

Dual Citizenship in the Context of Shifting Dynamics Within Kin-State

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ABSTRACT

Building on the literature on engagement with dual citizenship (Harpaz and Mateos, 2018; Joppke, 2018; Knott, 2018; Pogony 2018; Harpaz 2020), this paper further explores how individuals frame their engagement with kin-state citizenship by looking at the members of the transborder community of Croats residing in Herzegovina. Most Croats from the neighbouring region of Herzegovina can and do acquire Croatian citizenship due to the citizenship policies of Croatia, since 2013 a member state of the EU. The data was collected during two fieldwork trips to Herzegovina in 2019, and it consists of interviews, dyads, and focus groups with ordinary people and several political actors. Previous research suggests that individuals frame their engagement with kin-state citizenship through three dimensions: instrumental, symbolic, and legitimacy. The data confirm such findings, but it takes a step further by looking at how the shifting dynamics between the kin-state and home-state impacts the transborder community's engagement with citizenship. Firstly, the symbolic dimension remains significant – but for Croats from Herzegovina, it manifests external (kin-state and EU) recognition of belonging. Secondly, the instrumental dimension of engagements profoundly changed as Croatia joined the EU, and participant recognised the implications EU membership has on inequalities across Herzegovina. Thirdly, research participants depart from normative claims over Croatian citizenship and justify it by recalling the legal framework primarily. Finally, the reframing of the engagement with citizenship does not challenge the overall impact of the kin-state policy. On the contrary, it further strengthens it because the kin-state citizenship replaces ethnicity as a source of transborder community's attachments to home-state and kin state.

1. INTRODUCTION

The most powerful and controversial of all kin-state policies is the expansion of kin-state citizenship (Waterbury, 2010, p. 142). It explicitly challenges the sovereignty of the home-state and the position of transborder community vis-à-vis both states.

As the number of states adopting the kin-state citizenship policies was increasing, so did the scholar interest in the reasons behind the state's adoption of the policy and potential impact (Fowler, 2004; Iordachi, 2004; Pogonyi, Kovács and Körtvélyesi, 2010; Štikš, 2010; Dumbrava, 2014, 2019; Herner-Kovács and Kántor, 2014; Waterbury, 2014; Duvold, 2015; Udrea, 2017). In recent years, the focus has shifted on how the transborder ethnic community's members justify the acquisition of kin-state citizenship and frame their engagement with it (Knott, 2015a, 2015b, 2019; Vasiljević, 2018; Harpaz, 2019b, 2019a; Harpaz and Mateos, 2019; Pogonyi, 2019). The bottom-up approach expands our understanding of the impact kin-state policies have at the individual level.

Scholars have established three mutually non-exclusive dimensions through which members of transborder ethnic community frame their engagement with the kin-state citizenship:

1. Identity/symbolic dimension – kin-state citizenship 'strengthens the holder's sense of belonging to the national group' (Pogonyi, 2019).
2. Strategic/instrumental dimension – members of the transborder ethnic community acquire kin-state citizenship for instrumental reasons (Harpaz and Mateos, 2019).
3. Legitimacy dimension – acquisition of kin-state citizenship rectifies perceived past injustices (Knott, 2019).

This paper presents findings from yet another transborder community that engage with kin-state citizenship: Croats from Herzegovina. Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) were part of the common state until 1992. Once the two countries gained independence the newly established border has split the Croat ethnic community

Throughout 2019, I have conducted two fieldwork trips and interviews 53 people, Croats from Herzegovina. Most research participants were ordinary people, only some were political representative. Research participants were encouraged to discuss how they engage with

Croatian citizenship. The analysis suggests that the shifting dynamic across kin-state impact the way Croats in Herzegovina frame their engagement with citizenship. It challenges their engagement and contributes to reimagining citizenship.

Croats from Herzegovina frame their engagement through symbolic dimension. They justify the acquisition of citizenship as recognition of subjective feeling of belonging and instrumentalise the passport as a means of social closure. However, unlike in other cases, the social closure remains unimportant internally across Herzegovina for two reasons. First, they are the majority in Herzegovina and constitutive people across BiH – their ethnic identity is already recognised. Secondly, as some participants suggested, it is straightforward for them to establish who is from what ethnic community in BiH by other ethnic attributes. Social closure becomes essential concerning Croatia and the EU. Croats from Herzegovina use Croatian citizenship to claim equality to their co-ethnic who reside in Croatia. They also use Croatian passport to seek recognition of their EU status across the EU, where they refuse to be identified with BiH, for the seemingly poor international outlook BiH holds.

The strategic or instrumental use of citizenship changed throughout the time. During the 1990s the Croatian citizenship provided access to social services and social benefits in Croatia and the sense of security should the circumstances require relocation. In the 2000s, as the relation between Croatia and BiH improved, the opportunities narrowed for Croats from Herzegovina – the two countries established a mechanism of control and prevention of misuse of citizenship rights misuse. However, in 2013, when Croatia joined the EU, the opportunities attached to citizenship increased significantly. Consequentially, the unprecedented opportunities contributed to increasing inequality between the three communities.

Croats in Herzegovina justify their engagement with citizenship as normal, natural and right – as a legitimate right for the contributions they made during the war either in Croatia or BiH and as a right that rectifies seemingly unjust separation of the single ethnic community with the international border. Younger participants, who were born into the citizenship – who acquired it while they were still very young – depart from normative claims and justify the engagement by recalling the legal framework which enables them to use Croatia citizenship. That is the result of the contentious notion of dual citizenship across Croatia and BiH. Croats

from the two cantons are often portrayed negatively in Croatia for the apparent utilisation of ethnic ties and in BiH for apparent disloyalty to BiH and the inequality that the Croatian citizenship enables.

The paper proceeds with providing a brief background, and then moves onto discussion of citizenship. Before the conclusion, a border, category which emerged inductively in analysis will be outlined.

2. BACKGROUND

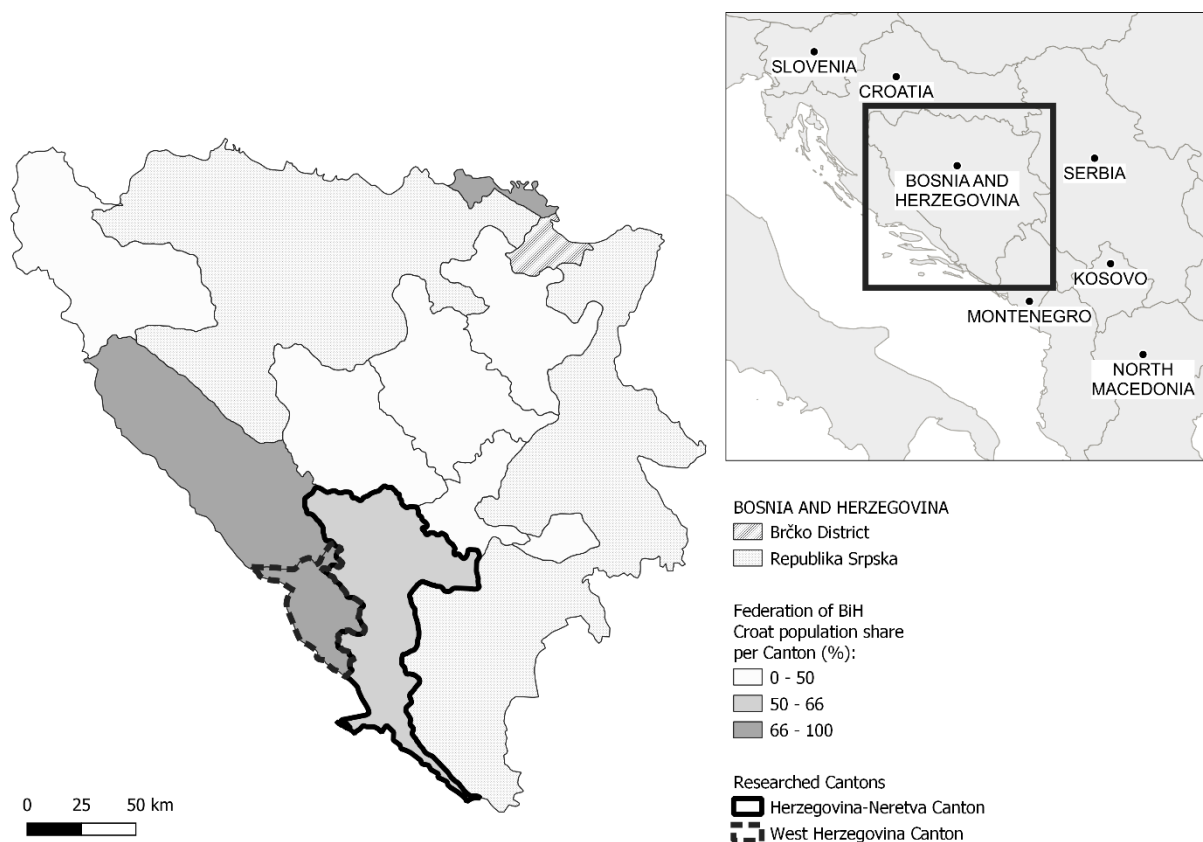
Croatia and BiH claimed independence from Yugoslavia as the republics across Yugoslavia could not reach an agreement in the early 1990s on the future outlook of the common state. The nationalising principle of establishing new states *for* and *of* dominant ethnic communities prevailed, which in Croatia caused a war between an ethnic majority comprised of Croats and a minority Serb ethnic community (Brubaker, 1996, p. 55; Bose, 2002; Ramet, 2002; Caspersen, 2009). The circumstances in BiH, which consisted of three ethnic communities, proved more detrimental. The lack of agreement on the common state that would accommodate all three ethnic communities gave precedence to those among Bosniak, Croat and Serb community, which aimed to establish states only *for* and *of* members of their own community. A wealth of literature has explored the catastrophic humanitarian effect such policies left on BiH's soil – the genocide against the Bosniak ethnic community, ethnic cleansing across BiH and other war crimes and crimes against the community were committed (Burg and Shoup, 1999; Bose, 2002; Caspersen, 2004; Tabeau and Bijak, 2005; Ramet, 2006). Finally, the international intervention brought the three sides together to sign a Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995, establishing BiH as an asymmetric federation, made of Republika Srpska (RS) and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH). The border split Croat ethnic community between Croatia and BiH.

Meanwhile, Croatia has succeeded in establishing a state *for* and *of* Croat ethnic community, where the members of the community could claim ethnic ownership over institutions and institutional entitlements. In line with such policy, Croatia awarded all Croats across the globe, including the Croats from BiH, with Croatian citizenship (Koska, 2011). After failed attempt to create their own statelet in BiH across Herzegovina, which Croatia extensively supported, Croats of BiH remained distant to BiH (Hoare, 1997; International Crisis Group, 1998; Grandits,

2007; Subotić, 2016). Their focus remains at the cantons across FBiH, where they make the majority, while at the state level, they claim the recognition of constitutive status, which, in their view, includes a fair share of institutional ownership and ethnic entitlements. That creates recurring tensions with the Bosniak and Serb ethnic community and shifts the Croat community's attention back towards areas where they can successfully claim ethnic ownership and entitlements – towards cantons of FBiH where they make a majority and towards Croatia (Subašić, 2020).

In this paper, I look at how the dynamics impact how members of the transborder community frame their engagement with citizenship. Unlike other scholars, I look beyond the recent acquisition and explore how the acquisition of citizenship is renegotiated in the long term. All research participants who hold dual citizenship acquired it either during the 1990s or while they were very young.

Map 1. Administrative organisation of BiH and the Croat population share across cantons.



According to the population census conducted in 2013, there are 544,780 Croats in BiH, making roughly 15% of the population (*Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine*, 2019). Most of them, 497,883, live in FBiH, where they make 22% of the population. My research is focused on the two cantons, part of FBiH, where Croats make the majority: Hercegovina-Neretva Canton (*Hercegovočko-neretvanski kanton*, HNK) and West Herzegovina Canton (*Zapadnohercegovački kanton*, ZHK). Members of the Croat community make 98% (93,725) of the population of HNK and 53% (118,297) of the population of the ZNK. Map 1. shows the administrative organisation of BiH, and it highlights areas discussed, including the two cantons.

The focus is on HNK and ZHK for three reasons. Firstly, that was the area where the Croat community during the war in BiH tried unsuccessfully to establish the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosna (*Hrvatska Republika Herceg-Bosna*, HR HB), a Croat community statelet. One of the war-related consequences is the increased share of Croats against members of other ethnic communities in the two cantons. Secondly, scholars (Knott, 2015b) have recognised the different dynamics across cases where transborder communities make the majority at substate level compared to cases where they only make the minority. Thirdly, the two cantons share the border with Croatia.

When it comes to Croatian citizenship, in the period from 1991 till 2010, Croatia admitted 678,918 applicants to Croatian citizenship from people who held BiH's citizenship at the time of application (Koska, 2013). It is safe to assume, and the research data also confirms that most Croats in BiH hold Croatian citizenship. Among participants from the two cantons I have interviewed, only one does not hold Croatian citizenship.

3. ENGAGEMENT WITH THE KIN-STATE CITIZENSHIP

Franjo Tuđman, president of Croatia back in 1992, highlighted in his letter of BiH's recognition that 'Croatia offers dual citizenship to all Croats [in BiH] who wish to obtain it'. He also added that the two countries should 'regulate the issue by a bilateral agreement' (Tuđman and Bilić, 2005, p. 87). However, the bilateral Agreement on Dual Citizenship was signed only in 2007 and ratified four years later in 2011 (RH 2007). Meanwhile, most Croats in BiH already acquired Croatian citizenship. The available data and the research participants' recollection show that the acquisition happened *en masse* after the Washington Agreement was signed in 1994. A

research participant, with the help of his wife, remembered when they applied for citizenship and how they experienced the process:

'Croatian [citizenship certificate] started to be requested [by the people] around 1994, 1995. Not before. Maybe, some people did before, but in 1994, 1995 *en masse*. Before that, I remember, I travelled, I used BiH's passport. [But after that] it went *en masse*. Last kid got it straight away, [woman adds] "because he was born in Croatia", the same for the other, they were born in Croatia, during the war [when we were in refuge]. The others did not have it before 1994. [woman adds] "Then, I think I just went and took it for all, at the same time. You could do it here, in Mostar, you did not have to go to Croatia, I remember there were huge queues"' (TG-3-12).

Only in 2008, when other states already adopted the kin-state citizenship policies, the OSCE issued a recommendation suggesting the states 'should refrain from granting citizenship *en masse* to citizens of another state' without the approval of the respective state (OSCE HCNM, 2008). The OSCE High Commissioner recognised that such an approach 'has the potential to create tensions. That is particularly likely to happen when citizenship is conferred *en masse*, i.e. to a specified group of individuals or in substantial numbers relative to the size of the population of the state of residence or one of its territorial subdivisions' (OSCE HCNM, 2008, p. 19). By that time, Croatia has already signed the Agreement on Dual Citizenship with BiH.

3.1 Identity/symbolic dimension of engagement with the kin-state citizenship

As outlined in the introduction, Croatian citizenship provides the opportunity to Croats from Herzegovina to formalise previously held subjective feelings of belonging and instrumentalise the passport as a means of social closure. The social closure aspect of citizenship is emphasised externally rather than internally because of Croats' constitutive status in BiH. The external aspect of the social closure, on the contrary, provides an opportunity for Croats in BiH to claim equal status to co-ethnics in the home state and claim equal status across Europe, with other EU citizens and distance themselves from BiH.

All research participants, except one, hold Croatian citizenship, and the majority expressed how they hold the citizenship for the recognition of their subjective belonging. In discussion

with students from the focus group, that has become evident. Each student suggested how they hold citizenship simply because they 'feel attached to Croatia' (FG-STD-F1). Four of them have family relatives in Croatia, and by acquiring citizenship, they suggested, the family relations are also strengthened. One participant used the family relation to depict the relation between Croatia and the transborder ethnic community. He said, 'I have citizenship because I feel attached to Croatia, and I think' with awarding citizenship to Croats of Herzegovina, Croatia acknowledges 'the responsibility to take care of us. When I say to take care, I mean as if they are a mother and we are a child' (FG-STD-M3). The discussion in other focus group was very similar (FG-CTL-FG).

Some students used the sports examples and the atmosphere in Herzegovina when the Croatian team plays to suggest how regardless of the citizenship, they feel attached to Croatia. 'When it comes to sport, all Croats from Croatia support the Croatian national team. When it comes to BiH's sport, Croats simply do not feel attached to BiH's national team' (FG-STD-M3). Other participants throughout the fieldwork (NO-TG-ST, NO-TG-CTL, TG-3-3, TG-3-11, TG-3-12, TG-3-14, TG-3-18, TG-3-23M, TG-3-24F1, TG-3-24F2) also used sport and expressed the support for the Croatian national team to suggest how the citizenship formalises attachment Croats from Herzegovina experience anyhow.

The following statements illustrate how formal recognition strengthens the existing feelings of belonging: 'I did not acquire Croatian documents to make it easier for me, but simply because I want to express the attachment. I feel when I hold the Croatian ID that I belong to Croatia' (NO-FG-CTL). Passport, ID, and other documents that Croats from Herzegovina hold bear an emotional, symbolical, and formal value – it reconfirms their belonging to Croatia. One participant's reflection captures well all aspects of identity management through the use of documents:

'I think you can't divide something that heart brings together. We thirst for Croatia. Why do I have a Croatian ID? When somebody asks me for an ID, I will always show a Croatian ID, even if I have two IDs. Why? Because it is emotional to me. I have the FBiH ID, but I will always give the blue and pink one. It is simply an emotional

attachment. When I had to withdraw my address in Croatia, it was very hard for me; it means a world to me' (TG-3-12).

Another participant, aiming to express how the citizenship provided the attachment, got puzzled by expressing her belonging. She said, 'well, you feel somehow, you are not in Croatia, but you are with Croatia, it is our second homeland' to which she stopped, rethought what she said and added 'I mean it is our main homeland' (TG-3-21). Her reflection outlines precisely the issue of the transborder community and the insecurities arising from the position between the two states. Recurring competing claims between the two states, not least in the form of subjective feeling of belonging, is often triggered by Croatian politicians.

One political representative, a research participant from Croatia, suggested in the interview how he thinks that 'many Croats from Herzegovina, had there not been a double citizenship, would choose the Croatian rather than BiH's citizenship' (TG-ZG-2). The 'second homeland' is used to suggest the special status Croats from Herzegovina have concerning both states. However, the second homeland usually refers to Croatia, even if some, such as Kolinda Grabar Kitarović, ex Croatian president, used to say that BiH is a 'second homeland' to Croats in BiH (N1, 2018). She intended to highlight that the Croats from Herzegovina are equal to Croats from Croatia. Unlike those who put Croatia 'second' to emphasise Croats' constitutive, core status in BiH. Another participant expressed similar concern and suggested how citizenship is also used as a mean of intra-ethnic social closure in Croatia to claim the same status as other Croats who reside in Croatia:

'When I am in Croatia, I feel like in Herzegovina. When I compare it to how I feel in Ljubuški, my home, I feel local there, similarly to how I feel in Croatia. Even if [people] in Croatia look at Croats from Herzegovina with slight suspicion, and I feel that. I used to have a Bosnian passport, and frankly, I felt [strange]. As if some part of me has been artificially imposed on me. It felt as I am not on my own. I live here, and BiH is a nice state, but Croatia is still something I am focused on. Citizenship certificate means that I can have that Croatian passport, which is ultimately Croatian' (TG-3-23M)

Several (FG-CTL-F, FG-CTL-F1, TG-3-3, TG-3-13, TG-SA-2, TG-SA-3, TG-3-21, TG-3-25), participants including, naturally, political representatives, linked Croatian citizenship to voting, as another opportunity to perform ethnic attachment. One participant framed it precisely 'I vote in Croatian elections. There have been recently elections for the EU Parliament, and we went to Mostar to cast a vote, it was organised only in one place. Indeed, I vote – you should use whichever right you have (TG-3-21).

Three (TG-3-01, TG-3-03, TG-03-23M) participants explicitly suggested how the external aspect of social closure concerning the EU is crucial. Essentially, when travelling outside the region, they do not wish to be identified with BiH for its international outlook, as they perceive it, and the higher status recognition they receive with Croatian documents. When you 'come with Croatian passport', one participant said, 'it is a sovereign state, it proved itself through the war. I am happy and proud to show my Croatian passport when I come to German border control. Honestly, it would be embarrassing for me to show BiH's passport where they could mock me: "Look at him"'. (TG-3-03). Another participant reflected similarly:

'it is looked differently [at you] if you are a Croat because Croatia is a part of the EU. As soon as you are part of the EU, it is different. It is looked at it differently across EU if you are an EU citizen. There are certain standards the country needs to achieve and some culture. I worked in the NGO sector for a while, I attended over 50 seminars, and people who travelled confirmed to me that once you mention BiH the first association is terrorism' (TG-3-01)

On the contrary to others, two participants throughout the research distinguish the formal recognition citizenship assumes from their subjective feelings and denies the desire for social closure. They both felt confident about their ethnic identity. While holding a Croatian passport, one participant stated how she 'do[es] not have a problem with the identity', and continued 'it comes naturally to me what I am. It is clear to me, so I am more focused' on other aspects of citizenship (TG-3-08). Another participant used his Australian citizenship to highlight the irrelevance of the citizenship in recognition of his belonging. He said 'Australian?', not really, 'I have an Australian passport, but I am not Australian, I do not feel Australian' (TG-3-14).

3.2 Strategic/instrumental dimension of engagement with the kin-state citizenship

For Croats in Herzegovina, the opportunities attached to Croatia's membership in the EU changed how they engage with citizenship significantly. However, the strategic use of citizenship existed before – especially in terms of access to social services and benefits from Croatia and insecurities induced by the political circumstances in BiH. It follows that rather than engaging in the acquisition, the growing opportunities attached to Croatia's EU membership prompt Croats in Herzegovina to renegotiate the engagement with citizenship. The changing circumstances across kin-state (and home-state) add another layer of value to citizenship, which, yet again, reinforces ethnic considerations. Furthermore, it is through the instrumental dimension that participants experience the inter-ethnic inequalities across BiH.

Before Croatia acceded to the EU, the most explicit instrumental value of citizenship was experienced among Croats from Herzegovina through social benefits and access to social services in Croatia. Naturally, most research participants who were adults already in the 1990s emphasised that aspect of citizenship entitlements. That has become most evident in discussion with the war veterans and the focus group from Čitluk. Formers receive a war-related pension from Croatia for their contributions during the war - 6,780 people received the pension from Croatia in 2020 (HZMO 2018, p. 111). The number is higher, as it does not include Croats from Herzegovina who fought or lost their lives in Croatia. Besides, the number decreased after BiH introduced war-related benefits. Only in that year, 20,560 people stopped receiving contributions from Croatia (MF 2000, p. 46). War veterans from the focus group described the legal process many veterans initiated to get their pension entitlements back, explaining 'we do not have any high expectations from Croatia, we only claim our pensions and health insurance' (FG-WV-M)

While not neglecting the war-related contributions, the participants from the focus group in Čitluk highlighted other benefits, similar to other research participants. The following excerpt is from the discussion with the participants in the focus group:

F2: If there were not for Croatia, it would not be as half as good. At least Croatia helps.

F1: Croatia gave us more than BiH.

M: They [Croatia] also give for culture.

F1: It gives concerning war veterans. Financially.

M: There is an income from Croatia, which ensure the existence. Those who lost their lives or who were wounded get compensated, their status is recognised.

F1: But they cannot get the flat or the house [as the veterans in Croatia can]

F2: Well, those are the rules.

M: All kinds of promises were made in the beginning ...

F2: I will never leave Croatia [withdrew the address]. It never crossed my mind, no way, never! I have pension there, and I remain there.' (FG-CTL)

Two students in the focus group emphasised the opportunity to keep health insurance, even if one needs to have residence, but in case of anything more serious, they both suggested they would go to Croatia (FG-STD-M5, FG-STD-F2). Other participants recognised the importance of health insurance, too, suggesting how advance is Croatian health system compared to BiH's (TG-3-12, TG-3-16, TG-3-19, TG-3-20, TG-MST-2). 'I was taken with the ambulance to Split, and they saved my life', one participant (TG-MST-2) explained, while another suggested that some people he knows kept the double residence 'to feel safe in case they need medical assistance' (TG-3-16). Other participants highlighted Croatia's financial help to different institutions, the opportunity to study in Croatia, or scholarships that students can receive (TG-3-06, TG-3-13, TG-3-11, TG-3-15, TG-2-MST-3, TG-3-6, TG-3-8, TG-3-24F, FG-CTL-F). Two participants explained how their household benefited during the 1990s from the maternity allowance (TG-3-19, TG-2-20).

In the 1990s, citizenship also provided a desperately needed sense of security and an exit strategy should the circumstances require it. Some research participants reflected on that: 'During the war we fled, and Croatia helped us, you could rely on that, we were genuinely grateful. It provides a sense of security; God forbid similar situation in the future' (TG-3-21). Regardless of their war experience, two other participants emphasised how they think of citizenship in terms of 'security - who knows what comes with the time' (TG-3-19) or 'insurance policy' (TG-3-04). The latter quickly added, 'had BiH's passport provided additional

opportunities, I would have acquired it', emphasising the instrumental dimension of engagement with citizenship.

The insurance policy argument periodically appears in headlines across Croatia and BiH when the prosecuted individuals in one country, in expectation of sentence, move to the other country. The two countries tried to prevent prosecuted individuals from avoiding the sentence by signing in 2012 another Agreement on Extradition. Previously, the two countries would deny extradition of their citizens, from which the prosecuted individuals benefited extensively. Ante Jelavić, for example, a leader of unsuccessful and unconstitutionally established parallel Croat institutions back in 2001, fled BiH and still today resides freely in Croatia, while BiH's authorities seek to bring him to court for breaking the Constitution.

Between 2012 and 2020, 94 individuals have been extradited between the two states, but BiH's authorities claim that they still refuse 30% of requests for citizenship issues (Primorac, Buhovac and Pilić, 2020). Additional concerns emanate from the Agreement on Extradition that still enables prosecuted individuals to avoid the justice: a) the Agreement excludes requests submitted previously, b) the Ministries of Justice need to approve the request, but the ambiguous agreement gives them extensive arbitrary powers, and c) the prosecuted individuals can request to serve a sentence in the residence country, which then subjects them to the legal framework of the respective country, which might not recognise the crime at all, alter the sentence significantly or simply initiate entirely new proceedings.

The second residence for some dual citizenship holders translates to an opportunity to avoid justice. When this opportunity is used by wealthy, publicly exposed and well-organised lawbreakers, it usually appears in headlines and, consequently, portrays dual citizenship holders in an exceptionally negative light.

Finally, the most significant aspect of the instrumental dimension of citizenship is related to the rights and opportunities related to EU status. The opportunities are framed well beyond the preferential treatment at the border and include the opportunity to work, travel and study across the EU. All research participant indicated the opportunities arising from EU citizenship, even the only research participant who does not hold Croatian citizenship. He semi-sarcastically insinuated he 'is afraid to travel abroad' because he 'might never return' when

asked about the citizenship acquisition. His parents try to convince him to 'sort out the papers, just to escape, should the situation require', but he refuses (TG-3-17). His counterpart in Čapljina wish never to leave Herzegovina, where she studied, but 'just in case' she decided 'to apply for formal diploma recognition in Croatia, should' she 'ever leave the country to have the papers clear' (TG-3-24-F2).

Below, in Table 1, additional examples of how participants reflect on opportunities attached to Croatian citizenship concerning the EU are outlined. All participants who discussed citizenship, even those who denied citizenship as a formal recognition of subjective feeling of belonging, recognise the value of Croatian citizenship. Through the opportunities attached to citizenship, the kin-state expands the influence and captures more members of the transborder community. Furthermore, the status attached to Croatian citizenship across the EU generate recurring competing claims among transborder community members between the kin-state and home-state, in which the kin-state takes precedence for the opportunities it ensures. In almost all of the highlighted examples, research participants directly compared the opportunities each citizenship offers.

Besides, the opportunities attached to Croatian citizenship generate the inequalities between the Croats and other communities across Herzegovina. A group of research participants (TG-3-01, TG-3-02, TG-3-06, TG-3-08, TG-3-11, TG-3-15, TG-3-21, TG-3-25) recognised how. 'I am very grateful for having Croatian citizenship alongside BiH's. My colleague wanted to work in Germany for over a year now. However, the procedure is long. He went several times to a visa interview in Sarajevo. The expenses are high, and it is much effort while he cannot be sure if he gets the work permit and if all the expenses pay off' one participant elaborates (TG-3-02). Others also reflect on their friends' experiences such as 'my friends often tell me "lucky you for having [an EU] citizenship, I would have been long gone by now if I had it"' (TG-3-08), or 'my friends are jealous' (TG-3-25), while some express more generalised assumptions such as 'Others cannot leave that easily' (TG-3-01), or 'they always tell us how lucky we are, we can always leave for Europe' (TG-3-11).

Table 1. Examples of interview reflections capturing the EU opportunities and the interviews in which similar examples appeared.

	Easier Travel / Visa issues	Work / Business / Studies	Status and Security
Statement examples	<i>'It is much easier to go abroad'</i>	<i>'Especially for us students, we work in Croatia seasonally'</i>	<i>'I use it if for nothing than because it is more powerful'</i>
	<i>'The number of countries you can enter without a visa is significant'</i>	<i>'[It is easier] to start working. If somebody wishes to leave, except in the UK'</i>	<i>'Croatian passport opens the door everywhere', 'it is a privilege'</i>
	<i>'I have it, and I travel with it. It is also cheaper and easier to obtain it'</i>	<i>'That passport provides me with the opportunity to work in the EU'</i>	<i>'It is an EU passport, Croatia is in the EU, the doors are open for us'</i>
	<i>'I travel with Croatian. Otherwise, they stamp it all the time, you need a visa for everywhere except for Iran'</i>	<i>'I have studied in Croatia'</i>	<i>'We are treated like the EU citizens'</i>
	<i>'If I wish to go to Germany, I can easily just go'</i>	<i>'We can work, anywhere in the EU'</i>	<i>'You never know what can happen here with the time'</i>
	<i>'It is easier to cross the border everywhere'</i>	<i>'We do export/import, and it is useful to be connected with both sides'</i>	<i>'I am an EU citizen', 'it is a prestige'</i>
	<i>'It is easier to cross the border everywhere'</i>	<i>'I work seasonally in Croatia, I just need to get a stamp, and I work, students can work too'</i>	<i>'They look at us differently. We are an EU citizens'</i>
	<i>'I went with work to Canada, and I did not need to have a visa. It was much easier'</i>	<i>'I have a business on both sides. It is much easier to trade'</i>	<i>'No discussion there, the EU is advantage'</i>
Interview code where similar explanation appeared	NO-FG-CTL, TG-3-02, TG-3-04, TG-3-07-TG-3-06, TG-3-08, TG-3-10, TG-3-12, TG-3-05, TG-3-15, TG-3-18, TG-3-20, TG-3-22, TG-3-23F, TG-3-24-F1, TG-3-24F2, TG-3-25	FG-STD-F4, TG-3-12, TG-3-20, TG-3-21, TG-3-24-F2, TGFG-STD-F4, TG-3-02, TG-3-04, TG-3-10, TG-2-22, TG-3-24F2, TG-3-01, TG-MST-2, TG-3-08, TG-24-F1. TG-3-25	TG-3-04, TG-3-20, FG-STD-M-3, TG-3-07, TG-3-08, TG-3-10, TG-3-10, TG-3-21, TG-3-23M, TG-3-25, TG-3-01, TG-3-11, NO-TG-CTL, TG2-MST-2, TG-3-17

(some participants expressed all three categories of opportunities)

A woman (TG-3-21) who occasionally work in Croatia, witnessed how the number of people who used to work in Croatia seasonally, like her, and hold only BiH citizenship decreased once Croatia joined the EU: 'They used to go with us' she said, 'but it is stricter now, those who do not hold [Croatian] citizenship cannot join us. They can, but only if they got the paperwork', a work permit which is hard to obtain. Croatian citizenship becomes the source of inequalities.

In a focus group with war veterans, who primarily think of citizenship as recognition of ethnic attachments and war contributions, participants expressed strong disapproval of cases where a member of another ethnic community obtained citizenship by claiming Croat heritage. In a less disapproving and more understanding way, another participant emphasised how others wish to obtain Croatian citizenship for the opportunities it offers:

'I often get proposed, in a witty manner, just for my Croatian citizenship. But it is not Croatian citizenship that matters; it is the EU citizenship that matters. Croatia is privileged for the EU status. When you think about Serb people in BiH, they hold Serbian citizenship, but it does not mean a lot, except for the pride. I also know a lot of people who are not Croat, they do not declare as Croats, not to say that they do not even feel as Croats, but they have Croatian papers and the passport, it is another interesting phenomenon' (TG-3-25)

3.3 The legitimate or legal dimension of engagement

In the case of Croats from Herzegovina, the legitimacy dimension appears significant. However, while some express the normative position, others avoid it. Instead, they only frame citizenship as normal, natural and as a right through legal dimension – escaping the assessment of the appropriateness of such legal framework. The three contextual factors explain the shift from normative to legal claims: a) Dual citizenship is a contentious topic in BiH as it challenges the holders' support towards BiH and in Croatia for the social benefits and access to social service, b) Since Croatia joined the EU the dual citizenship ensures unprecedented opportunities to citizenship holders and consequently produces inequalities – by expressing normative position one cannot exclude the inequality attached to it, and c) In the time of *en masse* acquisition some participants were underaged and never had the chance to think of the acquisition, and the trend continuous by ensuring the children citizenship acquisition as soon as they are born.

The discussion with participants illustrates both perspectives, the normative claims and legal framework.

The most explicit in expressing the normative position are participants who participated in war. That is expected as those people jeopardised their life for Croatia – either by fighting in Croatia or BiH. Despite the recognition that the latter unfolded in BiH, participants argued that the Herzegovinian contribution was crucial to prevent Serb forces from merging all the territories they claimed during the war.

Besides, their ultimate loyalty lay with Franjo Tuđman, a Croatian president at the time, who ensured appropriate and deserving contributions according to a local political representative:

‘Tuđman and minister Šušak [Croatian Defence Minister at the time] appreciated the fact that Croats from Herzegovina were among the first, alongside other Croats, willing to engage, defend and die for Croatia. They compensated our contributions’ (TG-MST-2)

War veterans expressed similar thoughts. However, they are frustrated, as seen in the previous part, with seemingly undeserving people who acquired Croatian citizenship. They are in part frustrated because such awarding of citizenship departs from their depiction of citizenship as a reward, compensation, a right – which rectifies their unjust residence in BiH and the loss they experienced in the war. They were naming people who fought against Croats in BiH but still acquired Croatian citizenship (because they could prove Croatian ancestry or self-declared as Croats throughout Yugoslavia). In contrast, ‘people who were in Croatian forces (HVO), Serbs and Muslims, who were with us the whole time - do not hold citizenship. They cannot acquire it ... When it was easier to get it, somebody should have offered it to them for their contributions. They were 4 years in HVO! These things need to be addressed!’ (FG WV).

Other research participants, even those who did not participate in the war, expressed normative position when debating citizenship. It was suggested, for example, that people ‘fought the war to be with Croatia, and they left’ them in BiH ‘to deal with Muslims and to prevent the establishment of Muslim country here’ (NO-FG-CTL) or ‘we have it, but do not have it – Croatia is our homeland, it is’ (TG-3-18). ‘Half of us went to war because we thought we would merge [to Croatia]’ (TG-3-11) told another participant when he reflected on citizenship.

Overall, he would have wished more to be in Croatia than only to have a citizenship. Another participant suggested that 'Homeland war [which for Herzegovinians includes the war in BiH, while in Croatia the alternative discourses exist] was fought for Croatia, and that attachment exists, and the help from Croatia towards us and those who fought is normal' (TG-3-22). One participant went further behind in history to show how Croats from Herzegovina supported Croatia far back in time, and all the people are 'aware of their Croat nationality, more than people in Croatia', which in his opinion, suggest that they deserve citizenship indeed (TG-3-10).

Younger participants recognised the claims of their older counterparts, who witnessed the war, but they also distance themselves from such views for the controversies surrounding the issue (FG-STD-M3, FG-STD-F3, FG-STD-M2, TG-3-02, TG-3-03, TG-3-04, TG-3-06, TG-3-07, TG-3-08, TG-3-15, TG-3-16, TG-3-19). In their views, they hold citizenship simply because the legal framework enables them to have it, because they all received it as they were young, and because it is a common practice that all entitled take citizenship.

'I had the opportunity [to take it] so why not to have it' (FG-STD-M6), 'I did not ask for it, there was an opportunity, so I took it, I mean, I feel grateful, but I did not ask for it, nor I expect anything because of it' (TG-3-04), or 'I always had dual citizenship because I am entitled' (TG-3-06). Those are only some examples that illustrate how people recall the legal framework without expressing an opinion on the policy.

Most of those participants acquired it when they were born, a common practice which remains present, especially after Croatia became a part of the EU. It is normal to hold Croatian citizenship to the point where one participant even claimed that he does not hold the BiH's citizenship, which is almost impossible but it shows which citizenship is thought to be important (FG-STD-3). Some excerpts outlining how participants were born into citizenship and how common the practice is are highlighted in Table 2.

The following excerpts show how even among younger people, most still find it normal and common to request citizenship straight away upon child's birth.

'Yes, straight away, it is a first thing to do once the kind gets born, you send papers to Zagreb [Croatian capital]. Certificate request, passport request, ID request, then

you go to Metković [Croatia, in the proximity of border] to sign everything. That is the first thing, alongside baptism ... Where to take health insurance and all. That is typical' (TG-3-16).

Table 2. Interview excerpt focused on early age citizenship acquisition.

Participant	Excerpt from the interview
FG-STD-F3	<i>'We were raised like that'</i>
TG-3-02	<i>'I was given Croatian citizenship. My sister was given too. The parents always claimed that it needs to be sorted as soon as possible'</i>
TG-3-03	<i>'I had it since my birth. No, I am lying, I did not have it, and we realised when I went to apply for the passport. Then we sorted the citizenship. But the officer there suggested, "you must be the only person not to have it"'</i>
TG-3-04	<i>'I got it as a kid, my parents went and took it for all kids'</i>
TG-3-06	<i>'I had it since I was born'</i>
TG-3-07	<i>'As I remember, we got it during the war, but I was young, my dad went'</i>
TG-3-10	<i>'Which [Croat in Herzegovina] does not hold it? I do not know anyone'</i>
TG-3-25	<i>'It is a constitutional right, according to Croatian Constitution'</i>

4. BORDER – A PLACE OF DIVISION AND UNITY

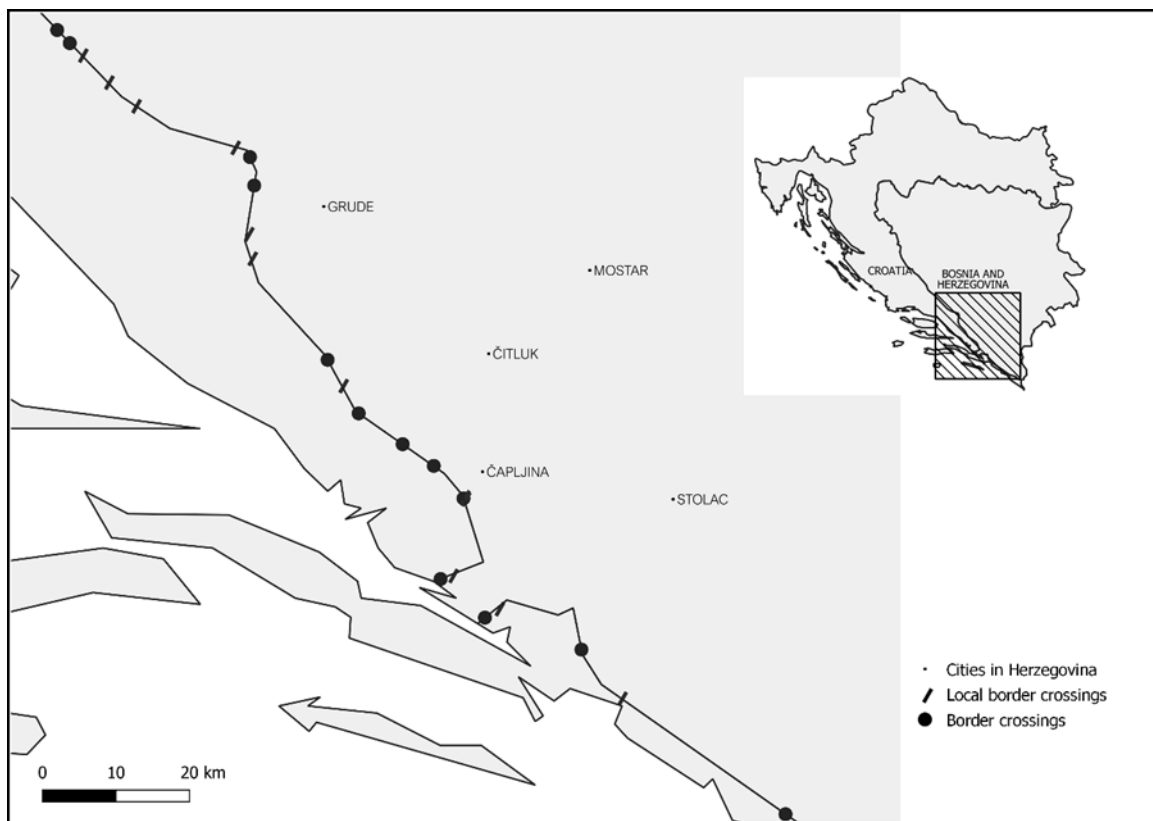
Croatia and BiH share more than 1000 kilometres long border (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2018, p. 44). Border crossings between BiH and Croatia stand as significant symbolical places, where belonging to home-state and kin-state is manifested. From an analytical point of view, the border is a critical variable that produces the notion of a transborder ethnic community – previously united, the community becomes divided by the international border.

Border management changed significantly since 1992. In the first period, until 2001, the border was established, but it remained porous for the local community as for the illegal trade networks (International Crisis Group, 2001, p. 8; Hajdinjak, 2002). In 2001, shifting dynamics within the triadic nexus had a spillover effect on border management. The two governments signed an Agreement on Determining Border Crossings, and in the following years, border management improved, preventing the wealth of illegal activities and ensuring a higher level

of surveillance (*Narodne Novine*, 2002). Finally, in 2013, the border was significantly strengthened in preparation for the Croatian accession to the EU. The introduction of the border and the improved border management, which ensued, impacted how the transborder ethnic community imagined and experienced the border.

Border emerged as a significant symbolical place for the transborder ethnic community where their attachments to kin-state and home-state are manifested. As the border grew in strength, so did the obstacles it creates to a transborder community (TG-2-MST-1, TG-2-MST-2, TG-3-MST-3, TG-3-ZG-2, TG-3-03, TG-3-06, TG-3-08, TG-3-10, TG-3-12, TG-3-16, TG-3-22, TG-3-23F,, TG-3-23-M, TG-3-24, FG-CTL, FG-STD). It reminds participants of the distance from Croatia and disadvantageous status compared to co-ethnics across the kin-state.

Map 2. Current border crossing and local border crossing between Croatia and Herzegovina



On the contrary, people who reside further away from the border and do not cross the border reasonably often imagine the border as a symbol of unity because only at the border they experience preferential treatment vis-a-vis kin-state citizenship (TG-3-07, TG-3-10, TG-3-11,

TG-3-14, TG-3-15, TG-19, TG-3-19, TG-3-20, NO-TG-CTL, TG-3-01, TG-3-03, TG-3-08, TG-3-12, TG-3-14, TG-3-17, TG-3-22, TG-3-23). It is a place where they get the opportunity to claim their ethnic identity and equality with co-ethnics in Croatia. Border for those participants is also a symbol of the value of citizenship. It is also a reminder of inter-ethnic inequality across BiH. Therefore, as the border becomes harder to cross, so preferential treatment becomes even more evident.

A wealth of exciting interview encounters witness the significance of the border. One participant, for example, has to choose between long queuing at the border to process the bank payment the same day in Croatia and the three-day (international) e-payment. On the other side, one participant who imagines the border as a symbol of unity claimed she 'wished the border to be even stronger. In a sense, a stronger border translated into the increased value of attachment recognition. Being aware of the space, I will not provide more examples, maybe also recognising that the border encounters should take a more prominent role in some future paper.

5. CONCLUSION

Croats from Herzegovina, where they make a majority and which neighbours Croatia, compensate for the lack of engagement with other institutions across the home-state by enhancing the engagement with the kin-state institutions.

The research participants were encouraged throughout the interview to discuss the acquisition at the time when they acquired the citizenship and reflect on the meanings they currently attach to Croatian citizenship. This approach supplements the existing studies on the bottom-up acquisition of kin-state citizenship in three ways. First, it adds a contextual dimension to the acquisition – it looks at how people renegotiate the meaning attached to citizenship contingent on changing circumstances across triadic nexus. Secondly, it adds a temporal dimension by looking at a long-term consequence of the kin-state citizenship acquisitions. Thirdly, it adds the perspective of people who were born into Croatian citizenship.

Border crossings between BiH and Croatia stand as significant symbolical places, where belonging to home-state and kin-state manifests explicitly. The research participants who reside in the vicinity experience the border as an obstacle to their everyday life and a reminder

of the distance from the kin-state. On the contrary, research participants who reside further away imagine the border as a place where the unity with the kin-state is formally recognised and confirmed.

The changing dynamics across Croatia impacts how Croats from Herzegovina engage with and imagine Croatian citizenship. Croats from Herzegovina frame their engagement through symbolic dimension. They justify the acquisition of citizenship as recognition of subjective feeling of belonging and instrumentalise the passport as a means of social closure. However, unlike in other cases, the social closure remains unimportant internally across the two cantons. Social closure becomes essential concerning Croatia and the EU. Croats from Herzegovina use Croatian citizenship to claim equality to their co-ethnic who reside in Croatia. They also use Croatian passport to seek recognition of their EU status across the EU, where they refuse to be identified with BiH, for the seemingly poor international outlook BiH holds.

The strategic or instrumental use of citizenship changed throughout the time. During the 1990s the Croatian citizenship provided access to social services and social benefits in Croatia and the sense of security should the circumstances require relocation. In the 2000s, as the relation between Croatia and BiH improved, the opportunities narrowed for Croats from the two cantons – the two countries established a mechanism of control and prevention of misuse of the rights attached to citizenship. However, in 2013, when Croatia joined the EU, the opportunities attached to citizenship increased significantly. Consequentially, the unprecedented opportunities contributed to increasing inequality between the three communities.

Croats in Herzegovina justify their engagement with citizenship as normal, natural and right – as a legitimate right for the contributions they made during the war either in Croatia or BiH and as a right that rectifies seemingly unjust separation of the single ethnic community with the international border. Younger participants, who were born into the citizenship – who acquired it while they were still very young – depart from normative claims and justify the engagement by recalling the legal framework which enables them to use Croatia citizenship. That is the result of the contentious notion of dual citizenship across Croatia and BiH.

The availability of kin-state citizenship to a transborder ethnic community generate recurring competing claims among research participants between the rights and opportunities kin-state provides compared to home-state. Croatia's advanced international and economic outlook, not least for the EU membership, strengthens the attachments to kin-state. Kin-state citizenship replaces ethnicity as a source of attachment. That has a profound impact on the transborder community: a) the kin-state influence expands and captures more members of the transborder community, b) the transborder community remains distant to the home state and expands the autonomy claims, and c) contributes to growing inequalities across the home-state.

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