

NATIONALITY CATEGORIES, NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AND IDENTITY FORMATION IN "MULTINATIONAL" BOSNIA.

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Introduction: Cantonization and the Western Concept of National Identity

Before the referendum on independence in Bosnia-Herzegovina on 31 March 1992 (boycotted by the Bosnian Serb nationalists) and before the onslaught on the civilian population in the former Yugoslav republic, Western European powers with Lord Carrington as the main negotiator suggested a Swiss-style cantonization along ethnic lines of the former Yugoslav Republic. The EC has already made serious blunders in its attempts at peacemaking between the warring South-Slav fractions. The idea of cantonization proved one of the most disastrous ones. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, cantonization was embraced by ethnic nationalists (particularly Serb) who interpreted the plan as a support for political dominance in certain parts of Bosnia. But the plan was strongly opposed by those who had most to lose by it, namely the citizens of mixed nationality and above all the Muslims who comprise 44% of B-H's total population.

Many Sarajevo intellectuals despaired at the European diplomats and politicians obvious ignorance of Bosnia and Herzegovina's unique ethnic composition and their disregard for her history. Cantonization is a political and ideological compromise for those areas which are a patchwork of different ethnic groups co-existing side by side without relinquishing the basic principle of self-determination and nationalism. Historically, cantonization as a project can be traced back to the Wilsonian doctrine, used to create national states after the fall of the imperial multi-ethnic states (Ottoman, Russian and Habsburg) in 1917-19. Its aim was to divide Europe into ethno-linguistic territorial states (cf. Hobsbawm, 1992), with the right to self-determination and the principle of "one state, one nation and one nation, one state" a plan which then as now was "a project as dangerous as it was impracticable, except at the cost of forcible mass expulsion, coercion and genocide which was subsequently paid." (Hobsbawm, 1992:5)

This doctrine, which some authors have called the Wilsonian-Leninist, doctrine since Lenin too favored the right to self-determination of the "suppressed non-Russian peoples" within the Russian empire, is based on the premise that nations are clearly definable, historically

fixed units. It implicitly assumes that such cultural and "naturally bounded" units are culturally homogeneous and that socio-political stability is best ensured by creating politically sovereign units which overlap with assumed cultural units. By the same token multi-ethnic (or multi-"national") states become an anomaly. In fact, the nation-state legitimates itself by its culturally homogeneous nature. The opposite, however, held true for the multi-ethnic socialist states such as Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union and China.

For cantonization along ethnic lines to work in Bosnia-Herzegovina, radical and brutal incisions would be needed, and areas dominated by one ethnic group would have to be created by force. In fact, the Serb (and Croat) nationalist forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina with their "ethnic cleansing" operations have already succeeded in creating the basis for a cantonization of the state along ethnic lines. These atrocities have resulted in huge loss of human life, untold suffering, and displacement of thousands of people, destruction of cultural and historical monuments, and of the fabric of ethnic co-existence. The intricate ethnic patchwork in Bosnia-Herzegovina is the immediate and obvious reason why a plan for cantonization would not work or could only be realized at immense cost. At a more fundamental level, cantonization of Bosnia-Herzegovina is ill informed as it assumes that categorization of Bosnia into three separate nationalities are concomitant with the Western notion of "nation." Furthermore, the Western concept of cantonization is incompatible with contradictory ideas about nationality and national (cultural) identity found in Bosnia-Herzegovina at both the state level, i.e. of official policies towards the "nationality question", and the local level, i.e. of "folk" understanding.

This paper will first discuss some of these local traditions; it will go back in time, to a more peaceful period, to the ethnically mixed village of Dolina and examine how members of different ethno-religious communities categorized each other, and how ideas of similarities and differences informed both categorization and social interaction. Second, it will explore the state's role in the categorization of collective cultural identities. Last, it will say a few words about the kind of nationalism which is so hostile to multiethnic coexistence. The discussion focuses

in particular on the situation of the Bosnian Muslims and will seek some possible answers to why they seem to be losing the ongoing nationalist battle in the former Yugoslav "multi-national" republic. Of particular significance to this discussion is the contested status of the Bosnian Muslims as a "nationality" within the former Yugoslavia. Although the lack of a patron state outside B-H is crucial in understanding the Muslims' losing battle to retain an undivided and ethnically mixed Bosnia-Herzegovina, the problem is a more fundamental one. I suggest that in Bosnia-Herzegovina (and the former Yugoslavia) there are various models for collective cultural identity and for imagining national communities (cf. Anderson, 1983). In some contexts these conflict with one another, in others they coalesce. They are closely tied to historical, political and religious factors in the formation of "nationalities" in Bosnia.

The study of nations and nationalism was until recently considered the domain of political scientists and seen as primarily concerned with political structures and processes of the modern state. In contrast, social anthropologists mainly concerned themselves with so-called traditional societies or with minorities within nation states. Lately, however, both political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists have been interested in the relationship between ethnic groups and nations, and between ethnicity and nationalism. It has been argued that the ethnic group is a stage in the development of all nations (cf. Smith 1986). In a similar vein ethnicity has been understood as "a form of stagnant nationalism which may eventually...become manifest as nationalism (Eriksen, 1991:265)." In sum the major difference between ethnicity and nationalism is seen in their relationship to the state. However, the literature on these issues often ignored the active role of the former socialist multi-ethnic states (e.g. the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia) in conferring nationality status to some ethnic groups within their borders, and the consequences of this policy for local understandings of national identity. For while ethnicity is mainly related to self-definition, nationality is about to which group the state decides one belongs (cf. Gladney, 1991).

At the crux of any discussion of ethnicity or nationalism is, as far as the anthropologist is concerned, that of ethnic or national identity, yet many authors have failed to question the basic premise of such terms as "ethnicity" and "nationality". In social science literature "ethnicity" is used as an analytical tool and ethnicity as a concept is closely linked to what Linnekin and Poyer call a Western ethno-theory which, they argue, is based on the premise

that cultural affiliations reflect blood ties and have a predetermined quality of inevitability. This theory assumes that one is a certain person because one was born to be so (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990) and that membership in a group is given at birth and can never be changed. This is, however, only one of many possible models for conceptualizing and experiencing cultural difference and similarity. Different peoples have different ideas about what decides what kind of person one is or what category of people one belongs to. National and ethnic identity is dependent on ascription (i.e. self-definition) and description (i.e. definition by others). People locally define and construct their identity according to their own experiences and perceptions, in interaction with and in relation to members of neighboring groups, and in relation to the official state definitions (cf. Harrell, 1990).

Bosnia-Herzegovina is an example of a society where collective cultural (ethnic or national) identity has been and continues to be contested by one or more parties. This lack of consensus in defining "nationality" is particularly salient in the case of the Muslim Bosnians and is reflected in the ambiguity of the official ethnonym "Muslim" which, in Bosnia and former Yugoslavia, refers to an ethnic group, a nationality, and a religious community. In Serbo-Croat official orthography the potential ambiguity of the term "Muslim" (*Muslimani*) was avoided by writing a noun designating a person's nationality with an initial capital and the term referring to a member of the religious community with a small letter (cf. Purivatra, 1974). Official Yugoslav policy implicitly denied that the category "Muslim" was dependent on religious identity. However, in Bosnia religious identity overlapped with national or ethnic identity for all three groups. Thus Muslims adhere to Sunni Islam, Croats to Roman Catholicism and Serbs to Orthodoxy. Thus, religion is more than a set of beliefs. It is part of a person's cultural identity, whether or not one is a believer. This is as true for a Muslim as it is for a Catholic or Orthodox Christian. The attitude is not unique to Bosnia. Secular Jews in the US and Catholics and Protestants in Ireland are other examples of such ethno-religious identities. However, to Western observers Orthodox and Catholic Bosnians escape this ambiguity because their official ethnonym refers not to their religion but to their ethnic and religious ties with peoples outside Bosnia-Herzegovina, in Serbia and Croatia respectively. In fact, the use of the term "ethno-religious" to describe the identity of all three nationalities is a more accurate reflection of local understanding of "national identity" as determined by religious adherence (cf. Bringa 1991). As we shall see, in rural areas the terms for religious identity, i.e. Catholic

(*katolik*) and Orthodox (*pravoslav*), rather than the official national terms "Croat" and "Serb" are used. The implications of these local categories, at odds with "official" ones, will be discussed below. The official term Muslim to denote a cultural identity is thus in accordance with local parlance which reflects the overlap between religion and collective cultural identity.

National Identification and Categorization in a Bosnian Village

Throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina one finds ethnically mixed villages. They may be Muslim/Croat or Muslim/Serb, or even Serb/Muslim/Croat, but very rarely Croat/Serb. The village of Dolina is situated in a valley about two hours' drive north of Sarajevo. Dolina proper, with the mosque as its center, consisted of seventy-six households: 52 Muslim, 23 Catholic, and one single Serb. It is divided into several clearly defined hamlets which consist of a cluster of two to four houses inhabited by related families, usually a group of brothers with their elementary families.

A Catholic house is easily distinguishable from one inhabited by Muslims by marked architectural difference. Muslim houses are square (like the village mosque), while Catholic ones are rectangular, with the longest side facing the village. These differences are characteristic throughout Bosnia though they were becoming increasingly blurred as Muslims tended to build new houses in a more rectangular shape with two or even three stories. Their houses thus looked more like Catholic ones, but were considered more "modern" and urban. Still, they illustrated Muslim identity since they were built with their short side facing the village.

In many mixed villages the two groups had their own clearly defined village area: e.g. each end of the village or each side of a river (cf. Lockwood, 1975). In Dolina, by contrast, Muslim and Catholic settlements were interspersed throughout the village. However, this diffuse geographical and physical division did not necessarily mean that the two groups were more closely integrated as one village community.

Defining Self and Other: Muslims and Catholics as Neighbors:

"The difference between Catholics and Muslims is the way they pray and what they eat. (Muslim woman)"

Dolina is one village but consisted for certain purposes of two distinct communities. The Muslim and Catholic

communities interacted and cooperated as neighbors and co-villagers at secular times and in secular activities. At religious times, however, they separated and their knowledge about each others' traditions at these times is scanty. Since religious rituals underline the exclusiveness of the ethno-religious community, social exchange in these contexts is limited, as a rule, to members within the Catholic or Muslim community respectively.

Secular communal activities were characterized by social exchange between the two ethnic communities and were occasions for pointing out and seeking mutual acknowledgement of differences. There are many such activities—ceremonial gift giving, voluntary community work (such as building projects), ritualized hospitality and institutionalized visiting patterns (at births, deaths, or weddings)—and they are closely interrelated through the cultural ethos of honor and hospitality, key values which the two ethnic communities share. In fact "to refuse to give, or to fail to invite is like refusing to accept [but] is to reject the bond of alliance and commonality (Mauss 1990:13)." And the refusal to give can clearly result in animosity and neighborhood quarrels. Social exchange is primarily between households, underlining its key role as in village interaction. Individuals always act on behalf of or as the member of a certain household. Neighboring Muslims and Catholics visited each other less often than their neighbors from the same ethno-religious group. But, as I have said, some events were occasions for all neighbors to visit regardless of ethno-religious identity. Such occasions were either "sweet visits" or visits "for joy" (*na slatko, na radost*), such as when a son or daughter married, when a son returned from the Army or when a child was born to the household, or visits "for sorrow" (*na zalost*) at someone's death. At such occasions it is considered shameful for neighbors not to visit.

These visits were opportunities for the two groups to frequently refer to differences between them. Whenever I asked a question related to ways of behaving or doing things in the village my informants would almost inevitably begin their answer with "among us..." (*kod nas...*). This expression did not refer to the village population, but only to the ethnic community in question. It was particularly noticeable at women's coffee-visits between Muslim and Catholic households held daily and often in the village. The "among us" at the start of a sentence in mixed ethno-religious company would signal a statement about differences between the two groups. On one occasion I accompanied three Muslim women to visit a Catholic woman who had returned from hospital and other Catholic women in the neighborhood joined in to

have a chat. (All the women were born in the village and grew up as close neighbors.)

The conversation revolved around issues common to any coffee-visit: the work the women did in the house, the last rise in prices, etc. However, friendly acknowledgements of differences in customs between the hosts and the visitors were made throughout. Thus, a Catholic woman told her Muslim neighbors that she had been to the market and seen a good and reasonably priced material for making "your *bosca*" (a cloth which Muslims put on the floor when eating. Furthermore, when putting out coffee-cups the hostess put out one teaspoon for each guest. The Muslim women said they could share one, but the Catholic host answered that "among us" they put out one teaspoon for each person. Although this may have been a display of "cultured behavior" in honor of the foreign and "Christian" guest, it still illustrates the way cultural differences are mutually stated. However, such statements would inevitably be followed by jokes and humorous comments about common female experiences.

Thus, when in each others' company, Muslims and Catholics in Dolina communicated about who they themselves are by pointing out differences with Catholics or Muslims respectively, and also communicated about who the others are by stating how they are different from themselves. There was an acknowledgement that the formation of cultural identity was dependent on the presence of the others "who do things differently." Thus customs practiced by Orthodox Christians but not by Catholics, such as *Jurjevdan*, were practiced by Muslims in Dolina and in other mixed Muslim and Catholic/Croat villages, but not in other villages to the east with a mixed Muslim and Orthodox/Serb population. In other words, the presence of the *other* ethnic group was needed to construct cultural identity, since it is mainly through its presence that a person is taught awareness of his or her own ethnic identity. Differences in dress and house style are only a reflection of this attitude in everyday life. Similar comments about differences in all-Muslim company might refer not only to the other religious group but also to other socio-cultural units: the town, the region, Bosnia or even Yugoslavia, thereby conveying the idea that other peoples might follow different customs but with the same legitimacy.

The religious customs of the other group, as far as they were known, provided not so much a comparison as a tautological legitimation of Muslim customs by way of differentiation: "we are Muslim because we do things differently from the Catholics and we do things

differently because we are Muslim and not Catholic." Individual villagers would express their approval or disapproval of a specific custom existing elsewhere, but they would add: "It is different among them, but we are used to our ways," or they would say: "What is valid for her/him is valid for me." Similarly, Muslims and Catholics would merely state the differences factually and then add: "This is the way they learned it," reflecting an ultimately tolerant and pluralist attitude towards the "other."

The villagers often concluded such comparisons by saying: "we have learned it this way and we are the way our surroundings (*sredina*) are." The idea expressed is that a person's socio-cultural environment shapes them, their behavior, and their values. However, this also implies that in a multicultural environment ethno-religious group values, and by implication group identity, may be easily influenced and weakened by the different customs and values of close neighbors. Paradoxically, then, it is the acknowledgement of the fluidity of collective identities which makes it necessary to invoke an "ethnic boundary" through frequent statements of "what our customs are and are not." While individual differences are condemned within the ethnic group, differences between the two groups are acknowledged, so that individual loyalty to group values is encouraged and group identity enhanced.

Great importance is thus attached to custom (*adet*, a word of Turkish origin, is used rather than the standard Serbo-Croat word *obicaj*) and the way in which it defines a person and the community of which s/he is a part. An awareness of the significance of *adet* is epitomized in several proverbs: "Better that the village should die than our customs" (*Bolje je da selo propadne nego adeta*); "There are as many customs as there are villages" (*Koliko sela, toliko adeta*). Such sayings reflect the idea that traditions and customs *are* the village. They may vary from place to place, but in their diversity they are unchangeable. Without them the local community would be dead, without value and without an essence to pass on to its members. The village and its customs as a whole imbues a person with an identity. The proverbs implicitly demand a denial of the village as a community of two ethnic groups with different "customs" and focus instead on the higher level of a community of villagers sharing the same surroundings.

To a Dolina villager, whether Muslim or Catholic, this means a rural, Muslim/Catholic environment. Some of the women who had married into Dolina grew up in

Muslim/Serb villages and it was acknowledged both by these women themselves and by their covillagers that their experience made them different from the women who had grown up in Muslim/Croat villages. They celebrated different festivals and, it was said, they were more knowledgeable about fortunetelling (the Serbs were known for practicing this more than the Croats). Most typically, however, they were more cautious in their relationships with Croats. There are two reasons for this, which may at first seem contradictory: first, to them the Croats were the "unknown others," and second their personal memories (or handed down memories if they were younger) of Serb atrocities against them during the Second World War (several women in Dolina had fled from Eastern Bosnia to save their life) had made them scared and distrustful of their non-Muslim neighbors. In other words, the kind of mixed ethnic surroundings a person grew up in and her experiences in this environment influence her views of and attitude towards her Bosnian neighbors and is ultimately inextricably linked to her identity as a Bosnian Muslim.

The lack of any clearly defined physical or geographical boundaries between the different communities is counteracted by drawing boundaries between two clearly defined and different moral worlds by way of symbolic contrast with the customs and values of the other group. The most conspicuous expression of a moral boundary between the two ethnic groups concerned intermarriage. In rural areas this boundary is usually non-negotiable. Although the villagers are clearly aware that it is transgressed in urban settings, the difference in behavior is ascribed by devout Muslims to the lack of "faith" in towns. A Muslim mother said:

I would never allow my daughter to marry somebody from a different religion. In town I know it is different, more people do marry those from different religions, but that is because in town this is not important; they have no religion. In villages, however, we are all believers. Also, the kids from mixed marriages will not have any friends since they are neither Catholics nor Muslims.

Urban areas are not only more secularized but also more influenced by Western individualism. A young couple who are economically independent can also be independent of their parents' wishes. Many villagers would acknowledge the differences in attitude between town and country:

We are the way our surroundings (*sredina*) are, and here we see things this way, although they see things

differently in town... We respect their [Catholic] holidays, their churches, their prayers and we see it as a sin to blaspheme against their sacred symbols..., but we do not marry them!

The boundary which still operates among rural Muslims and Catholics is illustrated in the following case. A Catholic had brought home a Muslim bride, but the man's mother refused to share the house with her and the bride had to leave. On an earlier occasion her son had brought home a Serb woman, whom his mother had also rejected because: "they cross themselves with three fingers and we with five". She would only accept a daughter-in-law from the same faith. I expressed my surprise to the Muslim neighbors of the Catholic mother at her tenacious opposition to a Muslim daughter-in-law, since she was particularly friendly with Muslim women in the village. Her Muslim friends explained:

We get along well and we have a good time together, but this is one thing; it is another thing to have somebody from a different religion together with you in the kitchen. When two people who prepare different foods and keep different holy days share the same house many problems arise.

A young, modern Catholic girl echoed these views:

I wish everybody was one *nacija*, that everybody was either Croat, Serb or Muslim. It would have been so much simpler if we were all the same. You can be good friends with those from other religions, but you do not marry them. It is better not to because so many problems occur. He wants you to take his religion and you want him to take yours; and when children arrive, the problem is what name to give them, etc., and then the respective families interfere. This is why it is better to marry somebody from your own religion.

In rural areas the taboo on intermarriage is the ultimate perpetuation of group distinctions. However, this does not mean a denial of the other group or an absence of tolerance. Rather, there was an acknowledgement of cultural diversity and co-existence as an intrinsic quality of life and as an essential element in the process of identity formation.

The Concept of *Narod* and the Role of the State in Defining Nationalities:

State policies relating to the "nationality question" in former Yugoslavia resulted from three intertwined ideological legacies: the Ottoman *millet* system, Stalinist

doctrine, and Wilsonian doctrine discussed in the Introduction. A typical feature of multi-ethnic socialist states (such as the USSR, Yugoslavia and China) was the prominent role of the State in defining nationalities within its borders, and "in objectifying that identity, through conferring nationality status, or contesting the group's ethnicity, by refusing recognition" (Gladney, 1991:76). In the Yugoslav multi-ethnic and socialist federal state, "nationality policies" were one of the tools by which the state legitimated and strengthened its structure and thus its power. So while in the West ethnic and national identities might be imagined and manipulated by individuals and communities, in socialist regimes it is the state that does the imagining; the people can only contest, resist, or acquiesce (a tradition which many ex-communist nationalist leaders have upheld more fiercely than ever).

A key concept within socialist nationality policies is represented by the terms "nation" (*narod* or *nacija* in Serbo-Croat) and "nationality" (*nacionalnost*). Both terms are most commonly translated as "ethnic group" in Western literature. As several authors noted, however, this led to some confusion among English speakers since one's nationality is a state assigned status (see e.g. Gladney, 1991, Bromley & Kozlov 1989). However, there is a hierarchy of nationality categories and the Slav term closest to the idea of "ethnic group" is *narodnost*. From a Marxist viewpoint *narodnosti* are smaller than *narodi*, do not have a working class of their own, and exist only in relation to a larger nation. However, a *narodnost* may gain political recognition as a *narod* as did the Muslims in Bosnia Hercegovina. The concept of "nationality" in a socialist state differs significantly from that within Western Europe. In Western Europe citizenship and nationality are synonymous and nationality refers to the relation of a person to a particular state. However, in the multi-ethnic socialist state national identity is different from and in addition to citizenship. On an individual level it leaves room for manipulation and choice, since self-ascription and self-identification are the ultimate decisive factors. It is not necessarily a question of a person's state or place of residence. It is, in short, an identity a person can either inherit or adopt (Shanin, 1989). These conceptual differences, and not least the role of the state in conferring nationality status on ethnic groups, are key to understanding the dynamics of inter-ethnic relations in the former socialist states. As part of their "nationalities policy" these states had a hierarchy of categories within which they grouped different peoples and according to which they were granted national rights. Yugoslavia was a multi-national federation with a three-tier system of national rights. The first category was the "nations of

Yugoslavia" (*Jugoslovenski narodi*) of which there were six (Serb, Croat, Slovene, Macedonian, Montenegrin and Muslim), each with a national home based in one of the republics and with a constitutional right to equal political representation. The constitution of each republic stated that it is the republic of the particular nation. Bosnia-Hercegovina, however, was an exception and was seen as constituting the republic and national home of the Serb, Croat and Muslim nations. The second category was the "nationalities of Yugoslavia" (*narodnosti*) which were legally allowed a variety of language and cultural rights. There were ten ethnic groups officially recognized as "nationalities," the largest being the Albanians and Hungarians. The third category was "other nationalities and ethnic groups"- Jews, Vlahs, Greeks, Russians etc, including those who classified themselves as "Yugoslavs" (cf. Petrovic, 1987 and Poulton, 1991). The category of *narod* was heavily influenced by Stalin's definition of a "nation." According to his definition a nation is "a historically formed and stable community of people which has emerged on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up, the latter being manifest in a common shared culture" (Bromley & Kozlov, 1989:426). The four criteria outlined by Stalin in his "nationalities policy," were the main guidelines in the Yugoslav federal state's attitude towards its various ethnic communities. But they were applied flexibly, erratically and according to a Yugoslav *realpolitik*. In addition, however, there was the historical legacy of the Ottoman *millet* system, which had created collective cultural identities based on membership of a religious community. This legacy is particularly salient in the case of Bosnia-Hercegovina, where the three ethnoreligious communities (Muslims, Croats and Serbs) speak the same language and share the same territory and economic life. In fact, in Bosnia the term *nacija* rather than the census term *narod* (both meaning "nation") is used in everyday speech. While the term *narod* was used more generally to refer to "the people" or any people (the French, the German etc.) and even sometimes used to refer to the Yugoslavs as a collectivity, the term *nacija* referred specifically to ethnoreligious identity, which within the Bosnian context is also a person's national identity, whether she is Muslim Bosnian, Catholic Croat or Orthodox Serb.

When Others Tell You Who You Are:

In the former Yugoslav federal state each citizen was officially identified by his or her nationality at birth, although national identity would never be written on one's identity-card, as was the practice in the USSR (cf

Karklins, 1986). The question of a person's national identity would turn up every ten years on the national census. When parents registered their child for a birth certificate they could choose from a range of different nationalities. For children of mixed marriages, the parents would choose one nationality for the child, typically the father's, until (as it was said) the child was old enough to choose for him- or herself.

Until 1971 when the Bosnian Muslims obtained nationality status, they had various official categories to choose from. In the population census of 1948, there was the option of "Muslims of undeclared nationality" in addition to Serb and Croat, etc; in 1953 those who did not want to declare themselves as Serbs or Croats had the option of "Yugoslavs of undeclared nationality". In 1961 the Bosnian Muslims could declare themselves as "Muslims in the ethnic sense" (i.e. as *narodnost*) and finally in the 1971 census they could declare themselves of "Muslim" nationality (i.e. as *narod*). However, many Serbs and Croats never quite accepted the Muslims as a separate "nation." They would insist that the Bosnian Muslims were really something else, i.e. ethnically either Serbs or Croats respectively (or at best either "Serbs- or "Croats of the Islamic faith"). These claims were part of wider Serbian and Croatian hegemonic aspirations in Bosnia-Herzegovina: making the Bosnian Muslims into Serbs or Croats would strengthen one of the two contestants considerably.

Yet, the great variety in Muslim national and ethnic self-designation for administrative purposes before 1971 may in itself be seen as an expression of the Bosnian Muslims' distinct identity (cf. Purivatra, 1974). When I asked my Bosnian Muslim friends how they identified themselves at censuses, the replies varied from person to person. Furthermore, the same person would slot into different national or ethnic categories at different times, particularly as census categories changed. Many would identify themselves as Yugoslavs when this was an option. Otherwise, they would identify themselves as a Croat or Serb according to personal experience: if you had a good friend or neighbor who was a Serb, you would "write yourself" as a Serb.

Atif, an old Muslim and former Communist party member, is typical of many of his generation who, for most of their lives, did not have the choice of calling themselves Muslim for public and administrative purposes, i.e. he could not identify with an official Muslim Yugoslav nation. Similarly, as a Communist party member he was not allowed to practice his religious

customs, and therefore had publicly to deny his Muslim religious identity as well. Atif had been through most of the categories: Unspecified, Croat, Yugoslav, Serb, and Muslim. His choice was influenced first by official options, and second by socio-cultural context, i.e. where he lived or where he worked. Yet, he would stress that he had always been "a Muslim in heart". To be a Muslim in heart (*biti Musliman u crce*) is an expression often used by non-devout, non-practicing Muslims to refer to their cultural identity. Being a Muslim in the religious sense is dependent on performing certain acts contained in the five pillars and in abstaining from acts which are illicit, such as drinking alcohol. As we have seen, however, in Bosnia "Muslim" is also a cultural identity which does not depend on what you do, on performance or religious devoutness, but is rather a sense of belonging to a community of people with whom one shares certain experiences. Muslims thus refer to their "ethnicity," in an idiom which emphasizes not so much descent as sentiment and a common experience. This is significantly different from the symbol of blood and heritage which is so often invoked in discourses on ethnic or national identity among other European peoples. The symbol of blood, i.e. referring to common descent, is e.g. used by Bosnian Serbs. The only Serb villager in Dolina, the village where I did my field research, would teasingly tell his Muslim friends that they had Serbian blood in their veins. Furthermore, ethnographers have noted that Muslim villagers have little knowledge of or interest in their genealogies compared to e.g. Bosnian Serbs or Croats (cf. Lockwood, 1975). I suggest that the Muslims' weaker emphasis on descent and "common blood" as defining their "ethnic identity" partly excludes them from a discourse which evolves around such principles. In a sociopolitical climate where collective cultural identities based on such claims become the only valid ones, the Muslims claim to nationality status on a different basis is seen by others competing within such a discourse as illegitimate.

Conclusions: Devoured by Nationalist Categories:

"Our orthodox neighbor (they like to call themselves Serbs) now came at our door and told us to leave by the next morning or else he or someone else would kill us." Semir, July 1992

"All the Catholics here put up Croatian flags, they even put up one at the entrance to our village, they all insist they are Croats now and that there is no place for the Muslims. Even my friends do this. I am very disappointed in them. I tell them there are Catholics everywhere in the

world. Isn't this so? You can be a Catholic and live in Italy or Germany, you do not have to live in Croatia. You can be a Catholic and a Bosnian. My friends never lived in Croatia, their great-grandad was born in this village and his dad before him. He was born in Bosnia. I think that as long as our Catholics insist they are Croats and our Orthodox insist they are Serbs, there cannot be a Bosnia."Azra, June, 1992

Semir and Azra are two Bosnian Muslims in their thirties. Semir is a young man from a Muslim/Serb village in northern Bosnia where all the Muslims have been forced to leave their homes. Azra is a young woman from a Muslim/Croat village in central Bosnia. These are just two among many young Bosnians who grew up in a post-war Yugoslavia secure in their identity as "ethnic" Muslims and enjoying the status of their state-supported Muslim "nationality", equal to that of their Bosnian Croat and Serb school friends. To this generation difference in nationality was just one of the many differences between people. It was acknowledged and often joked about but it never precluded friendships. In fact, for the Bosnian post-war generation, as for the generations before them, the essence of being Bosnian (*bosaniac*) was growing up in a multicultural and multi-religious environment, an environment where cultural pluralism was seen as intrinsic to the social order. Today Azra's and Semir's hopes for peaceful co-existence with their Serb and Croat neighbors and friends are dashed by a nationalism foreign to their local traditions.

In the Socialist Federal State of Yugoslavia (1945-1991) there were six officially recognized "nations" each with a national home based in one of the six republics. Those ethnic groups with a national home outside Yugoslavia, such as Hungarians and Albanians, were recognized as a *narodnost*, but never given status as a *narod*. Since the Muslims had status as one of six Yugoslav nations it should have followed that Bosnia-Herzegovina was defined specifically as the "national home" of the Muslim *narod*, yet this was never the case (one of the reasons being the ambiguity of the category Muslim) Bosnia-Herzegovina is the only one of the former Yugoslav republics which was not associated with one main nationality.

The Yugoslav constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina stated (as does the revised and unfinished 1992 constitution) that it is the state of equal citizens and nations of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Muslims, Serbs and Croats and members of other nations and nationalities living in it. The Muslims are in other words the only nation in the former

Yugoslavia which did not have a republic as their *de jure* national home, although 86% of the members of the Muslim nation were Bosnians. Although there are also people outside Bosnia-Herzegovina who identify themselves as members of the Muslim *narod/nacija* (e.g Muslims in Serb Sandzak) the Muslims are culturally and historically rooted in Bosnia, where their historical, cultural and religious experience has been different from that of their Catholic Croat and Orthodox Serb neighbors. However, the absence of an institutionalized, ideologically and legally established link between the (Bosnian) Muslim nation and the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina leaves the Muslims without legitimate claims to a national state when competing within a nationalist discourse dominated by Serb and Croat territorial claims. Their doctrine of "one nation, one state" implies that the natural order of things is a society organized around people who are basically the same. In a similar vein, cultural pluralism within states is seen as an anomaly; they are communities that cannot be "imagined." The paradox is, of course, that until "ethnic cleansing" started, Bosnia consisted of ethnically mixed local communities where mutual acknowledgement and acceptance of differences constituted the dynamics of social life. Dealing with cultural differences was part of people's most immediate experience of social life outside the confines of their home, and it was therefore an essential part of their identity.

In the two quotations which introduced this section we saw that Semir and Azra were making a clear and significant distinction between Croats and Serbs on the one hand and Catholic and Orthodox neighbors on the other. In villages in the area where I did research people would use the terms for religious identity (i.e. *katolik* and *pravoslav*) rather than those of national identity (i.e. Croat and Serb). There was one significant exception to this practice, however. Muslims would use the term "Serb" rather than "Orthodox" if they did not share a village with Orthodox Serbs. Although informants would say that the terms *hrvat* and *katolik* "are the same thing," the actual use of terminology was dependent on closeness in social (and by implication geographical) terms with members of the other group. The same villagers who referred to their co-villagers and neighbors as Catholics would refer to people from Croatia as Croats and not Catholics. Although both categories of people are officially designated as Croats there was in the eyes of Muslim villagers an essential difference between the two. When a Muslim villager referred to her co-villager as a Catholic she implied that she was part of "our community," that social world where he or she gained his or her immediate

experiences outside the household. In the present situation these terms have taken on a new meaning. Whereas they were originally used to distinguish between "those you know" and "those you do not know," they now distinguish between Bosnians and those who attach their "national" identity to a state outside Bosnia. The notion that Catholic and Orthodox Bosnians belong to the Croat and Serb nation-states was accentuated during the exchange of nationalist rhetoric between Croatia and Serbia before and certainly during this war (when categories of cultural identity harden and become transfixed and monomial). It was within this framework that a plan for cantonization along ethnic lines was understood locally and therefore embraced by Serbia and Croatia while fiercely opposed by Bosnia-Herzegovina and the majority of its Muslims who, together with some Bosnian Croats and Serbs (mainly of the intelligentsia) were committed to a multi-ethnic and multi-religious unitary Bosnian state built on the principles of democracy and pluralism.

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