

Zbornik Instituta za kriminološka
i sociološka istraživanja
2019 / Vol. XXXVIII / 3 / 57-75
Originalni naučni rad
Priljeno: 29. novembra 2019. god.
UDK: 323.15(497.6)

IS THIS MY COUNTRY? IDENTIFICATION WITH NATIONAL SYMBOLS IN SERBS AND BOSNIACS IN B&H*

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Although the war in B&H ended more than 20 years ago, ethnic tensions continue to be present. The aim of this article is to present the level and differences between Serbs and Bosniacs in identification with national symbols of B&H. The representative sample consisted of 1308 participants, 58.7% of Bosniac ethnicity, living in Bosnia & Herzegovina. The data is collected by IPSOS as a part of the project Strategies of symbolic nation-building in West Balkan states: intents and results. The results have shown that Bosniacs identify significantly more with all national symbols, including flag, anthem, coat of arms, holidays. They also consider B&H to be their patria significantly more than Serbs. Both groups estimate low level of quality of intergroup relationship. Bosniacs are more prone to express dual ethnic and national identity, while Serbs tend to identify themselves only with their ethnic group. The results are discussed in the light of social identity theory.

KEY WORDS: Bosnia & Herzegovina / national symbols / national identity / intergroup relations

* This paper is a result of research Project "Crime in Serbia: phenomenology, risks and the possibilities of social intervention" (47011), financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Republic of Serbia.

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INTRODUCTION

The question of identity is among key issues of numerous intergroup conflicts (Oren, Bar-Tal, & David, 2004). National and ethnic identity are examples of social identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), based on self-categorisation of the individuals as members of certain groups (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). According to social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), individuals pertain to many social groups at once, while membership importance varies across identities. As social identity development theory explains (Nesdale, 2004), national or ethnic identities are among the earliest categories children identify with. They are also among the most important social identities, especially in B&H (Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013), which have the power to drive behaviour. This behaviour is closely correlated with ingroup and outgroup attitudes, which have a base in the evaluation of ingroup similarity and outgroup distinctiveness (Hogg, 2006; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). These processes lead to evaluating ingroup as more positive, more negative characteristics are attributed to outgroup and there is a tendency of discrimination of its members. This perceived distinctiveness can lay solid ground for intergroup conflict. The other group can be delegitimized while at the same time one's own group is glorified, thus leading to perceiving other group as a threat to fulfilment of one's own group identity (Bar-Tal & Čehajić-Clancy, 2014).

In literature, ethnic and national identities are mostly referred to as synonyms. Only after the dissolution of Yugoslavia have the researchers in the region made the distinction between these two group memberships and started studying them as separate concepts. In this article, we refer to *ethnic identity* or *ethnicity* as ethno-national concept, a shared social identity based on common history, language, religion, common culture and symbolism. We refer to *national identity* or *nationality* here as a civic national concept that denotes affiliation to a category that is superordinate to ethnic identities and stands at country level, i.e. common Bosnian state identity.

The country of Bosnia-Herzegovina (B&H) continues to be considered a post-conflict region, although more than two decades have passed from the war. "War was and continues to be central for building nations and states" (Bobowik, Paez, Liu, Licata, Klein, & Basabe, 2014, p. 2). B&H is no different. Only after the 1990s war was B&H declared an independent country for the first time in its history. Although different ethnic groups lived on its territory for a long time, their identities were not that edged ever before. Bosnian Muslims, a term used for the citizens of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, turned into Bosniaks, unofficially in 1993 and officially with the Dayton Peace Accord in 1995. The importance of the term Bosniak increased just before the first post-war census in 2013, when it was strongly propagated that Bosniaks existed always and that they are autochthonous people of B&H (Sokol, 2014). Religious leaders claimed that Bosniak people was not allowed for centuries to be called by their real name and that the price that had to be paid was war (Sokol, 2014). Bosnian Serbs (and Croats) have had a clear ethnic identity much longer, their parent-countries are just across the border of B&H, but for Bosniaks the only

country they have ever had a chance to name a parent-country is Bosnia-Herzegovina. Since the end of the war in 1995, the questions of ethnicity continue to be the main topic of disagreement between groups in B&H. It is involved in every aspect of social, political, economic, psychological life of people. The task of *nation-building* continues to be one of the top priorities if Serbs and Bosniaks in this country.

‘Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Serbs thought they shared the same history and culture until only very recently, but this is precisely what the zealots on both sides now deny’ (Coady, 2006, p. 62). Since the end of the violent conflicts, Serbs are guarding their independent entity while constantly bearing the idea of secession, while Bosniaks aspire a unified country (Andjelić, 2012). Although by the Constitution none of the peoples is to be considered a minority (*au contraire*, they are considered equal in terms of power and rights), in reality Bosniaks represent the numeric majority in the country, hence the fear of Serbs that they can be outvoted and considered a minority (lose the power they have now) if the idea of unitary B&H comes into effect can be considered justified.

However, in order for the three peoples to be able to live at peace in a country arranged by the Dayton Peace Accord, the international community has, through the Office of the High Representative (OHR), tried to implement a hybrid, superordinate national identity. This national identity aimed to achieve what is proposed by the common ingroup identity model (CIIM; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Identifying with a shared, superordinate identity shifts the focus from distinctiveness to similarities between groups and decreases intergroup discrimination (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Following this course, it can be hypothesised that identification with the superordinate Bosnian national identity would reduce conflict and decrease social distance and negative attitudes towards other ethnic groups.

One of the paths to building a nation certainly includes symbols and myths. Myths surrounding Serbs and Bosniaks are very rich and numerous, and they are out of the scope of this article. We will concentrate on symbolic nation-building, including flags, anthems, coats of arms, on social identities of Serbs and Bosniaks and their collision. In the so called third wave of nation-building, which took place after the collapse of Yugoslavia, the need to build nations as soon as possible has led to increased construction and manipulation of symbols and rituals (Kolsto, 2014). Why is it necessary to adopt and promote ethnic symbols in the first place? A nation is a social construct, it is imagined (Condor, 2006), but it is necessary for it to be materialized somehow (Finell, Olakivi, Liebkind, & Lipsanen, 2013), so that it can become a part of the reality of group members, that is, these symbols are usually seen as objective rather than subjective (Kaya & Keranen, 2015). Symbols provide a means by which members of a community can define themselves as part of a larger collective identity (Robinson, Engelstoft, & Pobric, 2001). The symbols are also important for marking boundaries between groups and distinguishing one group from another (Geisler, 2005), and they represent history, values, memories associated with a nation (Firth, 1973). When the meaning of the nation/ethnicity is based on confrontation between groups, as is the case in B&H, it is more possible

that the groups will have negative attitudes towards one another (Finell et al., 2013; Brown & Zagefka, 2005). Starting with monuments that are built in a way that emphasizes ethnicity (e.g. in Republika Srpska monuments are usually in the shape of a cross, with Cyrillic script, while in the Federation they include *fleur de lis*, crescent moon and a star; Sokol, 2014; Čusto, 2013), through flags, anthems and rituals such as holidays and commemorations: everything seems to be in question when it comes to intergroup relations in B&H. It is understandable then why mosques, churches, graveyards, bridges were systematically destroyed during the war, in an attempt to destroy the materialized aspect of ethnic identity.

National flag, anthem and coat of arms are symbols that are present in every country in the world. These symbols increase the sense of identification with the group (Feshbach & Sakano, 1997). The omnipresence of national flags is widespread, especially during higher salience of national identity (e.g. sports competitions) or when nation's identity is threatened (Skitka, 2005). It is hypothesized that higher exposure to national flag increases nationalism, however this hypothesis has acquired opposing empirical support. In the study of Butz and colleagues (Butz, Plant, & Doerr, 2007), exposure to the U.S. flag has led to decreased outgroup hostility, which was assigned to activating core American values of humanitarism and egalitarianism. On the other hand, Kammelmeyer and Winter (2008) found that exposure to the U.S. flag provoked higher nationalism. On German sample, direct exposure to the national flag led to increased outgroup prejudice, but only in highly nationalistic participants (Becker, Enders-Comberg, Wagner, Christ, & Butz, 2012). All authors agree that the consequences of exposure to national flags depend on social context and the meaning, the concepts people attribute to national flags (Ferguson & Hassin, 2007; Kammelmeyer & Winter, 2008; Becker et al., 2012). It has to be taken into account that pervasive exposure to national symbols may lead to unconscious and automatic responses in the shape of increased national attachment (Billig, 1995). Previous research has indicated that national identification can lead to prejudice and outgroup hostility and conflict (Butz et al., 2007; Butz, 2009), thus making the boundaries between groups even thicker. To conclude, national symbols play an important role in increasing national identification, especially when nations are unstable or threatened (Butz, 2009). However, in new and insecure nations, such we have in B&H, national symbols do not have a unifying function, but the contrary, bringing divisions within the nation (Kolsto, 2006).



Figure 1. *Flag used by Muslim military during the 1990s war*



Figure 2. *Flag used by Serbian military during the 1990s war*

The question of flags in B&H is complicated. During the war different flags were in use by different armies, representing mostly their ethnic identity (Figures 1 and 2). In a desperate try to avoid the conflict in 1992, Bosnian leaders introduced a medieval Bosnian Kotromanić dynasty symbol, the *fleur de lis* (Figure 3), representing Bosnian lilies, an autochthonous plant. This symbol represented no particular ethnic group, but did not contribute to stopping the war. After the war ended, the state of B&H had no flag for two years. The work



Figure 3. *Symbol of B&H introduced in 1992*



Figure 4. *Current flag of B&H*

on the new flag began in 1997, but Serbian representatives voted constantly against every solution. The current flag of B&H (Figure 4) was imposed in 1998 by the OHR after failure of representatives in the Parliament to agree upon a common solution. That way, B&H got a flag that did not (and could not) choose itself. The official anthem of B&H has no official lyrics and it was imposed by the OHR in 1999. However, these are not the only symbols used in B&H. Other symbols in still in use were primarily mobilized during the war and/or representing the para-state

formations. Andjelić (2002) argues that the identification with these former par-national symbols reflects the state of B&H society and its division.

Several studies conducted in B&H have dealt with national and ethnic identification. They revealed that Bosniaks identify significantly more with the country they live in (national identity), compared to Serbs who identify more with their ethnic group (Turjačanin, Dušanić, Lakić, Čehajić-Clancy, & Pulić de Sanctis, 2017; Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013; Turjačanin, 2011). Bosniaks also identify more with the state flag and anthem (Kostić, 2008), although these are just descriptive differences not supported by statistical testing in the study in question. Complex social identities were also a topic of studies (e.g. Turjačanin, Dušanić, & Lakić, 2017), studying interrelations of ethnic, religious and national identities. However, there are no studies assessing commitment to different ethnic and national identity through exploring identification with national symbols and other elements of nation-building, such as holidays, commemorations etc.

In this article, we are exploring identification with different national symbols, ethnic groups, social identities, and interethnic relations, with search for differences between Serbs and Bosniaks in the level of identification. The aim is explore the attachment to ethnic symbols of Serbs and Bosniaks and national symbols of Bosnia and Herzegovina as *materialized social identities*, and to assess intergroup relations. The main research questions are whether Serbs and Bosniaks differ in level of identification with the national symbols of B&H, whether they differ in level of identification with different social identities, how they assess interethnic relations and are they pro-unity or pro-partition oriented. Following findings in previous research, we expect that:

- H1. Bosniaks identify significantly more with the nation-state symbols than Serbs.
- H2. Serbs will identify stronger with their ethnic identity, while Bosniaks will identify stronger with the national identity.
- H3. There will be no significant differences in estimations of quality of intergroup relationship between Serbs and Bosniaks.
- H4. Bosniaks will be significantly more pro-unity oriented, while Serbs will express more intense pro-partition attitudes.

1. METHOD

1.1. Sample

The representative sample consisted of 1308 participants from B&H, of which 45.1% men and 54.9% women, aged 18 to 87 ($M = 42.66$, $SD = 16.89$). With 21% of missing data, 15.4% earns less than 400 KM, 13.3% between 401 and 600 KM, 14.1% between 601 and 800 KM, 13% 801-1000 KM, 13.2% between 1001 and 1400 KM and 9.9% above 1401 KM. The majority of the sample finished high school (64.8%),

13.9% has graduated from the university, and the rest (21.3%) have elementary school diploma. Of the whole sample, 58.7% are of Bosniak ethnicity, and 41.3% are Serbs. As only 7 Serbs come from the FBiH and only 26 Bosniaks from RS, the comparisons between groups will be performed on the whole subsamples, not taking into account whether they are a local minority or majority.

1.2. Instruments and procedure

The survey was conducted by IPSOS in 2011 as a part of the project *Strategies of symbolic nation-building in West Balkan states: intents and results*¹, supported by the Norwegian Research Council. The survey consisted of 120 questions covering different aspects of symbolic nation-building and 11 socio-demographic questions. In this paper, only a selection of questions will be used referring to symbols, social identities and intergroup relations.

The questions about national symbols include: liking the nation-state flag and anthem (yes/no), estimation of which symbol represents Bosniaks (the crescent moon with a star/coat of arms with lilies/other), which symbol is considered to be pan-Bosnian (six lilies/stećci/medieval pre-Ottoman tombstone/other), what does six lilies CoA represent (Bosniak army/medieval CoA), do they attach positive, negative or no specific meaning to it, and which state and subgroup holidays they identify with (see Table 1 for the full list).

Further questions about level of identification with the state, ethnic and national identities included following questions: which state do respondents regard as their patria (B&H/other), how, how proud they feel to be citizens of B&H (not proud at all/somewhat proud/very proud), what identity they find most important (ethnic identity/citizen of B&H/both important the same/none of them important), could an ethnic Serb be a Bosnian at the same time (yes/no), do they prefer the term Bosniak to Bosnian Muslim (yes/no) and who do you have more in common with (members of your own ethnicity living outside B&H/members of ethnicities different from yours in this country/both members of your ethnicity outside and members of ethnicities different than yours living in this country).

Finally questions about intergroup relations, image of ingroup and outgroup and attitudes towards unity or partition were asked. This set of questions included: how do you evaluate interethnic relations in B&H (scale 1-5, very bad to very good), how do you compare current interethnic relations to ten years ago (in 2001; scale 1-5, much worse to much better), do you see B&H as an example of multi-ethnic and multicultural country (yes/no), how do you think of Serbs, i.e. Bosniaks (scale 1-5, most negatively to most positively), and attitude towards unitary B&H (see the following section for details).

¹ <https://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/english/research/projects/nation-w-balkan/>

1.3. Data and analysis

The data from the project are available at the project web page and free to use by all scholars. Since the variables are mostly categorical, but with categories that vary across questions, it is not possible to form a unique national symbols identification variable, hence the data will be presented question by question. One of the continuous variables was calculated from the mean scores of items measuring attitudes toward unitary B&H. PCA was conducted, which revealed two factors on a 7-item scale. KMO measure equals .754, while Bartlett’s test of sphericity is significant ($\chi^2(21) = 2599.660, p < .001$). The first two factors had Eigenvalues above 1, explaining 60% of the variance. The first factor contains items with content of partition of B&H (e.g. *Any part of Bosnia and Herzegovina should be allowed to secede*) and is named Pro-partition attitudes, and the second factor’s items talk in favour of unitary B&H (e.g. *The state authorities make me feel that I belong to Bosnia and Herzegovina*), and is named Pro-unity attitudes. The correlation between the factors is $r = -.040, p > .05$.

2. RESULTS

2.1. Identification with the national symbols

There are significant differences when it comes to liking the flag ($\chi^2(1) = 642.21, p < .001$) and the national anthem of B&H ($\chi^2(1) = 335.54, p < .001$), in that Bosniaks like both the flag and the anthem of B&H significantly more than Serbs (Figure 5).

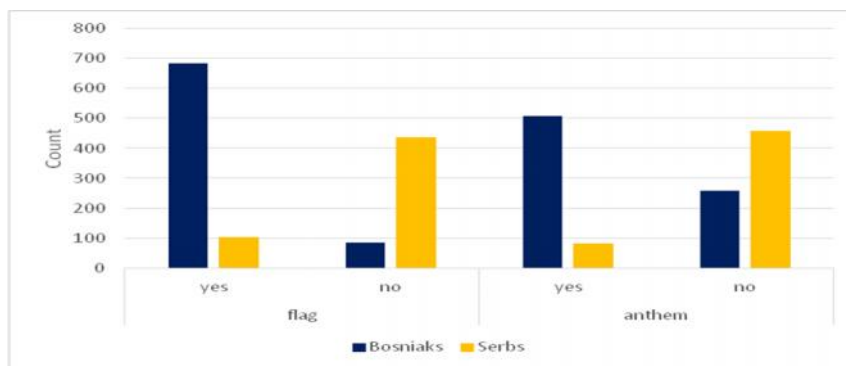


Figure 5. Differences between Serbs and Bosniaks in preference for the national anthem and flag of Bosnia and Herzegovina

When asked which symbol they find representative of the history of all Bosnian people, the possible answers were Lilly Loyalty and Stećci (medieval, pre-Ottoman tombstones). There are again significant differences between Serbs and

Bosniaks ($\chi^2(1) = 91.761, p < .001$), in that Bosniaks find both lilies and stećci the symbols of all people significantly more often than Serbs (Figure 6).

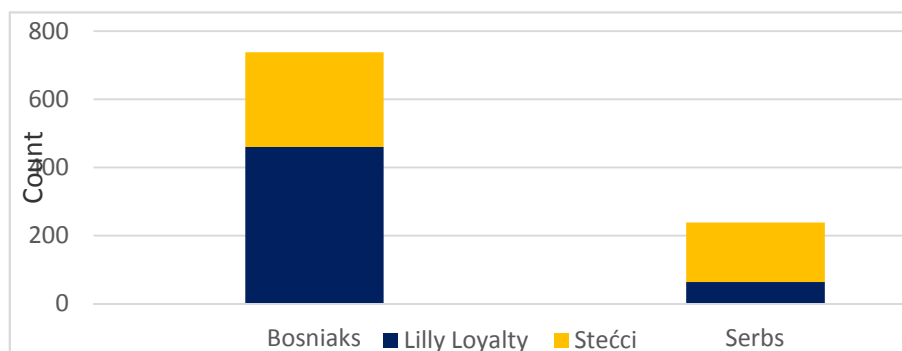


Figure 6. Identifying with Lilies and Stećci between ethnic groups

In total 31 participants reported they think some other symbol represents the whole people, of that 2 Bosniaks find crescent moon and stars, and the majority of the rest ($N = 29$) of Serbs indicate that that are some of the symbols from Serbian national history, such as Serbian Orthodox Church, double eagle, the coat of arms of the Nemanjić dynasty, or a universal symbol, such as the sun, geographical shape of Bosnia, or any three symbols for the three nations.

When asked about what the coat of arms with six lilies reminds them of, $\frac{3}{4}$ of both Serbs and Bosniaks responded it reminds them of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (73% of Bosniaks and 75.6% of Serbs). The rest responded they were reminded of the medieval coat of arms of Bosnian rulers. The difference between groups was not significant ($\chi^2(1) = 1.039, p > .05$). However, when asked if that specific CoA has a positive, negative or no meaning for them, the differences were significant ($\chi^2(1) = 626.754, p < .001$; Figure 7).

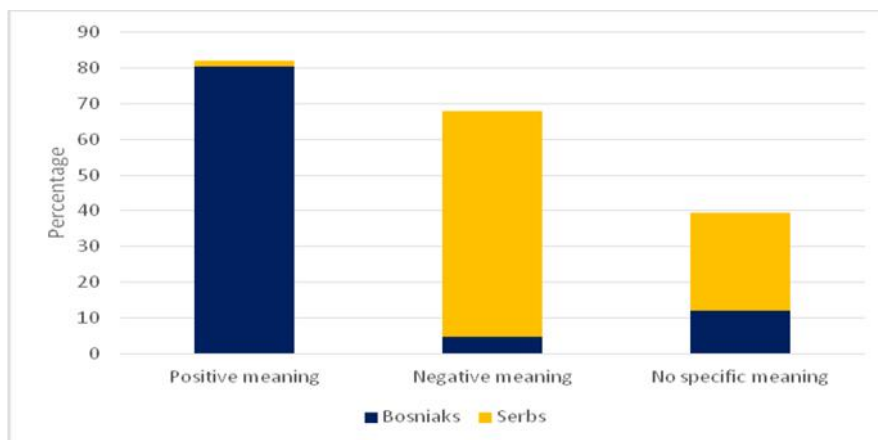


Figure 7. Meaning of six lilies CoA for different ethnic groups

Serbs and Bosniaks identify with different state holidays ($\chi^2(18) = 801.604, p < .001$; Table 1, only those with some percentage of identification are presented). As it can be noted, Bosniaks identify more with the holidays that represent the whole country, while Serbs identify more with their orthodox holidays, as well as with the Independence day of Republika Srpska. Only around 1/5 of the sample identifies with the signing of Dayton Peace Accord.

Table 1: Identification with state holidays (percentage)

	Bosniaks	Serbs
Bosnian statehood day	72.40	2.59
Independence day (March 1)	60.55	2.78
The annual commemoration in Potocari/ Srebrenica for the Bosniak victims	20.83	0.37
The signing of the Dayton Peace Accord	17.32	23.15
May 1	10.3	13.7
New Year	1.8	6.5
Day of Republika Srpska (January 9)	0.39	45.74
Christmas	0	8.3
St. Sava (January 27)	0	4.8

2.2. Social identity identification

Bosnia and Herzegovina is considered as patria country by 99.3% of Bosniaks and 69.6% of Serbs, while the rest of the Serbs considers another country to be their patria (mostly Serbia). The differences between two groups are significant ($\chi^2(3) = 248.774, p < .001$). The differences are also significant in the feeling of pride for being a citizen of B&H ($t(1278) = 30.336, p < .05$), with Bosniaks ($M = 2.59, SD = .59$) being more proud than Serbs ($M = 1.56, SD = .61$).

When two groups are compared on importance of different social identities, they differ significantly ($\chi^2(4) = 302.579, p < .001$; Figure 8). Serbs identify mainly with their ethnic identity, while almost the half of Bosniaks identifies with both identities, and 1/3 with the identity of B&H. At the same time, 85% of Bosniaks believe that an ethnic Serb can be Bosnian at the same time compared to 64.3% of Serbs. One third of Serbs finds this to be impossible compared to 10% of Bosniaks ($\chi^2(2) = 91.456, p < .001$). Also, 62.4% of Bosniaks prefers the term Bosniak for naming their ethnicity instead of the term Bosnian Muslim, compared to 15.8% of Serbs. The majority of Serbs (79.2%) does not prefer this term ($\chi^2(2) = 291.089, p < .001$).

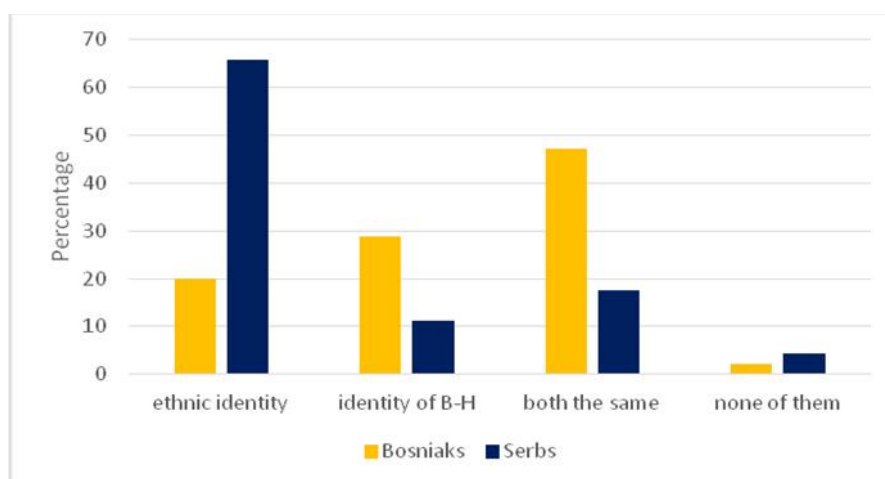


Figure 8. Identification with different social identities

The half of Serbs (51.8%) feels they have more in common with members of their ethnicity living outside B&H, compared to 14.6% of Bosniaks. Also, 59.8% of Bosniaks express double identity, identifying both with members of their ethnicity living outside of their country and members of other ethnicity living in their country, compared to 32.8% of Serbs. Small percentage of both Bosniaks (15.8%) and Serbs (9.5%) identify with members of ethnicities different from their own, living in their country ($\chi^2(3) = 208.690, p < .001$).

2.3. Interethnic relations

There are no significant differences between Serbs and Bosniaks in their estimation of quality of interethnic relations in B&H ($t(1285) = -.697, p > .05, M_{Serbs} = 2.50, SD = .89, M_{Bosniaks} = 2.46, SD = .98$), both groups assess the quality as average. There are differences in their estimation of change of the quality of interethnic relations ($t(1282) = -3.094, p < .01$), with Bosniaks tending to estimate the relationship somewhat worse than Serbs ($M_{Serbs} = 3.09, SD = .98, M_{Bosniaks} = 2.91, SD = 1.11$). The

majority of Bosniaks (70.6%) considers B&H to be an example of multi-ethnic and multicultural community, compared to 22.6% of Serbs ($\chi^2(1) = 269.482, p < .001$).

The image of one's own group is more positive than the image of the other group. Bosniaks have more positive attitude towards their ethnic group (attitude toward Bosniaks $M_{Serbs} = 2.22, SD = 1.08, M_{Bosniaks} = 4.17, SD = .92, t(1292) = -34.848, p < .001$), while Serbs consider the same for their own group (attitude toward Serbs $M_{Serbs} = 4.31, SD = 1.01, M_{Bosniaks} = 2.38, SD = 1.19, t(1295) = -30.601, p < .001$).

Finally, when asked whether they are prone to unity or partition of B&H, Bosniaks and Serbs differ in this matter too. Bosniaks are more pro-unity oriented than Serbs ($M_{Serbs} = 2.38, SD = .72, M_{Bosniaks} = 2.68, SD = .87, t(1247) = 6.325, p < .001$), while Serbs are more pro-partition oriented, with Bosniaks scoring very low on this variable ($M_{Serbs} = 3.09, SD = .83, M_{Bosniaks} = 1.66, SD = .83, t(1245) = -29.840, p < .001$).

3. DISCUSSION

The main aim of this article was to explore the level and differences between Serbs and Bosniaks in identification with different national symbols of B&H and with their ethnic groups and other relevant social identities. One major advantage of this study is the substantial and representative sample of Serbs and Bosniaks living in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are no studies involving such samples on this territory. Although the measures could have been developed in a more efficient manner, by that increasing their power and validity, the results presented here are valuable.

Differences on every variable used to measure identification with national symbols indicate that Bosniaks do identify more than Serbs with all symbols in question: they like the national flag and anthem much more than Serbs, they identify more often with fleur de lis and with the nation-state holidays. The national flag and anthem were imposed on them by the OHR, that is, by the international community, an outside actor, because Serbian representatives voted against all proposed solutions, trying to delegitimize what they considered a new ethnicity. They also intended to delegitimize the new country, although Dayton Peace Accord clearly defines relationships between the three constitutive peoples. Bosniaks do not seem to consider the imposed national symbols a threat, they identify with them very readily, because these symbols make the independent country of B&H possible. Serbs are prone to even not consider the medieval symbols representative of the country they live in, but rather they consider them the mark of the 1990s war. The flag that represents them is the flag of Republika Srpska and there is no place in this entity where Bosnian flag flutters, but there are numerous displays of the entity flag, that aim to show the discontinuity of the unified country of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In a study conducted by Kostić (2008), Serbs also did not identify with the national hymn of B&H, but rather with the hymn of Serbia, while Bosniaks considered the national hymn to best express their feelings towards their homeland. In the same study, the majority of people all over B&H agreed that they do not approve of the

High Representative making decisions about their national symbols. However, Bosniaks keep identifying with these symbols, even when they are externally imposed. Kolsto (2006) argues that when (what is supposed to be a shared) symbol is perceived as belonging more to one group than the other, it becomes extremely hard to get the other group accept it as their own. This may be due to distinctiveness threat (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Namely, social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) considers aggressive intergroup behaviours such as prejudice and discrimination to be in function of achieving and maintaining positive distinctiveness of one's own group. Hornsey and Hogg (2000) argue that in a superordinate group context, such we have in B&H, a threat to one's identity may have grounds in the possibility of loss of status or if there is self-conceptual or social uncertainty. The authors argue that 'perceived threat accentuates subgroup solidarity, sharpens intergroup boundaries, accentuates ethnocentric attitudes and behaviour, inhibits superordinate group identification' (p. 145). Following this course, Serbs may be the group that perceives that the superordinate national Bosnian identity threatens the distinctiveness of their own identity, hence their resistance in identifying with the symbols of the superordinate group. Gaertner and colleagues (Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman, & Anastasio, 1994) argued that the superordinate identity can only be acknowledged by both groups if each member 'retains a distinct identity but conceive themselves as all playing on the same team' (p. 227). Hence, in order for subgroups to identify with superordinate group, this distinctiveness should be guarded, but benefits of identifying with the outgroup should be clear (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). However, as Petrunić (2005) argues, societies do allow for individuals to identify with multiple categories, but at the same time they expect them to identify with a certain identity.

As is explained in the introduction, Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only country Bosniaks feel attachment to, since the parent-state of Serbs is Serbia, although all respondents were born on the territory of B&H. The level of identification with B&H as patria country also supports this hypothesis: almost 100% of Bosniaks consider B&H to be their patria, compared to 70% of Serbs (the rest attribute this role to Serbia). Bosniaks are also more proud for being B&H citizens. Serbs identify in majority with their ethnic identity and only to some extent with the identity of B&H citizen. Bosniaks are mostly prone to dual identification – both with their ethnic group and with their country. This significantly stronger identification of Bosniaks with the country makes Serbs refuse the idea of the nation even more and directs them to their nation-state, Serbia (Andjelić, 2012; Robinson et al., 2001). The backlash produced by imposing the central national identity is natural (Weinstock, 2004), and it can be overcome with building intergroup trust (Andjelić, 2012). However, this does not seem to be the case in B&H.

The question of the coat of arms with six lilies also divides the groups deeply. Both groups consider this symbol to be primarily a representative of the Army of B&H; however, they attach different valence to it: for most Bosniaks it has positive meaning, while most of the Serbs consider it negative. This is not surprising, since Serbs were fighting against the Army of B&H.

When it comes to holidays and commemorations as another form of nation-building processes, differences emerge again. Bosniaks identify in much bigger percent with state holidays such Independence Day, Bosnian Statehood Day, or the annual commemoration of victims of Srebrenica. On the other hand, only a very low percentage of Serbs identifies with these holidays, while one of the most important holidays for them is the Day of Republika Srpska. On January 9, 1992, the self-proclaimed Parliament of the Serbian people of B&H declared the Republic of Serbian Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the Constitutional Court declared this date illegitimate and obligated Republika Srpska to choose another date for the Day of the Republic, the citizens of RS voted on a referendum to keep January 9. This is yet another form of resistance to accept B&H as a unitary state with pan-Bosnian laws.

All previously discussed findings could also be explained in the light of the need of each subgroup to project their identity on to the shared superordinate category (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999). This projection bias is stronger in (by status or power) majority groups. Although Serbs and Bosniaks are constitutionally considered equal in terms of power and rights, the very own number of members of each group makes Serbs a minority in the country. In case of uniting the entities of B&H, Serbs could easily be outvoted, which makes them vulnerable and this fact may contribute to their need for strengthening the distinction of their own group. It is also argued that identifications in minority groups tend to lead to autonomy (Turjačanin et al., 2017). In a major study by Staerklé and colleagues (Staerklé, Sidanius, Green, & Molina, 2010) it was found that majorities identify significantly more with national identity than minorities. Conversely, minorities have separatist tendencies more often, which was demonstrated in other studies (Turjačanin, 2011; Turjačanin et al., 2017).

Both groups see themselves as better than other group, which is in accordance with Social Identity Theory, which proposes that the ingroup will be seen in a more positive light, while the outgroup will be considered more negative (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Also, as discussed in the introduction, national identification may lead to negative outgroup attitudes in the context of confrontation between two groups (Finell et al., 2013). B&H is considered a multi-ethnic and multicultural community by the vast majority of the Bosniak sample, while only a quarter of Serbs thinks the same. The groups also differ in their attitudes towards unity and partition: Bosniaks are more prone to unity, while Serbs are considerably more pro-partition oriented.

Some authors have argued that the implementation of the western concept of nation-state can lead to ethnic solidarity and widening the gap between ethnic groups (Hroch, 1993; Smith, 1993), thus failing to fulfil its unifying purpose. The symbols that are rooted in a cultural past will more often than not be more divisive than unifying, since different ethnic and political groups often hark back to different pasts (Kolsto, 2006, p. 5). The rejection of each solution for the state flag and anthem indicates that the Serbian side does not consider Bosnia and Herzegovina to be a valid state entity. It is a verse that has been repeated many times by the Serbian leader Milorad Dodik, who, ironically, became a member of the Presidency of a state

he denies. If Bosniaks felt threatened in various time points in history, it is Serbs today who feel that their identity and their existence within B&H is endangered. Hence their attitudes towards unity and partition – they may feel as if they have given up on their ethnic independence if they agree to live in a unitary state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This leads to ‘mobilizing, territorializing and politicising identity’ (Einagel, 1997, p. 244), thus developing identity politics (Robinson et al., 2001).

In Bosnia, national symbols are used in a political game of building nations that are represented as not being able to reconcile or cooperate. Dragičević Šešić (2011) recognized that different, so called, memory politics strategies are being implemented in B&H. The first was destruction of every bridge connecting the new country with Yugoslavia (Karačić, 2012); the second strategy is destruction of all outgroup elements on ethnically cleansed territories (Riedlmayer, 1995): no monuments dedicated to the victims of the other group can be seen on ‘Serbian’ or ‘Bosnian’ piece of land, no streets are named after members of the outgroup. The third strategy includes construction of new nationalist collective memories which are in collision with one another (see e.g. Ruiz Jiménez, 2010). The magic circle must stop if the groups are to reconcile, but whose responsibility is it and how does it stop?

Limitations and future directions. There are many valid instruments for assessing different aspects of nation-building, including nationalism, identification with the ingroup, attitudes towards outgroup etc., which were not used by IPSOS, but would contribute to the clearer empirical image of this process in B&H. The questions could have been formed in a more precise manner, include the same answer categories where possible and be representative of the symbols of all groups in question. That would enable for an improved and more complex statistical analysis. However, as earlier explained, the sample is highly representative and the data from the project has not been published so far, hence the value of the research presented in this paper. Also, identification with national symbols was not measured before in this scope including various national holidays, coats of arms and national symbols other than the flag and the anthem. Future research could expand the targeted elements of nation-building and assess them in a methodologically sounder way, e.g. using complex scales for measuring social identifications, including interval or ratio level of measurement etc. Furthermore, the studies could focus on majority/minority self-perceptions of the two groups, in order to explore the image of these groups in relation to each other.

Conclusions. The results presented in this paper denote a clear tendency of Bosniaks to identify with the symbols of the nation-state at much higher level than Serbs. Serbs tend to ground their identifications in symbols representing or resembling the neighbouring state Serbia. Although by the constitution these two ethnic groups are considered to be equal, there are clearly present dynamics of minority and majority groups. This may shape further relations of these groups, since more than two decades after the war, these gaps remain. Serbs may have an issue, even in the future, in recognizing B&H as *their* state. However, they represent one third of the

population of B&H, implying that a solution to the current situation should be carefully planned.

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DA LI JE OVO MOJA ZEMLJA? IDENTIFIKACIJA SA NACIONALNIM SIMBOLIMA KOD SRBA I BOŠNJAKA U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI

Iako se rat u BiH završio pre više od 20 godina, etničke tenzije opstaju. Cilj ovog članka je da predstavi nivo i razlike između Srba i Bošnjaka u identifikaciji sa nacionalnim simbolima Bosne i Hercegovine. Reprezentativan zorak se sastoji od 1308 ispitanika, od čega je 58,7% bošnjačke etničke pripadnosti, koji žive u BiH. Podaci su prikupljeni od strane IPSOSA u okviru projekta Strategije simboličke izgradnje nacija u zemljama Zapadnog Balkana: namere i rezultati. Rezultati su pokazali da se Bošnjaci značajno više identifikuju sa svim nacionalnim simbolima, uključujući zastavu, himnu, grb i praznike. Takođe u značajno većoj meri doživljavaju BiH kao svoju domovinu. Obe grupe procenjuju kvalitet međuetničkih odnosa kao loš. Bošnjaci su skloniji izražavanju dualnog etničkog i nacionalnog identiteta, dok Srbi teže da se identifikuju isključivo sa svojom etničkom grupom. Rezultati su diskutovani u svetlu teorije socijalnih identiteta.

*KLJUČNE REČI: Bosna i Hercegovina / nacionalni simboli /
nacionalni identitet / međugupni odnosi*