

ARTICLES

**SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF BOSNIAN-HERZEGOVINIAN CROATS IN CROATIA ON THE EXAMPLE OF OKRUG GORNJI**

*AUTHORS*

**Jurica Botić**

*University of Mostar, Faculty of Science and Education, Matice hrvatske b.b., 88000 Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. E-mail: jurica\_botic@yahoo.com*

**Tihomir Jeličić**

*Podbor b.b., 884000 Prozor-Rama, Bosnia and Herzegovina. E-mail: tih0@windowslive.com*

*UDC: 911.3:30(497.5Dalmacija)*

*ABSTRACT*

***Social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats in Croatia on the example of Okrug Gornji***

*The paper deals with the social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats in Croatia on the example of the settlement of Okrug Gornji as a case study. Correlating the theoretical approaches of human geography and identity studies, the article deals with the phenomenon of migration as a research object in human geography through the relation of ethnic and regional identity as the factors of social integration of the immigrant population. The research proved that B&H Croats are mostly successfully integrated into the social context of Gornji Okrug without forms of spatial and social ghettoization. Being stronger than regional, the common ethnic (and religious) identity of domicile and immigrant population gives a positive impetus for successful integration of the immigrants.*

**KEY WORDS**

*Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats, Okrug Gornji, migration, identity, integration.*

## 1. Introduction

Social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovina Croats in Croatia is an under-addressed topic within geographical science, since it is approached from the standpoint of self-understanding of successful integration of Croat immigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) in Croatia, or in a certain way trying to avoid facing potential weaknesses and deficiencies in the process of integration into social context in Croatia. In line with the above, the paper narrowly addresses the issue of the social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats into the entire social environment in Croatia, on the example of a central-Dalmatian settlement, Okrug Gornji on the island of Čiovo, as a case study. The research is conducted in the context of studying the phenomenon of migration through the relation between ethnic/national and regional identity as the factors in the social integration of the immigrant population.

Okrug Gornji is a settlement with a population of 3,081, according to the 2011 census. This settlement is located in the centre of the Dalmatian region, in the Split-Dalmatia County, in the western part of the island of Čiovo. The selection of Okrug Gornji as a case study is not accidental at all, since in 2011 in relation to the total population of Okrug Municipality the share of immigrants born in B&H was as much as one fifth, which is apart from Gradac Municipality (30.2%) the largest share of this population per municipality in the Split-Dalmatia County. Indeed, it is known that during the second half of the 20th century, and especially during the war in the 1990s and in the post-war period, Dalmatia was exposed to migrations from B&H, with Okrug Gornji standing out by the share of Croats from B&H in its total population.

## 2. Objective and research methodology

The objective of the research is to determine the success level of integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats into the social context in Croatia, using the example of a Dalmatian settlement as a case study. Having in mind the size of this population and their ethnic (and religious) commonality with the domicile population of Okrug Gornji, but also different regional identity, the research starts from the hypothesis that Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats are successfully integrated into the social context of Okrug Gornji due to the ethno-religious commonality of domicile and immigrant population. In fact, it is assumed that the strength of ethnic/national, and even religious, is significantly greater than the strength of regional identity (Bosnian, Herzegovinian, Dalmatian or other regional identities), whereby the commonality of ethnic identity creates a positive stimulating effect on successful social integration of immigrants.

Social integration implies the possibility of achieving political, economic, cultural and other forms of social integration of the immigrant population, but also the openness to establish private ties between the domicile and immigrant population. Considering the social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats successful, it can be assumed that the research will not confirm the existence of elements of either spatial or social ghettoization of this population, whereby social ghettoization implies the impossibility of social integration through formal and/or informal ways of discriminatory and isolating procedures.

Examination of the success of social integration of Bosnian Croats in the social context of Okrug Gornji is conducted utilizing multi-criteria analysis of the survey results through the following criteria: subjective attitude of respondents about the success of integration, existence of elements of spatial ghettoization, participation of immigrants in the public life of the settlement and the readiness of the domicile and immigrant population to various levels of private relations with those of others. The statistical techniques have been used to process the survey results in such a way that Pearson chi-square testing of the respondents' answers was performed in the SPSS program. Selected sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents are presented later in the text, and their connection with the survey answers is investigated using the aforementioned testing. The survey reflects the subjective attitude of the respondents on the success of social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats in Okrug Gornji. The semi-structured interview with pre-prepared questions provides an opportunity for the selected target group of respondents to elaborate on what they consider to be particularly important (Clifford et al., 2016).

This method is used to gather information from persons who are more knowledgeable about the subject matter than the social average or directly have certain information relevant to the topic. Finally, the field indicator method is used as a typical geographical method with specific application in human-geographical research. In fact, in the circumstances of insufficient qualitative and quantitative sources and data, this method seeks to avoid these shortcomings by direct insight, which is especially emphasized in determining the elements of symbolic marking of space (Zupančič, 2006). In this particular case, using "door-to-door" technique, this method is used to determine the existence of elements of spatial ghettoization.

### **3. Theoretical aspects of research**

The article comes into theoretical area of human geography, bringing it into correlation with identity studies. In fact, the article deals with the phenomenon of migration as a research subject in human geography through the correlation of national and regional identity as a factor of social integration of the immigrant

population. Such an interdisciplinary approach to the research subject points to the complexity of the subject matter, thus the expected research results additionally gain in importance in terms of theoretical relevance.

### *Migration as a research subject in human geography*

The term of migration means the physical movement of the population, which, in addition to the population growth, is an integral part of the total movement of the population as its most complex component (Wertheimer-Baletić, 1999). Migrations are therefore the subject of research in various sciences and scientific disciplines, ranging from demography, economics, political science, history, sociology, security studies to geography. Within geography, human geography, primarily population geography, but also other geographical disciplines, including political geography, deal with migration. The article deals with the consequences of migration on changes in the socio-cultural environment in the circumstances of the common ethnic identity of the domicile and immigrant population.

The issue of social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats in Croatia is considered in the context of such an understanding of migration and the importance of identity in the process of adapting to the new sociocultural environment. Censuses are an exhaustive source of data on the demographic characteristics of migration. However, changes in the administrative-territorial organization present difficulties in the comparative analysis of migration in different census periods. Censuses contain characteristics of a migrant and non-migrant population, and for the purpose of comparative analysis it is necessary to classify the population according to specific characteristics. Apart from the census, migration surveys are also an important source of information on migration, their individual aspects, structures, migration motives, the standard of living of migrants and the direction of migration. (Wertheimer-Baletić, 1999).

Changes in the administrative-territorial organization of the Trogir area point to the difficulties mentioned above, and such a deficiency was sought to be avoided by a questionnaire. As it is known, according to the cause, migration can be economic and non-economic (Wertheimer-Baletić, 1999). In the case of migration of Croats from B&H to Croatia, the reasons for migration are various, considering whether we are talking about war or peacetime migration. Like other European Mediterranean countries, Croatia is at the same time an emigration and immigration country, but with specific historical circumstances and dominant immigration from B&H. As an example of an immigrant local community, this paper focuses on the settlement of Okrug Gornji, where the settling of Croats from B&H reached its peak during and after the wartime events of the 1990s.

*Identity and social integration as socio-geographical phenomena*

Mesić defines identity as a bond among those who identify themselves in that way, i.e. as a bond that holds one collective together and excludes others who do not meet the criteria of belonging (Mesić, 2006). Therefore, identity manifests itself as inseparable from social formation and is recognized through the principle of identity unification (Bromberger et al., 2002). Understanding ethnicity within the sociobiological paradigm as an extension of kinship (Poutignat and Streiff-Fenart, 1997), the commonality of ethnic identity in the case of migration of Croats from B&H to Croatia is considered to be a crucial factor for integration. Indeed, the Croatian nation in its final form has been established according to the ethnic model which, according to Čičak-Chand, “defines the nation in terms of ethnicity and strong ties of culture and language”, and nations are “communities by fate” linked by objective characteristics (history, language, culture and blood ties) (Čičak-Chand, 1998).

As a result of migration, migrant communities were formed in formal and informal forms: from gatherings and cafes to businesses and associations of various character (Božić, 1998). In the case of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats immigrated to Croatia, the distinctive features are not based on ethnicity but on regional affiliation. Without intending to burden the article with the process of Croatian national integration, it is important to remind that Croats today have the status of a nation-building nation in two states, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, whereby they (self) identify as a unique nation. Therefore, in this particular case, the strength of ethnic and regional identity is the basis for studying the success of immigrant integration. If the ethnic identity of both the domicile and immigrant population is stronger than the regional one, the level of integration will be high. However, if the regional identity of both population is stronger than the ethnic one, the level of integration will be significantly lower.

Social integration is considered as the process of the end of group separation (Juka, 2000). The most powerful integration processes are expressed through these social subsystems: political integration (through political organization); economic integration (by development of capitalist economy and free market); cultural integration (by development of education and culture); social integration (by achieving civil liberties, democracy, solidarity and integration) (Korunić, 2000). The term of ghettoization is opposed to integration. The term of ghetto originally refers to a city district in which Jews forcibly lived in the past separately from other citizens, while in modern terminology it means a less valuable city district in which some discriminated population groups live because of religious, economic, racial or other differences, or members of a discriminated ethnic group minorities, but also a separate space in and out of the city for any reason (Cvitanović, 2002).

Some social groups consciously aspire to separate forms of occupation and use of living space. When a social group or community closes itself off from its environment, it is about ghettoization as a process, and the spatial form is ghetto or ghettoized space. Separation motives are various and may be the result of older segregationist policies and ideologies that people still follow by inertia, although separation policies have already been overcome (Zupančič, 2017). However, elements of voluntariness are also encountered in ghettoization in cases where the rich are voluntarily ghettoized in their own urban areas. (Šarinić and Čaldarović, 2015). This article tries to determine the possible existence of any form and intensity of the spatial and social ghettoization of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats in the settlement of Okrug Gornji.

#### 4. Results and discussion

Okrug Gornji is located in the western part of the island of Čiovo and administratively belongs to the Okrug Municipality, which is located in the Split-Dalmatia County as the central part of Dalmatia. The island of Čiovo belongs to the group of central Dalmatian islands and has an area of 28.8 km<sup>2</sup>. Due to a number of circumstances (economic, war, political, security, national), Dalmatia, but also Croatia as a whole, is the target destination for migration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats. Taking into consideration the share of these immigrants in relation to the total population, Okrug Gornji is a settlement in which this migration process is particularly pronounced.

The Okrug Municipality administratively separated from the City of Trogir in 1997, and Okrug Gornji as the largest settlement becomes the municipal headquarter. In the past, the population has been predominantly engaged in agriculture and fisheries, while tourism nowadays is a fundamental economic activity. There is a very large difference between the number of inhabitants in the winter and summer months, and the spontaneous and dispersed spatial development has resulted in a high density of residential buildings and a significant change in the environment and the landscape (Miletić et al., 2018). Since the beginning of the war in Croatia and B&H, Okrug Gornji has recorded a continuous increase in population, and in the period from 1991 to 2011 (Table 1) the population doubled. Despite the increase in the number of holiday apartments, their relative share in the total number of apartments decreased from 67.1% to as much as 31.3%, indicating a significant trend in immigration. This interpretation is further strengthened by the fact that the share of residents living in Okrug Gornji since birth from 1971 and 2001 has fallen from 89.4% to just 30.9% (Table 2). This data shows the highly immigrant character of this settlement, and the share of immigrants from abroad in the observed period increased from 2.1% to 33.1% of the population (Miletić et al., 2018).

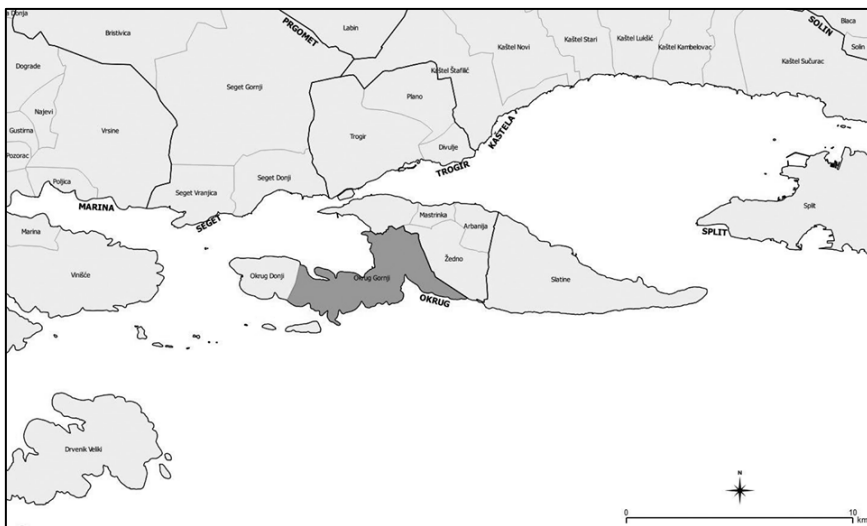


Figure 1: Geographical location of Okrug Gornji (Source: Miletić et al., 2018)

The largest number of immigrants (Table 3) comes from the territory of Croatia (1,290 persons), while 1,147 persons came from abroad, the largest number from B&H, as many as 680 or 59.3% (CBS, 2013). Moreover, residents of the Municipality of Okrug born in B&H make up as much as a fifth (20.3%) of the total population, which positions this municipality at the very top of municipalities and cities in Split-Dalmatia County according to the number of inhabitants born in B&H. Indeed, only the Gradac Municipality has a higher share of births in B&H (30.2%), and the Okrug Municipality is followed by the City of Makarska with 13.5% of the population born in BiH, while 6.1% of members of this population live in the Split-Dalmatia County as a whole (CBS, 2013). However, these data should be taken with caution, since some people, including some Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats, who do not live there permanently on the coast and on the islands have been registered, but they are formally registered for various reasons.

Table 1: Population and housing units in the settlement of Okrug Gornji 1971-2011.

Year	Population	Holiday apartments	Total apartments	Holiday apartments share in total number of apartments (%)
1971.	909	38	272	13,9
1981.	1,044	372	752	49,4
1991.	1,514	1,442	2,148	67,1
2001.	2,767	1,100	2,463	44,6
2013.	3,081	1,779	5,678	31,3

Source: Miletić et al., 2018.

Table 2: Migration features of population in Okrug Gornji in 1971 and 2001.

Year	Living in same settlement since birth		Immigrants from the other settlement of the same municipality		Immigrants from other municipalities		Immigrants from abroad	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1971	813	89.4	47	5.2	25	2.8	19	2.1
2001	855	30.9	-	-	970	35.1	916	33.1

Table 3: Population by migration features and gender in 2011.

	Total population	Live in the same settlement since birth	Immigrated to the settlement										Unknown	
			from the territory of the Republic of Croatia				from abroad							
			total	from the other settlement of the	from the other city of the same county	from the other county	total	B&H	Germany	Serbia	Slovenia	Kosovo		other countries
	3,349	907	1,290	3	1,001	286	1,147	680	266	35	6	5	155	5
M	1,647	503	574	-	445	129	569	320	143	20	1	2	83	1
F	1,702	404	716	3	556	157	578	360	123	15	5	3	72	4

Source: CBS 2013.

Based on a survey conducted in the period from June to September 2018 on a random sample of one hundred adult respondents among the inhabitants of Okrug Gornji (3.2% of the population according to the 2011 census), the chi-square testing of responses related to the integration achievements of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats in this settlement is conducted. The survey included 56 men and 44 women. Half of the respondents are up to 30 years of age, 24 are between 31 and 45, 15 are 46 to 60, and only 11 are over 60.

Such a sample with a dominant proportion of respondents up to 30 years of age does not correspond to the share that the same age group would occupy in the total population of Okrug Gornji, but is a useful indicator of future identity trends. The questionnaire had a total of 23 questions related to the personal profile of the respondents, their way of self-identification with Okrug Gornji and their subjective attitude about the success of the social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats in this settlement.



Table 4: Age structure of respondents.

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-30	50	50.0	50.0	50.0
31-45	24	24.0	24.0	74.0
46-60	15	15.0	15.0	89.0
61-	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

In terms of education, the majority of respondents have completed secondary education (54%), 33% have a college or university degree, while a much smaller proportion of respondents have completed primary school (9%), a postgraduate or doctorate (3%), and only 1% of respondents do not have even completed elementary school. The data do not differ significantly from the data from the 2011 census year, except in the case of higher education. By marital status, half of the respondents are unmarried, which is attributed to the fact that half of them are under 30 years of age. Married respondents are 36%, divorced 10%, while the remaining four respondents are widowed. The majority of respondents live in households with 3 to 5 members (65%), while a quarter of respondents live in households with a total of up to 2 members, with only 10% in households with more than 5 members.

Considering the age structure of the respondents, it is not surprising that almost four fifths of the respondents (79%) have up to two children or no children at all. On the other hand, 19% of respondents have 3 to 5 children and only two have more than 5 children. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents (59%) have monthly incomes ranging from HRK 3500 to 7000, which is very close to the statistical average of personal income in Croatia. An identical number of respondents or 17% answered that their income was less than HRK 3500 or that this amount was between HRK 7000 and 10000. Only 6% of them have a personal income in excess of HRK 10000, while only one respondent has no personal income. According to the type of income, the results indicate that the majority of respondents (37%) receive a salary from a private employer, while 29% earn a salary from a public employer, and one fifth have income from their own sources. Pension is received by 10% of respondents, while only 4 respondents receive social benefits. Only 38% of respondents live in their own apartment or house, 13% live in a separate apartment in their parent's house, while even one third of the respondents live with their parents. The share of respondents who point out Okrug Gornji as their birthplace (31%), another place in Dalmatia (32%) or one of the places in B&H (30%) is almost identical, while only 3% were born in another place in Croatia and 4% elsewhere.

Regarding the place of birth of the respondents' parents, 43% answered that their parents' birthplace is in B&H, followed by 27% of the respondents whose parents were born in other parts of Dalmatia, and only 15% state Okrug Gornji as their parents' birthplace. The smallest number of respondents answered that their parents' birthplace is in other parts of Croatia (11%) or elsewhere (4%). Among the respondents who have their birthplace or their parents' birthplace in B&H, almost half (46.8%) stated that they came from more remote parts of Bosnia, which mainly refers to Central Bosnia. A slightly smaller proportion of respondents (38.3%) originating in B&H replied that they came from the closer parts of B&H along the border with Dalmatia, with only 14.9% originating from more remote parts of Herzegovina. They provided various answers as a reason for moving to Okrug Gornji, and 40.4% of respondents originating from B&H point out that war is the predominant reason. On the other hand, almost a third of respondents (29.8%) emphasize quality of life as a reason for relocation, and 17% of respondents emphasize business reasons, while even 12.8% emphasize some other reasons.

Regarding the personal identification of the respondents with Okrug Gornji as their homeland, an attempt is made to determine the connection between the identification with this settlement and the regional origin of the respondents. In fact, only one third of respondents said that they consider this settlement their homeland, while more than half of them are not sure how Okrug Gornji is perceived, since 45% of respondents also consider and do not consider this settlement their homeland, and that 6% do not know how to answer this question. Moreover, a significant proportion of 15% of respondents do not consider Okrug Gornji their homeland. When we examine the results according to the birthplace of the respondents, the results are significantly different, which is confirmed by the performed chi-square testing of the obtained results. Indeed, while 83.8% of the respondents who point out Okrug Gornji as their birthplace also consider this settlement their homeland, only 18.8% of respondents born in other places in Dalmatia think this way.

In addition, only a small 3.3% of respondents whose birthplace is located in B&H consider Okrug Gornji their homeland, while even 36.7% said that they do not consider the settlement in which they live as their homeland. When analysing the results according to the birthplace of the respondents' parents, the results are very similar, which is also statistically confirmed by the chi-square test performed. In fact, while more respondents who declare Okrug Gornji the birthplace of their parents (93.3%) also consider this settlement their homeland, about a quarter of respondents whose parents were born in other places in Dalmatia think this way. In addition, a quarter of respondents who found their parents' birthplace in B&H stated that they considered Okrug Gornji their homeland, while slightly fewer (23.3%) said that they did not consider the settlement in which they live as their homeland.

The results indicate that the non-domicile respondents recorded an increase in the level of identification with Okrug Gornji already with the first generation born in the settlement. When it comes to social engagement in Okrug Gornji, most respondents consider themselves socially active, with only 15% of them claiming to be socially inactive. However, within the area of social engagement, there is a certain diversity of activities, since even 38% of respondents did not complete any of the offered forms of social engagement but “something else”, and most often, cultural activism was rounded off from the offered answers (32%). Finally, a quarter of the respondents are active in the religious life of the settlement, and the smallest part of them is politically active (12%). The conducted chi-square test did not find any significant differences in the social engagement of the respondents in relation to their native origin. Among the socially active respondents, half of them associate their social engagement with their native origin, with 9% of them indicating that their social activity is entirely related to their native origin, and even 38.5% of the respondents partly associate the engagement with their roots.

In a certain way, native origin motivates 34.1% of the respondents whose social engagement both relate and do not relate in their native origin, while only 16% do not partially or fully associate their social engagement with their native origin. When it came to highlighting the type of identity by relevance, respondents were asked to sort by priority national, regional, religious or other identity. Most respondents opted for religious identity as the most important (even 40%), followed immediately by national identity, which 39% consider to be the most important.

However, it is indicative that only 12% of respondents consider regional identity as the most important, while only 9% consider another type of identity as the most important. The results indicate that the order of priority experience of religious and national identity will positively influence the successful social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats in Okrug Gornji in relation to the situation when the regional identity would be considered the most important. Thereby, even 42% of the respondents would accept persons who did not come from their homeland as family members, while 52% considers that they could accept such persons as friends but not as family members. However, it is encouraging that only 6% of respondents do not accept persons who do not come from their homeland either as friends or as members of their families, but tolerate them in their vicinity, while no respondent stated that do not accept or tolerate such persons in his/her vicinity.

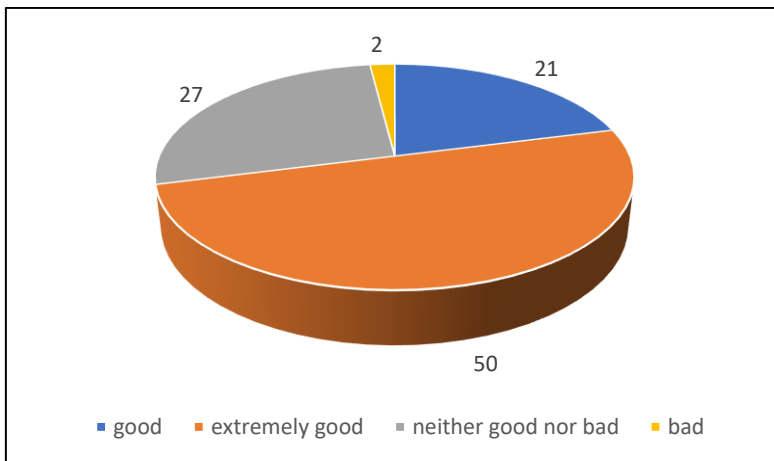


Figure 2: Perception of the success of integration of immigrants from B&H in Okrug Gornji.

Even half of the respondents consider the relations between the domicile and the immigrant population in Okrug Gornji to be good, while even one fifth consider the relationship to be extremely good. However, 27% of the respondents do not consider the relations of the domicile and the immigrants as good or bad, while only 3% of them consider the relationship bad and none considers it extremely bad. By grouping the respondents by place of birth, we get very similar percentages of answers, dominated by a positive attitude towards the question asked. Similar results are also found in the assessment of the success of integration of the immigrant population from B&H into the community in Okrug Gornji (Figure 2). Again, even half of the respondents rated the integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croat immigrants as good, while even 21% rated integration as very good. However, again 27% of respondents do not consider integration as good or bad, while only 2% of them consider immigrants' integration as bad, and none of them consider the level of integration extremely bad.

When we group respondents by their parents' birthplace, we get very similar percentages of responses that are dominated by a positive attitude to the question asked. Selecting the order of occasions that contribute most to the successful integration of immigrant Croats from B&H in Okrug Gornji, even 36% said that business and social resourcefulness of immigrants contributed most to integration, while 34% saw hospitality of the domicile population as the most important integration factor. In addition, a significant 28% of respondents believe that the successful integration of immigrants is a result of belonging of domicile and immigrant population to the same ethnicity, while only 2% cite other factors as crucial.

On the other hand, the majority of respondents (37%) consider the inhospitality of the domicile population to be the phenomenon that most disable the successful integration of immigrants, and 24% of them consider the immigrants' business and social lack of resourcefulness to be responsible. An almost identical number of respondents (23%) highlighted the diversity of the regional identity of domicile and immigrant population as a barrier to successful integration, while 16% cited some other arguments.

The results of the survey and chi-square tests show that the majority of the respondents expressed a positive opinion on the success of integration of the immigrant Croats from B&H into the social context of Okrug Gornji, without significant differences in the respondents' regional origin. Moreover, questions regarding the level and type of social engagement of the respondents also did not reveal any significant differences between the respondents with respect to their regional origin. According to the survey, the level of social inclusion of Croats from B&H is found to be almost equal to the level of inclusion of the domicile population in Okrug Gornji, and that both groups within this community similarly evaluate their relations and the level of success of integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats into the social context of the settlement.

Therefore, it can also be established that commonality of the ethnic identity was crucial in integration, despite the strong differences between regional identities. Considering them as persons with the most comprehensive insight into the social life of Okrug Gornji, in August 2018, an interview was conducted with Ivica Radić, the Mayor of the Okrug Municipality and also a member of the domicile population, and Don Ivan Babić, the parish priest of the Okrug Parish, asking them about their attitude on the relations between the domicile and immigrant population and the level of success of the integration of immigrant Croats from B&H into Okrug Gornji. Both interviewees said that Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats may feel welcome by the domicile population in Okrug Gornji, which corresponds with the results of the survey.

The Mayor emphasized that many Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats had already raised children in Okrug Gornji and taken over some of the local customs, and despite their different traditions, belonging to the same people further strengthened their acceptance by the domicile population. The parish priest points out that the Church, which has significantly contributed to coexistence and even assimilation, is largely due to the welcome of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats. Such a claim can be considered quite justified, since the results of the survey confirm the equal engagement in religious institutions and associations by the domicile and immigrant population. Asked if they consider that the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats have done enough to integrate successfully into the new environment, both interviewees responded similarly.

The Mayor estimates that about 70% of them did much to integrate, while the remainder included those Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats who did not come directly from B&H but from Germany or some other country, considering themselves to be more valuable than the others. The parish priest believes that the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats made a lot of efforts to integrate into the new environment, but notes that more could have been done, especially given the need to understand the differences in mentality. Both interviewees spoke positively about the representation of immigrants in social, cultural, political, religious and other forms of public life in Okrug Gornji. The Mayor points out that already this population makes up about half the population of the settlements and that Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats are involved in numerous citizens' associations, klapas and sports associations, while the parish priest adds that this type of their engagement has been systematically encouraged by the Church for the purpose of more successful integration.

Considering that belonging to the Croatian people and the Catholic religion was a crucial factor in successful integration, Mayor Radić confirms the results of the survey. Moreover, the Mayor welcomes the mixing of the population that came with the arrival of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats, as well as the diversification of the structure of the economy, since the new population has increased the share of the working population, especially in occupations that were not represented in Okrug Gornji, such as construction, as opposed to agriculture and fisheries traditionally dealt with by the domicile population. In addition, the Mayor points out that tourism is the only activity common to all residents, but adds that Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croat immigrants in the service sector are often more successful and business more creative than the domicile population, sharing experience gained elsewhere.

The parish priest Babić agrees with the above, pointing out the advantages of Okrug Gornji as a place of better quality of living compared to the communities from which the immigrants originate, which enables them economic progress and thus successful integration. However, the interviewees' views on obstacles to the integration of immigrants are quite different. While Mayor Radić believes that the obstacle to faster integration is the part of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats who live in Germany for most of the year, and only during the summer months in Okrug Gornji, the parish priest Babić sees potential obstacles to successful integration in political disunity as a social reality of Croatian society as a whole. It is interesting that none of the interviewees offered answers from the questionnaire, since they see potential obstacles to successful integration as a rule outside the settlement.

Finally, neither the interview nor the field research within the boundaries of the Okrug Gornji settlement identified the existence of elements of spatial ghettoization of the population immigrated from B&H.

Indeed, a field research found that the spatial distribution of the population does not, as a rule, have a zonal character in terms of population gathering according to regional origin. Specifically, conducting the survey questionnaire, the researcher used the “door-to-door” technique and, by visiting a significant number of households in Okrug Gornji, found that there was no spatial separation between the domicile and immigrant population. Therefore, in this particular case, there is no evidence of the spatial ghettoization of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats in Okrug Gornji.

According to the results of the survey, half of the surveyed residents of Okrug Gornji subjectively assess the social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats in this settlement as successful, while a fifth of the respondents consider the same phenomenon very successful. Adding a similar assessment by the mayor and the parish priest who, in addition to successful integration, point to certain difficulties and differences, it is concluded that the first set criterion for examining the success of social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats is generally met. The “door-to-door” technique of conducting the survey did not establish the existence of elements of spatial ghettoization of immigrants in Okrug Gornji, so the second success criterion was fully met.

The survey and interviews determine a high level of involvement of all residents in the public life of the settlement, regardless of regional origin, emphasizing the partial orientation of interest towards regional identity. In addition, the only visible differences between domiciles and immigrants, except in different regional traditions, are found only in the economic structure of the population, and therefore this criterion is assessed as mostly satisfied. Finally, the survey showed that almost half of the respondents are willing to accept people of different regional backgrounds as family members, indicating a high level of acceptance, but still less than just over half of the respondents who can only accept such people as friends, so therefore this criterion is assessed as generally satisfied. In accordance with the above criteria, it can be concluded that the social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats in Okrug Gornji is generally successful.

Besides that, the survey results confirmed that the ethnic and religious identities are stronger than regional identity, confirming the claim that the commonality of the ethnic identity of the domicile and immigrant population creates a positive incentive effect on the successful social integration of immigrants in Okrug Gornji. Finally, the results of the research do not negate the strength of regional identity, but it is not so much as to be an obstacle to the successful integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats in the social context of ethnic and religious commonality.

## **5. Conclusion**

The article presents the challenging topic of social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats who immigrated to Croatia. Indeed, the issue of social integration of this population in Croatia is most often viewed from the aspect of self-understanding, since any other understanding of this issue would open a number of politically sensitive issues. The selection of Okrug Gornji as a case study proved to be completely justified, taking into consideration the immigrant character of this settlement and the share of residents born in B&H in its total population.

In addition, located in the centre of Dalmatia, Okrug Gornji nurtures the developed Dalmatian regional identity of its inhabitants, so the confrontation of the strength of ethnic and regional identity in this case has become especially important. However, the research largely confirmed the hypothesis that the social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats in Okrug Gornji was successful without established forms of spatial and social ghettoization of immigrants. Also, the research confirmed that the success of integration was significantly contributed by the ethnic and religious commonality of the domicile and immigrant population despite the differences in regional identity.

Interdisciplinarity that correlates demographic with identity and sociological perspectives through the correlation of ethnic and regional identity as a factor of social integration of immigrant population, has significantly contributed to the theoretical relevance of this research, which also opens space for some new approaches and research. However, such issues addressed by this research cannot be limited to only one scientific discipline, in this case exclusively to demography or population geography, but should be viewed through different scientific approaches, and even from the aspect of political geography whose theoretical settings were not discussed too much in this article.

Understanding the fundamental issues addressed in this article as much more identity issues and much less demographic in the narrowest sense of the terms, this case study encourages the possibilities of further research on some other case studies that open the possibility of establishing new generalizations and final conclusions on social integration of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats in the Croatian social context.



## 6. References

- Božić, S. 1998: Etničnost migrantskih zajednica: nastajanje novih manjina, in: Čičak- Chand, R., Kumpes, J. (eds.): Etničnost, nacija, identitet: Hrvatska i Europa. Institut za migracije i narodnosti, Jesenski i Turk, Hrvatsko sociološko društvo. Zagreb. 85-100.
- Bromberger, C., Centlivres, P., Collomb, G. 2002: Između lokalnog i globalnog: figure identiteta, in: Segalen, M. (eds.) Drugi i sličan: pogledi na etnologiju suvremenih društava. Jesenski i Turk. Zagreb. 177-189.
- Clifford, N., Cope, M., Gillespie, T., French, S. 2016: Key Methods in Geography, SAGE Publications Ltd., London.
- Croatian Bureau of Statistics (CBS) 2013: Population by migration characteristics and gender, 2011 Census. [https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv/censuses/census2011/results/htm/h01\\_01\\_38/h01\\_01\\_38\\_zup17.html](https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv/censuses/census2011/results/htm/h01_01_38/h01_01_38_zup17.html) (30.04.2019).
- Cvitanović, A. 2002: Geografski rječnik. Hrvatsko geografsko društvo, Filozofski fakultet, Matica hrvatska. Zadar.
- Čičak-Chand, R. 1998: Oblici etničnosti u Europi i osnovne značajke odnosa zemalja imigracije prema novim etničkim manjinama, in: Čičak-Chand, R., Kumpes, J. (eds.): Etničnost, nacija, identitet: Hrvatska i Europa. Institut za migracije i narodnosti, Jesenski i Turk, Hrvatsko sociološko društvo. Zagreb. 57-69.
- Juka, S. 2000: Migrant kao socijalni fenomen. Pedagoški fakultet. Mostar.
- Korunić, P. 2000: Fenomen nacije: porijeklo, integracija i razvoj. <https://pkorunic.net/pdf/Fenomen-nacije.pdf> (11.05.2019).
- Mesić, M. 2006: Multikulturalizam: društveni i teorijski izazovi. Školska knjiga. Zagreb.
- Miletić, G. M., Bara, M., Marinović Golubić, M. 2018: Sekundarno stanovanje i transformacija naselja Okruga Gornjeg na otoku Čiovu. Pogled iz lokalne perspektive. Sociologija i prostor 56 (3). 227-249. DOI 10.5673/sip.56.3.2.
- Poutignat, P., Streiff-Fenart, J. 1997: Teorije o etnicitetu. Biblioteka XX vek. Zemun. Čigoja Štampa. Beograd.
- Šarinić, J., Čaldarović, O. 2015: Suvremena sociologija grada: od nove urbane sociologije prema sociologiji urbanog. Jesenski i Turk. Zagreb.
- Wertheimer-Baletić, A. 1999: Stanovništvo i razvoj. Biblioteka Gospodarska misao. Zagreb.
- Zupančič, J. 2017: Socialna geografija: človek, prostor in čas. Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete. Ljubljana.
- Zupančič, J. 2006: Terenski indikatorji kot raziskovalna metoda v socialni in politični geografiji. Dela 25. 7-14.

