

Whither the National Identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

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Abstract

This paper deals with the public perceptions of the national identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has been in flux throughout history. Hence, the common national identity was replaced by exclusive ethnic national identities and ideologies of Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats. In particular, the post-war period, marked by unrest and ethnic tension as well as the socio-political and economic challenges, contributed to exclusive ethnic national identification. The research examined the level and importance of national identity to Bosnians, Serbs and Croats and the way they express their national identity through loyalty to the country and national identity markers while recognizing current socio-political and economic challenges. The research indicated that the main ethnic groups maintain their radical and exclusive ethnic national identities, which significantly affected state functioning, stability, security and prosperity of the country. Therefore, the Bosnian society should put emphasis on diversity, dialogue and trust, whereby exclusive ethnic national identities of Bosnians, Serbs and Croats are countered and balanced by civic, nation-state and institution-based identity models.

Key words: National Identity; Multiculturalism; National Identity Markers; Socio-political Challenges; Ethnic National Identity; Civic and Nation-State National Identity; Dialogue;

1. Introduction

Emerson (1960) defined and conceptualized the national identity in his work *From Empire to Nation*. He argued that the fall of an empire-model and the rise of a civic and nation-states model of governance consequently was a defining political transition in the making of the modern world. Hence, he defined the national identity as “a body of people who feel that they are a nation, and it may be that when all the fine-spun analysis is concluded this will be the ultimate statement as well” (p. 102). This implies that the people who live within the state-boundaries and abide by the laws of that state share national identity. Thus, national identity is defined predominantly within the civic, nation-state and state-institutions structure and as such is above the race, ethnicity, religion, tradition, and language (Mason, 2000, 115-147; Verdugo & Milne, 2016, 5-6). Estel (2002) also argued that national identity, as a collective identity, is communicated through state-institutions (p. 108). On contrary, if different ethnic groups demand an independent state based on race, ethnicity, religion, tradition, and language there would likely be thousands of states in world system today. In this regard, it is interesting to examine why in Bosnia and Herzegovina exclusive ethnic national identification challenges and undermines the universal conceptualization of national identity model based on the civic, nation-state and state-institutions structure.

Although personal identity is decisive in the creation of identification, motivation, and self-esteem, in the process of its creation gender, religion, family, society, language and nationality also play a significant role. Actually, territorial identification of citizens determines nationality, citizenship, and loyalty to the state. Moreover, national identity is manifested through symbols, flags, arts, national anthems, heritage, architecture, currency, postage stamps, passport etc. Such symbols support and strengthen national consciousness, create a sense of a pride toward national heritage, and inspire loyalty towards the national interests. In addition, the patriotism is a positive manifestation of a national identity. However, chauvinism, exaggerated patriotism, and extreme ethnic national identification can present a burden to a particular nation in terms of

stability, security and prosperity (Bechhofer & McCrone, 2009: 1). In this regard, exclusive ethnic national identification and exclusive ethnic patriotism are inhibiting a proper functioning of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a modern, secular and liberal state. Therefore, it is significant to explore how public perceptions of national identity are shaped within the socio-political, economic, cultural and media contexts (Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013: 55-56).

2. Statement of the Problem

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country where the Bosnians, Croats, Serbs and the others have been living together for many centuries. However, due to 1992-1995 war, the wounds are still fresh and distrust persists. The post-war period is marked by unresolved past and distrust among three main ethnic groups. The war produced new exclusive ethnic national identities because of which common national identity is often the source of socio-political, constitutional, economic and cultural debates. This is especially the case because of different public perceptions regarding ethnic national identity, which stems from different historical beliefs, claims and present-day socio-political, geographical, demographic challenges. Then, the political elite manipulates and shape the public perceptions regarding exclusive ethnic national identity, which gained internal support due to the strong influence of radical hegemonic and ideological influences from Serbia and Croatia. Therefore, the crisis of a common national identity, derived from the civic, nation-state and institution-based models, furthermore contributes to socio-political unrest and instability.

3. Significance of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the public perceptions of the national identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Why throughout history, Serbia and Croatia have played the role in shaping exclusive ethnic national identity among Bosnian population? What are the reasons behind the emergence of new exclusive ethnic national identities? What is an alternative to present-day exclusive ethnic national identification? How socio-political and economic progress could strengthen common national identity? Considering these questions, the purpose of the paper is to provoke greater constructive debates on the conception of a common

national identity among policy-makers, academia, and politicians. This paper will certainly contribute towards better understanding of Bosnian socio-political, economic and constitutional contexts and especially the question of both exclusive ethnic national identity and civic national identity. Moreover, this research will attempt to propose the civic, nation-state and institution-based national identity, which can incorporate all the elements of three different ethnic national identities, without them hindering one another.

4. Literature Review

Hutchinson and Smith (1994) in their book *Nationalism* elaborated the definition of a nation, its theories by European philosophers and nationalism across the globe. According to Smith (2003), national identity involves (re)interpretation of values, memories, symbols, traditions, and myths, which shape individual and nation's culture and heritage. For him, national identity includes historical territory and memory, public culture, legal rights, economy and territorial mobility (p. 24-25). Then, Jensen (2016) examined the origins and roots of nationalism. According to the book *The Roots of Nationalism*, nations and nationalism are not primordial but are rather "rooted in primordial human sentiments of a kin-culture affinity, solidarity and mutual cooperation, evolutionarily engraved in human nature" (p. 31). Therefore, the ethnicity has been political and politicized because of a bias towards kin-culture community.

Grgić (2009) in his work problematized the national identity by explaining the progressive evolution of the term. He argued that the national identity exists as a mental state or more specifically as a sum of mental conditions of the members of a nation (p. 186). Thus, the national identity is the collection of someone's beliefs and emotions, belief in the existence of certain facts and the emotions that stem from it. Radenović (2006) examined common constitutive elements of national identity and ethnic identity by considering their relationship with cultural memory (p. 221). Parekh (2008) described different kinds of identities from personal, through social, human, collective, national and religious. He argued that the national identity in the life of an individual was an incidental historical outcome and that in pre-modern society the national identity was not greatly articulated. However, due to two World Wars and Globalization,

the European countries came close to the creation of continental identities (p. 52-53).

Kržišnik-Bukić (1997) examined the Bosnian identity between past and future, where she offered historical analysis of Bosnian identity throughout the history. Her historical overview focused on the term *Bosanstvo* or Bosnianism (p. 11). Although this work examined the conception of *Bosanstvo* or Bosnianism it dealt with different ethnic national identities. The author made an in-depth analysis of each historical period and explained how the national identity has been evolving. According to the author, the national identity started as Bosnianism but in the following centuries, it was replaced by *Millet* system, whereby the groups within societies were divided according to religion, not on the ethnic basis or geographical location (Mulalić, 2009: 114). Furthermore, the national identity was shaped within the Yugoslavian context.

Imamović (1998) examined the development of the national identity from the historical perspective. The work *Historija Bošnjaka* or *History of Bosnians* focused on Bosnians, partially the Serbs, and the Croats. He divided the Bosniak history into three large periods such as the time of feudal Bosnian state, the Ottoman period and modern times. Then, Karčić (2015) published the work on Bosnian Muslims entitled *The Other European Muslims: A Bosnian Experience*, where he elaborated a religious dimension of Bosnian identity. His historical scheme started with the 20th century, through Yugoslavian periods, where he especially stressed the Bosnian socio-political and religious developments and the establishment of religious institutions. He described that oftentimes, in their emancipation, Muslims found themselves in a difficult position, where they faced external as well as an internal opposition (p. 100-104). Hence, religion has been greatly nationalized and was made an integral part of ethnic national identity (Radušić, 2010: 9).

Vanderwerf (2009) defined national identity through objective, subjective and emotional dimensions. The author elaborated certain elements in society as products of history and personal identity, which persist in today's Bosnia and Herzegovina. These elements contributed to prejudice, exclusive differentiation, and ethnic mobilization. Hence, Vanderwerf believed in a melting of historical narrative and national identity with religion and national identity as unique characteristics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (p. 28). Similarly, Mavrić (2014) described the psychosocial conception of national identity and collective self-esteem.

These concepts are important for Bosnian citizens, who struggle in coping with the past. Thus, ethnic national identity is a fusion of history, narratives, religion, ethnicity, and language, which divide society into 'us' and 'them'. Identity, as historical and psycho-social phenomena, depends greatly from the interaction with the outside world and interaction with others or against others. Often our social behavior and acceptance of social norms must fit the expectations of the nation or the society that we live in. These are the reasons why exclusive ethnic national identification inhibits an acceptance of a common national identity (p. 183-192). In addition, an ethnic mobilization is consequently the product of those differences. Abazović & Seizović (2007) also argued that the ethno-mobilization through legal, political, social, ethnic and poleomological causes fundamentally affect the creation of conditions for conflict generation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (p. 3-5).

Majstorović & Turjačanin (2013) in their work presented prospects and challenges regarding national coexistence for future generations. Moreover, the authors looked into the public sphere and the media, where exclusive ethnic national identity and common national identity coexist (p. 53). Then, some authors related national identity crisis to the socio-democratic and liberal values crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, socio-democratic and liberal values should adhere to the values of the welfare state, economic democracy, corporative political management, neo-Keynesianism and intra democracy. The promotion of socio-democratic and liberal values would inevitably foster the nation-state and institution-based national identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Ćurak et al., 2015: 179).

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a meeting point of different cultures, religions, traditions and hence multiculturalism is Bosnian hallmark. Therefore, multiculturalism could foster common national identity because the people share common socio-cultural values. In addition, multiculturalism ensures the continuation of peace, equal opportunities and mutual tolerance, civil rights and multiethnic coexistence, which are important prerequisites for a common national identity (Mulalić & Kulanić, 2017: 7). Mahmutćehajić (2012) also offered six prerequisites for strengthening the Bosnian society based on dialogue and trust (p. 115).

5. Research Methodology

This paper integrated numerous pieces of previous research studies on national identity. The research used both ethnographic and ground theory models. This research was based on two assimilated questionnaires, namely *Ohio State University Survey (CSE)* and *National Identity III Basic Questionnaire 2013 (ISSP)*. Then, the researchers developed “*Public Perceptions of National Identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina*” questionnaire, where questions-statements were divided into three sections, which reflected three main research questions. The questionnaire targeted three ethnic groups, namely Bosnians, Serbs and Croats as to quantify their attitudes, opinions, and perceptions on national identity.

The non-probability sampling and quota sampling were used. The research respondents were divided into groups (strata), out of which samples were taken to correspond to proportions of the representative sample. The research strata included the Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats, while the research sample was taken from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the most important segment of the research sample was the ethnic representation. Based on the *Census of 2013* the research sample (N=600) was calculated according to total population 3,531,159. The questionnaires were distributed at the universities, shopping malls, workplaces, and houses; however, out of 663 distributed questionnaires, 63 were incomplete and hence were omitted.

Inferential data analysis was used for obtaining perceptions of national identity. The research aimed to test the national identity of the selected sample, which could be generalized on a particular ethnic group. Testing for normality of distribution was checked with Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. Nonparametric statistics was used for measuring statistically significant differences in the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The above statistical models were used for assessing the following research questions:

1. What is the level and importance of national identity for the public in Bosnia and Herzegovina?
2. What is the relationship between national identity markers and public perception of national identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina?
3. Do the socio-political challenges affect public perception of national identity in Bosnia & Herzegovina?

6. Data Presentation and Analysis

The three main ethnic groups such as Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats were the focus of this research. Nevertheless, through the process of collecting the questionnaires, other ethnic groups were identified and grouped into 'Others' category but were not analyzed. The representative sample was used as to reflect *Census of 2013*, where the largest group are Bosnians with about 50%, Serbs 30 %, Croats 15% and 'Others' 5%. In addition, the researchers applied the *Census of 2013* concerning gender representation, where women make 51% while men 49% of total population.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were used to determine 1) *level and importance of national identity*, 2) *the relationship of national identity markers with public perception of national identity*, 3) *socio-political challenges effect on public perception of national identity*. All measured parametric in the statistically important measure ($p < 0,05$) represent the normal distribution. For the reliability of scale, Alpha Cronbach coefficient of reliability was used (0,791).

6.1. Demographic Analysis

The average age of respondents was $M = 35$, where the youngest respondent was 18 while the oldest was 72 years old. Out of 600 respondents, 307 were female and 293 male, which makes 51% of women and 49% of men. Of the total 600 respondents, 50% were Bosnian, 29% Serbs, 15% Croats and 5 % others. The religious affiliation of respondents included Muslim 317 respondents or 53%, Catholic 92 respondents or 28% and Orthodox 166 respondents or 28%. In addition, the small number of the respondents identified themselves as Atheists and Agnostics. These results implied that religion significantly determines ethnicity and national identity. Bosnians identified themselves as Muslims, Serbs as Orthodox Christians while Croats as Catholic Christians.

6.2. Analysis of the Level and Importance of National Identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The section that measured the level and importance of national identity consisted of ten questions, measuring the level of respondents' affection to national identity i.e., are they proud of their ethnicity, their belonging to a certain ethnic group, their engagement in their group, etc. The last question-statement "My national identity is one of my most important

identities,” to some extent provided the conclusion-implication of the whole section on the level and importance of national identity.

Table 1: Level and Importance of National Identity for the Public

	Ethnicity					
	Serb		Croat		Bosnian	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1. I am very proud of my ethnicity.	4.4	.8	4.6	.7	4.5	.8
2. I feel that I strongly belong to my entity.	4.2	.9	4.2	.8	4.1	1.1
3. I feel that I strongly belong to my canton.	NA	NA	3.8	1.0	2.2	.9
4. Bosnian nation for me is the best nation in the world.	2.4	1.0	3.1	1.1	3.4	1.2
5. I am a proud member of my racial/ethnic group.	4.3	.9	3.8	1.0	4.2	1.0
6. My racial/ethnic group is an important reflection of who I am.	4.1	1.0	3.5	1.2	3.8	1.2
7. I often regret that I belong to my racial/ethnicity.	1.6	.9	2.5	1.4	1.9	1.1
8. I often participate in the activities of my racial/ethnic group.	3.6	1.0	3.2	1.3	3.2	1.1
9. I often feel my ethnic group is not worthwhile.	1.8	.9	2.7	1.4	2.2	.9
10. My national identity is one of my most important identities.	3.8	1.2	3.7	1.1	3.7	1.3
Level and importance of national identity for the public	32.8	4.5	35.0	6.2	34.5	6.0

According to Table 1, Croats and Bosnians, with the Mean (M) of 35.0 and 34.5, achieved the highest total score for the level of national identity, while Serbs followed with 32.8. According to the results for the questions 1 and 2, all three groups achieved a similar score as they agreed that they are proud of their ethnicity and that they have strong ethnic attachment and belonging; thus exclusive ethnic national identity. The Croats achieved the highest score for this section although they are the smallest ethnic group.

All three groups demonstrated disagreement (on average) on regretting to belong to their ethnic group. All three groups were (on average) undecided for often participating in the activities of their group. For question 4 Serbs disagreed that the Bosnian nation is the best nation in the world by 56% of the respondents. While for question 6, the Serbs agree by 80% of respondents that their racial/ethnic group is an important reflection of who they are. On the other hand, most Bosnians and Croats were undecided on these two questions. Regarding statement 9, the Serbs showed the strongest disagreement with 86%, that their ethnic group is not worthwhile following the Bosnians 67% and Croats 46%. Serbs do not believe that the Bosnian nation is the best nation in the world, which stems from their reliance on their focus on exclusive ethnic national identity. As for the last question, 'My national identity is one of my most important identities' all three ethnic groups were undecided and agree. The data clearly demonstrated the crisis on national identity among the respondents, as they are not aware of civic, nation-state and institution-based national identification.

6.3. Analysis of the Relationship between National Identity Markers and Public Perceptions of National Identity

This part the questionnaire analyzed the relationship between the national identity makers and public perceptions of national identity in the form of the country of birth, clothing as national identity marker, language, history, being proud of a national flag, anthem, respecting state institutions, etc.

Table 2: The Relationship between National Identity Markers and Public Perception of National Identity

	Ethnicity					
	Serb		Croat		Bosniak	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
11. I am proud of being born in Bosnia and Herzegovina.	3.1	1.0	3.5	1.1	4.2	1.0
12. I regret living most of my life in Bosnia and Herzegovina.	2.7	1.0	2.9	1.2	2.3	1.3
13. I proudly use Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian language.	4.4	.8	4.1	1.1	4.4	.9
14. I openly state that I am Muslim/Orthodox/Catholic.	4.3	1.0	4.0	1.1	4.5	.9
15. I do not respect Bosnian state institutions.	2.8	1.0	2.5	1.4	1.8	.9
16. I proudly show my national identity by wearing special clothes/attire.	3.1	1.0	3.1	1.4	3.0	1.3
17. I show very high respect to the passport, national flag and national anthem of Bosnia and Herzegovina.	2.7	.9	3.7	1.1	4.2	1.0
18. I am proud of a harmony and understanding between Bosnians, Serbs, Croats, and Others in Bosnia and Herzegovina.	2.1	1.0	3.3	1.3	3.0	1.3
19. I admire history, culture, religions, and languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina.	2.9	.8	3.9	1.1	4.3	.9
20. My national identity is manifested through most of my doings.	3.4	1.0	3.4	1.3	3.6	1.1
The relationship of national identity markers with public perception of national identity	31.5	3.2	34.4	5.6	35.3	4.6

According to the data, the total score for the relationship between the national identity makers and public perceptions of national identity was as follows: Bosnians Mean (M) 35.3, Croats 34.4 and Serbs 31.5.

All three groups showed similar perceptions regarding questions 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16. Hence, they disagreed on regretting living most of their life in Bosnia and Herzegovina; they agree on average on proudly using Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian language (Bosnian agree with 90%, Serbs with 94%, Croats with 74%). It appears that the language is an important signifier of ethnic national identity and emphasizes intergroup divisions. Then, Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats all agree on average on openly practicing their religion. Respondents disagree, especially the Bosnians, that they do not respect Bosnian institutions. Obtained data regarding this statement is interesting since the public often does not show the support to the state and state institutions because of corruption and ineffectiveness of the public administration. Thus, all ethnic groups showed respect for state institutions, which demonstrated the support for a possibility of civic, nation-state and institution-based national identity model. The political elites who hold state positions in the public administration could foster such a model. Finally, all three ethnic groups are undecided on average on showing their national identity by wearing special clothes/attire. Although the research respondents do not show their national identity through specific clothing, however, many today use pendants as symbols that mark them of belonging to a certain religion and ethnic group. Those symbols include Catholic's cross pendant, Orthodox rosary or *brojanica*, and the Muslim star and crescent.

Serbs disagreed 38% with statement 17, regarding high respect to the passport, national flag and national anthem of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Serb respondents showed significant disagreement for statement 19, regarding admiring history, culture, religions, and languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Serb state and entity political officials frequently question the existence and functioning of the state and promote the secession. They influence the Serb citizens to disregard civic, nation-state and institution-based national identity. Then, according to Allcock (2000) historical narrative in Bosnia and Herzegovina is subjective and hence shapes the consciousness of people and the meaning of the past and the future (p. 314). There is no basic consensus on the past and there is no common denominator for the new future.

In comparison to the Serbs and Croats, the Bosnians are proud of being born in Bosnia and Herzegovina (question 11). They showed the agreement on statement 17, regarding a high respect to the passport, national flag and national anthem (80%). Moreover, Bosnians and Croats are undecided on

statement 18, while Serbs disagree that there is a harmony and coexistence between the three ethnic groups. Perhaps, because of the constitution, the political system, ambiguous concepts of ethnic categorization and politicization of ethnicity has led to the perception of other people as unfamiliar and distant (Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013; p. 153).

For the question “My national identity is manifested through most of my doings,” Bosnians, Croats, and Serbs are undecided on average with the statement. This shows that although national identity is important to Croats, Bosnians, and Serbs, they are undecided that they show their identity through their opinion, beliefs and other national identity markers. Perhaps, Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats demonstrated aspirations for mutual coexistence and hence they hold back their ethnic attitudes, opinions, and beliefs as to fit the multi-ethnic and multicultural environment.

6.4. Analysis of Socio-Political Challenges and Public Perception of National Identity

This part of the research analyzed the respondent’s perception of national identity within current socio-political challenges, such as politics, democracy, economy, media, etc.

Table 3: The Socio-Political Challenges Effect on Public Perceptions of National Identity

	Ethnicity					
	Serb		Croat		Bosnian	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
21. I am satisfied with the way politics/democracy works in Bosnia and Herzegovina.	1.6	.9	2.2	1.3	1.6	.8
22. I do not agree that the media represents my national and ethnic identity and interests.	3.4	1.0	3.3	1.3	3.5	1.2
23. Bosnia and Herzegovina gives priority to lowering political tensions over the improvement of the local economy.	2.1	1.2	2.6	1.2	3.0	1.3
24. BiH should follow its own interests even if that leads to conflicts with other nations.	3.2	1.0	2.7	1.4	3.2	1.4
25. Bosnian government should work more on the promotion of the country and its cultures in region and world.	3.8	.7	4.2	1.0	4.4	1.0
26. Bosnian people should work more on the promotion of their cultures (Bosnian, Croat, Serb) - individually, regionally and even internationally.	3.9	.6	4.1	1.1	4.2	1.0
27. It is better for Bosnian society if Bosnians, Croats, and Serbs maintain their distinct customs and traditions.	3.8	.7	4.1	1.0	3.7	1.1
28. B&H government should give more assistance to ethnic minorities for the preserving of their customs and traditions.	3.8	.7	4.4	.8	3.8	1.0
29. Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats are not doing enough for mutual coexistence.	3.8	.8	3.9	1.1	4.0	1.0
30. Some of the existential challenges within the state are hindering my strong national feeling.	2.7	1.2	3.6	1.3	3.3	1.0
Socio-political challenges effect on public perception of national identity	32.1	3.6	35.1	6.2	34.8	5.2

According to Table 3, the distribution of the highest total scores for socio-political challenges and public perception of national identity is different from the previous two sections. The highest score was achieved by the Croats with Mean of 35.1, followed by Bosnians with 34.8 and Serbs 32.1. Although for Bosnians and Croats national identity is most important regarding national identity markers, they believe that socio-political challenges shape their national identity to a certain extent, while Serbs are least convinced that socio-political challenges shape their national identity.

For questions 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 all three ethnic groups gave similar answers. Three ethnic groups disagree with the way democracy works in Bosnia and Herzegovina (21. question), Bosnians disagree with 87%, Serbs with 92% and Croats with 70%. Three ethnic groups are undecided on average that the media represent their national and ethnic identity and interests (22). All respondents from three ethnic groups mostly agreed that the Bosnian government should work more on the promotion of the country and its cultures in the region and the world (25). Similarly, they agreed that Bosnian people should work more on the promotion of their cultures (26). Furthermore, for the statement that it is better for Bosnian society if Bosnians, Croats, and Serbs maintain their distinct customs and tradition (27), Croats agreed while Bosnians and Serbs were undecided. Bosnians and Serbs were undecided when asked if the Bosnian government should give more assistance to ethnic minorities for preserving their customs and traditions (28), while most of the Croats once again agreed with this statement. Finally, all three ethnic groups showed similar answers to the statement that Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats are not doing enough for mutual coexistence (29), Bosnians (77%) followed by Serbs (75%) and Croats (72%) Regarding the statement 23, that Bosnia and Herzegovina gives priority to lowering political tensions over the improvement of the local economy, both Croats and Serbs largely disagree while Bosnians were undecided. For statement 24, that Bosnia and Herzegovina should follow own interests even if that leads to conflicts with other nations, Bosnians and Serbs were undecided while Croats disagreed.

7. Conclusion

Data presentation and analysis indicated that the respondents demonstrated high ethnic national identity in contrast to civic, nation-state and institution-based national identity. Ethnic groups, because of exclusive

ethnic national identification, do not see and recognize Bosnian nation-state as a whole. Furthermore, respondents of the three ethnicities, especially Serbs and to some extent Croats do not have desired respect for passport, national flag, and national anthem. In addition, a similar opinion remains regarding the respect for history, cultures, religions, and languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Exclusive ethnic national identity among Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats could be countered through dialogue and trust, which is crucial for the future of Bosnian society. Multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural plurality could foster understanding, dialogue, and trust (Mulalić & Kulanić, 2017). Different ethnic national identities should flourish because each ethnic group has its own history, culture, traditions, customs, and language. Nevertheless, since all ethnic groups are at the same time citizens of a nation, the civic, national-state and institution-based model of national identity should be shared by all three ethnic groups. The civic, nation-state and institution-based model should counter exclusive ethnic national identification and foster the values of freedom, tolerance, equality, human rights, coexistence, prosperity, and stability.

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