Summary

The subject of this dissertation is contemporary Bosniak nationalism understood as internally diversified political process present in Bosnia and Herzegovina after 1995, rooted in the activities of institutionalized political actors who originate from the Muslim elites of Bosnia and Herzegovina, oriented towards shaping Bosniak national identification among members of the Bosnian Muslim community and manifesting itself through politics of memory concerning three key events from the last armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995): the Srebrenica massacre, the Siege of Sarajevo and the Siege of Mostar. The aim of this dissertation is to examine the main strategies that were used by the Bosniak nationalist camp – above all, by the dominant political parties and the politically involved leadership of the Islamic Community – to build the Bosniak nation via politics of memory conducted in the period 1995-2015.

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first one presents the theoretical approach: a processual-relational perspective rooted in moderately constructivist post-Weberian sociology, which brings two concepts: nationalism and state into the fore, and simultaneously considers two other concepts: nation and ethnicity secondary to the analysis. The second chapter provides an interpretation of the historical process of emergence of Bosniak nationalism and covers the period from the second half of the XIXth century to the early 1990s. It shows how Bosniak nationalism developed from pre-nationalist Bosniak/Muslim political practice conducted until 1945, how it emerged in the 1960s within several competing intellectual and political trends, and how it was consolidated into one political current at the beginning of the 1990s and then institutionalized during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992-1995. The third chapter provides the framework for empirical analyzes conducted in the following chapters, since it reconstructs the dynamics of post-war political field of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the years 1995-2015 from the perspective of the functioning of Bosniak nationalism. It indicates and discusses key factors that have an impact on shaping the field, as well as three main turning points of major significance for the configuration of political forces in the whole field as well as inside the Bosniak camp.

The fourth and fifth chapters are the results of a systematic analysis of the research material – an ideological messages available in the nationalist Bosniak mainstream printed media – and they provide the interpretation according to which the nationalist process of Bosniak nation-building is based on two main strategies: a consolidating-antagonizing
strategy and a cooperative strategy. Both chapters show how these two strategies structured Bosniak national memory of the last war into several interpretative variants which problematized differently two issues that are fundamental to Bosniak nationalism: the issue of cultural criteria of belonging to the Bosniak nation and the issue of relationship between the Bosniak nation and the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the one hand, the chapters illustrate how the radical wing of Bosniak nationalist camp sought to strengthen the internal cohesion of its own reference group by using the consolidating-antagonizing strategy, in accordance to which they developed a vision of the Bosniak nation as the community founded on exclusive cultural criteria (the religious and historical one) and having the ownership right to the whole Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the other hand the chapters show how the moderate Bosniak nationalists sought to build symbolic links between their own reference group and the other two nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina by using the cooperative strategy that gave up the issue of cultural criteria of nation-belonging and focused on indicating that the Bosniak nation had the right of ownership to the state to the same extent as the other two nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, both chapters show the dynamics of complicated relationships between these two nationalist milieus and their strategies at certain stages of the period studied: how they sometimes co-existed side by side, sometimes complemented each other and in yet other circumstances struggled against each other. Finally, these chapters illustrate how (and discuss why) Bosniak radical wing, who promoted the consolidating-antagonizing strategy, won over the moderates and gained dominance in the politics of memory after 2006.