

Proposal for a Case Study of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Aims of the study: The aim is to examine and compare the discourse of the Bosniak nation-building process and its dynamics during the late 1960s/early 1970s (years still to be determined) and 1990s. The analysis will focus on the interaction of two levels of nation building in everyday life: the officially promoted concepts and presentations of Bosniak national identity in the media and the individual experience of national identity in everyday life.

Previous research has been mainly restricted on the aspects of elites, their political agency (FILANDRA 1998; DZAJA 2002), the academic debates of mainly political scientists and historians (REDZIC 2000), and the „historical origins of the Bosniak nation“ (HADZIJAHIC 1990). The project primarily wants to contribute to that field of studies by illuminating the discursive mechanisms of routine and mundane reproduction of national identity on the quotidian level. This will be done by analysing the competing discursive logics that were applied by the daily media in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the construction of the Bosnian Muslim/Bosniak national identity and their definitional potential in the essentially experienced and unreflected individual identity of *everyday primordialism*¹. Further, the impact of the broad structural forces i. e. the different political climates during the two periods (communism - democratisation attempts - war conflict) will be taken into account as a determinant variable for identity transformation process and the mutation of the cultural capital including ingredients that were applied². The influences of the socio-political settings will be analysed on both, social and individual levels³.

Theoretical framework: The intention is to apply a constructivist (CHATTERJEE 1993) and modernist theoretical (*inter alia* GELLNER 1983; HOBBSBAWM 1990; HROCH 1968) apparatus, that considers nation and national identities as a vessel filled with changing symbols of changing meanings, imagined, and as a discursive social construction linked to and provoked by the modernisation process. Since in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, national identities were/are defined in terms of ethnic and cultural foci, “ethnic origins“ will be discussed as instruments for making national identity convincing enough to be absorbed as part of a personal identity, essentially experienced.

¹ This term was introduced by Fearon and Laitin, (LAITIN/FEARON 2000).

² Curiosity about the impact of the structural forces is given also by the fact, that the nominal question of the Bosniak identity was “solved” only in the 1990s, whereas the official name of Bosniak nation got proclaimed on the Second Bosniak Conference (Sabor) on September 27, 1993. During the 1960s and 1970s the lively debate about the nominal question was ended in favour of the designation “Musliman u nacionalnom smislu” despite the friction raised by some Bosniak intellectuals and proponents of the Bosniak name. On the debate (REDZIC 2000).

³ The fact that during an unofficial census conducted after the Dayton agreement only 40% of the Muslim population in Bosnia declared itself as Bosniaks raises the question about the attractiveness of the officially ascribed collective national identity for the individual essentially experienced identity. This fact was presented in the lecture held by Roland Kostic on May 17, 2006 at Osteuropaforum at Uppsala University.

One of the sources for the analysis is the media/newspaper. Therefore, special attention will be given to Anderson's idea of "print capitalism" as a means of dissemination of the national idea and its impact on the imagining process of the national community in everyday life through the consumption of "national" media (ANDERSON 1991).

Also Michael Billig's notion of "banal nationalism" and the necessity of a continuous/daily reproduction of national identity will be employed in the analysis (BILLIG 1995). The assumption is that the reproduction process was a dynamic one with different discourses (incorporated by several newspapers) employed in the media-*competing narratives* (CORA/VERMEULEN 1997)- which were absorbed with different success (if at all) into the popular culture of everyday life. Thus, a dynamic of negotiation between the various factions adhering to different rhetoric and contents of national identity in the media as well as between the official/institutionalised and individual/popular level will be at stake.

Identities (individual and collective), their content and their boundaries are seen as relational, constructed, dependent on the social, political, economic, and cultural context (BRUNNBAUER 2003). They are multi-faceted and undergo modifications. The study departs also from the point that despite being constructed, identity can be also experienced in essence, which means it is often absorbed and felt as something given without further reflections. Paul Ricoeur's model of *idem*-identity and *ipse*-identity will be used for illuminating the two dimensions (construct/ascribed-essence/experienced) of identity (RICOEUR 1996)⁴.

Additionally, collective (national) identity results from a continuous negotiation between the official level, that ascribes certain characteristics and social practices to the members of the group and the popular level, on which those members identify themselves with the characteristics and actualise the ascribed social practices. The distance between those two identities can vary according to the context and in time.

Methods: Since the analysis employs several dimensions (social/official versus individual) of national identity, a methodological pluralism will be employed. In a historical-anthropological manner, a combination of historical discourse analysis and oral history will be used in order to illuminate the interaction of the official and private discourse.

For the examination of the national discourse in the media during the two periods, the historically oriented aspect of discourse analysis will be used. Since discourse both, influences and is influenced by society the differing discourses are treated as embedded ones in their historical, political and institutional context. Therefore, especially the analytical dimensions of content and strategy will be studied (FAIRCLOUGH 1995; v. DIJK 1988; WODAK 1998). Regarding content, the following questions will guide the conduct of research: Which cultural contents were given major importance as foci of national identity? Which narratives were used for the confabulation of a common political history? According to which criteria were the boundaries drawn between the

⁴ *Idem*-identity consists of a set of characteristics that are ascribed to the individual as a group member according to which the individual, resembles to other members of the that group (in this case the national group). *Ipse*-identity on the other hand consists of the internalized/habitualized aspects of the individual's identity, which are seen as essential to the identity by the individual itself. The *ipse*-identity can correspond to the *idem*-identity in several degrees but the correspondence can also vary in time.

homo bosniacus and *homo externus*? What kind of values, customs i. e. common culture were delineated as characteristics to the Bosniak nation? Referring to discursive strategies, special attention will be given to the question of which dimensions of national identity were in the two compared periods newly constructed/innovated, transformed, or/and conserved. Did the change of the socio-political setting also change the rhetorics of the national media and to what extent?

For the analysis of private discourse „from below“ in everyday life, the method of oral history will be employed. In order to deal with episodic and semantic memory, the method of narrative interviews will be used. The aim of this part of the research is to show the (in)dependence of personal identity from/on official concepts of national identity, presented in the media.

Major issues in this part of the study will be: How much was the national doctrine about the essence of reality (KAPFERER 1993) accepted and expressed by „ordinary people“ in their everyday life? Which cultural patterns are perceived as most important for their national identity? How much of the officially presented discourse is employed in the interviews by the informants (consciously and unconsciously)? To what extent do the two periods differ as to how national identity was negotiated in everyday life? When and why were decisions made by the people to position themselves as national subjects and how much did it depend on the political circumstances? How did they perceive the national identity in the media, as purely constructed in an instrumentalist way or as something that represented what they essentially felt?

The analysis of both media and interviews will be conducted with the Atlas/TI computer programme, which enables qualitative data analysis and offers „contextual“ and „de-contextual“ reading of the text.

Sources: The main sources for the analysis of the media discourse will be newspapers that were published in BiH during the 1960s and 1990s. Both weekly magazines and daily newspapers will be used. Some of them were published during both periods e.g. the daily newspaper “Oslobodjenje”. For the 1990s period, however, many new political magazines appeared as most strongly engaged in the newly independent Bosnian state, e.g. the weekly magazine “Ljiljan”, “Dani”, “Preporod” or the daily newspaper “Dnevni avaz”, which will be taken into consideration.

As far as oral sources are concerned, the intention is to interview urban people with different political and professional backgrounds, mainly from the capital, Sarajevo. Since the gender aspect may play an important role in the recollecting of memories, both men and women will be interviewed.

By taking both dimensions of national identity into account (the officially constructed and the individually experienced) the project will delineate some of the dynamics of the interaction between the micro level and the macro level of the Bosniak society and its national identity, which should provide a better understanding of nation-building processes by employing a multi-perspective approach.

In regard to the project, the study applies for the 2nd option enlisted in the Call for Application “Appropriation and representation of public symbols in private spaces after

1945". By comparison between the 1960/70s period with 1990s a temporal perspective on the socialist period should be given. Further, analysis of media will illuminate the representation of national identity on quotidian level, whereas the interviews will serve to give insight in the private spaces of "ordinary people", how they "lived"/materialized the national identity as well as how they related to the publicly represented national identity and to what extent this representation could be appropriated in "ordinary people's" life.

18.12. 2006 – 20.01.2007: historical research in the archive and library in Sarajevo, collecting media materials from the years 1968 and 1969.

22.1.2006 - March 2007: elaboration of theoretical framework and methodology:

- media discourse analysis
- anthropological fieldwork
- oral history
- identity theory
- social identity theory
- theory of nationalism.

March 2007: first workshop in Graz, Austria

April - May 2007: preparation for the first fieldwork, which should be conducted in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

- preparation of interviews
- selection of questions
- creation of focus groups

June - September 2007: fieldwork in Sarajevo combined with collecting media data from 1990s period (1990, 1992, 1995)

Since my intention is to analyse national identity(ies) in Sarajevo, my fieldwork will focus on this town.

During the first fieldwork I intend to interview ca. 25 – 30 people. Among my informants there will be intellectuals, workers, unemployed people (among them housewives).

Further specification of my informants will be given by the fact who originates from Sarajevo and who has moved to the capital recently.

Further analysis will focus on how different social roles make the individuals employ and present the Bosniac national identity in everyday life.

October - December 2007: evaluation of the media data and analysis of the discourse with the Atlas TI programme.

December 2007 – January 2008: second field work in Sarajevo combined with research in the library and the archives.

During my second fieldwork in Sarajevo I intend to expand my interview corpus (ca. 10 interviews). During this period I also intend to accomplish my media data collection.

January – June 2008: research stays in Graz and Berlin

July – October 2008: transcription of interviews and analysis of their discourse with Atals TI programme. Analysis of media discourse from the 1990s.

October – December 2008: final evaluation of all collected data, comparison of the media discourse from the 1960s and 1990s. Comparison of the media discourses and the interviews. Analysis of the interaction between the social construction of the Bosniac identity presented in the media and the individually experienced national identity. Conceptualizing the final report.

January – April 2009: Exploring final report with final results of the fieldworks and analysis.

May 2009: International conference in Chisnau

June – August 2009: Accomplishing research project

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