

Abstract

This thesis focuses on issues of multi-layered identities within a social space. It analyzes ritual (or ceremony) as one of the codified displays of culture within which collective ideas and attitudes regarding identity are manifested, shared, and strengthened. Bosnian Serbs - due to political and social change - were forced to redefine their position in society, as well as their (collective) identities and social ties. *Slava* is a fundamental ritual seen as an attribute of “Serbianness”, and in the context of this study, manifests itself as an indicator of establishment and validity of collective identities. *Slava* is a traditional celebration practiced by Orthodox believers in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Albania, and Macedonia. It is a festivity of either a family, village, or local church patron. At the center of this research will be an individual *slava* of a family patron saint, *krsna slava*, or *krsno ime*. For Bosnian Serbs, *krsna slava* is currently a revitalized ritual concurring with local tradition and convening with social ambitions of current inhabitants in the region (otherwise it would not be revitalized). The pertinence of this research subject is given by the nature of ritual itself as it is founded on collective sharing and the manifestation of common ideas¹. The objectives of the research, apart from ethnographic description of the *krsna slava*, or *krsno ime* ritual, were identification of symbolic manifestations referring to different collective identities, observation of unambiguity versus ambiguity of meanings of ritualistic acts, and social conditionality of its interpretation by agents. Last but not least, the objective was a concept of *krsna slava* as an interpretative framework of the model of segmentary identities of Bosnian Serbs.

Key words: identity, ritual, celebration, ethnicity, ceremony, symbol, collective identities, *krsna slava*, *krsno ime*, family patron – saint, religion, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Balkan, Bosnian Serb, social ties, ritual feast, family, ethno-national, nationalism, ethnography

¹ Bowie 2009