

# “I Thought You Were Montenegrin”: The Role of Tribal Identity in Ethnic Miscategorization

## Research Topic

This research project investigates interaction between multilevel identities in segmentary societies. More precisely, it examines the nature of interaction between tribal and ethnic identity in contemporary Montenegro problems it imposes for nation building and inter-group relations. I argue that tribalism profoundly affects the prospects of ethnic miscategorization and in return increases ethnic distance.

## Case Selection: *Why Montenegro?*

**(1)** Abundant *variation* on both levels: ~35 tribes and 4-5 nations; **(2)** Possibility of *wider comparison* **(3)** Ten years since the “second independence” - a good opportunity for studying dynamics of nation building **(4)** *Feasibility* issues.

## From Tribes to Nations

- *The Tribe* (“Pleme”) was the largest stable corporate and political group in Montenegro. Identity of the individual Montenegrin was tied much more closely to his tribe than to any idea of Montenegro as a whole (Cvijic 1918);
- Lack of collective memory – most of the tribes at one time or another cooperated with the Turks against some other tribe;
- In all decisive political moments, tribes had clear political and national affiliations: “*Greens*” (“Old Montenegro”) have never really accepted the union with Serbia; “*Whites*” (“Highlands”) were for a Serbia-dominated state. *Separatist vs. unionists* division remains until today.

## Ethnic Miscategorization and Inter-Group Relations

- Certain tribes kept “monopoly” over deciding who can be denied part of their national identity!
- Types of miscategorizations:
  - (1) *Categorized as a member of a group that they do not belong to at all* (e.g. Cetinje Tribe);
  - (2) *Categorized as a member of a certain group while having another part of their identity denied*;
  - (3) *Categorized as a part of pan-ethnic identity* (e.g. Vasojevici Tribe-all Montenegrins are subtype of Serbs);

**(1)** People who have their identity denied might try to present themselves as good members of the identity group. They often do so by trying to *disassociate* themselves from the group to which they do not belong to in order to avoid future confusion (Trujillo et al. 2014);

**(2)** When denied part of identity (or imposed), people tend to express negative emotional reactions towards perpetrator. These negative feelings may further be generalized to the perpetrator’s entire ethnic group (Flores & Huo 2013).

**Method:** a series of randomized lab experiments with participants from both extremes of tribal identification measures. Also, survey experiments with question order manipulation and large-N regression type analysis using survey data (also used for identifying extremes that would be part of experiments).

## Hypotheses

H1: *Participants with strong tribal identification will be more prone to ethnic miscategorization.*

H2: *Participants with strong tribal identification will experience the strongest negative feelings once they are the objects of ethnic miscategorization.*

H3: *Once miscategorized, participants with strong tribal identification will express more negative behavior towards perpetrator’s group (or distance).*