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Peace Building in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Effects of Ingroup Identification, Outgroup Trust and Intergroup Forgiveness on Intergroup Contact

Abstract

The current study examines the effects of ingroup identification, outgroup trust, and intergroup forgiveness on intergroup contact quantity in the diverse cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A total of 455 individuals ranging in age from 14 to 102 self-reported as either Muslim, Roman Catholic, Orthodox Christian, or Other completed a questionnaire. Analyses revealed that ingroup identification was significantly and negatively correlated with intergroup contact quantity; however, ingroup identification was not significantly correlated with outgroup trust or intergroup forgiveness. The comparison between groups revealed significant group differences across all predictor and criterion variables. To confirm whether age or community background had a moderating effect on predicting the relation between ingroup identification, outgroup trust, and intergroup forgiveness on intergroup contact quantity, moderated regression analyses were conducted. Results revealed community background, ingroup identification, and outgroup trust were all significant contributors to the model; however, age and forgiveness were not. Taken as a whole, the entire model accounted for approximately 21% of variability in intergroup contact quantity. The results from the current study reinforce the supposition that the two cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla in Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot move towards reconciliation without first understanding the effect that strong ingroup identification has on mixing with the other diverse groups, and implementing proactive measures to enhance outgroup trust and cross-community outreach. Implementing these measures in the two cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla, along with other areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina, may improve future intergroup relations and move the country closer to reconciliation and peace.

Keywords: *Ingroup Identification, Outgroup Trust, Intergroup Forgiveness, Intergroup Contact*

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Dr. Gül Aldıkaçtı Marshall is an Associate Professor and the Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Sociology at University of Louisville. Her current research focuses on the dynamics of the relationship between feminist grass-roots activism, the state, and supranational bodies. It highlights the significance of transnational feminist activism in influencing gender policies both at national and supranational levels. She is the author of *Shaping Gender Policy in Turkey: Grassroots Women Activists, the European Union, and the Turkish State* (SUNY Press). Other publications examine secular and Islamist women's movements, volunteerism, domestic violence, and media coverage of gender policies.

Peace Building in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Effects of Ingroup Identification, Outgroup Trust and Forgiveness on Intergroup Contact

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Bosnia and Herzegovina is a young country still in the process of rebuilding itself after a period of violent conflict. Politically, it has transitioned from Socialist Yugoslavia to an internationally recognized, democratic state. During this transitional period, the country found itself deeply entrenched in war from 1992-95, which was often presented to the international community as the culmination of “ancient ethnic and religious hatreds” in the region ([Carmichael, 2006](#); [Love, 2011](#)). The depiction established by the media between ethnicity and religion during and after the war made the terms appear to be interchangeable, and that religious affiliation was the key distinguishing factor between the ethnic groups. While the depiction is partially correct, it is also problematic. This depiction may lead people to conclude that it was mainly a religiously-motivated conflict. However, ethnicity is a complex construct with the potential to motivate diverse groups to conflict ([Costalli & Moro, 2012](#)). Thus, the current study seeks to better understand the present-day intergroup relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, specifically, in the diverse cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla.

Conflicts between groups, particularly in new states, were very common throughout the 20th century ([Wimmer & Min, 2006](#)). More than half of all wars that occurred post 1945 are attributed to ethnic conflict ([Sambanis & Shayo 2013](#)). [Brubaker \(2004\)](#) suggests that “ethnic conflict” is more accurately described as “ethnicized or ethnically framed conflict” and contends that it should not be viewed “as conflict between ethnic groups” (p. 9). While the participants may be members of a particular ethnicity, he argues that groups are evoked by ethno-political entrepreneurs and exist for the purpose of achieving certain actions.

[Brubaker \(2004\)](#) proposes that groups participating in ethnically framed conflict to be studied by the processes of their reification (political, social, cultural, and psychological construction) rather than as de facto entities. The groups themselves need to be regarded not as stable categories but as fluid ones that are redefined through interactions with other groups as well as social pressures. Furthermore, the process of establishing group solidarity and cohesion amid such variable circumstances is vitally important to understanding the group because only

once a high level of groupness has been established can those groups be mobilized. This usually requires the manipulation of categories as a foundation for group formation. Within social categories there are rules for membership and there are characteristics which are expected of its members, but the categories themselves are equally unstable and fluid ([Fearon & Laitin, 2000](#); [Brubaker, 2009](#); [Dyrstad, 2012](#)).

In fact, it is violence that helps increase levels of groupness, meaning groupness can be a result of conflict rather than its cause. The groups themselves are not the propagators of conflict; organizations, which may be viewed as acting on behalf of a group, are the true protagonists ([Brubaker, 2004](#)). In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the organizations were the political parties in power that branded themselves by their ethnic identity ([Fearon & Laitin, 2000](#)). Political elites contributed to inter-ethnic intolerance by manipulating media images ([Sekulić, Massey, & Hodson, 2006](#)). Sekulić and colleagues state political elites also used ethnicity to invoke groupness most often when political disagreements occurred between extremists and moderates within the same ethnic group. Therefore, it can be inferred that violence is then used as a strategy to garner more support for extremists, with a well-known example being former President Milosevic on behalf of the Serbs.

[Brubaker \(2004\)](#) suggests that the violence in the former Yugoslavia “may have as much or more to do with thuggery, warlordship, opportunistic looting and black-market profiteering than with ethnicity” (p. 19). This implies the idea of Weber’s status groups ([Barnes, 1992](#); [Stone, 2003](#); [Sambanis & Shayo, 2013](#)), where a group uses an easily identifiable characteristic of another group – such as language or religion – as a pretext for their exclusion, in order to profit from the redistribution of those goods and opportunities the other(s) are now excluded from accessing. The status group itself must have its own way of life that is different from the other group but common among its own group members. Weber (1947; 1961) also stressed that status groups place restrictions on interactions with members of other groups. The current study seeks to determine if the groups in Sarajevo and Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina are still behaving as status groups, emphasizing religion as the characteristic for exclusion and discouraging its members from interacting with the other groups.

Weber (1947; 1961) stresses that an ethnic group does not constitute a community; rather, it merely facilitates other types of communal relationships. This is key to understanding how religion has functioned in these conflicts. An important interpretation of Weber noted by Stone

(1995; 2003) is that belonging to a particular ethnicity is a resource that may be utilized by a political community in order to facilitate the creation of a group identity on the basis of ethnicity. Calhoun (1993) cites the example of the former Yugoslavia and the policy of ethnic cleansing as an example of ethnic identity shaping political action. He maintains the creation of nationalism from ethnicity merely requires the addition of a historical narrative to existing traditions, which are then utilized by the political community for mobilization.

Brubaker (2004; 2009) also points out the cognitive dimension of ethnicity, in that it exists as a perspective; specifically, that it comes with a frame of reference which includes specific narratives and implicit categorizations. For this reason, it is important to study how events are framed because that will influence how they will become part of the group narrative and how future events should be interpreted, usually increasing the level of groupness. Here it is important to note that, due to its nature, a high level of groupness does not sustain itself but tends to decline in a process of what Weber and Heydebrand (1994) called “routinization,” where everyday interests become the priority once again. Arguably, the current study seeks to measure the level of groupness in the cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla based on a particularly salient category that was used to develop groupness during the Bosnian conflict: religion. Continuing to emphasize one’s religious community would be indicative of ongoing collective action to maintain group boundaries to some extent.

The consideration of the political use of religion rather than religion itself as the cause of the war has been urged by Love (2011) in her analysis of the situation in former Yugoslavia. She argues that the political leaders sought to recreate their images as nationalists in order to advance their political careers, and religion was incorporated into this new image in order to appeal to, and subsequently mobilize, their group. She explains that religious identity is often used to spread a conflict because it is easier to target than the underlying economic or political factors, which are the true cause(s) of unrest and wholly non-religious. The use of religious affiliation as the marker of group identity can also be found in Northern Ireland, where groups were distinguished based on religion, yet the causes of the conflict were not in theology but in the underlying political motivations that accompanied the interests of each group (Tam et al., 2008).

Ingroup Identification

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has many commonalities with the conflict in Northern Ireland. While primordialist perspectives suggest that groups are in conflict due to cultural differences assumed to be fixed and vital to the group's identity, McGarry and O'Leary (1995) found little support for this idea. Rather, their study found that people in Northern Ireland believe that the cause of violence is found in political sources more so than in religious differences. Once again, while religion may be the characteristic used to differentiate groups, it is necessary to understand through empirical research whether these conflicts are about religion or religious differences, or more significantly about how ingroup identification impacts whether or not the groups interact with one another.

Ingroup identification was structured into Bosnia and Herzegovina's post-war society with the writings of the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995), also referred to as The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main political leaders of the country were invited to Dayton, Ohio, to negotiate on the territory that would form the sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina. The result is a government where the ethnic divides are recognized and subsequently institutionalized, as outlined in the Constitution with the statement "Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs as constituent peoples (along with Others)" (Dayton Peace Agreement). One scholar noted that, "[I]t is observable that the concept of 'constituent peoples' containing exclusive connotation of 'non-constituent,' *per se*, constitute discriminatory treatment against those who are 'non-constituent,' and/or 'others,' citizens" (Seizovic, 2014a, pp. 20-21).

The country was divided into two entities, a Serb Republic (Republika Srpska) and the Federation, as well as an independent Brcko District. Each entity essentially has its own government, controls its own taxation policies, determines its own education standards, and has the political power to engage in foreign affairs on its own accord ([Rogan, 2000](#); [McMahon & Western, 2009](#); [Weidmann, 2011](#)). Politically, the citizens are encouraged to maintain their group identity rather than to move past wartime divisions and view themselves as sharing a common ingroup identity with their neighbors, such as the Bosnians and Herzegovinians. These tendencies have been found to be obstructive to reconciliation efforts in other post-conflict societies such as Chile and Northern Ireland (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, Manzi, & Lewis, 2008); and, it may be creating an additional obstacle for society in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well. According to Majstorović and Turjačanin (2013), the ethnic distance that has been encouraged

by the elite for political purposes during post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina is associated with high levels of psychological and social distance, meaning it does not aid in the improvement of intergroup relations since it discourages contact between the groups.

Intergroup Contact Quantity

Intergroup contact is often a successful method by which intergroup relations may be improved. The Contact Hypothesis proposed by [Allport \(1954\)](#) states that relations between groups improve if group members engage in contact where members are perceived as having equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and the support of authorities or customs. Allport theorized that when these criteria were met, it would result in better relationships between the groups. Pettigrew (1998) expanded upon Allport's findings and added that the contact must have "friendship potential." He argues that this would improve certain effects, such as learning about the outgroup, behavior modification as a result of contact, the building of affective emotions through continued contact, and gaining deeper insight into your own ingroup. [Pettigrew \(1998\)](#) stresses that cross-sectional analysis of contact is inadequate, time for cross-group friendships to develop is essential, and, while repeated contact is preferable, the quality of the contact is highly important in determining the success of the experience.

A similar finding was presented by Cehajic, Brown, and [Castano \(2008\)](#), who conducted research in Sarajevo that utilized a sample of university students. They concluded that intergroup contact needed to be of good quality in order to have a positive effect but it must also be frequent. Contact quantity was also stressed in other intergroup studies, such as one in Britain by Brown, Eller, Leeds, and Stace (2007). They reported that, by itself, quality of contact had no significant effects on attitudes toward the outgroup, but regular and frequent contact was necessary; and quality of contact was insufficient in positively changing attitudes toward an outgroup unless it occurred frequently. The study also echoed Pettigrew's (1998) findings in that the effects of contact were more positive when the contact with one member of the outgroup was successfully generalized to the entire outgroup. He states there are three strategies to enhance generalization: decategorization, salient group categorization, and recategorization.

During intractable conflict, intergroup contact is hard to achieve because underlining group differences become part of a sociopsychological infrastructure that creates a sense of justness of one's own group goals and even superiority over the other group ([Bar Tal, 2007](#)). However, despite Bar Tal's finding, intergroup contact may be vital because it has been shown to

rebuild trust. Continuous and consistent positive interactions and behaviors when in contact with the other group are critical to promoting and sustaining trust between diverse groups ([Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, & Cairns, 2009](#)) because it can help alter expectations about behaviors exhibited by both groups ([Moy & Ng, 1996](#)).

Outgroup Trust

Trust is the psychosocial factor that allows individuals to interact with one another without any perception of imminent threat but an expectation of cooperation without exploitation ([Tam et al., 2009](#)). Their study found that a higher frequency of contact with an outgroup is correlated with higher trust of that group. By its nature, trust is necessary for reconciliation because it allows for positive intergroup relations ([Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008](#); [Tam et al., 2009](#)). However, Tam and colleagues report establishing trust can be especially difficult in an atmosphere of conflict.

Furthermore, it has been reported that lasting peace requires the establishment of social trust and actions that foster reconciliation ([Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005](#); [Hoogenboom & Vieille, 2009](#)). Social trust is defined as the expectation that others will not cause us deliberate harm and will even consider our best interests ([Delhey & Newton, 2005](#)). Overall, inter-group social trust is low in Bosnia and Herzegovina ([Whitt, 2010](#); [O'Loughlin, 2010](#)). O'Loughlin's postwar study reveals that existence or lack of trust is a significant factor in the establishment of inter-ethnic friendships. According to [Whitt \(2010\)](#), Bosnia and Herzegovina has the least amount of interpersonal trust in Europe with a decline of almost 15 percent from a survey period incorporating 1996-1998 and 1999-2001. This suggests that even in the absence of physical conflict, the citizens are having difficulty rebuilding trust. Whitt's research also indicates that personal experiences during the war did not have any effect on undermining inter-ethnic trust. Of the study participants, 91.7 percent believed that caution should be exercised in interactions, a belief that did not have any attachment to specific ethnic labels. The data showed that in every ethnic group, ingroup trust was higher than outgroup trust. Any significant differentiations were not attributed to a particular ethnic group but rather to the individual's location and corresponding population homogeneity. For example, Serbs living outside the homogenous Republika Srpska were found to have higher levels of outgroup trust than Serbs living within the Republika Srpska, and the same was found among Croats living in Siroki Brijeg as compared to Croats living elsewhere. A possible explanation for this finding is that people learn to internalize the norms

found within their particular community, meaning people living in homogeneous surroundings maintain their distance ([Kunovich & Hodson, 2002](#)).

Intergroup Forgiveness

The particular effect of outgroup trust which concerns the current study is its relationship to intergroup forgiveness. Intergroup forgiveness has been described as a way to help groups in conflict put the past behind them and to facilitate both public and private healing (Leonard, Yung, & Cairns, 2015; Shriver & Shriver, 2008). Forgiveness is a psychosocial factor in sustainable reconciliation efforts because the goal of forgiveness is the restoration of relationships ([Cehajic et al., 2008](#)). Often, when in conflict, it is not so much the strength of one's religiosity but the strength of one's ties to their community that predicts forgiveness (Leonard et al., 2015).

The expectation that reconciliation will naturally occur in the absence of violence has been reported to be incorrect ([Myers, Hewstone, & Cairns, 2009](#)). The example of Northern Ireland applies once again, in that Myers and colleagues found that the signing of the Belfast Agreement itself was insufficient in achieving reconciliation because forgiveness was identified as an essential variable for successful reconciliation and the improvement of intergroup relations. They recommend that reconciliation initiatives should aim to promote intergroup forgiveness without placing excess emphasis on past transgressions, which may threaten individuals' group identities.

Therefore, the same could not be expected by the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995) for Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly with the previously discussed maintenance of ethnic categories. While trust is positively associated with forgiveness, ingroup identification has a negative relationship with forgiveness because it may be viewed as an act of disloyalty toward the group ([Cehajic et al., 2008](#)). Yet, according to the Reconciliation Orientation Model (Noor et al., 2008), intergroup forgiveness is the key precursor for reconciliation. Cehajic and colleagues reported a negative correlation between the strength of an individual's ingroup identity with intergroup forgiveness. They suggest the unwillingness to forgive is either a way of protecting the group from further injustice, or it is opposed because it is associated with forgetting the past. Indeed, every July 11th in Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina marks the anniversary of the genocide of an estimated 8,000 Bosniak men (Kerry, 2014). Recent variations in public discourse have seen the usage of the slogan "never forgive, never forget" shift to the

usage of alternative slogans such as “never forget, never repeat,” or simply “never forget” because it is important that people remember and know the truth. It may be that only once the complete truth from all perspectives is known, no matter how painful, can those in Sarajevo and Tuzla move closer to reconciliation.

The Current Study

The current study aims to add to the growing body of research on reconciliation in post-war society after a domestic conflict, specifically in the cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla in Bosnia and Herzegovina. People are aware of the need for reconciliation, particularly the youth. In a qualitative study conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, young adults reported they were more concerned with building relationships between groups rather than learning about the factual events from the past (Magill & Hamber, 2011). Relationships naturally require contact but there are a variety of factors that influence what occurs when groups come together. Through the analysis of survey responses collected from Sarajevo and Tuzla in 2014, nearly 20 years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995), this study seeks to better understand the effects of ingroup identification, outgroup trust, and intergroup forgiveness on intergroup contact quantity. Specifically, the following relationships are expected: (1) negative correlations will exist between ingroup identification and outgroup trust, intergroup forgiveness, and intergroup contact; and (2) positive correlations will exist between outgroup trust, intergroup forgiveness, and intergroup contact.

In addition to these correlations, it is hypothesized that community background will have a moderating effect on the relationship between ingroup identification, outgroup trust, and intergroup forgiveness on intergroup contact quantity, because the importance of staying loyal to one’s group has been reported to reduce contact with the outgroup. Furthermore, due to differences in war experiences between those born immediately preceding, and after, the conflict, and those who lived through the violent conflict, age is hypothesized to also have a significant moderating effect on these relationships.

Methods

Recruitment

The principal investigator (first author) received study approval from the University of Louisville’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to subject recruitment. Individuals ranging in age from 14 to 102 with a self-reported community background (based on religion) of either

Muslim, Roman Catholic, Orthodox Christian, and Other were recruited from the two cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla. Two non-governmental organizations administered the surveys: Transitional Justice Association in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, and Snaga Zene (Power of Women), Tuzla. To ensure adequate power in our sample size, an a priori power analysis using an alpha of .05, an effect size d of .5, and a total sample size of 504 (42 in each of the categories of age and community background) revealed a power of .9862 to find a large effect (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). A total of 49 surveys were eliminated from analyses because they did not contain responses to the questions relevant to this study (e.g., community background, ingroup identification, outgroup trust, or intergroup forgiveness). **Table 1** represents the demographic breakdown by community background of the final sample size of $N = 455$.

Table 1
Demographics by Community Background

Variables	Community Background			
	Muslim ($n = 307$)	Roman Catholic ($n = 93$)	Orthodox Christian ($n = 41$)	Other ($n = 13$)
Age:				
Adolescents	17	13	2	1
Emerging Adults	80	33	20	4
Adults	171	30	15	9
Elderly	23	9	6	3
Gender:				
Male	118	37	21	4
Female	172	51	19	8
Birthplace:				
Bosnia and Herzegovina	281	75	31	12
Croatia	4	9	2	1
Serbia	10	1	6	0
Other	6	6	2	0
Nationality:				
Bosniak	286	1	4	3
Croat	1	83	1	3
Serb	2	5	36	4
Other	14	3	0	3
Neighborhood:				
Mixed	148	59	25	11
Mainly Catholic	1	9	0	0
Mainly Orthodox	3	0	9	1
Mainly Muslim	150	23	7	1

Data Collection Procedure

An IRB-approved preamble in the Bosnian language and signed by the principal investigators was distributed to each person prior to survey completion in early 2014. The preamble explained the study was about cross-community involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that participation was completely voluntary and confidential. Upon individual agreement to participate, respondents from Sarajevo and Tuzla were provided with a copy of the survey completion instructions and the survey, both in the Bosnian language. Surveys were completed in a private setting. Survey completion lasted approximately 20 minutes. Research personnel collected the completed survey and provided a short debriefing to each respondent. Although respondents were thanked for their participation, they were not compensated.

Measures

The measures selected for the survey instrument consisted of the following predictor and criterion variables.

Predictor Variables.

Ingroup identification was measured using the 5-item group identification scale (adapted from [Brown, Condor, Mathews, Wade, & Williams, 1986](#); [Myers et al., 2009](#)). Instructions preceding the statements were, "Thinking about the religious community that you belong to, please answer the following questions." Respondents were asked to rate themselves on a 5-point Likert-type scale as an individual who: (1) "considers your community important," (2) "identifies with your community," (3) "feels strong ties with your community," (4) "is glad to belong to your community," and (5) "sees yourself as belonging to your community." Scores were averaged to yield an ingroup identification index, with higher scores denoting higher in group identification.

Outgroup trust was assessed using a 4-item outgroup trust scale (adapted from [Cehajic et al., 2008](#)). Respondents were asked to rate each of the following statements on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree): (1) "The other communities cannot be trusted to deliver on their promises" (R), (2) "I believe the other communities can be trusted on their promises," (3) "Despite the events that occurred during the war, I trust the other communities" (R), and (4) "I believe my community cannot trust the other communities after everything they have done during the war." Items marked (R) indicate reverse scoring. Responses were averaged to form an outgroup trust index; higher scores denoted greater outgroup trust.

Intergroup forgiveness was measured using a 7-item intergroup forgiveness scale (adapted from Moeschberger, Dixon, Niens, & Cairns, 2005) with ratings ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The scale included the statements: (1) “Forgiving the other communities for past wrongs would be disloyal to my community” (R), (2) “My community can only forgive members of the other communities when they have apologized for past violence,” (3) “It is important that my community never forgets the wrongs done to us by the other communities” (R), (4) “Only when the three communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina learn to forgive each other can we be free of sectarian/political violence,” (5) “It is important that my community never forgives the wrongs done to us by the other communities” (R), (6) “My community should, as a group, seek forgiveness from the other communities for past violent actions,” and (7) “My community has remained strong precisely because it has never forgiven past wrongs committed by the other communities” (R). Items marked (R) indicate reverse scoring. Scores were averaged to yield an intergroup forgiveness index with higher scores denoting higher intergroup forgiveness.

Criterion Variable.

Intergroup contact quantity was measured using a 3-item scale (Hewstone, Cairns, Voci, Hamberger, & Niens, 2006). The first item asked: “About how many of your friends are from the other religious community?” Respondents were asked to answer using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (none at all) to 4 (more than ten). The other two items were: “How often do you visit the homes of friends who are from the other religious community?” and “How often do these friends visit your home?” Ratings ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (every day). Scores for the three items were summed and averaged to yield an overall intergroup contact quantity index. A higher score denoted greater intergroup contact.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses included Cronbach’s alphas to determine scale reliability on all the predictor and criterion variables. Cronbach’s alphas ranged from .61 (acceptable) to .97 (excellent): ingroup identification index = .76, outgroup trust = .73, intergroup forgiveness = .61, and intergroup contact quantity = .97. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

Pearson product-moment correlations (**Table 2**) were conducted to determine correlations between variables. The data revealed that ingroup identification was significantly and negatively

correlated with intergroup contact quantity, as predicted. However, contrary to the hypothesis, ingroup identification was not significantly correlated with outgroup trust or intergroup forgiveness. These results are surprising because ingroup identification has been reported to suppress forgiveness since it would be considered as an act of disloyalty to the group (Cehajic et al., 2008) and ingroup identification is what determines contact, which influences trust (Tam et al., 2009).

Table 2

Summary of Intercorrelations between Predictor and Criterion Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Ingroup Identification	--	.004	.031	-.163**
2. Outgroup Trust		--	.507**	.314**
3. Intergroup Forgiveness			--	.253**
4. Intergroup Contact Quantity				--

** $p < .01$.

Additionally, a one-way MANOVA (**Table 3**) was conducted to compare whether group differences existed independently across community background (Muslim, Roman Catholic, Orthodox Christian, and Other) in the psychosocial elements of ingroup identification, outgroup trust, intergroup forgiveness, and intergroup contact quantity.

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and Group Differences Between Community Background

Variable		<i>N</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>F(df)</i>	<i>p</i>
Ingroup Identification	Muslim	245	3.97 (.56)	5.57 (3, 353)	< .001***
	Roman Catholic	73	3.86 (.60)		
	Orthodox Christian	30	3.72 (.54)		
	Other	9	3.91 (.57)		
Outgroup Trust	Muslim	300	3.12 (.82)	5.78 (3, 439)	< .001***
	Roman Catholic	91	3.28 (.74)		
	Orthodox Christian	39	3.56 (.85)		
	Other	13	3.75 (.80)		
Intergroup Forgiveness	Muslim	286	3.25 (.61)	14.37 (3, 416)	< .001***
	Roman Catholic	85	3.64 (.44)		
	Orthodox Christian	37	3.59 (.45)		
	Other	12	3.74 (.49)		
Intergroup Contact Quantity	Muslim	297	2.43 (1.18)	15.08 (3, 434)	< .001***
	Roman Catholic	89	3.17 (1.13)		
	Orthodox Christian	39	3.31 (1.33)		
	Other	13	2.69 (1.23)		

Note. Scores on all variables ranged from 1 to 5 with higher scores denoting greater Ingroup Identification, Outgroup Trust, Intergroup Forgiveness, and Intergroup Contact Quantity.

*** $p < .001$.

The data revealed that ingroup identification was significantly and negatively correlated with intergroup contact quantity, as predicted. However, contrary to the hypothesis, ingroup identification was not significantly correlated with outgroup trust or intergroup forgiveness. These results are surprising because ingroup identification has been reported to suppress forgiveness since it would be considered as an act of disloyalty to the group (Cehajic et al., 2008) and ingroup identification is what determines contact, which influences trust (Tam et al., 2009). Additionally, the data supports existing literature that reports outgroup trust, intergroup forgiveness, and intergroup contact quantity are all positively and significantly correlated to each other. Furthermore, **Table 3** represents the comparison between groups based on community background, with significant group differences emerging across all predictor and criterion variables.

Additional post hoc analyses were performed using the Scheffe's method to identify exactly where these group differences exist. The Scheffe' test is customarily used with unequal sample sizes to determine where the differences lie when conducting multiple comparisons (Scheffe', 1999). The following significant differences emerged: outgroup trust between the Muslim and Orthodox communities ($MD = -.43, SE = .14, p < .05$), intergroup forgiveness between Muslim and Orthodox communities ($MD = -.33, SE = .10, p < .01$) as well as between the Muslims and Catholics ($MD = -.39, SE = .07, p < .001$), and contact quantity between the Muslim and Orthodox communities ($MD = -.87, SE = .20, p < .001$) as well as between Muslim and Catholic communities ($MD = -.74, SE = .14, p < .001$). No significant differences were revealed between the Orthodox and Catholic communities.

Moderated Regression Analyses

To confirm whether age or community background had a moderating effect on the relationship between ingroup identification, outgroup trust, and intergroup forgiveness on intergroup contact quantity, moderated regression analyses were conducted. Prior to analyses, predictor variables were centered to reduce multicollinearity among predictor variables (Aiken & West, 1991). Dummy codes were created for the four levels of community background (Muslim, Roman Catholic, Orthodox Christian, and Other) and the four levels of age (adolescents, emerging adults, adults, and elderly).

The criterion variable (DV: intergroup contact quantity) and all predictor variables (IVs: ingroup identification, outgroup trust, intergroup forgiveness, age, and community background)

were entered in Block 1 and accounted for significant variance, $R^2 = .199$, $F(5, 328) = 16.27$, $p < .001$. Specifically, inspection of the coefficients revealed that intergroup contact quantity was associated negatively with ingroup identification, $beta = -.143$, $t = -2.822$, $p < .01$, associated positively with outgroup trust, $beta = .311$, $t = 5.307$, $p < .001$, and associated positively with community background, $beta = .177$, $t = 3.327$, $p < .001$. Contrary to our prediction, intergroup forgiveness was not significantly correlated, $beta = .049$, $t = .833$, $p > .05$, nor was age, $beta = .088$, $t = 1.747$, $p > .05$.

Post-hoc investigation included a step-wise regression analysis to determine possible interactions. The criterion variable (DV: intergroup contact quantity) and the significant predictor variables from the previous regression analysis (IVs: ingroup identification, outgroup trust, and community background) were entered in Block 1 and accounted for significant variance, $R^2 = .190$, $F(3, 339) = 26.57$, $p < .001$. A series of possible interactions were then entered in Block 2, as reported in **Table 4**. Although adding the interaction terms did not result in a significant effect on the model, $R^2 = .208$, $F(7, 332) = 1.07$, $p > .05$, the interaction between centered ingroup identification and Catholic community background was significant, $beta = -.329$, $t = -2.02$, $p = .044$, suggesting that community background moderated the relation between ingroup identification and intergroup contact quantity at the Catholic level only. No other interaction effects were significant. Taken as a whole, the entire model accounted for approximately 21% of variability in intergroup contact quantity (**Table 4**).

Table 4

Moderated Regression Analyses Output

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>R</i>	R^2	<i>Adj R²</i>	<i>SEest</i>	R^2 Change	<i>F</i> Change	<i>Sig. F</i> Change
(Constant)	1.963	0.258		7.601	0.000							
Ingroup Identification**	-0.300	0.106	-0.143	-2.822	0.005							
Outgroup Trust**	0.446	0.084	0.311	5.307	0.000							
Intergroup Forgiveness	0.103	0.123	0.049	0.833	0.405							
Community Background**	0.279	0.084	0.177	3.327	0.001							
Age Group	1.141	0.081	0.088	1.747	0.082							
Model 1: IVs and DV**						0.446	0.199	0.187	1.080	0.199	16.269	0.000
Model 2: II x CB Muslim interaction term	-0.995	0.702	-0.381	-1.417	0.157							
Model 2: II x CB Catholic interaction term*	-1.452	0.719	-0.329	-2.020	0.044							
Model 2: II x CB Orthodox interaction term	-1.290	0.741	-0.179	-1.742	0.082							
Model 2: OT x CB Muslim interaction term	-0.127	0.573	-0.073	-0.222	0.825							
Model 2: OT x CB Catholic interaction term	-0.044	0.593	-0.012	-0.075	0.941							
Model 2: OT x CB Orthodox interaction term	-0.152	0.605	-0.037	-0.252	0.801							
Model 2: II x OT interaction term	-0.020	0.121	-0.009	-0.162	0.871							

Note. Ingroup Identification (II) and Outgroup Trust (OT) were centered at their means. Age Group and Community Background (CB) were dummy coded. Intergroup Contact Quantity was entered as the dependent variables and all independent variables were entered in Block 1. All interaction terms were entered in Block 2.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Discussion

While not generalizable to the country overall, the survey data provides a starting point for discussing current psychosocial elements of peacebuilding and reconciliation that impact intergroup contact in the cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla in Bosnia and Herzegovina. From the study data, it is evident that ingroup identification is generally strong for each community. This reflects a strong tendency for those living in these two cities to identify with their group on the basis of their religious community. This also suggests that the level of groupness continues to be maintained nearly 20 years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995). It is possible that the new framework for the society, as outlined in the Dayton Peace Agreement, influenced groupness by specifically mentioning it in the document, thereby not only encouraging but also requiring group identification based on ethnicity to continue. The redrawing of the territory affected the distribution of the population by accepting newly ethnically homogenous areas and simultaneously giving those territories enough political power to function somewhat independently within the state. This may have affected the relationships between the people as well, encouraging the opinion that the groups can maintain a distance from each other yet still function without requiring cooperation or interdependence. In terms of routinization, it is possible that the new society, and the relations its structure encouraged, have resulted in groupness itself being routinized, and that may be why there is a discrepancy between what was expected and what the data reflects.

Of the respondents, the majority reported living in mixed neighborhoods across each community background (**Table 1**). This is a hopeful sign, indicative of a willingness to live alongside each other in Sarajevo and Tuzla. However, nearly one-half of the Muslim respondents reported living in a homogenous neighborhood implying the existence of an underlying desire to live amongst their own group. Living in close proximity to members of one's own group may provide a sense of security that aids in reducing fear and anxiety. According to [Pettigrew & Tropp \(2006\)](#), intergroup contact avoidance is primarily caused by intergroup anxiety. Homogenous living situations decrease opportunities for intergroup contact for both young and old and ultimately perpetuate the conflict by contributing to the physical, social, and emotional separation of the communities (Leonard et al., 2015).

A strong identification with an individual's ingroup does not have to result in such deliberate distancing. This has already been demonstrated by the amount of respondents living

in mixed neighborhoods. In other research findings specific to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cehajic and colleagues (2008) found that the common ingroup of Bosnians largely overlapped with the subgroup of Bosniaks, which resulted in a positive correlation between the two levels of identification. Specifically, the authors showed that only a relative common ingroup identification, over and above the subgroup identification, could effectively promote intergroup forgiveness and decrease the social distance between groups. Regardless of these findings, *our hypothesis was supported in that ingroup identification was significantly and negatively correlated with intergroup contact quantity, meaning stronger ingroup identification would result in lower intergroup contact quantity.*

The data revealed that group differences exist in regard to trust, forgiveness and contact quantity, particularly between the Muslims and the other communities. There was a significant negative group difference between the Muslim and Orthodox communities in regard to trust. Forgiveness and contact quantity were also significant and negative between the Muslims and the Catholics, as well as the Orthodox communities. Lingering tensions between the Muslim and Orthodox communities may be explained by Serb aggression during the conflict, particularly in Sarajevo where Serbian forces held the city under siege for years. No significant differences existed between the Catholics and Orthodox communities on any of the variables—perhaps due to the fact that the cities surveyed experienced less conflict between the Catholics and Orthodox members, since most aggression was targeted toward the Muslims. This may explain the attitude of the Muslim community toward interacting with the others, as reported just above.

It may also be a matter of being able to find similarities with the other group. Religion innately bonds its members through shared traditions and beliefs, which may be why it is sometimes used to mobilize groups as previously described. While Muslims come from an Islamic background, the Catholics and Orthodox members are both Christian traditions, meaning those groups may be able to find common ground and likeness more easily. These group differences may eventually manifest themselves into noticeable tension. This is troubling because the data demonstrates the largest represented group in the country is having difficult interactions with the other communities on psychosocial variables that have been identified as crucial in moving toward peace and reconciliation. Without addressing these obstacles, it is difficult to imagine how these diverse communities will peacefully coexist in the long term, and hard to fathom if the society will be able to prosper.

Based on the moderated regression analyses, it is clear that community background is a significant moderator in the relationship between ingroup identification and outgroup trust on intergroup contact quantity, but only for the Catholic community. A possible explanation may be that the Catholic community within these two cities feels a need to maintain its boundaries because of its minority status within Bosnia and Herzegovina, accounting for 14.6 percent of the population according to the preliminary results from the 2013 government census. With the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995), the Orthodox community associated with the Serbs was given the Republika Srpska, which is their own entity, government, and territory within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Geographically, the Republika Srpska lies between the cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla. Essentially, the Serbs achieved what the group had intended to achieve and established a territory that is predominantly Serbian and somewhat autonomous, thereby losing the inclination to feel threatened as a minority (since they have territory and power).

The rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina, called the Federation, was split into cantons that were divided between the Catholic Croats and the Bosniaks. Based on the preliminary results from the 2013 government census, the Bosniaks compose 48.4 percent. While they are not the national majority, they are the largest group represented. The goals and aspirations of the Croat group were not achieved as they were for the Serbs, and the ethnic composition of the cities stresses their minority status, while the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995) requires them to share political power in the Federation. This may have resulted in lingering levels of groupness and a tendency toward social isolation which Catholic communities built through the maintenance of social boundaries with the other communities. As a group in a society that shows signs of high ingroup identification overall, there may be more of an emphasis on staying loyal to one's community background rather than being open for intergroup interaction, especially for the Catholic community. Again, we suggest that this may be due to their minority status.

Although outgroup trust was a significant contributor to the model of predicting intergroup contact quantity, intergroup forgiveness was not. This is a surprising finding given the data reflects both strong outgroup trust and forgiveness indices for each community. As previously stated, forgiveness was identified as an essential variable for successful reconciliation and the improvement of intergroup relations ([Myers et al., 2009](#)). According to a qualitative study conducted by Ajduković & Čorkalo Biruški (2004) in Vukovar, Croatia, the Croats want Serbs to acknowledge their suffering, to show some remorse for the past crimes committed in

their name, and to help them reveal the truth about their missing family members. However, the Serbs in Vukovar think they had nothing to do with the violence directed against the Croats during the war and see no reason to show remorse or apologize for crimes they never committed, much less seek forgiveness. It is possible that these thoughts expressed by the Serbs in Vukovar, Croatia, do not apply to the Croats and Muslims in Sarajevo and Tuzla. This may suggest that the restoration of intergroup relationships in Sarajevo and Tuzla does not require one to forgive another from the outgroup, but rather, trust in their outgroup neighbors is much more important for intergroup contact to improve.

It was also surprising that age did not have a significant moderating effect, suggesting that living during the conflict does not influence one's willingness for intergroup contact. This may suggest that the narrative of the conflict is shared by the community regardless of age and passed down to the younger generation. Once again, identifying with one's community appears to be important in daily interactions. This may provide further evidence that the reconciliation process has stalled in Sarajevo and Tuzla. Overall, even though nearly 20 years have passed since the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995), and an official end of the war was declared, the cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla remain in a state of negative peace (absence of war) with much work to be done in regard to reconciliation.

Limitations

A limitation in questionnaire research is the risk of response bias, which has been defined as a tendency to respond to a survey question on the basis of something other than the actual content of the question ([Paulhus, 1991](#)). The respondent may be answering in a socially desirable way on the basis of expectations, for example, or other items on the questionnaire may have influenced the interpretation of a question. This may have had a negative impact on the survey results, specifically in the area of intergroup forgiveness. Therefore, possible response bias may have interfered with our ability to report that forgiveness was indeed an essential variable for successful reconciliation and the improvement of intergroup relations.

Similarly, the use of convenience samples brings forth additional considerations. Respondents were recruited through two non-governmental organizations in Sarajevo and Tuzla, which reach a specific subset of the overall population. Their beliefs may have influenced their attitudes and questionnaire responses in a distinct way. For example, respondents recruited through the Transitional Justice Association in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo most likely

believe and support the mission of the organization, while other citizens may view the concept of transitional justice in an unfavorable way. More broadly, people involved in non-governmental organizations clearly believe in a need for overall civic engagement and improved intergroup relations; whereas, others may not. It is important to note that both organizations in Sarajevo and Tuzla are inclusive and accepting of diverse groups, and those associated with them are motivated to participate based on a desire to improve society overall, rather than focusing on one group over the other. Our findings might not have been as significant had we administered the survey through civic groups other than the two NGOs: Transitional Justice Association in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, and Snaga Zene, Tuzla.

Additionally, the cities in which surveys were distributed were not representative of the entire population. Sarajevo and Tuzla are both large cities in central Bosnia and Herzegovina. While both have been praised for their multiethnic composition, both are predominantly Muslim. In 1991, the ethnic composition of Sarajevo was 49.3 percent Bosniak, which increased to 78.3 percent in 1998, post-war (Anonymous, 2010a). Tuzla was considered free territory during the war and many Bosniaks fled to the city for safety, which may explain its present Bosniak majority of 52.6 percent (Anonymous, 2010b). This is significant in that non-Bosniak respondents may have been aware of their ethnic minority status which may have influenced their responses in the same way that responses of Bosniaks may have been influenced by their majority status. As such, we cannot be certain of the influence this may have contributed to the survey results.

Implications and Conclusions

The data reports the current struggle of Sarajevo and Tuzla on their path to post-war reconciliation. Examining the psychosocial variables of ingroup identification, outgroup trust and forgiveness, and intergroup contact quantity, it is clear that strong identification with one's community negatively influences contact with other groups, which may not allow unity between groups to emerge.

In other research, it was found that 50 percent of the participants wanted friends from different nationalities; although, 41 percent admitted that their friends were of the same ethnic group (O'Loughlin, 2010). This indicates that people, to some degree, do see a necessity to mix, but are unable to break through the social boundaries that prevent the type of contact necessary for reconciliation to be achieved. As stated by Leonard and colleagues (2015) regarding their

work in Northern Ireland (which may also be applied to this study in Bosnia and Herzegovina), “the conflict has become much less visible in the traditional ways many view conflict, such as physical violence. Yet, it appears that the conflict continues to manifest itself in the daily lives of individuals through social interactions and environments” (p. 165). This implies the findings between Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland after the signing of the Belfast Agreement are similar to the findings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in that the Catholic, Muslim, and Orthodox communities continue to experience social distancing and limited intergroup contact nearly 20 years after the signing of their peace agreement (Dayton Peace Agreement, 1995). These findings may suggest to the international community that much more effort and work beyond the signing of a document is needed to restore peace and reconciliation to a society that is recovering from intergroup conflict.

While the criterion variable of interest for this study was intergroup contact quantity, future studies may also examine intergroup contact quality, because contact quality has been shown to be significantly correlated to quantity of contact, outgroup attitudes, empathy, and positive and negative action tendencies toward the outgroup ([Lalljee, Tam, Hewstone, Laham, & Lee, 2009](#)). Pettigrew (1998) suggests that quality is what leads to friendship potential. Cehajic and colleagues (2008) support this theory while adding that forgiveness is the restoration of relationships. Additionally, according to a qualitative study conducted in Kosovo by [Andrighetto, Mari, Volpato, and Behluli \(2012\)](#):

It is also noteworthy that our measure of extended contact did not require friendship between ingroup and outgroup members, but simply positive intergroup contact. This result appears relevant especially for highly charged intergroup settings, where people may be reluctant to admit that a family member or friend has a friend who belongs to the outgroup. (p. 523)

Another factor of interest may be how many opportunities the individuals from the cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla have for contact with other groups varying in ethnicity, religion, and social status, and the circumstances of those interactions. It seems an important yet lacking concept that for improved intergroup relations in Sarajevo and Tuzla intergroup contact may be necessary. Programs that support mixed interactions may need to be encouraged ([Hewstone, 2009](#)); although, it is unclear how many individuals would be willing to participate in such programs. The results of a large-scale, cross-national study conducted in eight European

countries focused on secondary transfer effects of intergroup contact, “confirm the wider, and potentially the most far-reaching effects of intergroup contact in fostering positive intergroup relations, thus providing a powerful testament to the wider effectiveness of intergroup contact in contributing to positive intergroup relations more generally” ([Schmid, Hewstone, Küpper, Zick, & Wagner, 2012](#), p. 48). The opportunities that these programs provide for contact with members of the out-group and for friendship building has helped in the promotion of peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland (Leonard et al., 2015), and it may therefore be beneficial to experiment with this idea in the cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The results from the current study reinforce the supposition that the two cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla in Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot significantly progress toward reconciliation without first understanding the effect that strong ingroup identification has on present-day social interactions. As a country, Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot continue to ignore the ethnic tensions that persist because its society cannot prosper to its fullest potential while these social distances are maintained. Our model emphasizes outgroup trust rather than intergroup forgiveness, pointing to a potential area worthy of greater attention and focus. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina saw many sides fighting each other, the cities surveyed were predominately influenced by violent attacks on Bosniaks by the Serbs. The society must ask itself: what has been done to restore the trust between those groups? It seems criminal trials and prison sentences are not enough, possibly because it keeps people focused on the events of the past while little is being done to move together toward a future. In that regard, it may not be so difficult to understand why, in our study, age did not have a moderating effect when the entire country continues to relive its troubled past even into the present.

Yet the long road ahead should not dismiss the progress that has been made nor the resilience of the people themselves. While this study notes challenges, the research shows that even despite the obstacles, there exists a willingness among the communities to live together. This is not a society of ancient hatreds that cannot forgive; it is a society that has been manipulated by its political elites and now requires significant, proactive efforts to address its past in a way that rebuilds outgroup trust and intergroup relations. Cross-community outreach measures may be one way to enhance intergroup contact and outgroup trust. However, this study also suggests that perhaps there is no one model to fit every intergroup conflict situation but rather that the groups themselves need to be given an opportunity to express which psychosocial

factors are most important and may be currently missing within their particular society. The history and the suffering are unique in every location of intergroup conflict, but measures beyond peace agreements seem to be necessary in all (Lederach, 2005). By definition, reconciliation requires restoration of relations, and while that does not seem to progress far when left to its own devices, focused programs on relevant psychosocial factors would be expected to yield positive results. Reconciliation will not happen on its own, but that does not mean reconciliation and continued peacebuilding is not possible in the two cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla, along with other areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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