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Ethnic Identity and Reconciliation: Two main tasks for the young in Bosnia-Herzegovina

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ETHNIC IDENTITY AND RECONCILIATION

Two main tasks for the young in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Hanna Hjort

Abstract. This study aims at describing a group of 30 adolescent girls in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, in relation to ethnic identity and reconciliation. The group, aged 13-23, consists of members of a local organisation with the purpose of re-building society. An independent sample of 59 adolescents serves as comparison group. Data was collected using a questionnaire including open-ended and fixed response questions. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure was used to measure ethnic identity. Results show that ethnicity and ethnic identity are highly salient issues for the group. While they demonstrate strong emotional attachment to ethnic group, exploration of ethnic identity, however, is less reported. The participants assess reconciliation in Mostar as very desirable and show a personal and integrated relation to the concept. However, their definitions of reconciliation are vague as regards to what constitutes the process of reconciliation. Participation in the organisation was not found to enhance either ethnic identity or cross-ethnic friendships. However, the centres seem to be of great importance to the girls.

According to identity formation theory, identity is a highly relevant issue during adolescence. Ethnic identity represents an aspect of global identity, and as such is particularly salient during adolescent years. However, the saliency of ethnicity and ethnic identity is decidedly influenced by historical and contextual circumstances. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, due to the current ethno-political situation in many ways shaped by the war in the early 90s, ethnicity and ethnic identity may be considered a crucial aspect of being young. The Bosnian society is in uncountable ways affected by the conflict that, regardless of the deeper roots, on a manifest level was a conflict between ethnic parts. Moreover, the war led to heightened segregation between ethnic groups.

In this context, the notion of ethnicity, ethnic identity and ethnic relations, is closely linked to the issue of reconciliation. One of the main tasks in a post-conflict society concerns the re/building of bridges between former enemies. In Bosnia-Herzegovina these parties are in most cases of different ethnic groups. On various levels, international as well as local, the concept of reconciliation is being discussed and referred to. Hence, the issue of reconciliation, like ethnic matters, might be expected to be of importance to the young Bosnians.

This study aims at describing a group of 30 young women from the Mostar area, southern Bosnia-Herzegovina, regarding ethnic identity and reconciliation. The participants are members of a local organisation with the purpose of re-building society by offering the members practical courses, psychosocial support and possibilities to meet across ethnic and religious boundaries. The influence of this organisation on ethnic identity and cross-ethnic friendship is investigated. For this purpose an independent comparison group of 59 young Mostarians is included in parts of the study.
Bosnia-Herzegovina

The Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina is situated between Serbia-Montenegro and Croatia on what was once the border between East and West Rome. During most of the 20th century, Bosnia-Herzegovina belonged to the communist state of Yugoslavia. Following a disintegration of the state and an ethnic polarisation during the 1980s, Slovenia, Croatia and finally Bosnia-Herzegovina were proclaimed independent in the early nineties. This led to war, which, by 1992, had spread to Bosnia. The Dayton agreement – concluded in 1996 – settled that Bosnia-Herzegovina remain a state, but divided into two political, quasi-ethnic and geographically divided “entities”: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina dominated by Croats and Muslims/Bosnjaks, and Republika Srpska dominated by Serbs.

As opposed to the rest of the Balkan states, Bosnia has no titular people and no ethnic group is or has been in majority in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The population can be estimated to consist of roughly 40% Bosnjaks, one third Serbs and a fifth Croats. A small minority identify themselves as “Bosanac”, a term that implies no religious or ethnic belonging but rather focuses on national origin. To a stranger’s eye, the ethnic and national terms may be rather confusing. In this text, the term Bosnjak refers to the ethnic group that is sometimes referred to as “Muslims”; Bosanac is used in accordance with the definition above; and when Bosnian is used, the term refers to national rather than ethnic belonging.

The war implied large demographical changes: towns and areas that were formerly mixed as regards ethnicities have been “ethnically cleansed”. Although refugees are officially guaranteed the right to return, for various reasons many of them do not do so. The situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina today is marked by poverty, unemployment, and economic insecurity. Large portions of the younger population wish to move abroad, but in practice there are few possibilities for them to do so.

Mostar

The second largest city of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mostar contains roughly 100 000 inhabitants. While the population today is comprised of primarily Bosnjaks and Croats, pre-war Mostar housed roughly 1/3 Bosnjaks, 1/3 Croats and 1/5 Serbs.

Mostar became a central site of confrontation during the war. Sporadic shooting began already in 1991 and did not cease entirely until 1996. During the first months of the war, Croat and Bosnjak forces jointly fought the Serbian/Yugoslavian attack on the city and finally managed to drive out the enemy forces. When the fighting renewed a couple of months later, Croats and Bosnjaks had become enemies.

Large parts of central Mostar were destroyed during the war. The destruction along the frontline still remains and the town is being rebuilt at a slow pace. In late 1993, the old bridge Stari Most in the central old part of Mostar was destroyed by Croatian military. The

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1 [www.bosnet.org](http://www.bosnet.org) 2003-05-05
2 “Bosnjaks” is the current official term for the ethnic group that was once called “Muslims”. In this paper, the term “Bosnjak” will consistently be used as regards the ethnic group.
3 Musli 2002
4 Musli 2002
5 62 %; Human Development Report 2002, UNDP
6 Mostar 2004 Census
destruction of the bridge – a source of local pride and a symbol of unity - is commonly seen as a symbolic attack on the Bosnian society and pre-war identity. The bridge is currently under reconstruction, a project largely financed by the international community.

Social structure, like material assets, was ruined and altered by the war. Almost no Serbs stayed in Mostar throughout the war, and so far very few of those who left have returned. The two remaining groups – Croats and Bosnjaks – remain for the most part divided. Fighting took place mainly on the front line formed by the “Bulevar” parallel to the Neretva River. This division line that divided the city into the west held by the Croats and the east held by the Bosnjaks, still forms a physical boundary between the two main ethnic groups: Croats mainly living on the west bank, Bosnjaks on the east. Most governmental institutions are still divided into two separate systems. For example, Mostar has two school systems, one serving the Croatian children on the west bank, the other teaching the Bosnjak children on the east side.

While many Mostarians fled their hometown during the war, others found refuge in Mostar. This has led to large demographic changes: Only 20% of the present inhabitants originate from Mostar, while 80% moved there during or immediately after war.

Traumatic experiences and symptomatology among children and adolescents

Obviously, the war in Bosnia exposed children and adolescents to a large number of stressful and potentially traumatic events. A number of studies deal with the extent and degree of such exposure. The findings all point in the same direction: children in various parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina all had to suffer one, more often several, stressful events during the war. A screening of schoolchildren in Sarajevo found that over 78% underwent at least six traumatic experiences. Similar studies implemented in Republika Srpska conclude that the entire young population has experienced severe stress, and 2/3 of them have had seven or more war-related stressful events.

Children of Mostar, like children all over Bosnia-Herzegovina, suffered during the war. This applies to all categories of children, but there seem to be some differences connected to ethnic group. While Bosnjak children from the eastern side of the town report higher numbers of traumatic experiences, the Croatian children across the river demonstrate more symptoms of psychological disorders, a paradox possibly explained by higher social support within the Bosnjak group. Another study conducted in Mostar, reveals high levels of posttraumatic stress symptoms and grief reactions among children aged 9 to 14. Surprisingly, the study shows normal levels of depression and anxiety in the group. The authors/researchers conclude that this result might indicate that, after all, the community was coping well.

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7 Eg Grodach 2002
8 Corkalo et al (forthcoming)
9 Dapić and Stuvland 2002
10 Savić 2002; Milosavljević and Turjačanin 2002
11 Milosavljević and Turjačanin 2002
12 Knežević and Ovsenik 2002
13 Smith et. al. 2002; The screening, carried out in early 1996, includes 2976 children, 98% of whom were identified as Muslim.
The humanitarian organisation “Koraci Nade”

Numerous international and national Non-Governmental Organisations crowded Mostar in the late 90s. An organisation that still remains is Koraci Nade, first initiated in the mid-nineties. Koraci Nade (KN) is a local, non-governmental organisation with five centres in the southern part of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The target groups are women, youth and children.

The main aim of the organisation is to “decrease psychological difficulties and sad experiences during passed years, and [...] help people in process of rebuilding community”\(^{14}\). In order to attain this goal, KN offers various activities ranging from educational courses to psychosocial discussion groups. Furthermore, a mobile team offers legal advice, individual consultation and psychotherapy, and social assistance.

Three of the KN centres are located in the centre and suburbs of Mostar, two of them in smaller villages in the area. While four centres are situated in the Federation, the fifth is sited across the border of Republika Srpska. Although most of the activities take place in the local centres, centrally organised events such as seminars, excursions and holiday trips offer possibilities for the participants from different centres to meet.

Koraci Nade documents as well as personnel emphasize the importance of offering opportunities to meet and socialize across ethnic and national boundaries: KN is working with women, youth and children “regardless of their region, nation or religion” and creating a forum where “people of all ethnic backgrounds are working and socialising”.\(^{15}\)

Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity versus ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to an objective group membership, primarily determined by parents’ ethnic origin\(^{16}\). Ethnic identity has been defined as that part of an individual’s self-concept that derives from his or her knowledge of membership in a social group, combined with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership\(^{17}\). Accordingly, whereas ethnicity refers to a membership that can be objectively established, ethnic identity refers to the person’s subjective relation to his or her ethnicity. Ethnic identity, then, refers to a sense of psychological affiliation and connectedness to a group of people with a common heritage\(^{18}\).

Ethnic identity: an Introduction

The concept of ethnic identity turns out to be meaningful only in the situation when two or more ethnic groups are in contact over a period of time. Thus, ethnic identity has primarily been studied in bi- and multicultural societies such as the US, Canada and Israel\(^ {19}\). Moreover, research on ethnic identity most often focuses on minority groups, including the majority only as a contrast or comparison group.

\(^{14}\) Pamphlet "H.O. "Koraci Nade” Mostar; Hierarchy of aims. Koraci Nade head-centre, Mostar. 2003
\(^{15}\) Pamphlet "Humanitarian Organisation "Koraci Nade” Mostar”. Koraci Nade head-centre, Mostar, 2003
\(^{16}\) E g Phinney 1993, Branch et al 2000
\(^{17}\) Tajfel 1981; Although a number of definitions have been used, this is one that recurs in a number of (social) psychological contexts.
\(^{18}\) Branch et al 2000
\(^{19}\) Phinney 1990
A wide range of fields has dealt with ethnic identity: sociology, anthropology, education and psychology. Neither between nor within the fields is there an entirely agreed-on definition of the concept. While some definitions emphasize behavioural aspects such as customs and group activities, others focus on emotional aspects or attitudes. Consequently, ethnic identity has been measured in a number of ways, ranging from self-labelling to involvement in cultural activities.20

Roughly speaking, studies of ethnic identity start out from one of three main perspectives: Social Identity Theory according to which the mere membership of a group provides the member with a sense of belonging that contributes to his or her self-concept; Acculturation and Culture Conflict, primarily focusing on how the minority group relates to the dominant society; and Identity Formation emphasizing the developmental and dynamic aspects of ethnic identity.21 The two perspectives that are most relevant to this research study, Social Identity Theory and Identity Formation Theory, will be presented here.

Ethnic identity: Social Identity Theory

According to Social Identity Theory, primarily developed by Henri Tajfel, social identity forms an important part of the self-concept.22 Via social categorisation the individual is provided not only with tools for understanding and handling the social environment, but also with a system of orientation for self-reference: Every individual identifies with a number of social categories, the sum of these identifications constituting his social identity. Since individuals strive for a positive self-concept, they also strive to achieve or maintain a positive social identity. This, in turn, is primarily based on favourable comparisons between in-group and out-group(s). In case the social identity is unsatisfying, due to e.g. negative power balance between the groups, the individual will attempt either to leave the group or to change the value of the group.23

Ethnic identity may be considered an aspect of social identity.24 Ethnic groups, however, present a special case. When the majority group devalues the ethnic group(s) in minority, this may lead to a sense of inferiority and “self-hatred” in the minority group member. While leaving your ethnic group in many contexts is not a realistic option, alternative solutions may be to develop stronger pride in your group, reinterpret “negative” characteristics and stress the distinctiveness of your group.25

Ethnic identity: Identity Formation Theory

According to identity formation theory, ethnic identity is formed in a process similar to ego identity formation. Hence, it takes place over time as the individual explores the ethnicity in her life. This perspective draws on psychoanalytic theory and developmental psychology, the main influence being the theories and empirical studies of Erikson and Marcia.

20 Ibid.
21 Phinney 1990
22 Tajfel and Turner 1979
23 Ibid.
24 Hutnik 1991
25 Phinney 1990
Erikson

Erik H Erikson in his psychosocial theory stresses the multidimensional aspects of identity. Identity is, he writes, a subjective experience and a dynamic fact, but also a group-psychological phenomenon.\(^{26}\) The process of identity is "located in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture, a process which establishes, in fact, the identity of those two identities."\(^{27}\)

The formation of ego identity is crucial during puberty and adolescence. During this period the individual encounters a crisis with two extreme outcomes: identity and role confusion, a state where the individual is in total lack of secure identity. Ego identity must be formed in a new way, different from yet based upon the earlier introjections and identifications of childhood.\(^{28}\) In order to achieve the ideal outcome – identity – the adolescent must make some personal investments, commitments, in various areas in life. Erikson stresses the importance of commitment to an ideological worldview.

Marcia

James E Marcia considers his model of identity development an operationalisation of Erikson’s theory, developed as a methodological device by means of which Eriksonian identity theory might be empirically studied.\(^{29}\) There has been discussion on the relation between the theories of Erikson and Marcia, some claiming that Marcia is largely independent of Erikson’s theory. Beyond discussion, though, is the fact that Marcia inherited two of Erikson's cornerstones: the notion of a period when relevant issues are explored – crisis – and the notion of personal investment – commitment.\(^{30}\) Furthermore, Marcia, like Erikson, considers identity development a psychosocial task, preceded by the psychosocial tasks of childhood and followed by those of adulthood.\(^{31}\)

Marcia has defined identity as “a self-structure – an internal, self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual history”.\(^{32}\)

A well-developed identity structure provides the individual with a clear sense of what distinguishes him from others and in what aspects he is similar to them. It is flexible and open to changes in society as well as in relationships, growing stronger through each crisis. The less developed identity structure, on the other hand, leaves the individual without a clear sense of distinctiveness from others. Hence, a person with a weak identity structure has to rely on external sources and consequently is more vulnerable to changes around him.\(^{33}\)

Identity structure develops gradually with age and experience. Although it begins with the self-object differentiation at infancy and ends at old age with the self-mankind integration, it is particularly salient during adolescence. This is a period in a person’s life when his physical development and cognitive capacity combine with social expectations, enabling him “to sort through and synthesize […] childhood identifications in order to construct a viable pathway to adulthood”\(^{34}\).
Based on the four possible combinations of the two variables “commitment” and “exploration”, Marcia formulated four modes of dealing with the identity issues during adolescence, the *identity statuses*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity Status</th>
<th>Exploration</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity Achievement</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moratorium</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity diffusion</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Absent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Exploration* is defined as the period when the adolescent is engaged in choosing among meaningful alternatives, *commitment* as the degree of personal investment shown by the individual.\(^{35}\)

*Identity achievement*, according to this model, is the ultimate identity resolution. Following a decision-making period, the individual has made commitments to social roles. That is, he has gone through the identity formation process, explored his alternatives and made his choices.

*Foreclosures*, like the identity achieved, are committed to social roles. In this case, though, fidelity is not the outcome of a period of exploration, but based on identification with parents and other significant childhood models. Values, attitudes and choices have merely been adopted. The identity formation process has not yet begun.

The young person in *moratorium* is currently undergoing the identity formation process, exploring and evaluating the pathways available to him. He has not yet made commitments.

*Identity diffusion* characterises the individual who is neither able to make any commitments, nor undergoing the process of exploration.

Longitudinal studies of identity formation in adolescence demonstrate a clear pattern of progression from foreclosure and diffusion to moratorium and identity achievement. Moratorium has proved to be the least stable status of identity, empirically supporting the theoretically based assumption that this is a transitional state where the psychosocial task of identity formation is being resolved.\(^{36}\)

Marcia’s model has generated hundreds of research studies on identity formation. While Marcia saw the areas of occupation, ideology and sexuality as the most indicative of identity process during adolescence, identity formation research during the last decade has focused a much wider range of areas, one of them being the formation of ethnic identity.\(^{37}\)

**Phinney: A three-stage model of ethnic identity formation**

Jean Phinney has developed a three-stage model of ethnic identity development.\(^{38}\) The basis for the model is the aforementioned model of ego identity development and recent empirical

\(^{35}\) Marcia 1966

\(^{36}\) Kroger 1996

\(^{37}\) Ibid.

\(^{38}\) Phinney 1993
studies with American minority adolescents. The model is specifically developed to be applicable across ethnic groups.\(^39\)

Phinney considers ethnic identity a continuous variable, ranging from low identity to high identity.\(^40\) Her three-stage model describes a progression from an unexamined ethnic identity through a period of exploration to an achieved or committed ethnic identity. The process is assumed to take place primarily during adolescence, but might be delayed or never occur. According to the model, identity formation process is activated by exposal to ethnically relevant issues, and therefore may take place at different ages. The three stages are as follows:

1. **Unexamined ethnic identity.**
   This stage is characterised by lack of exploration of ethnic issues. Early adolescents might not be interested in ethnicity and consequently have not given it much thought. This state is parallel to Marcia’s *identity diffusion* status. Alternatively, the teenager may simply have taken over ethnic attitudes from parents or other adults. In this case, the stage is analogous to Marcia’s status of *foreclosure*.

2. **Ethnic identity search/Moratorium**
   The second stage, corresponding to Marcia’s *moratorium* stage, is characterized by the individual exploring his or her ethnicity. The model suggests a turning point similar to what Erikson called identity crisis. In other words, a single event or a complex of circumstances initiates a search for ethnic identity.

3. **Ethnic identity achievement**
   As a result of this exploration, the individual might reach the third and final stage, denoted by a deeper understanding and appreciation of his or her ethnic roots and belonging. At this point, ethnic identity is considered *achieved*.

The model describes the process, not the content, of identity formation. The meaning of achievement obviously varies between individuals and groups. Historical, societal and personal components differ and consequently so do the ethnic issues to be explored.

### Table 2:

**Phinney’s three-stage model and Marcia’s identity statuses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Phinney</th>
<th>Marcia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Unexamined ethnic identity</td>
<td>I Identity diffusion</td>
<td>III Moratorium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. diffusion b. foreclosure</td>
<td>II Foreclosure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Ethnic identity search</td>
<td>III Moratorium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Ethnic identity achievement</td>
<td>IV Identity Achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethnic identity: current research**

Ethnic identity has been studied in relation to a number of aspects such as self-esteem and psychological adjustment, age, gender and ethnic group. In this research a wide range of methods has been used, including interviews and structured questionnaires. A measure that is

\(^{39}\) Ibid.

\(^{40}\) Phinney 1993
increasingly being used is the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure scale developed by Phinney and introduced below (see: Methods p 19f).

**Ethnic identity and age**
The stage model posits a positive relation between age and ethnic identity. Phinney et al in several studies have presented evidence that older subjects are more resolved and sure of their ethnic identity than the younger. According to these results, ethnic identity development takes place primarily during the college years. These findings have been challenged by Branch et al who found no age effects on ethnic identity. Another study by Branch concluded that 10-18 year olds were more concrete and obvious in expressing ethnic identity than were their older counterparts. Furthermore, in a study on Jewish teenagers in a non-Jewish setting, participants 15 years old or younger scored significantly higher on ethnic identity than the older subjects. It is commonly suggested that these discrepancies may best be explained by assuming a developmental peak in late adolescence (presumably between age 16 and 18).

**Ethnic identity and ethnicity**
Several American and British studies have found ethnic identity scores to differ significantly among ethnic groups. Various minority groups such as Pakistanis, West Indians and Afro-Americans have shown higher levels of ethnic identity than others, but little research has addressed the influence of the relative size of the groups studied. Most research has been directed towards the ethnic identity of minority group members. When majority groups have been included, they have constantly displayed lower ethnic identity than minority groups. In a study including a number of American ethnic groups, Roberts et al found that European Americans scored significantly lower than all other groups.

**Ethnic identity and gender**
Very little research has dealt with the gender aspect on ethnic identity and the empirical evidence that exists is largely inconclusive. Some research suggests that women are more involved in ethnic identity issues than men. On the contrary, a Bosnian study found evidence that women are more indifferent than men to ethnic identity matters.

**Ethnic identity and psychological well-being**
Social Identity Theory like Identity Formation Theory suggests a positive correlation between ethnic identity and psychological well-being. Most research seem to support this assumption: A strong and secure ethnic identity has been proved to correlate positively with for example self-esteem, coping and optimism, scholastic self-competence and psychological well-
being. Branch et al, investigating the relation between ethnic identity and ego identity, found a strong negative correlation between diffusion status (see above) and ethnic identity.

Contextual and historical aspects
Many scholars mention contextual and historical factors as essentially influencing ethnic identity. One aspect is, of course, relations between different ethnic groups and the power balance between majority and minority groups. Another aspect is the situation of the individual within his or her own ethnic group. Davey et al, studying Jewish adolescents, found that the younger part of their group demonstrated higher ethnic identity levels than their older counterparts. They argue that this may best be explained by the fact that these younger participants were preparing for alternatively recently went through Bar Mitzvah, a process that might trigger ethnic awareness and identity exploration.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation – the concept
The discourse concerning reconciliation as a method of conflict prevention is increasing, including not only the fields of conflict resolution and international relations, but also psychology and sociology. Still, reconciliation has been defined in many ways, and the meaning of the term is by no means clear. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, reconciliation refers to (1) the action of reconciling, and (2) the state of being reconciled. The Latin verb reconciliare means “re-establish peace or friendship”. Reconciliation also refers to a Roman Catholic sacrament, and is a theological term frequently used in Christian theology. As such, the term carries strong religious connotations.

Reconciliation as referring to a process in divided and conflict-torn societies, is a fairly new concept that became internationally focused with the Argentinean Truth Commission in 1984. Since then, reconciliation on a societal level has been pursued through other Truth Commissions such as the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in the 90s.

Reconciliation and psychology
Social scientists, and among them psychologists, are starting to devote more attention to reconciliation, but psychological research on reconciliation is still in its infancy. Some psychological research and theories are developing (for example Bar-Tal, see below), but much theory is still to be found in other fields, such as conflict resolution, sociology and theology. Hence, theorists from other disciplines such as Lederach (Conflict resolution) and Tavuchis (Sociology) will be included in the following overview.

When do we need reconciliation? Conflicts in post-modern societies
One way to gain further understanding of reconciliation, is to identify the situation that creates a need for it. What are the characteristics of contemporary conflicts?
According to Lederach, the post-Cold War conflicts are internal rather than international, typically featuring a “competition between sharply defined identity groups”\(^61\). The typical geographical setting of the conflicts is the immediate community or neighbouring villages, places where the conflicting groups are in close proximity. Finally, post-Cold War conflicts are typically intractable or long-term, combining deep-rooted fear with direct experiences.

In that context, identity is being formed not by nationality, but by something more concrete and closer to the individual’s experience: religion, ethnicity or regional affiliation – or a mix of these: “People, when threatened, seek security in narrower, more localised identity groups…”\(^62\). This “narrowing of identity” has its roots in enduring mistrust and fear, and is reinforced by current experiences of bloodshed and division. Thus, internal cohesion of a group is strengthened as a result of external threat. The result of these dynamics is further fractionalisation.\(^63\)

According to Bar-Tal, conflicts can be divided into two main categories: tractable conflicts that are solved by peaceful means, and intractable conflicts that call for a process of reconciliation.\(^64\) Inter-group conflicts that are long-term and involve extensive violence are considered intractable. These conflicts deeply involve the society members, requiring a “psychological infra-structure” in order to cope with the extraordinary conditions. This infrastructure consists of a set of shared beliefs, ideologies, goals and myths about the in-group, the out-group(s), and inter-group relations. These beliefs include justification of one’s own goals, prejudices of the adversary party and beliefs that between-groups relations can not change. With time, these societal beliefs become institutionalised into society and internalised into the individual, carried on over generations. Bar-Tal calls this collective philosophy a conflictive ethos.\(^65\)

**What is reconciliation?**

As noted above, there is no consensus as regards the answer to this question. Bar-Tal gives the following definition:

> “A process […] through which the parties in conflict form new relations of peaceful coexistence based on mutual trust and acceptance, cooperation, and consideration of each other’s needs”\(^66\)

**Reconciliation vs. reconstruction**

The terms reconciliation and reconstruction are often used together, sometimes interchangeably. However, they refer to separate phenomena.\(^67\) Whereas reconstruction primarily refers to the restoration of economic, political and physical infrastructure, reconciliation concerns the social fabric. To some extent, reconciliation may be thought of as social reconstruction. Still, reconstruction and reconciliation are closely linked. As a minimum, one is the essential condition for the being of the other.

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\(^{61}\) Lederach 1997, p 10
\(^{62}\) Lederach 1997, p 18
\(^{63}\) Ibid.
\(^{64}\) Bar-Tal 2000, 2001
\(^{65}\) Bar-Tal 2000
\(^{66}\) Ibid., p 355
\(^{67}\) E.g Lundwall 2001
Reconciliation as building relationships

Although reconciliation has been defined in numerous ways, there is consensus on one aspect: the relational aspect. This focus becomes obvious in the quote above. Lederach is of the opinion that a sustainable peace building “must address and engage the relational aspects of reconciliation as the central component”. He defines reconciliation as a focus and a locus: A focus on the relational aspects of conflict and solution; A locus, a social space, where people, ideas and stories come together. These relations may be between individuals, between groups or between an individual on one hand and a group on the other.

Reconciliation as rehumanising

The change in relations includes acknowledging the other(s). Following social psychological theories of inter-group phenomena such as the development of in- and out-group categorisation, a central component in violent group conflicts is the dehumanising of the other. In this process the individuality of the out-group member is lost, and he is seen merely as representing a more or less stereotyped category. From this perspective, the key issue in reconciliation is to reverse this dehumanisation and return humanity to those whose individual attributes have been replaced by categorisation. According to Halpern and Weinstein, a central aspect of reconciliation is regaining empathy for the other. Through empathy the other is perceived as a distinct and particular individual, and his or her perspective is fully understood and experienced.

Reconciliation vs. apology and forgiveness

The concepts of apology and forgiveness have often been central to reconciliation debate. While some scholars, like sociologist Tavuchis, in effect equate reconciliation with the two, others emphasise the importance of distinguishing between the concepts. It has been increasingly stressed that they must be kept apart, allowing for reconciliation to include other aspects than apology and forgiveness.

Reconciliation as a change of ethos

Following Bar-Tal’s model, reconciliation requires the formation of an ethos of peace. During conflict, the conflictive ethos helps the society and the individual to cope with the adversary. At the same time, it fuels the conflict and it is therefore imperative that the ethos is changed. This is a time-consuming, painful process that includes the majority of the society members. Bar-Tal has identified five core changes that have to take place in order for the ethos to become peaceful rather than conflictive:

(1) Beliefs about societal goals, specifically about the justness of one’s own goals, have to change. These beliefs were involved in the outbreak of the conflict and make up the cognitive foundations of the conflict. Dreams and visions of the future must be abolished, and replaced by realistic goals that include all parties.

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68 de la Rey 2001
69 Lederach 1997, p 24
70 Ibid.
71 Tavuchis 1991
72 de la Rey 2001, Lederach 1997 etc
73 Halpern and Weinstein, forthcoming
74 Ibid.
75 de la Rey 2001; Lundwall 2001
76 Tavuchis 1991
77 Hamber and van der Merwe 1998; de la Rey 2001; Halpern and Weinstein, forthcoming
78 Bar-Tal 2000
Beliefs about the adversary group(s) must change. These beliefs include stereotypes, de-legitimisation and de-humanisation. “The others” must be granted humanity, their needs must be legitimised, and they must be seen as individuals rather than a group.

Beliefs about the in-group also have to change. Former self-glorifying must change into more objective, complex and critical self-images. This includes reducing the monopolisation of victimhood, and admitting responsibility for acts related to the conflict.

Beliefs about inter-group relations need to change as regards past, present and future. The collective memory of the past should be reconstructed, so that beliefs about the past are objective and balanced; beliefs about present relations to the former enemy should be normalised; and beliefs about the future should emphasise the mutual dependence between the groups.

Beliefs about peace, finally, must be subject to change. These must be realistic, admitting compromises.

These changes represent a very painful and complicated process that meets many obstructions. In intractable conflicts that go on for decades, there will be younger society members that were socialised into the conflictive ethos, never having known another reality. Especially for these young people, but also for the rest, the conflictive ethos contributes greatly to the social identity. The shared beliefs are well founded in society, becoming an ideological base for political groups and often not allowing any deviating ideologies.

How do we reach reconciliation?

How, then, is the process and state of reconciliation achieved? How can it be facilitated? In other words, what is the praxis of reconciliation? Although theoretical understanding of reconciliation is rapidly developing, there is still a lack of knowledge about the process of reconciliation in practical terms.\textsuperscript{79}

Conflict resolution vs. reconciliation

Many scholars emphasise the formal termination of conflict – e.g. with the signing of a peace agreement – as a determinative starting point for the reconciliation process. According to Bar-Tal conflict resolution and signing of peace-agreement is a crucial catalyst of the reconciliation process.\textsuperscript{80} Lederach calls for a change of paradigms, a shift from traditional diplomacy focusing on resolution, to a focus on relationships and reconciliation.\textsuperscript{81}

Bar-Tal emphasises the importance of the outcome of the conflict resolution on the reconciliation process. He identifies two main outcomes of conflict resolution: (1) A solution where two or more conflicting groups continue to live within the same system (such as is the case in South Africa), and (2) a solution where the conflicting parties will live in separate states (e.g. Israelis and Palestinians). While the second form requires reconciliation between two different states, the first form necessitates the establishment of a new system that incorporates the past rivals on equal premises. In this case, the very creation of such systems – educational, political, cultural, economic and legal – has great impact on the reconciliation process.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{79} de la Rey 2001
\textsuperscript{80} Bar-Tal 2000, 2001
\textsuperscript{81} Lederach 1997
\textsuperscript{82} Bar-Tal 2000
Reconciliation and legislation

Although a change in relationships is generally seen as central to the process of reconciliation, it is frequently noted that this is not enough, but needs to be accompanied by changes in social structure. Structures and institutions that monitor and act on complaint from the citizens may be developed in order to protect the individual as well as the reconciliation process. De la Rey calls this a “creation of human rights culture”.  

Facilitating reconciliation

Lederach underscores the importance of creating a space, social and physical, where opposing parties can meet, encounter and engage each other as people – developing a relationship. This might include eating, living and working together, sharing time and space and thus coming to see each other as individuals rather than antagonists. This analysis is based on studies of successful peace negotiations, but Lederach suggests that this also applies to middle-range and grassroots levels. 

In accordance with the hypothesis of Halpern and Weinstein, the development of empathic rehumanisation takes individual as well as societal changes. Among the necessary social conditions are conditions for regaining trust, possibilities to voice disagreements and circumstances that allow for relationships to develop over time. They conclude that empathy and reconciliation are achieved “in living together and genuinely attending to another’s perspective over time”. It is therefore vital that any interventions aiming at empathic rehumanisation allow for the process to take time.

According to Bar-Tal, a number of variables facilitate or impede the reconciliatory process. The first and determinative condition for reconciliation is a successful conflict resolution. A second factor consists of acts where the adversaries prove their will to change from conflictive relations into peaceful relations. Thirdly, external factors such as the international climate may support or counteract reconciliation. Additional factors are the strength and determination of those parts of the society that support the reconciliation process, as well as of those groups that oppose it. Finally, societal institutions and organisations play an important role in the process of reconciliation: Institutions such as the educational system may socialise entire generations into an ethos of peace, or may transmit societal beliefs sustaining the conflictive ethos; Various organisations may promote reconciliation among the in-group members and initiate joint acts with the adversary groups, or may – obviously – fail to do so.

These thoughts seem to be shared by various organisations such as Koraci Nade that aim at facilitating reconciliation and social reconstruction by means of creating social forums. In the Koraci Nade centres, the participants can work and socialise together, regardless of ethnic origin. This generates opportunities for “re-humanising” of the other as Halpern and Weinstein put it. In the terminology of Bar-Tal, Koraci Nade might be helping in the creation of an “ethos of peace”.

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83 de la Rey 2001, p261
84 Lederach 1997
85 Halpern and Weinstein forthcoming, p 28
86 Ibid.
87 Bar-Tal 2000
The Contact Hypothesis

The contact hypothesis has long been considered one of psychology’s most effective strategies for improving inter-group relations. The hypothesis, first formulated by Allport in 1954, states that inter-group intolerance may be reduced by inter-group contact if certain basic features are present. These prerequisites as identified by Allport are: (1) equal status, (2) inter-group cooperation, (3) common goals, and (4) supportive norms. Under such conditions, inter-group contact can lead to changed attitudes towards and perceptions of the out-group.

The contact hypothesis has received much research attention ever since the 50s, with an upsurge in recent years. The theory has obtained heavy empirical support and there is now substantial evidence that inter-group contact is successful in reducing inter-group biases in various settings. Inter-group contact has been shown to reduce prejudice, undermine group stereotypes and enhance trust.

Recent research has developed Allport’s model further, adding two more prerequisites to the original four. First, studies have found personalisation to be of importance for inter-group contact to be successful. Contact situations must provide participants with opportunities to decategorise the other, i.e. personalise him. Second, the importance of inter-group friendships has been increasingly stressed.

Research studies on the contact hypothesis have been using a number of methods, ranging from controlled laboratory experiments to longitudinal between-groups designs. A method that has been increasingly applied, is investigation of existing cross-ethnic friendships. It is assumed that such friendship requires the critical conditions specified above. Today, research leaves little doubt that inter-group friendship is highly associated with less inter-group prejudice. A question that has been raised, though, is to what extent, how and when this effect is generalised.

Pettigrew found that personal friendship with an out-group member may actually bring about tolerance toward out-groups in general and reduced nationalistic pride. For this generalisation to take place, he underscores, the inter-group contact must be a process over time. In a Northern Irish reconciliation project, Ed Cairns also found that inter-group friendships changed attitudes towards the out-group as a whole. The results of the project indicate that the effects of inter-group contact are mediated by inter-group anxiety: the higher the anxiety, the less the positive effects of contact are. Finally, inter-group contact seems to have the best effect when taking place in every-day settings such as at work or school.

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88 Eg Dovidio et al, 2003
89 Amir 1969; Dovidio et al, 2003
90 Dovidio et al, 2003; Cairns and Niens, 2001; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2000
91 Pettigrew, 1997; Pettigrew 1998
92 Niens and Cairns, 2001; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2000
93 Pettigrew 1997
94 Lundwall, 2000
95 Pettigrew and Tropp, 2000
Methods

Aim and hypotheses

The main purpose of this study is to describe a group of 30 young women in relation to ethnic identity and reconciliation. Focus will be on the participants’ perspectives on the topics and the personal meanings they attribute to the concepts of ethnicity and reconciliation. However, some aspects (ethnic identity and cross-ethnic friendships) will be measured quantitatively and subject to within-group and between-group analyses including an independent comparison group.

Based on ethnic identity theory and the Koraci Nade agenda, the following hypotheses were postulated:

1) friendships across ethnic boundaries enhance ethnic identity as measured by the MEIM;
2) participation in the KN groups promotes cross-ethnic friendships;
3) participation in KN also influences ethnic identity in a positive direction.

Finally, in accordance with identity formation theory and prior ethnic identity research, it was also hypothesised that

4) there is a difference between age groups in ethnic identity, presumably with a peak in the ages between 16 and 18.

Method

The study is a questionnaire study, including open ended as well as fixed response items. Data was collected at (1) five local Koraci Nade centres in the Mostar area, (2) the Mobile Culture Containers site in central Mostar. Data collection was carried out during June/July 2003.

Sample

The Koraci Nade sample (KN) entails 30 females aged 13 to 24 (m=18.2). These were young women participating in the psychosocial and/or practical activities offered by the five local KN centres in Mostar, Blagaj and Nevesinje. The comparison group (MCC), n=59, comprises males (39 %) as well as females (61 %). This group was aged 15 to 23 (m=16.9). These were participating in various media activities arranged during four weeks by a mobile OSCE project called the “Mobile Culture Containers.” The MCC participants were primarily recruited via high schools and participated voluntarily in the MCC activities. The MCC activities took place in central Mostar, in an area considered “ethnically neutral”.

The geographical distribution differs between the two groups: While a majority (85 %) of the MCC sample lived in Mostar town, more than half (60 %) of the KN sample lived outside

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96 While Blagaj is a village not far from Mostar in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nevesinje is situated in Republika Srpska and rather isolated from Mostar.
Mostar in smaller villages. None of the MCC participants included in the analysis lived outside Mostar.

Table 3:  
**Geographical distribution in the KN group, comparison group and groups combined**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residency (%)</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KN</td>
<td>MCC</td>
<td>Entire sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostar town</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostar suburbs</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/villages</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The composition of the two main groups also diverges as regards ethnicity: While the comparison group roughly reflects the ethnic composition of Mostar today, the ethnic composition of the KN sample clearly is influenced by a diverging geographical distribution.

Table 4:  
**Ethnic distribution in the KN group, comparison group and groups combined**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity (%)</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KN</td>
<td>MCC</td>
<td>Entire sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serb</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3,5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croat</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnjak</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosanac</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3,5</td>
<td>3,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedure**

A questionnaire including open-ended as well as fixed response items was developed to fit the Koraci Nade group. The questionnaire was translated to Bosnian and revised according to recommendations from researchers at Sarajevo University. The questionnaire was handed out on five occasions at five local Koraci Nade centres.

After filling in the form, each group was given the opportunity to reflect on the subject and suggest alterations of the instrument. Since the majority of the participants reported to be satisfied with the instrument, no changes were made. Reflections and thoughts concerning the subject served as tools when analysing the data.

A second, abbreviated version of the questionnaire was developed for the comparison group. This form was handed out on several occasions during three days at the Mobile Culture Containers location in central Mostar. For practical reasons, most of these participants did not get the opportunity to reflect orally on the questionnaire. All participants were guaranteed anonymity. Participation was voluntary and no compensation was given.

Data was translated at the Department of Psychology at the University of Sarajevo. Qualitative data from the Koraci Nade group was categorised and clustered. In order to test the above-mentioned hypotheses, data from the KN group as well as the comparison group was analysed using t-tests, ANOVA and Pearson’s correlation test.
Instrument

A questionnaire was developed in two versions: the complete version for the Koraci Nade group, and an abbreviated version for the MCC comparison group. The questionnaire was originally developed in English and translated to Bosnian at Sarajevo University. Both versions of the questionnaire included demographic data (gender, age, residency), the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), and a measure of cross-ethnic friendship (CEF).

MEIM, developed at the California State University, consists of four items regarding ethnicity (open-ended, multiple choice, ethnicity of father and ethnicity of mother) and 12 five-point rating items measuring two factors: (1) Ethnic Identity Search, and (2) Affirmation, Belonging and Commitment. A composite total score may be used to measure global Ethnic Identity. The measure has been used in various studies, consistently showing good reliability scores (alphas ranging between 0.80 and 0.90). In this sample, reliability of the total 12-item scale was 0.88, of factor 1 0.72 and factor 2 0.89 (assessed by Cronbach’s alpha).

In a recent study in Sarajevo, the MEIM was standardised and adapted to the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Another eight items with specific relevance to the current situation were added to the original twelve. In the present study, the Bosnian version was used, but since construct validity, reliability and factorial structure are unsure the extra items were excluded from analysis.

Cross-ethnic friendships (CEF) were measured by three multiple-choice items concerning number of cross-ethnic friends, frequency of contact with these friends and estimated intimacy in the friendships. The total score of these three items was used as an indicator of cross-ethnic friendships. In addition, the participants were asked to give three examples of places where they got to know their cross-ethnic friends.

Apart from this, the questionnaire distributed to the Koraci Nade group included another thirteen items. Most of these were qualitative, open-ended questions asking for personal reflections on:

- the meaning of ethnicity
- differences between ethnic groups
- the meaning of reconciliation
- the impact of Koraci Nade

Moreover, the Koraci Nade group were asked to assess the desirability and realisticness of reconciliation. Four items, regarding self-image and the school system in Mostar, were excluded from analysis since the answers showed no relevance to the current topics.

\[97\] A validity study of the MEIM resulted in structure coefficients ranging from .35 to .77 on factor 1, and from .40 to .77 on factor 2.\[97\]

\[98\] Butollo, Pašić and Powell (forthcoming)
Results

The results of the study consist of four main parts, presented in the following order: Firstly, a part concerning Peer patterns in general and cross ethnic friendships. Secondly, a chapter where the results concerning Ethnicity and ethnic identity are presented. Thirdly, a presentation of the results regarding Reconciliation, and finally the results regarding the The role of Koraci Nade.

Peer patterns: general and cross-ethnic friendship

It was hypothesised (1) that cross-ethnic friendships constitute a trigger to ethnic exploration and as such enhance ethnic identity, and (2) that participation in Koraci Nade activities promotes cross-ethnic friendships. Accordingly, the peer patterns of the participants were investigated.

The general social patterns of the Koraci Nade group were investigated by means of two questions. The participants were asked to give three examples to each question:

I  Where do you get to know most of your friends?
II  Where do you mostly hang out with friends?

30 participants (the entire KN group) answered questions I and II; generating a total number of 80 examples to question I, and 81 examples to question II. The seven most frequently given examples to each item is shown in the table below. Public areas include examples such as at cafès, in the streets, going out, in parks. Social network includes examples such as through friends, at parties, through friends of my parents, through relatives.

Table 5: General peer patterns – seven most frequently given examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Where do you get to know most of your friends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood</td>
<td>Where do you mostly hang out with friends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses/seminars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folklore activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koraci Nade centres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1. School                  | Public areas                                  |
| 2. Neighbourhood          | Homes                                         |
| 3. Social network         | School                                        |
| 4. Public areas           | Outdoors                                      |
| 5. Courses/seminars       | By the river                                   |
| 6. Folklore activities    | Koraci Nade                                   |
| 7. Koraci Nade centres    | Folklore                                      |

n=30; ex.=80  n=30; ex.=81

Cross-ethnic friendships were investigated in the Koraci Nade group as well as the comparison group: Three multiple-choice questions concerned various aspects of friendship across ethnic boundaries (number, intimacy and frequency). A total score of cross-ethnic friendship (CEF) was created by summing up the scores of the three items. The CEF-scale has a potential range from 0 (no cross-ethnic friends) to 6 (many cross-ethnic friends of whom
many are seen often and many are considered close). All 30 participants answered the three CEF-items and received a CEF score. Scores ranged from 0 to 6, with a mean of 2.93.

**Hypothesis 1, that participation in the KN groups promotes cross-ethnic friendships**, could not be confirmed: an independent samples t-test showed no significant difference between the Koraci Nade group and the comparison group. Analyses also show no significant differences between ethnic groups or gender. However, participants living in central Mostar or Mostar suburbs scored significantly higher on the CEF measure than participants from rural areas ($t=2.2, df=87, p<0.05; \text{one-tailed}$). Moreover, there is a significant positive correlation between age and CEF ($r=.411, n=30, \ p<0.05$)\(^{99}\).

Participants were also asked where they got acquainted to their cross-ethnic friends. They were asked to give three examples. 23 Koraci Nade girls answered the question, rendering a total of 56 examples. The six most frequently given examples are shown in the table below:

**Table 6:**
Cross-ethnic Peer Patterns – six most frequently given examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. School</td>
<td>Where did you meet most of your cross-ethnic friends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Public areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. KN/Other youth organisations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Abroad/out of town</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Social network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Neighbourhood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 23; ex. 56

Ethnicity and ethnic identity

Three components in the questionnaire relate to ethnicity and ethnic identity: the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure distributed to the comparison group as well as the Koraci Nade participants, and two open-ended items answered by the Koraci Nade group only.

**The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)**

The MEIM was distributed to the Koraci Nade group (n=30) as well as to the comparison group (n=59). Mean scores, score range and standard deviations for the two groups combined are shown in the table below.

\(^{99}\) This correlation was also found when the comparison group (n = 59) was included in the analysis.
Table 7: 
Mean scores etc. for MEIM (Total score, Factor 1 and Factor 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>(n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total score</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>(87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1: Ethnic Identity Search</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnical Identity Search</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>(89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2: Affirmation, Belonging and Commitment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging and Commitment</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>(86)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results demonstrate no significant differences between groups divided by gender, ethnicity or residency. A one-sample t-test analysis shows that the total group scores significantly higher on factor 2 than on factor 1 \((t = 29.7, df = 88(85), p < 0.01)\).

**Hypothesis 2: KN participation influences ethnic identity positively**

As mentioned above, participation in the Koraci Nade activities was hypothesised to influence ethnic identity as measured by the MEIM. This hypothesis could not be confirmed for either factor. A t-test analysis, however, shows that there is a significant difference between the KN group and the comparison group on factor 2 (Affirmation, Belonging and Commitment): Contrary to what was hypothesised, the comparison group scored higher than the Koraci Nade groups \((t = 2.104, df = 84, p < 0.05; \text{two-tailed})\). This slightly surprising result might be explained by differences between the two groups as regards age distribution: While only 27% of the Koraci Nade group were 16-18 years old, 80% of the comparison group were of that age. It turns out that factor 2 varies with age (see below).

**Hypothesis 3: A positive correlation between cross-ethnic friendships and ethnic identity**

Furthermore, it was hypothesised that there would be a positive correlation between cross-ethnic friendships as measured by the CEF scale and ethnic identity. This hypothesis did not receive any support, neither for total MEIM score nor for individual factors.  

**Hypothesis 4: A difference between age groups in ethnic identity**

The third hypothesis was that data would show a non-linear relation between age and ethnic identity with a peak in the ages between 16 and 18. In order to investigate this, the total group was split into three age categories (see below) and analysed using one-way ANOVA. Neither factor 1 nor total score shows any relation to age. However, analyses show that 16-18 year olds score significantly higher than younger and older participants on factor 2 \((F(2,83)=8.511, p<0.0005)\). Hence, the age hypothesis was confirmed for factor 2.

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100 Analyses conducted: one-way ANOVA (for residency and ethnicity); t-test (for gender).
101 Analyses conducted: Pearson correlation for KN-members only, one-tailed t-tests for comparison between KN and comparison group.
102 Although the mean age did not differ significantly between the groups, the standard deviation in the Koraci Nade group \((SD = 2.96)\) was clearly higher than in the comparison group \((SD = 1.50)\).
103 Analysis conducted: Pearson, one-tailed; both KN and comparison group included.
104 Analyses conducted: Pearson’s correlation test (one-way); ANOVA.
What does it mean to you to be a member of your ethnic group?

One item in the Koraci Nade version of the questionnaire concerned the content of ethnic membership: What does it mean to you to be a member of your ethnic group? This item was intended to provide an insight into the immediate, conscious, personal meaning(s) the young women attribute to the concepts of ethnicity and ethnic belonging. 23 participants answered the question (23/30). Several participants gave answers that apply to more than one category, and hence the total number of quotes below exceeds the number of answering participants.

“What would it mean to me?” – attributing no meaning
Ten answers (10/23) indicate that the participants attribute no meaning to their being members of ethnic groups. Some decline using that kind of category, preferring other ways of dividing/categorising people. Others demonstrate an un-reflected relation to the concept:

Well, it doesn’t mean much to me … It is important that people are people.

I have never been thinking about that.

“It means pride” – emotional attachment
One third of the participants (8/23) demonstrate an emotional attachment towards the ethnic group. These answers either express attachment towards the ethnic group as a whole, or relate attachment to specific inter-personal relations:

For me, being a member of my ethnic group means pride, because I belong to it.

It means trust and love among friends. To help each other whenever that is needed.
“Before the war” – relating to the context
In three of the answers (3/23) participants refer to the historical context and current situation:

Being a member of one’s own ethnic group is very important when taken into account the problems surrounding us

What are the differences between Bosnjak, Croatian and Serbian teenagers?

The groups at Koraci Nade centres in Mostar and Blagaj were asked: What are the differences between Bosnjak and Croatian teenagers? For the group in Nevesinje, the question was re-phrased to include the main ethnic group in the district: What are the differences between Bosnjak, Croatian and Serbian teenagers? The intention was to see whether the participants consciously distinguish between the main ethnic groups and upon what such distinctions are based. Furthermore, focus was directed towards teenagers since a majority of the Koraci Nade group were in the teens.

29 of 30 answered the question. A couple of participants gave answers that fall into more than one category below; the total number of answers therefore slightly outnumbers the number of answering participants.

“They are teenagers like all of us”- no differences
A little more than half the group (17/29) declare that they see no such differences. In a third of these answers the participants emphasise that they see no differences when it comes to teenagers:

There are no differences there, because they are teenagers like all of us!

A couple of answers see no genuine differences, but depict distinctions created by the war:

I believe that the difference between Bosnjak and Croatian teenagers does not exist. Basically, we are all the same, only after the war there are some “constructed” differences.

Differences: from personality to habits
A total of eleven participants (11/29) see differences of various kinds between the groups. Most of them emphasise that these are small or less relevant differences. The types of differences seen by these participants range from differences in personality, orientation and opinions to differences in language and customs:

Croatian teenagers are a lot more arrogant and furious. They’re more hermetic when it comes to co-operation

… that we speak Bosnian, and have our own customs and habits like they do
Reconciliation

Assessing reconciliation in Mostar: how realistic and how desirable is it?

The Koraci Nade members were asked to assess reconciliation in Mostar in terms of how realistic and how desirable they consider it to be. Assessments were indicated on a three-point scale, ranging from “not at all” via “fairly” to “very”.

Results show that a high number of participants (63%) consider reconciliation very desirable. Considerably fewer (10%) regard it as very realistic. A one-sample t-test shows that this difference is significant ($t=25$, $df=27$, $p<0.001$; two-tailed).

Table 8:
How desirable/realistic do you consider reconciliation in Mostar to be?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Desirable (n) &amp; (%)</th>
<th>Realistic (n) &amp; (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>19 &amp; 63</td>
<td>3 &amp; 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly</td>
<td>8 &amp; 27</td>
<td>22 &amp; 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>1 &amp; 3</td>
<td>4 &amp; 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28 (30) &amp; 93 (100)</td>
<td>29 (30) &amp; 97 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What does reconciliation mean to you?

The Koraci Nade questionnaire included the question What does reconciliation mean to you? The intention was to map the meaning of reconciliation as it was defined in the Koraci Nade group. 29 out of 30 girls answered the question, most of them assigning more than one meaning to the term. Moreover, while the sub-categories below are mutually exclusive, the main categories are not; meaning an answer included in the category of “Relational focus” may also occur as “Explicitly positive”. A single participant, therefore, might occur in more than one category and the total number of answers below exceeds the number of answering participants.

A term with positive connotations
Two thirds (19/29) of the participants explicitly demonstrate positive attitudes towards the concept of reconciliation, including terms such as “desirable” and “something very important” in their definitions. About a quarter (7/29) do not explicitly value the concept, but give definitions that imply or vaguely express a positive attitude. A small minority (3/29) express negative attitudes or scepticism towards the concept.

Table 9:
Attitudes demonstrated towards the concept of reconciliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude towards the concept</th>
<th>POSITIVE</th>
<th>IMPLICITLY</th>
<th>N = 29</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPPLICITLY</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGATIVE EXPPLICITLY</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28
“Renewing friendships” - A relational perspective

The answers of most participants (23/29) include a relational focus. This focus is more or less explicit. The 23 “relational” answers refer to relations on different levels. One third of the participants primarily focus on relations on an individual, grassroots level:

… It is very important to have friends and sometimes forgive them if they make mistakes

Others primarily refer the relational aspects of reconciliation to an international or national level while finally some answers apply to more than one level:

Reconciliation for me means simply to introduce peace among people, to stop arguing, fighting war, having two shores – still, Mostar is one city – that we should not be divide – us here, and Croats on the other side

There are many kinds of reconciliation, like among children and parents, among friends, reconciliation among two or more peoples

Process or outcome?
The term “reconciliation” refers to a process as well as to the outcome of a (that) process. A majority (13/29) treat the concept as a process through which something (for example peace) is achieved:

It means stop fighting war in this way or the other, I mean stop arguing and so on.

A few answers define reconciliation as a state, that is the outcome of a process, while another minority give definitions of reconciliation as both a process and an outcome.

Table 10:
Reconciliation defined as a process or a state (outcome)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process or outcome?</th>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>OUTCOME / STATE</th>
<th>PROCESS AND OUTCOME / STATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forgive and forget?
A quarter of the participants (7/29) associate reconciliation with forgiving. These answers more or less directly equate the concepts:

Reconciliation is forgiving.

A total of four (4/29) definitions include the concept of forgetting. Two answers accentuate the distinction between forgiving and forgetting; two concern the difficulties of forgetting past atrocities and whether it is desirable to do so:

Reconciliation – when everything that happened is forgiven but doesn’t have to be forgotten. To forgive, but to remember so that it would not happen to us again in the future.
… it will not be easy since there are many hurt people that won’t and can’t forget it all. I also believe that it mustn’t be forgotten but we can’t live with hatred, at least I can’t and I don’t want to

Table 11: Definitions of reconciliation that include the concepts of forgiving and forgetting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forgive and forget?</th>
<th>RECONCILIATION MEANS FORGIVING</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RECONCILIATION RELATES TO FORGETTING</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FORGIVE BUT NOT FORGET</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“That we shall not be divided” – the current situation

Seven participants (7/29) give answers that directly refer to the current situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and/or Mostar. Some of these answers include concrete changes in the society as examples of reconciliation:

… when all of us get to be in one country

Koraci Nade: In what ways has it affected your life?

The last question in the Koraci Nade questionnaire concerned the impact of the organisation: In what ways has Koraci Nade affected your life? Bad things and good things? The intention was to investigate what the members perceive as the main influences of KN on their lives, positive as well as negative. All thirty (30/30) participants answered the question, most of them reporting more than one type of impact. Hence, the total number of answers below exceeds the number of participants.

100 % of the participants (30/30) state that Koraci Nade has had a good impact on their lives. Three participants offer no further explanation as to what this impact consists of. The others give the following reasons:

Table 12: The functions of Koraci Nade (number of answers in each category)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>(n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A social forum</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing psychosocial support</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving practical skills</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“An organisation that links people” – a social forum

Half the group (16/30) refer to the social functions of the organisation as having an impact on their lives. The local centres and the organised activities offer important opportunities to develop new friendships as well as socialise with the friends that one already knows. Three of these answers emphasise the importance of cross-ethnic contacts:

In Koraci Nade I have met many nice people and spent lots of good time with them … a place where I can relax and socialise.
Teenagers of all religions meet, and we are all having a good time. This is an organisation that links people.

“Relieved from stress” – getting psychosocial support
A slightly smaller portion of the group (14/30) mention the psychosocial support provided at the centres as something that affects their lives. These answers refer to psychosocial discussion groups as well as to informal support granted by individuals, by personnel as well as by peers:

What is most important, we have discussion groups. Women for psych-support talk to us about our problems. They teach us how to cope with them

“The knowledge we’ve got” – gaining practical and linguistic skills
Thirteen participants (13/30) give answers that include references to practical and linguistic courses offered at the centres. Many underscore the importance of these skills in their current life situations:

When it comes to courses we are offered, the knowledge we’ve got is very valuable, because when we finish chosen courses we’ll get diplomas that will enable us to get a job or open some private enterprises
Discussion

Ethnicity and ethnic identity

The high scorings on the MEIM indicate that ethnicity and ethnic identity are highly salient issues for the young in the Mostar area. A comparison with American studies\textsuperscript{105} shows that the participants of this study score significantly higher than European Americans as well as American ethnic minorities.\textsuperscript{106}

The participants in the study score considerably higher on factor 2 “Affirmation, Belonging and Commitment” than on factor 1 “Ethnic Identity Search”. This may be interpreted as high emotional attachment, but low exploration of and reflection on the issue of ethnicity and ethnic identity. A similar pattern arises in the results of the open-ended items regarding ethnicity. When asked what it means to them to be a member of their ethnic group, a large portion of the Koraci Nade group are unable or unwilling to present a personal meaning. The second largest category of answers to this question is composed of definitions based on emotional attachment (roughly equivalent to the content of MEIM factor 2). When asked about differences between teenagers of various ethnic groups, a little more than half the group declare to see no such differences. Of those that describe some kind of differences, many stress that these are small. Very few answers clearly demonstrate a reflective attitude.

Another difference between factor 1 and factor 2 concerns the influence of age. Whereas the hypothesis of a difference between age groups was confirmed for factor 2, no such relation was found between age and ethnic identity search. In other words, for the age group included, there seems to be no development in the exploration of ethnic identity. This result may be understood in several ways:

Firstly, factor 2 may be considered a measure of achieved ethnic identity, which is, according to identity formation theory, supposed to be the outcome of ethnic identity search. Following this theory, commitment without prior exploration, however, is indicative of the foreclosure status.\textsuperscript{107} From this point of view, the results of this study indicate that many of the young in Mostar have what Phinney terms an “unexamined ethnic identity”. Considering the ethnopolitical situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Mostar adolescent may very well be discouraged in the process of ethnic identity exploration; A lesson learnt by many during the war, is the inherent danger of cross-categorisation – in for example cross-ethnic marriages. Moreover, the current Bosnian society does not offer any “neutral” options to distinct ethnic commitment: as opposed to for example the US, there is no majority to which the individual may be assimilated. In this context, it is not too surprising that adolescents show no clear period of ethnic exploration.

Secondly, it must be taken into account that only a small minority of the subjects were younger than 16 years old. It is possible that a younger sample would have given different results, perhaps indicating that ethnic identity search takes place primarily in the younger teens. An alternative explanation for the low scorings on ethnic identity search, is the potential occurrence of ethnic exploration in even younger years (pre-adolescence). Growing

\textsuperscript{105} Roberts et al 1999
\textsuperscript{106} T-test comparison with European Americans: $t=10.88$, $df=840$, $p<0.001$; two-tailed. T-test comparison with African Americans: $t=6.2$, $df=1322$, $p<0.01$; two-tailed.
\textsuperscript{107} Phinney 1993
up in Bosnia during the 90s, one could argue, might very well trigger an early period of ethnic awareness and exploration. While this would have to be studied further, the results of the open-ended items do not support either of these theses.

Thirdly and finally, factor 2 may be regarded a measure of ethnic identity as defined by social identity theory, that is as an immediate result of social categorization with no obvious relation to identity search. According to this theory, ethnic identity forms an important part of the self-concept. In order to maintain a positive self-concept, the individual must therefore maintain or increase the value of his ethnic identity.\textsuperscript{108} One way to do this is to develop increasingly stronger pride in the ethnic group.\textsuperscript{109} From this point of view, the high scorings on factor 2 may indicate that the young Mostarians strengthen ethnic pride in order to maintain a positive self-concept in a context where few of them have good prospects for the future.\textsuperscript{110}

Ethnic identity is, in many ways, a result of historical and contextual factors. Refraining from too much questioning and developing stronger pride in and emotional attachment to ones ethnic group may not only be a way of coping with poor future prospects, but also a way of mastering a traumatic history and a complex current situation. From this perspective, the issue of ethnic identity is closely linked to the notion of reconciliation.

Reconciliation

The vast majority of the Koraci Nade group demonstrates clearly positive attitudes towards the concept of reconciliation. This is both shown in the open-ended item asking for personal definitions of the concept, and in the fixed-response items where the participants were asked to assess how desirable they consider reconciliation in Mostar. However, while 63 % of the group consider reconciliation “very desirable”, significantly fewer (10 %) assess it as “very realistic”. As many as 13 % do not consider it realistic at all.

When asked the question \textit{What does reconciliation mean to you?} as many as 29 of 30 deliver an answer. A large majority give answers that include a relational focus. Many of these answers include relational aspects on an inter-/personal everyday level, indicating that the concept is reflected, personal and integrated. The conclusion that can be drawn is that the participants have a personal relation to the concept of reconciliation.

About half the group define reconciliation as a process; only three participants define it as an outcome or a state. Accordingly, they see reconciliation as something that must be undertaken, something that will lead to a “better future”, “peace” or “having one city with both Croats and Bosnjaks”. The answers are unclear as regards what this process consists of. A minority relate the concept to forgiving and/or forgetting atrocities, but apart from this the girls offer no suggestions of how to operationalise the concept. Hence, although the participants deem reconciliation as important and seem to have a personal relation to the term, they seem to have a rather unclear picture as regards what constitutes the process of reconciliation. Here it must be added, however, that the question asked was phrased in a very open way (“What does reconciliation mean to you?”), and different results might emerge from a question more specifically aimed at the nature of the process.

\textsuperscript{108} Tajfel and Turner, 1979
\textsuperscript{109} Phinney 1990
\textsuperscript{110} Human Development Report 2002; Salomaa, in progress
According to Bar-Tal’s model\textsuperscript{111}, reconciliation requires a change of ethos. Among the things that need to be changed, are beliefs about the in-group and the adversary groups. The de-legitimisation and de-humanisation of the others must be reversed; and the self-glorifying must be replaced by a realistic and complex self-image. According to the contact hypothesis, changes in attitudes towards an out-group are best achieved by means of inter-group contact under certain circumstances.\textsuperscript{112} Among these conditions are equal status, inter-group cooperation, common goals and supportive norms. Research has shown that this kind of contact, when maintained over time as in for example cross-ethnic friendship, results in generalised lessened inter-group prejudice.\textsuperscript{113}

The Koraci Nade centres seem to constitute forums enabling cross-ethnic contacts on the conditions formulated by the contact hypothesis. When the participants are asked about the impact of Koraci Nade on their lives, one of three distinct themes that arise is the function of a social forum. Of those that mention this social aspect, a minority emphasise the possibility of cross-ethnic contacts. Results of the items concerning peer patterns show that Koraci Nade is the third most common place for making cross-ethnic acquaintances, while for acquaintances in general, it is ranked as number seven. A comparison between cross-ethnic peer patterns and peer patterns in general, shows a difference when it comes to private and public spheres: cross-ethnic friendships are to a greater extent made in public areas and less in private settings. Considering this result, it is interesting to see how the participants perceive the Koraci Nade centres. Results from the item regarding the impact of KN indicate that the girls feel at home at KN, see it as an alternative to coffee shops, and feel free to come there whenever they feel the need. Hence, a Koraci Nade centre seems to have the role of a semi-private, semi-public sphere.

However, the hypothesis that Koraci Nade participation would promote cross-ethnic friendships could not be confirmed. Demographic differences between the Koraci Nade group and the comparison group may interact with the result: While the entire comparison group lived in Mostar centre or suburbs, a large portion of the Koraci Nade group lived in rural areas.

Ethnic Identity, like cross-ethnic friendship, was hypothesised to increase with participation in Koraci Nade. This hypothesis, like the first, received no support. On the contrary, the comparison group scored higher on factor 2 “Affirmation, Belonging and Commitment”. This result might be explained by the age factor, considering the fact that a markedly larger portion of the comparison group was in the age 16 to 18 years old. A better match between groups, not only regarding age but also in ethnicity, residency and perhaps gender, would be required in order to test the hypothesis properly.

Another reason for the fact that no correlation between KN participation and cross-ethnic friendship was found might be that the local centres in practice reproduce the ethnic segregation in the area. The girls all attend centres in their local area and thus do not always meet members of other ethnic groups. This emphasises the importance of centrally arranged activities where members of different centres get together. In fact, several girls mention summer camps and “out-of-town-trips” as places where they got to know their cross-ethnic friends.

\textsuperscript{111} Bar-Tal 2000, 2001  
\textsuperscript{112} E g Dovidio et al 2003  
\textsuperscript{113} Pettigrew 1997; Lundwall 2001
Although the postulated hypotheses regarding the influence of Koraci Nade participation could not be confirmed, the results of the open-ended Koraci Nade item seem to show that the organisation is of great importance to the participants who perceive the centres as providing important social forums in their lives. The psychosocial support reported by many is indirectly linked to a process of reconciliation, on an individual level as well as on a community level. Furthermore, the practical skills the girls are getting are beneficial not only to the individual, but in the long run to the society as a whole. As such, organisation like the Koraci Nade can be supposed to enhance ethnic identity development as well as reconciliation on a broad level.

Summary and suggestions for future research

To sum up, results support the assumption that ethnic identity and reconciliation are issues of concern for the young girls in the Mostar area. For the Bosnian adolescents, these seem to be major tasks to solve. However, exploration of ethnic identity is demonstrated to a lesser extent than what was expected, which might indicate a context where such questioning is not encouraged. The results regarding reconciliation indicate that this is a concept upon which the girls have reflected and to which they can relate. Yet, the girls are rather vague as regards what constitutes the process of reconciliation. Participation in the Koraci Nade activities, finally, could not be proven to influence either ethnic identity or cross-ethnic friendships. However, the girls report that the organisation has a great impact on their lives in different ways and as such it can be assumed to have a promoting influence on reconciliation as well as ethnic identity processes in the long run.

Another assumption underlying this study was a connection between the concepts of reconciliation and ethnic identity. According to Marcia a well-developed identity structure provides the individual with a clear sense of what distinguishes him from or unites him with others. A less developed identity structure, on the other hand, leaves the individual without a clear sense of distinctiveness and he has to rely on external sources in order to maintain a sense of identity. A less developed and thus more rigid identity structure may result in a lower ability of open interaction with “the other”, in the ethnic case the other-ethnic individual. Following this line of thought, ethnic identity development is of great importance for the process of reconciliation. This connection was not studied in this study, but might be of interest to future researchers.

According to identity formation theory, an ethnic identity formation process is activated by some kind of exposure to ethnically relevant issues. In this study, it was assumed that friendship across ethnic boundaries would constitute such a trigger. However, no correlation was found between cross-ethnic friendships as measured by the CEF scale and ethnic identity. A possible explanation might be the fact that participants reported older friendships as well as newer acquaintances, older friendships no longer activating identity exploration. Thus, the study might have benefited from further development of the CEF measure, including time aspects as well as various qualitative assessments. It is also possible that the Bosnian context is so full of ethnically triggering components that cross-ethnic friendship is of relatively small importance. This aspect, too, might be of interest in future research.

Finally, a theme that might be studied in the future emerges in the answers to the question regarding differences between ethnic groups. A portion of the participants stress that they see

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114 Marcia 1980
no differences when it comes to teenagers. This can be interpreted as a different kind of moratorium: While the girls might feel that as adults they will have to stick to a static ethnicity, they feel free to cross boundaries as long as they are still young. Another, and perhaps more hopeful, way to see it is that they perceive the younger generation as different from the older, challenging the ethnic categorisation of the older. Research on this topic might be of interest not only from the perspective of ethnic identity, but also from the standpoint of reconciliation research and facilitation.