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Originalni naučni rad
Original Scientific Article
UDK: 316.47(497.6)

WHAT KIND OF STATE? VIEWS OF BOSNIAKS, CROATS, AND SERBS ON THE CHARACTER OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Summary: The article is based on findings from two sociological surveys undertaken in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1996 and 1999. It is shown that the views of Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs on the character of the common state are often highly conflicting and different from the official perceptions of the international community. It is argued that a viable solution to the Bosnian problem cannot neglect the issue of ethnicity and the need for an institutional structure which explicitly recognises the fact this is not an ordinary nation-state. Although there are short-term explanations for the violence in Bosnia, the situation is ultimately the outcome of a complex and delayed process of nation-building. Therefore, Bosnia is today faced with the same dilemma as before the war: how to construct a legitimate state in a situation where a common identity does not exist and no ethnic group constitutes a majority.

Key words: nation-state, nation-building, ethnicity, institutional structure, attitudes

INTRODUCTION

The understanding of political and social processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina has to a large extent been influenced by the recent war. Shocked by the atrocities, the international community has often failed to distinguish between the immediate causes of violence and its wider historical or social context.^[1] While it is true that the history of Bosnia cannot be described as centuries of ethnic hatred, this does not mean that ethnicity

^[1] For a discussion of misunderstandings or simplifications in the literature on the war, see Kent 1999.

is irrelevant or that the war should be interpreted exclusively as a case of external aggression (Burg & Shoup 1999, Bougarel 1996, Cailic 1995). Although the immediate outbreak of war was a result of conscious actions by political leaders, the fact that the character of Bosnia was an issue at all is largely an effect of the specific history of the region.

Ultimately, the post-Yugoslav conflicts were the outcome of an unfinished process of nation-building and state formation, where different options had been present since the onset of modernization: a unified South Slav state, or the creation of nation-states on the Western European model (Stavrianos 2000). This dilemma was the result of a unique constellation of linguistic similarities and cultural differences which was extremely difficult to resolve, due to the discrepancies between political and ethnic borders.^[2] The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was particularly complex, since it was the only republic in former Yugoslavia without a majority population.

When the Yugoslav federation disintegrated according to the principle of modern nationalism it was, therefore, natural that the Bosnian Muslims or Bosniaks would try to make Bosnia their own state, while Serbs and Croats would gravitate towards Serbia and Croatia. There was nothing mysterious about this, and the political orientations of the ethnic communities were not necessarily the result of nationalist manipulation, although they were made salient in a situation of intense ethnic mobilization.^[3]

In this article results from two sociological surveys undertaken in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1996 and 1999 will be presented. They show a divided society faced with the same basic issues as those which existed before the war: How should a state with three major ethnic communities be constituted? We will concentrate on attitudes towards language, views on the character and future of the common state, attitudes towards democracy and the West, ethnic distance and reconciliation. The presentation is largely descriptive, and it is believed that the results as such merit reflection.

DATA

The first survey was undertaken in the summer of 1996, shortly before the first post-war elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its purpose was

^[2] In his book on nationalism, Ernest Gellner explicitly deals with the Bosnian case of identity-formation, notably the complex interaction between language and culture-religion (Gellner 1983:71-72).

^[3] This is shown empirically by Vladislavjević 2002, studying the mobilization of Kosovo Serbs. His results are corroborated by the theoretical discussion on the impact of propaganda in Green & Seher 2003.

to investigate attitudes towards ethnicity and political issues. The second survey was carried out in Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia in the autumn of 1999. This time the goal was to study religion, nationalism, and the process of reconciliation in a post-war context. In both cases data were collected by the public opinion agencies Puls (Split/Zagreb) and Medium (Belgrade). As far as Bosnia and Herzegovina is concerned both surveys comprised about 3000 respondents, equally divided between the Bosniak, Croat, and Serb areas of the country. Only results concerning the majority population in each area will be presented.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, where, due to the lack of reliable population statistics, it is impossible to obtain a strictly representative sample, a multi-stage sampling procedure was used, based on the 1991 census and population estimates. In the final stages random selection of towns/villages and respondents was employed. This method has been used for several years in public opinion research in Bosnia, and is regarded as satisfactory in the circumstances.

Data were collected by qualified and experienced interviewers employed by the field organisations of Medium and Puls in the Serb Republic and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In order to facilitate data collection there were three linguistic versions of the questionnaire: Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian. The interviews were conducted without disturbances and non-response rates are generally low. It should be added, though, that, as in all surveys in former Yugoslavia, less educated people tend to refuse participation and are, consequently, underrepresented.

LANGUAGE

In the Dayton Accords the issue of language was simply ignored. It turned out that while three languages had official status within the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, none of them was recognized in all parts of the country. Obviously the negotiators were not aware of the importance of the language issue, which soon became a political problem, however, especially during controversies on educational policies. Today, after intervention of the international community, the standard languages of Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs enjoy equal status all over Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Nevertheless, the basic views on the language issue remain, and are obviously not limited to politicians. The results of both surveys show that people are very much concerned about these matters. At first, the respondents refer to their language by the name used within their own ethnic group,

i.e. Bosnian, Croatian, or Serbian. In the 1996 survey a minority of Serbs, especially among those with a university degree, still used the expression Serbo-Croatian, which had practically disappeared three years later. Further, Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks have very different views on the character of the language. When asked whether Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian are one or several languages, there is a clear difference between, on the one hand, Croats, and on the other, Serbs and Bosniaks. A majority of Serbs and Bosniaks regards the three standard languages as basically the same, whereas Croats are of the opinion that these are three different languages, although with certain similarities.

While Serbs and Bosniaks differ from Croats in some respects, in others Serbs and Croats share views which are in sharp contrast to those of Bosniaks. For example, when evaluating the language situation, Serbs and Bosnjaks tend to regret the differences between the new standard languages, while the Croats welcome them. However, on the question whether the official language in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be labelled Bosnian, a large majority of Serbs and Croats opposes such a solution, whereas most Bosniaks are overwhelmingly positive. Similarly, a majority of Serbs and Croats are in favour of separate schools or classes for Serb and Croat children, and feel they have a right to use the Croat and Serb standard languages in Bosnia. On both issues the Bosniaks are against.

When the international community became aware of the problem, the reaction was often one of disbelief and consternation. Why should this be a problem, since, after all, the standard languages are based on the same vernacular, and the differences must be regarded as minor? Although this is true from a linguistic point of view, the (lexical) differences that do exist are important, since, consciously or unconsciously, they are signalling ethnic identity.

It goes without saying that there are practical and economic consequences of the present situation, where the educational system and the administrative apparatus must adopt to a situation with three official languages, but perhaps even more important is the symbolic dimension. Since, according to common sense, language is the most important marker of national identity, the existence of three languages will have implications for the idea of a common Bosnian identity.

It would surely have been more practical to adopt the solution of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to which the then two variants of Serbo-Croatian were equal and where there existed a broad tolerance regarding lexical alternatives. By the end of the 1980: s this had

developed into a third variety of Serbo-Croatian, referred to as the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Standard-Language Expression. At first it seemed that the Bosnian Muslims would adopt this solution to the language question, that is, the earlier approach would still be in force, although the inhabitants could identify the language as Bosnian, Croatian, or Serbian. Instead, a new Bosnian standard was introduced, largely based on the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Bosniaks. It is reasonable that a newly formed Bosniak nation will not accept that its language is referred to as Serbian or Croatian, but it is equally logical that Serbs and Croats will not regard the new Bosnian language as theirs.^[4]

It is very difficult to see a straightforward solution to this problem, and it is illusory to believe that it could be found solely in a Bosnian context. In order to resolve the language issue in Bosnia and Herzegovina an official recognition of the common features of the three standard languages would probably have to be reached with Croatia and Serbia, which at present seems unlikely.

THE CHARACTER OF BOSNIA

The language issue is only one aspect of significant differences in attitudes and interests, which are further illustrated by views on the character of the common state. One controversial issue is the political structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Should it be more centralized, or should there be some kind of federal solution, since there are three major groups of which no one constitutes a majority of the population? In the 1996 investigation the respondents could choose between five alternatives: a central government, regional autonomy, two entities, three entities, or partition. Between 70-90 per cent of the Serbs, according to education, preferred partition, which was also the dominant answer among Croats, although many would accept a three-entity solution. On the other hand, a majority of Bosniaks were clearly in favour of a centralized state, although a fair amount of those with higher education would be prepared to accept regional autonomy. In other words, the three communities were highly divided and none of them accepted the Dayton accords based on the idea of two entities.

Not surprisingly, the same pattern appears on the question whether the Bosniaks constitute the dominant nation in Bosnia. Croats and Serbs to a large extent deny this, whereas a substantial proportion of the Bosniaks believe this is the case. There are also very clear differences regarding attitudes towards Bosnia as a political and cultural concept. Between 80-90

^[4] For a review of the language issue in Bosnia and Herzegovina, see Gustavsson (2009).

per cent of the Bosniaks are proud of being citizens of Bosnia, while a large majority of the Serbs and a substantial part of the Croats are not. Similarly, the often mentioned idea of a unique Bosnian spirit is endorsed by 80-90 per cent of the Bosniaks, but only by 2-6 per cent of the Serbs, or 8-12 per cent of the Croats.

On the question whether it would be better if people simply identified as Bosnians, not as Bosniaks, Croats, or Serbs, a vast majority of Serbs (70-90 per cent) and most Croats (60-70 per cent) strongly disagree. On the other hand, neither do the Bosniaks support this idea without reservations. Between, 28 – 43 per cent strongly agrees, while 12-28 per cent strongly disagrees.

As for the relevance of a Bosnian identity on a personal level, a great majority of Serbs and Croats state that their identity as Serbs, respectively Croats, is more important, while the Bosniaks are divided between the alternatives “Bosnian” and “both are equally important”. It might be added that about half of the Bosniaks spontaneously declare themselves not as Bosniaks, but as Muslims, the term used in Socialist Yugoslavia and initially favoured by Alija Izetbegović.

Concerning the future of the common state, the respondents could agree or disagree with three statements: “Bosnia should be a unitary state”; “Republika Srpska should be united with Serbia”, and “Herceg-Bosnia should be united with Croatia”. Whereas Bosniaks are unequivocally for a unitary state, the Serbs are against; as are the Croats, although not with the same intensity. Similarly, the Serbs overwhelmingly support the unification of Republika Srpska and Serbia, and a majority of the Bosnian Croats would like to be united with Croatia. Furthermore, the Croats and to some extent the Serbs are supporting each other’s desires.

It might be argued that it is not strange if members of three ethnic groups which only a year earlier had been waging war against each other express these views. Unfortunately, the two surveys are not completely comparable, but some of the questions were repeated. It turns out that on the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina members of the three ethnic groups in 1999 still have diametrically opposed views. Croats and Serbs would prefer unification with the “motherland”, while the Bosniaks want a unified state where the two entities are abolished.

A MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY

One of the major objectives of the international intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina is to promote a multicultural or multi-ethnic community. There seems to be some confusion as to the meaning of the term, and it is often used in a normative manner, rather than as a factual description. Moreover, one has the feeling that what is really meant is a cosmopolitan society where people with different cultural backgrounds live together, but where ethnicity actually plays a minor societal or political role. It is more or less taken for granted that in such a multi-ethnic society there is a dominant culture to which everybody ultimately adheres, like in the United States, Canada or the immigrant countries of Western Europe. In the Balkans the situation is, of course, very different. Countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, or Macedonia, are by definition multi-ethnic societies, which have to come to terms with conflicting interests on a scale unknown to the West. An important reason is the specific process of nation-building and the fact that for centuries the Balkans were dominated by the Ottoman Empire, which constructed a society based on religious affiliation. In the Ottoman *millet* system ethnic groups learned to live together, but as clearly defined groups, and very few crossed the cultural borders (Stavrianos 2000).

It is therefore of great interest to investigate how people in Bosnia today perceive an ideal multi-ethnic society: according to the western model, where ethnicity does not play a major role, or according to the traditional system, where it does, and where different groups are living side by side, rather than assimilate? The respondents could choose between three alternatives:

”A society where several ethnic groups are living together in harmony, but do not mix. Every group preserves its culture and mixed marriages are uncommon.” [Coexistence/Cultural Segregation (cf. Ottoman *Millet* system):]

”A society where several ethnic groups are living together; everyone preserving its culture, but mixed marriages are common.” [Coexistence/Cultural Preservation/Mixed Marriages (cf. Socialist Yugoslavia)]

”A society where ethnic identity is increasingly unimportant. People mix freely and mixed marriages are common.” [Coexistence/Ethnic Identity Unimportant (cf. the view in the West; ”multi-ethnic society”)]

In fact, a majority of Bosnians adhere to the *millet* model of coexistence where different groups live side by side, but do not mix. This view is especially pronounced among Serbs and Croats, but also dominant among Bosniaks.

SELF-IMAGE AND SALIENCE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

Even though the three communities have fundamentally different outlooks on important issues, they are very similar in the way they look at themselves. Three statements were used to measure attitudes towards self and history: “my people has only conducted defensive wars”; “my people has suffered more throughout history than other peoples”; “my people is not perfect, but its cultural tradition is superior to others”.

The response pattern is remarkably similar. Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs all believe they have only defended themselves against outside aggression and have suffered more throughout history than others. At the same time they perceive their own culture as superior. There are differences according to education, but even among those with a university degree, the dominant tendency is the same, especially as far as defensive wars are concerned. On this item between 60 and 78 per cent chose the alternative “strongly agree”. The conviction that one’s own people has a unique experience of suffering is not as widespread, but only slightly less, and a more differentiated response is primarily noticeable among those with higher education.

The idea of cultural superiority is less accepted, especially among those with secondary or higher education. Still, 40 per cent of university educated Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats, and 67 per cent Bosnian Serbs in the same category subscribe to this idea. The general picture is clear: All groups feel they belong to a peace-loving and suffering people, which is the bearer of an exceptional cultural tradition.

RECONCILIATION

Besides a viable political structure and democratic institutions, an important aspect of international policy in Bosnia has been the emphasis on reconciliation. It is however not quite clear how this process will come about, and it is characteristic that in Bosnia, as well as in Croatia and Serbia, the term *rekoncilijacija* is often used instead of the native expression *pomirenje*.

It is widely believed that an important instrument to achieve reconciliation is through the judicial process at the war crimes tribunal in The Hague. Unless the perpetrators are brought to justice there can be no genuine peace and coexistence, it is argued. Most Bosnians agree. A clear majority feels that a trial of the perpetrators is a precondition for the restoration of a normal society, although Serbs and Croats are somewhat less convinced than the Bosniaks. However, the Bosnians are divided as far as the legitimacy of the War Crimes Tribunal is concerned. A majority of

Serbs and Croats do not believe that trials in The Hague will be fair, which the Bosniaks unanimously do. It is interesting that a much larger percentage of Croats shares this view in 1999 compared to 1996, which might be related to the fact that Croats have increasingly been prosecuted and sentenced for war crimes.

The same pattern emerges when people are asked if they believe that the three communities in Bosnia will be able to live in peace in the future, or that the war has made a life together impossible. While the Bosniaks do believe in a common future, a fairly large part of Croats and Serbs do not.

On the direct question whether one should forgive those who have committed atrocities, the dominant answer is that one should not, followed by the alternative one should forgive, but never forget. Serbs and especially Bosniaks are much less inclined to forgive than Croats.

SOCIAL DISTANCE

As a measure of social distance a modified version of the Bogardus-scale was used. The respondents were asked whether they were prepared to live in the same town or village as a member of a given ethnic group, and whether they would accept him or her as a work-mate, friend, or spouse.

In general, there is a high degree of ethnic distance, especially as far as mixed marriages are concerned. This might, at first sight, be interpreted as a result of the war, which is not necessarily the case. Inter-marriage rates in former Yugoslavia were consistently rather low, notably in Bosnia (Petrović 1985, Botev 1994), and it is therefore not surprising that only a minority of the respondents is prepared to marry across ethnic and religious lines. Thus, the pattern of intermarriage does not, by itself, have to be an indicator of a highly divided and conflict-ridden society.

Of greater importance is the fact that a large part of the respondents are not prepared to share work-place with, or even live in the same town as members of other groups. About half of the Croats and around 60 per cent of the Serbs in Bosnia would not accept Serbs or Bosniaks, respectively Croats or Bosniaks, as fellow citizens in this sense.

The degree of social distance is associated with rural-urban background and education, but not with age or sex, and the most salient factor seems to be education. In all groups there is a more or less clear difference between those with primary education or less, and those who have a university degree, while respondents with secondary education fall in between.

The differences between ethnic groups are remarkable and appear in both surveys. When education is held constant, there is still an apparent dissimilarity between, on the one hand, Bosniaks, and, on the other hand, Croats and Serbs. According to these investigations Bosniaks are definitely more inclined to accept members of other ethnic groups. One reason might be that Muslim culture in Bosnia, due to the Ottoman heritage, is more tolerant, another that the Bosnjaks have nowhere else to go, and must, if they favour a common state, cohabitate with others. It might be added that, on concrete issues, like culture or language, Bosniaks, as we have seen, are not willing to allow for additional rights to Serbs or Croats.

One would expect war experience to be a salient factor, but the effects are somewhat contradictory. While those who have participated in combat or been wounded during the war do not express a higher degree of social distance, refugee status does result in less tolerance – among the Serbs. Since the refugee contingent in our case is considerably higher among Serbs than among Bosniaks or Croats, this will have consequences for the over-all response pattern of the Serbs.

Returning to the issue of whether social distance might be an effect of the war, it is interesting to compare the studies from 1996 and 1999. It turns out that three years later the degree of social distance is, in fact, lower. Common to all groups, however, is that views on intermarriage remain the same.

DEMOCRACY AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE WEST

An important goal of the international community has been to further democracy.^[5] This has been done through media policies and electoral procedures, as well as by direct intervention, when non-suitable politicians have been ousted or not been permitted to participate in political life. Judging from the surveys, it seems that the problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not so much a lack of democratic attitudes. A large majority of the respondents, regardless of ethnic affiliation, are in favour of a market economy, rule of law, fair elections or a free press. The point is, however, that they do not trust their leaders. Apparently, the international community has not, in spite of its efforts, been able to convince ordinary Bosnians that they could really trust politicians or institutions.

At the same time, there is a wide-spread scepticism towards the involvement of the international community. In the 1996 survey most

^[5] On the failure of the policies of the International Community, see e.g. Chandler 1999 and Knaust & Martin 2003.

people welcomed the foreign military presence, and in fact, both Croats and Serbs pleaded for a general disarmament in the region, in contrast to the Bosniaks, who had a positive view on the US policy of strengthening the Bosnian army. However, there was a rather high degree of distrust towards the foreigners. Many respondents felt that the international community or the "West" did not understand the situation in Bosnia, that they treated the country as backward, and were even acting against the interests of their people. The same questions were put in 1999 and the results are similar. A majority of Croats and Serbs, and a fairly large part of the Bosniaks are of the opinion that the international community has misunderstood the real conditions in their country, and treat them as a backward people.

DISCUSSION

The results of the two surveys indicate that the coexistence between ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina is precarious. Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs are often highly divided in their views on crucial aspects of Bosnian society and the political system. Moreover, their attitudes differ from the official perceptions of the international community.

At first, the three major groups in Bosnia favour solutions which are contrary to the Dayton Agreement. Bosniaks want a unitary state, while Serbs and Croats to a large extent would prefer to join their respective homelands.

Second, among Serbs and Croats, there is a high degree of distrust towards the Tribunal in The Hague. There is also a fairly large scepticism towards the International Community, which is characterized as arrogant and ignorant.

Third, the general view of a multi-ethnic society is from a Western point of view very specific, favouring a certain degree of cultural segregation. It also turns out that the language issue is sensitive and in practice very difficult to solve.

According to these data, the reconciliation which the international community is officially trying to promote is faced with difficulties, due to values and attitudes in the population.

What does this mean? If one presumes that disagreements and distrust primarily are the result of nationalist propaganda and war, it is of course natural to continue with the kind of institution-building that has been going on since 1995. However, it seems that at least some of these

attitudes cannot be explained as a result of manipulation or misperceptions, but, rather, reflect attitudes and views that are genuinely felt, and which are not necessarily created by cynical politicians. One reason the thesis of manipulation is not wholly credible is that those who have nationalist views, or show a greater tendency to social distance, do not differ from others in terms of reading newspapers or watching TV.

Moreover, certain political opinions are not automatically dependent on ethnocentric or chauvinist attitudes. For example, there is a correlation between Croat and Serb views on the future of Bosnia and measures of national exclusiveness or ethnic distance, but the relationship is not very strong, which means that people who are not nationalist-minded also subscribe to these views.

The international community has used the public profession of belief in Dayton as a yardstick of democratic and non-nationalist attitudes, as if the agreement itself represented the only possible solution. After all, it might be recalled that totally different proposals were put forward by the international community, both before and during the war, from a cantonal system to the idea of a federation of three republics. The strange and hyper-institutionalized Bosniak-Croat federation inaugurated in 1994 and later confirmed at Dayton, was a result of US pressure to stop the war between two of its allies, rather than an affirmation of Croat or Bosniak interests, not to mention a resolution of the Bosnian conflict. Originally supposed to be part of a confederation with Croatia, an idea which was quietly forgotten in Dayton, it is a political construct which continuously produces tensions.

The point is not to argue for dissolution of the common state or to excuse war and atrocities, only to say that in a society of this kind it would be natural to satisfy the legitimate interests of all groups. The suggestion that a third, Croatian entity, would mean the beginning of the end of Bosnia and Herzegovina is not entirely convincing, since the existence of the state is ultimately based on international protection. In fact, a tripartite solution would at least in theory make it easier to form a more efficient central government, as it would safeguard the interests of all three communities and make them explicit.

Instead, there are signs that the international community would favour a revision of the Dayton agreement, in the direction of a more centralized state. Not only would such a programme mobilize the ethnic groups on nationalist platforms; it would be contrary to basic European documents on national and minority rights. The only possible argument would be that

according to the international community, Croats and Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and maybe even Bosniaks, are not really what they think they are.

The international community has regarded post-Dayton Bosnia primarily as a case of conflict resolution and reconciliation with international assistance, often understood as an issue of attitude change. It seems one would have to recognize the real differences and conflicts that do exist, and understand them as contradictory goals produced by a complex process of nation-building, rather than as a result of the promotion of false ideologies. There are, after all, three distinct ethnic communities living in Bosnia. One may regret the fact that, due to historical circumstances, there never developed a common Bosnian identity, but one cannot ignore it.

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APPENDIX

Different schools/classes [1996]		Ethnic Affiliation		
Education		Serb	Croat	Bosniak
Primary	Strongly agree	41,9%	27,8%	1,5%
	Mainly agree	26,1%	40,0%	3,1%
	Mainly disagree	7,9%	13,5%	23,0%
	Strongly disagree	17,7%	17,1%	72,4%
	N	203	245	196
Secondary	Strongly agree	31,6%	27,8%	1,1%
	Mainly agree	26,5%	38,2%	1,8%
	Mainly disagree	11,7%	17,8%	17,1%
	Strongly disagree	23,6%	14,0%	78,9%
	N	751	579	615
Higher	Strongly agree	26,3%	27,6%	2,7%
	Mainly agree	29,2%	35,9%	
	Mainly disagree	12,3%	17,9%	12,7%
	Strongly disagree	25,4%	17,2%	82,7%
	N	236	145	150

Official language should be Bosnian [1996]		Ethnic Affiliation		
Education		Serb	Croat	Bosniak
Primary	Strongly agree	1,0%	2,4%	87,2%
	Mainly agree	,5%	4,9%	9,2%
	Mainly disagree	4,9%	18,0%	1,5%
	Strongly disagree	91,6%	73,1%	2,0%
	N	203	245	196
Secondary	Strongly agree	1,3%	4,7%	85,0%
	Mainly agree	,9%	5,4%	10,2%
	Mainly disagree	5,6%	15,2%	1,8%
	Strongly disagree	90,9%	72,7%	1,8%
	N	751	579	615
Higher	Strongly agree	2,1%	4,1%	76,7%
	Mainly agree	1,3%	2,8%	14,0%
	Mainly disagree	8,9%	14,5%	4,7%
	Strongly disagree	83,5%	77,2%	2,7%
	N	236	145	150

In Your opinion, are Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian, one or several languages? [1999]	Bosniak	Croat	Serb
	Col %	Col %	Col %
Education			
Primary			
The same language	29,6%	12,2%	41,0%
The same language but with certain differences	60,9%	20,4%	45,2%
Three different but similar languages	8,2%	46,9%	10,1%
Three totally different languages	1,3%	20,4%	3,7%
N	304	245	188
Secondary			
The same language	26,8%	9,3%	37,4%
The same language but with certain differences	62,2%	27,2%	48,9%
Three different but similar languages	8,3%	43,1%	12,9%
Three totally different languages	2,6%	20,3%	,9%
N	503	591	583
Higher			
The same language	32,9%	9,2%	39,4%
The same language but with certain differences	57,6%	29,8%	44,9%
Three different but similar languages	9,4%	39,7%	14,6%
Three totally different languages		21,4%	1,0%
N	85	131	198

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Organization of the Bosnian state [1996]		Ethnic Affiliation		
Education		Serb	Croat	Bosniak
Primary	Central government	,5%	2,6%	70,4%
	Regional autonomy		1,7%	8,4%
	Two entities	4,6%	7,8%	18,4%
	Three entities	4,6%	35,5%	2,2%
	Partitioned	90,2%	52,4%	,6%
	N	194	231	179
Secondary	Central government	,9%	2,3%	68,6%
	Regional autonomy	1,1%	4,6%	15,4%
	Two entities	4,1%	6,6%	12,2%
	Three entities	7,2%	34,9%	3,2%
	Partitioned	86,7%	51,6%	,5%
	N	738	562	564
Higher	Central government	1,8%	2,8%	50,0%
	Regional autonomy	1,8%	4,2%	33,8%
	Two entities	14,0%	8,4%	10,8%
	Three entities	9,6%	37,1%	3,8%
	Partitioned	72,8%	47,6%	1,5%
	N	228	143	130

Proud of being citizen of Bosnia [1996]		Ethnic Affiliation		
Education		Serb	Croat	Bosniak
Primary	Strongly agree	4,4%	10,3%	92,3%
	Mainly agree	12,3%	28,9%	7,7%
	Mainly disagree	7,9%	26,0%	
	Strongly disagree	75,4%	34,7%	
	N	203	242	196
Secondary	Strongly agree	7,6%	7,8%	83,6%
	Mainly agree	11,4%	26,5%	14,8%
	Mainly disagree	8,5%	34,2%	,8%
	Strongly disagree	72,5%	31,6%	,8%
	N	737	567	610
Higher	Strongly agree	9,3%	13,9%	78,4%
	Mainly agree	17,2%	29,9%	18,9%
	Mainly disagree	14,5%	20,4%	1,4%
	Strongly disagree	59,0%	35,8%	1,4%
	N	227	137	148

Bosniaks dominant nation in Bosnia [1996]		Ethnic Affiliation		
Education		Serb	Croat	Bosniak
Primary	Strongly agree	5,7%	5,1%	40,4%
	Mainly agree	3,6%	12,0%	30,3%
	Mainly disagree	9,3%	19,7%	17,4%
	Strongly disagree	81,3%	63,2%	11,8%
	N	193	234	178
Secondary	Strongly agree	3,0%	6,6%	40,3%
	Mainly agree	3,0%	11,9%	31,0%
	Mainly disagree	12,9%	21,7%	18,9%
	Strongly disagree	81,0%	59,9%	9,8%
	N	727	563	571
Higher	Strongly agree	3,1%	7,7%	35,8%
	Mainly agree	8,8%	14,0%	23,9%
	Mainly disagree	22,9%	23,8%	26,9%
	Strongly disagree	65,2%	54,5%	13,4%
	N	227	143	134

What would, in Your opinion, an ideal multi-ethnic society look like? [1999]	National Affiliation		
	Bosniak Col %	Croat Col %	Serb Col %
Elementary School			
Cultural Segregation ("Millet")	64,7 %	85,5 %	82,8 %
Cultural Preservation/Mixed Marriages	23,1 %	10,2 %	10,0 %
Ethnic Identity Unimportant	12,2 %	4,3 %	7,2 %
N	303	235	180
Secondary School			
Cultural Segregation ("Millet")	48,7 %	79,2 %	80,0 %
Cultural Preservation/Mixed Marriages	29,1 %	15,2 %	13,3 %
Ethnic Identity Unimportant	22,2 %	5,6 %	6,7 %
N	509	591	570
Higher			
Cultural Segregation ("Millet")	36,4 %	68,5 %	73,5 %
Cultural Preservation/Mixed Marriages	36,4 %	22,0 %	15,5 %
Ethnic Identity Unimportant	27,3 %	9,4 %	11,0 %
N	88	127	200

WHAT KIND OF STATE? VIEWS OF BOSNIAKS, CROATS, AND SERBS ON THE CHARACTER
OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Coexistence/Cultural Segregation (cf. Ottoman *Millet* system):

”A society where several ethnic groups are living together in harmony, but do not mix. Every group preserves its culture and mixed marriages are uncommon.”

Coexistence/Cultural Preservation/Mixed Marriages (cf. Socialist Yugoslavia):

” A society where several ethnic groups are living together; everyone preserving its culture, but mixed marriages are common.”

Coexistence/Ethnic Identity Unimportant (cf. view in the West; ”multi-ethnic society”).

”A society where ethnic identity is increasingly unimportant. People mix freely and mixed marriages are common”.

The Future of Bosnia [1999]		Ethnic Affiliation		
Partial Table		Bosniak	Croat	Serb
Primary		Col %	Col %	Col %
Republika Srpska should be a part of Serbia	Strongly agree	2,9%	49,5%	71,4%
Herceg Bosna should be a part of Croatia	Strongly agree	1,3%	69,1%	28,7%
Bosnia and Hercegovina should be a unitary republic, the Federation and RS should be abolished	Strongly agree	86,8%	16,2%	1,6%
		314	210	185
Secondary				
Republika Srpska should be a part of Serbia	Strongly agree	1,5%	38,4%	55,1%
Herceg Bosna should be a part of Croatia	Strongly agree	1,0%	55,2%	24,9%
Bosnia and Hercegovina should be a unitary republic, the Federation and RS should be abolished	Strongly agree	81,3%	13,5%	2,5%
		520	526	555
Higher				
Republika Srpska should be a part of Serbia	Strongly agree	2,3%	30,9%	49,2%
Herceg Bosna should be a part of Croatia	Strongly agree	2,3%	40,5%	25,0%
Bosnia and Hercegovina should be a unitary republic, the Federation and RS should be abolished	Strongly agree	80,2%	19,4%	2,1%
		88	110	193

My people has only conducted defensive wars [1999]	Ethnic Affiliation		
	Bosniak	Croat	Serb
Primary			
Strongly agree	84,9%	87,7%	84,9%
Somewhat agree	13,8%	9,4%	10,9%
Somewhat disagree	,6%	2,5%	2,6%
Strongly disagree	,6%	,4%	1,6%
N	311	244	192
Secondary			
Strongly agree	80,0%	76,2%	72,4%
Somewhat agree	17,0%	19,1%	21,1%
Somewhat disagree	1,3%	4,1%	5,1%
Strongly disagree	1,7%	,5%	1,4%
N	519	585	588
Higher			
Strongly agree	73,3%	72,4%	78,0%
Somewhat agree	19,8%	25,2%	19,0%
Somewhat disagree	4,7%	1,6%	2,5%
Strongly disagree	2,3%	,8%	,5%
N	86	127	200

My people have suffered more throughout history than other peoples [1999]	Ethnic Affiliation		
	Bosniak	Croat	Serb
Education			
Primary			
Strongly agree	74,3%	73,0%	79,9%
Somewhat agree	22,5%	22,5%	17,0%
Somewhat disagree	2,3%	4,5%	2,6%
Strongly disagree	1,0%		,5%
N	307	244	194
Secondary			
Strongly agree	61,9%	68,8%	72,6%
Somewhat agree	27,9%	23,1%	21,4%
Somewhat disagree	5,6%	6,4%	5,1%
Strongly disagree	4,6%	1,7%	,9%
N	501	576	583
Higher			
Strongly agree	57,6%	53,2%	73,4%
Somewhat agree	25,9%	31,5%	23,1%
Somewhat disagree	10,6%	11,3%	2,5%
Strongly disagree	5,9%	4,0%	1,0%
N	85	124	199

WHAT KIND OF STATE? VIEWS OF BOSNIAKS, CROATS, AND SERBS ON THE CHARACTER OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

My people is not perfect, but its cultural tradition is superior to others [1999]	Ethnic Affiliation		
	Bosniak	Croat	Serb
Education			
Primary			
Strongly agree	58,9%	63,1%	74,5%
Somewhat agree	28,5%	31,1%	20,8%
Somewhat disagree	8,3%	5,4%	3,1%
Strongly disagree	4,3%	,4%	1,6%
N	302	241	192
Secondary			
Strongly agree	45,5%	56,6%	68,8%
Somewhat agree	31,7%	32,0%	24,9%
Somewhat disagree	14,0%	8,4%	4,7%
Strongly disagree	8,8%	3,0%	1,6%
N	499	572	574
Higher			
Strongly agree	40,7%	39,5%	67,7%
Somewhat agree	34,6%	42,7%	27,8%
Somewhat disagree	12,3%	12,9%	3,0%
Strongly disagree	12,3%	4,8%	1,5%
N	81	124	198

What do you think about the War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague? [1999]	Ethnic Affiliation		
	Bosniak	Croat	Serb
	Col %	Col %	Col %
Education Primary			
A trial is a precondition for a just peace and normal relations	99,3%	67,5%	66,2%
It is better to forget and go on living	,7%	32,5%	33,8%
	302	203	133
Secondary			
A trial is a precondition for a just peace and normal relations	98,1%	66,8%	73,0%
It is better to forget and go on living	1,9%	33,2%	27,0%
	525	488	389
Higher			
A trial is a precondition for a just peace and normal relations	98,8%	73,8%	70,1%
It is better to forget and go on living	1,2%	26,2%	29,9%
	86	107	144

Do you think that the Hague tribunal against war criminals will be fair? [1999]	Ethnic Affiliation		
	Bosniak	Croat	Serb
Education	Col %	Col %	Col %
Primary			
Yes	86,9%	18,3%	16,0%
No	13,1%	81,7%	84,0%
N	289	224	175
Secondary			
Yes	86,1%	21,1%	15,3%
No	13,9%	78,9%	84,7%
N	489	551	504
Higher			
Yes	80,5%	31,7%	16,5%
No	19,5%	68,3%	83,5%
N	82	120	170

Do You believe that Croats, Muslims and Serbs will be able to live in peace, or do You think that the harm caused by the war has forever made a life together in peace impossible? [1999]				
Partial Table		Ethnic Affiliation		
Education		Muslim/ Bosnia	Croat	Serb
Primary/Less	Possible	85,7%	33,3%	16,4%
	Total N	307	234	165
Secondary	Possible	89,1%	37,2%	25,2%
	Total N	506	548	493
Higher	Possible	82,6%	48,2%	28,0%
	Total N	86	110	175

WHAT KIND OF STATE? VIEWS OF BOSNIAKS, CROATS, AND SERBS ON THE CHARACTER OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Do you think one should forgive those who have tortured and killed your countrymen? [1999]		Ethnic Affiliation		
		Bosniak	Croat	Serb
Education				
Primary/Less	No, one should never forgive	74,2%	46,9%	71,4%
	Yes, one should forgive and forget	2,2%	10,2%	2,1%
	One should forgive, but must not forget	23,7%	42,9%	26,6%
		325	245	192
Secondary	No, one should never forgive	75,1%	46,3%	68,8%
	Yes, one should forgive and forget	2,1%	8,6%	2,3%
	One should forgive, but must not forget	22,8%	45,1%	28,9%
		527	592	577
Higher	No, one should never forgive	77,0%	37,3%	61,8%
	Yes, one should forgive and forget	2,3%	7,1%	3,0%
	One should forgive, but must not forget	20,7%	55,6%	35,2%
		87	126	199

Social Distance [1999]		Ethnic Affiliation		
		Bosniak	Croat	Serb
Partial Table				
Education				
Primary				
Croat living in my village or town	Yes	93,9%		37,9%
Croat as a work-mate	Yes	87,9%		23,4%
Croat as a friend	Yes	65,3%		13,2%
Croat as husband or wife	Yes	16,7%		5,9%
Muslim living in my village or town	Yes		40,3%	32,6%
Muslim as a work-mate	Yes		40,0%	20,2%
Muslim as a friend	Yes		22,5%	9,2%
Muslim as husband or wife	Yes		5,1%	3,2%
Serb living in my village or town	Yes	81,9%	48,9%	
Serb as a work-mate	Yes	73,5%	51,4%	
Serb as a friend	Yes	48,6%	33,2%	
Serb as husband or wife	Yes	11,4%	7,0%	
Secondary				
Croat living in my village or town	Yes	95,6%		55,1%
Croat as a work-mate	Yes	95,0%		49,9%
Croat as a friend	Yes	84,7%		31,3%
Croat as husband or wife	Yes	39,3%		11,7%
Muslim living in my village or town	Yes		49,4%	44,5%
Muslim as a work-mate	Yes		50,8%	38,9%
Muslim as a friend	Yes		33,6%	20,3%
Muslim as husband or wife	Yes		8,6%	6,1%
Serb living in my village or town	Yes	90,7%	58,2%	
Serb as a work-mate	Yes	86,9%	61,3%	
Serb as a friend	Yes	64,6%	43,4%	
Serb as husband or wife	Yes	31,5%	14,2%	
Higher				
Croat living in my village or town	Yes	91,2%		60,2%
Croat as a work-mate	Yes	92,3%		60,7%
Croat as a friend	Yes	87,1%		32,3%
Croat as husband or wife	Yes	59,8%		14,7%
Muslim living in my village or town	Yes		69,4%	49,2%
Muslim as a work-mate	Yes		68,3%	48,1%
Muslim as a friend	Yes		45,5%	24,3%
Muslim as husband or wife	Yes		16,2%	8,8%
Serb living in my village or town	Yes	94,4%	72,8%	
Serb as a work-mate	Yes	89,9%	75,0%	
Serb as a friend	Yes	75,0%	56,0%	
Serb as husband or wife	Yes	45,6%	19,8%	

WHAT KIND OF STATE? VIEWS OF BOSNIAKS, CROATS, AND SERBS ON THE CHARACTER OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVIN

The West has not understood the real conditions in our country [1999]		Ethnic Affiliation		
Partial Table		Bosniak	Croat	Serb
Education				
Primary	Strongly agree	46,9%	64,2%	65,6%
	Total N	290	229	186
Secondary	Strongly agree	46,0%	58,2%	69,9%
	Total N	526	596	569
Higher	Strongly agree	43,8%	64,7%	75,0%
	Total N	89	133	200

The West is acting against the interests of our people [1999]		Ethnic Affiliation		
Partial Table		Bosniak	Croat	Serb
Education				
Primary	Strongly agree	16,0%	54,3%	70,1%
	Total N	294	230	187
Secondary	Strongly agree	19,0%	46,3%	64,5%
	Total N	501	575	564
Higher	Strongly agree	19,3%	44,5%	52,6%
	Total N	88	128	194

The West is treating us as a backward people [1999]		Ethnic Affiliation		
Partial Table		Bosniak	Croat	Serb
Education				
Primary	Strongly agree	31,9%	56,9%	74,1%
	Total N	295	232	185
Secondary	Strongly agree	34,7%	58,9%	74,9%
	Total N	522	593	561
Higher	Strongly agree	34,1%	57,3%	68,9%
	Total N	91	131	193

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КАКВА ДРЖАВА? СТАВОВИ БОШЊАКА, ХРВАТА И СРБА О КАРАКТЕРУ БОСНЕ И ХЕРЦЕГОВИНЕ

Сажетак: Чланак је заснован на налазима из два социолошка истраживања која су проведена у Босни и Херцеговини 1996. и 1999. године. Показало се да су ставови Бошњака, Хрвата и Срба о карактеру заједничке државе често веома конфликтни и другачији него званична перцепције међународне заједнице. Тврди се да одрживо рјешење босанског проблема не може занемарити питање етничке припадности и потребу за институционалном структуром која ће експлицитно признати чињеницу да то није обична нација-држава. Иако постоје краткорочна објашњења за насиље у Босни, та ситуација је крајњи исход сложеног и закашњелог процеса изградње нације. Дакле, Босна је данас суочена са истом дилемом као и прије рата: како изградити легитимну државу у ситуацији у којој не постоји заједнички идентитет и ниједна етничка група не представља већину.

Кључне ријечи: национална држава, изградња нације, етничка припадност, институционална структура, ставови