

The formation of a nation: The case of bosnian muslims

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Abstract

This study examines the process of the formation of Bosniak nation. Ethno-symbolist approach to nationalism is taken as the basis of the study in evaluating the formation of the Bosniak nation due to the fact that ethno-symbolists argue that nationalism is a modern phenomenon but the origins of the nations can be traced back to the ethnicity. They emphasize the importance of subjective elements such as myth of common ancestry, shared culture and values in constituting nation. In this study it is argued that there are three turning points in the history of Bosnian Muslims that led to the formation of the Bosniak nation. These are Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia in 1878, the recognition of Bosnian Muslims as a separate nationality in 1968 and Bosnian war between 1992 and 1995. In this study, these turning points and their relevance for the formation of nation is analyzed through an ethno-symbolist perspective.

Keywords: Bosnian Muslims, ethno-symbolism, Bosniak, nationalism.

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1. Introduction

Following the break-up of Yugoslavia, the world once again, had witnessed a bloody war within the territories of old Yugoslavia, especially in Bosnia. As Yugoslav idea was approaching to its end, political elites of each nation started to discuss the possible future for them. Each nation had claim on resources, on territory and on distinctiveness of their identity. However, these claims were generally overlapped due to the multi-ethnic structure of republics. Yugoslavia was composed of six republics and the strict separation of these according to ethnic ground is not simple. Bosnia, among other nations, accommodated the most complex population. It was the sole republic that was not constituted according to ethnic or nationality principle. It was composed of Bosnian Muslims, Serbs, Croats as well as a-national minorities. In such a complex society the vanishing away of the Yugoslav ideal, which constituted a supra-national identity and reduced the national claims for a period of time, increased the tensions among the population and paved the way for the increasing nationalist discourse among the political elites at first and then, the spread of nationalism en masse.

Although there are very important studies considering Bosnian Muslims, there are no attempts to evaluate the formation of Bosniak nation with reference to the approaches to nationalism. By relating the formation with these approaches, the processes of evolution can be clearly seen. Each step taken by Bosnian Muslims to protect their distinctiveness and survival under the domination of different power can be analyzed within a historical perspective as well. However, the importance of these steps can be understood better if they are analyzed through approaches to nationalism. These steps cannot be seen as randomly taken; they are aimed at formation of a nation and nationhood.

There are four approaches to nationalism. These are modernist approach, primordial approach, perennial approach and ethno-symbolist approach. These approaches explain the reason for the emergence of the nation-states, the foundations of the nations, the continuity and the component of the nations. The case of Bosnian Muslims can be best explained by ethno-symbolist so in this study, only ethno-symbolism will be given further information. Ethno-symbolists argue that nationalism is a modern phenomenon and nationalism makes nation but the source of nationalism and nations cannot be solely explained through processes such as industrialization or spread of capitalism. Rather ethnic core is emphasized in construction of nationhood. The symbols, values and features that unite people around an ethnicity may be the sources of nationhood.

Three historical events that are considered to be the turning point for the formation of Bosniak nation will be analyzed in relation to the ethno-symbolist approach. The first one is the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia in 1878. The importance of the occupation lays in the fact that with this occupation Bosnian Muslims transformed themselves to an ethnic community and this, according to Brass, is the first step in the development of a nationality (1980, p. 9). The second decisive moment is the national recognition of Bosnian Muslims as a separate nationality within Yugoslavia in 1968. Through recognition, not only Bosnian Muslims but also Yugoslav administration and other nationality had to accept the distinctiveness or ethnic individuality of Bosnian Muslims. Third and the last moment is the Bosnian War that took place in 1992 and lasted until 1995. Bosnian Muslims enhanced their sources of identity, the features of the Bosniak national identity had been shaped during the war, and they rediscover their past and transform some religious as well as ethnic traditions into a secular one. In this study, it is stated that after these events, Bosnian Muslims became a separate nation, namely Bosniaks. All these events have crucial places in the formation of the nation from an ethno-symbolist approach and these will be evaluated in detailed throughout this study.

2. Ethno-symbolist Approach to Nationalism

There is no single, comprehensive theory that encompasses all the components or all the structural changes within it. Rather there are approaches and distinct interpretations of nationalism, which lead to not to theory of, but to approaches to nationalism. As it is stated above, there are four approaches

to nationalism. These are modernist, primordial, perennial and ethno-symbolist. Distinguishing element between perennial approach and ethno-symbolist approach is that ethno-symbolists do not claim the perennial character of the nations, their survival since the antiquity, what is in common is the stress on the role of ethnicities on the formation of nations. The common point between modernist approach and ethno-symbolists is their agreement on the idea that both nations and nationalism belong to modernity, whereas they differ due to the fact that whereas modernists disregard subjective elements in the formation of nations such as myth, symbols, historical antecedents and based their theories on changes that occurred in modes of production, namely to industrialization and its upbringings, ethno-symbolists based their theory on these subjective elements.

According to Anthony Smith, who is the most important figure in ethno-symbolist approach, and can be identified as the founder of ethno-symbolism, there are two important forms of social organization these are *ethnies* and nations and Smith defines these as

An ethnie as a named community of shared origin myths, memories and one or more element(s) of common culture, including an association with a specific territory; and a nation as a named community possessing an historic territory, shared myths and memories, a common public culture and common laws and customs (2002)

Although ethnie and nation share many of the elements such as shared origin of myth, memories and association with a specific territory, nation possesses more than ethnies. A nation has its own public culture which is shared by members who live in it, it has the ability to regulate the masses through common law and customs, it is, in a sense, bearer of law and duty. The similarities or common points between ethnies and nations, for ethno-symbolists are crucial in the process of nation formation as nations are formed through and around ethnies.

Political action, when combined with existing cultural differences, constitutes a powerful and recurrent source of ethnic community... it was on the basis of an ethnic model and around a dominant ethnic core population that political actors and institutions helped to forge the nation (Smith, 2009).

Political action is necessary for the transformation of an ethnie to a nation. Politics can be used in order to reveal the uniqueness of the culture, which is a marker of differentiation of the ethnie from other ethnies. And besides from politics, institutions also help to construct a nation through using existing values, rediscovering the old ones and transferring it to the modern world. Ethno-symbolism puts emphasis on the symbols and myth in both formation and in the maintenance of the identities. "Myths of ethnic descent, particularly myths of 'ethnic chosenness', lie at its core. Of all these myths, the myth of a 'golden age' is perhaps the most important" (Conversi, 2006). So the subjective elements rather than economical factors in formation of nations or in formation of national identities have crucial effect for ethno-symbolists. While modernist approach can trace the origin of the nation into a moment, in which economical and technological changes such as industrialization or print capitalism took place, at the core of ethno-symbolist approach lays, as Smith argues, "the subjective elements of attachment, will and imagination of groups of individuals...the institutional expression of these elements – in recorded myths, memories and traditions, in symbols and values, and in the various forms of styles of art, music, literature, law, ritual and activity that give concrete and recurrent embodiment to these elements" (2002)

For ethno-symbolists, nationalism is not a political movement, It is an ideological movement that aims unity, autonomy and identity; but at the same time it is more than the shared sentiment, "It is an active movement inspired by an ideology and symbolism of the nation" (Smith, 2009: p. 61). The analysis of ethno-symbolists include subjective elements such as "la longue duree, ethnic myths,

memories and symbols” and the reason for them to be re-operated within the nationalist discourse cannot be disregarded or cannot simply treated as parts of a political agenda. They are not ‘invention’ of political elites or intellectuals“. Culture, then, for ethno-symbolists means not just symbols, traditions or rituals, but also the meanings and orientations to collective action that these evoke (Hutchinson, 2004). Hutchinson further argues that, although there occurs many changes between pre-modern and modern societies, long established cultural systems are transported by modern institutions into the modern era and in times of crisis, this historic cultural systems are re-evoked or redeveloped (ibid,p. 41).

In the context of this study, ethno-symbolist approach will be taken as the base while examining the process of the formation of Bosniak nation. The Bosniaks have constituted a nation on the basis of their cultural distinctiveness in relation to other Slavs in the region. Their nationality is constructed through the differences that stem from the religion in the first instance. As it is stated in the introduction part, nationalism, in this study, is treated as a modern phenomenon, which gained power with the secularism. So nationalism is explained without references to religion in most of the theories of nationalism whereas ethno-symbolist approach emphasizes the role of religion in making nationalities. Nationalism, for ethnosymbolists

However secularizing its thrust, nationalism is ultimately more akin to political religion than to political ideology...we can grasp the nation as a ‘sacred communion of citizens’ – a characterization that accords with an interpretation of nationalism as surrogate religion (Smith, 2010)

The power of secularism and modern nation-states excludes religion from their very existence. However, for many nations religion plays great role in the period of formation. Ethno-symbolism, through stressing the subjective elements of the nation, does not exclude religion. Rather it gives religion proper role in the formation of nations. Religion is not the only subjective element that ethno-symbolists propose, but for Bosnian Muslims, it is the subjective element over which nation is constituted.

Besides being Muslims, Bosniaks have an ingrained territorial identity, which is relatively weak for other Slavic nations. The Bosniak nation is constituted by the same processes that each nation had passed, through re-inventing tradition, reviving customs, rediscovering history and purifying language. Bosnia have always had territorial integrity however there was no consciousness of being bound to a territory, this would become just one part of the Bosniak national identity later. Living in Bosnia does not have the same meaning with being Bosniak. Related to this point, Ethno-symbolist approach, contrary to the modernist approach, is not necessitated a sovereign state for a nation to exist. Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of three different nations, each has equal share in the state.

3. From Ethnic Category to Ethnic Community: Austro-Hungarian Rule over Bosnian Muslims

The Ottoman occupation of Bosnia had important consequences for the history of Bosnia. After the Ottoman occupation, the population of Bosnia started to convert to Islam gradually. it is important to note that conversion to Islam had affected the history of the Bosnian Muslims for good. Due to the conversion, many Bosnian notables became Muslim and being Muslim in a Muslim Empire brought some privileges to the notables. During Ottoman period, Bosnian Muslims protected their territorial attachment and developed a religious identity because of the millet strategy of Ottomans. During Ottoman rule, the distinction between South Slavs started to be made easily. There were Orthodox millet, Catholic millet and Muslims. The differentiation marker between South Slav was religion and their identity affiliation evolved around religion and turned into distinct ethnicities. The diminishing

power of Ottomans created uprisings among Balkan population in general and Bosnian population in particular. However Muslim revolts did not aim at overthrowing the Ottoman rule rather they were to protect the Bosnian Muslims individuality and privileges and the same time, the decreasing power of the Ottomans in the Balkans resulted with the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia. Bosnian Muslims during Austro-Hungarian rule had developed an identity based on territory and religion. They wanted to protect their status in society as well as they wanted to maintain their religious practices. Austro-Hungarian period was marked by the struggle of Bosnian Muslims for their existence. "Bosnian Islam for the first time had to deal with non-Muslim rulers, a condition that persisted from 1878 to the collapse of Yugoslavia in 1992" (Pinson, 1996).

The transition from an ethnic category to an ethnic community requires recognition of that group as distinct from other communities, and also the acquisition of some rights (it may be educational, religious or cultural rights) as a group. The Bosnian Muslims started to construct gradually an ethnic community as Eriksen argues "it is only when they make a difference in interaction that cultural differences are important in the creation of ethnic boundaries" (1993). Transformation of an ethnic category to an ethnic community, for Brubaker (2002), necessitates a consciousness. It is not the concern of this study what leads such a transformation; rather the transformation itself is important if ethnic communities are treated as the basis of the nations. Brass, for instance, defines nations as politicized ethnic communities with political rights (1980)

The politicization of the Bosnian Muslim was the first step towards foundation of an ethnic community and the politicization began when the opposition movement spread to the Bosnian Muslim population, from nobility to the peasantry. Politicization is important as it laid the basis for the solidarity between the Bosnian Muslim. Establishment of a political party (MNO) is very important not only for the Bosnian Muslims, but also for the political life of Bosnia in general (Babuna, 1996). The MNO by being representative of the Bosnian Muslims in general introduced them as a community with their own interests, needs and demands. This is crucial for the enhancement of the communication of the members of the society. It makes them community. As Smith argues 'It is primarily the political community, no matter how artificially organized that inspires the belief in common ethnicity' (1991:p. 26). Establishment of political party and the existence of organized struggle can be recognized as the emergence of a group consciousness. This is how an ethnic category can turn into an ethnicity and in turn, ethnicity becomes their identity as Hutchinson argues "in many periods in history ethnicity provides an important framework of collective identity and of collective political action (2004:p. 12).

Although it is hard to speak of a national consciousness, as Friedman argues, "their communal feeling based on religious identification allowed them to resist nationalist pressures for self-identification as Serbs or Croats" (1996:p. 68). Bosnian Muslims' struggle over the autonomy shows that they had acquired a form of political as well as social consciousness. This cannot be separated from the national consciousness as Hobsbawm argues that "the acquisition of national consciousness cannot be separated from the acquisition of other forms of social and political consciousness" (2010:p. 130). The basis of the ethnicities, on the other hand, might be varied but Smith argues that some religious community can turn into ethnicity. "Religious communities are often closely related to ethnic identities. While the 'world religions' sought to overstep and abolish ethnic boundaries most religious communities coincided with ethnic groups" (Smith, 1991). This argument is valid for the Bosnian Muslims. Bosnian Muslims, by being an Islamic faith, did not develop an ethnic consciousness at first, they maintained their existence as a religious community; but after ruled by a Christian Empire they use religious differences in creating first their ethnicity and their nation. So during Austro-Hungarian rule, it can be said that, Bosnian Muslims became an ethnic community and thus, as ethno-symbolist approach regards ethnicity as the basis of the nation, they laid the foundation of their nation.

4. National Recognition Of Bosnian Muslims

After the WWI, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was established, and renamed to Yugoslavia and during the interwar period, Bosnian Muslims used a clientele strategy in order to protect their distinct identity so they adopted, at least in the political arena, Yugoslavism. The efforts of the intellectuals during Yugoslavia to protect their individual identity had helped to maintain the link between the past and the present. Ethno-symbolist approach put great importance on the ethnic past of ethnicities. Smith argues that “the ethnic past may influence the national present through established continuities” (2000: p. 63). After the Second World War and with the Communist regime, religion was oppressed and was brought under state control. However from the beginning of the 1953 when the new constitution adopted and especially with the election of new Reis-ul-Ulema in 1957, the balance of religious affairs had shifted in favor of the Muslim institution, Islamic Religious community. In 1968 Muslims were recognized as separate nationality.

The establishment of Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia (later will be called Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) was important for the Bosnian Muslims. During the Communist Party Conferences, as it is stated above, Bosnian Muslims were recognized as separate ethnic community. Nevertheless the idea that Bosnian Muslims were either Croats or Serbs, did not lose its validity during Communist regime. Pressures for Muslims existed throughout SFRY and also after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The situation, however, for Bosnian Muslims was different from that of Serbs and Croats. Bosnian Muslims had different identification and they did not consider themselves as Serbs or Croats. The most important indicator of Muslims’ national affiliation was the censuses.

1948 census indicated that...Of the Muslims of Slavic origin located in Bosnia, over 89 percent, or 788,403, declared their nationality "undecided Muslim" in the census, while just over 8 percent (71,991) declared themselves as Serbs and less than 3 percent (25,295) declared themselves as Croats... 1953 census In Bosnia, however, an overwhelming proportion--over 93 percent--of those who declared themselves adherents of Islam were also recorded in terms of nationality simply as "undetermined Yugoslavs" (Burg, 1983).

The censuses shows that Although Yugoslav administration did not propose an acceptable solution to Muslims of Bosnia in either two censuses, Muslims were seemed determinate that they were not Serbs or Croats. Not only the Muslim people in Bosnia but also the religious leaders and their community did not consider themselves as Serbs or Croats. Babuna points out

During the communist period, the Islamic Community (Islamska Vjerska Zajednica) was a pan-Yugoslav multi-ethnic federation of autonomous Muslim institutions and associations, while the centralized and hierarchical Christian churches were linked to their respective national communities (2006).

Nationalism and nation formation for ethno-symbolists is not just an elite led project, or political agenda. Smith argues that “ethn-symbolic approaches also helpful in directing our attention away from an exclusive concern with elites and their strategies... emotional and moral dimensions of national identity back into focus” (Smith, 2009). The censuses of the Yugoslavia were best examples of the emotional and moral dimensions of national identity. Not only the religious leader, but also people did not consider themselves as either Croats or Serbs.

1960’s had witnessed also the emergence of nationalist discourses among the Bosnian Muslims. This had enhanced through religious institutions and religious revivalism at the same time. Purivatra, the leading figure in recognition of Bosnian Muslims as a separate nationality argues that “the Bosnian Muslims were not only adherents of the Islamic religion but also members of a separate nation”

(Babuna, 2004). Another prominent name in construction of nationhood was Muhammed Filipovic and he demanded, for the first time, national status for the Bosnian Muslims (ibid, p. 305).

Bosnian Muslims were recognized as a separate nation in 1963 and party leadership approved it in 1968. Recognition of Bosnian Muslim as a separate nationality was a turning point. From then on Bosnian Muslims became a recognized, separate nation. Before the recognition, the religious leaders was recognized as the protector of the values. Smith also argues that “in the absence of a state, then, religious institutions may become the guardians as well as the source of common observance of shared customs and laws, and create a strong sense of ethnic cohesion” (1981: p. 51). However after the recognition, the conditions had changed. with the recognition of Bosnian Muslims as a nationality, their ethnicity became political in the sense that the appearance of Bosnian Muslims in politics, in representation, in allocation of resources, and in negotiation increased. They became equal partners within the administration. And through this recognition, nationalist discourses of Bosnian Muslims increased due to the need to define the boundaries and features of the nation, which is the most important driving force in the formation of nation and national identity.

5. From Muslims to Bosniaks

Bosnian Muslims, after recognition as a separate nationality, tried to construct a national identity. Intellectual debates were mainly between Islamic Community, secular reformists and religious revivalist. The sources of ethnic identity of the Bosnian Muslims are transferred to the national identity and it is due to the fact that Muslim nationalists and intellectuals never departed from their history and kept their sources of identity alive. During this period, many books written during Ottoman period or Austro period had republished in order to link the past and presents. The sources of national identity were found in the sources of ethnic identity. As Smith puts it “the past influences the present through the tendency of later generations, especially of nationalists, to rediscover, authenticate, and appropriate aspects of what they assume is their ethnic past” (2000: p. 63)

Religion gained public appearance during 1970's and 1980's. The liberalized environment paved the way not only for religious revivalism but also for nationalism. Nationalist ideas spread all around the Yugoslavia. Each republic established its own Writers' Union which meant separate historiography and separate linguistic (Dragovic-Soso, 2003). The disintegration of Yugoslavia was felt in every republic without exception but Bosnia was the last to feel it. Aggressive nationalism of Serbs in Serbia as well as reactionary nationalism of Croats affected Bosnia as there were Serbs and Croats in Bosnia. The independence declaration of Croatia and Slovene did not welcome by Serbs whereas the Europe recognized their independence. The declaration of independence of Bosnia, however, was not accepted by European Community, and a referendum was made with the proposal of EC. Although Serbs within Bosnia boycotted the referendum, the result was in favor of independence and Bosnia declared its independence and EC recognized it. The next day after the declaration of independence, Bosnian war had began.

With the disintegration of Yugoslavia nationalist ideas increased and Muslims did not drop behind. In the first multi-party election throughout Yugoslavia, nationalist parties won most of the votes and Bosnia was not an exception. The motivation behind Muslim nationalist party, namely SDA was religion. They used religious symbols and religious flags in their meetings. They used Arabic vocabulary and they always appealed to Islam and its rules during their meetings. As Lederer points out “the ruling party has had pronounced Islamic orientation and the symbiosis of ethnic and national identities, ideology and power” (2001). However SDA did not really represent the Bosnian Muslims in relation to religion as it cannot be suggested that Muslim population in Bosnia were devout Muslims. Tone Brंगा explains the relation with religion among Muslim population

Attendance at mosque was at a low during the restrictive fifties and once more in the eighties, when alleged fears of pan-Islamic demonstrations led to a harsh attitude on the part of the

authorities toward all public Islamic activities. The late 1980's saw a new openness toward religion, reflected, among other things, in the number of new mosque being built. The fall of communism opened the way for the free expression of religious faith and devotion without the fear of being accused of Muslim nationalism or fundamentalism (2005: p. 204).

For ethno-symbolists appealing to religion is not unusual for nationalists. "Not only have nationalists often found it necessary to appeal to the religious sentiments of the masses, but they have also found it relatively easy to identify the nation with the religious community" (Smith, 1991: p. 49). The nationalism developed first among the leaders of the SDA and then it spread to the Muslim population. Nationalism is the key to the development of nations. "Nationalism has endowed ethnicity with a wholly new self-consciousness and legitimacy, as well as fighting spirit and political direction" (Smith, 1981: p. 20). It pulls the trigger and if it is successful, it makes the nations.

During the war, national consciousness of the Bosnian Muslim increased due to the emergence of a common goal among Bosnian Muslim. During the war, religion had gained more importance due to the discourses of SDA and Izzetbegovic. The war was displayed a religious war between Serbs and Croats. Bougarel argues that

The slogan promoting the idea that the Serb and Croat genocidal projects or Western indifference to the plight of the Bosnian Muslims were 'just because we are Muslims' (*'samo zato što smo muslimani'*) was already present in speeches held by political and religious leaders on the eve of the war and remained one of the key elements of the war rhetoric aimed at the local Muslim population (2005).

It created a unity and enhanced the solidarity. War erased the differences between elites and made them to find a common ground. It is the mass mobilization that is created through nationalism that paves the way for the possibility of nations. It is also valid for the Bosnian Muslims and the mobilization en masse was made possible by the Bosnian war. As Smith argues "not only do wars mobilize large sections of the community, often under extreme circumstances, they also give rise to myths of battle and furnish examples of heroism and collective sacrifice for emulation by subsequent generations" (1981: p. 47).

During the war another important development occurred. In 1993, the Bosnian Muslims started to call themselves Bosniak. They entered the war as Bosnian Muslims but they existed from it as Bosniak, as a separate nation, with a separate and unique national identity. The name Bosniak had no religious connotation, it is a secular name and did not include religious theme. Smith argues that

In transition from a population whose members know only who they are not to one that know who they are, the act of conferring a collective proper name is critical to ethno genesis...Only when a collective proper name is conferred on a population, highlighting the unity of its parts, and only when it becomes widely accepted by the members of the population, can a sense of distinctive ethnic identity begin to emerge (2009).

The term Bosniak is important for the ethno genesis of the Bosnian Muslims. It had a historical roots and it is a secular name. The name itself specified its historical existence and the abandoning a religious name increase the unity among Bosnian Muslims. Nevertheless SDA leaders had never denied their devotion to Islam. Though for the recognition as a secular nation they needed to change their discourses and adhere themselves to the secular ideas. The Bosnian war had united Bosnian Muslims. In a sense, it created a common enemy, a common past to mourn for, it created sorrow for

the whole nation. At the end of the war, the Bosniaks, as a separate nation, had even their own language, 'Bosnian' language.

History, in the study of nations and nationalism, is regarded as a decisive factor for ethno-symbolist. Bosniak case is best explained through considering the historical path of the Bosnian Muslims, their evolution and their struggle for the search of an identity. History determines and shapes the future. During the Austro-Hungarian period many of the Muslim wrote their histories and during Tito's Yugoslavia and with the liberalization period, these writings were rewritten and published in order to create a link between past and present. These writings were represented as the bulwark of Muslim identity. Another important, also related point that ethno-symbolists advocate is that

only those symbolic elements that have some prior resonance among a large section of the population will be able to furnish the content of the proposed nation's political culture...we need to take into account pre-existing traditions, memories and symbolism among non-elites, just as elites themselves often had to alter their own ideas and symbols if they were to carry the majority of the population with them (Smith, 1981).

6. Concluding Remarks

In this study the formation of the Bosniak nation is analyzed with reference to the ethno-symbolist approach. The arguments of modernist approach in relation to the modernity of nations and the role of nationalism in making nations are taken for granted. These arguments are not only supported by modernists, they are also arguments of ethno-symbolist approach. Thus, the study is based on ethno-symbolist approach. The basic argument of ethno-symbolism is it "regards the central components of ethnic and national phenomena as both socio-cultural and symbolic, rather than demographic or political" (Smith, 2000). So ethnicity is seen as the foundation of the nation. According to this statement, it is stated during the study that, Bosnian Muslim became ethnic community under the Austro-Hungarian rule. Before that, they were an ethnic community. With the Austrian occupation, they began to feel the differences between ruling elites and they fought for autonomy. This was the first moment in becoming nation; transition from ethnic category to community. Second turning point was the national recognition of Bosnian Muslims. They became a separate nationality, through this recognition, Bosnian Muslims had the recourses for the maintenance and cultivation of their culture, the resources to develop their language and rediscover their history. So among the Muslim population, national consciousness began to rise and this is important for nationhood according to the ethno-symbolists. Third point is the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Bosnian War. Disintegration of Yugoslavia or the diminishing of the Yugoslav ideal triggered the nationalist discourses among the nationalities of Yugoslavia. The Bosnian war had accelerated the nationalism further. It also led to the increase of the public appearance of religious symbols. Wars are important in making nations. Hutchinson argues that warfare by itself may strengthen and reinforce identities but cannot by itself create them. For a population to defend itself militarily, there already has to be a sense of common values and interests around which they can be mobilized (2007: p. 45). During the war, Bosniak population had reinforced their already existing solidarity. Those who did not feel solidarity to the Bosniak population started to develop a loyalty and a common cause for their population. SDA leaders defined the war as a war against the Muslims, and they tried to mobilize people with religious motivations. Mobilization of people for a common cause, discovering the past and creating a common future for the population by using existing symbols values or rediscovering the old ones are the means of making nation for ethno-symbolist.

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