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Power of Categorization: Natives and Incomers in Southeastern Kosovo*

The paper is based on fieldwork conducted over the course of a period from 2003 until 2006 at refugee centers in Serbia proper and Southeastern Kosovo, more specifically in a part of the area known today as Kosovsko Pomoravlje. The paper is intended to present preliminary results of the probe into the issue of relations between the native Serbs and Serb incomers (colonized in the area after 1918 as part of the agrarian reform drive). Incomers from Southeastern Serbia to whom the native population ascribed the "Šop" identity are the focal point of the research.

Key words:

Kosovo, Kosovsko Pomoravlje, Serbs, Albanians, Sops, natives, incomers, colonization, ethnic identity, identification, categorization

Field research in Southeastern Kosovo started in 2003 among internally displaced people from this area at refugee centers in Smederevo, Vranje and Vranjska Banja, and *in situ* in the enclave of Vitina, which, in addition to the town of Vitina itself, also comprises villages of Vrbovac, Grnčar, Binač, Klokot and Mogila.¹ The research subsequently resumed² in the Vitina enclave but also in

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Gnjilane and surrounding villages (Šilovo, Gornje Kusce, Gornji Livoč, Parteš, Pasjane, etc.).³ From the very outset of the field research at “Radinac” refugee camp near Smederevo, in an interview of an elderly woman from Cernica near Gnjilane, the issue of relations between the *natives* and *incomers*, self-identification and identification by others, stood out. Talking about weddings in Kosovo, the female interviewee referred to her own family as “native” as opposed to the incomers whom she referred to as “Šops” [Sops], thus drawing a sharp *we/they* dividing line. In the course of further research among the displaced people from Kosovo, this issue permeated and was, at times, even dominant in almost all the interviews conducted. My informants that fled Kosovo in June 1999 and who are officially designated in Serbia as “internally displaced people”, effectively placing them in a non-status *neither-here-nor-there* limbo, continued, in their hearts and minds to live in Kosovo. The *natives/incomers* division was still conspicuously relevant, reinforced by the gloom of refugee life reality. During the field researches in 2005 and 2006, the interviewees were burdened with the problems of their subsistence, their life under the protectorate and anxiety over the final solution to the Kosovo status, hence, colonization was discussed with restraint taking into account the passage of time and mostly when I brought up the issue in my questions. Nevertheless, their stories confirmed my opinion that the issue of relations between the (at least) two groups within the Serb ethnic community in the area under scrutiny as well as the ways in which these groups define and designate one another must be inevitably explored further.

As Richard Jenkins explained, ethnicity (other forms of collective identity as well, depending on the social context) always represents the result of interaction between continuous processes of external and internal designation, self-identification and identification by others. The external and internal definitions are intertwined and dependant on one another, so that one cannot be understood without the other.⁴ The external definition – categorization – is an important dimension of the internal definition.⁵ In cases of mutual consent, the internal definition becomes confirmed; if there’s no consensus, then one group imposes a name and categorization to another group which considerably influences the social experience of the categorized.⁶ According to this approach (where society and its categories are taken to be social constructs), identities are fluid, determined by the situation and open to negotiation, while at the same time, being significantly influenced by external definition, the question of power and dominance.⁷ This paper only aims to present a

² This part of the project was carried out within the projects of the Institute of Ethnography, SASA.

³ All toponyms are given in their Serb vernacular variants.

⁴ Ričard Dženkins, *Etnicitet u novom ključu: argumenti i ispitivanja*, Biblioteka XX vek, Beograd 2001, 97, 127, 285. [Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*, SAGE Publications, London 1997].

⁵ *Ibid*, 101.

⁶ *Ibid*, 94.

⁷ *Ibid*, 91, 291.

preliminary result of the research,⁸ and it is directed towards understanding the role of internal definition – categorization in terms of groups- in processes of identity construction among the members of Serbian community in the area of Southeastern Kosovo. The interpretation of one’s own identity among the incomers in Kosovo, and sometimes even among the natives, is closely related to the possible interpretations given by the other party respectively.⁹ Focusing on the external definition, the so-called “neighborly discourse”,¹⁰ allows a deeper insight into the dynamics of identity shaping processes in a border and multi-ethnic area.

Colonization – Background

After 1912 Kosovo merged the Kingdom of Serbia and the government brought various agricultural legislation and demographic measures (colonization) to aid the process of merging. During WW I the process ceased, only to be continued with more intensity after 1918, in the next agricultural reform. Manifesto by Alexander Karadjordjević from December 21/24, 1918¹¹ identified the necessity of agricultural reform on the whole territory of the united Kingdom, with an aim to terminate residues of feudalism and give the land to the farmers and war volunteers. Colonization was further supported by various acts: in 1919, a policy¹² was proposed that emphasized colonization; the legislation referring exclusively to agricultural reform and colonization of Kosovo was proclaimed in 1920: “Policy on colonization of new southern areas”.¹³ Non-occupied state land, rural and municipal land were designated for colonization. The policy defined regulations accordingly, so that every family would get four or five hectares, and in city areas no less than

⁸ The problem in the relationship between the Serbs natives and incomers (Šops), self-identification and identification by others is briefly presented in Sanja Zlatanović, „Šopovi“ u Kosovskom Pomoravlju, *Skrivene manjine na Balkanu*, Balkanološki institut SANU, Posebna izdanja 82, Beograd 2004, 83-93.

⁹ Compare Vered Talai, *Social boundaries within and between ethnic groups: Armenians in London*, Man (N.S), 21, 1986, 267-268.

¹⁰ The term “neighboring“ discourse is introduced by Biljana Sikimić, *Etnolingvistička istraživanja skrivanih manjina – mogućnosti i ograničenja: Čerkezi na Kosovu*, *Skrivene manjine na Balkanu*, Balkanološki institut SANU, Posebna izdanja 82, Beograd 2004, 259-281. The discourse about “others” is analyzed in several other papers: Marija Ilić, „Izgubljeno u prevodu“: *Romi u diskursu Srba iz Trešnjevce*, *Banjaši na Balkanu: identitet etničke zajednice*, Balkanološki institut SANU, Posebna izdanja 88, Beograd 2005, 121-144; Svetlana Ćirković, *Etnički stereotipi o Romima u Srbiji: pragmatolingvistička analiza*, *Društvene nauke o Romima u Srbiji*, Odeljenje društvenih nauka SANU, knj. 29, Komisija za proučavanje života i običaja Roma, Beograd 2007, 169-186; Sanja Zlatanović, *Đorgovci: skica za portret podeljenog identiteta*, *Društvene nauke o Romima u Srbiji*, Odeljenje društvenih nauka SANU, knj. 29, Komisija za proučavanje života i običaja Roma, Beograd 2007, 195-197.

¹¹ Newspaper *Slobodne novine*, no. 2/1919, cited according to: Bogdan Lekić, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Jugoslaviji 1918-1941*, Udruženje ratnih dobrovoljaca 1912-1918, Službeni list SRJ, Beograd 2002, 100, 222.

¹² Newspaper *Slobodne novine*, no. 11/1919, cited according to: B. Lekić, op cit., 100, 223-225.

¹³ Newspaper *Slobodne novine*, no. 232/1920, cited according to: B. Lekić, op cit., 288-292.

two hectares. Depending on land quality, there was a possibility of acquiring even more land. The policy benefited colonizers in many other ways: free transportation, usage of state building material such as woods for house building and so on. The agricultural reform was a slow and difficult process though, the same as colonization.¹⁴ The state help did not aid enough: the colonists had to take matters in their own hands, cut woods, build houses and fertilize land. The colonization was marked by various irregularities, weak organization and inconsistency.¹⁵ However, it was a planned colonization: people from (mostly from Lika, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Monte Negro, Metohija and Southeastern Serbia) settled on the states' designated areas, they could not choose like the ones that moved in before WW I.¹⁶ In fact, they began to inhabit the areas with predominantly Albanian population. Atanasije Urošević explains it in the following way:

After the World War, many Serbs have moved in. This was aided by colonization. For the most part, the new colonizers were given land for free, to move in. It is only here, that the colonizers were settled in where the government determined; they could not choose the place like the first ones. Therefore, these others are not found everywhere, but only in the areas designated by the government. The majority reside in the western part of Gornja Morava (west of Požeranja and Vitina), an area inhabited solely until the Liberation by the Albanians. The main roads were taken care off too. That is why the colonists were moved again in the western part of Gornja Morava, with certain distances near the road from Uroševac all the way to Požeranja [...]. Economy caused this population to move out of their native area, but the government added up a political moment too.¹⁷

Other authors, like Milovan Obradović, also claimed that the national goals were the foundation of the colonization of Kosovo.¹⁸ However, the recent Serbian literature¹⁹ disputes the argument, claiming no such goal was present. On the other hand, all of the informants, the natives and incomers alike, view the colonization as a national strategy.

The local Albanians did not accept the incomers well: they were against colonization, land sharing, Serbian enhanced presence in the Albanian homogenous

¹⁴ See Atanasije Urošević, *Аграрна реформа и насељавање*, Споменица двадесет-петогодишњице ослобођења Јужне Србије 1912-1937, Скопље 1937, 819-833. Lekić documents data and events on the reform and colonization in Yugoslavia in 1918-194: B. Lekić, op. cit., 221-579.

¹⁵ See B. Lekić, op. cit., 136-139

¹⁶ Atanasije Urošević, *Горња Морава и Изморник*, Насеља и порекло становништва, књ. 28, Српски етнографски зборник LI, Београд 1935, 81.

¹⁷ A. Урошевић, *Горња Морава и Изморник...*, 81-82.

¹⁸ Milovan Obradović, *Аграрна реформа и колонизација на Косову (1918-1941)*, Institut za istoriju Kosova, Priština 1981, 104-105.

¹⁹ B. Lekić, op. cit., 197-198.

villages, especially so since these Serbs were from a different area.²⁰ The native Serbs too, had similar opinions: the incomers, although coming from the same genetic pool spoke differently, had different customs and behavior; the natives were especially bothered by the way the incomers had got the land – for “free” (which is emphasized even today) – unlike them, whose ancestors acquired it “in blood”. Some sources even point out to the notable examples of cooperation between the native Serbs and Albanians against the incomers, perceived as the usurpers.²¹ Hence, the status and standings of the incomers were very difficult: they were not welcomed well by the local populations and the state failed to provide necessary means of support.²² My informants described the hard life of their parents and ancestors in the period of colonization. In a quest for better life, they have traveled by foot, some families in harnessed vehicles managed to move some of the belongings, while once there, they had to clean and cut forests and fight to survive.

The fieldwork among the incomers was focused on groups from wider area of the city of Vranje, from poor villages near Surdulica, Vlasina, Vladičin Han, Vranjska Banja and Pčinja that were once settled on the territory of Southeastern Kosovo, in the villages of Vlaštica, Žegra, Cernica, Požaranje, Trpeza, Grmovo, Drobeš, Kabaš, Novo Selo, Tankosić, etc. There were some incomers from villages in Vranje's vicinity who used to buy houses and estates from the Muslim population in Gnjilane.²³ After arriving in the new environment, they labeled *themselves* as *Vranjanci*, while the natives designated *them* as *Šops*.

Naming

The incomers, especially those from Southeastern Serbia, were regarded as *Šops* by the native populations. In the villages with mixed population of the natives and incomers from the Vranje area, the natives made a clear distinction between incomers from Monte Negro, Hercegovina etc. In certain villages, like Vrbovac and Grnčar (near Vitina), the natives labeled pejoratively all incomers (and not just those that came from the Vranje area, but also Montenegrins and those from Hercegovina) as *Šopi*, *Šopci* or *Šops* (*Šop* – masculine, *Šopka* – feminine, *Šopce/Šopciki* – child, children), regardless of their actual place of origin. One informant, born in 1939, from the village of Vrbovac explains it:

[1] We did not make any distinction. All people from Vranje, or where ever, we labeled “Vrcari”, or “Šops”. The same. (*So, all incomers were “Šops”?*) Yes, all incomers, all were “Šops”, all were “Vrcari”.

²⁰ Atanasije Urošević, op. cit., 153.

²¹ M. Obradović, op cit., 195; Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History*, New York University Press, 1998, 264-288.

²² On status and standings of the incomers see M. Obradović, op cit., 176-183.

²³ Атанасије Урошевић, *Гњилане*, Гласник српског географског друштва, св. XVII, Београд 1931, 48-49; Slobodan Simonović, *Dubnica i Dubničani*, A propo, Kruševac 2000, 81-102.

(*Why did you call them “Vrcari”?*) Well, it is our tradition, that is how my mother and grandmother spoke. “Vrcari” implies that they came from someplace else. Aliens. All people here labeled them like they [the incomers] were not Christians, so not to be trusted.

[2] We called them Šopci.

In the Vitina area, the incomers were also called *Vrcari*, the label derived from common occupation, rope making (*vrca*-rope). The natives hence had identified all incomers with the common label, while the incomers had perceived and maintained clear cut cultural boundaries.

The incomers had not accepted the assigned label for themselves (along with all that the name designated). During the interviews, the subject was rarely brought up by the informants themselves. When asked bluntly about it, most of them showed mixed emotions of humiliation and anger. Physically, they reacted by a gulp down and voice change. As an example, I present a transcript of an interview with an elderly female and her son (internally displaced from Žegra, Gornje Kusce). The son wanted to know if his father’s family (the groom’s), before marriage, had brought her wool so she could make presents (the informants are marked with the first letter of their respective names; my questions are in parenthesis):

[3] N: No, they didn’t bring me any. That was the custom among the natives. And we were Šopo...but not really, we are from Vranje! (*That is how the natives used to call you, right?*) Shh... We are from Vranje, dear, but the nickname was given to us...Č: OK, OK, they used to call them Šops. But they are...(*Were they called Šops, Šopci or Šopi?*) Č: Šops, Šopci, Šopci, Šops, that is all the same! (*So, the natives called the incomers from the Vranje area like that?*) Č: No, not from Vranje. Actually, all were labeled the same: people that came from Vranje, Han, from Lika and Monte Negro, in the Vitina area. Some Montenegrins were in Vitina.

A female informant, born in 1952 in Gnjilane, into the family of natives, explains how her husband addressed her sister-in-law (a brother’s wife) who was born into the incomers:

[4] “Šopke”, “Where are you Šopke?”, and she would get angry: “I’m not a Šopke, I am from Vranje!” “No way, you are Šopka for me”!

Even though the incomers did not accept and were opposed to the external definition, many examples show that the definition was also internalized.²⁴

It is now necessary to explain several issues regarding historical geography. *Šopluk* or *Šopsko* is a mountain area in the central Balkans. The boundaries of *Šopluk* are not clearly defined, in fact, literature provides different margins. These boundaries are difficult to establish since the residents refuse to be identified as

²⁴ See R. Dženkins, op cit., 125.

Šops; instead, others are always called Šops, the ones living further away²⁵. The name itself carries a deep pejorative connotation, assuming a very simple man, living isolated in mountains, far away from civilization.²⁶ There are multiple theories and assumptions on their origin, the meaning and origin of the name, but Slavic component has never been questioned.²⁷ At present, *Šopluk* includes the area in between Serbia, Macedonia and Bulgaria (nevertheless, state borders have been changed many times), with the largest part being in Bulgaria. Šops belong to the three south Slavic people and declare themselves as such.

It still remains an open question if the colonists, from the wider area of Vranje, were Šops or not, considering that they were identified as such by the local populations. The boundaries of *Šopluk* in Serbia are fluid hence the answer can be different. Jovan Cvijić defines Šops as the population of the higher/mountain parts of Pčinja, Vlasina, Lužnica and Pirot.²⁸ Rista Nikolić argues that the boundary goes from Bela Palanka and Pirot basin, encircling the villages of Vlasina, Crna Trava and Pčinja, so that Šops settle in mountain areas, and are not found in Pomoravlje.²⁹ From the cited authors, it could be concluded that a part of colonists surely originated in the territories inhabited by Šops. Throughout this manuscript, and in my discussion on the relationship between the natives and incomers, the colonists are marked with quotation marks (“Šops”), respecting their decline to be identified as such.

²⁵ Šop is always someone else, living even far away from the *Šopluk* boundaries. The population of Sredačka Župa pejoratively designate Sirinićani as being Šops, see Desanka Nikolić, *Etnokulturni stereotipi stanovnika Gore i Sredačke župe*, In: Šarplaninske župe Gora, Opolje i Sredska – antropogeografsko-etnološke, demografske, sociološke i kulturološke karakteristike, Geografski institut „Jovan Cvijić“ SANU, Posebna izdanja, knj. 40/II, Beograd 1995, 179.

²⁶ Young people in Kosovo explained, jokingly, that the name ŠOP is a short-term for “broadly educated mountain-man”. This, as it turns out, is a widely accepted explanation even among younger generation in Vranje, where the population of the Pčinja villages bear the name Šop.

²⁷ See more in: П. Р. Славейков, *Неколко думи за Шопите*, Периодическо списание на Българското книжовно дружество, кн. IX, Средець 1884, 106-123; Ю. Трифоновъ, *По произхода на името „Шопъ“*, Списание на Българската академия на науките, кн. XXII, София 1919, 122-158; Ст. Л. Костовъ, Е. Петева, *Селски битъ и изкуство въ Софийско*, Материали за историята на София, кн. VIII, София 1935, 11-28; В. Хаджиниколов, *Проблеми на етнографското изучаване на София и Софийско*, Народната култура в София и Софийско, Българско историческо дружество, секция „Етнография“, Етнографски институт и музей към БАН, София 1984, 11-30; Р. Сефтерски, *Софийските Шопи като историко-етническа формация в светлина на последните изследвания*, Народната култура в София и Софийско, Българско историческо дружество, секция „Етнография“, Етнографски институт и музей към БАН, София 1984, 55-65; Петко Христов, *Границите на „Шоплука“ и/или Шопи без граници*, Skrivene manjine na Balkanu, Balkanološki institut SANU, Posebna izdanja 82, Beograd 2004, 67-82.

²⁸ Јован Цвијић, *Основе за географију и геологију Македоније и Старе Србије*, кн. I, Београд 1906, 179.

²⁹ Риста Николић, *Крајиште и Власина*, Насеља српских земаља, кн. VIII, Српски етнографски зборник, кн. 18, Београд 1912, 222-223.

The incomers in Kosovo called the natives by the same name the natives used for themselves, (*Starosedelci* – masculine, *Starosedelka* – feminine) which clearly testifies on the power relationship. The colonists/incomers too, used to label the natives with somewhat pejorative name too, in their intra-group communication, or in their respective individual reactions to the enforced naming; hence the natives were called “hempen” (since they engaged in hemp raising more than the incomers) and “tails” (*reparci*) (a “tail” is a specific decoration made of spun out black wool that the native women wear around their waists, with fringes hanging at the back).

[4] We used to call them “hempen”. Because they raised hemp, and for us, it represented something gross, that is, raising hemp, sinking there, what do I know, in a whirlpool. And then, they call me “Šop” and I call them “hempen” (male informant, born in 1954 in Vlastica; he lives in a rented place in Vranje).

The native identity of the Serbs and Albanians in the area of Southeastern Kosovo, in the period of colonization, is not altogether undisputed. The notion of a native group is problematic in itself.³⁰ Besides, Atanasije Urošević provides the data on several waves of migrations and colonizations from the different areas, at the different time periods and for different reasons.³¹

Categorization

In the process of mutual identification both the native and incomer Serbs have denied each other the ethnic membership. The natives questioned Serbian identity of the incomers, taking them to be Šops and not real Serbs. This defined the incomers further as those belonging to “a different religion” (the less educated informants presume that the term religion assumes also ethnic and religious affiliation, as well as identity in general).

[5] We didn’t marry them since we assumed that it would mess up the (our) religion. They had a different way of speech, hard to bear: they used bad words, and swear a lot even mentioning the closest family members. This model also developed in our speech too, that you can say those things, but much later on (male informant born in 1939 in Vrbovac).

[6] We didn’t marry them, nor gave our daughters. “How can you give your daughter to Vrcari, or to take a wife from them?! Their families are like...you know. His rooster, sings from his vehicle. They were moving around all the time, there’s no consistency in them... they just announce: “I’m leaving now”. Then they sell something, and move

³⁰ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Pluto Press, London 2002, 125 (second edition).

³¹ А. Урошевић, *Горња Морава и Изморник...*, 68-91.

on. So, I would not give away my child to this kind of people. They move around, they would take my children away too. But now the time has come and we all live like that. Now a rooster sings on vehicle to everybody. And who would say it would come to this! (male informant born in 1939 in Vrbovac).

[7] They were not counted as one of “us”, these people that came from Vranje. They were really different. (...). My grandmother had the same opinion (...). Šops and the natives did not mix in marriages (female informant born in 1941 in Klokot, lives in Binač today).

On the other hand, for the incomers, the natives seemed similar to the Albanians. In describing the natives, the incomers emphasized the fact that the natives were longer under the Turkish rule than the people from Vranje (until 1912, while Vranje got liberated in 1878); moreover, the natives lived together with the Albanians, hence were experienced as “others” and culturally backwards by the incomers.

[8] They lived a very different life, these people, the natives. They lived among the Albanians. It was in the Turkish times. And those people who stayed to live among the Albanians, they accepted a lot of the Turkish way (...) Their women went around covered (...). They used...to live here...in the Turkish times...And so were we...live here in the Turkish times, but here...they stayed to live together with the Albanians...The same as Albanians, men and women were separated. It took them a long time to overcome this (female informant born in 1941 in Žegra, lives in a rented place in Vranje).

[9] They were not allowed to harass the natives (the informant is addressing the Albanians). The natives were the same as the Albanians – eye for an eye. And we – we were mellow people...And the natives were much more impulsive (male informant born in 1927 in Vlasina, then moved to Kabas, internally displaced in Binač).

The natives and “Šops”, although belonging to the same ethnic group (though sometimes denied by each other), religion, language and dialect (of the Prizren-Timok type but with a different local versions), lived as two endogamous groups. Mixed marriages are entered from 1960’s though sporadically, in specific family circumstances. Older people at both sides did not approve of the new practice.

[10] When one of us, the native, takes a Šop person for his/hers wife/husband, she/he is not looked upon as a human being (male informant born in 1926 in Pasjane, today lives in a camp in Vranjska Banja).

[11] They used to mock me, laugh at me, because I took her for my wife (*Who mocked at you?*) Well, my neighbors! (*And what do they say?*) Why have you taken a Šopka? A rooster sings from her vehicle, they used to tell me. They move around constantly, they came here from somewhere. They will stay here for awhile too, and then they

will just move on. And really, they ran away! (male informant, around 70, born in Žegra, now internally displaced in Gornje Kusce).

[12] The relationship between the Serbs and us, the incomers, was not very good. Not so good. There was a mutual distrust, so no one befriended with the natives, nor has given away a bride. Maybe I was the first one to “break the ice”. I married a native woman from Šilovo (...). My father had never accepted her (male informant born in 1936 in Vrbica, a Montenegrin, now internally displaced in Šilovo).

Since 1980's, mix marriages appear more frequent but the distinctive identities have remained until today. Many of the informants, even though being internally displaced from Kosovo, emphasize that they are the natives, that their sons are married with the native women and so on. Children from the mix marriages are called mutts. In a few cases that I've come across, these children, now grown ups, say they feel as “natives”, choosing hence a more favorable identity. If a father appears to be a native, then they experience their own identity as indisputable.

The distinctive identities are based on the interpretations of the local and regional differences. The local, that is, regional identities in certain aspects assume a significance of an ethnic identity. The members of another group are experienced as different while possible kinship relation between the groups is seen as a threat to one's own identity (see transcript [5]); children from such mix unions are considered to be mutts etc. The natives openly declare to view the incomers as “aliens”, “being non-Christians” (see transcript [1]). The “Šops”, familiar with these attitudes, have mentioned during the interviews that the natives never considered them to be “true” and “great” Serbs. An ethnic identity, as explained by Mladena Prelić, represents a social construction but formed in such way to acquire primordial attributes, so ordinary people experienced it in essential and primordial sense.³² The natives do not see the “Šops” as carriers of the same ethnic identity; they lack primordial devotion (the feeling of companionship and solidarity which develops from a belief in blood kinship, same origin and similar).

An interesting research question here appears to be an overlap of ethnic and gender, as well as local and gender identities. During the conversations with both males and females, the images on other group gathered around a few key subjects, especially so around the women's behavior and dress; this issue was prone to stereotyping among both groups. The natives described women of the “Šops” group as being not clean enough (in a broader sense of the word), with more liberated behavior and dress.³³ If someone from the natives would marry a “Šop” girl, his relatives would experience her as dirty and would reluctantly eat the food she prepared. They used to say that the bread she made is “hard as a rock”. This established stereotype is clearly evident from the story told by a woman from Vrbovac (born in

³² Младена Прелић, *Етнички идентитет: проблеми теоријског одређења*, Традиционално и савремено у култури Срба, Етнографски институт САНУ, Посебна издања 49, Београд 2003, 279, 281.

³³ Compare A. Урошевић, *Горња Морава и Изморник...*, 154.

1981 in Klokot, married into the Vrbovac village) on one such Šop girl who got married into the natives; the informant could not even tell if the bride was originally from newcomer's family from Vranje or some other area.

[13] When he married her, she was so dirty, she didn't keep the house or herself either, for she was very dirty. When she was making bread...soft bread is kneaded first, then put into this special pot...then comes the rest. However, she made it so awful that it was uneatable, but her sister-in-law and mother-in-law had to try it, that was the custom (...) Her in-laws didn't pay a visit to her native house since she was dishonest. The in-laws saw their son and daughter-in-law but didn't go, they stayed home. That's how the story goes, what I heard about her. Now, she's changed, works, keeps herself up. She lives now better than anyone else, let me tell you. She uses a lot of stuff. Keeps her body fit. And she got more beautiful, keeps the hygiene. But when she came, that's how it was. This is what I've heard about her (*And how old was she when she got married?*) Well, young, like 18-19.

The opposition clean/dirty implies a number of other antagonisms: one's own (ours)/ alien, native/mobile population, "true Serbs"/"Šops" and so on. The stereotype on cleanness referred solely to the incomers' women, whose dress (*futa*, a hand woven skirt), and more liberated behavior provoked comments and mock. Atanasije Urošević wrote that the natives referred to women of incomers in a derogatory manner as "futarke" on account of their unusual skirts.³⁴ On the other hand, "Šops" found it strange that among the natives, during various social gatherings such as family' saint day, weddings and so on, males and females are seated separately and do not dance together.³⁵ They further explained that the natives' upbringing of female children was very strict. For example, when approached by somebody on the road regardless of the sex, a native woman would just lower her head down and not say hello. She was dressed in long dress, with many layers made of hemp, and her head was covered with two scarves, one covering her face (according to the description given by the "Šops"). The differences in female dress, used to establish the boundaries, have become elements which made them permeable. Since the 1960's, the native women have made skirts *futa* and worn them in everyday occasions; their skirts are woven in black, and are distinguished from the "Šops" by the decoration and the way of fastening. Even today, older women in rural areas are dressed in this type of skirts. The traditional dress, on the other hand, richly decorated and layered, is carefully kept and wore only at weddings.

At the time of colonization by the incomers, the natives engaged in cattle breeding, and some agriculture (corn and wheat) their diet focusing on these products. The native women were very skilful in kneading (bread, pita and *filije*, a type of layered dough specially baked outside). The incomers engaged less in cattle

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Compare op cit., 139.

breeding and more in various types of agriculture: they raised various fruit, vegetables and wine growing, and also were skilful artisans. During my research, I have heard several stories on how the natives used to eat only green tomatoes (baked) while the red, ripe ones were thrown away. Then, from the incomers, they learned the usage of ripe tomatoes. The incomers made wine and brandy, while their women made various dishes out of vegetables and winter food-stash (*turšija*). The differences in cuisines and house decoration are even today a foundation to consider the “Šops” women as dirty and unskillful to make bread, a highly valued food in the traditional culture of the natives. On the other hand, the “Šops” women valued themselves as better and more progressive housewives: they made dishes out of vegetables that the natives never even heard of and slept in beds while the natives slept on the floor, on straw.

The natives, being very proud of the native identity (they constantly emphasized they are the natives since their ancestors had lived on the same land thousand and some more years), see the “Šops” as a very mobile population, constantly on the move, and unable to settle in one place (*pevac na kola*, a rooster on their vehicle announcing the recent move) and this makes their characteristic feature. All the presented accounts and stereotypes of members of one group or another tells us more about the people doing the categorization than vice versa.³⁶ In their description of the incomers, the natives reveal the main constructs of their own identity: relationship with the ancestors, highly valued tradition, family and kinship relations, and attachment to the land and their homes where they live “since forever”. A widely used metaphor *pevac na kola* [“a rooster on the vehicle”] illustrates the relationship of the natives toward change of residence and changes in general. Since they live (or used to live) in a multiethnic environment, the natives have a need to emphasize the Serbian identity, describing so themselves as the carriers and guardians of ancient Serbian customs and religion. Both groups, especially so the “Šops”, have shown a very good knowledge of the outer determination of their respective identities. It even happened that the “Šops” imitate the way of speech used by the natives when discussing the “Šops”.

The “Šops” in the post-war context and discourse

Since the 1960’s, and more intensively in the 1980’s, the „Šops“ are moving out of the area, settling in Vranje and other parts of inner Serbia. In the South-eastern Kosovo, they used to inhabit rural areas where the majority of population was Albanian. The Albanians have perceived them differently than the natives with whom they had lived for generations, and pressured the Šops accordingly. These explanations were given by both the natives and incomers. Besides, the natives, contrary to the incomers, lived in extended kinship families, which provided security in troubled times. However, the natives criticize the “Šops” for being the first to leave Kosovo. They think the incomers got the land as a gift, so it was easy for

³⁶ R. Dženkins, op. cit., 110.

them to abandon or give away that same land. Very few incomers have stayed in the Southeastern Kosovo, mostly the ones who married into the native families. The villages they once inhabited today belong to the Albanians. In the post-war context and discourse, the relationship of the natives toward the incomers bounces between negative opinions and condemnation to a deep regret: if the natives had formed kin relations and truly accepted the incomers, the incomers would not be able to leave so easily, and perhaps Kosovo would have been kept. The natives also mention they had a closer relationship with the “Šops” than with colonizers from the other areas. In spite that the agricultural reform and subsequent colonization aimed, at least in one part, to be a national strategy to settle Kosovo with the Serbian population, the representatives of the government and Church had not found it necessary to work in overcoming the differences and hence boundaries within the Serbian community. Many of my informants recognize this fact, with a deep regret. As all the other internally displaced people, the Kosovo „Šops“ remain in constant unpredictable position. They were not accepted by the natives, while their native community does not recognize them as one of “their own”. Their name is a result of categorization, which had the power to determine undertones of the everyday life.³⁷

The current image of Kosovo as an area marked only by Serbian-Albanian conflict is oversimplified and wrong; this image implies a wrong conclusion on rigidity of the two peoples and languages.³⁸ Until the end of the 20th century, cultural boundaries and endogamy existed and were maintained among the Serbian population in Kosovo. Given the complicated reality of Kosovo territories, identities seen as practical products of social interactions, can be better understood only if we include the situation “within” and wider socio-historical context.³⁹

³⁷ Compare R. Dženkins, op. cit., 99.

³⁸ Radivoje Mladenović, *Slovenska lingvistička pripadnost, konfesionalna pripadnost i etnički transfer u svetlu skrivenih manjina na jugozapadu Kosova i Metohije*, *Skrivene manjine na Balkanu*, Balkanološki institut SANU, Posebna izdanja 82, Beograd 2004, 245.

³⁹R. Dženkins, op cit., 111; M. Prelić, op cit., 248.

Сања Златановић

Моћ категоризације: староседеоци и досељеници југоисточног Косова

Кључне речи:

Косово, Косовско
Поморавље, Срби, Албанци,
„Шопови“, староседеоци,
досељеници, колонизација,
етнички идентитет, иденти-
фикација, категоризација

Рад се заснива на теренским истраживањима обављаним у периоду од 2003. до 2006. године у избегличким центрима у Смедереву, Врању и Врањској Бањи и, *in situ* на подручју југоисточног Косова: у енклави Витина, коју – осим истоимене варошице – сачињавају и села Врбовац, Грнчар, Бинач, Клокот и Могила, као и у Гњилану и околним селима (Шилово, Горње Кусце, Горњи Ливоч, Партеш, Пасјане и др.) Рад има за циљ да дâ прелиминарне резултате истраживања проблема односа Срба староседелаца и досељеника (колонизованих у периоду после 1918. године, у оквиру аграрне реформе). У фокусу разматрања су досељеници из југоисточне Србије, којима је староседелачко становништво приписивало идентитет „Шопова“.

Према друштвенонструктивистичком приступу, идентитети су променљиви, ситуационо условљени и подложни преговарању, а у тим процесима важну улогу играју спољашња дефиниција, односи моћи и доминације. Етничитет (у зависности од друштвеног контекста, и други облици колективног идентитета) увек представља резултат интеракције континуираних процеса унутрашњег и спољашњег одређења, самоидентификације и идентификације од стране других. Спољашња дефиниција – категоризација – значајна је димензија унутрашње дефиниције (Р. Џенкинс). Рад је усмерен на сагледавање улоге спољашње дефиниције – категоризације у процесима конструисања идентитета међу припадницима српске заједнице у области југоисточног Косова. Начин на који досељеници, али у појединим ситуацијама и они који себе одређују као староседеоце на Косову, интерпретирају свој идентитет уско је повезан с тим како њих интерпретирају ови други. Усредсређеност на спољашњу дефиницију, тзв. „комшијски дискурс“ (Сикимић), омогућава продубљенији увид у динамику процеса

друштвеног обликовања идентитета, и то на подручју које карактерише погранични карактер и мултиетничитет.

Староседеоци и „Шопови“, иако истоветни по етничкој припадности (премда су је једни другима, у извесном смислу, доводили у питање), религији, језику и дијалекту (призренско-тимочки дијалекатски тип), само с различитим локалним говорима, живели су као две ендегамне групе. Дистинктивни идентитети двеју група заснивају се на интерпретацијама локалних и регионалних разлика. Локалним, односно регионалним идентитетима придаје се у појединим њиховим аспектима значај етничитета. Припадници друге групе опажају се као другачији, и то у таквој мери да се изражава бојазан да они првима могу угрозити идентитет уколико би дошло до орођавања (в. транскрипт [5]), деца из таквих бракова сматрају се *мелезима* и сл. Етнички идентитет представља друштвену конструкцију, али формирану на такав начин да задобија примордијалне атрибуте, односно – обични људи доживљавају га у есенцијалном и примордијаланом смислу (Прелић). Староседеоци не опажају „Шопове“ као носиоце истог етничког идентитета, јер недостаје примордијална приврженост (осећање заједништва и солидарности, које произилази из веровања у крвно сродство, заједничко порекло и сл.)