

ISLAM IN THE SUCCESSOR STATES OF FORMER YUGOSLAVIA – RELIGIOUS
CHANGES IN THE POST-COMMUNIST BALKANS FROM 1989 - 2009

by

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A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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September 2011

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Abstract

This thesis contributes to the study of religions, particularly Islam, in the successor states of former Yugoslavia from 1989 to 2009. The theoretical contributions of this work lie in the comparison of the communist and post-communist periods, where clear similarities and differences have been drawn for better understanding of the continuity between them. Current works on the state of Islam and Muslim communities in the Balkans have mainly focused on recent developments without insight into the conditions and effects of religious life under communism.

This work is concerned with the continuity of religious practice from the communist period, religious changes and the revival of Islam at the institutional, public, intellectual and individual level. The thesis begins with a historical background of the region and the arrival of Islam. It moves then to examine constitutional and legislative changes regarding religion and their impact on Islam. After analysing the most visible signs of an Islamic revival at the institutional level, the thesis examines the place of Islam in the public arena, analysing the media, public gatherings, Muslim organizations and mosque construction. It then focuses on intellectual changes and similarities within the communist period. The concluding chapter explains the scope and reasons for the Islamic revival.

The thesis concludes that, although noteworthy changes have occurred in the past twenty years, the methods of observance of Islamic practice from previous periods remains apparent. Muslim communities and their leadership have resisted foreign influences and have managed to maintain organizational structures present in the past and even revive crucial educational institutions. At the same time, new laws have enabled Muslims to significantly strengthen their organizational capacities. Muslim intellectuals have followed the tradition of previous generations and responded to the new challenges. Although Islam, alongside other religions, has survived communism and is more visible in the public domain, the revitalization of Islam at institutional level in many cases does not correspond to an increase in individual religiosity.

IN THE NAME OF GOD, MOST GRACIOUS, MOST MERCIFUL

To my parents, *Hajji* Ćazim and Hava Fazlić

Acknowledgements

Throughout my research a number of individuals supported me as I gathered my data and wrote up my findings. I would like therefore to acknowledge their immense contribution on my writing journey. Firstly I would like thank my supervisors Dr. Ian Draper and Prof. David Thomas for their meticulous reading of the sections and chapters of my thesis and constructive supervision throughout my research.

I extend my thanks to the academic staff of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo, Enes Karić, Ismet Bušatlić, Jusuf Ramić, Ahmet Alibašić and Aid Smajić, for their valuable input, advice and suggestions.

During my data collection process I had enormous help from the academics, government officials and representatives of the Islamic Communities in the successor states of Former Yugoslavia. I would therefore like to thank Muharem Omerdić at the Education Department of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Aziz Kadribegović at the *Preporod* newspaper and Mustafa Spahić at the Gazi Husrev-begova medresa, all in Sarajevo.

Osman Lavić at the Gazi Husrev-begova library was always on hand to send me necessary archival materials from the shelves of one of the oldest library in the Balkans, so I wholeheartedly acknowledge his assistance. Likewise, Asim Zubčević, a librarian at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, was always willing to provide his assistance.

My gratitude also goes to Dragan Novaković at the Ministry of Faith in Belgrade for the valuable contribution of sending me materials from his Ministry archive.

I would like also to thank Samir Skrijelj from the Mufti office in Novi Pazar and Eldin Aščerić from the Islamic Community in Belgrade, Bajro Agović and Mujdin Miljanić from the Islamic Community of Montenegro, Agron Vojnika from the office of *Reis ul-Ulema* in Macedonia; Aziz Hasanović, the deputy head chairman of the Assembly in Croatia; Ahmed Pašić from Slovenia, Nevzet Porić, from the Mufti office in Slovenia and Resul Rexhepi from the Mufti office in Kosovo.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, in particular my wife Sabina for her continuous support, advice and proof-reading of my writing. She patiently and constantly corrected my English and edited my manuscript throughout my research. I am also thankful to my daughter Amina and son Yusuf for allowing me more time with my research and writing.

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A note on transliteration and pronunciation

Arabic terms

For transliteration from Arabic International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies system has been adopted as follows:

(ا) a (initial ,ء)‘	(ض) ḍ
(ب) b	(ط) ṭ
(ت) t	(ظ) ṣ
(ث) th	(ع) ‘
(ج) j	(غ) gh
(ح) ḥ	(ف) f
(خ) kh	(ق) q,
(د) d	(ك) k,
(ذ) dh	(ل) l
(ر) r	(م) m,
(ز) z	(ن) n
(س) s	(و) w
(ش) sh	(ه) h
(ص) ṣ	(ي) y

Long vowels: ā (alif and a.maṣūra) ī ū.

Short vowels: a i u.

Diphthongs: aw ay iyy (ī if final) uww (ū if final).

Initial hamza: omitted.

Some common Arabic terms usually quoted in English dictionaries will not be transliterated.

The exception to this rule is the terms which have been adopted from Arabic or Turkish in the languages of peoples of the Balkans. Thus for instance *masjid*, *maktab*, *madrassa* or *Ra’is ul-‘Ulama* have been used as *mesdžid*, *mekteb*, *medresa*, *Reis ul-Ulema*.

Slavic terms

Throughout the work I have kept the original forms of the Bosnian (Serbo-Croatian) names, i.e. as they are written in the Bosnian (Serbo-Croatian) language. This mainly affects personal names and names of cities, e.g. Đozo instead of Djozo, and Bihać instead of Bihach.

The vowels should be read as follows:

A as in father

E as in let

I as in he

O as in port

U as in rule

Regarding the letters that do not exist in the English alphabet or are used differently in terms of their sound, they should be pronounced as indicated in the following examples:

C ‘ts’ as in cats

J ‘y’ as in yet

Č ‘ch’ as in church

Lj roughly ‘ll’ as in million

Ć a soft ‘tch’ as in tune

Nj ‘n’ as in news

Dž ‘j’ as in jug

Š ‘sh’ as in shout

Đ roughly ‘dj’ as in duke

Ž ‘s’ as in measure

The problem of terminology: *Wahhabi*, *Salafi* or *Neo-Salafi*

There has been a significant discussion in the literature as to which term best describes current trends in the Muslim world. The question whether *Wahhabi* or *Salafi* best represents how some Muslims see themselves today has been going on for some time at both academic and grassroots levels. For the purpose of this research, the author has mainly used the *neo-salafi* term to denote current trends among some Muslims in the Balkans as well as in the rest of the Muslim world. However, in citing other authors, their original terms have been retained.

Referencing

Throughout this work, the MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association) referencing style has been used. Sources quoted for first time contain the author's name(s) as it appears on the text: the author's forename(s) or initials first, followed by their surname.

If the same source was referenced more than once in a particular piece of work, the second and subsequent references have been abbreviated by providing only the author and page numbers. If there are more than one source by the same author, year of publication is provided as well. The abbreviation *Ibid.* (meaning in the same place) refers to a reference immediately above.



Successor states of former Yugoslavia

Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to analyse current developments in regard to Muslims in the Balkans from 1989 to 2009, drawing a comparison with the communist period. Although the Balkans encompass a number of states, the focus of this research has been the changes occurring in the successor states of former Yugoslavia, i.e.: Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo. This analysis explores three key questions:

- a. How has Islam survived communism and to what extent has the faith been revived at institutional and grassroots levels?
- b. To what extent is there a continuation of thought, legal frameworks and observance of Islam during and after communism?
- c. In what ways have there been significant departures from conditions under communist rule in terms of the public, organizational and intellectual life of Muslims in the Balkans?

The significance of the chosen topic firstly lies in the profound social, political, cultural and economic changes that have occurred since the collapse of communism in former Yugoslavia. A sizeable Muslim population has lived in this region as an indigenous community for the last five hundred years. Living under a repressive regime, its religious and national rights were suppressed. After the collapse of the communist regime in 1989, Muslim communities attained more freedoms to re-establish their Islam. It is important therefore to examine how Muslims are managing the interpretation and the practice of Islam in these new circumstances and in which ways they are using the new opportunities of living in post-communism. Furthermore, it is important to see how they were affected by the experience of communism and how they rejected communist ideology.

Secondly, the sudden upsurge of Islam in the Balkans has often been seen as a threat to the European character of the region. Stronger institutions, an increased construction of mosques, the establishment of new Muslim organizations, new religious trends, the presence of Islam in the media and large public gatherings have all been seen as evidence of the ‘Islamization’ of the local population. Despite the fact that two other religious communities, Catholic and Orthodox Christians, have been experiencing a similar process of visibility in the public sphere, a stronger emphasis has been placed on Islam. Moreover, the arrival of Islamic humanitarian organizations, several thousand *mujahidūn* during the Balkan conflicts, as well as the presence of hundreds of students educated in the Muslim world, have raised concerns among Western writers and journalists, such as those discussed below, over the future of the regional Islamic Communities as the bodies looking after the organized religious life of Muslims. On the pages of Western literature it has seemed that the Islamic Communities as organizations are losing control over their mosques, congregations, *imams* and academics. Finally, amidst the increased visibility of *neo-salafi* groups, some prophesized a ‘islamization’ of Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia.

Literature review

A number of works have already offered a good insight into the post-communist reality of the Balkan Muslim. The book *Le nouvel islam balkanique: Les musulmans, acteurs du post communisme, 1990-2000* (New Balkan Islam: Muslims, Actors of Post-Communism, 1990-2000), edited by French scholars Xavier Bougarel and Nathalie Clayer, examines various aspects of the Muslim presence in the first decade of post-communism. Also, Bougarel’s paper “*The Role of Balkan Muslims in building European Islam*” has significantly contributed to the above theme and has been widely used throughout this research. However,

it would have been even more useful if the contributors and editors of these two publications referred more to the communist period and had drawn parallels with current developments.

A valuable work by Vejkoslav Perica, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*, also examines the role of religion during the wars of former Yugoslavia. Perica has brought to light an extensive amount of data during the communist period and included all three religious communities in the former Yugoslavia. Furthermore, he is more focused on the relationship between ethno-nationalism, religion and politics, producing a worthwhile piece of research on the political history of religion in the Balkans. Although nationalism has played an important role in post-communist Balkans, this thesis is trying to avoid an extensive analysis of ethno-national divisions and their relationship to Islam and has focused mainly on the official Islamic communities and their contributions to religious life.

Other works are mostly concerned with the role of religion, including Islam, in Yugoslav conflicts, either in a particular successor country, or in the region as a whole. Important contributions to this theme have included the study by Paul Mojzes, *Yugoslavian Inferno: Ethno-religious Warfare in the Balkans*, in which he focuses mostly on the wars and ethno-nationalism in the former Yugoslavia, as well as religion and the war in Bosnia.

An increasing number of authors from the Balkans have written on this topic from a wide range of perspectives: historical, sociological, theological, ethno-national and political. One of the most useful works used throughout this research has been “*Islam in the Balkans*” by Bosnian author Fikret Karčić, originally published in English in the *Islamic Studies Journal* and later expanded on in the Bosnian language and published under the title *Muslimani Balkana Istočno Pitanje u XX vijeku (Muslims of the Balkans: the Eastern Question in the*

20th Century).¹ His analysis is focused on the revival of Islam in the Balkans from the 1970s to 1990. He defines the main indicators of a religious revival in the Balkans, such as publishing, (re)construction of mosques, Islamic education and emergence of Muslim humanitarian organizations. At the same time, a more extensive analysis of the post-communist period, including twenty years of post-communism, would have contributed further to this theme. Nevertheless, his approach to the revival of Islam during communism has been adopted and explored in more detail in this thesis.

Similar to the work this research has attempted in terms of Islam, the work of Serbian author Mirko Blagojević has examined within the Orthodox Church. In his doctoral dissertation, Blagojević compares the two post-communist contexts, the Serbian and Russian, and examines religious changes occurring within the Orthodox Church from a sociological and historical point of view. Providing valuable insight into the religious and social changes of post-communist societies, a particular contribution from the author lies in his thorough analysis of the de-atheization or de-secularization process in the stated countries.

Ahmet Alibašić has also examined post-communist changes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. His main focus has been the relationship of traditional and reformist currents in Bosnia and his work, published in 2003 as a conference paper under the title *Traditional and Reformist Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina* at the University of Cambridge, provides a good insight into the recent developments in Bosnia. His work has served as a starting point for further analysis of other successor states of former Yugoslavia, while exploring the relationship

¹ Fikret Karčić, "Islamic Revival in the Balkans 1970-1992", *Islamic Studies* 2-3 (1997), 565-81.

between the traditional and reformist Islam of post-communism. His paper has contributed to this thesis in providing a detailed analysis of new Muslim trends in the Balkans.

Similarly, Eldar Sarajlić from Budapest University has analysed the influence of foreign actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the past two decades. His paper “*The Return of the Consuls: Islamic networks and foreign policy perspectives in Bosnia and Herzegovina*”, written in 2010, sheds new light on the short- and long-term impacts of foreign actors in Bosnia.²

However, it appears as though too much attention has been placed on foreign organizations, as many authors downplay the strength and the level of organization within the Islamic Communities. As the following pages will show, Islamic Communities across the Balkan region are the main bearers of an organized Muslim life. With an enormous number of mosques, educational institutions, staff and publications, their influence and the level of their organization is growing at unprecedented speed.

At the same time, the majority of authors have not emphasized the importance of Muslim practice during the fifty years of communism in the region. With the exception of Karčić, who has rightly identified the beginnings of the Islamic revival in the Balkans during the seventies, others give enormous importance to Muslim humanitarian organizations, foreign fighters and *neo-salafi*-style organizations in their analysis of the Balkan region. A rich Muslim organizational and intellectual life existed during communism, especially during the so-called liberal phase of communism, or during the period of ‘normalization of religion state.’ Enes Karić from the Sarajevo-based Islamic Faculty has thus examined Muslim

² Eldar Sarajlić, *The Return of the Consuls: Islamic Networks and Foreign Policy Perspectives in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Oxford: European Studies Centre, 2010) <<http://www.balkanmuslims.com/pdf/Sarajlic-Bosnia.pdf>> [accessed 13 March 2011] (p. 31).

intellectual life in the Balkans in his *Contributions to Muslim thought in Bosnia*, which has been a helpful source of information when it comes to the intellectual contributions of Balkan Muslims. Despite the fact that his work is mainly focused on the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries, a significant analysis has been undertaken in the works of Yugoslav Muslim intellectuals after the WWII, especially of Husein Đozo (d. 1982), Ahmed Smajlović (d. 1988), Muhamed Filipović, and others.³

Furthermore, the strength of the Islamic Communities lies in their ability to make use of their own intellectuals and academics to justify the religious practice of Balkan Muslims and to emphasize the importance of their own existence and traditions. The previously mentioned Western authors often portray Balkan Muslims as a disorganized and disinterested body of silent observers. The challenges imposed upon Muslims in general and Muslim intellectuals in particular, have been explored in detail by the leading scholars of the Islamic Communities and the staff of their educational institutions. Even the *Reis ul-Ulama* of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mustafa Cerić has been theoretically and practically responding to the new challenges within Muslim communities.

Finally, the Islamic revival and survival of religion as such stems from a number of factors in the complex multilayered reality of the region. Islam cannot be examined in isolation from the two other religions, or from global trends in religiosity. The works of leading sociologists Peter Berger in the West, and Ćimić, Bošnjak and Vrcan in the Balkans have explored this phenomenon in more detail from a sociological point of view.⁴ Others have explored the interplay of religion and nationalism, drawing parallels and differences. Among such authors

³ A detailed description of their work and biographies can be found in Chapter Four of this thesis.

⁴ Their work is cited in Chapter Five of this thesis.

are Cohen Lenard with his work *Bosnia's 'Tribal Gods': The Role of Religion in Nationalist Politics*, Aleksandar Pavković's *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia: Nationalism in a Multinational State*, and *Religija u Tranziciji* by Dino Abazović.

Exploring issues related to Islam and Muslims, some authors write about the Islamic revival and Islamization of the Balkans. They support their arguments with evidence of an increased influence of foreign actors, Islamic humanitarian agencies, *mujahidūn* and publications on the religious practice of Balkan Muslims. These influences, resulting from an increased connection of the region with the Muslim world and the proceeding wars, have also sparked claims of local populations and their leadership being involved in international terrorist networks. The security driven literature, such as Kohlmann's *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe - The Afghan-Bosnian Network*, Vidino's *Al-Qaeda in Europe: the New Battleground of International Jihad* and *The Coming Balkan Caliphate: the Threat of Radical Islam to Europe and the West* by Deliso, have demonstrated concerns over the influence of foreign elements on the religious practice of Balkan Muslims. Islamic revival in the Balkans has been strongly linked with international networks and Islamic terrorism in the work of Bulgarian security analyst Velko Atanasov.⁵ At the same time, other works on this topic have shown a different picture of the influence of foreign agencies over the future of the Balkans. Thus Juan Moreno, a NATO security analyst, in his paper "*Foreign Influences in Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina Since 1995*", argues that 'Islamic radicalism, represents a predominantly marginal phenomenon, which is now waning.'⁶

⁵ Velko Atanasov, Bosnia and Herzegovina – Islamic Revival, International Advocacy Networks and Islamic Terrorism, *Strategic Insights*, Volume IV, Issue 5, 2005.

⁶ Juan C. A. Moreno, *Foreign Influences in Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina Since 1995* (Sarajevo: ISEEF, 2010) <http://sim.ba/dokumenti/Foreign_Influences_in_Islam_in_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina_since_1995.pdf> [accessed 13 November 2010] (p. 30).

Research Methodology

This work focuses on the seven newly established states of the Balkans. The countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia were selected because of their shared forty-five year history as part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Yugoslav communism was seen as different from those in neighbouring Albania, Romania and others, mainly as it was more liberal in human rights and religious freedoms.⁷ The political and, to some extent, cultural context has, therefore, been the main factor in determining which countries to include in this research. Among these countries Muslims represent a relative majority or around 40% in Bosnia and Herzegovina, over 90% in Kosovo, 35% in Macedonia and 20% in Montenegro, while in Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia their percentage is less than 4%.

The thesis looks for a number of indicators for the state of Islam during, and particularly after, communism in the Balkans at an institutional, public, individual and intellectual level.

- At the institutional level, the research begins with its relationship with the state, publication, mosque construction, religious education, emergence of Muslim solidarity institutions, restitution of religious legacies (*waqf*) and its presence in the media. The Islamic Communities are the main organizations looking after the religious life of Muslims in each of the successor states of the former Yugoslavia.

⁷ Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 12; Paul Mojzes, Religion and the Left in Yugoslavia in: Reimer, Allen James., and Rudolf J. Siebert. *The Influence of the Frankfurt School on Contemporary Theology: Critical Theory and the Future of Religion; Dubrovnik Papers in Honour of Rudolf J. Siebert*. (Lewiston: Mellen Pr., 1992), p. 84.

The unique position of these institutions and the scope of their work has been the main reason for examining Muslim life in the Balkans at the institutional level.

- At the public level, four areas have been selected to demonstrate changes in activities of the Islamic Communities as well as the general perception of Islam, including the establishment or continuity of Muslim grassroots organizations, the presence of Islam in the media, public gatherings and the funding and management of mosques.
- A more comprehensive insight into either a significant departure from the communist period or a moderate continuity of religious practice is made possible through the exploration individual religiosity in the region.
- Lastly, the intellectual life of the Balkan Muslims is included here as an indicator of the Muslim presence in the region during both the communist and post-communist periods.

These indicators are not exhaustive, as many other cultural, political and religious signs provide an insight into the developments of Muslim religious life. However the aforementioned indicators most faithfully portray an image of Islam in the Balkans. They are most visible and best supported by the existing information from communist and post-communist times. The consideration of the indicators from the two periods presented inherent challenges in data compatibility, but the categorization and evaluation of the data available was structured so as to minimize any inconsistencies in comparison.

1. Collection of data

In order to collect data from primary sources, the author used the triangulation method which is defined as ‘a combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study.’⁸

a. Interviews

Throughout this thesis, the author has used semi-structured interviews, which are, according to Dawson, ‘perhaps the most common type of interview used in qualitative social research. In this type of interview, the researcher wants to obtain specific information which can be compared and contrasted with information gained in other interviews.’⁹ The main advantages of the personal interview, as compared with the open-ended questionnaire, are a flexibility in the questioning process, control of the interview situation, high response rate and collection of supplementary information. However, the main disadvantage of the personal interview is interviewer bias.¹⁰

There were a number of benefits of using interview method to supplement the existing literature. First, those who had been selected for interview had an access to unpublished data. Second, the organizations they represented had gathered vast amounts of information for their own use. Finally, they regularly receive feedback from local communities regarding both their own organizations and the state of Islam within the region as a whole. Those

⁸ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *The Landscape of Qualitative Research Theories and Issues* (London, Delhi: Sage Publications, Inc., 2003), p. 4.

⁹ Catherine Dawson, *Introduction to Research Methods* (Oxford: How To Content, 2009), p. 28.

¹⁰ Chava Frankfort-Nachmias and David Nachmias, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* (New York: Worth, 2000), pp. 218, 219.

organizations are the main institutions of an organized Muslim life and they represent the majority of Muslim population in the region.

Although in this work a number of predetermined questions were asked during each interview, the interviewees were allowed freedom to digress and go beyond the initial question. In doing so, the interviewer has not limited himself on the strict responses during the interviewing process, but rather has gained an overall depiction of given topics. This has also enabled the interviewer to obtain balanced information from different officials and intellectuals who may have varying views about a particular question. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning here the main themes discussed as they formed the basis of interview structure:

- Publications
- Religious Education
- Access to the media
- Restitution of *waqfs*
- Muslim humanitarian organizations
- Neo-*salafi* organizations
- Construction of mosques

These are themes that reflect the thesis aims, and hence structure, and particularly those that are not fully developed through existing analysis alone.

For the purpose of collecting data, four research trips were made to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. During these field studies, interviews were carried out with a number of high officials of the Islamic Communities and journalists, as well as intellectuals

from Muslim educational institutions. In some instances governmental officials responsible for religious affairs in a particular country have also been consulted. In addition, the research relied on email correspondence or telephone interviews with officials of the Islamic Communities, in circumstances where it was not possible to organize an interview owing to the location or unavailability of an interviewee. This was the case with officials of Macedonia, Slovenia, Kosovo and Croatia.

These individuals were selected because of their position within the Islamic Communities, usually as the deputies of the Muftis. The author believes that the above individuals were important for this research because of valuable up-to-date information they have at their disposal. The officials employed within the institutions of the Islamic Communities deal with Muslim religious affairs on an everyday basis and are familiar with the developments regarding religious trends among the Balkan Muslims.

b. Library research

Previous research under the same subject has also been extensively used as a secondary source. This includes a number of resources from libraries in the UK and the Balkans, such as books, journal articles, conference proceedings, legislation, constitutional acts, government publications, official statistics and archives. Because of the contemporary nature of this topic, significant up-to-date information has been found online, on the websites of Muslim institutions and organizations in the region, as well as in newspapers and magazines. The official literature of the Islamic Communities, such as *Preporod*, *Takvim*, *Glasnik*, *Glas Islama*, *Islamska Misao*, *Elif* and *Duturia Islame*, has been used widely. As the majority of this literature lacks a profound critical approach to the organization and activities of the Islamic Communities, publications of other private or state media were consulted as well.

c. Observation

Hazim Fazlic lived in the countries of former Yugoslavia for more than twenty years. He had an opportunity to observe and experience the events and changes which occurred in both periods, during and after communism. He thus collected a significant data by immersing in the Balkan social setting in which he observed the behaviours or members and the leaders of the Islamic Communities, as well as other groups and organizations.

2. Data Analysis

a. Comparative historical analysis

The data was collected from both communist and post-communist periods and was compared and analysed against the indicators: an increase or continuity of activity, as in the case of religious freedom and equality of Muslim communities or mosque construction; introduction of a new activity, as in new Muslim organizations and trends and introduction of religious education in public schools; or a change in a state, as in the survival of Islam in the Balkans. It was expected that these indicators would show the significant departures from conditions under communist rule, the survival and revival of Islam and its institutions after communism and the extent of a continuation of thought, legal frameworks and observance of religion.

In analysing the collected materials, the author has relied on the comparative historical analysis which is, according to Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 'best considered part of a long-standing intellectual project oriented toward the explanation of substantively important outcomes. It is defined by a concern with causal analysis, an emphasis on processes over

time, and the use of systematic and contextualized comparison.¹¹ Collier argues that the comparative method 'refers to the methodological issues that arise in the systematic analysis of a small number of cases. In this method an aspect is taken in two different situations and compared.'¹²

The historical comparative method has particularly been useful for this research. The two periods have been compared and their differences and similarities analysed according to the indicators discussed at the outset of the methodology section. By employing this method the author has been able to analyse both the interview transcriptions and a large amount of information contained in the works of previous authors identified in the publications written in English, Albanian or Slavic languages. The thesis frame of reference in the comparison and contrast of the two periods is Karčić's indicators of Islamic revival in the Balkans in Islamic publications, construction of mosques, Muslim humanitarian organizations and education. This research has expanded his indicators to include constitutional and legislative changes, Muslim organizations and trends and restitution of *waqf* properties, among others. Also, this work has organized them through the chapters of institutional, public, individual and intellectual life of the Balkan Muslims. The rationale behind the choice of comparing the two periods lays in the profound political and social changes that occurred in the last decade of the twentieth century. These changes have inevitably affected the religious life of Muslims in the Balkans. A proper examination and comparison of the two periods would provide an insight into most discernible transformation or continuation of religious practice of Balkan Muslims.

¹¹ James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), p. 6.

¹² David Collier, 'The Comparative Method', in Ada W. Finifter, ed. *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II* (Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association, 1993), p. 105.

3. Constraints of the Research

There were less resources available from the communist period when compared with the post-communist reality of Balkan Muslims, as information under communism was censored or hindered. The recent developments have been, to a great extent, better recorded and published compared to the communist period, when many Muslim activists, officials and intellectuals feared for their own safety. As a substitute for this state of affairs, the author has mainly relied on interviews with officials and intellectuals within the Islamic Communities who, for a large part, lived through the communist policies in former Yugoslavia. However, interviewees have been involved with the Islamic Communities as employees in the majority of cases. While recognizing their possible inherent biases, this thesis has also provided alternative views of present-day sociologists of religion or authors who are not in any way linked with the Muslim religious organization. In summary, although the sources of the data may at times be different, the data contained within them is essentially of a similar character.

When analysing the collected data, some countries differed from others in their activities, number of Muslims and level of organization. Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Sanžak area of Serbia and Macedonia have advanced further in their level of organization than Kosovo, for instance, despite the fact that more than two million Muslims live in the latter. The attempt to present a balanced amount of information between Muslim communities among the given countries has proven to be a very complex undertaking. The successor states of the former Yugoslavia had been part of a unified country and obvious similarities among the Muslim communities do exist. However, the proportion of Muslims in those countries is not similar. Furthermore, the relationship between the state and a particular Muslim community is not the same in each country. Without the inclination to equalize Muslim communities in these

countries, this work has nonetheless focused on specific themes to answer the research questions.

Outline

Before setting out to analyse the religious changes in the former Yugoslavia, the first part of the thesis has been allocated to the historical background of the Balkans. This region and its developments would be difficult, if not impossible, to understand without a proper comprehension of fundamental segments of its history. The first chapter therefore deals with the arrival of Islam in the Balkans, explores the context and circumstances in which Muslim communities operated during the last centuries, and provides a background to the communist advent and the place of Islam during the forty-five years of communist rule.

Chapter Two, in its first section has mainly relied on the constitutional and legislative acts of former Yugoslavia and its successor states. As the legal framework forms a basis of religious freedom, the laws and constitutional acts of the two periods have been examined to find what differences have occurred in the second period. The second section of Chapter Two examines the practical implications of the Constitutions and laws on religious communities in the two decades of post-communism. It considers what new legislation has provided for Muslims, and how Muslims have used new legal frameworks to establish new institutions, expand and develop their activities and present Islam in the public domain. This section enumerates the accomplishments of the Islamic Communities in the last two decades in the re-construction of mosques, the establishment of *madras*'s and Islamic faculties, an introduction of Islamic education in state schools, restitution of the *waqf* properties and publishing.

Chapter Three is concerned with the place of Islam in the public sphere during the two decades of post-communism. Here, four areas have been chosen to explore the changes from and similarities with the communist period: the presence of Islam in the media; construction of mosques; public gatherings; and new Muslim organizations. These four areas are not the only aspects of public life, but they best provide evidence of the changes occurring in the Balkans. In the media section the place of Islam in the public domain is examined and how it is portrayed at the present time compared to 1970s for instance. With deep social changes visible in public life it is important to examine whether an acceptance of Islam is a norm or if this religion is still seen as being on the edge of society. The section on Muslim organizations and diversification of Muslim practice have focused on major influences which might have come from abroad. Here the intention is focused on the question of whether new practices and teaching characterize Islam today, or whether we are seeing an organic development of Islam established on the tradition of previous generations. An increased construction of mosques, sometimes with money from wealthy Gulf countries, has been seen by some as an Islamization, and often as the radicalization, of areas where Muslim constitute the majority. This section therefore explores whether the increased construction of mosques represents a revival of Islam, to what extent, and what the role of foreign agencies and governments in this process is.

Here we come to foreign influences, which have been a pressing issue since the war in Bosnia, on the methods of organization and religious practice of Muslims in the region is then considered. There has been concern over the arrival of a number of humanitarian and relief agencies to the region, along with several thousand freedom fighters. Coupled with local graduates returning from Arab and other countries, these factors prompted some authors to predict a takeover of the Islamic Communities as traditional organizations looking

after religious life by newly established radical organizations supported by generous funding from abroad. In order to accurately assess the presence of Islam in the Balkans nowadays, several crucial questions are raised. What is the extent of foreign influence on the Balkans? Are the Gulf-based charities, wealthy individuals, Turkish governmental and non-governmental agencies and Iranian-Shia institutions overtaking Balkan Islam? Are Balkan Muslims, supported by funds from international Muslim networks, changing their methods of organization, work and religious practice?

How Islam is perceived by internal and external observers depends also on the perceptions given during Muslim religious gatherings. These large events where journalists, researchers and religious officials gain impressions at various levels of the Islamic Communities are explored in the public gatherings section.

Chapter Four looks at modern Muslim thought in the Balkans during the communist period and how post-communist intellectual contributions are building on this thought in order to respond to the new challenges. This chapter therefore examines major intellectuals, the nature of themes, and works written or translated, as well as external influences on the intellectual scene of the Balkans.

Finally, in Chapter Five statistical data on religiosity in the Balkans allows us to examine the changes occurring at grassroots level. Is the manifestation of Islam in the public a result of genuine religiosity and a post-communism return to Islamic practices, or are other factors contributing to such an impression? This thesis has followed the findings of sociologists of religion and survey data from as early as the 1950s, through the communist regime, to the first decade after its collapse. Whatever the level of Islamic revival in the Balkans, it is

evident that Islam as a religion and a marker of identity is very much alive after forty five years of relegation. Whether one considers the resurgence of Islam, or its continued existence, it is surprising how religions of the region, including Islam, survived the communist regime. Chapter Five also attempts to provide a more comprehensive depiction of the different stages of the communist regime's attitude towards religion in order to qualitatively comprehend the post-communist currents. What is the role of nationalist movements and national identities in reviving religious feelings? Did the former Yugoslavia follow, or was it influenced by, global trends in the secularization and/or de-secularization of society? These and some other questions need to be answered to fully understand the state of why and how Islam has survived communism.

1. ISLAM IN THE BALKANS – HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

In order to understand the present Muslim position in the former Yugoslavia, a brief historical overview of the arrival and survival of Islam in the Balkans is needed. Present-day antagonisms towards Yugoslav Muslims, their rejection and non-recognition as well as their religious, cultural and political aims can be understood only through a detailed survey of the historical background of the region. However, it is not possible to offer a full insight into five centuries of Islam in the Balkans in only one chapter. Thus, this chapter only places Islam and the Muslims of the Yugoslav lands in a geographical and historical framework.

This chapter examines the arrival of Islam in the Balkans, beginning with the Ottoman military invasion of the Balkan Peninsula in the 14th and 15th centuries. The forms, factors and motives of conversion to Islam in various parts of the Balkans have been presented in light of historical works. Also, brief information about the political and social circumstances and organized religious life in the Balkans will be presented.

This chapter also explains the political turmoil, acceptance of new circumstances and migration of Muslims from or within the Balkans, following, chronologically, the Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire, the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Also a brief introduction to the involvement and position of Yugoslav Muslims during both World Wars will be presented.

In order to examine the position of Islam after Communism one has to understand the uniqueness of Yugoslav Communism, its attitude towards religion in general and towards Islam and Muslims in particular. This chapter therefore explores not only these issues, but also the attempts of Muslims to maintain and develop their religious institutions and their liaison with the Communist regime. At the end of the chapter the consequences of the Balkan wars on the reshaping and strengthening of Muslim identities as well as the current organization of Yugoslav Muslims will be explained.

1.1. Military invasion of the Balkan Peninsula

Although there are indications that Islam first appeared in the Balkans in the 12th century through missionary activities of the Anatolian saint Sari-Saltuk, the Ottoman conquests during the fourteenth century have been maintained as the first noteworthy encounter between Islam and Muslims and the Balkans.¹³ The Ottomans initially entered Europe as mercenaries in the first half of the fourteenth century, but their victory over a crusade coalition at the river Marica in 1371 signified their military aspirations towards the Balkan peninsula and, according to some historians, marked the fall of the Balkans.¹⁴ As the Balkans' south-Slav lands, jaded by internal struggles and religious intolerance, were unable to maintain any lasting resistance to the advancing force from the east, the Ottomans conquered nearly the entire Balkan peninsula within two centuries. Even the great battle on Kosovo Plain, where joint forces of Serbians, Bosnians, Bulgarians, Wallachians, and

¹⁴ About pre-Ottoman links of Islam with the Balkans see more in: Harry T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans: Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World* (London: Hurst and Co., 1993).

Albanians,¹⁵ fought against the Turks, had not secured Balkan lands from either vassalage or complete conquest.

1.1.1. The Balkans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries

On the eve of the Ottoman invasion, present-day Slovenia was part of the Habsburg monarchy and their histories are closely linked. Slovenia lies across four former Habsburg crown regions of Carniola, Carinthia, Styria and Littoral. Only a small part of Slovenia, Prekmurje, was occupied by the Ottomans in the sixteen century. After more than a century of Ottoman presence, Slovenian lands again became part of the large Habsburg monarchy until the end of WWI.

The Habsburg monarchs had also ruled a large part of present-day Croatia since the aftermath of the Battle of Mohács in 1526. This battle ended direct Hungarian influence on Croatian political life, which was introduced through the *Pacta conventa*, an agreement between the Kingdom of Croatia and Hungary for leadership by a joint king. In its internal matters Croatia was governed by a local lord, *ban*, and had its own assembly of nobles, *sabor*.¹⁶ The most influential families of Šubici and Frankopans at times represented real power in Croatia, independent from the King.

After the death of King Louis in 1382, the twenty five year period of feudal anarchy additionally weakened Croatian positions towards the apparent Ottoman advancement. Pretenders to the throne and local influential rulers preoccupied by mutual fighting created a

¹⁵ Leften S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958), p. 44. Some historians however, question the involvement of Albanians on the same side as Serbs. See more in: Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia a Short History* (New York: New York UP, 1994).

¹⁶ For more about the history of Croatia see: Vjekoslav Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata* (Zagreb: Nakladni Zavod MH, 1985); Ivo Goldstein, *Croatia: a History* (London: Hurst & Co., 1999).

crisis which erupted in civil war. This situation was used in a timely manner by Venice from the south and the Ottomans from the east and southeast. During the Croatian civil war in 1408, Ladislas of Naples, a pretender to the throne, sold all his rights in Dalmatia to Venice. In the following years almost all of Dalmatia fell into the hands of Venetians. Throughout the entire sixteenth century Croatia remained a military zone or *vojna krajina* between the Ottomans and the rest of the Western world.

Although Bosnia was an independent country for decades preceding the arrival of the Ottomans, other than a few able rulers who were capable of mastering the political situation, there was no credible force to maintain long-term political power in the territory of present-day Bosnia. However, at the end of the fourteenth century, the Bosnian king Tvrtko was able to control the local princes and for a short while to extend his power to parts of Croatia while proclaiming himself King of Croatia and Dalmatia. Yet this period also marked Turkish incursions into the southern part of the country, Hum (later Herzegovina). Most of these incursions were successfully suppressed by a local prince, Vlatko Vuković, who led Bosnian forces one year later to Kosovo Plain to assist the Serbian knez Lazar against the Ottomans. After the death of King Tvrtko, Bosnia had a long period of interregnum in which local lords maintained their political and economic positions fighting against each other. At the same time they relied on fragile alliances either with the Hungarians or the Ottomans. These alliances actually represented an intensified interference of the rival powers, especially the Ottomans, in Bosnian political life.

Bosnia's eastern neighbour, Serbia, reached its apex under King Dušan, and as one of the strongest countries in the Balkans, occupied today's Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Albania and Greece. However, the king's death in the mid-fourteenth century signified the

end of the short-lived Serbian empire that broke apart, be it due to national boundaries or local rulers' zones of interest.

King Dušan was succeeded by his son Uroš Nežak (Uroš the Weak) who did not share his father's statesmanship abilities to safeguard the stability of the large empire. It wasn't long before Vukašin Mrnjavčević, one of the two influential brothers who ruled central and northwestern Macedonia, detached from Uroš and proclaimed himself a king, while other nobles such as Lazar Hrebeljanović in southern Serbia and Vuk Branković in Kosovo, sustaining *de facto* independence, pledged nominal allegiance to the weak king.

It is difficult to say whether a strong and unified political power would have been able to halt or at least prolong the fall of this Balkan state, as even local rulers were aware of the Turkish invasion and took steps to forestall it. Thus, under the command of the most influential lords in the region, the Mrnjavčević brothers, Serbian forces had begun a pre-emptive campaign against the Ottomans that ended in failure on the River Marica in 1371.

1.1.2. Religious life

The area of the Balkans had been under direct control of the Eastern Roman Empire, Byzantium, before the Ottomans conquered it in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Orthodox Church, as the state religion, had a privileged position, and alongside the nobility represented the most influential estates in the country. The lands of present-day Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia were mostly populated by Orthodox inhabitants together with some parts of Kosovo and Bosnia.¹⁷

¹⁷ Peter Stearns, ed., *Encyclopedia of European Social History* (New York, London: Simon & Schuster, 2000), p. 421.

Due to missionary activities and political influences facilitated mainly by the Vatican, large areas of today's Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia had been converted to Catholicism. Apart from the two main forms of Christianity there were other more or less significant sects, of which the Bogumils was most influential.

There were various levels of religiosity among the local people in the Balkan region. In some areas, such as Bosnia and Albania, due to terrain configuration there was no properly established church. As Fine suggests, 'Bosnia's Christians, of whatever confession, had had little contact with any church, and few Bosnians were deeply attached to any religious community.'¹⁸ A Christian sect of *Bogumili* whose creed was against any form of ecclesiastical establishment had prevailed among pre-Ottoman local people in Bosnia. As part of 'a large Christian movement in Medieval Europe, including the Albigeneses in Southern France and the Waldeneses in Italy' the sect was condemned as heretical by the Vatican, and the Pope persisted in various ways in the re-conversion of local people and their rulers to Catholicism.¹⁹

The religious antagonism of Catholics towards the Orthodox Christians was one of the reasons why western powers, occupied by their own internal problems and quarrels, failed to respond to the appeals of Balkan lords for support against the advancing Ottoman forces. The calls of local princes who were prepared 'to make concessions not only from their territories but also on religious matters' were futile. On the other hand, the Orthodox Church and masses in the Balkans saw Western powers as representatives and defenders of Catholicism and regarded them with hostility. Naturally, this antipathy, along with

¹⁸ John V.A. Fine, *The Bosnian Church: a New Interpretation: a Study of the Bosnian Church and Its Place on State and Society from the 13th to the 15th Centuries* (Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1975), as cited in: T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam; a History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (London: Archibald Constable and Co., 1896), p. 44.

¹⁹ Gerd Nonneman, Bogdan Szajkowski, eds., *Muslim Communities in the New Europe* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1996), p. 108.

diplomatic and political calculations, was skilfully used by the Ottoman sultans increasingly cementing their political and military presence in the Balkans.²⁰

1.1.3. Conversion and Islamization

One of the most common discussion points in the history of the Balkans utilized by both nationalists and politicians of the region has been the conversion of Slavs to Islam. The act of mass conversion in the 14th and 15th centuries somehow justifies non-recognition of the present day Balkan Muslims as a separate ethnic entity. Muslims have been often regarded as Serbs or Croats of Muslim faith, without reference to their ethnic identity. That is why it is important to assess the reasons for mass conversion to Islam in the first two centuries of Ottoman rule.

While some European historians claim that the majority of converts accepted Islam under of the threat of force, others assert ‘that most conversions were acts of expediency made under duress and that the converts hoped to both preserve their way of life and escape the Muslim rulers’ ire... becoming, in effect, “crypto-Christians.”²¹ Yet, an abundance of sources suggest that the Ottoman Empire restrained from a compulsive conversion policy in the newly conquered territories. As for the assertion of crypto-Christianity, according to Hupchick, ‘much of the supporting evidence was produced by Roman Catholic high clergymen possibly attempting to rationalize the widespread conversion to Islam among their western Balkan followers.’²² However, there have been variations in the nature of

²⁰ Halil Inalcik, ‘Balkan’, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. by Johannes H. Kramers (London: Luzac & C., 1960), p. 999.

²¹ Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Balkans: From Constantinople to Communism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 151.

conversions in different parts of the Balkans in terms of stability and mixture of syncretism.²³

Minkov explains the conversion and its pace through the combination of several factors that played roles in the Balkan region.²⁴ Among the first who accepted Islam were members of the aristocracy. Conversion enabled them to retain their social and economic privileges.²⁵ Economic interests drove members of the urban population to convert in large numbers in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and members of the rural population, along with religious syncretism and past heretical influences, in the second part of the century.²⁶

There is no doubt that *sufi* orders, with their elastic application of Islamic tenets, were well received among the local population. The establishment of *tekkes* and orthodox *darwish* orders, directly supported by the Empire for its cause from the earliest days, was a widespread phenomenon in the first centuries of Islam in the Balkans, furthermore contributing towards a more rapid acceptance of Islam.²⁷

²³ Ger Duijzings claims that 'in Bosnia a substantial part of the population converted to Islam soon after the local aristocracy did; they did so more or less on a voluntary basis and were attracted by the splendour of a growing and magnificent empire.' He asserts that in Kosovo more significant conversions occurred only in the seventeenth century after more frequent wars between the Ottoman Empire and Christian powers. '...because in Albania and Kosovo Islam was imposed in a much more violent manner, most converts were only nominally Muslims. Here, syncretism and heterodoxy were much more widespread than in Bosnia, where an influential school of *ulema* (religious scholars) and a much denser religious infrastructure ensured a higher degree of orthodoxy.' Ger Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo* (London: Hurst and Co., 2000), pp. 14, 15.

²⁴ Anton Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans: Kisve Bahasi Pettitions and Ottoman Social Life* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004), p. 108.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-101.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 108,109.

²⁷ 'They established *tekkes* of orthodox devish orders, especially the *Mawlawiyya* (which has now all but disappeared); the *Khalwatiyya*, which is still alive in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia, the *Rifa'iyya*; the *Naqshibandiyya* (with its historical roots in Central Asian Islam like the *Bektashiyya*), which is found to this day in Bosnia; the *Qadiriyya*, and at a later period the *Tijaniyya* in Albania and other orders.' Norris, p.101.

The institution of *devshirme*,²⁸ introduced by Sultan Murad II in the first half of the fifteenth century, has been one of the most controversial and criticized Ottoman institutions which contributed towards conversion to Islam. On one hand, it is seen as an extremely ruthless and unscrupulous Turkish invention, breaking apart families of the conquered territories and separating children from their parents for the cause of the Empire and military preparation. The negative memory of this institution has been maintained amongst the local people even to this day through folk songs and stories in some parts of the Balkans. On the other hand, as Minkov asserts, ‘the people drawn into the Janissary corps through the institution (of *devşirme*) became in effect the ruling elite of the Ottoman state.’²⁹ Thus, many Christian families readily enlisted their children into these *janissary* corps, especially after the appalling circumstances these families endured after devastating wars.³⁰

1.2. The Balkans under the Ottomans

In the newly conquered lands the Ottomans established their military and administrative organization. Their presence in some areas was more intense than in the others. For example in Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia the Turks converted strong garrisons into fortresses, expanded towns or built new ones with distinguishing Islamic architecture, established religious and educational institutions and introduced new social and humanitarian foundations. This was characteristic more of the urban areas than rural ones. However, in

²⁸ System of human taxation under the Ottoman Empire, from the 15th century until the 19th century. Young Christian boys were taken away from their families in the Balkans and made into the property of the sultan in order to become part of the army or the administration. *Devsirme* is from Turkish, meaning ‘gathering’. Tore Kjeilen, *Devsirme*, <<http://lexicorient.com/e.o/devsirme.htm>> [accessed 10 December 2007].

²⁹ Minkov, p. 69.

³⁰ T.W. Arnold, p. 130. T.W. Arnold further explains the history and development of this institution. ‘The whole country had been laid waste by war, and families were often in danger of perishing with hunger; the children who were thus adopted were in many cases orphans, who would otherwise have been left to perish; further, the custom so widely prevalent at that time of selling Christians as slaves may have made this tax appear less appalling than might have been expected. This custom has, moreover, been maintained to have been only a continuation of a similar usage that was force under the Byzantine emperors.’

other regions, such as Montenegro, the mountains of Albania and present-day Kosovo, the Ottomans never had full control over the population and domestic affairs, so the *nahije* (regions) of a province were conceded to the local lords for administration.³¹ Meanwhile, for more than a hundred years a large part of northern and western Croatia acted as a buffer or military zone between the two empires, the Ottomans and the Hapsburgs.

Apart from the above distinctions, the Ottoman presence in Yugoslav lands differed in its timescale as well. Macedonia, for instance was under the Ottomans until as late as 1912, lasting for 523 years. As for Serbia, the Battle of Kosovo 'did not result in the immediate extinction of the state. A diminished Serbian principality continued to exist under its own rulers, now called *desposts*, for seventy years.'³² However, the fall of Smederevo commenced a 350 year Turkish rule of Serbia. Vojvodina formed an integral part of Hungary and shared its destiny under the Ottomans until the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, after a hundred and fifty years of rule. As mentioned before, Montenegro had, with few exceptions, relative independence from the Ottoman Empire, although a large part of its coastal area around the town of Kotor, *Albania veneta*, was dominated by the Republic of Venice for more than 370 years, until 1797. Bosnia and Herzegovina remained under the Ottomans for four hundred years until its Austria-Hungarian annexation in the late nineteenth century. Some Croatian lands, as mentioned above, formed a military frontier, others, such as those of Dalmatia, were under the Republic of Venice until the late eighteenth century. Only a small part of Croatia, known as the remnants of the once great Croatian kingdom, was independent of foreign rule.

³¹ Vladimir Dedijer and others, *Istorija Jugoslavije* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1973), p. 143.

³² H.C. Darby and others, *A Short History of Yugoslavia: from early times to 1966* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 100.

1.2.1. Institutions

The Ottomans made significant changes in the Balkans in all aspects of life, especially in towns. This was visible in the Oriental-Islamic style of towns and buildings; new religious, cultural, communal and social places built by wealthy merchants, representatives of the feudal class, craftsmen, and ordinary people.³³

On the organizational side, they established their judicial, administrative and military authority in the newly conquered lands. Administration of the provinces was entrusted to the military officers, who in the majority of cases retained their military duties and titles. Lands, as the property of Sultan, were conceded to the *spahis* through the *timar* system. The *spahis* were entitled to income from *timars* or fiefs in return for their military service.³⁴

Judicial authority was administered by the office of *Qāḍī* who was appointed by the *Shaikh-ul-Islam* in Istanbul. *Qāḍīs* performed their duties in accordance with *Shari ah* and *Qanun*, independent of the provincial rulers, and were accountable only to the *Shaikh-ul-Islam*.³⁵ The *Shari ah* law was officially applied in the newly conquered regions, while non-Muslims were allowed to administer their judicial matters in accordance with their own religions or customs through the *millet* system.³⁶

³³ Behija Zlatar, 'Podizanje i Održavanje Objekata Islamske Arhitekture u Sarajevu u XVI Vijeku', *Anali Gazi Husrev-begove Biblioteke*, 13-14 (1987), p. 207.

³⁴ 'Spahi', in Encyclopædia Britannica Online <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/557564/spahi>> [accessed 7 August 2011].

³⁵ Dedijer, p. 135.

³⁶ Millet (Turkish, from Arabic millah). In Qur'a'nic and early Islamic use, millah means "religion" and "religious community," as in the "religion of Ibrahim," (Q. 3:95).

'It was adopted as an Ottoman legal and administrative term to designate the religious groups in its empire. These groups were administered separately, each with its own code of law for governing internal affairs, and its own set of rulers. Eventually, Muslims came to be regarded as one of a group of religious claimants for recognition and court patronage. With the collapse of the empire and the identification of religious groups as national entities, the word has taken on the sense of "nation" in modern Turkish.' Gordon D. Newby, *A Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2002) pp. 149-150.

Institutions of public importance, such as places of worship, educational institutions, communal and humanitarian foundations were mainly established and maintained by the institution of *waqf*. However, the state administration and *waqf* were often interlaced, as was the case with Gazi Husrev-beg, viceroy of Bosnia and one of the most generous benefactors in the Balkans, and his endowment.³⁷ The reason why *waqf* and its major institutions are mentioned here lies in their importance for the religious, social and political life of Yugoslav Muslims in their five-hundred-year history.

Waqfs were usually established with a certain sum of money, which was invested, and only its income was used for charitable purposes. The same principle was applied when shops, lands or other properties were bequeathed. They were leased for an agreed annual amount of money which was spent in accordance with the *waqfnama* document. *Waqf* properties could not be sold or donated and they could be exchanged only if it was in the *waqf* interest. Nowadays, many charitable foundations and trusts in Britain operate on a similar basis to *waqfs*. Extinction of *waqf* in most instances meant the disappearance of Muslims. On the other hand, a concern for *waqf* signified not only a defence of religious freedom and practice, but in some cases a struggle for cultural reform and political independence.³⁸

The central government encouraged, as Handžić points out, the founding of towns in the Balkans through building a mosque in an area where a larger town is to be developed. 'These mosques were called "sultan mosques", built by the order of the Sultan with a state fund. They were well maintained and *imams* were paid from state funds.'³⁹ Yet, in most cases only one such mosque was built in a town. Other mosques were mainly established and

³⁷ Abdurahman Hukić, 'Socijalne i Humanitarne Ustanove Gazi Husrev-begova Vakufa', *Anali Gazi Husrev-begove Biblioteke*, 19-20 (1983) pp. 233-240.

³⁸ See more about the demands for financial and educational autonomy of Bosnian Muslims in: Ferdo Hauptmann, *Borba muslimana Bosne i Hercegovine za vjersku i vakufsko-mearifsku autonomiju* (Sarajevo: Arhiv SRBiH, 1967).

³⁹ Norris, pp. 134-169.

maintained through the endeavours of prominent individuals and state officials.⁴⁰ Besides the mosques, *mesdžids*, *musalle*⁴¹ and *tekije* were built. The two former had almost the same role as mosques, whereas *tekije* were mainly places of mystical teaching of Islam and *dhikr* practice. Most *tekije* were built in Macedonia and Kosovo.

Along with the mosques, which bore religious significance, there were other endowments of educational, social, communal and cultural importance. More or less every Muslim village or town had a *mekteb*,⁴² established for the study of the Arabic script and the *Qur'ānic* texts. It is estimated that in Sarajevo there were about 70 *Mektebs* alone.⁴³ Muslim secondary schools, or *medresas*, were founded in almost every larger town, and were used for both, religious and secular education. Apart from traditional Islamic disciplines,⁴⁴ the *medresa* was a place where Eastern languages were taught, along with Islamic jurisprudence, philosophy and mathematics. The most prominent *medresas* were in Sarajevo, Belgrade and Skopje, from which the talented students went to higher Islamic institutions in Istanbul, Cairo and Damascus.

In the middle of the seventeenth century there were 292 various levels of *medresas* in the European part of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁵ They were established by the state officials, merchants, artisans and '*ulama*'. The *medresa* system has played a significant role in

⁴⁰ During the Ottoman presence hundreds of mosques were built, mostly in towns. Most prominent are Čauš-begova in Bitolj built in 1434, Aladža in Skopje from 1438, (both in Macedonia), Gazi *Husrev-begova* from 1537 in Sarajevo and Ferhadija in Banjaluka (in Bosnia). See more in: Mehmed Begović, *Vakufi u Jugoslaviji* (Beograd: Naučno Delo, 1963).

⁴¹ *Musalla* is an enclosed place without any roof, which was used for prayers during sunny days.

⁴² *Mektebs* are religious primary schools. Apart from *Qur'ānic* studies, they offered education in the basics of worship. The two year *Mekteb* education was obligatory for all children, male and female. Today the term *mekteb* denotes Islamic supplementary education provided in mosques or a building attached to the mosque in after-school hours. The *mekteb* also denotes the place where religious instruction is held.

⁴³ Dedijer, p. 141.

⁴⁴ Nowadays *medresa* is a four year Islamic high school providing religious education for prospective religious officers.

⁴⁵ Omer Nakičević, 'Mjesto Gazi Husrev-begove Medrese u Sistemu Osmanskog-Turskog Školstva i Sistem Školstva u Osmanskoj Turskoj', *Anali Gazi Husrev-begove Biblioteke* (1983), p. 242.

sustaining the religious consciousness and educational advancement of the Balkan Muslims. A *medresa* was often accompanied by a library founded by the same benefactor. Apart from the building and books the benefactor would donate permanent funds for maintenance of his library. Most books were in Arabic, Turkish and Persian and treated subjects such as theology, Islamic jurisprudence, history of Islam and eastern languages. Libraries were open both to the students of a particular *medresa* and to the public.⁴⁶

Waqfs were also founded for social and humanitarian purposes. Many of the endowments superseded governmental role. Thus endowments for the building or maintenance of water-pipe systems, bridges, graveyards, clock towers, *musafirhanas* (inns) were present.⁴⁷ For the purpose of the maintenance of mosques, *medresas*, *mektebs* and other charitable foundations, a benefactor or *waqif* bequeathed large sums of money, shops, lands and watermills. These legacies were described and listed in every detail in the *waqufnama* or endowment document. Their validity is verified by the stamp of *qāḍī* and by the *waqif* and witnesses. Some *waqfs* were so well organized that they have been in service for more than four centuries. Nevertheless, most of them have disappeared, especially in areas where Muslims became the minority or were expelled.

⁴⁶ Begović, p. 31.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 33.

1.3. Period of independence and Austro-Hungarian annexation

1.3.1. Slovenia and Croatia

The retreat of the Turkish Empire resulted in vast demographic, social and political changes in the Balkan lands. As the advancement of the Ottoman state towards the West meant the settlement of the Muslims and migration of non-Muslims in the newly obtained areas and an afflux of significant material gains, so the loss of these areas marked financial difficulties within the Empire and large emigrational processes to the interior of the Empire. The newly established independence for most non-Muslims meant liberation from a foreign occupier and this was widely welcomed. For Muslims they meant loss of centuries-long privileges, loss of property and migration.

As early as the end of the seventeenth century, the Empire lost Croatia, which was to remain an integral part of the Habsburg monarchy afterwards. After 150 years of their presence in Croatia around 150,000 Muslims were forced, whether out of fear for their lives, their religion or possessions, to migrate to the neighbouring Bosnia or other parts of the Empire.⁴⁸ Dozens of *medresas*, around 190 mosques, *hamams* (public baths), *turbets* (mausoleums) were left in the regions of Lika and Slavonija.⁴⁹ The only remains of the Muslim presence in Croatia are two mosques used as churches, a *turbe* and toponyms such as Islam Grčki, Islam Latinski, Bošnjaci (village), etc. Muslims began to re-settle in Croatia after 150 years, after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austro-Hungary at the end of the nineteenth century. The Austro-Hungarian Empire recruited a large number of Muslims from

⁴⁸ Ahmet Alibašić, *Muslimani Jugoistočne Evrope* (Sarajevo: Bosanski Alim, 2007) http://www.bosanskialim.com/rubrike/tekstovi_save/000400R021.pdf [accessed 13 April 2008] p. 4.

⁴⁹ Alibašić (2007), p. 4.

Bosnia to its army. This resulted in the settlement of Muslims throughout the Empire, especially in Croatia, which officially recognized Islam in 1916.⁵⁰

1.3.2. Serbia *Kosovo and Vojvodina*

In the beginning of the nineteenth century Serbia managed, through two uprisings,⁵¹ to gain its autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. Although these uprisings did not mean a national revolution, as most of the rebels wanted things to be as they had been before, there was a strong sense among Serbs of a separate identity under the Ottomans. This precursor of Serbian nationalism was facilitated, as Sowards points out, by the Turkish *millet* system, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the way of village life.⁵²

To understand the Muslim position in Serbia in the beginning of the nineteenth century, one should examine, apart from the fact that the Ottomans were foreign occupiers, the immediate cause of the Serbian revolt and disenchantment. The general decline of the Ottoman Empire resulted in the deterioration of the Ottoman system and worsened the situation of the peasantry. In the early stage the uprisings were not a request for national liberation of Serbs from the Ottomans. It was rather a 'conservative reaction to new abuses by the janissaries and *dahis*.'⁵³

However, in their retaliatory campaign against the occupiers, Serbs tended to exterminate or expel all Turks/Muslims whether they were soldiers, artisans, tradesmen or peasants, and regardless of their Turkish or Slavic origins. Muslims were expelled from major cities such

⁵⁰ See more in: Ševko Omerbašić, *Islam i Muslimani u Hrvatskoj* (Zagreb: Mešihat Islamske Zajednice u Hrvatskoj, 1999).

⁵¹ The First Serbian Uprising was in 1804 and the second was in 1815.

⁵² Steven W. Sowards, *Lecture No. 5: The Serbian Revolution and the Serbian state. Twenty-Five Lectures on Modern Balkan History* (Lansing: Michigan State University Libraries, 1996).
<<http://staff.lib.msu.edu/sowards/balkan/lecture5.html>> [accessed 22 June 2008]

⁵³ Ibid.

as Belgrade, Smederevo, Šabac and Užice. Their properties were expropriated or sold for a mere trifle. Almost all mosques were destroyed, and *waqf* properties expropriated. Many Muslims found refuge in Bosnia and southern Serbia, which at the time was still part of the Ottoman Empire.

Under the pressure of Miloš Obrenović, the leader of the uprising, the Sultan issued a royal decree (*hatti sharif*) in 1830 that Muslims should leave Serb villages. The whole nineteenth century passed in Muslim migration within and out of Serbia and the constant impoverishment of Muslim communities.⁵⁴

On the organizational level, Islam was recognized in Kneževina Serbia in 1868 by the decree of Mihail Obrenović. Symbolically, the state supported the maintenance of the *Bajrakli* Mosque in Belgrade. Also, the law from 1879 granted Muslims right and freedom to practice their religion. The city of Niš was the seat of the Mufti, who was appointed by *Shaikh-ul-Islam* in Istanbul to lead the *Shari* ahaffairs in the whole territory of the Kingdom of Serbia. According to the law the Muslim community had rights, with knowledge of the Minister of Education and Church affairs, to maintain spiritual ties with representatives of Muslim communities abroad.

Muslims of Albanian ethnic origin, whether living in Kosovo or Macedonia, speak the Albanian language. Thus, they differed from other communities in the region, not only in religious allegiance, but in language as well, which was to have significant cultural implications for Albanian Muslims living in Yugoslav lands.

⁵⁴ About the state and migration of the Muslim community in Serbia and Montenegro see more in: Safet Bandžović, *Iseljavanje Muslimanskog Stanovništva iz Srbije i Crne Gore Tokom XIX Stoljeća* (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 1998).

At the end of the nineteenth century, Albanians, as a majority in Kosovo, increasingly displayed their tendencies towards autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. However, after a successful campaign against the Ottomans during the First Balkan War, Serbia gained full control over Kosovo in 1912 at the Conference of the Ambassadors in London. Expelling the remnants of the Turkish forces from Kosovo, the Serbian army retaliated against Albanians who had sided with the Ottomans. It is estimated that 25,000 Albanians were killed and 120,000 Albanians from Kosovo emigrated to either Albania or Turkey.⁵⁵ Anti-Serbian sentiments and a struggle for political and cultural autonomy and independence have marked Kosovo's situation ever since.

From the eighteenth century until the end of WWI Vojvodina remained an integral part of the Habsburg monarchy, but with the strong influence of a large Serbian Diaspora in this region. In 1918 Vojvodina became a part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and remained as an autonomous province of Serbia ever since. There is no evidence of Muslims living permanently in this area until the twentieth century.

1.3.3. Bosnia and Herzegovina

The decline of the Ottoman system was visible in an increased number of revolts and unrests in almost all of the European part of the Empire. In Bosnia and Herzegovina in the nineteenth century this culminated in a number of revolts both from the Muslim and non-Muslim population.⁵⁶ At the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Bosnia and Herzegovina was 'temporarily' conceded to Austro-Hungary for administration while the Sultan sovereign rights over the region remained inviolable. Over forty years of the new administration

⁵⁵ Alibašić, p. 10.

⁵⁶ About Muslim rebellion see more in: Ahmed S. Aličić, *Pokret za Autonomiju Bosne od 1831. do 1832. Godine* (Sarajevo: Orijentalni Institut, 1996).

brought drastic changes in the lives of all inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly Muslims. Bosnian Muslims offered a powerful but unsuccessful armed resistance to the Austria-Hungarian occupying force. The following years were marked by mass migration of Muslims to Turkey. The most common reasons for this were impoverishment and the psychological attitude of the Muslims. According to some sources more than 150,000 Muslims emigrated from Bosnia and Herzegovina, mostly to Turkey, but also to Sandžak, Kosovo and Macedonia.

‘The arrival of Austro-Hungary to BiH for Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) meant a transition from one civilisation to another, to a completely different culture and a way of life, which could not be accomplished easily, painlessly and quickly... Bosniaks, left alone, totally lost, politically disorganised, without any reliance beyond Bosnia, had to either accept the new civilisation or perish.’⁵⁷

The Austro-Hungarian Empire tended to have full state control over the religious and educational affairs of the Bosnian Muslims. In that regard, it pressured both Bosnian Muslim leaders and authorities in Istanbul to create an Islamic religious hierarchy independent of the Ottomans. This resulted in the appointment of the first Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina and *Ulema Medžlis*.⁵⁸ However, this controlling tendency sparked a struggle for religious and *waqf*-educational autonomy, which had political significance as well. After almost two decades of organizational and political inactivity the Bosnian Muslims established the Muslim National Organisation (MNO), demanding protection of their religious, political and agrarian rights and privileges. On the other side, steps towards the cultural renaissance followed the establishment of a number of foundations. The beginning of the twentieth century marked the establishment of the Bosniak newspaper, *Behar*, the

⁵⁷ Mustafa Imamović, *Historija Bošnjaka* (Sarajevo: Bošnjačka Zajednica Kulture Preporod, 1998), p. 361.

⁵⁸ The first Grand Mufti was Mustafa Hilmi Hadžiomerović, appointed in Sarajevo 1882 by decree of *Shaykh ul Islam* as a Grand Mufti, and by Austro-Hungary as *Reis ul-Ulema*. The title of *Reis ul-Ulema* has been in usage thereafter.

humanitarian society *Gajret*, the sport society *El-Kamer*, the Islamic equity printing house, the magazine *Ogledalo*, etc. Such were the responses of the Bosnian Muslims to the newly incurred circumstances.

1.3.4. Montenegro

With the acquisition of several areas with the Muslim majority in the Sandžak, Montenegro became fully independent from the Ottoman Empire in 1912. A separate Islamic Community in Montenegro was established in 1878 by the Berlin Congress accords as well as through mutual agreement between Montenegro and Turkey. This agreement recognized the rights of Muslims in establishing a religious community and independent administration of religious affairs and properties.⁵⁹ The first *mufti* in Montenegro was appointed in 1878 by the decree of *Shaikh ul-Islam* in Istanbul, with the approval of the ruler of Montenegro, Knjaz Nikola, ‘to judge Muslims in accordance to *Shari ah* as it had been in Turkish times.’ *Shari ah* courts existed until 1946, whereas the position of the Montenegrin *mufti* was active until 1918, when the assembly in Podgorica proclaimed its unification with Serbia. His jurisdiction passed to the *Mufti* in Niš, that is to the Grand Mufti in Belgrade responsible for the Serbian and Montenegrin region.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Bajro Agović, *Historija Islamske Zajednice* (Podgorica: Islamska Zajednica Crne Gore, 2011) <<http://www.monteislam.com/historija-islamske-zajednice>> [accessed 2 May 2011].

⁶⁰ Ibid.

1.3.5. Macedonia

During the Balkan wars, the Greek-Serbian-Bulgarian alliance, the Balkan league, succeeded in suppressing the Turkish army in the Macedonian region. Macedonia was divided between three countries and Serbia gained control over the northern part of the country, or Vardar Macedonia, which was renamed as Southern Serbia. The country remained part of Serbia as late as WWI, when it was occupied by Bulgaria and remained under its control by the end of the war and final defeat of the Central powers. Macedonia again became part of Serbia and the Kingdom of SHS and of Yugoslavia respectively.

After the events of the 1870s in other parts of the Balkans, Macedonia became overcrowded with Muslim refugees from Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Balkan wars only worsened the already difficult position of the Macedonian Muslims. During the 1912-1913 many mosques were burnt down, people expelled and refugees died from hunger and cold. According to some sources, as a result of the Balkan wars, around 40,000 Muslims emigrated from Vardar Macedonia by 1914.⁶¹ In order to coax a discriminated population in the newly conquered region in the First Balkan War, the regent Alexander issued a proclamation for full civil and political equality of 'the brothers liberated from the Turks,' abolishing all individual laws and extraordinary measures he had introduced in Macedonia in 1913.⁶²

⁶¹ Branko Babić, 'Iseljavanje Muslimana iz novih krajeva Crne Gore u proljeće 1914. Godine', *Jugoslovenski Istorijski Časopis*, 1-4 (1978), p. 314.

⁶² Bandžović, pp. 14-19.

1.3.6. Acceptance and Migration

Balkan Muslims were the indisputable losers during the formation of new borders. Their responses differed, from armed resistance and migration to staying, reluctant acceptance and adaptation to the newly incurred state of affairs. Over 400,000 Muslims emigrated to Turkey during and after the Balkan wars. In 1923 only 38% of the 1911 Muslim population remained in their countries of residence. The rest, or over 600,000, emigrated, died during migration or were killed.⁶³ The following decades marked various ways of preserving Muslim identity and attempts to reorganize Muslim communities in accordance with the new political and administrative facts with the help and co-ordination of the current governments and authorities in Istanbul.

1.4. Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and Kingdom of Yugoslavia

At the end of WWI, the Yugoslav lands became either independent states, such as Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia, or integrated parts of Serbia such as was the case of Macedonia, Kosovo, Vojvodina, Montenegro. The same period saw the first unification of the South Slav lands into one state, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. After more than a decade, attempting to weaken national tensions among the different nations of the Kingdom and to promote ‘an integral Yugoslavism ideology,’ the King dismissed the parliament, proscribed political parties and banned all political activities in the country. He also changed the name of the state to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. These measures are known as the 6th January Dictatorship.

⁶³ Safet Bandžović, *Muslimani u Makedoniji i Prvi Balkanski Rat* (Sarajevo: Znakovi Vremena, 2011) <<http://www.ibn-sina.net/bs/component/content/article/171-muslimani-u-makedoniji-i-prvi-balkanski-rat.html>> [accessed 20 May 2011].

Involvement of Yugoslav Muslims in WWI was mostly noticeable through participation in Austro-Hungarian military forces. From its province Bosnia, the Empire recruited tens of thousands of soldiers to fight for its causes in various battlefields. The position of the Muslims in the first years of the Kingdom of SHS can be compared with that in the Austro-Hungarian period. Bosnian Muslims were not recognized as a nation, but ‘adopted’ by the Serbian or Croatian politicians in order to assimilate them. Bosnian Muslims, as well as those in Sandžak, Kosovo and Macedonia, were exposed to repression and police torture.⁶⁴ Especially difficult was situation in Sandžak, which was divided between Serbia and Montenegro. Several thousands of Muslims were killed and around 80,000 emigrated from Sandžak during this period.⁶⁵ After the Balkan wars, the Serbian and Montenegrin armies occupied and divided the Sandžak region.

1.4.1. Institutions and Laws

The Muslim response to state pressure was the establishment of the Yugoslav Muslim Organisation (YMO) in 1919. The main objective of the YMO was a campaign to protect individuals and possessions of the Muslim population, a campaign for religious and educational autonomy as it had been under Austro-Hungarians, and protection of the agrarian interests of Muslim landowners. In Sandžak, Kosovo and Macedonia Muslim interests were represented by the *Džemijet* Party.⁶⁶

Under the factual situation and huge pressure from the international community, the newly established states had to recognize the religious and political rights of their Muslim citizens

⁶⁴ Mehmedalija Bojić, *Historija Bosne i Bošnjaka (VII-XX Vijek)* (Sarajevo, TKD Šahinpašić, 2001), p. 162.

⁶⁵ Alibašić, p. 9.

⁶⁶ The Džemijet was banned in 1924 when a fifty year political vacuum of the Sandžak Muslims started.

and create laws for protecting those rights. Regardless of the level of their implementation, these steps played a significant role in the building of trust of the Muslims.

The creation of the Kingdom of SHS meant new organizational, social and religious circumstances for the Yugoslav Muslims. In Article 10 of the Saint Germain peace agreement from 1919, the Kingdom of SHS was obliged to protect the rights of its Muslim citizens especially through three major steps (levels): regulation of individual and family affairs in accordance with ‘the Muslim customs’; protection of mosques, graveyards, *waqfs* and other charitable foundations; and appointment of a *Reis ul-Ulema* for the whole country. Unfortunately, none of these steps were fully implemented in the following years. For instance, the article 109 of the *Vidovdan* Constitution, a first constitution of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes brought about on the *Vidovdan* holiday, clearly stated that the family and inheritance affairs of the Muslims were to be conducted by the *Shari ah* judges. However, only in Bosnia and Herzegovina and parts of Montenegro did *Shari ah* courts exist, so this provision could not be applied to other regions of the Kingdom. Although the introduction of *Shari ah* courts law was brought in 1929, its implementation was prolonged to infinity in Serbia and Montenegro. Thus the Supreme Council of the Islamic Religious Community (IRC) complained to the government after nearly four years that in the regions of Macedonia, Kosovo and Sandžak the *Shari ah* courts had not yet been introduced.⁶⁷

As for mosques, graveyards and *waqf* properties, the Supreme Council of the IRC made a detailed list in the 1920s of the destruction and alternation by the authorities of mosques and graveyards. Also, many *waqf* properties were expropriated and ceded to other institutions. Although *Reis-ul-Ulema* was appointed for the whole region, his *de facto* authority was

⁶⁷ For history of the Institution of the *Rijaset* see more in: Omer Nakičević, *Istorijski Razvoj Institucije Rijaset* (Sarajevo: Rijaset Islamske Zajednice, 1996).

limited only to Bosnia and Herzegovina, while other regions were administered by the Ministry of Faiths responsible for family and *waqf* affairs. This changed due to the 6th January dictatorship, when the government decided to reorganize the Muslim community and place its leadership under direct governmental control.

The law regarding the IRC of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1930 abolished “The rule for autonomous administration of the Islamic religious and *waqf*-educational affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” The law also stated that the seat of the *Reis-ul-Ulema* move from Sarajevo to Belgrade; members of the two *Ulema Medžlises* in Sarajevo and Skopje and nine *muftis* would be appointed by the decree of the king. All *waqf*-educational affairs were also placed under the Ministry of Justice.⁶⁸ This law was abolished after six years due to the insistence of Mehmed Spaho, an influential Muslim politician and minister in the government. The same year a new constitution of the IRC was proclaimed. The new constitution enacted the formation of one *Ulema Medžlises* and united the *Waqf* Directorate. This enabled democratic election of a new *Reis-ul-Ulema*, who was installed in Sarajevo in 1937.⁶⁹

1.4.2. World War Two

At the beginning of WWII Bosnia and Herzegovina was annexed by the fascist regime of the Independent State of Croatia. The Bosnian Muslims, without their consent, were proclaimed Croats of the Muslim faith.⁷⁰ Serbia and Macedonia were occupied by Germany and ceded their administration to the quisling regime of Milan Nedić, while Kosovo fell to Albania. Slovenia and Montenegro were annexed to Italy.

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 21-41.

⁶⁹ Nakičević, pp. 21-41.

⁷⁰ Bojić, p. 187.

There were two resistance movements in Yugoslavia. One was led by Josip Broz Tito, the head of the Communist Party and leader of partisans who fought for liberation of the country as well as a social and political revolution and the formation of a federal Yugoslavia, based on the resolutions of the Second Convention of the AVNOJ.⁷¹ The other movement, the *Četnički Ravnogorski Pokret* (Chetnik Ravna Gora Movement),⁷² led by the royalist general Dragoljub Draža Mihajlović, in the beginning fought against the Nazis, only later to focus its effort in the struggle against Tito's partisans. Apart from these, several other military formations and gangs were established mainly for defence of local towns and villages, or for the purpose of looting and killing people of other nationalities.

Despite their self-determination during WWII, the Muslims of Yugoslavia did not have a national army and political aims. The Muslims encountered WWII politically and nationally passive.⁷³ This resulted in the fragmentation of the Muslim populace and, for survival, reliance either on pro-*Ustaša*, pro-Četnik, pro-German or pro-Italian currents.⁷⁴ Muslims suffered most, and proportionally had the biggest human losses in this period.⁷⁵ Systematic executions of people of all ages by the forces of Draža Mihailović in Eastern Bosnia forced Muslim leaders to demand the formation of autonomous military forces to prevent further killings of their population. One of the results was the recruitment of Muslims into the 13th SS Division, used for the Nazi military agenda, despite the intentions of Muslim authorities and recruits.⁷⁶ However, the most beneficial act of the Muslims proved to be joining and

⁷¹ AVNOJ (Anti Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia). The second AVNOJ conference was held in Bosnia in 1943. One of the resolutions of the second AVNOJ conference was a creation of Federal Yugoslavia, as a country of equal peoples.

⁷² They called themselves 'Yugoslav Royal Army in the Fatherland'.

⁷³ Šaćir Filandra, *Bošnjačka politika u XX stoljeću* (Sarajevo: Izdavačko Preduzeće Sejtarija, 1998), p. 157.

⁷⁴ Bojić, p. 213.

⁷⁵ See more in: Vladimir Žerjavić, *Gubici Stanovništva Jugoslavije u Drugom Svjetskom Ratu* (Zagreb: Jugoslovensko Viktimološko društvo, 1989).

⁷⁶ See more in: George Lepre, *Himmler's Bosnian Division: the Waffen – SS Handschar Division, 1943-1945* (Atglen: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2004).

supporting the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia, led by the Communist party. The Communist Party was the only political organization at that time which in its proclamations recognized the Muslim national identity and political subjectivity.

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One of the important contributions of the Yugoslav Muslims in WWII were several resolutions of the Muslim '*ulama*' denouncing Croat-Nazi measures against Jews and Serbs. After assuming power in Croatia, joined by some irresponsible Muslims, members of the *Ustaša* movement began the systematic execution and imprisonment of all non-Aryan race in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Condemning these executions, Muslim religious authorities in Sarajevo, Mostar,⁷⁸ Zenica and Travnik were among the first to rise against the Fascist regime.

1.5. From Communism to democracy

Thanks to the overwhelming victory of Tito's partisans over other political and military forces in the country, as well as an earlier social and political revolution, Tito's Communist party seized power in Yugoslavia and imposed a communist regime over the whole country at the end of WWII. The new country was proclaimed in 1943 as Democratic Federal Yugoslavia, only to be renamed in 1946 as the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia.⁷⁹ The same year a new constitution was brought in which established six federal republics and two autonomous provinces. Each republic had its own parliament, president and prime

⁷⁷ Bojić, p. 221.

⁷⁸ About the Sarajevo resolution see more in: Ferid Dautović, *Kasim ef. Dobrača - Život i Djelo* (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 2005), pp. 215-223.

⁷⁹ In 1963 this name changed again to Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

minister, as well as constitution. The country was led by the party of League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY)⁸⁰ with Josip Broz Tito as head, and party secretaries in the republics. The one-party system remained in the country until its dissolution in the 1990s. Until 1948 Tito's Communist Party followed a Stalinist style of communism; then it detached itself from the Soviet Union and continued as an independent version of communism, which was one of the main features of the LCY in the international arena. Domestically, the LCY introduced self-management in state enterprises, giving more power to workers.

Yugoslav Communism was able to develop independently, unlike other forms in the East-European block, due to the two main factors: the strength of the Yugoslav Communists and the political charisma of their leader. The Yugoslav communists came to power by their own means without much help from the Soviet Union.⁸¹ Communist veterans from the Partisan's arrays 'remained loyal to Tito the peacetime leader as they had to Tito the wartime leader.'⁸²

On the international scene Yugoslavia gained significance through the Non-Alignment Movement established by Tito, Nasser, Nkrumah, Sukarno and Nehru in 1961. The main objective of the movement has been a counter-balance to the military alliances of the NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The Non-Alignment movement was used successfully by the Yugoslavian leadership to strengthen and develop its economic ties with countries of the Third World.

⁸⁰ In 1952 it was Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

⁸¹ George W. Hoffman, Fred W. Neal, *Yugoslavia and the New Communism* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1962), p. 105.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 107.

1.5.1. Yugoslav Communism and its attitude towards religion

In 1946 a new constitution based on the 1936 constitution of the Soviet Union was brought forth, proclaiming equal rights for all citizens, including freedom of religion, speech, association and assembly. Religious communities could engage in religious activities, establish and run schools for training of priests. They could also receive state funds. The use of religion for political or proselitelian purposes however was forbidden and punishable.⁸³ The 1953 law went even further including 'priests, church officials and their families in the state system of insurance' and providing grants to Orthodox, Muslim and Roman Catholic communities for the maintenance of their schools for theological study and places of worship.⁸⁴

Yet, on a practical level, by 1950 the situation was not as ideal as it seemed according to constitutional acts. There were many cases of persecution of priests, church officials or members of religious groups either for their 'collaboration' with the enemy or their political views immediately after the war. The regime wanted to reduce or eliminate the political and spiritual influence of religion by expropriating lands, buildings and industries and closing down colleges, schools and newspapers. However, churches and mosques still remained open and supported by the members of their congregation, although their influence was reduced to a minimum.⁸⁵

⁸³ H.C. Darby and others, *A Short History of Yugoslavia: from Early Times to 1966* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 239.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 243.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 242-244.

1.5.2. Muslims under Communism

After the war the Communist regime introduced measures which directly affected Muslim national and religious rights. Although they were recognized as a separate entity during the war, Yugoslav Muslims experienced a great deal of national and cultural suppression in the post-war recovery. In the case of the Bosnian and Sandžak Muslims, they were not recognized as a distinct nation until the 1970s. Muslims had to identify themselves as a religious entity without any impact on national and political developments. The religion of Islam became the main source of self-determination of the majority of Yugoslav Muslims. Albanian Muslims in Kosovo and Macedonia suffered economically and were deprived of their cultural and national rights. Their struggle for political, national and, to less extent, religious autonomy has continued after the demise of Communism due to complicated historical and mythological ties with Serbia.

The three most important institutions for Muslim, *Shari ah* courts, educational institutions and *waqfs*, were abolished during the early phase of communism. On 5th of March 1946 *Shari ah* courts were abolished and the Islamic law lost its binding legal force for the Muslims. Its place was taken by the civil law derived from European sources. Secondly, in 1952 the government closed all elementary religious educational institutions – *mektebs* - and left only one secondary school – Gazi Husrevbeg *Madersa* in Sarajevo – to prepare future *imams* and *khatibs*. Religious instructions to ordinary believers could be given only during weekends in *mesdžids* and even that legal possibility was restricted by the policy of local authorities. Finally, *waqf* property was largely expropriated and nationalized in 1945-1958. This included arable lands endowed to *waqfs*, companies, hotels and spas, as well as residential and business premises. What remained, as Fikret Karčić rightly concluded ‘was the religious hierarchy and some rudiments of education (informal religious instruction and

one *medresa*) and *waqf* (whose jurisdiction was now reduced to *mesdžids*, their vicinities, adjacent lands and housing for religious officials.)⁸⁶

In 1950 the *nikab* was banned in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁸⁷ This was seen as the emancipation of the Muslim women and was advocated by secular and some Muslim religious authorities.⁸⁸ The deterioration and depredation of *waqfs* reached its culmination in Communist Yugoslavia, especially in the first fourteen years after the war. The 1945, 1947 and 1948 laws nationalized almost all *waqf* properties, which totally destroyed the economic basis of the Islamic community. In 1959 the *Waqf* Directorate was abolished due to nationalization measures and expropriation of the *waqf* properties. One of the reasons for these drastic measures, not only against the Muslim religious establishment, but against the two other religions, was the programme of forcible secularization of society.⁸⁹ Muslims who had more liberal views about religion and the future of Islam in Yugoslavia were persecuted, as in the case of members of the *Mladi Muslimani* (Young Muslims) organization.⁹⁰ A number of its sympathizers were either killed or imprisoned for long periods of time, particularly in the 1949 and 1983 processes. In Bosnia they later formed a nucleus of the new political party SDA, which gained overwhelming support from the Muslim masses. Out of 33 *medresas* which were functional before the war, only the *Gazi Husrev-begova* was allowed to continue with its work. On the other hand, the communist regime allowed the

⁸⁶ Fikret Karčić, 'Administration of Islamic Affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *Islamic Studies*, 38.4 (1999), pp. 535-561.

⁸⁷ On the eighth ordinary session of the National Assembly of Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina a law was adopted which forbade wearing the *zar* (veil) and *feredža* (a long coat). The law prescribes a prison sentence up to three months or a financial penalty for wearing the *zar* and *feredža*.

⁸⁸ *Reis ul-Ulema* Džemaludin Čaušević, for instance, advocated the ban of the veil. See more in: Xavier Bougarel, 'Reis i Veo: Jedna Vjerska Polemika u Bosni i Hercegovini Između Dva Svjetska Rata', *Historijska Traganja*, 6 (2010), pp. 69-114.

⁸⁹ S. Mahmutović, 'Višedecenijsko Uništenje Vakufa u Bosni i Hercegovini', *Novi Muallim*, December 2007, p. 30.

⁹⁰ About the Young Muslims organization see more on: <<http://www.mm.co.ba/ba/udruzenje>> [accessed 12 May 2011].

formation of a new elite of Muslims (professors and teachers, physicians, engineers, etc.) which played a significant role in post-communist political life.⁹¹

Many Muslims, disenchanted with the political and economic conditions in the country, emigrated, as was the case in the past, to Turkey, but also to America, Canada and Australia. Amidst the great social injustice during the terror of Tito's interior minister, Ranković, around 100,000 Kosovo Muslims emigrated to Turkey. The situation improved later, especially after the 1974 constitution which granted Kosovo an autonomy similar to that of a republic. Unrest in Kosovo began again in 1981 when students of Priština University organized protests demanding better economic conditions in the province. Police drastically intervened and harsh measures by the Serbian government were introduced, accusing Kosovo Muslims of separatism and chauvinism.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Yugoslav communism significantly changed its attitude towards religion. During this period a high degree of freedom and considerable latitude was allowed for religious communities to operate. Some authors even wrote about the Islamic revival occurring at that time in Bosnia and other parts of Yugoslavia. This revival manifested itself in the reconstruction of mosques, increased religious education, Islamic publications, and the use of Islamic social symbols.⁹² Along with the relaxed laws on religious communities, the improved economic situation of Yugoslav citizens contributed to the construction programme of the Islamic community, of which the most important was the establishment of the Islamic Theological Faculty in Sarajevo in 1977.

⁹¹ Xavier Bougarel, 'Islam and Politics in the Post-Communist Balkans', Paper presented for the Socrates Kokkalis Student Workshop: New Approaches to Southeast Europe, Cambridge, Mass., February 12-13, 1999, p. 3.

⁹² Karčić (1999), pp. 535-561.

However, even under the harshest conditions immediately after WWII, the Muslim leadership made efforts to organize religious life in Yugoslavia. The Islamic Community of Yugoslavia (ICY) was established in 1947 at the Great *Vakuf* Assembly (*Sabor*) in Sarajevo when a new constitution was adopted.⁹³ The organization consisted of four councils (*Starješinstvo*): the Islamic Community (IC) of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia with its seat in Sarajevo, the IC of Serbia in Priština, the IC of Macedonia in Skopje and the IC of Montenegro in its capital, Titograd. A number of delegates from each council were elected onto the Supreme Council of the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia in Sarajevo (SCICY) which elected the *Reis-ul-Ulema*. All the office holders of the *Reis-ul-Ulema* were from Bosnia except 1989's Jakub Selimoski, a Macedonian.

Lower organizational levels were regional *mufti* districts with the *Mufti* as head, comprising several councils with the chief *imam*. The head *imam* was responsible for religious life in his area and the activities of a number of *imams* attached to a mosque or a *mesdžid*. Each *imam* was in charge of leading prayers, teaching children, organizing religious festivals, etc. The Islamic Community has had its own publishing house with a number of publications, colleges, a faculty, an administrative-legal office, etc. The most influential institution had been the *Gazi Husrev-begova medresa* in Sarajevo which had for the last fifty years educated a few thousand students from all around the country for the positions of *imam*, *khatib* and *mu'allim*. In order to substitute the income from nationalized *waqf* properties, the Islamic Community appealed to its strong, although in most cases impoverished, membership base.

⁹³ Four constitutions of the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia were adopted: in 1947, 1959, 1969 and 1990.

Through centralized collection of *zakāh*, *sadaqat al fitr* and *qurbāni* and membership fees the ICY managed to overcome its difficult position and even organizationally grow.⁹⁴

1.5.3. Transition period

Tito's death in 1980 is most commonly used as the beginning of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, a time when ethnic tensions among different nations began to grow and interfere in the politics of the country. Serbia, as the largest and most populous republic, sought more influence in the country's affairs, especially over its own autonomous provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina. The Serbian communist leader Slobodan Milošević succeeded in reducing their autonomy, causing an eruption of revolts from Kosovo Albanians. On the other hand, Slovenia and Croatia demanded a looser relationship in the Federation, accusing the Serbian leadership of hegemonism and supporting Kosovar demands.

The situation shifted to the Communist league, which was dissolved in 1990. After the first democratic elections in 1991, Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence, turning a crisis into an open military conflict. Although there were a few skirmishes between the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) and the Slovenian Territorial Defence, Slovenian independence did not cause much trouble. However, in Croatia a significant Serb minority, backed by the YPA, established a Serb autonomous province, *Srpska Krajina*, which erupted in a four year war. The conflict between the national Croatian army and Serbs was ended in 1995 with Operation *Oluja* (Storm) and the expulsion of thousands of Serbs to Bosnia and Serbia.

⁹⁴ For this purpose a *fatwa* about collection of *zakāh* and *sadaqat al fitr* for the needs of the ICY was issued by an influential Muslim scholar Husein Đozo. Thanks to this legal opinion the Islamic Theological Faculty (present Faculty of Islamic Studies) was established in 1979 mainly from the funds of *zakāh* and *sadaqat al fitr*.

When Bosnians voted for their independence in a referendum, the Serb population in the republic demanded to remain in remnant Yugoslavia consisting of Serbia (with Vojvodina and Kosovo) and Montenegro, establishing a Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A large scale war began between the recognized Bosnian government, with a Bosnian Muslim majority, Bosnian Serbs backed by remnant Yugoslavia, and Bosnian Croats supported by Croatia. Most Serbs claim that it was a civil war involving the three ethnic groups, while Bosnian Muslims claim that it was open aggression by the remnant Yugoslavia and Croatia, supported by local nationalists. The war was ended by the Dayton Agreement in 1995, leaving behind genocide, war concentration camps, a hundred thousand killed, and over a million expelled.⁹⁵

Bosnia and Herzegovina had just started recovering from the war, when a new conflict emerged in the Serbian southern province of Kosovo. The culmination of the Albanian struggle for autonomy and independence broke out in the early 1990s with the dismissal of 123,000 Albanian workers by the government. Other restrictive measures were introduced by the Serbian authorities to fight Albanian demands for secession, such as control of the media, enterprises, police and court systems, abolishment of the Albanian language in schools and police harassment. Their response was the formation of parallel institutions and guerrilla warfare by the Kosovo Liberation Army. The Yugoslav army and police were called to take control and pacify the unrest. This grew into an open conflict resulting in nearly 640,000 Albanians being expelled from Kosovo by mid-1999. Many of them found refuge in Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania. The war ended the same year by the intervention of a NATO military force and the deployment of international peacekeeping forces. Large

⁹⁵ According to data from the Centre for Research and Documentation: Vlatko Vukotić, *Objavljeni Novi Podaci o Žrtvama Sukoba u BiH* (Southeast European Times, 2007).
<<http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/bs/features/setimes/features/2007/06/25/feature-03>> [accessed 24 June 2009].

numbers of refugees, mainly Kosovo Serbs, still live in the neighbouring countries as displaced persons. The region of Kosovo has been administered by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission (UNMIK) since June 1999. In 2008 Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia and has been recognized by more than fifty countries.

1.5.4. Political organization of Yugoslav Muslims

In the first democratic elections in the 1990s, Muslims were organized through several political parties in the region of Yugoslavia. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the most influential and strongest was the Party for Democratic Action (SDA) of Alija Izetbegović, which had branches in Serbia, the Sandžak region, Croatia and Slovenia (SDAS). Kosovo Albanians established the Democratic League of Kosovo and the Democratic Party of Kosovo; both parties resulted from the province's political and military struggle for independence. The most prominent in Macedonia were the Albanian political parties Union of Democratic Integration (BDI), Party for Democratic Prosperity (PPD), Democratic Party of Albanians (PDSH) and People's Democratic Party.

Due to the traditional mass support of religious organizations, most Muslim parties tend to have a close relationship with the Islamic Communities in their region. This resulted in better conditions for the ICs, but also an open conflict between religious groups and the misuse of religion for political gains. The best example is the *Sandžak* case, where two political parties, SDA and SDP, after being closely linked with the Islamic Community and its Mufti, Muamer Zukorlić, created conflict with the religious leadership for political gains. This led

to a situation where the Islamic Community, as a religious organization, had to engage in political activities.⁹⁶

As a bridge between the political parties and religious organizations, Yugoslav Muslims created various cultural associations, newspapers and intellectual forums such as the Congress of the Bosnian Muslim Intellectuals in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ About the intertwining between politics and religion in Sandžak see more in: Muhamed Jusić, *Muslims in Serbia: Two Parallel Islamic Communities in Serbia - The danger of Politicization of Religion* (Berlin: Globalia Magazine, 2008) <<http://www.globaliamagazine.com/?id=509>> [accessed 24 June 2009].

⁹⁷ About Muslim political organizations see more in: Bougarel (1999).

2. CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES DURING POST-COMMUNISM AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR ISLAM

Introduction

The questions raised in this chapter revolve around the changes occurring on a constitutional, legislative and practical level in the newly established states. In reality, has anything been done to re-establish a role for religion in the public arena? The chapter attempts to examine the differences between Yugoslav states in creating and implementing laws about religious communities in their respective societies. What provisions have been made for Muslims and how much did this group seize new opportunities?

First, constitutional provisions for religious communities will be discussed in each of the seven newly established states, along with detailed legislative frameworks. This section will explain what each constitution and law says about freedom of religion, registration of religious communities, governmental bodies dealing with religious communities, state support and tax relief, religious instruction in the schools, establishment of religious schools and charitable organizations, religious publications, press and access to media, chaplaincy, and holidays. This section will also compare the legal provisions in different Yugoslav states. If certain provisions are not mentioned here it means that there are not mentioned in the constitution or in law. The next section will analyse the implementation of the above provisions within the Muslim communities in each state in question.

2.1. Constitutional and legislative framework

In analysing the constitutions of the Yugoslav states, certain similarities exist with their post-communist counterparts. All the constitutions, along with the constitution of the former Yugoslavia, guarantee freedom of religion, and equal status of individuals and religious communities before the law. Also, all constitutions, except the Bosnian one, have stated that religion is separate from the state. Free observance of religion is guaranteed at the legislative level as well. Pursuant to the laws on religious communities, they are eligible for financial state support. The laws on religious communities were enforced during the seven-to-twelve-year period after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. All the states during this period applied the laws from communist times.⁹⁸ Other legal provisions, varying from one state to another, will be discussed in more detail below.

2.1.1. Slovenia

In addition to Freedom of Expression and Conscience guaranteed in articles 39 and 41, as well as equal status before the law, Article 14, Article 123 of the constitution allows citizens exemption from military duty, provided that they participate in the defence of the State in some other manner.⁹⁹ Article 9 of the Law on Legal Status of Religious Communities guarantees religious communities the right of the publication and distribution of publications for the purpose of religious education, religious ceremonies and for internal use. The law

⁹⁸ The 1976 law of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia was applied in 2007 when Slovenia introduced the Religious Freedom Act; Croatia used the 1978 law in 2002 when the Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities was brought in. The Law on Freedom of Religion and Legal Position of Religious Communities and Churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina Bosnia was passed in 2004 when the 1976 Law was superseded.

⁹⁹ The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia*, No. 33/1991-I, 42/1997, 66/2000).

allows persons in hospitals, nursing facilities and closed institutions to be visited by priests, and to receive religious ceremonies.¹⁰⁰

By bringing into force the Religious Freedom Act in 2007, the provisions of the Legal Status of Religious Communities in the Republic of Slovenia Act from 1976 ceased to be applied. Comparing the 1976 act with the Religious Freedom act, the former does not mention anything about the access to media of religious communities and religious education in schools, but it guarantees freedom to build religious buildings.

In 1993 the Governmental Office for Religious Communities was established.¹⁰¹ The office is responsible for registering and monitoring religious communities, executing governmental decisions on the social insurance of priests and monks, and monitoring enforcement of laws for religious communities. Other activities of the office include: cooperation with ministries and local authorities for the benefit of religious communities, dialogue with religious communities, and cooperation with governmental offices in other States.¹⁰² By 2008 the office had registered 43 religious communities in Slovenia.

During the 1999-2007 period the Government of Republic of Slovenia signed a number of agreements with religious communities on their judicial status. Among the last was an

¹⁰⁰ Article 16, Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia with Amendments (*Official Gazette of SRS*, No. 15/1976, 421986, *Official Gazette of Republic of Slovenia*, No. 22/1991).

¹⁰¹ 'Decree on formation of Governmental Office for Religious Communities (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia*).

¹⁰² Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia*, No. 56/1990, 135/1997, 8/1998-consolidated text, 113/2000, 124/2000-consolidated text, 28/2001, 41/2001-consolidated text)

agreement between the Government and the Islamic Community in the Republic of Slovenia signed on 9th of July 2007.¹⁰³

2.1.2. Croatia

Article 41 of the 1990 Constitution of the Republic of Croatia guarantees equality and freedom for religious communities to found schools, teaching establishments or other institutions. The article also guarantees freedom for religious communities to establish and manage social and charitable institutions. In their activities the religious communities shall have the protection and assistance of the state.¹⁰⁴

The Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities from 2002, confirming constitutional provisions, further specifies freedoms of religion and religious communities. Chapter 17 confirms that the state allocates funds to religious communities, which should be applied for. The funds could be used particularly for the ‘construction and rehabilitation of the structures of a religious community.’ The full tax exemption applies to the religious communities when purchasing buildings or land for religious purposes and upon receiving contributions from citizens or legal persons. Articles 5,6 and 20-28 regulate registration of religious communities with the state. A religious community will be entered into the Register for Religious Communities, and as such it will be legally liable ‘to the extent of the value of their entire property.’¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Other agreements have been signed with the following religious communities: the Bishops' Conference of the Roman Catholic in 1999, Evangelical Church in the Republic of Slovenia on 25 January 2000, the Slovenian Bishops' Conference on 21 September 2000, the Evangelical Church in the Republic of Slovenia on October 20, 2000, the Pentecostal Church on 17 March 2004, the Serbian Orthodox Church – the Zagreb-Ljubljana Metropolitanate on 9 July 2004. (Ljubljana: Office for Religious Communities, 2008) http://www.uvs.gov.si/en/areas_of_work/ [accessed 25 May 2008].

¹⁰⁴ Article 41, Constitution of the Republic of Croatia.

¹⁰⁵ Article 17, Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities.

The law also allows religious education in pre-school institutions, primary and secondary schools as an optional subject following agreement between the state and religious communities. School programmes, textbooks and qualified teaching staff will be approved and regulated by the Ministry of Education.¹⁰⁶ Religious communities are allowed to establish religious schools and institutions of higher learning up to the highest level.¹⁰⁷ The same law guarantees religious communities the right to spiritual support for their believers in penitentiaries, prisons, the police and armed forces.¹⁰⁸ The law on defence enables members of the army non-combatant military service, if because of religion they are not comfortable to serve otherwise.¹⁰⁹ Article 14-16 allow visits to believers in health care institutions, prisons and in the army by religious officers for the purpose of spiritual care.¹¹⁰ Citizens of Croatia can celebrate their own religious holidays along with national holidays. Citizens of Republic of Croatia of Islamic religious affiliation during the days of *Ramazan Bajram* (*‘Īdu l-’Aḍḥā*) and *Kurban Bajram* (*‘Īdu l-Fiṭr*) have the right to be absent from work.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Article 13, Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities.

¹⁰⁷ Article 11, Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities.

¹⁰⁸ Article 15, 16, Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities.

¹⁰⁹ Article 38, Law on Defence, (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia*, No. 33/2002).

¹¹⁰ Articles 14-16, Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities.

¹¹¹ Article 3, Law on Holidays, Memorial Days and Days off in Republic of Croatia (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia*, No. 33/1996, 13/2002).

2.1.3. Serbia

In the past forty years Serbia has had three constitutions. Article 197 of the 1974 constitution guarantees freedom of expression of religion, the right to establish faith schools and state support to religious communities. 'Religious communities shall be separate from the state and shall be equal before the law.'¹¹² The same provisions are guaranteed in the 1990 and 2006 constitutions with the exception of state support, which is not mentioned in the latter. The constitutions also allow religious communities to establish and operate charitable organizations.¹¹³

The law on religious communities brought in 1977 was in force until 2006, when it was replaced by a new one. Both laws allow religious communities to build places of worship. Religious communities need to be registered with local municipalities (1977 law) or with the Ministry of Faith (2006 law). According to the 2006 law, the continuity of the Islamic Community is recognized from 1930. Articles 17-24 regulate registration with the Ministry of Faith. Both laws also allow and regulate the establishment and functioning of religious schools.

The 2006 law has allowed religious communities more freedom and regulated their work in a more detailed way. Thus, Articles 28 and 32 provide possibilities for religious communities to receive state support. Article 33 enables the establishment of charitable organizations. Article 40 regulates religious education in primary and secondary schools. Article 29 provides social insurance for religious officers. According to Article 30, religious organizations are fully or partially tax exempt. In Article 27 the law also allows local

¹¹² Article 197 and 178, The Constitution of Serbia (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No. 1/1990).

¹¹³ Article 41, The Constitution of Serbia.

administration to temporarily lease nationalized properties to religious communities. None of the above provisions were considered or regulated by the 1977 law.

2.1.4. Macedonia

The Islamic Religious Community is mentioned in the constitution along with the Macedonian Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church, Evangelical Methodist Church, and the Jewish Community as being separate from the state and equal before the law. These religious groups along with others are free to establish faith schools and charitable organizations.¹¹⁴

In terms of legislative provisions, the Law on Religious Communities from 1977 was in force until 1997 when it was replaced by the Law on Religious Communities and Religious Groups. Article 8 of the 1997 law regulates registration of the religious communities with the state, clearly stating that ‘for one confession of faith only one registered religious community or group may exist.’ As this provision prevents groups of the same confession to register under a different name, the Muslim community, lead by the former *Reis ul-Ulema* of Yugoslavia, Jakub Selimoski, has found it very difficult to register his Islamic organization. The 1977 law required registration of a religious community with the Ministry of Interior, while, according to the 1997 law, the Authority in Charge of Religious Affairs executes registration.

The laws on education previously forbade any religious activity or instruction in the schools, primary, secondary or higher educational institutions.¹¹⁵ However, the new amendments will

¹¹⁴ Article 19 of the Constitution of the FYR Macedonia (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, No. 52/1991, 1/1992, 31/1998 and 91/2001).

¹¹⁵ Article 13 of the Law on Primary Education (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*,

allow students to have religious instruction in the schools to some extent.¹¹⁶ Provision of spiritual support in care homes, prisons and in the army, regulation of charitable activities or organizations of religious communities, provision of state funds, and any intentions to denationalize religious properties are not mentioned in this law.

Christmas, the second day of Easter, the first day of Ramadhan *‘Īd*, the first day of Kurban *‘Īd*, and the first day of Yom Kippur are public holidays and non-working days according to article 4 of the Law on Holidays of the Republic of Macedonia.¹¹⁷ Macedonia is the only country of the former Yugoslav republics to celebrate *Ramadhan* and *Qurban ‘Īd* as public holidays.

2.1.5. Montenegro

Serbia and Montenegro formed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia between 1992 and 2003 and the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro between 2003 and 2006. Similar to other Yugoslav states, the constitution of the Republic of Montenegro generally guarantees the same individual and collective rights in observance of religion. The law on the judicial status of religious communities further clarifies these provisions confirming freedom of religion

No. 44/1995); Article 7 of the Law on Secondary Education (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, No. 44/1995); Article 13 of the Law on Higher Education (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 64/2000).

¹¹⁶ ‘On April 16, 2007, Parliament adopted amendments to the law on education to allow for religious education in public schools starting in the 6th year of primary school, when students are approximately 12 years old. Religious instruction is not mandatory. Parents and the student must give consent and specify which religious instruction they wish to receive. The law does not limit the type or number of religious beliefs that can be taught. Courses were to range from religious practice to history of religion and ethics. The new amendments were scheduled to be implemented starting in the 2008-09 academic year.’ *Macedonia, International Religious Freedom Report 2007* (Washington: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2007) <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90187.htm>> [accessed 29 May 2010].

¹¹⁷ Law on holidays of the Republic of Macedonia (*Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia*, No. 21/1998).

and separation from the state as well as regulating registration of the religious communities with local municipalities.¹¹⁸

The state or ‘sociopolitical community’ can materially support religious communities. If general regulations on publications and press are applied, the law allows distribution of religious publications and press.¹¹⁹ Religious education out of school hours is permitted. Inspection of the conditions of religious instruction is performed by the municipality officials.¹²⁰ The law does not regulate religious instruction in schools, charitable organizations, restitution, tax relief for religious communities and religious officers’ social insurance, chaplaincy or religious buildings.

2.1.6. Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina guarantees freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association with others.¹²¹ The Constitution has come into being as a part of Annex 4 of the Dayton Peace Agreement which ended a four-year war in Bosnia in 1995. Hence, it is more general and no other provisions were mentioned. The Law of Freedom of Religion and Legal Position of Religious Communities and Churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina was brought into force in 2004. Confirming constitutional rights of religious freedom and equality, the law further regulates provisions for religious communities.

¹¹⁸ Articles 1-4, The Law on Judicial Status of Religious Communities, *Official Gazette of Socialist Republic of Montenegro*, no. 9 from 5 April 1977, 26 from 20 July 1977, 29 from 25 October 1989, 39 from 29 December 1989, *Official Gazette of Republic of Montenegro*, no. 48 from 28 November 1991, 17 from 24 April 1992, 27 from 29 July 1994.

¹¹⁹ Article 22, The Law on Judicial Status of Religious Communities.

¹²⁰ Article 17, The Law on Judicial Status of Religious Communities.

¹²¹ Paragraph 3, Article 2 of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina (The General Framework Agreement: Annex 4).

Registration of religious communities is executed by the Ministry of Justice. With regards to the nationalized properties, the law provides a general statement that ‘Churches and religious communities shall have the right to restitution of expropriated property throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.’¹²² However, no law has been yet drafted to regulate restitution of religious properties. Churches and religious communities shall pay taxes for their transactions as any other legal entity.¹²³ Article 4 allows religious education in private and public schools, as well as in primary and higher education. Religious communities can ‘publish and distribute books, textbooks and handbooks and disseminate relevant publications in written or pictorial form via the press, electronic media.’ Religious communities can establish cultural, charitable, health and educational institutions which shall enjoy the same rights as those founded by the State. The State may also materially support health-care activities, and educational, social and charitable service organized by religious communities. Churches and religious organizations offering these services cannot discriminate service-users on the basis of religion.¹²⁴

According to the Peace Agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina is comprised of two entities, the Federation of BiH and Republic of Srpska, which have their own constitutions and laws. The constitution of the Federation follows a similar pattern in guaranteeing religious freedoms and provisions as the constitution of BiH. Thus, only in Article 2 does the Constitution guarantee the fundamental freedoms of ‘speech and press; freedom of thought, conscience,

¹²² Article 12, Law on Freedom of Religion and Legal Position of Religious Communities and Churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, No. 5/2004).

¹²³ Article 13, Law on Freedom of Religion and Legal Position of Religious Communities and Churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, No. 5/2004).

¹²⁴ Articles 7 and 10 Law on Freedom of Religion and Legal Position of Religious Communities and Churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, No. 5/2004).

and belief; freedom of religion, including private and public worship; freedom of assembly; freedom of association.’¹²⁵ The constitution of the Republic of Srpska guarantees free observance of religion and equality of its citizens regardless of religion. However, Article 28 states that ‘the Serbian Orthodox Church shall be the church of the Serb people and other people of Orthodox religion.’ No other churches or religious groups which exist in the Republic of Srpska are mentioned in the constitution.

2.1.7. Kosovo

Kosovo declared independence on the 17th of February 2008. So far, the newest Yugoslav state has no legislative provisions for religious communities. Its constitution declares Kosovo as a secular state and neutral in matters of religious beliefs.¹²⁶ The state ensures the preservation and protection of its cultural and religious heritage. As is the case with other constitutions, freedom of belief, conscience and religion is guaranteed as well as free internal organization of religious communities.¹²⁷ Religious communities also have a right to establish religious schools and charity institutions in accordance with this Constitution and the law.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Official Gazette Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina* No. 1/1994, 1/1994, 13/1997, 22/2002).

¹²⁶ Article 8 of Constitution of Republic of Kosovo (Pristina : Kosovo’s Constitution, 2008) <<http://www.kushtetutakosoves.info/repository/docs/Constitution.of.the.Republic.of.Kosovo.pdf>> [6 June 2011].

¹²⁷ Articles 38 and 39 of the Constitution of Republic of Kosovo.

¹²⁸ Article 39 of the Constitution of Republic of Kosovo.

Conclusion

As can be seen from the research presented above, the process of changing laws and bringing them into force has taken over a decade in some Yugoslav states. Laws from the communist period regulated and influenced religious life in the Balkans from six to twelve years after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The ever-changing political maps of the formerly unified country, the complexity of creation of new legislation, as well as the communist mentality are some of the reasons for such slow change.

Generally, post-communist constitutions and legislations guarantee the same basic rights and provisions to religious communities as their predecessors, such as freedom of observance of religion, religious organization, equal status, separation from the state and state support, and freedom to establish and run schools for training of priests. Religious communities are also required to register with national or local governmental bodies.

Since the communist regime forbade any religious activity at all levels of education within the state schools, there were no signs of any regulation of religious education in the legislation. However, almost all post-communist laws made an attempt to introduce religious education into state schools. The exception to this rule has been Macedonia, but it is already making amendments to its legislation. A completely different situation exists with the nationalized religious properties, which were taken away from religious organizations by communist policies and, until the final collapse of the regime, there were no indications of denationalization. Although religious communities have made numerous claims to the newly-formed governments for a change in legislation, only Serbia allowed the possibility of a temporary lease of nationalized religious properties to their previous owners.

In both communist and post-communist legislation there is no sign of discrimination or favourable status of any religion. Islam and Muslim communities are treated equally with other main religious groups in the area. The exemption to this rule is the Constitution of the Republic of Srpska, which mentions only the Serbian Orthodox Church. The entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina thus discriminates against other religious groups in its highest legal act. In Slovenia, the Islamic Community signed an agreement on its judicial status with the government eight years after other religious communities. The reasons for the late registration will be analysed in the next section of this chapter. The following section will also examine the practical implementation of the above legislations and the treatment of the Islamic community along with other religious communities.

2.2. Implications of new constitutional acts and laws on Muslim communities

From the above analysis a number of constitutional and legislative provisions related to religious communities can be seen to be common in almost all Yugoslav states. Although their importance is immense for the overall life and functionality of religious communities and their members, for the purpose of this research only those which reflect both the revival of Islam and continuing influence of Communism will be discussed. Also, the major difficulties Muslims face in their respective countries will be highlighted.

To examine the renewed interest of the Balkan Muslims in their religion, Fikret Karčić from Sarajevo University considered the following manifestations of Islamic revival: (re)construction of mosques, education, publishing, emergence of Muslim solidarity

institutions, the use of Islamic social symbols, political culture and organizations.¹²⁹ A similar categorization will be followed in this section.

Also, in certain instances other practical manifestations of state provisions will be discussed depending on the state in question. These are: chaplaincy, celebration of Islamic holidays, restitution of *waqf* properties, and access to and depiction in the media. To give a general overview of the countries involved, at the beginning of each section basic information will be provided about the number of Muslims and their percentage of the total population, their ethnicity and internal organizational structure.

2.2.1. Slovenia

The current Muslim population in Slovenia settled in this country only after WWII, when a number of seasonal workers came from other Yugoslav republics. The number of Muslims is relatively small: 47,488 out of the population of 1,964,036. Muslims are the second largest religious group (2.4%), of which 61.5% are Bosniaks, 11% Albanians, 5.9% Slovenians, 1.8% Gypsies and 1.3% Montenegrins. The religious organization of Muslim communities in Slovenia goes back to the 1970s when large numbers of Bosniaks, Albanians, Maceodnians, even Turks and Arabs, came to Slovenia to seek employment and to study. The present IC was established in 1994 when a separate *Mešihat* and *Zbor (Sabor)* were formed, with a strong relationship to the IC of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The *Mešihat* of the IC of Slovenia follows a similar organizational structure to that of Croatia, with the *Mufti* as a member of the executive body, *Rijaset*, in Sarajevo. The first

¹²⁹ Karčić (1997), p. 570.

mufti for Slovenia was appointed by the Sarajevo *Rijaset* in 2001. Although the IC of Slovenia has 15 *medžlises* in different towns, more than a third of all Muslims live in and around Ljubljana and are attached to its *medžlis*.¹³⁰

2.2.1.1. Education

Before 1990 there was only one *džemat* and *mesdžid* in Ljubljana. There is no data available for the number of students enrolled in religious education classes before 1990. Religious instruction in 2008 was held for 500 to 700 students in sixteen towns. The instruction, which is mainly held on weekends, is given in the basics of Islam (*Ilmihal*), introduction to Arabic letters (*Sufara*), and the correct recitation of the *Qur'ān* (*Kiraet*). The *džemats* in Ljubljana and Jesenice are the most active due to the large number of Muslims concentrated there. In Ljubljana, apart from religious instruction for children and youth, lessons are organized for adults in the history of Islam, *sufara*, the *Qur'ān* and various aspects of the Muslim religion. On weekend evenings the local *imam* guides the activities of the youth club (*Druženje mladinskega kroga*). In order to attract the younger population the Islamic Community in Ljubljana organizes workshops in religious songs (*sekcija zbora*), recitals and drama. In both countries, Slovenia and Croatia, the number of Muslims are far less than in other countries of former Yugoslavia due to their short historical presence in those areas. This is why activities and level of organization, which have not generally been dealt with in other countries are brought up in the sections about the two countries.

There is no religious instruction in the public schools either at primary or secondary level.

Apart from Slovenia, the two other former Yugoslav countries which have no religious

¹³⁰ The '*medžlises*' are as follows: Ljubljana, Jesenice, Velenje, Maribor, Koper, Kranj, Trzic, Skofja Loka, Kocevje, Postojna, Celje, Trbovlje, Novo mesto in Ajdovščina-Nova Gorica.

education in public schools are Montenegro and Macedonia. Although teaching a particular religion is prohibited in state schools, the study of religions is an obligatory subject in the seventh, eight and ninth years.

‘Each pupil should choose three from the six optional subjects. Among other possibilities, the pupil can also choose to learn about religions and ethics. It should be a nonconfessional subject that allows each pupil, whatever his personal conviction, to deepen and widen his knowledge of the religious facts that he had acquired within the framework of the obligatory subjects.’¹³¹

Compared with the pre-1990 period when only one *džemat* operated in a *mesdžid* in Ljubljana, there has been a significant increase in the organized religious life of Muslims in Slovenia. This is due to a number of reasons. Most seasonal workers used to send money back home to support their families and secure accommodation, while at the same time spending resources in the countries they worked. After the independence of Slovenia in 1991, many decided to stay in the country indefinitely, bringing their families and enrolling children in local schools. They had also felt the need to replicate their everyday lives in their hometowns and cities and to strengthen the reach of religious activities in the area in which they live. In addition, many Bosnian refugees were accommodated permanently in Slovenia and used their skills, knowledge and already established community to successfully organize their lives in the new environment. This resulted in considerably improved economic conditions for Muslims, both as individuals and as a community, and enabled an increase in the number of *mesdžids* and full-time *imams*

¹³¹ Zdenko Kodolja, *The teaching about religion at Slovene public schools* (The School Field, 1999) <http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/religion_teaching-slo-enl-t06.pdf> [accessed 23 May 2008] (pp. 153-158).

Also, it is evident that a large percentage of Muslims in the diaspora is religiously more conscious than those in the homeland. Weekly religious instructions and prayers act as a reminder of belonging, not only to Islam, but also to tradition and motherland. Although most of the younger generation have been fully integrated into the host society, an organized religious life represents somewhat of a protection against complete assimilation, not only in Slovenia, but also in Croatia and parts of Serbia. However, these attempts at preserving national and religious identity have proven sometimes difficult to materialize due to misunderstanding and the adverse attitudes of some elements of the host society. The most significant example has been the Ljubljana mosque.

2.2.1.2. The Ljubljana mosque issue

‘In Slovenia, there are around 3000 Catholic churches for 1,135,626 followers (as recorded in the last census in 2002), which means approximately 378 Catholics per church. To ensure the same ratio for the country’s 47,488 Muslims, approximately 125 religious buildings would have to be made available to them. And yet they at this time do not have any.’¹³²

The issue of the Ljubljana mosque has extended for almost three decades. Muslims in Ljubljana filed their first request for a mosque to authorities in 1969. Unwilling to grant permission for the building, the authorities prolonged the decision until 2001, justifying the negative outcome with ‘unsuitability of the proposed locations.’ The reasons for the constant rejection of the mosque lay, according to Dr Srečo from the Ljubljana University, firstly in the communist uniform ideology that tried to conceal religious and national differences. Secondly, nationalistic reasons superseded the communist ideology of the newly established

¹³² Srečo Dragoš, ‘Islamophobia in Slovenia: Politically Produced Intolerance’, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 13.3 (2005), 299–315 (p. 299).

state, and continued 'a communist' attitude towards the Ljubljana mosque. Even requests for a referendum were called to stop the building of the mosque.

On the other hand, Slovenian Muslims do not accept any other solution but to have a proper mosque 'with minaret' in the capital. In many other European cities Muslims are satisfied with a plain *mesdžid*, but in the case of Slovenia, Muslims feel that it is their right to have a place of worship equal to that of the Catholics. After thirty years living and working in the country, they do not want to be seen as second-class citizens. Thus, a religious building is becoming a political issue of requests for equal status and full citizenship recognition from one side, and islamophobic, media-facilitated, attitudes from parts of the indigenous community from the other side.

Finally, the IC succeeded in obtaining permission and purchased land in an appropriate location for the mosque in 2008/09. This development marked a departure from the communist-nationalistic era by the state and an approach to a more democratic and tolerant attitude towards religious communities generally, and the Islamic Community in particular. On the other hand, the IC leadership has learned from previous failures regarding the mosque and managed through wise and continuous effort to accomplish the first phase towards its place of worship.

2.2.1.3. Free observance of religion and equality of religious communities

In most Yugoslav states religious practice is not impeded by the state. This is a noteworthy sign of the leaving of communist practice, when the state regime was directly involved in, among others, appointing or dismissing religious officers and dignitaries. In Slovenia,

Muslims are generally equal with the majority Catholics and other groups in their religious rights.¹³³ Also, according to Nevzet Porić, secretary general of the IC, there is no single instance where religious practice is obstructed by the state. Mufti Grabus is also satisfied with the position of the IC in relation to the state and on a number of occasions he has been received by the highest governmental officials in Slovenia. Although Muslims do not have any private religious schools or nurseries, in contrast with five Catholic ones, it does not seem that this represents any unequal position. It is rather a lack of physical capability and organization that prevents Muslims having similar institutions.¹³⁴

However, it is unclear why, for instance, there is no representative of the Islamic Community in religious programme editorial on national television. Two appointed members are representatives of the Catholic and the Orthodox Church, despite the fact that the Muslim community is the third largest in the country. Also, the army chaplaincy, whose introduction was initiated by the prospect of joining NATO, consists only of Catholic and Evangelical priests. The Roman Catholic Church may expect to be treated favourably in relation to the state on the account of its membership size, 'and its historical significance or connectedness with the national or cultural identity of the nation,' in both Slovenia and Croatia.¹³⁵ Yet, if a full sense of citizenship and belonging is to be built among all communities, including Muslims, more fairness has to be applied in all segments of religious rights and freedoms.

¹³³ Personal email correspondence with Nevzet Porić 15 October 2008.

¹³⁴ According to data from the Ministry of Education and Sport, there are 105 independent kindergartens, 186 kindergartens under primary schools, and 20 private kindergartens in Slovenia. Certain private kindergartens operate under a Catholic programme. There is no primary school in Slovenia established by a religious community. In 2007, the Catholic Church established a primary school which was expected to open in September 2008.

¹³⁵ Aleš Črnič and Gregor Lesjak, 'Religious Freedom and Control in Independent Slovenia', *Sociology of Religion*, 64.3 (2003), p. 363.

2.2.1.4. Registration with the state and the state support

Following the agreements signed with the Catholic Church and other religious communities, the Islamic Community and the government signed an Agreement on the Legal Status of the Islamic Community in the Republic of Slovenia on 9th of July 2007. The agreement grants Muslims a wide spectrum of rights including the freedom of worship and religious instruction in and outside of premises of the Muslim community. Also, the Republic of Slovenia provides for comprehensive observance of the religious freedom of individuals and groups of individuals in hospitals, health resorts, prisons, military barracks and other institutions where the movement of the persons present is limited or prevented. In these institutions the Islamic Community has a full right to provide religious spiritual care according to the sectoral regulations.¹³⁶

The agreement includes freedom to establish close contacts with the IC in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as this has been one of the important issues for the Muslim community in Slovenia. Although fully integrated and equal citizens of the country, Slovenian Muslims still tend to see Bosnia as their motherland, or spiritual 'centre'. Furthermore, the IC is permitted to establish contact and cooperate with other institutions and organizations either in the Republic of Slovenia or elsewhere in the world. As seen from the activities of the Mufti in Ljubljana, it appears that these provisions are fairly respected by the government. The *Mufti* is a member of the *Rijaset* in Sarajevo and his officials regularly attend meetings with their counterparts in other parts of the region, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

¹³⁶ *Agreement on the Legal Status of the Islamic Community in the Republic of Slovenia* (Ljubljana, Government of Slovenia, 2007) <www.uvs.gov.si/fileadmin/uvs.gov.si/.../sporazum_-_isl.sk._-_ang.doc> [accessed 27 May 2009].

As there is a constitutional separation between state and religion, the activities of religious communities are not directly financed by the government. However, the employer's social security contribution for religious officers with no other profession is subsidized by the government up to 60% of its value and the Islamic Community is no exception.¹³⁷ Also, it is evident that the government morally supports the Islamic Community, especially after the appointment of the *Mufti* Nedžad Grabus in 2006. Through regular meetings and audiences, the government is trying to build a strong and stable relationship with the IC.

The reasons why the predominantly Catholic states such as Slovenia and Croatia tend to support religious communities lie in a general feeling prevailing after the collapse of Communism that the role of religion had to be rearranged within the society. This has also been a sign of an approach to democratic values and Western societies, as the Balkan states have for the last several decades expressed their desire to join the European Union and NATO. Another important reason is the influence of the Vatican, which required special agreements with the governments in regulating religious affairs. Of course, the main beneficiary of such development has been the Catholic Church and its employees, whose numbers, compared with other religious communities, prevail. As the state had to regulate and treat religious communities equally, the Islamic Community, along with others, has financially benefited from the state of affairs described above.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Črnič and Lesjak, p. 356.

¹³⁸ By 31 March 2005, the Government had completed 34,465 (90 percent) of the 38,156 denationalization claims filed. In 2004, the Government reallocated existing resources to reduce the backlog in cases, and there was improvement in speeding up resolution of cases. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51581.htm>> [accessed 22 December 2008].

2.2.1.5. Media

As the Islamic Communities of Slovenia and Croatia do not own any media outlets, their activities are mainly followed by other media. The officials of the IC in Croatia regularly contribute to two TV shows, '*Ekumena*' and '*Duhovni izazov*' (Spiritual challenge), and two radio shows '*Duhovna misao*' (Spiritual thought) and '*Susret u dijalogu*' (Encounter in dialogue). Both Islamic Communities administer their official web sites, which provide information about their activities and Muslim cultural organizations. A number of *medžlises* also administer their own websites. There is also widespread use across the region of online presentation as an inexpensive instrument for broadcasting information about the Islamic Communities.

In Slovenia the activities of the IC and Islam are presented two-sidedly. The officials of the IC are mostly satisfied with media treatment, as their meetings with state officials, representatives of local government, and other dignitaries have been regularly and fairly followed. The celebration of the *Qurban 'Īd* festival in 2008 was broadcast on several TV stations. The secretary general of the IC, Nevzet Poric, confirmed his contentment with the media.

On the other hand, some researchers claim that Islam is often presented in a negative way. Thus Ahmed Pašić, a Slovenian Muslim writer argues that

‘in almost ninety percent (88%) of the articles in Slovenian daily press, Islam is presented with prejudices and partial misleading of the public. In 36.2% of articles there are many words with negative and threatening implication such as terrorism, fundamentalists, murderers, non-democracy, rebellion, war, guerrillas, violence,

aggression, threat, talibanization, rule of Islam, expansion, rigour, lack of democracy in Islam, etc.’¹³⁹

It seems that some media, especially government owned TV stations, report fairly on the Islamic Community and Islam in general. They mainly follow the attempts of the government to treat religious communities, and Islam in particular, equally. Yet, the press is more focused on the bestselling headlines, which often pinpoint the affairs of Muslims in a negative context. This has been especially evident in the post-9/11 period. One can also notice that Slovenia and Croatia have not been an isolated case, but this practice is more generally applied, as we shall see later, throughout the region.

Discrepancy between the opinions of religious leaders and some independent researchers is not characteristic of Slovenia alone, but is apparent across the region. Religious leaders in most cases see the current state of affairs as temporary, being more patient in looking for a change. They also tend to have a gradual but persistent approach towards issues and solutions related to their respective communities. The cautiousness in their statements sometimes generates disagreements and critiques from more orthodox groups. On the other hand, independent researchers see their articles as an academic, one-off project, stating the current state of affairs, without looking beyond it at possible consequences.

¹³⁹ Ahmed Pašić, *Islam and Muslimani in Slovenia*, unpublished materials obtained from the author.

2.2.2. Croatia

According to the 2001 census there were 56,777 Muslims in Croatia out of a population of 4,437,460. Most of the Muslims are Bosniaks (20,755) and Kosovars (15,082).¹⁴⁰ Religious life is organized through the *Mešihat* of the Islamic Community of Croatia and Slovenia, formed in 1990 on the basis of the new constitution of the IC of Yugoslavia. Four years later, the IC followed the disintegration of the Yugoslav state, and a *Mešihat* of the IC in Slovenia was formed. The IC in Croatia consists of the *Sabor*, and the *Mešihat* as an executive body headed by a *Mufti* with a seat in Zagreb. A *Medžlis*, as an organizational unit of the IC, covers several towns or region(s). There are thirteen *medžlises* with two mosques and eighteen *mesdžids*.¹⁴¹ More than half of the *medžlises* are situated on the Adriatic coast where Muslim construction workers from Bosnia and confectioners from Kosovo and Macedonia settled in the 1960s and 1970s.

2.2.2.1. Construction of mosques

Croatian Muslims have only two mosques, one in Zagreb and the other in Gunja, which were constructed before the 1990s. The *Zagrebačka* mosque and the Islamic Centre built in 1987 is a focal point for the religious and cultural activities of Croatian Muslims. The Centre organizes international competitions in *Qur'ānic* recitation, symposiums and conferences. Within the precincts of the Mosque is the *Dr. Ahmed Smajlović medresa*, established in 1992 with over a hundred students.

¹⁴⁰ Alibašić (2007), p. 5.

¹⁴¹ The *medžlises* are: Dubrovnik, Gunja, Labin, Osijek, Poreč, Pula, Rijeka, Sisak, Slavonski Brod, Split, Umag, Varaždin and Zagreb.

Apart from the mosques, there are nineteen *mesdžids* of which twelve have been purchased in the last two decades.¹⁴² While the purchase of the *mesdžid* premises face fewer administrative obstacles, Muslims are experiencing difficulty in obtaining permission to build a mosque with a minaret. A distinct example has been a mosque in the south-western city of Rijeka where permission and an appropriate location were pending for more than two decades. However, after the granting of the permission for the Rijeka mosque, it is now easier for other mosque projects to materialize. Plans are under way to build mosques in the cities of Sisak, Osijek and Pula, where locations have been secured.

The purchase of places of worship in the last two decades demonstrates a significant development for the IC. As is the case with Slovenia, the reasons for such a status lie in improved general economic conditions and in the number of Bosnian-Muslim refugees who have remained indefinitely in the country. Many of them tend to organize their religious life through a mosque/*mesdžid* building project. Finally, the IC, led by *Mufti* Šefko Omebašić, has mainly maintained a good relationship with the local population and the government. With the exceptionally well-organized Islamic Centre in Zagreb, and after being granted long-awaited permission for the mosque in Rijeka, one can expect further developments in Muslim religious buildings in Croatia.

2.2.2.2. Free observance of religion and equality of religious communities

According to Aziz Hasanović, deputy head of the Islamic Community in Croatia, Muslims have more religious rights than they utilize in everyday life. There is a general feeling of an equal treatment by the state with other religious communities, particularly with the majority

¹⁴² The following places accommodate a *mesdžid*: Dubrovnik, Split, Rijeka, Zamet, Krk, Crikvenica, Pula, Vodnjan, Raša, Umag, Labin, Poreč, Sisak, Varaždin, Karlovac, Bogovolja, Maljevac, Slavonski Brod and Osijek.

Catholic Church. As an example of religious rights, Hasanović specifies excellent communication with the government, religious education in the schools and the chaplaincy activities of Muslim officials.¹⁴³ The Lepoglava prison, the largest in the country, now has its own *mesdžid* and regular *juma* prayers. While religious officers were imprisoned because of their beliefs in the second half of the 20th century, the beginning of the 21st finds them leading prayers and preaching those beliefs in the same prisons.

It seems that the rights which the Catholic Church attained through five agreements between the Republic of Croatia and the Vatican have had positive impacts on other religious groups, in this case, the Muslims. The agreements on chaplaincy in the army, prisons and hospitals, on legal issues, Catholic education in schools and nurseries, on culture and upbringing, and economic dealings, all signed in 1996, have prompted similar agreements with other religious communities, including the IC. It is also evident that the agreements with the Vatican have produced similar effects in Slovenia as well.

2.2.2.3. Emergence of Muslim solidarity institutions

An important sign of the revival of religious conscience and practice has been the emergence of institutions. Being central points on Bosnian refugees' route towards Europe, Slovenia and Croatia have naturally become places where a number of charitable organizations have been established and still operate. After the arrival of many Muslim refugees from Bosnia in 1992, *Merhamet* branches were established both in Croatia and Slovenia. Initially, the primary activity of the branches was the care of refugees. Dozens of thousands of refugees received some kind of help during the conflict years. As the war ended, *Merhamet* has changed its

¹⁴³ Personal correspondence with Aziz Hasanović, 12 October 2009.

priorities and evolved to provide financial support, healthcare provisions, employment, support for the elderly, students and orphans for the most disadvantaged Muslim residents in their respective countries. The beginnings of the *Merhamet* Society go back to 1913, when it was established in Sarajevo. The proscription of the society by the Communist regime, and its revival in the 1990s, will be discussed below in the Bosnia and Herzegovina section.

Apart from *Merhamet*, many other Muslim charitable organizations in the region were founded as a direct result of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, such as the Islamic Humanitarian Organization in Serbia and *El-Hilal* in Macedonia, both discussed in this chapter. Also, as refugees reached almost every country in Europe, some international humanitarian organizations were established or significantly developed during the Bosnian conflict. In this way Muslims in the region and beyond expressed their compassion and help towards their coreligionists.

2.2.2.4.State support

A place of worship and an officer to organize religious life and lead congregational prayers is essential for the existence of almost every religious group. While the contributions of many support the construction or purchase of a place of worship, some religious communities lack continuous maintenance for their priests/*imams*. The Croatian government seems to have recognized this condition, allocating funds for active religious officers. Thus the Islamic Community receives two annual salaries for *Imams* for every registered *džemat*. The payment is made regularly through *Mešihat*. This has resulted in a very stable and productive life for the Islamic Community in Croatia. Small Muslim communities across the country are now able to afford to have a full-time *imam* in the *džemat*, with an organized

religious life including regular congregational prayers, religious instruction and social events. Moreover, the state has recognized the *medresa* and supports it financially. Religious instructors and Muslim chaplains are also paid by the state for their work and religious communities are VAT exempt. All this support could hardly be imagined during the communist era only twenty years ago.

With the direct support towards salary costs for *imams*, Croatia has recorded a unique model of state support unprecedented in other states of former Yugoslavia. Although the Croatian state traditionally has had more lenient attitudes towards religious minorities, it can be speculated that such a degree of leniency is driven by the prospect of joining the European Union. Subsequent rights within the country can also be attributed to such an approach. Also, the traditionally dominant Catholic Church has attained significant rights in the country. This has opened the door for other religious communities to claim and obtain similar rights for their respective communities.

2.2.2.5.Registration with the State

In 2002 the IC signed an agreement with the State. The agreement provides a legal framework for unobstructed work and realization of religious rights for Muslims. It regulates the right to Islamic education in schools and nurseries, the right to Muslim chaplaincy in hospitals, army barracks, prisons, and in the police, the right to publish and to establish schools. The agreement also regulates the observance of Muslim holidays, *ḥalāl* food and Muslim funeral services, as well as the construction of mosques, marriage contracts

according to the *Shari ah* and funding for *imams*.¹⁴⁴ This contract has provided the IC, along with other religious communities, with a vast scope of rights and benefits.

Again, the Catholic Church has by tradition been very active and, as will be discussed later, even opposed anti-religious policies during the communist era. After the fall of communism the Church managed to gain significant support both from the government and from the general public. The IC has only benefited from this positive attitude towards the Catholic Church and equally has attained its share of legal rights.

2.2.2.6. Education

When the funding for *imams* had been secured, the IC could focus on its educational activities in state schools. In 2007 there were 47 religious officers teaching religious education to 4,502 pupils in 127 primary and 18 secondary schools. The teachers of religious education as a facultative subject are paid by the state. In schools where there are fewer than seven pupils, religious instruction is held in the premises of the IC and is valued and marked by educational authorities. There is no data available on the number of students attending religious instruction at the *mesdžids* and mosques during the communist era. However the Islamic Community in Croatia has never had more pupils enrolled in classes of Islamic education than now.¹⁴⁵ The significant attendance of students is supported by parents who realized, for a number of reasons, the need for religious education in the public schools. Although not sufficiently educated in religion during the communist era, the parents are now

¹⁴⁴ Ugovor Između Vlade Republike Hrvatske i Islamske Zajednice u Hrvatskoj o Pitanjima od Zajedničkog Interesa (*Narodne Novine* 196/2003).

¹⁴⁵ Hasanović, 2009.

keen for their children to attend Islamic education and fully understand the principles of their religion.

The curriculum for primary and secondary schools was drafted by the *Mešihat* of the IC and has been verified by the Ministry of Education and Sport, with whom Muslim religious authorities realize a high level of cooperation. The *Mešihat* has published textbooks, which are purchased by the Ministry and distributed to students free of charge. Issues around the interpretation of sensitive topics in Islam such as *jihād*, women's rights, corporal punishment, etc., seem not to represent any conflict between the Islamic Community and the government. Islamic education is mainly taught by graduates from the *medresa* or the Islamic College in Zagreb, who understand the circumstances under which they live and the requirements of their community. For this, among other reasons, the IC established its higher educational institution, the *Ahmed ef Smajlović medresa*, in 1992, with a curriculum and method of organization similar to other *medresas* in the region.

More than twenty full and part-time teaching staff have been employed in the *medresa*. In the academic year 2006/2007 about 20 students were enrolled. In the last fifteen years around 300 students have graduated from this institution. Many of them have been employed by the *Mešihat* as *imams* and teachers. However, the number of graduates far exceeds the required staff for the IC. In order to enable better prospects for its graduates in further education and employment, in 2007 the *medresa* was transformed into the Islamic High School. Along with four religious subjects, secular subjects will enable the students to continue their education at a number of faculties in the country and abroad. Also, those wishing to pursue their career in Islamic studies on the basis of their religious knowledge from the Islamic High School will be able to do so.

It is obvious that wherever religious instruction exists in public schools, most religious communities benefit from this change. The IC is no exception to this. However, due to the school setting, the IC has not been able to practically test the knowledge of its pupils. This is why religious instruction during out of school hours is performed by *mu'allims(ahs)* in local mosques or other provided buildings. Religious instruction in public schools is an important step forward in breaking with the communist past, when teaching religion was completely banned from public education; a trace of this attitude can be found in states such as Macedonia, Slovenia and Montenegro, which have still not introduced religion into public schools.

All *medresas* in the region have been established predominantly for creating enough religious officers, ie. *imams*, teachers, administrative staff of the IC, scholars, etc., for their respective communities. However, in their zeal, the founding fathers of *medresas* overlooked the real need for *medresa* graduates. Thus, for instance, the Croatian *medresa* has successfully been transformed into the Islamic College, as a private school based on Islamic discipline and morale, without necessary producing religious officers. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other hand, the position of *imam* now requires a university diploma in theology, as opposed to previous practice when every *medresa* graduate was able to work as an *imam*. In this way, the Islamic community attempted to avoid mass production of its staff, improving at the same time the quality of education.

2.2.2.7. Publishing

The Muslim leadership is fully aware of the importance of and need for Islamic publications. They finally have a full right to circulate their books across the region. In some states this has resulted in a significant quantity of religious publications, while in others, this amount is restricted. The Croatian IC publishes a limited number of textbooks for the *Zagreb medresa*, religious instruction in the schools and books on the history of Islam and Muslims in Croatia. The Zagreb Islamic Centre has for the last four years distributed a bulletin which provides information about activities and news at the centre. The bulletin also contains *shari'a* rules and *khutba* sections. Activities of both the Slovenian and Croatian communities are mainly presented through their websites and regular contributions from the *Preporod* newspaper printed in Bosnia and distributed worldwide.

The small number of Muslims and availability of various religious publications from Bosnia are most likely to be the reasons why publishing has not developed in countries such as Croatia and Slovenia. Also, in the last two decades these countries have prioritized strengthening the organizational units of the IC, *džemats*, building/purchasing new Islamic centres, as was the case with Ljubljana, and educational projects, as was the case with the *Zagreb medresa*. As a result it is unlikely that in the near future any major developments in the field of publishing will occur in Croatia or Slovenia.

2.2.3. Serbia excluding Kosovo

According to the 2002 census, there are 239,658 Muslims in Serbia out of a population of 7,498,001. Most of them are Albanians from Kosovo and Bosniaks from Sandžak and Bosnia. There also Muslim groups of Gorani, Muslim Roma, Aškali and others. Prior to the

1990s, Muslim communities were organized through the Islamic Community of Serbia with its seat in Priština the capital of the predominantly Albanian region, now country of Kosovo.

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the independence of Kosovo during the 1991-2008 period, the area of Serbia was divided, as far as Muslim organizational units are concerned, into three independent organizations. During the 1990 events, the Belgrade *Mufti* district detached itself from the IC in Priština so as to establish a separate Islamic Community of Serbia and proclaim a new *Reis-ul-Ulema* in 2006. It founded a *medresa* in Belgrade in 2001. The main activities are run around the *Bajrakli* mosque, one of the two mosques surviving from Ottoman times in Serbia. There had been requests by the Belgrade Muslim community to build more mosques in the city. The Belgrade *Mufti* district coordinates activities for the ten *medžlises* and more than forty *džemats* in the wider area of Serbia.

The *Mešihat* of the Islamic Community of Sandžak was established in 1993 and cares for the needs of Muslims, mainly Bosniaks in Sandžak, but has its activities in the Preševo valley, Vojvodina and other parts of Serbia.¹⁴⁶ The organization has strong links with the IC of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its *Mufti* is a member of the Bosnian *Rijaset*. The *Mešihat* founded *Gazi Isa-begova medresa*, the Islamic Pedagogic Academy, and supported the International University in Novi Pazar, established in 2002. It has its own publishing house, *El-Kelimeh*, and publishes a monthly newspaper, the *Glas Islama* (Voice of Islam).

¹⁴⁶ For the purpose of this research the Sandžak area is placed in the Serbia section. However, the area of Sandžak covers parts of southern Serbia, with six, and northern Montenegro, with five, municipalities. According to the 2002 and 2003 censuses in Serbia and Montenegro the total population of Sandžak was 420,259. The population of the Serbian part of Sandžak was 235,567, while the population of the Montenegrin part of Sandžak was 184,692.

There is also an Islamic Community of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa in southern Serbia, serving a 100,000- strong Albanian community.

2.2.3.1. Equality and the state support

Muslim religious practices are generally not impeded by the state. This is evident from Muslim organizational and personnel improvement in the last two decades as well as regular contact between officials from both sides. Religious education for Muslim children is organized in state schools wherever it is required, and teachers for Islamic instruction are paid by the Ministry of Faith. However, there is a noticeable involvement of state officials in the internal conflict between the Belgrade *Mufti* and the Sandžak IC.

According to *Mufti* Zukorlić of the Sandžak region, the state is supposed to recognize only one Islamic Community in Serbia. Yet apparently, the government favours the installation of a new IC leadership, interfering thus directly in the affairs of the Muslim religious organization.¹⁴⁷ He also believes that the IC is not equal with the Orthodox Church in this matter. The internal cohesion and integrity of the latter is protected and nurtured by the state, while in the case of the IC, political motives have played a major role in the violation of the Muslim organization structure.¹⁴⁸ The consequences of these developments are to be seen.

There is a level of inequality in the armed forces as well. As there are only Serbian Orthodox chaplains at army chapels, military personnel of other faiths observe their major religious holidays outside the army barracks. This is the case with some other Yugoslav states such as

¹⁴⁷ Mirnes Kovač, 'Nakon prvih izbora u objedinjenoj Islamskoj zajednici u Srbiji –Sandžak: Nova Energija za Novi Razvoj', *Preporod*, 15 July 2008, p. 11.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Slovenia and Croatia. The reasons for such treatment could be in the relatively small number of Muslims in the Armed Forces when compared with the majority.

Religious communities are tax-exempt, and although there is no state religion, the Orthodox Church has had privileged treatment over other religious groups. 'The Government continued to collect money from postal charges for the construction of a large Serbian Orthodox church and to subsidize salaries for Serbian Orthodox clergy working in Kosovo and internationally.'¹⁴⁹ There also have been complaints that the Government has double standards towards the Orthodox Church and the Islamic Community. The state, for instance, has donated a hotel building near to the monastery of Sopoćani to the Orthodox Church, while the properties within the precincts of the hotel have been requested by the Islamic Community to be returned as a *waqf* to their pre-1945 owner, i.e. the IC.¹⁵⁰ On the other hand more than three hundred students of the two *medresas* receive monthly scholarships, along with seven hundred from the Orthodox and thirty five from Catholic seminaries. The Ministry of Faith supports the IC's educational institutions, partly subsidizing maintenance costs of the *Medresa* students, providing scholarships for twenty students at the Faculty for Islamic Studies and paying for pension funds for some lecturers. The Ministry of Faith has recognized these schools as institutions of national significance. The IC has benefited through this scheme more than any religious community, as the number of its students in terms of percentages far exceeds the Orthodox. Also, the bimonthly *Glas Islama* magazine is sponsored with a thousand euro per month.

¹⁴⁹ *International Religious Freedom Report 2007* (Washington: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2007) <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90198.htm>> [accessed 1 August 2008].

¹⁵⁰ D. Bašović, *Srbija Gura Problem Sandžaka Pod Tepih –Intervju sa Muamer ef. Zukorlićem* (Novi Pazar, Mešihat Islamske Zajednice, 2009). <http://www.islamskazajednica.org/index.php?option=com_ezine&task=read&page=2&category=11&article=2123> [accessed 1 August 2008].

This could be seen as a noteworthy gesture from the state, which in some way it is, bearing in mind that such support could not have been envisaged thirty years ago. However, according to the secretary general of the *Mešihat*, Samir Skrijelj, this support is a symbolic gesture towards the Islamic Community, as the Orthodox Church receives far more funding than any other religious community.¹⁵¹ Thus, for instance, the Ministry of Faith fully subsidizes most expenses of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) religious schools in Serbia, Montenegro, Republic of Srpska and Kosovo, as well as the printing this Church's documents. It is not clear why the government in some cases does not approach the two communities equally. It may believe that the Orthodox Church represents not only an organized religious institution, but also embodies, as a bearer of culture and tradition, the very essence of the Serbian identity. At the same time, the Islamic Community has been seen as a remnant of the Ottoman past, to which the majority of the society has an adverse attitude.

2.2.3.2. Education

The Sandžak-based *Mešihat* has arguably been the most successful *Mešihat* in the region during the last two decades. It comprises six *medžlises* and more than a hundred *džemats*. Led by its chairman and *mufti* for the Sandžak region, Muhammed ef. Zukorlić, the *Mešihat* re-established the fifteenth-century *Gazi Isa-begova medresa* in 1990. The most significant educational institution of the Sandžak region has been restored forty five years after it was closed by the Communist regime.

¹⁵¹ Personal correspondence with Samir Skrijelj, the Secretary General of the Islamic Community in Serbia, made on 20 March 2009.

As a substitute for several Muslim schools in the region closed by or after WWII, the *Mešihat* expanded the *medresa's* programme to include women's sections in Novi Pazar and Rožaje. The *medresa's* graduates continue their university studies in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Libya, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. A number of students have secured places at the University of Al-Azhar through the *Mešihat*. The above countries are also the main destinations of students from other Yugoslav states. However, due to the financial difficulties a large proportion of students experience while studying abroad, the *Mešihat* decided to take steps towards providing its own facilities for Islamic higher education.

In 2001, the first group of 39 students enrolled in the Islamic Teacher Training College, which was later transformed into the Faculty of Islamic Studies. The College was established in Novi Pazar and offers courses in Islamic Theology and Pedagogy. The shortage of appropriate facilities and academic staff is supplemented by the *medresa's* spare rooms and the staff from the Sarajevo Faculty of Islamic Studies, whose curriculum is followed for the most part.¹⁵²

Apart from the higher institutions, the IC manages a nursery, *Revda*, which was established in 1998 with the aim of social care and Islamic education of three to seven year-old children. By 2008 the *Revda* was operating with 47 employees and 900 children. With the establishment of a nursery, the IC compensated religious education in state schools. The government introduced religious education in 2001 on a minimal basis, and since 2003

¹⁵² Subjects studied at the Academy include: *Qur'ānic* studies, *Aqā'id*, *Hadeeth*, Islamic Jurisprudence, Arabic Language, English Language, Methodology of Islamic Jurisprudence, *Da'wah*, Islamic Culture and Civilisation, Islamic Philosophy, etc.

pupils are able to attend religious instruction in the first three years of primary and secondary education. The teachers are paid by the government and use a curriculum provided by the IC.

Compared with the communist period there are significantly fewer students attending Islamic instruction in *mektebs*. Thus, for instance, in the late 1980s around twelve thousand children were enrolled in *mektebs*. In 2008 that number was three and a half thousand. Yet, over twenty four thousand children, or 90%, attend religious instruction in the state schools, along with more than a thousand enrolled in the Revda and Vildan nurseries. Also, one of the reasons for the small number of children lies in the continuous emigration of the Muslim population from the Sandžak area. There is a similar situation in the *Preševo* Valley, where in 1990 around 1,400 children were taught in the *mektebs*. In 2008 that number has been reduced to 1,200. In addition, there are nine thousand students enrolled in the public schools. The reduced number of children in the *mektebs* in both Sandžak and the *Preševo* Valley is most likely the result of parents' view that Islamic instruction in the public schools is sufficient and the *mekteb* education is not necessary.

In 2005, the first group of nine students graduated from the Belgrade Islamic College *medresa* established in 2000. The importance of this institution lies in the fact that this is the first Islamic school in Belgrade since Ottoman times. The Belgrade IC managed to sponsor a number of its graduates for further study abroad in order to return to the *medresa* as teachers and educators. Its existence, however, attracts outpourings of nationalistic and islamophobic feelings in the capital of Serbia.

In 2004, as a response to setting fire to churches in Kosovo, Serbian vandals set fire to the Bayrakli mosque and the *medresa* in Belgrade and the mosque in the southern city of Niš.

All of the classrooms, the library, dormitory and restaurant were destroyed. Because of the restoration process, the management of the *medresa* had not been able to admit any new students for two years. Although the police authorities declared that they made every effort to protect the mosque complex, and despite the fact that a number of police officers were injured during the riots, a later investigation proved that the Ministry of Interior did not react accordingly to protect the mosque and the *medresa*.¹⁵³ Moreover, the trial that took place later showed that justice was only partially fulfilled, as the sentences for the accused were minimal.¹⁵⁴

The organizational success of the post-communist Sandžak Muslims lies with a group of young enthusiasts within the *Mešihat*, mainly educated abroad. Supported by the prosperous local community and the Diaspora, they seized a relative democratic environment and managed to achieve enviable results in a very short period. Also, in most neighbouring countries, the Bosnian war had awakened religious and nationalistic feelings manifested in personal and social life. The consequences of the 1990s war on the religious conscience of Balkan Muslims will be discussed in Chapter five of this work.

The Belgrade Muslim authorities have realized that without their own educational institutions and cadre they will not be able to significantly progress in their work. Also, the fierce competition imposed by the Sandžak leadership threatened to shatter the traditionally stable position of the Belgrade *mufti*. The establishment of the *Belgrade* medresa could be

¹⁵³ About the unwillingness of the government to more significantly react to the unrests which caused the fire at the mosque see more in: the *Blic* newspaper, 8 June 2005.

¹⁵⁴ The trial of those accused of burning down the southern city of Niš Islam-aga mosque in 2004 has produced outrage in the Muslim community at the light sentences imposed. The maximum sentence that could have been imposed is 5 years in jail, but one person was sentenced to 5 months in jail, seven others were given 3 months each in jail, whilst two were freed.

seen through this prism. As will be seen, the accomplishment of both organizational units has not been an easy task. The strong opposition within the radical elements of Serbian society have often caused discomfort within, and open attacks on, the Islamic Communities.

2.2.3.3.(Re)construction of mosques

Like their counterparts in Slovenia, the Belgrade Muslims have experienced the same difficulties in building new mosques. Although the leadership of the IC sent requests to build at least four mosques to serve around a hundred thousand Muslims in the Belgrade area, the official response was that the land was not available from the local government and had to be purchased on the open market. However, according to Eldin Aščerić, the secretary general of the IC, Muslims need assistance from city authorities because it is difficult to believe that somebody would sell land for a mosque building in Belgrade.¹⁵⁵ To buy a property for religious purposes, in this case for a mosque, may not pose a problem in some western societies, but in Serbia, with a heavy burden of historical and mythological attitudes, this seems almost impossible. There is also an indirect evasion of city authorities to qualitatively respond to Muslim requests, passing responsibility from one city department to another.

In the southern part of the country, *Sandžak*, where Muslims are in a relative majority, it is evident that the building of mosques does not represent a major issue. In 1990 there were 110 mosques, and 170 in 2008. Also, in the Presevo Valley since 1990 ten new mosques have been built, totalling fifty mosques in 2008. High internal organization and support from wealthy individuals as well as the Diaspora play an important role in erecting a significant number of mosques in such a short period. It is apparent throughout the region that mosques have been built more easily in rural areas as opposed to large cities, where planning

¹⁵⁵ Personal correspondence with Elding Aščerić, the Secretary General of the Islamic Community of Serbia, made on 4 March 2008

permission is more complicated to obtain. The rural areas are also more cohesive and an amplified sense of community is more present. Of course, wherever there is a majority of one ethnic group it is much easier for the religious leaders of that group to begin a building project. In the case of Muslims, the examples of Ljubljana, Rijeka, Belgrade and Banjaluka, makes this tendency more than obvious.

2.2.3.4. Publishing

The wider area of Sandžak was to a large extent neglected during the Communist regime. This caused a significant amount of the population to migrate to Turkey, Bosnia or to the West. The consequences of such an attitude could be seen even today in a poor economic situation, inadequate infrastructure and lack of educational institutions. It seems that even after the collapse of Communism, the Serbian government did not invest enough in the region. The IC of Sandžak, bearing this in mind, has initiated a revival of cultural, educational and, of course, religious life in the area. These steps, as we have seen, were made towards education and the establishment of a number of institutions for that purpose. As a part of this educational reform the *Mešihat* founded the *El-Kelimeh* publishing house with the aim of publishing calendars, textbooks, and translations from Arabic, English and other languages, as well as publishing lectures, documentaries, and films on DVD and CD. In 2008 *El-Kelimeh* published more than 130 titles in the Bosnian language.¹⁵⁶ The titles published vary from the basics of Islam and textbooks for *mektebs*, to classical works on the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* and modern internationally recognized authors. The books as well as articles published in the magazines seem to be published without any state censorship or interference, which was common during the Communist era.

¹⁵⁶ Information obtained from <<http://www.kelimeh.com>> [accessed 12 September 2008].

The *Glas Islama* (the Voice of Islam) has been printed monthly since 1997 as the first and only Islamic magazine in Serbia. Following a similar editorial model to other Islamic publications in the region, the magazine brings local and global news about the Islamic world, information about the activities of the Islamic Community and its officials, and religious texts. 2000 copies of the *Glas Islama* are printed and distributed in Serbia and its Bośniak Diaspora. In Belgrade the IC publishes a Friday bulletin distributed free of charge in the *Bajrakli* mosque. By the end of 2008, about forty issues had been published.

Until 1990, very few publications, mostly on the basics of Islam and worship, were published and distributed in the wider area of Sandžak. This long period of the IC's inability to publish more broad religious materials has left a large gap in Islamic publications. Democratic changes have opened the whole region of former Yugoslavia, including Sandžak, to the free admission of information and resources. A large number of books from internationally recognized authors such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Abdulhalim Mahumud, Aid al-Qarni available in Arabic and English have now been translated, while local authors have written textbooks for colleges and faculties. Many of these resources have been published with the support either of local Muslim communities or of international humanitarian organizations.¹⁵⁷

Among other reasons for an abundance of Islamic books are improved communications and distribution. Although former Yugoslavia has been divided, publishers have been allowed to distribute their texts across the region. Thus, books from *El-Kalem*, *El-Kelimeh* or other publishers of religious materials could be found not only in Ljubljana, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Skopje or Podgorica, but also in the countries of Europe, America or even Australia.

¹⁵⁷ For further details see for instance: www.elkalem.ba, www.kelimeh.com.

Distribution has been facilitated by international book fairs in the region. During the communist times religious books could not be displayed in such venues; nowadays various titles from almost every Islamic discipline are displayed during any major book fair.

2.2.3.5. Emergence of Muslim solidarity institutions

It is evident that in their development the Islamic communities of the region rely, to a large extent, on inherited practice and the methods of organization from the previous periods, including the communist one. As all of them were once part of a single Islamic community, there are obvious similarities in their structure and operation. On the other hand, the experience and developments of the IC and the Muslim community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as most numerous and best organized, have been a role model for Muslim communities across the region. Through this prism the establishment of the International Humanitarian Organization (IHO) in *Sandžak* could be seen. The IHO was founded with the aim of providing necessary help to the Kosovar refugees and needy families in the Sandžak region. The Organization also distributes *qurbāni* meat to hospitals, clinics and public kitchens. The establishment of the organization came as a response to the deep financial crisis this region experienced after the Balkan conflicts and the arrival of a large number of refugees, especially from Kosovo, in 1999.¹⁵⁸

As the official ideology held a view that any increased involvement of religion in the society undermines the socialistic order of the country, no faith based charities were allowed to operate during Communism. Immediately after the collapse of the regime all the religious

¹⁵⁸ *IHO – Internacionalna Humanitarna Organizacija* (Novi Pazar: Mešihat Islamske Zajednice u Srbiji, 2008 <http://www.islamskazajednica.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=58&Itemid=36> [accessed 12 July 2008].

groups re-established their charitable organizations. The resurgence of faith-based charities has represented, not only a sign of the revival of religion as such, but also an affirmation of national feelings and belonging. Muslim charitable organizations in the countries of the former Yugoslavia have mainly been run by religious officers, i.e. *Imamas*, who, due to the nature of their profession, have been trusted by and experienced of working with, Muslim communities. However, sometimes involvement with a charitable organization during scarcity proved, rightly or wrongly, an erosion of the trust religious organizations and their officials had among the people.

2.2.3.6. Restitution

Although the 2006 law on restitution of communal and religious properties recognizes the right of the religious communities to claim back their confiscated properties, the implementation of the law seems to be very slow. In 2007 the Directorate for Restitution of Communal and Religious Property did not process any claims. The Muslim authorities in Belgrade and Novi Pazar had already made lists of the properties they are interested in. The Belgrade Muslims have applied for the recovery of mosques in Belgrade, Prokuplje, Niš and Mali Zvornik. However, while gathering information about the properties Muslims face difficulties, especially in accessing the land registry.¹⁵⁹ Also, there are instances of attempts to sell *waqf* properties to third parties, although the law forbids the selling of properties which are due to be returned to religious communities.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Drasko Djenovic, *Serbia: Very Slow Official Implementation of Restitution Law* (Oslo: Forum 18 News Service, 12 March 2007) <<http://www.forum18.org>> [accessed 13 July 2008].

¹⁶⁰ 'For example, even though the Law forbids the selling of property that should be returned to religious communities, the Novi Pazar municipal council recently tried to give a building plot that should have been returned to the Islamic community to a medical college. (When such educational institutions are built, it is normal Serbian practice for the local authority to provide a building plot free of charge.) Only a media campaign, the community thinks, stopped the sale.' Đenović, (12 March 2007).

It seems that the state has begun the legislative process of restitution under intense pressure from religious communities, particularly the influential Orthodox Church. Yet pre-election pledges by political parties have proved to be complicated to materialize once power has been attained. The large property portfolio of religious communities have changed their purposes and leaseholders, and in many instances nationalized buildings have been replaced by modern constructions. Apart from political will, the government needs a huge financial commitment to subsidize the implementation of its legislations. On the other hand, the state arguably has not been sensitive enough towards the properties of the Islamic Community.

2.2.3.7. Serbia – Vojvodina

In the northern part of Serbia, the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, most Muslims came after WWII. The larger area of this semi-independent region is inhabited by a number of ethnic groups including Serbs, Hungarians, Slovaks, Croats, Romanians and Gypsies. The majority of the Muslims came from Macedonia, Kosovo, Sandžak and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The organized religious life was established with the appointment of a first *imam*, following the proposal of the Novi Sad Muslims, in 1968. Ten years afterwards a house was bought and converted into a small *mesdžid*. During the Bosnian war a large number of refugees arrived in Vojvodina. In 2001, the Islamic Community in Novi Sad received a request from the second largest city of the Subotica Muslims to discuss with the authorities the problem of a Muslim cemetery and prayer room. The same year a house was bought and adapted as a *mesdžid*.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ *Historija Islamske zajednice Vojvodine* (Novi Sad: Islamska Zajednica u Srbiji, 2008)
<<http://www.islamvojvodina.com/11history.htm>> [accessed 22 June 2012].

Also, in 2004, the Muslims of Beočin purchased land for their *mesdžid* project. At the moment *jumua* prayers are held in a rented space. There is also a *mesdžid* in the town of Veliki Rit bought in 2005. All *mesdžids* are managed through the voluntary work of committee boards with paid full-time *imams*. A similar practice of voluntary work by the management and a paid *imam* position is followed across the region. In August 2008 the first mosque was purposely built in the northern city of Subotica. The name of the mosque, *al-Muhadžira*, stands as a reminder of the recent arrival of four thousand of Kosovar refugees in the city. The construction of the mosque has been a result of the persistent work of around seven thousand Muslims and their relatively good relationship with the local authorities.¹⁶²

No Muslim publications are produced in Vojvodina. Most Muslim literature and press is imported from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sandžak, Kosovo and Macedonia. Also, owing to relatively recent immigration, Muslims in Vojvodina do not claim any nationalized religious properties. Muslims are generally free to practice their religion and are considered equal to other religious groups. They do not face difficulties in registering with the state. Although the Muslims of the *Mufti* district in Vojvodina supported several thousands of Bosnian refugees in the 1990s, there is no officially registered Muslim humanitarian organization.

The current multilayer context of the organization of the IC Serbia is the most complicated in the region. In a relatively small area several ethnic groups interact, mainly concentrated in the Sandžak region and Belgrade. In both difficult and different social frameworks, Muslims are trying to build their communities and protect their positions. Building new institutions and educating more students in Islamic studies, Sandžak Muslims have recorded significant

¹⁶² *Al-Muhadžira – Prva Vojvođanska Džamija* (Beograd: Politika, 2008) <<http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/tema-dana/t45454.lt.html>> [accessed 22 May 2008].

progress in the last two decades. Yet, the Muslim authorities claim that the state still interferes with the internal structure of the IC, thus dividing Muslims across political lines.¹⁶³

Although less productive in the post-communist era, the Belgrade Muslim leadership has made attempts in the last few years to break away from the communist-socialist grip by requesting more rights for its members and gradually building its institutions. However, in their task they face administrative and political difficulties due to Islamophobic/Turkophobic attitudes still present in Serbian political and social life. The exemption is Muslims in Vojvodina, who maintain relatively a fair relationship with the local authorities. This could be due to fact that the multi-ethnic society of Vojvodina is more inclined to protect minority groups.

2.2.4. Montenegro

According to the 2003 census, there were 104,197 Muslims (16.81% of the total 620,145 population of Montenegro).¹⁶⁴ Bosniaks make up 7.77% and Albanians 5.03% of the total population in the country. However, the authorities of the IC in Podgorica claim that the number of Muslims is much higher, up to 24%, as many have declared themselves Yugoslavs or Montenegrins.¹⁶⁵

The structure of the IC follows a similar pattern of organization as in Macedonia. The *Sabor* of the IC as a legislative body comprises 22 representatives of local boards. The *Sabor*,

¹⁶⁴ *Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2003 - Population, National or Ethnic Affiliation* (Podgorica: Statistical Office of Republic of Montenegro, 2004), pp. 11-17.

¹⁶⁵ Personal correspondence with Bajro Agović, secretary general of the *Mešihat* of the IC in Montenegro, on 28 March 2008.

among other ruling acts, brings the constitution of the IC, bylaws, and decisions to establish new institutions. Also, the *Sabor* oversees the work of the *Mešihat* or the executive body. The *Mešihat* of Montenegro includes thirteen local boards (*Odbor Islamske Zajednice*). All religious, educational and property affairs within the IC are managed by the *Mešihat*.¹⁶⁶

The highest religious authority is the *Reis ul-Ulema*, who represents the IC and its interests. The *Reis ul-Ulema* is elected for a period of four years. The current *Reis ul-Ulema* is Rifat Fejzić, elected by a committee in 2003 and re-elected in 2007.¹⁶⁷

2.2.4.1.(Re)construction of mosques

It is evident through the available data that communist policies towards religious communities have left long term scars in almost every region of former Yugoslavia. The process of mosque construction proved particularly difficult to realize. Muslims, along with other religious groups, faced a number of administrative barriers, particularly in urban areas where it was almost impossible to obtain building permission.¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, some areas suffered more during that period and the implementation of the adverse state stance was more evident. One of those regions without a doubt was Montenegro. Thus for instance, in 1948 there were ninety-nine *imams* serving 69,230 Muslims (one *imam* per 700 Muslims) in Montenegro. Compared with 2003, when there were seventy *imams* for 104,105 Muslims (one *imam* per 1,487 Muslims), it can be observed that during the Communist period there was a significant level of stagnation in the development of Muslim religious life. This was achieved through a number of actions, as has been stated before, such as the closing of all

¹⁶⁶ *Organizacija Islamske Zajednice* (Podgorica, 2011)<<http://www.monteislam.com/organizacija-islamske-zajednice>> [accessed 25 June 2012].

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Mustafa Spahić, 20 October 2009.

medresas, confiscation of *waqf* properties and restriction of mosque (re)building.¹⁶⁹

However, in the last two decades, more than forty new mosques have been built, while a number of mosques are under construction or are being restored.¹⁷⁰ There are instances of the restoration of mosques seventy years after they were destroyed.

For instance, in 1931 the *Marinarve* mosque was destroyed, and preparations for its restoration are under way. The *Osmanagića* mosque in Podgorica was seriously damaged in 1943 and has been restored recently. The *Sultanija* mosque in Plav had been used for various non-religious purposes for seventy years and now has been renovated and returned to its original purpose. A similar situation exists with the Nova mosque in Gusinje, the *Husein-pašina* mosque in Pljevlja and other mosques in this town.¹⁷¹

The reasons for the increase in the (re)construction of mosques lies in the democratic changes in the government and better economic conditions of local Muslims. Since 1996 Montenegrin governments have distanced themselves from the Serbian socialist leadership in seeking independence and integration into the European Union. The authorities have thus become more sensitive towards the religious and ethnic needs of major minority groups. Religion, as such, is no longer anathema any more, and religious practice and its manifestations have now been seen as a common feature. This position has evolved in all countries of former Yugoslavia. Also, due to the generally improved economic situation in the country and significant financial support from the larger Diaspora, Muslims have been

¹⁶⁹ Bajro Agović, *Istorijat Islamske Zajednice u Crnoj Gori* (Sarajevo: Islamska Zajednica u BiH) <http://www.rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=232> [accessed 28 July 2008].

¹⁷⁰ In the Islamic Community Board (*Odbor* or *Medžlis*) of Rožaja alone around twenty new mosques have been built in the last ten years. Agović, 2008.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

able, in a relatively short period, to update the network of mosques, *mesdžids*, *mektebs* and other buildings for their religious needs.

2.2.4.2. Publishing

Publishing activities have not been developed in Montenegro, as is the case with the bordering region of northern *Sandžak*. It is not clear why this is the case, as both organizations have approximate numbers of members and are operating in similar circumstances. A level of general organization and managerial abilities may have placed the *Sandžak* authorities (Northern Sandžak) in the advantaged position. However, the IC of Montenegro publishes its monthly magazine *Elif* in the Bosnian and Albanian languages. This magazine brings Islamic educational and informative texts as well as a number of interviews with Muslim leaders, intellectuals and '*ulama*'. The editorial team consists of employees of the *Mešihat*, supported by correspondents from the region. Along with *Elif*, the association for the study, preservation, and presentation of cultural and historical heritage of Bosniaks of Montenegro, publishes the *Alamanah*, its eponymous title in the Bosnian language. According to a number of Muslims, these relatively high-quality publications fulfil the needs of the Montenegrin Muslim community. *Glas Islama* from Serbia and the *Preporod* from Bosnia and Herzegovina are also regularly distributed. The same situation is found with books, which are mainly imported from neighbouring countries.

The Montenegrin IC follows a similar pattern of informing and educating members about its activities, and about Islam in general. In all cases the IC seized an opportunity as soon as the influence of communism had waned and freedom of speech and writing are re-affirmed, to embark upon the task of editing and publishing its own magazines. Also, the IC has mainly

used its own relatively well-educated officials and other *medresa* graduates either to lead or contribute to the quality of magazines and newspapers.

2.2.4.3. Education

It is not clear why the Montenegrin government has not yet introduced religious education in public schools. Gojko Perović, an Orthodox seminary rector, explains why the state has not recognized the Seminary and the *medresa* in Montenegro. He believes that disinterest in religious affairs among the state officials is one of the main reasons for such an attitude. Although state officials are generally inclined towards an increased presence of religion within society, some of them are still afraid of religion as such, thus leaving the solution of these problems for the future.¹⁷² As religious instruction in public schools is still uncertain, the Islamic Community has continued and improved religious education in more than a hundred *mektebs* throughout the country. In addition, the IC has invested a large amount of energy and funding in the new *medresa*.¹⁷³

The IC leadership hopes that the *medresa*, as the biggest single project run by the IC, will generate an increased interest in Islam among the young people. Completed in 2008, this is a multipurpose Islamic Centre with the total area of 3000 m². A dormitory for students, kitchen and dining rooms, eight classrooms for education in the Bosnian and Albanian languages,

¹⁷² Gojko Perović, *Bogoslovija i Medresa Zvanično Van Zakona* (Podgorica: IH4C portal, 2008) <<http://in4s.net/stari/drugi-pisu/67-drugi-pisu/4044-bogoslovija-i-medresa-zvanino-van-zakona>> [accessed 24 June 2012].

¹⁷³ *Historija Medrese* (Podgorica: Islamska Zajednica Crne Gore, 2011) <<http://www.monteislam.com/historija-medrese>> [accessed 24 June 2012].

library and sport facilities are provided for an increasing number of students interested in Islamic studies.¹⁷⁴ In 2008 fifty-four male students began their studies.

All *medresas* in the former Yugoslav republics follow the same pattern, in which students enrol after eight years of primary education. During the four-year period spent at the *medresa*, students are introduced to traditional Islamic subjects such as: *Ḥadīth*, *Tafsīr*, *Fiqh*, *qiraat ul Qur'ān*, the history of Islam and '*Aqā'id*'. Apart from religious subjects there are also more general ones such as history, maths, science, etc., which enable students to continue their education and pursue their career in either a religious or non-religious environment. In addition, several languages are taught at *medresa*, commonly Arabic and English, but sometimes also Albanian, Turkish and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian.

The *medresa* in Montenegro is another educational project of the Balkan Muslims, which promises further organizational development of the Islamic Community and growth in Muslim religious practices. The construction of this school was funded by the Turkish International Development Agency (TIKA), Islamic Development Bank from Jeddah, the House of *Zakāh* from Kuwait and the Red Crescent from the United Arab Emirates. However, as there was little support for its construction, it seems that the significance of the *medresa* has not yet been recognized by the wider Muslim population in the country. The following years will show whether this institution will follow the example of other *medresas* in the region in terms of their identification and success.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Agovic, 2008

2.2.4.4.State suport

The state has recently supported the IC in a number of cases. When the IC applied for a donation from the Mohammed bin Rashid Foundation for the *medresa* project, the government of Montenegro guaranteed the legitimacy and the genuineness of the IC. Also, the president, Filip Vujanović, personally wrote to the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency to support the *medresa*.¹⁷⁶ These and other examples prove the positive attitude of the Montenegrin government towards its minority citizens.

2.2.4.5.Restitution

In 2007 the Ministry of Finance began the process of the restitution of confiscated religious properties in Montenegro. Religious communities were given a deadline of three months to provide the details of all nationalized properties that belonged to religious endowments. The IC of Montenegro, through its commission for *waqf* properties, submitted a part of the requested documentation. However, it has complained that the period of three months was too short to collect information about the *waqf* properties confiscated at various times and under suspicious circumstances in the last seventy years. It seems that the government, although it has started the process of restitution, is attempting to avoid a complete return of the vast property portfolio of religious communities. Even so, some local organizational units of the IC have succeeded in securing the return of certain *waqf* properties as a small proportion of what is due to be restituted.

¹⁷⁶ T. Pavićević, *Prva Vjerska Škola Islamske Zajednice Biće Otvorena u Ponedjeljak u Milješu u Malesiji* (Sarajevo: Rijaset BiH 2008).
<http://www.rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5099:medresa-u-crnoj-gori-na-koju-se-ekalo-cijeli-vijek&catid=253:aktuelnosti-kat&Itemid=184> [accessed 2 December 2008].

2.2.5. Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina is the state with the highest Muslim population of the former Yugoslav republics. The majority of Muslims are of indigenous Bosniak ethnicity. In the 1991 census there were 1,902,956 Muslims out of a total population of 4,377,033 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Seventeen years after the census, and thirteen years after the end of the Bosnian war, there is no official data about the current population of this country. As a result of the war, Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into two entities: the Federation of BiH, which includes both Bosnian Croats and the majority Bosnian Muslims (Bošniaks); and the Republic of Srpska with the Bosnian Serb majority.

The Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina was officially (re)established in 1993 and relied on the 1909 *Štatut* for Autonomous Administration of Islamic and *Waqf*-Educational Affairs. The organization succeeded in maintaining its basic activities and developed under the extremely hard conditions during the 1992-95 war. The Islamic Community has the legislative and executive bodies *Sabor* and *Rijaset*, regional organizational units or *mufti* districts,¹⁷⁷ and legal-administrative offices. The *Rijaset*, lead by *Reis-ul-Ulema*, has fifteen members: *muftis* (4), directors and deans (2), and prominent Muslims not working within the IC (2). The heads of *mešihats* (3) director of the *Waqf* Directorate, deputy of the *Reis-ul-Ulema* and secretary general are permanent members not elected by the *Sabor*. Other important bodies include the Religious-Educational Office, Departments for *hajj* and Diaspora.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Mufti districts are in Banja Luka, Goražde, Mostar, Sarajevo, Travnik, Tuzla and Zenica. There is also a *Mufti* for the religious requirements of Muslims in the Army.

¹⁷⁸ *Službe Rijaset* (Sarajevo: Islamska Zajednica u BiH) <<http://www.rijaset.ba>> [accessed 24 June 2012]

2.2.5.1.(Re)construction of mosques

According to the IC's data, there are approximately 1,700 mosques and *mesdžids* in the country. During the aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bosnian Serb and Croat military planners, wishing to eliminate the Muslim material heritage, carried out a systematic demolition of more than 650 mosques and *mesdžids*. Another 530 were damaged.¹⁷⁹

After the war the Muslim communities began a process of restoration of the majority of mosques. In the part of Bosnia under the Serb control that process has faced various administrative and political barriers. The most obvious example is the *Ferhadija* mosque in Banja Luka, where a number of Bošniak returnees continue to make attempts to rebuild this mosque destroyed by Serbs in 1993. In many other places from which the Muslims were expelled, the reconstruction of the mosques represents a first step towards their return to their pre-war homes.¹⁸⁰ As the local, and in some cases regional, authorities, do not look at the return of Bosnian Muslims favourably, their first opposition is expressed towards the reconstruction of mosques. This consequently causes tension, administrative barriers, and repeated attacks on returnees, and on mosques as symbols of the return.

Thus in the Mostar area, where city and some municipal authorities have not allowed the Muslim community to rebuild or construct new mosques in Croat-dominated areas, Muslims are forced to start their construction works without official permission. *Mufti* Seid Smaikić of Mostar complained that, 'building a mosque east of Mostar, towards towns such as Čapljina and Stolac, conflicts with the 'ethnically clean' concept that some politicians have. When we

¹⁷⁹ Ahmet Alibašić, *Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Sarajevo: Bosanski Alim) <<http://www.bosanskialim.com/rubrike/tekstovi/000354R071.htm>> [accessed 13 February 2009].

apply for building permission, the administration just gives no response. So in west Mostar, we built a mosque without building permission.’¹⁸¹ Also, the Muslim authorities have been waiting for permission for a central mosque to be built in Mostar since 2000.

The number of new mosques built after the war is often subject to misinterpretation by those opposing the increased reconstruction process of the IC. The opponents come from both non-Muslims in Bosnia and abroad and from the Muslim secular elite and media. The first fear Islamization or ‘talibanization’, while the latter wish more funds to be invested in the improvement of the poor economic situation of the war-torn country. Large newly built mosques in urban areas of cities, especially in Sarajevo, are attracting much attention. Constructed with the support of foreign donations, they are changing the outlook of the city. Some western media have also seen an increased reconstruction of mosques as a sign of Islamic revival in the region.¹⁸²

However, almost 50% of the newly built mosques in Bosnia have actually been built on the sites of already existing smaller and inadequate mosques. Most of these mosques were built without a *mekteb*, the ablution and washing areas, or office space. In addition, for every newly constructed or rebuilt mosque that was destroyed during the war, the Muslim communities organize opening ceremonies, informing and inviting the public to attend. In this way, the number of new mosques seems much greater than in reality.

¹⁸¹ Drasko Djenovic, *Bosnia: To Legally Build a Place of Worship* (Oslo: Forum 18 News Service, 13 July 2006) <<http://www.forum18.org>> [accessed 13 July 2008]

¹⁸² Dan Bilefsky, ‘Islamic Revival Tests Bosnia’s Secular Cast’, *New York Times*, 27 December 2008 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/27/world/europe/27islam.html>> [accessed 23 January 2009].

2.2.5.2. Education

Religious instruction is taught in the public schools and in the *mektebs* usually attached to a mosque. Both follow a curriculum created by IC officials and, in the case of the public schools, confirmed by the Ministry of Education. Religious education in primary and secondary schools was introduced in 1993. The exception is the Sarajevo Canton where religious education was introduced in 2007.

In 2008 there were 204,840 Muslim children registered in primary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2007, 96.24% of the children attended religious instruction in 488 state schools. There are 741 teachers employed in primary schools and 132 in secondary schools. Religious education in secondary schools (beginning from fifteen years of age), is present in the Federation of BiH, and not in the Republic Srpska and the Brčko District.¹⁸³ In 2007 about 85% of secondary school pupils attended Islamic instruction, which is 5% more than in 2006. According to Ibrahim Begović, chief advisor for religious education at the *Rijaset* of the IC, there has been a steady increase in interest in Islamic instruction, particularly at primary school level.¹⁸⁴

Until 1991 there were 130,000 children enrolled in 2000 *mektebs*. In 2008 religious instruction was provided outside school hours in 1771 *mektebs*. Around 100,000 children were registered, of which 65,000 regularly attended religious instruction.¹⁸⁵ In 2007, an increase of registered pupils from 6.55% to 8.36% was recorded. Also, there has been a

¹⁸³ The Brčko District is a relatively small area around the town of Brčko belonging neither to R. Srpska or the Federation.

¹⁸⁴ Salih Smajlović, 'Vjeronauka - Bitan Faktor Kvalitetnog Odgoja – Intervju sa Ibrahim-ef. Begovićem, Savjetnikom za Vjeronauku u Rijasetovoj VP Službi,' *Islamske Informativne Novine Preporod*, 2008, 1-15 August 2008, p. 18.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Muharem Omerdić, director of the educational service of the Islamic community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 9 October 2008.

significant increase in new and refurbished *mektebs*. In 2008, 133 *mektebs* were completely renovated.¹⁸⁶

Since the introduction of religious education into the public schools, the IC has invested a significant amount of energy and resources into this segment of education. The opportunity given to religious communities after the collapse of communism has been a great challenge and responsibility both at organizational and qualitative level. The IC has established two academies in addition to the existing Faculty of Islamic Studies, prepared and published textbooks for all levels of religious instruction, and hired more than 870 qualified staff. These efforts have generated a considerable response from both parents and pupils. Also, Islamic education has benefited from the generally increased public interest in religion.

The data also shows a slight decrease in the number of *mektebs* and children attending compared with 1991. This is owing to the consequences of the war, during which over a million people were expelled from their homes and, as stated before, the destruction of hundreds of Muslim religious buildings. The decrease is particularly obvious in the parts of the Republic of Srpska where the pre-war Muslim population was between seven hundred thousand and a million, compared with present estimates of less than a hundred thousand.¹⁸⁷

Apart from the *Gazi Husrev-begova medresa*, which had continued its educational activities since its establishment in 1537, five *medresas* were (re)established in the regions with a majority Muslim population. The *Elči Ibrahim-pašina medresa* in Travnik was established in 1705, closed in 1945, and (re)opened in 1994; the *Behram-begova medresa* in Tuzla was

¹⁸⁶ Smajlović, p. 18.

¹⁸⁷ According to data from the 1991 Census.

founded around 1626, closed in 1949, and opened in 1993; the *Osman ef. Redžović medresa* in Visoko was established in 1992; the *Karadžoz-begova medresa* in Mostar established in 1557, was closed in 1918, and opened in 1995; the *Džemaluddin ef. Čaušević medresa* in Cazin established in 1867, was closed in 1918 and opened in 1993.¹⁸⁸

Although (re)established in difficult times, the revival of *medresas* should not be seen as a rushed move by local religious authorities. This process was conducted under the scrutiny of qualified members of a special board appointed by the IC to examine the real needs and possibilities of the work of new *medresas*. Also the same board, consisting of Džemal Salispahić, Subhija Skenderović, Bilal Hasanović and Omer Štulanović, thereafter proposed a united curriculum and reactivation of these educational institutions. All *medresas* follow the same, *Rijaset*-issued curriculum, and a similar pattern of internal organization.¹⁸⁹ Students are required to pay minimal monthly fees for their education and accommodation in the *medresa*'s dormitories. Education is subsidized by a share of the *zakāh* fund and donations from individuals and organizations in the country and overseas.

The data above shows two particularly difficult periods for Muslim education in the country. As it was explained in full detail in Chapter One, after WWI, Muslim religious institutions lost a large portfolio of *waqf* properties, which had mainly supported schools and mosques. The deprivation of Muslim religious foundations along with the decrease of the general Muslim population continued immediately after WWII, when the communist regime almost

¹⁸⁸ *Historijat Elči Ibrahim-pašine Medrese u Travniku* (Travnik: Islamska Zajednica u BiH, 2012) <<http://medresatravnik.com.ba/content/view/12/26/>> [accessed 24 June 2012]; *Historija* (Tuzla: Islamska Zajednica u BiH, 2012) <<http://www.medresatz.edu.ba/?jezik=BS&dio=info&naziv=historija>> [accessed 24 June 2012]; Alma Omanović-Veladžić, 'Karadžoz-begova Medresa u Mostaru' *Muallim*, 31 (2007), pp. 95-103; *Historijat Medrese* (Bihać: Islamska Zajednica u BiH, 2012) <<http://www.medresa-cazin.ba/historijat.htm>> [accessed 24 June 2012].

¹⁸⁹ The subjects taught in the *medresas* and details of their education have been explained earlier in this chapter while discussing the Montenegrin Islamic Community.

paralysed religious life in the former Yugoslavia. This resulted in the disappearance of all educational institutions of Muslim foundation, with the exception of the *Gazi Husrev-begova medresa*.

Also, an interesting point to make is that all five *medresa* (re)opened in the 1990s, during the Bosnian war. This extraordinary phase drew Muslims, as well as other peoples in the former Yugoslavia, closer to their beliefs and toward the reaffirmation of their religious and national identity. The expression of the national and religious revival in this period could be found in various aspects of life. In the case of Muslims, one of these has been the revival of traditional religious schools.

The highest educational institution is the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FIS), part of the University of Sarajevo. The FIS was founded as the Islamic Theological Faculty in 1977 by the Supreme *Sabor* of the IC.¹⁹⁰ The FIS offers four-year undergraduate and postgraduate courses in theology and Islamic pedagogy. Upon graduation, the students are awarded a diploma of 'Professor in Islamic Theology' or 'Professor of Islamic Pedagogy,' both of which are equivalent to a Bachelor's degree.

Although with a different name, aims and a completely new curriculum, the FIS relies on a long tradition of Islamic education. It is located in the premises of the High *Shari ah* School for Judges which was established in 1887. The School was banned by the Communists in 1945 and was revived in the 1990s by a generous donation from the Emir of Qatar. Again, as it was the case with the *medresas*, the major renovation works occurred during and

¹⁹⁰ *O Fakultetu Islamskih Nauka* (Sarajevo: Fakultet Islamskih Nauka) <<http://www.fin.ba/posebni-programi/o-fakultetu-islamskih-nauka>> [accessed 2 February 2008].

immediately after the Bosnian war. The influence of foreign organizations and individuals on Muslim religious life in Yugoslav states will be discussed later.

With an academic staff of 42 and more than 500 graduates since its establishment, the FIS is regarded as one of the most significant higher education institutions in the Balkans. Before the collapse of communism, most of its academic staff were educated at Al-Azhar University or at secular faculties, usually in Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo. However, the decline and disappearance of the communist regime as well as the direct effects of the Bosnian conflict resulted in many students gaining their education in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Malaysia, Jordan, the UK, the USA, Libya, Tunis, etc., which contributed towards a pluralistic educational environment at the Faculty.¹⁹¹ It is interesting how the Islamic Communities of the region managed to integrate graduates from diverse universities and intellectual orientations. The graduates have successfully blended the pluralistic institutions of their respective communities. Consequently, the Bosnian, and to a large extent Yugoslav, '*ulama*' is traditionally more open towards different interpretations of Islam, than the Muslim scholarly communities in some other areas.

Another higher institution is the Islamic Pedagogic Academy in Zenica, established in August 1993 by the decree of the *Sabor* of the IC.¹⁹² Apart from the FIS in Sarajevo, the Academy was the only higher institution of Islamic education in BiH. The establishment of the Academy came as a result of the increased interest for religion and religious education in many spheres of social life during the war. Also, the role of the Muslim international

¹⁹¹ See more in: Ahmet Alibašić, *Slovo u Pohvalu Islamskom Pluralizmu - Obrazovni i Intelektualni Profil Nastavnika i Saradnika FIN-a* (Sarajevo: Bosanski Alim 2007) <<http://www.bosanskialim.com>> [accessed 22 February 2008].

¹⁹² *Historijat* (Zenica: Islamski Pedagoski Fakultet, 2011) <<http://www.ipf.unze.ba/index.php?id=493>> [accessed 24 June 2012].

humanitarian organizations was one of the key elements for the substantial financial support for Muslim educational institutions. This was particularly evident in the region of Zenica as a free territory of the large Muslim population.

However the academy remains active more than fifteen years after its establishment. Its existence and further development show a real need for such an educational institution. The significant role of the Academy was recognized in 2002 by the parliament of the Zenica region, who began funding the Academy as a project of public interest, and by the University of Zenica, who accepted the Academy as a full member in 2004. In the same year, the Academy was transformed from a two to a three year educational institution, offering Islamic Religious Education and Social Pedagogy courses.¹⁹³

The Islamic Academy in Bihać¹⁹⁴ was founded in 1995 as a two-year course for prospective teachers of religious education in public schools.¹⁹⁵ The first generation of students was enrolled in 1996. With more than 20 lecturers, the Academy had generated 120 graduates by 2008.¹⁹⁶ The Bihać Academy had a similar development to the one in Zenica.

The main reason for the establishment of the Academies lies in the priority the IC places on educating teaching staff for religious education subjects, introduced in the early 1990s. As most of the *imams* had been already engaged in their *džemats*, in the army, or in administrative offices of non-governmental agencies, the need for qualified teaching staff

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ See more about the academy on <http://www.ipf.unbi.ba>

¹⁹⁵ Religious education was introduced in the Bihać region of Western Bosnia (Unsko-Sanski Kanton) at the end of 1992.

¹⁹⁶ The first graduation was organized in 2000 for 33 graduates; the second and third graduations were organized in 2003 and 2005 for 51 and 36 students respectively.

was recognized and supported through these courses. Also, the Faculty of Islamic Studies has continued its role of educating higher profile *imams* and officials of the IC, thus playing a major role in formulating Islamic thought in BiH. Moreover, the FIS has also significantly developed organizationally, introducing courses in Islamic Pedagogy within undergraduate studies, commencing postgraduate studies and short courses in Islamic Studies in the English language and employing more academic and non-academic staff for its activities.

Some Muslim institutions were appreciated even during communist times. Among those few has been the *Gazi Husrev-begova* library. This home of thousands of oriental books and manuscripts was established in 1537 in Sarajevo and represents the oldest library in the region. With over 80,000 volumes of books, titles, periodicals and documents in Oriental, Bosnian and other European languages, including 10,000 codices with over 20,000 works of Islamic studies and Oriental languages and literature, the library represents one of the most significant institutions not only for Balkan Muslims, but for the general public as well.¹⁹⁷

The library's work and resources were recognized by both Bosnian and Yugoslav academics, regardless of their national or religious affiliation. Thus the library's work was not interrupted by the communist regime. In 1972, the Library began publishing its almanac, *the Anali Gazi Husrev-begove biblioteke*. The almanac contains texts from Islamic studies and other disciplines related to the library's holdings, history and the cultural heritage of BiH. The library also published the first of fifteen volumes of *Catalogues of the Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Bosnian Manuscripts* in 1963.

¹⁹⁷ See more on: *Gazi Husrev-begova Biblioteka* <<http://www.ghbibl.com.ba>> [accessed 3 March 2009].

The Bosnian Muslims received much media attention during the aggression, especially by Muslim countries and Muslims in general. After the war the library, along with many other Muslim educational institutions, benefited from this attention. In 1998 the library began receiving generous support from the London-based *al-Furqan Foundation*, publishing 11 volumes of the *Catalogues*.

2.2.5.3. Emergence of Muslim solidarity institutions

As was stated earlier, the Muslim charitable society ‘Merhamet’ was founded at the beginning of the twentieth century with the aim of relieving the more evident poverty of the Muslim population in Yugoslav lands. It played a major humanitarian role during WWII, helping a large number of Muslim refugees. In 1946, the Communist regime, in accordance with its antireligious policies, banned all activities of the Society.

Yet the memory of its noble aims continued in Muslim society throughout the next half of the century and was revived in 1991 after the collapse of communism. The Society has helped refugees, orphans and the disabled, co-ordinating the humanitarian activities of many international charities and generous individuals during the Bosnian war. Almost two decades after its re-establishment, the society has managed to successfully complete numerous humanitarian appeals. Recent projects include the establishment and operation of public kitchens throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, the provision of scholarships for students of poor families, returnees and orphans, the distribution of *qurbāni* meat to needy families and

the building of polyclinics in the country.¹⁹⁸ The *Merhamet* society has also been active internationally, providing help for areas struck by earthquakes and famine.¹⁹⁹

The reasons for its rebirth can be found in the actual need for a Muslim charitable organization in the nationally defragmented and economically impoverished society on one hand, and the desire for an expression of national continuity and tradition of Muslims on the other. Apart from the *Merhamet*, a few international humanitarian organizations have established offices in Bosnia, such as Human Relief Foundation, Islamic Relief, Islamic Relief Agency, the Saudi High Commission for Aid to Bosnia, Muslim Aid and others. Their work in Bosnia is directly related to the war and their efforts to help refugees and orphans. Their significance will be analysed in the third chapter of this work.

2.2.5.4. Free observance of religion and equality of religious communities

While in some areas Muslims have full freedom to build, renovate or maintain their places of worship, in other places, like the Republic of Srpska, or areas where the majority are Croats, they face a number of administrative obstacles. Thus, for example, in the southern city of Mostar, city authorities have been obstructing the restoration of destroyed mosques for almost a decade. To avoid a long period of uncertainty, many mosques have been built without proper permission from the city authorities. The same case is found with the Ferhadija mosque in Banjaluka and many other places throughout the country. As an

¹⁹⁸ There are a number of the public kitchens sponsored by *Merhamet* in various cities and towns of BiH (Sarajevo, Tuzla, Maglaj, Kakanj, Tomislavgrad, Glamoč, Livno, Jablanica, Mostar, Gračanica, Lukavac, Kalesija, Srebrenik). Also, in 2006 *Merhamet* distributed over 65 tonnes of meat to various categories of the needy population.

¹⁹⁹ Two most successful projects have been 'Help for children of Kashmir' and a collection for the victims of the Tsunami in Indonesia.

instrument of nationalism and a campaign against the returned refugees, many mosques have been burnt, damaged, or in other ways desecrated, even after renovation.²⁰⁰

However, Muslims are not the only group who have suffered religious segregation in certain areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Cardinal Vinko Puljic complained that the Catholic Church has been waiting for planning permission to build a church in Sarajevo for last nine years.²⁰¹ He also emphasized the problems Catholics face in realizing their religious rights in the majority Muslim towns of Travnik and Bugojno.²⁰² There have also been complaints by Vladika Vasilije on the state of Orthodox buildings and returnees in the Muslim-Croat controlled parts of Bosnia. He attributed indolence on the part of the authorities in those areas for not doing enough to protect Orthodox returnees, churches and graveyards.²⁰³

Religious freedoms of all ethnic groups have been largely affected by the complexity of the current political situation in this fragile country. It is apparent that Bosnia and Herzegovina is now a divided society. Bosnian Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox Christians are living in predominantly ethnic-cleansed areas, where the majority attain more national, as well as religious, freedoms as opposed to the minority, which is often discriminated against and marginalized. It is also evident that in the Republic of Srpska, which makes up 49% of Bosnia and Herzegovina, less than 10% of the population is non-Serb, compared with the

²⁰⁰ *Za Godinu Dana 40 Napada na Džamije* (Studenac EU 2009) <<http://www.studenac.eu/najnovije/za-godinu-dana-40-napada-na-d-amije.html>> [accessed 24 June 2012]

²⁰¹ *Katolička Crkva Lako Dolazi do Dozvola za Gradnju* (Zagreb: Javno, 2009) <<http://www.javno.com/hr/svijet/clanak.php?id=223492>> [accessed 23 June 2010].

²⁰² *Susret Kardinala Puljića i Vršitelja Dužnosti Visokog Predstavnika* (Sarajevo: Katolička Tiskovna Agencija Biskupske Konferencije Bosne i Hercegovine, 2009) <<http://www.ktabkbih.net/info.asp?id=19429>> [accessed 18 October 2009].

²⁰³ Ibid.

earlier figure of 48%.²⁰⁴ The majority of the expelled population from that territory are Muslims, who found refuge either in other parts of Bosnia or in Western Europe and the USA.

2.2.5.5. Publishing

Publishing has significantly developed in Bosnia since 1990. Almost every large city has its own Muslim publications. A number of private firms have been established to print and distribute increasing numbers of Islamic books and other printed materials. However, the IC leadership has mainly relied on its own publishing house, *El-Kalem*, owned by the IC. Most textbooks for *mektebs*, *medresas* and the Faculties, the newspaper *Preporod* and other publications are printed and distributed through *El-Kalem*. Established in 1973, *El-Kalem* is among the largest publishing houses in the country with more than 600 predominantly religious books published in total. However, the organization also publishes works on cultural heritage, science, philosophy, arts and literature. Apart from Bosnian authors, many translations from western and eastern languages are also published.²⁰⁵

The work of *El-Kalem* can be observed through two periods. The first one extends from its establishment until 1990, when basic textbooks, regular publications, and some other materials were produced. This period was characterized by omnipresent censorship by the Communist party and restricted freedom to buy and distribute printed Islamic materials. After 1990, *El-Kalem* significantly expanded its publications to include various translations from internationally recognized authors on the topics of social and political Islam. Nonetheless, *El-Kalem* has been criticized on the grounds that, with its long tradition and

²⁰⁴ There is no available up-to-date information on the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the above figure is an estimate.

²⁰⁵ www.el-kalem.ba

well established organizational structure, it could have done more on publishing capital works of indigenous Bosnian 'ulama'. Also, it seems that private companies have seized an opportunity and have overtaken a large part of *El-Kalem's* publishing activities. During the communist times, *El-Kalem* had a privileged and, it is fair to say, monopolistic position in printing religious literature. In the post-communist era, the democratic changes have allowed other publishers to print and distribute religious literature as well. Naturally, this development has had positive as well as negative effects on the general state of the Muslim community. The number of Muslim books has now been increased and diversified. Prices have been cut and more books have become available to the reader. On the other hand, many publishing houses do not perform an appropriate selection of materials to publish. The only criteria have become a market value and profit. Consequently, the books published vary in topics and orientation, from Sufi, orthodox or mainstream, to Shia, *neo-salafi*, or even *Ahmadi* orientation.²⁰⁶

With the collapse of communism and the beginning of the war, a number of magazines and newspapers came into existence. Yet, many of them disappeared as suddenly as they started up, after a few months or, at best, a few years. This happened mainly due to lack of financial support or mismanagement. Of those rare publications which managed to survive the communist era and the war, which have been published continuously for the last few decades, are the *Takvim*, *Glasnik* and the *Preporod* which have been published for over forty years.

Takvim was first published in Belgrade in 1934 as a calendar for a new *hijri* year. Over the years it has evolved to include valuable texts of prominent Muslim scholars on various

²⁰⁶ I base this statement on a survey I have carried out on over a thousand publications.

Islamic topics. By 1997 *Takvim* was published by the *Ilimijja* Association²⁰⁷, when its publication was transferred to the *Rijaset* of the IC.

The *Glasnik* (Herald) of the Islamic Community was first published in Belgrade in 1933, and with a few short breaks it has been published until the present. The *Glasnik* is a place where all official acts of the Islamic Community are published: decisions, summaries of the meeting of the *Rijaset* and the *Sabor*, decrees of appointment of *imams* and other officials and annual reports of the *Rijaset* activities. Apart from these, there are texts on Islamic topics as well as articles on general and cultural history, literature, astronomy, etc.

The Islamic newspaper *Preporod* was established in 1970 as a publication of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is published bi-monthly for distribution in Bosnia (then Yugoslavia) and abroad. The intention of the newspaper is to offer all relevant information related to the activities of the institutions of the Islamic Community, as well as to inform the public about activities in *džemats*, *medžlises*, and *mufti* districts.²⁰⁸

Another noteworthy magazine with an interesting history has been Novi (New) *Muallim*. The first issue of *Muallim* was published in 2000 with a mission to ‘continue with the tradition of its name, examine the issues of rearing and education in Islamic teachings, Islamic tradition and contemporary, Islamic Community, Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as in the

²⁰⁷ The *Ilimijja* Association of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a association of *Imams*, religious teachers and other religious officers employed by the Islamic Community. It was established in 1912 with the aim of the education and social care of its membership as well as for the publishing activities. See more on: <http://www.rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=109&Itemid=248> [accessed 12 June 2011].

²⁰⁸ See more on: <<http://www.preporod.com>> [accessed 11 February 2008].

contemporary world.’²⁰⁹ The *New Muallim* relies on the tradition of its eponym published in the periods between 1910-1912 and 1990-1997. As with the previous *Muallim*, the *Novi Muallim* was established and edited by the *Ulama* association with a concentration on upbringing and education. Contributors to the magazine are specialists in pedagogy, religious education, theology, philosophy and history. It is published quarterly.

Although new projects have most often relied on the rich cultural and religious heritage of Bosnian Muslims, it is evident again that along with the departure of communism came new ideas among the intellectual circles in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As will be discussed later, the work of *imams* as teachers and educators has not only been neglected during the large part of the twentieth century, but the curriculum they followed was either inherited from pre-communist times, or was inadequately and scantily composed during the communist regime. In this light the revival of the *Novi Muallim* could be perceived as an inspiration to religious educators in the new era.

The Muslim Information and News Agency - MINA - is a part of the IC, established in 1990 with the aim of informing the public about the activities and events of the IC. MINA provides information related to Islam and the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina to radio and TV stations, daily press and other news agencies. All *hutbas* of the *Reis ul Ulema*, his *Ramadhan* and *‘Īd* messages and information about his official visits in the country and

²⁰⁹ Osman Lavić, *Osnovne Informacije of Muallimu* (Sarajevo: Rijaset Islamske Zajednice BiH, 2007) <http://www.rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2732> [accessed 12 June 2011].

abroad are distributed through the MINA. This agency also monitors the daily press and selects and archives significant materials.²¹⁰

The establishment of MINA corresponded with increased national and international activities of the office of *Reis ul-Ulema*, and the freedom to inform the public about these activities. As religion has gained more significance after the fall of communism, so the religious leaders, *imams*, *muftis* and *Reis ul-Ulema*, along with their activities and public statements, have attracted more attention.

As can be seen from the above, there are publications within the IC which were present or even established during communist times, which is the case with *Preporod*. Also, there are publications, such as *Takvim* and *Glasnik*, which have been active continuously in Bosnia and in the wider area for over 75 years. As they did not represent any major threat for the communist establishment they managed to survive through such a long period. They will be discussed further in the chapter about intellectual life.

RTV in the IC *Bir* produces and broadcasts radio programmes covering most of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is also a live programme online. The *Bir* radio station started at the beginning of 2008. The programmes on the radio are grouped into religious, educational, children and youth, music, sport, and informative-political sections.²¹¹

²¹⁰ *Muslimanska Informativna Agencija* (Sarajevo: Rijaset Islamske Zajednice u BiH, 2011) <http://rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18&Itemid=389> [accessed 24 June 2012].

²¹¹ *O Nama* (Sarajevo: Bošnjački Islamski Radio BIR, 2007) <<http://www.bir.ba>> [accessed 14 June 2009].

2.2.5.6. Army

During communist times, any idea of an organized religious life in the Army was seen as an act against the socialist state order. Devoted believers observed their religious duties secretly. Practicing Muslims also tried to avoid any food containing pork ingredients, as no separate food was prepared for them. However, after fifty years of silent repression, followers of the main religions in Bosnia have been allowed to organize their religious life within military barracks. This consists of daily prayers, *jumua* prayer, *iftars*, lectures and guest speakers.

Because of the increased interest in religion, particularly during the war, a military chaplain or *imam* was provided in almost every unit to look after the religious needs of the soldiers. As the amount of army personnel significantly decreased in the years immediately after the war, so too the number of active *imams* in the army was reduced. As of 2008, twelve *imams* are appointed by the Office of the Army *Mufti* established in 1999 and based in Sarajevo. 'The duty of an *imam* in the Office of the Army *Mufti* is to look after the religious life of the Muslims engaged in the units of the Ministry of Defence and the Army Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The work of *imams* is formulated according to the tradition of the *Imam's* position within the Islamic Community in BiH and with accordance to army chaplaincy of NATO.' There are currently twelve *mesdžids* in the Army of BiH.²¹²

²¹² *Vojni Muftiluk* (Sarajevo: Rijaset Islamske Zajednice BiH, 2007)
<http://www.rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=652> [accessed 14 June 2009]

2.2.5.7. Restitution

The *Waqf* Directorate²¹³ was registered with the state as a legal heir of the *Waqf* directorate which itself was established in 1894 and ceased to exist in 1958. The main reason for the revival of the Directorate lies in the expectation of the IC to return the majority of properties nationalized during communist times to the IC. The initial intention of the IC, to prepare itself for possible large scale restitution and to constitute the *Waqf* directorate as soon as communism fell and democratic changes occurred, was suspended by the aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, as soon as the war was over, the Directorate was (re)established in 1996 by decree of the *Sabor* to coordinate activities of the IC related to the restitution of the nationalized properties. This revival of the Directorate came as a direct result of the departure of the communist ideology that had initially confiscated a large portfolio of the *waqf* properties.

According to *Waqf* Directorate data, about 600 flats/apartments and 950 retail units were expropriated by the Communist regime.²¹⁴ The majority of these properties were nationalized during the first fourteen years of the communist rule. This was the most difficult period for *waqf* properties and ended with the closure of the first *Waqf* Directorate.

Since the first general democratic elections, the authorities have promised that religious properties will be restituted to their previous owners. However, since its (re)establishment

²¹³ The main activities of the Directorate are as follows:

- a) protection of the *waqfs* in the whole area of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Diaspora and affirmation of the institution of *waqf*.
- b) Establishment of new *waqfs* through bestowment of properties and other funds.
- c) Legal advice to *medzlis* related to *waqfs*
- d) Legal actions before domestic or international courts to protect *waqfs*
- e) Appointment and supervision of *waqf* trustees
- f) Supervision of any transaction or transformation of the *waqfs*

²¹⁴ Vildana Selimbegović, 'Zašto Rijasetu Smetaju Otkupi za 1 Marku', *BH Dani*, 28 April 2000. < <http://www.bhdani.com/arhiva/152/t1527.htm> > [accessed 14 June 2009].

the *Waqf* Directorate has in vain insisted on a law for restitution. The *Rijaset* even sent a memorandum to the Presidency of BiH in 1997, requesting the denationalization of *waqf* properties.

The chairman of the *Waqf* Directorate, Nezim Halilovic, complained that the current authorities are not willing to pass restitution laws and intend to sell the *waqf* properties to their existing users. Moreover, the Constitutional Court of the Federation of BiH in 2007 supported the law on the purchase of the *waqf* properties. Halilovic believes that personal interests of the political representatives, along with their lack of justice and morals are the main reasons behind this.²¹⁵

Also, in the Brčko District, Mustafa Gobeljić, the chief *imam*, criticized the attitude of the local authorities towards the IC and the Catholic Church. Pointing out the inequality of the former two with the Orthodox Church, Gobeljić complained that the local authorities have not returned any of the *waqf* properties so far either to the IC or the Catholic Church, while the Orthodox Church has retrieved all their properties.²¹⁶

Although some instances indicate that the local authorities have seceded properties to their previous owners, the lack of legislation is the main frustration, not only for the IC authorities, but also for all religious communities. Bearing in mind the value and importance

²¹⁵ Suad Mahmutović, 'Višedecenijsko Uništavanje Vakufa u Bosni i Hercegovini', *Novi Muallim*, 29 December 2007, pp. 26-31.

²¹⁶ *Nejednak Tretman Islamske Zajednice u Distriktu Brčko* (Sarajevo: Islamska Zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini, 2008) <http://rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4867:nejednak-tretman-islamske-zajednice-u-distriktu-brko&catid=253:aktuelnosti-kat&Itemid=184> [accessed 9 September 2008]

of these properties, it is expected that this struggle for the religious communities will continue without foreseeable result.

While to a great degree impoverished and organizationally weakened during and immediately after WWII, the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of Yugoslavia has rapidly consolidated its organization and activities. The first noteworthy steps were made during the 1970s with the establishment of several institutions existing as of 2008. The IC used the first democratic changes to revitalize the institutions that had existed prior to the communist regime and to introduce new ones required by contemporary Bosnian Muslims. Although almost all the changes occurring in the last two decades came as a result of the freedoms religious communities and the general public have attained after the collapse of communism, this could not have been achieved without a strong intellectual base and slow but steady material support from the grassroots organizational units (*dzemats*), which had existed and developed since 1970.

The Bosnian war has left serious wounds on the Bosnian Muslim community, destroying a large network of religious buildings and causing thousands of people to leave their homes. Yet, it has also acted as a catalyst for the revival of Islamic institutions and of a Muslim conscience, not only in Bosnia, but in the region as a whole.

2.2.6. Macedonia

The majority of 650,000 Macedonian Muslims are Albanians and they constitute more than a quarter of the two million population. Other ethnic groups include the Turks (77,959), Gypsies (53,879) and Muslims of Slav origin (17,018).²¹⁷ They are organized through the united Islamic Community lead by the *Reis-ul-Ulema*. The Islamic Community has four main organizational bodies: the Institution of the *Reis-ul-Ulema*, the Executive Council (*Meclisi Sura*), the Financial-Legal Council (*Meclis*) and the *Mufti*'s Offices. The Executive Council consists of 23 members and is responsible for religious education, science and culture, information and publications, administrative sector and the *waqf* directorate. Among them are *muftis*, the director of *medresa*, dean of the Islamic Faculty, and lay experts in various spheres of life, appointed directly by the *Reis-ul-Ulema*. The *Reis-ul-Ulema* is elected for five years by the *Election Council* of 41 members.²¹⁸

The needs of 520 and 690 *mektebs* fulfil the *Isa-bey Medresa* in Skopje established in 1984 and the Faculty of Islamic Studies founded in 1998. There is also a university in Tetovo with courses in the Albanian language. In 1997 the number of full-time students was between 250 and 270.

It is important not to get involved in ethno-national misunderstandings among the Macedonian citizens but to restrict this research to development of religious practice and identity. Although, it is an important factor in the developing Muslim identity in this country,

²¹⁷ *Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia* (Skopje: The State Statistical Office Dame Gruev, 2005) p. 20.

²¹⁸ Albina Gold, *Islamska zaednitsa i nejzinite institutsii* (Skopje: Islamska Zaednitsa, 1997), p. 67. as cited in Maria Koinova, *Minorities in Southeast Europe – Muslims of Macedonia* (Athens: Center for Documentation and Information on Minorities in Europe - Southeast Europe, 2000) < <http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/pdf/cedime-se-macedonia-muslims.PDF> > [accessed 24 June 2008] (p.18).

the open question between the Albanians, the Turks and the Gypsies from one side, and the Orthodox Macedonians from the other, is the subject for a completely new area of research.

2.2.6.1.(Re)Construction of mosques

Islam has been present in Macedonia for the last five hundred years. As a result, there is a significant number of mosques and other religious, humanitarian or social buildings from that period. In addition, Muslims also managed to maintain and build new mosques, even during communist times, despite harsh restrictions and control imposed by the state policies. Ahmed Smajlović, former head of the *Mešihat* in Sarajevo, wrote that 372 mosques existed during the early 1980s.²¹⁹ At the independence of Macedonia in 1991, that number had increased to 450, only to grow further in the first two decades of post-communism to reach around six hundred mosques.²²⁰

Despite the significant construction process of the mosques, Muslim authorities believe that they are in this respect discriminated by the state. In a number of places the Muslim leadership faces difficulties in obtaining planning permission for their mosque project. As a result, many mosques have been built without permission. This generates further friction between the state authorities and Muslim communities when demolition is planned to take place. The daily newspaper, *Dnevnik*, reported on the difficulties the Islamic community faces. It covered the debate over whether mosques in Dolno Nerezi, Lezac near Bitola, Singelik, Asenbegovo and elsewhere, built without planning permission, should be destroyed. In Singelik, local Muslims have even started a voluntary tax to collect money to

²¹⁹ Ahmed Smajlović, 'Muslims in Yugoslavia' *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 2.1 (1980), 132-144 (p. 132).

²²⁰ Personal correspondence with Agron Vojnika, head of *Reis ul-Ulema* office, 7 May 2009.

build a mosque, even though it does not have building permission.²²¹ Although there have been some cases where either the state or local authorities have impeded development of Muslim places of worship, it is generally acceptable that Muslim have been free to build new mosque and other religious buildings.

2.2.6.2. Education

Islamic instruction has mainly been taught in mosques and separate classrooms attached to the mosques, *mektebs*. The Orthodox Church, as the most influential religious group of the country, along with the Islamic Community and other religious organizations, tried for 10-15 years of post-communism to persuade the state authorities to include religious instruction in the public school curriculum.²²² It is not clear why the state had such an adverse attitude towards religion in the public schools. One of the reasons could have lain in the ethno-national complexity of the country, where various ethnic groups would like to have an equal share in religious education provision. The organization of primary and secondary education is complicated, due to language differences, as ethnic groups attend separate classes based on their native language. Also, religious communities would like to teach children either the Orthodox religion, or Islam, while the government within a secular state would like to see more general subjects on world religions.²²³

²²¹ Drasko Djenovic, *Macedonia: Why Can't New non-Orthodox Churches or Mosques Be Built?* (Oslo: Forum 18 News Service, 12 December 2005) <http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=703> [accessed 15 July 2008].

²²² Koinova, p. 32.

²²³ 'According to *Reis-ul-Ulema* Sulejman Rexhepi, the compulsory religious instruction has to substitute the subject "Marxism," which was studied during the Communist time. The subject "Religion" should be focused on Islam and Orthodox Christianity separately. Thus, the children of the Islamic faith would take the subject "Islam" and it would be taught by people from the Islamic Community. The children of the Orthodox faith would take the subject "Orthodox Christianity" and it would be taught by Orthodox theologians. Rexhepi does not exclude the possibility for the subject "Religion" to have some comparative aspects, but explicitly says that it does not have to include all religions.' Ibid., p. 28

In 2008 however, to the limited satisfaction of religious communities, religious education was introduced in public schools as an optional subject. Religious education is offered in Islam, Orthodox Christianity and Catholicism, but only to 11-year-old pupils, while the subject of History of Religions is taught to those of no or other faiths.²²⁴ Macedonian Muslims, because of limited access to religious instruction in the public schools, have continued to develop classes held out of school hours at local mosques and *mektebs*. In this way Islamic education has not been drastically affected by the school curriculum. However, if introduced on a larger scale, religious education would almost certainly strengthen the position of religious communities and contribute to the dissemination of religious knowledge.

One of the most important educational institutions of the Muslims in Macedonia is the *Isa Beg Medrese*. As part of the Islamic Community in Macedonia, this boarding educational institution is the only secondary school providing Islamic religious instruction in the country. Its establishment in 1984 came as the result of a real need for religious officers and represented a sign of the final weakening and decline of the communist regime in the country. Schooling is free of charge for around 270 full-time and about 300 distance-learning students. The school is based in Kondovo near the capital of Skopje, but has branches in the major Muslim cities around the country, such as Tetovo, Gostivar and Shtip. From 2010 the *medresa* has received funding from the Ministry of Education and Science and is officially recognized as a publicly funded school. However, the curriculum of the school will slightly change only to include a number of non-religious subjects.²²⁵

²²⁴ Muharem Jahja, 'Macedonia', in *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, ed. by Jørgen S. Nielsen and others (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), pp. 221-227 (p. 224).

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 224

The Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Skopje is the major Islamic higher educational institution. Founded in 1995 and officially admitting students in 1997, the Faculty offers courses in traditional Islamic disciplines such as *Qur'ānic Studies*, *Fiqh*, *Ḥadīth*, *Tafsīr* and *'Aqā'id*, as well as Islamic Philosophy, Islamic Civilization, Civil Law in Islam and Comparative Religions. Due to the multi-ethnic background of its students, a variety of languages are also taught, including Albanian, Turkish, Macedonian, English and Arabic.

Macedonia has a long tradition of Muslim presence and the Ottoman Empire withdrew from this region only in the beginning of twentieth century. Thus it should not be a surprise that a well established and developed organization such as the Islamic Community has institutions under its authority such as the *Medrese*, the Faculty of Islamic Studies, hundreds of mosques, *waqfs* and other religious properties. One of the influential educational institutions is also the Isa Beg library established in 1991 in Skopje. Most of the books and other holdings have been re-collected from private libraries around the country. It is estimated that around 341,000 books are to be found on the shelves of this library. Many of these books are manuscripts in Persian, Arabic, Ottoman Turkish, Albanian, Macedonian, Serbian, Bosnian and French.²²⁶

2.2.6.3. Publishing

The Islamic Community of Macedonia publishes its *El-Hilal* newspaper, twice a month in the Albanian language, with a circulation of 4,000 copies, and once a month in Turkish and Macedonian with 1,500 copies in each language. The newspaper mainly covers religious,

²²⁶ Koinova, pp. 33, 34.

cultural, moral, scientific and economic aspects of Islam. Also, information on the activities of the Islamic Community, mosque openings and Islamic celebrations during important holidays, can be found on the pages of *El-Hilal*.²²⁷ Most important information about Islamic affairs can also be found in the newspapers of the Albanian and Turkish minorities in Macedonia. In the Albanian language these are *Flaka* and *Fakti* and in Turkish, *Birlik*. Also, the *Zaman* daily newspaper, published in Turkey, publishes a weekly local newspaper in Albanian and Turkish in Macedonia and includes articles about Islam.²²⁸

Most Muslim newspapers and magazines emerging either at the end of the communist period, or during post-communism, have followed the editorial form of the Sarajevo-based *Preporod*, as the most successful title with the longest tradition. One will notice therefore that the Islamic Communities in Sandžak, Montenegro, Kosovo, mainly follow the example of *Preporod* when initiating and publishing their main publications.

2.2.6.4. Emergence of Muslim solidarity institutions

As has been stated earlier, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina has inspired the local Muslim communities to provide shelter and support to a large number of refugees fleeing from this country. As a result Muslim charitable organizations have been established in almost every neighbouring country. Macedonia in this aspect was not an exception. The Humanitarian Organization *El-Hilal* was established in 1991, as a Muslim association, and two years later was transformed into a humanitarian organization to provide material aid and support the religious and cultural activities of refugees. *El-Hilal* helped about 70 per cent (out of the total of 30,000) Bosnian refugees with accommodation in state owned and private locations,

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 34.

²²⁸ Ibid., p. 34.

guaranteeing food, clothing and health care, as well as with their repatriation back to Bosnia. In 1993 the organization helped repatriate 250 persons, in 1994, 720 and in 1996, 940 persons).²²⁹ Yet, in recent years the activities of *El-Hilal* have decreased owing to lack of funding.

2.2.6.5. Free observance of religion and equality of religious communities

Institutionally, relations between the state and religious communities in Macedonia, as well as in some other countries of the Balkan regions, are conducted through the government's Committee for Relations with the Religious Communities.²³⁰ This body is responsible for registering and dealing with religious communities in many aspects. In Macedonia two Muslim organizations are registered with the state, the Islamic Community of Macedonia and the Islamic *Derviš* Religious Community. Their registration came as a result of the new law brought in 1997. Another religious group, Muslim Religious Community, was not officially registered by the state, although some lower governmental departments had recognized it as a Muslim representative body. After a number of attempts at registration, the leadership of the organization decided to withdraw its application and cease its activities. After this unsuccessful attempt to register a new Muslim group, the initiator of the MRC, Jakub Selimoski, returned under the umbrella of the IC, working as a high official for this organization.

There may have been at least two reasons for not registering MRC with the state. First, the organization was viewed as a parallel organization to the existing Islamic Community of

²²⁹ "El Hilal" Brochure, 1996:7-37 as cited in Koinova, p. 72.

²³⁰ Mirjana Najceska, Emilija Simoska and Natasha Gaber, 'Muslims, State and Society in the Republic of Macedonia: The View from Within' in Gerd Nonneman, Tim Niblock and Bogdan Szajkowski, eds., *Muslim Communities in the New Europe* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1996), p. 75.

Macedonia. The existing law prescribed for only one community to be registered for one denomination. In addition, two or more organizations with the same aims and objectives would only further complicate Muslim religious affairs in the country. Secondly, there were also claims that the Islamic Community of Macedonia had a close relationship with the Party of Democratic Prosperity (PDP) of the Albanians. The same party participated in the government as a coalition partner of the Social Democratic League of Macedonia. Thus this legal motivation was allegedly based on a political agenda.²³¹

Islam is seen in Macedonia as a constituent part of society. The Macedonian state protects Muslims in many respects, and the activities of the main Muslim organizations are not hampered by the state. The majority of laws regulating the relationship between the state and religious communities have shown in the previous section that ‘the legislators have been applying the basic concepts of international laws regarding the protection of citizens’ rights.’²³² However, as the majority of population is Christian Orthodox, the Orthodox Church in fact receives special treatment. ‘Orthodoxy is the only confession named directly in the Constitution (although it is not designated as having any special competence or privileges)’ and, according to some surveys, many Muslims ‘consider themselves to be “second-class” citizens because of their ethnic and religious identity.’²³³ Muslim religious officials have mainly felt discriminated against when it comes to the building of new mosques or restoring existing ones, and the restitution of *waqf* properties.

²³¹ Koinova, p. 25.

²³² Najceska and others, p. 77.

²³³ Ibid., p. 81.

2.2.6.6. Restitution

Macedonian Muslims are facing similar problems regarding the return of religious legacies as their counterparts in other countries of former Yugoslavia. The earlier head of the *Rijaset* office in Skopje, Afrim Alija, complained in 2005 that Muslims are treated unequally in respect to restitution. 'As a basic problem we see that the state doesn't respect all religious communities equally. Some are more respected than others, especially when it comes to the question of denationalization.' He points out that the Jewish community received all its confiscated property back, while the Macedonian Orthodox Church has even received gifts from the government, such as the Biser complex in Ohrid. 'The Islamic community of Macedonia holds the position that all religious community should be equal.'²³⁴ It is also interesting that some mosques have been used by the state for art projects. 'We have a problem with mosques that are used by the state, as with the Husamedin Mosque in Shtip and the Jeni Mosque in the village of Manastir, which is now a gallery and which the Islamic community cannot get back,' Alija claimed.²³⁵

Restitution of religious properties has been a pressing issue in all the countries of former Yugoslavia. Firstly, this is a very complex problem, involving many stakeholders through a significantly long period. Religious communities have been claiming properties not only confiscated during the communist regime, but in some cases during the earlier periods, even from Ottoman times. Naturally, many changes have occurred with regard to those properties, whose number is not insignificant, in the last half century or more. Secondly, restitution requires not only the laws and good will, but also a considerable amount of funds to realize

²³⁴ Drasko Djenovic, *Macedonia: Why Can't New non-Orthodox Churches or Mosques Be Built?* (Oslo: Forum 18 News Service, 12 December 2005) <http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=703> [accessed 15 July 2008].

²³⁵ Ibid.

such a project. In many cases majority religious communities have been able to have a large part of their property portfolio returned through informal agreements with the state. On the other side, minority groups, including in this instance the Muslim community, not only in Macedonia but also in Serbia, Montenegro and some areas of Bosnia, has been segregated and unfairly treated. Most problems for the state is that the Islamic Community as a minority group whose significant endowments are from two or more centuries ago. This again reflects the grievances of the Muslims in respect to their equality and unequal status before the law in their own country. That is why, for example, Muslims in Macedonia see themselves as second class citizens.

2.2.6.7. Media and press

The Islamic Community of Macedonia, similar to other Muslim communities in the region, does not own either TV or radio stations. As we have seen in the first section of this chapter, the law prohibits religious communities or religious groups to found radio-television entities. However, private TV and radio stations broadcast Muslim religious programmes, either in co-operation with the Islamic Community, or independently. These are mostly the media outlets of different ethnic groups such as Albanians, Turks and Roma.

2.2.7. Kosovo

Kosovo gained a high level of autonomy within the Federation of Yugoslavia, especially after the 1974 Constitution. In 1989 the Milošević regime suspended that autonomy and imposed repressive measures onto the majority Albanian-Muslim population. The repression escalated into an armed conflict in 1997 between Kosovars and Serbian police and army forces, which resulted in over a million refugees being expelled from Kosovo into the neighbouring countries. The war was ended by NATO intervention bombarding strategic

targets within Serbia, Kosovo and Montenegro. In 2008 the Assembly of Kosovo unilaterally declared independence. By mid-2009 over sixty countries recognized Kosovan independence.²³⁶

As the last census was carried out in 1981, there are no accurate statistics about the Kosovo population. It is estimated however that there are around two million Muslims, mostly Albanians. Other ethnic groups include Bosniaks, Goranci and Kosovo gypsies. The majority of Muslims are Sunnis, although there are a small number of *Shia* Muslims as well. A number of *derviš* orders are also active in Kosovo, such as the Bektashi, Naqshibandi, Sinani, Mawlawi, Shadhili, Rifa'i, Qadiri, Khalwati and Sa'di. Of these, the last four have a large membership and thousands of followers. It is estimated that over one hundred thousand *darwishes* are active today in Kosovo, twice as many as in 1980.²³⁷

The Muslims of Kosovo are organized through the Islamic Community of Kosovo, which represents the majority of Muslims in the country. The IC has its headquarters in the capital, Priština, and it is led by its presidency, chaired by Grand *Mufti* or *Reis ul-Ulema*. The main activities of the IC are the expansion of the institution and the restoration of Muslim religious objects destroyed during the military conflicts.²³⁸

²³⁶ See more in: Nielsen, *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*.

²³⁷ Islamic Community of Kosovo (Prizren: Islamic Community of Kosovo 2011) <<http://www.bislame.net/>> [accessed 24 June 2012].

²³⁸ Simeon Evstatiev, *Public Islam on the Balkans in a Wider Europe Context* (Budapest: International Policy Fellowship Program -Open Society Institute, 2006). <www.policy.hu/document/200808/simeon_evstatiev_final.pdf&letoltes=1> [accessed 2 July 2006] (p. 35).

2.2.7.1.Registration with the state

Kosovo is a secular country with no official religion. The Islamic Community of Kosovo, which declared its independence in 1993, is not yet registered with the state, either as an NGO or a private organization. The reason for such a state of affairs probably lies in the short life of Kosovo as an independent state. We have seen above how slow the process of changing the laws on religious communities can be, sometimes taking more than eight years. However, the state recognizes the Islamic Community as a legal entity and, as such, its representatives are regularly invited to official meetings and celebrations at the Presidential Palace.

2.2.7.2.Education

No religious education is permitted in the public schools. The Islamic Community has frequently requested the inclusion of Islamic education in the public school curriculum, but the government has not yet responded positively to this request.²³⁹ The Islamic Community has organized a number of meetings with governmental officials, including seminars, round-tables and even appearances on the media, to work for the introduction of religious education. Again, the reason for such a situation might lie in the very short transitional period from communism and being part of Yugoslav state, to conflict and then independence. As the majority of the successor states of former Yugoslavia have introduced some kind of religious education, it is possible that the newest state in the Balkans will also be able to activate religious instruction within state schools. However, religious instruction is carried out during out-of-school hours within the precincts of mosques or in *mektebs*.

²³⁹ Personal correspondence with Resul Rexhepi, the Secretary General of the Islamic Community of Kosovo, made on 14 June 2011.

The oldest private educational institution for Muslims in Kosovo is the *Alaudin Medrese*, established in 1952 during the communist period. It is based in the capital Pristina and has two branches in Prizren and Gijlan. The *medrese* follows a similar curriculum to other religious schools in the region, offering courses to boys and girls in classical Islamic disciplines and non-religious subjects. Since its establishment, over 1,300 students have graduated and been employed mainly within the Islamic Community as religious leaders, teachers and administrative officers. In 2009, around 700 female and male students were studying at the *medrese*.²⁴⁰

Another educational institution is the Faculty of Islamic Studies, established in 1992 in Priština. It offers bachelor's degrees in Islamic studies for mostly Albanian students coming from Kosovo and other regions with a significant Albanian population, such as Macedonia, Preševo Valley, Montenegro and Albania. Around 140 students had graduated from the Faculty by the end of 2008.²⁴¹ Another 200 were studying in 2009.²⁴²

2.2.7.3.(Re)Construction of mosques

At the collapse of communism, Kosovo had around 450 mosques. Most of these places of worship originated from the Ottoman period. As of 1990 an increased process of building new mosques has started, particularly in the areas where the communist regime did not allow Muslim believers to have mosques, including major municipalities such as Skenderaj, Glogovc, Lipjan, Malisheve, Kline and Istog. However, the 1998-1999 war hampered that process as Serbian forces destroyed or seriously damaged 218 mosques. The 34 religious

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ See more on: *Fakulteti i Studimeve Islame Prishtine* (Pristina: Fakulteti i Studimeve Islame Prishtine) <www.fsi-ks.org> [accessed 2 May 2010].

²⁴² Rexhepi.

objects that the city and region of Peja had before the war were all destroyed or burned. After concentrated international attention and support from the Muslim world and humanitarian agencies, a number of mosques have been restored or newly built. It is estimated that in 2009 over 600 mosques were operating in Kosovo.

2.2.7.4. Publishing

Dituria Islame (Islamic Knowledge) is the name of the publishing house which has produced a number of books, magazines and textbooks for *mektebs* and *medresa* in Kosovo. Under the auspices of the Islamic Community, the same publishing house produces its namesake *Dituria Islame*, a monthly religious, cultural and scientific review published since 1986. As of 2009, four thousand copies were printed and distributed around Kosovo and the Kosovar diaspora. Its main themes revolve around Islamic studies, as well as scientific, cultural, educational and informational areas. Also, the *Dituria Islame* has published a quarterly magazine, *Edukata Islame* (Islamic Education), since 1971 and an annual Islamic calendar, *Takvim*, since 1970.²⁴³

In the last decade of post-communism, the *Dituria Islame* has published several hundred titles, mainly in Islamic studies. These publications are mostly translations from the leading Muslim authors such as Sha'rawi, Qaradawi, Shaltut, Abduh, Iqbal, Afghani and Ghazali, among others. There is also a number of works authored by local Albanian scholars.²⁴⁴

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

2.2.7.5. Media

The Islamic Community of Kosovo does not operate any radio or TV stations. According to Resul Rexhepi, secretary general of the IC, the community uses existing media as well as the daily newspaper to reach its membership and general public. These media outlets are generally open to officials of the Islamic Community and educational and informative programmes are mainly welcome.²⁴⁵

2.2.7.6. Charitable organizations

During and immediately after the Kosovo war (1998-1999), several hundred humanitarian organizations operated in the country. A significant number came from the Muslim world. However, in the last decade the vast majority of these organizations have moved to other emergency regions. Currently, the most active humanitarian organization is *Berećet*, established by the Islamic Community of Kosovo. The focus of its activities has mostly been disadvantaged communities and individuals in rural areas of the country.²⁴⁶

2.2.7.7. *Waqf* Properties

Again, as is the case with other successor states of former Yugoslavia, the problem of returning *waqf* properties to the Islamic Community of Kosovo has been present since the proclamation of independence of the Community in 1993. As a law on the restitution of religious legacies still does not exist, the *waqf* properties confiscated during communism and earlier have not yet been returned to their previous owners. The officials of the Islamic Community have the impression that the government is not interested at this point in solving

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

this issue.²⁴⁷ However, it is hoped that Kosovo as a majority Muslim country will probably solve this problem in the near future, and that the Muslim authorities, along with other religious groups, will receive some kind of settlement.

Conclusion

It is evident that Muslims have utilized the opportunities brought to the region by democratic changes. The general change of the public mood towards religion manifested itself in new laws on religious communities and new opportunities for religious communities. In some countries, state support for religious organizations has enabled a more proactive engagement for the Islamic Communities when it comes to organization or religious life. Also, the general relationship between the state and religious communities has improved, which has in most cases enabled the establishment of unhindered religious life.

Muslims have established dozens of mosques, *medresas* and other religious institutions. Millions of pounds have been channeled through new Muslim humanitarian organizations, while around 2,000 titles have been published throughout the region. There are also attempts to restitute *waqf* properties and legacies, as well as to improve the economic position of all religious communities.

This however does not mean that Muslims of the region still do not experience difficulties when it comes to the construction of mosques, equality with other religious groups or general acceptance. Also, some locations are more unwelcoming towards Islam than the other. The case of Serbia, some areas of Macedonia and of the Republic of Srpska are good examples of

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

such an attitude. Also, religious rights are often intertwined with ethnic or national rights, as it is shown in the case of Macedonia.

To complicate things further, internal divisions have diversified the problems and challenges that Muslim communities face even more. It is possible that some divisions will continue and new ones will be created. However, as the organizational capabilities of the Islamic Communities across the region have increased significantly, it is less likely that any major changes in the organization and practice of Islam will occur.

In the following chapters, the influence of other interpretations of Islam in the Balkan region will be discussed. These interpretations and the considerable visibility of atypical observance of Islam in the Balkans have raised concerns that local Islamic Communities will not be able to manage the religious life of their congregations and will either be overtaken by rival organizations, or parallel institutions will be created. However, the institutions of the Islamic Communities have not only continued their work from the communist period, but have also established many new departments and new initiatives. In many cases, educational institutions dating back to pre-communist times have been revived.

Islamic education has been introduced in public schools of some countries. As a result, the role of *mektebs* in some areas has decreased, but they continue to play an important part in Islamic education. Furthermore, private Muslim educational institutions are flourishing, as often *medresas* produce more graduates than the Islamic Communities can realistically employ. Institutions of higher education have been established in Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Sandžak, which complement the number of students going to study abroad.

The restitution of *waqf* properties has remained one of the pressing issues for Islamic Communities. Restitution laws have either not been brought in at all, or implemented yet, whereas the majority of religious legacies have not been returned to their pre-communist period owners. However, there are instances where local authorities have agreed to concede available properties to religious communities. The Islamic Communities are the exception in the areas where Muslims constitute a minority, most notably in Serbia, Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia.

Finally, the organizational development of the Islamic Communities should be placed in a wider context of social and religious changes in the successor states of former Yugoslavia and cannot be observed isolated from the other two religious traditions. The new, opportune conditions to preach, practice and organize religious life in the Balkans have brought significant changes in the religious structures of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches as well. Churches and Islamic Communities are attaining an increased role in the areas of education and moral, social and humanitarian work. It is expected therefore that they will continue to play an important role in post-communist societies and shape religious, and, to some extent public, life in the Balkans.

3. ISLAM IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Introduction

After fifty years of effective exclusion from, public life Islam, as well as other main religions, has entered the public sphere. The phenomenon of the increased presence of religion have not only been a peculiarity of the Balkan post-communist society. Dramatic religious growth has been recorded in the states of the former Soviet Union, with about 100 million people joining religious groups for the first time.²⁴⁸ In Hungary 46 percent of the population declared themselves as religious in 1972, while by 1993 this number had risen to 76.8 percent. “Islamic revival in the Balkans” has become a major topic for the experts in the region, journalists and TV presenters.²⁴⁹ We may agree with Milos Tomka that ‘this initial impression of a religious revival is correct; however, it causes more misunderstandings than it clarifies.’²⁵⁰ Do impressions received from the public represent the true nature of religious revival in the post-communist societies?

This chapter examines the most visible signs of religious revitalization among the Balkan Muslims, and questions the claims that a massive religious renaissance has occurred overnight in places such as Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia. The chapter firstly looks into the new trends emerging within the Muslim society, represented, but not limited to, the new Muslim organizations and neo-*salafi* ideas. Secondly, the place and characteristics of the

²⁴⁸ Paul Froese, ‘After Atheism: An Analysis of Religious Monopolies in the Post-Communist World’ *Sociology of Religion*, 65.1 (2004) p. 57.

²⁴⁹ Miklos Tomka, ‘The Changing Social Role of Religion in Eastern and Central Europe: Religion’s Revival and its Contradictions’, *Social Compass* 42(1), 1995. p. 17.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

mosque as a linchpin of Muslim worship and presence in the area has come under the scrutiny of the public, embodied in the secular and non-secular scholars, independent analysts, and media outlets. As the number, size and visibility of the new and refurbished mosques has increased, the public questions the justification for their massive construction, expressing particular concerns with the involvement of foreign (Gulf) agencies in their building and maintenance. This, as well as the amplified involvement of Muslim religious officials in public life, has mobilized the media to focus on the work and activities of the Muslims in the region. Therefore, the chapter will also extend to explore the treatment of Islam in the main media outlets during and after communism.

3.1. Muslim organizations in the Balkans?²⁵¹

‘The Islamic Community has to plan a long-term programme as to maintain religious unity of our people on the basis of the *madhhab* of Abu Hanifah, whom we have been following for centuries. To achieve this, the debates on the *madhhabs* have to be restrained only within the small circle of religious scholars, and under no circumstances are to be open to the common people.’²⁵²

This visionary warning by a prominent Bosnian scholar, Džemaludin Latić, has come too late and without any major impact on the debates on the *madhhabs* and different interpretations of Islam. For the last twenty years, Muslim communities from the grassroots to the highest level have been immersed in the issue of different teachings of Islam. Thus, for

²⁵¹ This section is not concerned with an actual number of formal and informal organizations operating in the Balkan region. The attention is more focused on the influences and impacts these organizations have had on Muslim religious practice and thought in the Balkans. In the end, many Muslim organizations are registered as NGO, or humanitarian organizations, or even cultural centres of foreign embassies, some of them have been closed down recently due to security considerations, some of them nearly vegetate and are not worth mentioning, therefore counting or naming all the organizations established in the regions would not only be a complex issue, but not of particular importance for the aim of this work.

²⁵² Faruk Vele, ‘Cilj je Da Se Bošnjacima Otme Tlo Pod Nogama i Razvuče Pamet – Intervju Sa Džemaludinom Latićem, Profesorom Fakulteta Islamskih Nauka u Sarajevu’, *Dnevni Avaz*, 22 July 2009, p. 4.

instance, the local Muslim population from a village in north-eastern Bosnia clashed several times with a group of neo-*salafis*. The head of the Islamic Community in Macedonia called on the government to intervene and prevent radicals overtaking mosques in the capital of Skopje.²⁵³ Heated debates have become an everyday occurrence in the mosques and the media. The Balkan region experiences an unprecedented upsurge of verbal and written arguments over traditional religious practice. Why has this been the case?

As Paul Froese noticed, ‘scientific atheism’ lost its sponsor, embodied in the Communist Party, while new religious groups and trends are competing with traditionally dominant religious groups.²⁵⁴ This has not only been characteristic of the Islamic Community, but also of the two other main religious groups. Yet, the presence of different interpretations of Islam has been most noticeable due to the geographical and post 9/11 contexts.

One of the characteristics of communism was that it allowed the existence and operation of only one Islamic organization or institution in the country. The same applied to the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The only semi alternative Islamic organizations were *Sufi* orders, which will be discussed below. The situation radically changed in 1990s when over two hundred Muslim organizations, whether of humanitarian, proselyterian, military or some other nature, operated in the region. Their number and visibility prompted claims among intellectuals and the media that a large scale of various Islamization streams was taking place in the Balkans.

²⁵³ Hrvoje Dečak, *Makedonski Islamski Poglavar Traži Pomoć Protiv Vehabija* (Zagreb: Večernji List, 2010) <<http://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/makedonski-islamski-poglavar-trazi-pomoc-protiv-vehabija-clanak-193503>> [accessed 12 December 2010].

²⁵⁴ Froese, p. 73.

These new organizations have not only been threatening the monopoly of the official Islamic Communities responsible for religious life, but also, as it will be seen in the media section, they have surprised the whole society. These changes brought new influences and transmitted ideas, values, and resources from the Middle East, as well as from other parts of the world.²⁵⁵

This section will firstly make an attempt to explore how it was possible that within a few years so many organizations were formed. For many, it seemed that the number and the scale of organizations has brought an overnight change. Secondly, what is the big social and religious transformation that they have brought? Most of the recently established organizations contribute to the circulation of new religious doctrines coming from different parts of the Muslim world, and challenge the established religious practices of the local population as well as the former monopoly of *Ḥanafī Madhhab*.²⁵⁶ And finally, how do these new organizations and the ideas they have been promoting influence the overall religiosity of the Balkan Muslims?

It is argued, on the basis of media reports, academic writings, lectures and other reports, that a main transformation has been brought by the *neo-salafī* trends on a part of the Muslim population in Bosnia, Kosovo, Sandžak and Macedonia. However, their influence and presence has been decreasing, while the work of Turkish state agencies and *neo-sufi* movements is on the rise. The majority of other groups and organizations have not had a

²⁵⁵ Attanasoff, p. 4.

²⁵⁶ Xavier Bougarel, *The Role of Balkan Muslims in Building a European Islam* (Zurich: European Policy Centre, 2005) <<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=17029>> [accessed 5 April 2010] (p. 18).

strong religious impact in terms of practice and teachings, and their scope of work has mainly focused on socio-educational aspects.

3.1.1. The neo-*Salafi* organizations

As mentioned above, over 250 organizations have been operating in the region, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among the most prominent was Active Islamic Youth, High Saudi Committee, *Al-Haramain* Foundation, the Society for the Revival of Islamic Heritage (*Jam'iyyat Ihya' al-Turāth al-Islāmi*), Balkan Centre in Zenica, (for short period) and the Centre for the Affirmation of Islamic Sciences.²⁵⁷ However, a most visible and controversial promoter of *neo-salafi* ideas, established with the aim of spreading *da'wah* among Bosnian Muslims, was Active Islamic Youth (AIY). Formed in 1995 by Bosnian members of the former army unit *El-Mudžahid* based in Zenica,²⁵⁸ the organization's aim was to spread *da'wah* among the Bosnian Muslims, targeting mainly young individuals, students or young graduates, with no or little previous knowledge about Islam. The organization aimed to 'change individuals' through education, social and sports activities, initiating short courses about the basics of Islam and introducing the participants to the tenets of their religion. Their activities included organizing of lectures, seminars, *Shari'ah* courses, summer camps, iftars, sport events, even a taekwondo academy.²⁵⁹

The AIY was initially supported by the High Saudi Committee for Bosnia and Herzegovina (HSC), the main humanitarian agency established by the Saudi government. The HSC later

²⁵⁷ Attanassoff, p. 3.

²⁵⁸ The *Al-Mujahid* had around five hundred members of Bosnian origin and up to two hundred from the Arab world.

²⁵⁹ Dženana Karup, 'Organizacija Aktivne Islamske Omladine, Borci za Eksteritorijalni Talibanski Distrikt u Zenici i Alipašinom Polju: Kur'an je Naš Ustav', *BH Dani*, 30 March 1998, <<http://www.bhdani.com/arhiva/72/tekst172.htm>> [accessed 12 October 2007].

turned into a more pro-Saudi Furqan organization. Ahmet Alibašić finds a possible reason for such a change in the influence of the ideas of Saudi dissidents, Safar al-Hawali and Salman al-‘Awdah.²⁶⁰ In Bosnia the *neo-salafi* movement

'has experienced a gradual ideological transformation which the very members of the movement at times were not aware of. Although this ideological transformation was influenced by Bosnian social circumstances, a far greater influence had the global trends, particularly the developments within the home movement in Saudi Arabia.'²⁶¹

Other organizations were more focused on a humanitarian work while at the same time promoting *neo-salafi* ideas, such as the High Saudi Committee and *Al-Haramain* Foundation. There have been claims that the Islamic NGOs often used humanitarian aid as an incentive to encourage people to fulfil their religious duties such as wearing the veil, attending religious education classes, etc.²⁶² However, apart from rumours among the local populations unsympathetic towards those who suddenly begun practicing Islam, there is no noteworthy proof for such an argument. Even if it existed in a limited number of cases, this practice has not produced long term visible results on the religious life of the Muslims. On the other hand, similar to the Western Christian agencies in the former Soviet Republics, many of these organizations have found resistance among the local population to implementing their ideas and practices.

Common for most of them has been, more or less, a radical approach. Their funding streams have mainly come from abroad. They question the local practice of Islam, publish books about the ignorance of the local population of Islam and as a result demand a radical change

²⁶⁰ Ahmet Alibašić, *Traditional and Reformist Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Cambridge: Cambridge Programme for Security in International Society, 2003), pp. 12, 13.

²⁶¹ Muhamed Jusić, 'Izazovi Nove Islamske Osjećajnosti Za BH Muslimane', *Selam*, 20 September 2009, p. 79.

²⁶² Bougarel (2005), p. 18.

and transformation of the Balkan Muslims. The most flagrant example of such an activity has been the 64 page book by Imad al-Misri *Shvatanja koja trebamo ispraviti (Attitudes That We Have to Change)*, published by *Jam'iyyat Ihya' al-Turāth al-Islāmi* in Bosnia. As Alibašić noticed, 'the book made an argument for radical departure from some established practices among Bosnian Muslims,' accusing the local population and the '*ulama*' of innovation in Islam (*bid'a*).²⁶³ However, similar to some other parts of the world (Russia), many organizations have found resistance among the common people, and after more than a decade their strategy has changed and the approach has become more subtle.

3.1.1.1. Why have they been established?

The sudden outburst of new trends, ideas and organizations has left the impression of a large social and religious change visible in the Balkans, announcing a possible huge Islamic revival. Most of these new organizations had hoped to bring a permanent change in the religious life of the Balkans Muslims. However, apart from a few successful examples, they have failed; as in the case of the former Soviet states, as they often did not understand the circumstances of their would-be converts.²⁶⁴

One of the most important reasons for the sudden upsurge of Muslim trends and organizations could be found in 'the immediate removal of the dominant atheist competition,' as Elliot and Corrado noticed, discussing the fall of the Soviet Union, which 'created a hole in the religious market that outsiders would try to fill.' As in the case of the former Soviet states, where by 1995 over 3000 missionaries had arrived from 25 Western

²⁶³ Alibašić (2003), p. 16.

²⁶⁴ Froese, p. 68.

agencies to form new congregations, the Balkans became a fertile ground for new religious trends, ideas and organizations from all three religious traditions.²⁶⁵

The Muslims of the Communist Yugoslavia were in a sort of ideological glass bell which isolated them from all ideological and other currents in the rest of the Muslim world. This glass bell has been broken in the flame of the wars of Former Yugoslavia and in the aftermath of the communist regime.²⁶⁶ Thus the Balkan wars and compassion of the Muslim *Ummah* for the sufferings of the Bosnian, and, later on, Kosovar Muslims at the hands of the Serbs, have prompted a number of Muslim humanitarian and religious organizations to provide the Balkan Muslims during the wars with humanitarian aid in food, medicines, clothes and shelter.

3.1.1.2. How have they been established?

Muslim humanitarian workers and several hundred fighters from the Muslim world were enabled to preach and proselytize freely. The foreign fighters and the *mujahidūn*, as they were called locally, brought their own understanding of Islam and made attempts to implant those ideas into the local Muslims. 'The *salafi* and *wahhabi* ideas on wider scale surfaced for the first time.'²⁶⁷

Also, an important catalyst for new Muslim organizations and new trends in the region has been a departure of a number of students from the Balkans who were sent mostly by the aid agencies to study in the Muslim world. It is well known that even during communism, a limited number of students were sent to study, mostly at *al-Azhar*, but also to Libya, Iraq,

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 68.

²⁶⁶ Jusić (2009), p. 78.

²⁶⁷ Alibašić (2003), p. 12.

Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Upon their return, these graduates represented the core of the IC leadership in the Balkans. However, with the collapse of communism, the aid agencies enabled hundreds of students to seek knowledge abroad, not only in religious studies, but also in economics, politics and languages.

In 2003 there were over three hundred Bosnian students studying abroad. Thus in Saudi Arabia over a hundred students pursued their knowledge, in Syria sixty, in Egypt forty, in Jordan thirty five, in Iran thirty, in Malaysia twenty and in Pakistan and Turkey ten.²⁶⁸ The majority of students have been able to find a role within the structure of the Islamic Community upon their return. Their knowledge and expertise brought from different corners of the world represent a rich mosaic of Islamic pluralism in the Balkans. Yet, there is a number of graduates who, either because of their attitude or individual antagonism, have not been engaged with the IC, and work in most cases with formal *neo-salafi* groups in the Balkans and diaspora. Thus a Saudi graduate, Muhamed Porča, based in Vienna, after an attempt to work at Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Sarajevo, decided to establish a parallel Islamic Community with more radical views. Even Grand *Mufti* Cerić has accused the Vienna Muslim circles with Porča as their head, of infiltrating *neo-salafi* ideas into the region and financing some of their activities.²⁶⁹

As Muslims of the Balkans have had more of a European outlook compared with their coreligionists in for example the Middle East, or North Africa, any change in dress or appearance which was not usual for the region would not pass unnoticed. The short trousers

²⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

²⁶⁹ Anes Alic, *Wahhabism: From Vienna to Bosnia* (Zurich: International Relations and Security Network, 2007) <<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Current-Affairs/Security-Watch/Detail/?id=53104&lng=en>> [accessed 12 May 2007]

and a specific way of clothing (*galabija*), long beards in males, and *niqab* and dark clothes in women, have drawn attention from the public. Also, the particular way of praying, observance of other *madhhabs* and schools of thought, have caused many conflicts among the traditional ‘*ulama*’ and worshipers in the mosques. This again has sparked discussion and arguments among people, giving more attention to the phenomenon of *salafism* than is sometimes deserved.

The case of Jusuf Barčić, the *neo-salafi* leader who wanted to promote *neo-salafi* trends in one of the main mosques in Sarajevo, was a top story for many media outlets in 2007. However, their increased visibility is not, as Bougarel noticed, ‘tantamount to a “re-Islamization” of Muslims in the region,’ as there are still significant differences in just how religious populations of the Balkans are. At the same time, there has been scarce visibility of other organizations and their members as well as other trends and their followers. The number of the followers of the *ṭarīqah* is most likely higher than the *neo-Salafis*, but the attention of the public toward the *Sufis* is insignificant. Their presence has often been seen as mystical and unusual, but nothing compared with the specific appearance and loud presentation of the promoters and preachers of *neo-salafi* trends in the region.

How have these new organizations and the ideas they have been promoting influenced the overall religiosity of the Balkan Muslims? It seems that the *neo-salafis* have mainly contributed towards the increased religiosity of the Muslims. As mentioned before, most of their members were almost ignorant about Islam prior to their involvement with the movement, and having been part of the organizations they have completely changed their way of living. They regularly perform daily prayers, organize intensive activities and show results. Their visibility in the public might suggest a large number of *neo-salafis* in the

region, but according to some estimates, there are no more than five thousand among five million Muslims of Bosnia, Sandžak, Kosovo and Macedonia, therefore around 0.1%.

3.1.1.3. Relationship with the Islamic Communities

No official Islamic organization likes alternative Muslim organizations, particularly when it comes to new teachings and practices which do not complement those of the IC. All the Islamic Communities in the Balkans are faced with new challenges to accept the realities of their time and tolerate work of other Muslim organizations, and, in some cases, even to work with them. Muslim organizations have struggled to find their place in society and in many instances clashed with the local population and even *imams* and representatives of the IC. In an interview for the Bosnian magazine, *Dani*, the chairman of the AIY claimed that their organization does not have any relationship with the official *'ulama* in their city (Zenica), but also affirmed that this is different from town to town. They also claimed their readiness and openness to work with the IC.²⁷⁰ The members of the local congregation of a Barčići village in north eastern Bosnia had to expel from their *mesdžid* a group of *Salafis* who had been advocating that the *mesdžid* had to be open 24 hours so their members could observe prayers and religious education, as well as sleep there. Yet, in the early 2000s, the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina developed, as Bougarel noticed, 'a *modus vivendi* with these movements which, for their part, were compelled to moderate their language and seek the protection of religious institutions after the September 11 attacks.'²⁷¹

It seems that the representatives of some alternative Muslim organizations have gradually realised that working with the official Islamic Communities could be beneficial for both their

²⁷⁰ Karup, March 1998.

²⁷¹ Bougarel (2005), p. 21.

own organizations and the Islamic agenda in general. The IC has a long experience of working in Islam and has more credibility among the ordinary people, with the state and with international institutions. The best example of such an attitude is the operation of the High Saudi Commission for the Relief of Bosnian Muslims – HSC - which in most instances did not even consult the IC of BiH.

‘The HSC also gave full support to *salafi* organizations, first to Active Islamic Youth (AIO) and then to Furqan. However, since September 11 things have changed. The media identified the HSC and these two organizations as the sources of extremism, while some of their employees and members were arrested or questioned by local police or international forces (SFOR) with regard to their links to terrorism. This pressure led to the closure of *Furqan* organization at the end of 2002 and King Fahd Center’s attempts to distance itself from “alternative” circles and establish closer relations with the IC.’²⁷²

Xavier also underestimates the financial strength of the local communities across the region, describing them as depending on the support from abroad. Rich Arab countries did provide valuable support to the Islamic Communities, especially in rebuilding vital educational institutions such as the Faculty of Islamic Studies and Gazi Husrev Beg Library, whose reconstruction was funded by Qatar. This is an ongoing process where support, mainly for (re)construction of the mosques and educational institutions, comes from various countries such as Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran and the Gulf states. However, the burden of maintaining these institutions lies exclusively on the local organizations. Without the established system of membership fees, collection and distribution of *zakāh* and *sadaqah al-fitr*, *qurbāni*, and other means of income, religious life would not be possible. Ahmet Alibašić has noted that the advantage for Islam in the Balkans lies in a single Islamic structure which means more powerful organization and a better negotiating position *vis-a-vis*

²⁷² Alibašić (2003), p. 8.

state and other actors, and self-financing, which makes such an organization more resistant to unwelcome outside influences, whatever they might be. ‘These two together mean a more autonomous, and consequently more credible, Islamic authority that is able to prevent radicalization.’²⁷³ Here exactly lies the strength of local communities and their ability to resist foreign influences.

An excessive focus on the *neo-Salafi* influences thus masks the fact that they too are part of the internal diversification of Balkan Islam and are confronted with other external influences, most notably from Turkey and its multiple religious movements and actors.²⁷⁴

Despite the fact that the arrival of Islamic NGOs and *mujahidūn* linked to Arab-Afghan networks gave rise to significant concerns about ‘the transformation of the Balkans into a “bridge-head” for Islamic terrorism and the creeping “wahhabization” of Balkan Islam,’ the reality is quite different.²⁷⁵ Most recent studies about Gulf-funded transnational Islamic activism in the Balkans show that Gulf-funded agencies did not have the effect ascribed to them by the majority of security-driven literature. Local Muslim communities, while welcoming aid and reconstruction programmes, have resisted any deeper infiltration of foreign elements into the organization and practice of Islam in the Balkans.²⁷⁶

²⁷³ Ibid., p. 8

²⁷⁴ Bougarel (2005), p. 19

²⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 17, 18.

²⁷⁶ Kerem Öktem, *New Islamic Actors After the Wahhabi Intermezzo: Turkey’s Return to the Muslim Balkans* (Oxford: European Studies Centre - University of Oxford, 2010) <<http://balkanmuslims.com/pdf/Oktem-Balkan-Muslims.pdf>> [accessed 12 February 2011] (p. 21).

3.1.1.4. What is the big social and religious transformation they have brought?

During Communism the official Islamic Community learned how to survive under a repressive regime and maintain the basic activities of religious education and practice. Those activities were limited and restricted by the regime. Over the years the people, along with local *imams* and religious officials have become used to new circumstances, but when restrictions have been lifted, the life and practice have, to a large extent, continued or been influenced by the communist mentality. Although there were no repressive measures imposed on religious officers and congregations, the limited practice was in many instances accepted as ‘our’ Islam, or ‘traditional’ Islam. The establishment of new Muslim organizations, which have in many aspects filled the gap in the activities of the official Islamic Communities in the Balkans, came as a challenge, not only to the official religious establishment, but also to the common people.²⁷⁷

As has been noted above, it is evident that real social and religious change and transformation has brought members of the so-called *wahhabi* or *neo-salafi* movement. It should not then come as surprise that a large portion of the media attention related to Islam and the Muslims of the Balkans has been allocated to this movement. ‘Is there any danger from the *wahhabi* movement,’²⁷⁸ ‘The terrorist threat of a group of the *wahhabis*,’²⁷⁹ ‘A Kosovo mosque closed because of *wahhabism*,’²⁸⁰ ‘Macedonia: The Police is observing the

²⁷⁷ Muhamed Jusić, ‘Izazovi Nove Islamske Osjećajnosti Za BH Muslimane’, *Selam*, 20 September 2009, p. 79.

²⁷⁸ Marija Arnautović, *Postoji li Opasnost od Vehabijskog Pokreta u BiH?* (Prague: Radio Free Europe, 2010) <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/gornja_maoca_vehabije/1947887.html> [accessed 8 May 2010].

²⁷⁹ Dženana Halimović, *Teroristička Prijetnja Grupe Selefija* (Prague: Radio Free Europe, 2008) <<http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/article/1352443.html>> [accessed 8 May 2010].

²⁸⁰ Anamari Repić, *Zatvorena Jedna od Kosovskih Džamija Zbog Vehabizma* (Prague: Radio Free Europe, 2010).

<http://www.danas.org/content/vehabije_kosovo_dzamija/1973591.html> [accessed on 08/05/2010].

groups of *wahhabis*,’ ‘The Saudis fund Islamic fundamentalism in the Balkans’ ‘The *wahhabis* in Kosovo’, are some of the newspaper and radio headlines during the 2008-2010 period.²⁸¹

Concern about the very existence and activities of the *neo-salafis* has been shared by the officials of the Islamic Communities in the region as well as prominent academics and *imams*. Hafiz Ismet Spahić, the deputy of the Grand *Mufti* of Bosnia, stated on numerous public occasions that a date cannot be grown in Bosnia, but a prune can, alluding thus that the Bosnian way of practicing Islam is more acceptable for this region. Similar statements were heard from the former *Mufti* of Kosovo and current Kosovar Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Rexhep Boja: ‘Albanians have been Muslims for more than 500 years and they do not need outsiders [Arabs] to tell them what is the proper way to practice Islam.’²⁸² In 2007 members of an informal *neo-salafi* group made an attempt on the life of the Sandžak *Mufti* Zukorlić.²⁸³ In a North-eastern town of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2007, members of local congregation attacked a *neo-salafi* oriented leader, hafiz Jusuf Barčić, and expelled him and his followers from their village *mesdžid*.²⁸⁴

The Islamic Community has been criticized for not working enough to eliminate the influence of *neo-salafis*. The critiques came mainly from secular or independent media and intellectuals, but also from intellectual and clerical circles within the IC. Thus an academic

²⁸¹ Refki Alija, *Vehabije na Kosovu* (Bonn: Deutsche Welle, 2008) <<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,3810708,00.html?maca=ser-rss-ser-all-1494-rdf>> [accessed 8 May, 2010].

²⁸² As cited in: Isa Blumi, *Political Islam Among the Albanians: Are the Taliban Coming to the Balkans?* (Prishtina: Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development, 2005) <http://www.kipred.net/web/upload/Political_Islam_Among_the_Albanians_Are_the_Taliban_coming_to_the_Balkans.pdf> [accessed 25 May 2009] (p. 1).

²⁸³ *Mesec Dana Pritvora za Vehabije* (Belgrade: B92, 2007) <http://www.b92.net/info/komentari.php?nav_id=237076> [accessed 18 March 2007].

²⁸⁴ See the section of this chapter about the presence of Islam in the media.

and professor and the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Rešid Hafizović, warned in one of his articles that *neo-salafis* are:

‘in our space, our administrative and religious institutions, in our mosques, *medresas* and academies. And the *Rijaset* of the Islamic Community as if it is just waking up and portend pestilence overshadowing the European Muslims in BiH.’²⁸⁵

The Chicago based chief *Imam* for the Bosnian Diaspora in the USA, Senad Agić, has also expressed his concern about the influence and strength of *neo-salafi* trends in Bosnia, as well as in the whole region²⁸⁶.

However, there have recently been attempts at reconciliation of the differences between the *neo-salafi* oriented organizations and the IC. One of the more balanced articles about the occurrence of *neo-salafi* circles and their practices was published in the IC funded *Preporod* by Ahmet Alibašić, a lecturer at the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo.

‘... “*wahhabism*” is not a serious threat to the Islamic Community and to Islam in BiH. The “*wahhabis*” are not a threat today because: the IC has not ever been stronger than today: in terms of human and financial resources, as well as in organizational terms... radical attitudes cannot withstand the test of time in a liberal society and to become a mainstream of the Islamic practice... this is a democratic society in which one wins through the work and the quality, but not through proscriptions. One needs to be cautious with repressive measures because they can lead to a radicalisation if “*wahhabism*” is not defeated and delegitimized intellectually.’²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ Rešid Hafizović, ‘Oni dolaze po našu djecu’, *Oslobođenje*, 25 November 2006.

²⁸⁶ Senad Agić, Vehabizam Će Nas, Ako Ne Poduzmemo Ništa, Koštati Života, *BH Dani*, 2 November 2001, pp. 24-26.

²⁸⁷ Ahmet Alibašić, ‘Militantni Ekstremisti - Haridžije Našeg Doba’, *Preporod*, 15 December 2006, pp. 16, 48.

Responding to frequent verbal, and in some cases, physical, attacks on the followers of *neo-salafi* ideas, Mustafa Spahic, the Sarajevo *medresa* lecturer, stated that they carry a negative image without any reason, and they have been harassed only for being different. The *neo-salafis* have been proclaimed terrorists and extremists because of ignorance and prejudice, and they have been judged without comprehending the essence of their teaching.²⁸⁸ His opinion is shared by sociologist Srđan Vukadinović, who believes that the attacks on individuals who attract attention because of their short trousers and long beards are the result of social anomalies and negative tendencies in society, but not because they threaten anybody.²⁸⁹

3.1.2. *Shi 'a* organizations

In terms of *shia* teaching, its existence has been recorded in previous periods, particularly in the areas of Kosovo, but their numbers and scope were limited. Their presence has increased modestly owing to the reasons mentioned above, but they still represent an insignificant minority in the region. The activities which exist have mostly been at educational level. The scientific and research institute *Ibn Sina*, established in 1996 in Sarajevo, promotes Islamic philosophy, culture and civilization, as well as the Persian language and the Balkan studies through its centres. Activities include round table conferences, seminars, various educational courses, the publication of books and other research projects. Its most important publication, *Znakovi Vremena (The Signs of Time)* magazine, has been published since 1997, and contributions come from the Iranian and Bosnian intellectuals. The aim of the magazine is to publish works on Islamic philosophy. As is mentioned in its mission statement, ‘this

²⁸⁸ *Etiketiranje iz neznanja: Vehabije nisu bauk?* (Mostar: BHWP 24sata.info, 2010)

<<http://www.24sata.info/vijesti/dogadjaji/24869-Etiketiranje-neznanja-Vehabije-nisu-bauk.html>> [accessed 25 January 2010].

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

magazine tends through scientific approach to treat fundamental issues of the society. Faith in a dialogue and abstinence from prejudices and theorisation are an essential method in the work of the publisher and contributors of the magazine.²⁹⁰

Other organizations include the Persian-Bosnian College registered in the Sarajevo canton as a private educational institution in 1999. The curriculum of the college follows other grammar schools in the country. Mulla Sadra, the educational centre, organizes weekly lectures in *'Aqā'id*, Islamic philosophy, logic, *Qur'ānic* studies, poems of Hafiz, lectures from *Nahj al Balāghah*, Arabic and Persian language. It is difficult to establish, but according to the origins of the people involved in running these organizations, it is most likely that funding for their activities is coming from Iran. According to the number of participants in their activities, it seems that these organizations do not attract large sections of the population. There is no evidence that the *shia* presence has any significant influence on either the practice or the quality of the religious life of the Balkan Muslims. On the other hand the political influence of Iran over the Balkans, particularly in Bosnia and Kosovo, has been seen as a threat to Western interests in the region. That is why the presence of the *shia* Muslims, most notably Iranians, is often inflated and constantly observed.²⁹¹

3.1.3. Turkish governmental and neo-Sufi brotherhoods²⁹²

The weakening of the neo-Salafi organizations came as a result of a number of reasons. Two of the most important are the incompatibility of the local populations with the strict teachings

²⁹⁰ *Časopis Znakovi Vremena* (Sarajevo: Ibn Sina, 2010) <<http://www.ibn-sina.net/bs/asopis.html>> [accessed 12 January 2010]

²⁹¹ In 1996 the IFOR (The International Force for Implementation of the Peace in Bosnia) discovered a small camp in a Bosnian place Pogorelica. The camp served as a training centre for Bosnian security agencies. Three Iranian instructors were arrested.

²⁹² This section relies mostly on the recent work of Öktem Kerem, *Wahhabi Intermezzo*, where he analysed the presence of the state actors and Turkish grassroots organizations in the Balkans in the last two decades.

of the promoters of *neo-salafi* ideas and the closure of a number of humanitarian organizations which were sponsored from the Gulf region. It seems that the gap has been filled by another important factor in the Muslim world, Turkey. For more than four centuries the Ottoman Empire ruled the region and shaped its religious landscape, only to withdraw at the end of the nineteenth century. In this context it is essential to examine why the Turks are ‘returning’ to the Balkans, in what ways, and their mid- and long-term impact.

As a result of political changes in Turkey and the arrival of the forces which are placing Turkey as a regional and global power, there have been increased calls for a more structural approach of the Turkish government in its foreign policy. This has been particularly evident in the areas where Turkey has maintained traditional ties, ie. former regions of the Ottoman Empire. Also, other global powers, the US in particular, have seen the presence of Turkey in the Balkans as a counterbalance to the *neo-salafi*-style organizations active during and immediately after the Balkan conflicts. Turkey has recently been seen not only as ‘a secular Muslim nation,’ but also as ‘a moderate Islamic player,’ which can influence the further development of moderate Islam in the region. In this context comes the statement by Turkish foreign minister Davutoğlu that ‘Turkey’s role is not to bring Islam to the Balkans. It is to protect what is there. This is why we support the Islamic Union.’²⁹³

What are the main avenues of the new Turkish presence in the Balkans? There are several ways through which Turkey establishes its influence in the region. Four areas are of particular importance: the intellectual and political networks around Ahmet Davutoğlu; the

²⁹³ As cited in Öktem, p. 29.

Turkish development agency (TIKA); the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet); and Islamic grassroots organizations, such as the Gülen movement and Islamic brotherhoods.²⁹⁴

The Turkish Development Agency TIKA,²⁹⁵ established during Turgut Özal's Presidency as an instrument for proactive foreign policy and 'soft power' projects, aims to support projects in the Central Asian republics and in the Balkans.²⁹⁶ Dozens of mosques have been restored in Kosovo and Macedonia through the works of this agency. As Kerem Öktem rightly noticed, the reconstruction of mosques is 'a significant act of symbolical re-appropriation of Ottoman material heritage and an affirmative statement of the role of Turkey as protector of the Muslim people of the Balkans.'²⁹⁷

In the long term, the most important legacy of the Turkish influence is the educational institutions established in the last two decades. Initiated and generously supported by Turkish *neo-Sufi* networks, in co-operation with local activists and academics, around twelve such institutions sprang up in Bosnia, Macedonia and Kosovo. The network of the Bosna Sema Educational Institutions, formed in 1997, succeeded in establishing three primary schools in Tuzla, Sarajevo and Zenica, three colleges in Tuzla, Sarajevo and Bihać and a university in Sarajevo. International Burch University (IBU) was established in 2008 in Sarajevo, 'with the goal of presenting a unique opportunity to rethink the very idea of a

²⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 25.

²⁹⁵ The full title of the agency is Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency or in Turkish *Türkiye İşbirliği ve Kalkınma İdaresi*.

²⁹⁶ Öktem, p. 28.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 30.

modern university and formulate a blueprint for the future.’²⁹⁸ All these institutions are the off spring of the global Gülen movement, whose work is replicated in fifty countries.²⁹⁹

A similar aim to the above educational institutions is followed by the Foundation for Education Development in Sarajevo, which founded another higher educational institution, the International University of Sarajevo. The foundation was established as a non-governmental organization with characteristics of endowment, with the purpose of seeking and creating academic, material and legal conditions for the advancement of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Foundation is a product of the joint effort of Turkish businessmen and intellectuals from Bosnia.³⁰⁰ The same pattern of organization has also been applied in Macedonia, where the International Balkan University was established in 2008. The founding body of the university is the Skopje Education and Culture Development Foundation, which is, again, the product of joint co-operation of Macedonian intellectuals and Turkish businessmen.³⁰¹

The driving force behind all these businessmen-intellectuals networks comes from the Turkish *neo-Sufi* movements, Suleymanci³⁰² and Nurcu.³⁰³ The *neo-Sufi* movements have

²⁹⁸ *About IBU* (Sarajevo: International Burc University Sarajevo, 2010)
<<http://www.ibu.edu.ba/index.php?id=15>> [accessed 22 March 2011].

²⁹⁹ See more about the Gülen movement in: Enes Ergene, *An Analysis of the Gülen Movement* (Fethullah Gülen) <<http://www.fethullahgulen.org/about-fethullah-gulen/an-analysis-of-the-gulen-movement.html>> [accessed 25 March 2011].

³⁰⁰ *Foundation for Education Development Sarajevo* (Sarajevo: International University of Sarajevo, 2010)
<<http://www.ius.edu.ba/Default.aspx?tabid=29>> [accessed 22 March 2011].

³⁰¹ *History of Foundation* (Skopje: International Balkan University, 2010)
<<http://www.ibu.edu.mk/foundation.htm>> [accessed 24 March 2011].

³⁰² The Suleymanci movement was founded by Suleyman Hilmi Tunahan, a *sufi* leader of Naqshibandi order and a follower of *Imam-ı Rabbani*. According to the Strasbourg branch coordinator’s statistical information, the followers of Suleyman Hilmi Tunahan founded over 1100 student dormitories in Europe, which are linked to the German-based federation. The activities of the Suleymanci community in Europe are coordinated by the Union of the Islamic Culture centres of Europe (Islamisches Kultur Zentrum der Europa), which has its seat in Köln. See more in: Emre Demir, ‘The Emergence of a Neo-Communitarian Movement in the Turkish Diaspora in Europe: The Strategies of Settlement and Competition of Gülen Movement in France and Germany’, in proceedings of: *Muslim World in Transition: Contribution of the Gülen Movement* (London: Dialogue

particularly been active in the Balkans. They established their first colleges in Macedonia in 1996, in Bosnia in 1997 and in Kosovo in 2000. Presently there are ten secular colleges with several thousand students that follow the curriculums of their host states. Their activities have also been focused on religious education through reading circles and *Qur'ān* courses. It seems that most active in the region, if not in the world, has been the Gülen movement. Described as the world's leading Muslim network, the Gülen movement is a global network of primary and secondary schools, universities, charities, radio and TV stations, newspapers, lobbying groups and business initiatives. The movement is inspired by the teachings of Fethullah Gülen, a Turkish theologian and activist.³⁰⁴ Apart from these, a number of private initiatives, twin cities projects and municipalities with large communities in Turkey originating from the Balkans have also been active in the region through various projects.

Turkey's Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Genel Müdürlüğü*) is the government body that deals with all religious matters of the country's Sunni Muslim majority. 'It was given the mandate to carry out religious affairs pertaining to faith, worship and moral principles, to inform society on religion and to administer places of worship.'³⁰⁵ In reality, the *Diyanet* employs all the *imams* and other personnel, pays their salaries and organises religious life in the country. With about 80,000 employees and a budget larger than that of many service ministries of the Republic, the *Diyanet* is probably the world's largest

Society, 2007) <<http://gulenconference.org.uk/userfiles/file/Proceedings/Prd%20-%20Demir,%20E.pdf>> [accessed 27 March 2011] pp. 214 -229.

³⁰³ The founder of the Nurcu movement is Said Nursi (1878 – 1960) who was a prominent Muslim scholar and activist of a Kurdish background. Highly revered among his disciples and widely known as *Bediüzzaman* (the wonder of the age) he wrote extensively in his work *Risale-i Nur*, a six thousand page *Qur'ān*ic commentary. See more in: Camilla T. Nereid, *In the Light of Said Nursi: Turkish Nationalism and the Religious Alternative* (London: C. Hurst Publishers, 1998)

³⁰⁴ Among the institutions and organizations lead by members of the movement are: Turkish language TV station (Samanyolu TV and Mehtap TV), TV Ebru in English language, newspaper *Zaman* in Turkish and *Today's Zaman* in English language, magazines and journals in Turkish (*Sızıntı*, *Yeni Ümit* and *Aksiyon*), *The Fountain Magazine* in English, and the radio station *Burç FM*. See more in: Enes Ergene, *An Analysis of the Gülen Movement*.

³⁰⁵ Mehmet Görmez, *Clergy and Islam* (Ankara: Presidency of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey) <<http://www.diyane.gov.tr/turkish/ingilizce/icerik.aspx?IID=310>> [accessed 12 May 2011].

and most centralized Muslim religious organization. Currently, it is divided into five main departments whose main role is to provide religious services, organized education and inform the public about the activities of the body. Domestic services are provided through *mufti* offices and other religious personnel in Turkey and, for services taking place abroad, through religious counsellors, attaches and other religious personnel.³⁰⁶

Diyanet, as symbolic leader of the Muslim communities of the Balkans and Central Asia, has supported the official Islamic Communities in infrastructure and capacity building. Seminars and courses for officials of the IC and teaching staff of religious institutions are regularly organized in Turkey. Also, one of the most noticeable initiatives of this body has been the organization and hosting of the Eurasian and Balkan Councils. These annual meetings attended by religious representatives from the Turkish Republic, the Balkans and Caucasian Countries, as well as Turkish and Islamic societies, are forum where an exchange of ideas takes place and avenues of cooperation are explored.³⁰⁷

Apart from the organizations of the Eurasian and Balkan Councils, two other areas of *Diyanet*'s work have been the reconstruction of mosques and scholarship programmes for students from the Balkans. As shown in Table 1, around 400 students from the successor states of former Yugoslavia are admitted to study religious subjects in Turkey every year with full scholarships granted by the *Diyanet*. The total number of scholarships granted for the whole region including Bulgaria, Romania, Albania and Greece exceeds 1000.

³⁰⁶ Öktem, pp. 31-32.

³⁰⁷ About the *Diyanet* activities see more at <http://www.diyamet.gov.tr/english/>

Table 1: Scholarships granted by the Diyanet in the Balkans in 2009

Country	Recipients of grants	Turkish communities
Kosovo	195	30,000
Bosnia-Herzegovina	135	n/a
Macedonia	59	70,000
Serbia	23	n/a
Montenegro	-	n/a
Based on the Diyanet country statistics for the year 2010 (Diyanet, 2010a) as cited in Öktem, p. 34.		

The local populations and officials of the Islamic Communities have generally welcomed the Turkish involvement and no major clashes have occurred between the two, as it was the case with the *neo-salafi* organizations. The traditional positive sentiments towards modern Turkey as well as the Ottoman Empire are shared almost equally from Macedonia to the Sandžak region, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Bosnia Turkish involvement is often seen as a natural development after decades of disengagement of Turkish governments towards this part of the world. This view is best described in a statement by Džemaludin Latić, referring to the Ottoman role in bringing Islam to the Balkans and withdrawing from the region in 1878:

Turkey is our second mother and Turkish governments several times in the history were our stepmothers. Out of all foreign nations, the Turkish people are closest to us, and we are to them... We are the *mazlums*, who were, for the reasons not known to me, left by them, the Turks, on the Balkan windward side and we have our *hak* (right) with them.³⁰⁸

It is evident that the Turkish approach in the Balkans has been quite different from the attitudes of *neo-salafi* organizations and trends. Turkish governmental agencies, in particular, are trying to support existing Islamic Communities and strengthen their infrastructure through a number of initiatives. Their activities are well planned, organized and funded, with a long term goals, and their approach is constructive and gradual. Of course, Turkish factors are in a much better position in the Balkans. The official government stays behind the majority of the above initiatives, their involvement is welcomed by both the international community and the local population, and their experience in working within secular contexts, as well as the mentality of the two peoples, is the major advantage.

3.1.4. Local organizations

As a result of social and political changes in the successor states of former Yugoslavia there a certain number of local organizations have been established as community associations or associations of citizens. They have been formed mostly at a local or regional level, and very rarely at a national level. However, one informal organization, or rather trend, has survived in the Balkans since Ottoman times. The existence *sufi* orders dates back to the early Ottoman period when *sufi* missionaries travelled through the Balkan region and won the hearts of the local population. Throughout history the official Islamic Communities have had mainly good relationships with the *sufi* orders. This is due to the sympathies of the Ottoman

³⁰⁸ Faruk Vele, 'Cilj je da se Bošnjacima Razvuče Pamet - Intervju sa Džemaludinom Latićem', *Dnevni Avaz*, 22 August 2009, p. 4.

authorities towards the *sufi* teachings and later on to the moderate and subtle approach of the *sufi* orders in the areas of their presence. Among the official '*ulama*' there have always been sympathizers of *sufism* and the *darwish* practice. However, after the WWII, under the strong influence of the new communist regime, the modernist leadership of the IC saw *darwish* orders as syncretizers and deviators from Islamic orthodoxy, as a result banning the *sufi tariqah* in 1952. Their property was confiscated and was taken either by the IC or the state.³⁰⁹

This ban mostly struck the *darwish* circles in Bosnia, as for the following twenty years there was no official place for their gatherings and activities. Yet, in the areas of Kosovo and Macedonia their activities survived mainly owing to their ability to conceal their gatherings in the houses of *shaykhs*. The ban was lifted in 1970s thanks to prominent *sufi* scholars and activists, notably Fejzulah Hadzibajrić from Sarajevo and the Qadiri-Mevlevi Shaykh Xhemali Shehu. Also, the Community of Islamic Darwish Orders of the SFRY (ZIDRA) was formed in 1974, as an umbrella organization to promote *tasawwuf*. With this organization in place, the restrictions on darwish activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina were disregarded. The fact that in 1977 *dhikr* was performed in BiH in more than 41 places illustrates the strength *Sufi* orders regained in the late seventies.³¹⁰

Their number will have risen to about fifty locations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, of which seventeen are lodges (*tekija*), sixteen are private houses (*zavija*) and the rest are mosques. About 84% of buildings belong to the *Naqshibandi* order, five lodges belong to the *Qadiri*, 3 *Rifa'i* and one to *Shazili*. The lodges function with the consent of the IC and within its

³⁰⁹ Alibašić, (2003) p. 10.

³¹⁰ Huseyin Abiva, *A Glimpse at Sufism in the Balkans* (Chicago: Alevi Bektashi) <<http://www.alevibektasi.org/xabiva.htm>> [accessed 12 October 2009].

structures, although they are registered as associations of citizens. In Macedonia the *Sufis* are organized through the Islamic Darwish Religious Community, established in 1992. Headed by *Shaykh ul 'ulama'*, their orders include the *Halveti*, *Qadiri*, *Sinani*, *Rufa'i*, and *Naqshibandi*.³¹¹ Their activities include weekly *dhikr* gatherings, publications, (*Kelamul Šifa*, published by the *Tekija Masudija* from 2004, and *Šebi Arus*, published by the Association of the *Darwish* Orders in BiH from 1982). There is not an accepted definite number of *Sufis* in the region. Their estimated number however reaches a few thousand.³¹²

Although the *Sufi s* have been present in the region for the last five hundred years, and their activities and methods of operation have not significantly changed since the collapse of communism, they have not been immune to the new circumstances. Thus funding comes not only from members and local sympathizers, but also from brotherhoods abroad.³¹³ Their influence is limited to their lodges; informal influence on society could exist through the members and their leaders.

A number of organizations have been established as tools for promoting education, skills and sport among Muslim women. Thus, the Sarajevo-based *Sumejja*, established in 1991, pays particular attention to the affirmation of Muslim women at all levels. The organization tends to gather, direct and offer practical support to Muslim women in modern society.³¹⁴ Their activities include courses in the reading of the *Qur'ān*, foreign languages, information technology and tailoring. They also organize the promotion of books, specialized

³¹¹ Srđan Barišić, 'Institucionalizacija Islamskih Zajednica Nakon Raspada SFR Jugoslavije', *Filozofija i Društvo*, 2 (2008) <<http://www.institfdt.bg.ac.rs/nova/tekstovi/2008-02/Srdjan%20Barisic.pdf>> [accessed 7 June 2009] (p. 125).

³¹² Alibašić (2003), p. 10.

³¹³ The order of Shaykh Nazim Haqqani based in Cyprus has been particularly active in the region.

³¹⁴ *Historija Udruženja Sumejja* (Sarajevo: Sumejja, 2008) <<http://www.sumejja.ba/index.php?lokacija=strane&otac=1&id=11>> [accessed 20 March 2011]

publications and Islamic lectures and undertake humanitarian work. As a not-for-profit organization, *Sumejja* does not rely on any regular source of income. The majority of their activities have been funded through membership and donations. Other organizations such as *Nahla*, *Kewser*, etc. have similar aims and activities. *Sumejja* and its counterparts in other areas of the Balkan region have been characterized by a local, rather than natural, presence. Their common feature is subtle and gradual social change through education, sports, culture, and humanitarian work. They are membership or service funded organizations, without a great dependence on external or overseas funding.

Conclusion

The emergence of new Muslim trends in the Balkans has contributed toward religious pluralism in the region. This pluralism has often been misunderstood or confronted by the local population, but at the same time has found limited response among the young generation. New trends in the regions have mainly been embodied in the arrival of *neo-salafi* ideas and the establishment of organizations promoting these ideas.

Frequent media reports about the *neo-salafis* as a security threat to the public, sporadic arguments between local *imams* and mosque management with the representatives of the *neo-salafis* and the rejection by congregations of accepting different features of dress, appearance and performing worship, are still present in the Balkan region. The number of *neo-salafis* has increased and they are more visible now than before. However, compared with the situation ten or fifteen years ago, it is evident that sentiments have settled down and ordinary people have got used to the new and different interpretations and practices of Islam. Yet, despite their number and visibility, it seems that their influence has been drastically

reduced. Kerem Öktem's that the 'Wahabi Intermezzo,' as he named this occurrence, appears to be over. He further continues saying:

'this does not mean that some radical religious organisations, Muslim or otherwise, do not operate in the region, and have a visible presence in some disaffected villages or certain mosques in Sarajevo or Skopje. It does mean, however, that a hegemonic turn that would have destroyed the foundations of Islam in the Balkans—the Ottoman, mostly Hanefi heritage—and introduced a strict, conservative *salafism*, has not taken place and is very unlikely to do so in the future. The established Islamic Unions of the Balkans are mostly in control of the majority of mosques and preachers, and the political elites seem to support local forms of Islamic practice, promoted as "European Islam", "traditional Islam" or simply "our Islam".'³¹⁵

Although non-state actors linked to Arab-Afghan networks have existed in the Balkans for some time, especially during and immediately after the wars, their influence has significantly decreased over the past ten years. As the reasons for such developments, authors include the post 9/11 war on terror, the closure of several humanitarian organizations operating in the region, and the strength of the local religious institutions.

Other organizations founded in the post communist Balkans include Shi'a or Iranian influenced bodies which mainly promote the education, culture and philosophy of the Islamic Republic. Although their presence is a concern for political reasons and Western interests in the region, there is not much concern over their influence on overall religiosity and the ways of religious observance among the Balkan Muslims.

³¹⁵ Öktem, p. 22.

What seems to be mostly welcome is the Turkish involvement in the Balkans in the last two decades. Its approach is measured, diplomatic and gradual, but will definitely lead to a long term impact on the Muslim populations of the Balkans. The reason for such a forecast lies in the fact that the two mentalities, the Turkish and the Balkan, are pretty much similar. Opposite to the *neo-Salafi* involvement, Turkish factor does not aim to change the Balkan architectural landscape through constructing austere mosques, they do not form parallel institutions or organizations to compete with the Islamic Communities, and their approach is not arrogant and derogatory towards local religious practice. Also, their experience in working within secular context helps Turkish organizations on the ground to understand local conventions and mentalities.

Turkey is a rising economic power which seeks more influence in the region and therefore one may expect further engagement of Turkish governmental and private institutions establishing links and networks not only with religious organizations in the region, but also at political and economic level. The recent diplomatic initiative of Ahmet Davutoglu with the presidents of Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia best describes such a tendency.

Sufi orders have been present in the Balkans since Ottoman times and although the communist authorities banned their activities, with the help of local '*ulama*' circles, they resurfaced in the 1970s and continue their existence until present. No dramatic increase in members of *Sufi* orders has occurred during the post-communism period, although the network of their lodges and intensity of their activities have grown slightly.

What can the official Islamic Communities do to relate with new Muslim organizations? They can either distance themselves from an organization, or have an antagonistic attitude,

as in the case of the parallel IC in Serbia discussed in the second chapter. However a third option, the more frequent one, is to try to influence the leadership and management of those organizations to work in accordance with the established patterns and traditions of the IC. The IC is coming to understand the new circumstances and has to face the challenges of modern times. It is more than clear that the monopoly that the official Islamic Communities had on Islam and Islamic activities during communist times has now been challenged. In the new open competition for spiritual influence and leadership, the emerging organizations and agencies have a full right to organize religious activities, publish books and pamphlets, run courses in Islam, and interpret religion as they believe is right.

Organizations with foreign influence, including *neo-salafi* oriented organizations, Turkish governmental and non-governmental agencies, and the *Shi'a* or Iranian sponsored organizations, institutes and schools, have obtained their funding streams mainly from abroad. At the same time, social organizations with religious content have mainly originated locally without any major donations from abroad.

Diversification of religious practice in the post-communist Balkans does not necessary entail an increased appetite for religion. An appropriate conclusion to this section is Bougarel's statement that an increased interest (and participation) in the most important moments of religious life does exist, but their strictly religious character is becoming blurred by new national, cultural, or festive, dimensions.³¹⁶ This however will be further explained in Chapter Five of this work.

3.2. The place of mosques in Balkan society

³¹⁶ Bougarel, (2005) p. 16.

As the place of the mosque in Islam is of essential importance, it seems sensible to examine its very nature in the present-day Balkans and draw a comparison with the communist period. The analysis of differences and similarities in the building, funding and managing of Muslim places of worship opens the possibility of discovering the potential changes that have occurred in the religious lives of Balkan Muslims as well as continuation of the practices that were present during the communist period. This section, therefore, will examine the architectural features of mosques in the two periods.

The concern here is particularly with the questions of the influences on the process of building and maintaining mosques. Are the present mosques in any way different from those built forty or fifty years ago? If yes, are the new styles a product of the natural transformation of traditional features, or are there Middle-Eastern influences in their construction? This examination of influences goes further to explore the funding streams which have made it possible to build and maintain places of worship during the two periods. Whoever funds this essential institution in Islam has a responsibility, opportunity and privilege either to manage mosque affairs or to shape the way in which they are managed. Furthermore, if funding and management have drastically changed, then the very activities maintained within the mosque walls may have been altered. In an attempt to explore these issues, it is hoped that the observation of a wider image of Islam in the public domain will be possible.

It has been stated earlier that religious buildings of all three denominations (Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim) suffered during the restrictive phase of communism in 1945-1960. Many mosques were destroyed during this period, some centuries old, for the purpose of “new urban planning” and the planned secularization process of society. However, as Ivan

Iveković wrote, 'religions always played an important social and cultural role in Balkan societies, even when communist messianism suppressed their visible public manifestations.'³¹⁷ This was evident principally after the 1960s, during the liberal phase of communism, when Muslim communities, along with other religious groups, managed to reconstruct and build a network of religious buildings across the whole country. The Islamic Community of Yugoslavia operated with more than 3,000 mosques and prayer halls (*mesdžid*) in the 1970s.³¹⁸ The dynamic rebuilding of Muslim places of worship continued through the 1980s. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia 80 new mosques were built.³¹⁹ This impressive infrastructure enabled a faster and more efficient revitalization of Islam in the post-communist period. It is evident, however, that a more relaxed and liberal approach to the matter of religious freedoms by the regime itself contributed to the increased building of mosques and religious self-identification.

The Yugoslav government in 1965 even 'released an instruction for the local authorities to financially support renovation and rebuilding of all religious facilities destroyed or damaged during World War II.'³²⁰ Also, generous contributions by the congregations increased as the general economic condition of Yugoslavian citizens improved. It is estimated that in 1973 more than a million Yugoslav workers were employed abroad as seasonal or permanent workers.³²¹ Yet the Muslim community was not unique in the rebuilding process. Between 1945 and 1970, the Orthodox Church built 181 new places of worship and restored 841. 'In

³¹⁷ Ivan Iveković, 'Nationalism and the Political Use of Religion: The Politicization of Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam in Yugoslav Successor States', *Social Compass*, 49.4 (2002), 523-536 (p. 524).

³¹⁸ Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 12.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

addition, the Church built new chapels and 8 monasteries and repaired 126 chapels and 48 monasteries.³²²

In recording mosque building, some authors have exaggerated the actual number of newly built places of worship. The Belgrade media thus presented the process of rebuilding as a new expansion of Islam and a danger to the state and the regime. In recent years, several hundred new mosques have been built; some with substantial financial aid from Islamic countries, wrote the Belgrade *Borba*.³²³

3.2.1. Permission to build mosques

It has been noted earlier that religious communities in Yugoslavia enjoyed more religious freedom and better conditions than their counterparts in other communist states. ‘According to the official statistics for 1969, religious communities regularly operated over 14,000 churches, monasteries, mosques and other facilities. At the same time, in the ten times more populous USSR, the total number of places of worship open for regular service was 11,636.³²⁴ How Communism affected Muslim religious buildings elsewhere is demonstrated by the 20,000 mosques in 1917 in Central Asia, reduced to 4000 in 1929; and by 1935 there were only 60 registered mosques in Uzbekistan, the largest of the Asian Soviet Republics with over half of the Muslim population of Central Asia.³²⁵

But still Muslims and other religious groups experienced many obstacles in obtaining permission to build in many areas, especially in the large towns and cities. The Sarajevo

³²² Ibid., p. 38.

³²³ Ibid., p. 83.

³²⁴ Ibid., p. 38.

³²⁵ Froese, p. 63.

municipality of Novi Grad had two mosques for nearly a hundred thousand people, mostly Muslims, before the war. In 1997 the same municipality had three mosques under construction and 27 locations designated as places of worship for 136,000 inhabitants. Mustafa Spahic, lecturer at the *Gazi Husrev-begova medresa*, claims that the increased construction of mosques in the post-communist period is the result of previous obstructions laid by the communist regime. The media attention and unrest among the secular orientated intelligentsia in Bosnia and Kosovo in relation to the construction and rebuilding process in the post-war Balkans should not then come as a surprise. In his response to frequent media headlines about new mosque openings, Spahic contests that the majority of mosques built in new urban areas were required even earlier, but, owing to previous restrictions, their construction was impossible. There were instances where permission could not be obtained even in rural settings. Islam was not the only religion banned from construction in urban areas. Similar problems were experienced by the clergy and members of other religious communities. Catholic bishops complained at the Bishops' Conference of Yugoslavia in 1966 and 1968 about their difficulties in finding appropriate locations for churches in large cities.³²⁶ It would be naive to believe that almost all applications for permission were not granted 'by bad urban planning, massive migration from rural areas into cities, and illegal construction of private homes by these migrants,'³²⁷ as some authors say in trying to defend the communist policies. However, rare exceptions did exist, such as the continuation of the construction of a large Byzantine Cathedral in Belgrade city centre and, in 1984, the completion of the mosque in the Croatian capital of Zagreb.

³²⁶ Perica, p. 37.

³²⁷ Ibid., p. 37.

The Zagreb mosque, completed in 1987, became one of the largest in Europe, containing a large modern prayer hall, library, classroom, restaurant and offices. The design, by two Bosnian architects was a modernized version of classical Islamic architecture.³²⁸ In the years and decades that followed, the Zagreb mosque became a role model for large urban mosques in terms of modern architecture and contents. Because most of the money required for the construction of the mosque was raised abroad (in Libya, Saudi Arabia and Iran), the communist regime expressed concern over the influence that foreign governments might have on the Yugoslav Muslims.³²⁹ The concern over foreign involvement would resume in the post-communist period, during the rebuilding process of hundreds of destroyed mosques, but now by the “independent” media and “liberal” intellectuals.³³⁰ ‘Unregulated rebuilding and mass construction do not have anything with the revitalization of the Bosniak spirituality,’ wrote the Sarajevo weekly *Dani*.³³¹

Nonetheless, foreign funding for the construction of places of worship during and after communism was not a peculiarity of Muslims alone. Other religious communities received benevolent donations from foreign organizations or governments. The Serbian Church, for instance, like other religious institutions, ‘was also receiving Western financial aid as one of the churches persecuted by the communists.’ Donations for the Belgrade cathedral came from various parts of the world, including from the prime minister of Greece.³³²

As there were no new mosques in urban areas, the existing mosques built during the Ottoman period were mainly used for worship during the communism years. There were also

³²⁸ Perica, p. 81.

³²⁹ Ibid., p. 82.

³³⁰ Emir Imamović, ‘Džamija Po Glavi Bošnjaka’, *BH Dani*, 24 October 1997, pp. 37,39.

³³¹ Ibid., p. 39.

³³² Perica, p. 9.

instances of destruction of some of these mosques by the regime with the excuse of new building regulatory plans. The problem for worshipers was that existing Ottoman mosques had been situated in old parts of the cities and were inadequate in size, whereas new building estates were built without any places of worship.

The construction of new mosques sparked criticism from some media as they suggested that their development could completely change the landscape and appearance of cities. Indeed, in some areas community activists have exaggerated the need for a mosque, thus resulting in two or more mosques being built in very close proximity, or one very large building without any need for so much space. Kemal Zukić has confirmed that, despite the attempts by the Centre for Islamic Architecture (body responsible for protection and regulation of Islamic architecture in Bosnia and Herzegovina) to regulate all mosque projects, there are instances of aggrandizing the size and the needs of mosques. 'If we were asked the Mojmiro mosque (in Sarajevo) would not be that large, or lavish, as we need a larger number of smaller mosques'.³³³

Muslims, as well as followers of other main religions, are now by and large free to construct their place of worship and find it easy to obtain planning permission. Sead Jamakovic, the director of the cantonal planning institute in Sarajevo, confirmed that his institution had earmarked certain plots for the building of mosques and Islamic cultural centres. Also, the Institute has so far issued a dozen building permits after detailed surveys and expert

³³³ Dženana Duško, *Ko Plaća Taj Odlučuje Intervju Sa Kemalom Zukićem, Direktorom Centra Za Islamsku Arhitekturu* (Sarajevo: BH Dani, 22 October 1999) <<http://www.bhdani.com/arhiva/125/t254a.htm>> [accessed 13 May 2009].

adjustments.³³⁴ However, some exceptions do exist in areas where Muslims represent a minority. In Chapter Two the issue of the Ljubljana mosque was thoroughly discussed. As an example, Muslims in the Serbian capital Belgrade are still waiting for permission for at least five mosques to fulfil the needs of thousands of believers. In the Croatian city of Rijeka there was strong opposition to the local mosque. The dispute there between Muslims and the wider local community has been successfully resolved and the first cornerstone of the new building was laid in 2009.³³⁵

3.2.2. Funding

In the majority of cases, mosque construction is funded by members of the congregation. The official Islamic Community in most cases is not keen to approve any construction without real prospects of funding and maintaining the mosque from local resources. Responding to a Sunday Times article which warned about the funding and control of at least four mosques in the Macedonian capital of Skopje, the head of the Islamic Community, Suleyman Rexhepi, rejected insinuations of foreign involvement in the affairs of the IC and alleged control of the mosques by foreign financiers in his country.

‘All the mosques in Macedonia are being built exclusively with the permission of the Islamic Religious Community and with the support of voluntary donations from the believers themselves,’ affirmed official response from the IC, reiterating that ‘no financial contributions from any radical Islamist groups or dubious donations exist.’³³⁶

³³⁴ Dženana Duško, *Gladnom Narodu Raskošne Džamije* (Sarajevo: BH Dani, 22 October 1999) <<http://www.bhdani.com/arhiva/125/t254a.htm>> [accessed 13 May 2009].

³³⁵ Hajrudin Mujkanović, *Historijat Izgradnje Islamskog Centra Rijeka* (Rijeka: Islamic Community of Croatia, 2009) <<http://www.medzlis-rijeka.org/ic-rijeka/historijat-izgradnje-ic-rijeka/>> [accessed 24 June 2012].

³³⁶ Vojkan Ristić, *Džamije Nisu Pod Kontrolom Islamista* (Belgrade: Danas, 30 March 2010) <http://www.danas.rs/danasrs/svet/region/dzamije_nisu_pod_kontrolom_islamista.9.html?news_id=187089> [accessed 20 August 2011].

This means that each member family of the congregation pledges to support the construction with a certain amount of funds. If the pledged or collected resources are still not sufficient, the committee members organize fundraising events in other congregations and mosques. This is usually performed on Fridays when a local *imam* calls for believers to support the proposed project. This method of funding mosque construction, or rebuilding, was practised during the communist period and is still popular today. The only difference is that today fundraising is also organized in over three hundred congregations or *džemats* in the Diaspora. Furthermore, through the established traditional fundraising methods, the majority of the mosques and other religious enterprises, such as *mektebs*, graveyards, *tekijas*, etc. were built.

After the collapse of communism, more donors arrived, especially in Bosnia, to contribute to mosque construction or rebuilding. Thus, according to the Sarajevo magazine *Dani*, the Saudi High Commission for Help to Bosnia and Herzegovina donated funds for the rebuilding or construction of 72 mosques and *mesdžids*, the Malaysian government helped in the renovation of 40 damaged mosques, and donors from Kuwait were planning to rebuild up to a hundred mosques.³³⁷ The most grandiose and well known projects such as the King Fahd mosque, the Malaysian and Indonesian mosque in Sarajevo, the Princess Gevahirah mosque in Bugojno, the Prince Abdullah mosque in Tuzla, were funded by donors from abroad.

Similar building uplift has been recorded in Kosovo as well by the Saudi Joint Committee for the Relief of Kosovo and Chechnya (SJRC) and charitable organizations from the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. Serious concerns have been raised among secular intellectuals and the media about the possible influence of these foreign donors on the religious practices of Balkan Muslims. 'Foreign money will bring foreign ways and comprehensions of

³³⁷ Imamović, p. 38.

religion,' wrote the Sarajevo weekly, *Dani*, in 1997. However, regardless of their size and grandiose design as well as media and public attention, these foreign-funded mosques represent no more than 5% of the total mosques built in the Balkans after Communism.³³⁸ The vast majority of mosques have been funded by a local congregation. Also, the majority of the mosques, both during and after communism, have been maintained by contributions from the local population. Despite some attempts and incidents of assuming the management of mosques, a decade later, the Islamic Community still firmly controls the majority of mosques and their activities. This fact has been of utmost importance for official Islamic Communities, as no organization or country can influence the work and practice of the *Imams* and the mosque congregation other than the IC and local management committees. Nevertheless, foreign donors have had influence over the architecture and outlook of some mosques in both Bosnia and Kosovo.

3.2.3. Architecture

During communism, about 95% of mosques were built as four sloped roofs. Relying on a humble income, their size was rather modest, between one and three hundred square metres. The largest mosque in the Balkans until the 1990s was the *Gazi Husrev –begova* mosque built in 1531, which was about 350 m² in floor area. It is evident that the majority of mosques resembled traditional houses of the area in their architectural outlook. This resulted in the 'popular mosque' as Kemal Zukić called it, with a tiled roof and veranda or *safa* in front and sometimes a small wooden minaret.³³⁹ The majority of mosques had a large prayer room, *wudu* area and a space for women, either on the balcony or on the ground floor. Some

³³⁸ Omerdić, 2008.

³³⁹ *Interview with Professor Kemal Zukić, Architect in Sarajevo* (Berlin: Globalia Magazine, 2002) <<http://www.globaliamagazine.com/?id=171>> [accessed 20 February 2011]

mosques had classrooms and an *Imam*'s office, while others had classrooms separate from the prayer building. During the communist period, professional architects were not employed owing to financial considerations as well as prohibition imposed by the regime on architects from engaging in mosque design. Zukić said in one interview:

‘I've worked all over the former Yugoslavia as a designer, but not really as a mosque designer, because it was prohibited in the former Yugoslavia to work in the design and construction of mosques. Still I worked on the repair of old mosques during those thirty five years, but this was secretly. I worked without publicity. I helped people to repair old mosques, but not officially.’³⁴⁰

After communism one can find a variety of designs and influences in mosque architecture. The majority of mosques today are designed to resemble Turkish style mosques with one minaret, one large dome, and three or more smaller domes. The size and design of the mosque is enriched by the increased economic ability of the members of the congregation. ‘Some architects think it is good to forget the tradition and do a completely new design not dependent on past. We call this the "international" style,’ explained Zukić on the new architectural trends.³⁴¹

The mosques funded from abroad have architectural influences mainly from the Middle East. Their features are characterized by grandiosity and simplicity, manifested often in white colours and marble materials. Even where minor refurbishments are required, the foreign

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

financiers have imposed their own standards of Islamic architecture, whitewashing over numerous ornaments, mouldings and elaborate interior frescoes.³⁴²

‘The Qater Lula mosque in the center of Pristina, four centuries old, hadn’t even been damaged during the war. But like many of Kosovo’s Ottoman-era mosques, whether targeted during the hostilities of 1998-1999 or not, it was disused and in disrepair, a consequence of decades of official neglect. Rather than attempt the complicated task of restoration, the Saudi Joint Committee for the Relief of Kosovo and Chechnya (SJRC), the largest and most prominent Arab aid organization in Kosovo, had the old structure razed to the ground in 2000. In its place appeared a large, starkly white mosque, wrapped with reflective windows.’³⁴³

There are also a number of styles designed by local architects who are trying to give their project a vernacular touch and combine a general tradition of Islam, local styles and modern techniques and approaches in designing mosques.³⁴⁴ Such an example is the Rijeka mosque in Croatia, designed by a sculptor Dušan Džamonja. These new vernacular styles have been applied mainly in the urban areas, whereas in the rural context most mosques follow Turkish typology.

During the communist period, funding and the regime’s restrictions, and in some cases ignorance, resulted in professional architects not being employed during the planning and construction process of a mosque. Instead, local skilled construction workers volunteered to design and build them. At the present time congregations mainly employ professionals in most building projects to plan and supervise the building process.

³⁴² Ted Siefer, *Kosovo: Heritage or Sacrilege?* (Prague: Transitions Online: Regional Intelligence, 23 July 2003) <<http://www.tol.org/client/article/10172-kosovo-heritage-or-sacrilege.html>> [accessed 5 March 2010].

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Interview with Professor Kemal Zukić, Architect in Sarajevo.

In a contextual sense, there is an intention to diversify activities in the mosque to include not only religious but also social, cultural and educational content. Thus one will find a space for an IT room, library, coffee room, *Imam*'s office and meeting room, among others. Along with these contents, the phrase "Islamic (Cultural) Centre" has been introduced into the jargon. An Islamic Centre, apart from direct religious practice, i.e. prayer, should encompass religious education, including a school, *mekteb*, youth club, library and reading room. These centres did not exist in the tradition of Balkan Muslims and the experts as well as congregations, are looking for their place, size and right name.³⁴⁵

It is however questionable how much and how often these facilities have been used. From research carried out in 2008, it was evident most of congregations and *Imams* are contented with the level of activity present and maintained in the community for the last few decades. The size of mosques has increased to between seven hundred and eight thousand square metres.³⁴⁶

3.2.4. Management

During communism, a semi-official committee of elders (*džamijski/džematski odbor*) was in charge of mosque affairs, but the real "power" of running a mosque laid in the hands of a chairman of the committee (*mutevlja*) who looked after the *waqf* properties, leased them, collected leaseholds, donations and memberships. The *mutevelija* was in charge of almost all administrative duties around the mosque, including a provision for the salary for *Imam* either by himself or transferring the collected money to the regional office for Islamic affairs which was responsible for the salaries and national insurance contributions of the *Imams*. In most

³⁴⁵ Duško, 1999.

³⁴⁶ The King Fahd mosque in Sarajevo is the largest mosque in the Balkans with 8,200 square metres.

cases the *mutevelija* was elected for an indefinite number of years and held the trust of the entire congregation as a respected member who kept the accustomed traditions and standards of the community. The mosque itself was run under established traditional patterns. This form of management was maintained through the transition period of the 1990s and is still present, with slight differences, in Muslim communities today.

3.2.5. Activities

The content and activities in mosques varies in the Balkans. In small villages, of modest income, activities are scarce, whereas in large suburbs or cities, where membership is more numerous and income steady, the quality of religious life is much better. Basic activities include the Friday prayer, weekend instruction for children, religious ceremonies of *mevlud* (remembrance of the Prophet's birthday) and *tevhid* (a gathering with *dhikr* in memory of a dead member of the congregation). The most important regular administrative activities are the collection of memberships fees and donations, administration of *waqf* properties if they exist (usually in form of land) and the mosque maintenance. During the month of *Ramadhan* activities increase to include more regular prayers, daily reading of *Qur'ānic* chapters by the *Imam* and members of the congregation (*mukabela*), *teraviah* prayer, and the collection of *zakāh* and *sadakah al-fitr*. Most of these activities have been transmitted to the present day through communism without any significant changes. The only difference today is that in large urban mosques more content has been added in the form of weekly or monthly lectures, guest speakers, adult education classes, etc.

Conclusion

In terms of funding, most mosques have been built nowadays in accordance with traditional and accustomed ways present during or even before Communism. Media attention has been paid to the large urban projects funded by foreign donors. These projects, despite their size and the amount of money invested, are the exception and do not represent a general rule in mosque funding and maintenance in the Balkans.

In the managerial regard no noteworthy changes have occurred between the two periods. What was practiced during communist times remained afterwards without any significant modification. Serious concerns raised about the influence and control of factors abroad proved to be unjustified and, as Ahmet Alibašić noticed, ‘no concerns should exist that “the *wahhabis*” will take our mosques over, which we protected by the constitution, resolutions and other acts. ‘However,’ he continues ‘there is a real prospect that our mosques ... without valid responses to the challenges of the modern, transitional and post-conflict society ... become as empty as some western churches.’³⁴⁷

It seems that members of the Islamic Community have not yet freed themselves from the mental restrictions of communism in their adherence to Islam. Instead of adding new substance to their religious life in or out of the mosque, many Muslims are trying to manifest their religion through building large, lavish, sometimes expensive, and distinctive mosques. At times the size and lavishness of the mosque do not represent the real needs of the congregation, but rather a desire to demonstrate religious pride and belonging in the new circumstances of religious freedom. Although mosques have increased in size and their architectural outlook has changed (often resembling mosques in the Middle East or Turkey),

³⁴⁷ Alibašić, 2010.

in the contextual sense no significant transformation has occurred. Despite the fact that the presence of Islam has grown in the public, the mosque is still carrying the baggage of communism and previous periods. How much these new mosques will be utilized it remains to be seen.

3.3. The presence of Islam in the media³⁴⁸

Introduction

During communism, religious institutions could not use public media. As a result mainstream religious programmes or newspaper sections presenting religion could not exist during this period. At the same time, as Paul Mojzes noticed, ‘attack upon religion is freely permitted in such media without their right to reply.’³⁴⁹ If religious communities replied in their press, which was allowed to function from the 1960s onwards, the author or editors risked being involved in ‘a hostile anti-state propaganda’ which often involved complete withdrawal of the newspaper issue and police interrogation.³⁵⁰ The situation completely changed with the decline of the communist regime, resulting in religions, religious representatives, *imams* and priests entering the public space of the post-communist Balkan society. The two periods have been both drastically different and considerably similar. As the restrictions of the old system were fading away, the challenges of democracy, freedom and religious pluralism have appeared. To assess the place of Islam in the media, it is

³⁴⁸ One of the valuable sources examining the role and presence of religion in the media in the Bosnian context has been *Religion and Media*, published by The Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation in Sarajevo. The findings of this book have largely been used for the purpose of the research of this section. Other beneficial data was used from the monitoring of local media to published materials as to examine the level and nature Islam has been treated. See more in: Lea Taji, ed., *Religija i Mediji* (Sarajevo: Fondacija Konrad Adenauer, 2007) <<http://www.mediaplan.ba/docs/medijiReligija.pdf>> [accessed 12 September 2008].

³⁴⁹ Paul Mojzes, Religion and the Left in Yugoslavia in: Reimer, Allen James., and Rudolf J. Siebert. *The Influence of the Frankfurt School on Contemporary Theology: Critical Theory and the Future of Religion; Dubrovnik Papers in Honour of Rudolf J. Siebert*. (Lewiston: Mellen Pr., 1992), p. 84.

³⁵⁰ Mojzes, p. 84.

important to establish the main themes of the two periods in question and the differences and similarities when it comes to Islam. It is also crucial to find out how Islam has benefited from the new circumstances and whether there is any continuation of an influence of the communist attitude toward Islam.³⁵¹

3.3.1. How is Islam presented in the media?

In some western countries, Islam is often seen as an immigrant, imported or non-European religion.³⁵² In the Balkans, the media presents it as foreign in its essence, but not immigrant; rather a remnant of the distant Ottoman past. Hence in the *Nin* newspaper orientalist Darko Tanasković noticed that ‘many in Serbia still see Islam as something foreign and adversarial’.³⁵³ ‘Islamic fundamentalists are nothing more than a reflection of the “dark past,”’ wrote the Belgrade based *Duga*, citing Serbian leading orientalist Miroljub Jevtić.³⁵⁴ This shows actual animosity based on historical prejudices about the Muslims being ‘traitors of the ancestors’ religion’ or the ‘Turks who occupied the land.’ Muslims have become scapegoats for Albanian nationalism and separatism in Kosovo, advocates of Islamic fundamentalism in Bosnia, and agents of retrograde regimes and governments in the whole region. As will be shown, this attitude towards Islam continues in some media to the present day. The only difference is a so-called acceptance of traditional Islam and refusal of the radical, or *neo-salafi*, version.

³⁵¹ For the purpose of this study twenty two printed media were analysed during the period September 2008 to May 2009.

³⁵² See among others: Christina Schori Liang, *Europe for the Europeans: the Foreign and Security Policy of the Populist Radical Right* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Nezar Al-Sayyad and Manuel Castells, *Muslim Europe or Euro-Islam: Politics, Culture, and Citizenship in the Age of Globalization* (Lanham: Lexington, 2002).

³⁵³ Darko Tanasković, ‘Nacija i Vera Između ‘m’ i ‘M’’, *NIN*, 24 September 1989, p. 25.

³⁵⁴ Miroljub Jevtić, ‘Rezervisti Allahove Vojske’, *Duga*, 9 – 22 December 1989, p. 21.

Serbia had long clashes with the Ottoman Muslims; therefore it should not come as a surprise that the Belgrade-based media presented Islam and Muslims very often in a negative way, even during communist times. Almost every religious activity by Muslim communities could have been used to prove “a work against the interests of the people,” a communist parole utilized to blackmail the guilty or the innocent. The basic religious instruction in the *mektebs* was described as an unnecessary burden for Muslim children. The same religious instruction was presented as ‘a vehicle for the dissemination of Muslim nationalism.’³⁵⁵ Islam was accused by the same media outlets and some scholars as ‘the major catalyst of Albanian nationalism and Kosovo separatism,’ although government investigations proved quite the opposite, (i.e. involvement of communist Albania in the Kosovo unrests).³⁵⁶ The increasing struggle of Kosovo majority Albanians for national and economic rights were perceived by the media as Islamic fundamentalism.³⁵⁷

The study period of over a hundred Muslim students in Islamic countries were described as attempts of an Islamic propaganda in the *Borba*, the Belgrade daily newspaper close to the government.³⁵⁸ ‘Before 1970, the *Politika* of Belgrade created a hostile climate towards Muslims by always attempting to attribute the faults of individuals to Islam. This hostility was stopped only through numerous interventions by Muslims.’³⁵⁹ In his article “Europe is Seeking”, published in the *Danas*, Žarko Božić completely ignores the existence of Muslims in Europe.³⁶⁰ When the new *Reis ul-Ulema*, Jakub Selimoski was elected in 1991, the *Svet* described him as a man ‘under whose leadership all cards have been disclosed, which

³⁵⁵ Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nihil Obstat: Religion, Politics, and Social Change in East-Central Europe and Russia* (Durham: Duke UP, 1998), p. 170.

³⁵⁶ Perica, p. 84.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 145.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 83.

³⁵⁹ Abdullah Dedić, ‘The Muslim predicament in Yugoslavia: an Impression’, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 8.1 (1987), 1469-9591 (pp. 128, 129).

³⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 128.

indicate that our Muslims are moving towards an Islamic state.’³⁶¹ Muslims were accused of the imaginary creation of a Muslim state in the Balkans. At the same time, the majority of other republics consisted mainly of Christians. But no article was written claiming that their religious leadership was attempting to create a Christian state.

Islam is also presented as the biggest threat to Yugoslavia, even greater than the Serbo-Croatian relationship.³⁶² The Serbian media, with the support of the Serbian orientalists, expanded the term of fundamentalism to comprise any activity of Muslims. They even talked about “secular Islamic fundamentalism” and “communist Islam.” Consequently, even those who did not practice Islam or were actual non-believers at high governmental positions were accused of working, ‘unconsciously,’ for the benefit of *jihād*.³⁶³

However anti-Muslim propaganda was obvious in some Bosnian media outlets as well. The Sarajevo based *Oslobođenje* published a series of articles under the name Proregon, written by Derviš Sušić in 1980. He accused the Bosnian ‘*ulama*’ for siding with the fascists during WWII, and involvement in nationalist propaganda. When *imams* in Sarajevo demanded more rights in social insurance matters as well as in the election of a *Reis-ul-Ulema* and influence on the affairs of the Islamic Community, a Sarajevo University newspaper interviewed the Serbian politician Vuk Drašković who said that ‘those Islamic hawks and followers of Khomeini want to force Muslim women to wear Muslim attire like they do in Iran.’³⁶⁴

³⁶¹ *Svet*, 3 April 1991, as cited in Perica, p. 271.

³⁶² Slavoljub Kačarević, ‘Islam Bez Maske - Intervju sa Miroljubom Jevtićem,’ *Intervju*, 15 September 1989, p. 11.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁶⁴ Perica, p. 84.

It is evident that anti-Islamic attitudes in communist Yugoslavia were more pursued from ethno-national motives than from belief in communist policies against the religion itself. Of course, religion as such was a target of the communist media and Islam was not spared in those attacks, but the Serbian media led an open campaign to disparage and deprecate Islam as religion which, in their own opinion, did not belong to the region at all.

3.3.2. Media on Islam and Muslims in post-communist period

As the reins of the communist regime loosened, religious communities became more confident in responding to media assaults and commenting on social, political or cultural affairs in their respective countries. Islam became as visible as other religions in the media, and naturally more present in the public sphere. One of the first breaking points was in 1990 at the end of the holy month of *Ramadhan*, when state television in all Yugoslav republics with the exception of Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia, broadcast live religious ceremonies from the Sarajevo *Gazi Husrev-begova* mosque.

These new circumstances have allowed for a greater presence in the media, but have also challenged the Islamic organizations' internal infrastructures and functions. Many media outlets have openly criticized the statements and activities of religious leaders and scrutinized their work. Thus religious communities have gained prominence in the media, but the media has infiltrated religious communities as well.

As far as the printed media is concerned, most of it does not have specialist journalists to cover religious topics. This affects the quality and objectivity of the reports, as many journalists report in a way that mostly corresponds to their own ethnic or religious context.

The printed media do not have any regular columns about religion, although the number and extent of reports on religion show the need for such a section. Most texts and reports have occurred following particular events. Thus articles and reports are mainly related to the statements of religious leaders and other officers, to the importance, tradition and practice of religious holidays, or regarding unusual religious practice, as it was the case with the *neo-salafis* in Bosnia and the Sandžak area.

3.3.2.1. Socio-political context

Religion has been looked at through theo-educational and socio-political contexts. Thus, for instance, as far as Islam is concerned, the current *Reis ul-Ulema* of Bosnia, Mustafa Cerić, has on numerous occasions been cited and criticized for his interference in affairs which are mainly in the domain of local politics. He has also arguably been lenient towards *neo-salafis* and their influence on the life of post-war Bosnia. He has most frequently been criticized by the Serb or Croatian media, but at times, also by Sarajevan independent magazines. *Naši Dani* (Our Days) and *Slobodna Bosna* (Free Bosnia) have joined forces on almost every occasion to expose religious leaders, especially the *Reis ul-Ulema*, to sharp criticism.³⁶⁵ This criticism in many instances passed beyond an objective observation or report, as some media have been involved in an open anti-*Reis* propaganda and Islamophobic attitudes. In his recent book about the attacks on Muslim leadership, the Bosnian author Fatmir Alispahić noticed that Cerić was treated negatively seven times more often than the leaders of other religious

³⁶⁵ See more in: Fatmir Alispahić, *Reisofobija: Selektivna Analiza Tretmana Reisu-l-uleme i Islamskih Vrijednosti u Dejtonskim Medijima za Period 2004-2009 Godina* (Tuzla: Off-set, 2010).

communities in the country. 'No Christian cleric has been an object of photomontage, ridicule on the first pages as *Reis-ul-Ulema*, ' Alispahić observed.³⁶⁶

On the other hand the *Dnevni Avaz*, (Daily Voice) the most popular newspaper among the Bosnian Muslim population, has been an advocate for the activities and statements of the *Reis*, and regularly informed about his speeches, visits, meetings, and sermons. *Reis* Cerić was cited because of his presence not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but most often at international forums and conferences numbering more than any other religious leader in the region. However, the media has followed statements of other religious leaders in their respective countries.³⁶⁷

The representation of Islam in the media has varied in accordance to the area where the media has been located and its readership. Thus for instance, in Slovenia, Croatia and the areas of BiH mostly populated by Catholics, the media has mainly focused on Catholicism. In Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and the parts of BiH populated by the followers of the Orthodox Church, the main theme has been Orthodox Christianity. Sarajevo-based media have had either an equal treatment of religion, or Islam has been in a favourable position.

3.3.2.2. The educational context

Several radio and TV stations have held regular religious programmes where Islam has been regularly presented. For the purpose of this research, only radio and TV stations owned by

³⁶⁶ Fatmir Alispahić, *Sarajevo je Apsolutni Centar Islamofobije na Balkanu* (Sarajevo: Dnevni Avaz 4 April 2010) <<http://www.dnevniavaz.ba/dogadjaji teme/alispahic-sarajevo-je-apsolutni-centar-islamofobije-na-balkanu>> [accessed 5 April 2010].

³⁶⁷ These are: Muamer Zukorlić, mufti in Sandžak, Šefko Omerbašić, mufti in Croatia, Nedžad Grabus, mufti in Slovenia; Naim Trnava, mufti of Kosovo; Suleyman Rexhepi, mufti of Macedonia; Rifat Fejzić, *Reis ul-Ulema* of Montenegro; Hamdija and Muhammed Jusufspahić, Muftis in Belgrade and Adem Zilkić, *Reis ul-Ulema* in Serbia.

the state have been monitored and analysed, as private stations most commonly do not have religious programmes due to a lack of interest from the general public. The exception to this is stations established by religious communities themselves, whose programmes are mainly orientated around a particular religion. In Bosnia and Herzegovina three TV stations, the BHT, Federalna TV and TV Republike Srpske, have programmes with purely religious themes. BHT broadcast the *Duhovni Mostovi* (Spiritual Bridges); *Federalna Televizija* broadcasts *Mozaik Religija* (Mosaics of Religions), and TV of Republic of Srpska broadcasts *Riječ Vjere* (The Word of Faith). Each religion is treated separately in these programmes, thus leaving little space for interfaith dialogue or common points for all religions. It is the same situation with the radio stations, Radio of Federation BiH and Radio of Republic of Srpska. The Radio station of Federation of BiH broadcasts *Islamske teme* (Islamic Themes); Radio of Republic of Srpska has programmes for the Orthodox and the Catholics, but not for Muslims. The exception is BHT Radio 1 where representatives of the three religions discuss common themes. The programmes are mainly of an educational nature, often on the basics of Islam and other religions, local cultures and tradition, for the purpose of targeting a population which grew up during the socialist period.

Common post-communist themes for all Balkan countries include reports on Muslim holidays and traditions; the majority of the media have had neutral stance reporting these. The exceptions have been some media outlets in Bosnia and Herzegovina which either did not report on these holidays at all, or have had a slightly critical attitude towards local Muslim practice. In purely theological themes and educational programmes on TV and radio, Islam is promoted positively along with other religions. According to the contents of the programme, one could conclude that they are targeting more the middle-age population,

educated during the socialist period. The programme has mainly focused either on the basics of Islamic teachings, or on traditional religious practice and the culture of local communities.

What are the main themes related to Islam and Muslims in the media today? It is very difficult to offer an interrelated response to this question as each country and community has its own concerns and problems related to organized religious life. In Slovenia most topics dominating the media space during the monitoring period were around the Ljubljana mosque. As Muslims have gained the right to purchase the land and build the mosque, most media coverage was focused on this topic.³⁶⁸ Most of the articles were positive about the mosque, although there were some reports about a referendum to take place regarding a possible ban on its construction. The media was also focused on the *Īd*, *ḥajj* and the desecration of a Muslim cemetery. One of the positive articles was written by Srečo Dragoš about Islamophobia and the fear of the mosque.³⁶⁹ He has analysed the views of the local population towards Islam and Muslims through the project of the Ljubljana Mosque.

In Serbia, the conflict between the two Islamic Communities (Belgrade and Sandžak), has been present for several years. The media meticulously followed developments related to the Islamic Community, attempting not to side with any faction. Since October 2007, two options of the Islamic Community have been active in Serbia, one led by *Mufti* Muamer Zukorlić called the IC *of* Serbia, which maintains a close relationship with the IC in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the other, the IC *in* Serbia, headed by *Reis ul-Ulema*, Adem Zilkić. The two fractions do not recognize each other and their frequent quarrels have regularly been

³⁶⁸ See more about the mosque project in, among others, the *Delo* newspaper in 2008 from: 19 February, 2 March, 16 and 17 October, 2, 5, 20, 24, 31 December, and 8 January in 2009; in *Dnevnik* from: 14 December 2008; in *Večer* from: 13, 20, 27 December 2008.

³⁶⁹ Srečo Dragoš, *Islamofobija: Strah Pred Džamijo* (Ljubljana: Večer, 23 December 2008) <<http://ris.vecer.com/arhivi/arhiv.aspx>> [accessed 27 February, 2008].

reported in the media.³⁷⁰ The conflict culminated in 2009 when a chairman of the Assembly of the IC of Serbia was wounded. The conflict is still unresolved and one can expect further clashes and disagreements.

The other theme is Albanian nationalism presented as “an Islamic threat”. ‘Nationalism and Islam are mutually excluding’ claims Jevtić in the *Evropske Novosti* (European News), accusing Albanian nationalism in Kosovo as a front for Islamic Fundamentalism, because the Albanians are ‘false Europeans, in reality they are Muslims.’³⁷¹ Immediately after the collapse of communism, Jevtić placed Muslims outside the frontiers of coexistence portraying Islam as foreign and strange and having no compassion and non-violent means towards those who think differently from Islamic thought.³⁷²

The third theme is the involvement of foreign governments and organizations in spreading radical Islam in Serbia. This topic is a mix of the *neo-salafi* presence, radical teaching, terrorist activities and connections with al-Qaida. In his article “Al-Qaida in Kosmet” (the Serbian name for Kosovo) published by *Glas Javnosti* (The Voice of the Public), Milovan Drečun accuses the local population of terrorism and links with al-Qaida. He even manages to unite Saudi Arabia, Iran, Al-Qaida and Hezbollah in the joint aim of spreading Islamic radicalism in the Balkans. They are operating, in his opinion, in Kosovo with the aim of recruiting 750,000 soldiers for a European Islamic Army.³⁷³ ‘The most important logistical

³⁷⁰ See among others: *Tuča Pristalica Zukorlića i Zilkića* (Belgrade: B92, 17 April, 2009) <http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2009&mm=04&dd=17&nav_id=356054> [accessed 18 April, 2009]; *Sukob Muslimanskih Vernika u Prijepolju, Prijave Protiv 17 Osoba* (Belgrade: Blic Online, 6 July 2008) <<http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Hronika/48136/Sukob-muslimanskih-vernika-u-Prijepolju-prijave-protiv-17-osoba>> [accessed 7 July, 2008]; *Danas Newspaper* from: 26 March, 5, 14, 17, 21 April 2009.

³⁷¹ Miroljub Jevtić, ‘Lakrdija za Evropu’, *Evropske Novosti*, 22 Decembar 1993, p. 2.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁷³ Milovan Drečun, *Al-Kaida na Kosmetu* (Belgrade: Glas Javnosti)

<<http://www.glas-javnosti.rs/dodaci/vehabije-haraju-srbijom/al-kaida-na-kosmetu>> [accessed 20 May 2011]

bases of Islamic extremism are newly constructed mosques and religious schools funded by the Islamic humanitarian organizations, where *wahhabism* is taught,' he claims in the article.³⁷⁴ He does not, however, explain how it is possible that Kosovo, which has been officially under international supervision since 1999 and under the army of 16,000 UN soldiers, is a base for such terrorism.

In Bosnia, the media has often reported about Islam in relation to the consequences of the war. Unresolved land issues about churches in Konjević Polje, Divič and Kotorsko, built either on the place where there had previously been a mosque, or built on Muslim land, have dominated media headlines. The central news of the state TV reported about the removal of illegally constructed places of worship under the title 'Let's demolish mosques and churches.'³⁷⁵ Although these topics have been about Islam and Muslims, they very often implied ethnic tensions and remnants of the war.

The former *mujahidūn* units active within the Army of BiH during the 1990s have very often been exploited by the media. Journalists have regularly returned to this theme, writing, about international terrorism, *neo-salafis*, radical teachings of Islam and the corruption of local politicians. The *Dnevni List* (Daily Newspaper) of Croatian inclinations wrote about the police defending a Sarajevo mosque from the *wahhabis*.³⁷⁶ It was actually reporting about an attempt of a self-proclaimed leader of the *neo-salafī* movement, Jusuf Barčić, to preach in the *Careva* mosque, one of the main mosques in the Bosnian capital.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Taji, 46.

³⁷⁶ Ivan Herceg, *Incident u Mostaru – Vehabije Pretukle Lokalne Mladiće* (Mostar: Dnevni List) <http://www.dnevni-list.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3892:incident-u-mostaru-vehabije-pretukle-lokalne-mladiće&catid=10:izdvojeno1&Itemid=21> [accessed 23 May 2011].

³⁷⁷ Marija Arnautović, *Boji li se Islamska Zajednica Vehabija?* (Prague: Radio Slobodna Evropa, 23 February 2007) <<http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/news/696843.html>> [accessed 25 February 2008].

When it comes to the Bosnian *mujahidūn*, the *Glas Srpske* (Voice of Srpska), the Serb-orientated newspaper, wrote about arguable “New methods of the training for the followers of *Jihād* in the Balkans.” The article cited a “specialist” in international terrorism from Belgrade, Darko Trifunović, who claimed that BiH and Kosovo are flooded with terrorists. *Glas Srpske* published similar texts on a number of occasions; such as “Germinated Seeds of Evil,” reporting about a group of Bosnian *neo-salafis* in the Austrian capital of Vienna and lead by a Saudi graduate, Muhammed Porča. *Glas Srpske* reported about Muslims with negative connotations in majority cases. Even a mass funeral of the excavated bodies of Bosnian Muslims in the town of Bratunac has been politicized.³⁷⁸

Often exploited for political aims and ethno-national mobilization, these and the majority of other texts about the *mujahidūn*, or *neo-salafis*, lack a serious journalistic investigation into this sensitive topic, as they are regularly used to blackmail the Muslim political and religious elite. ‘Most of these articles’ as Juan Moreno noticed, ‘are based on rumours or recycling of previous media information and not on new evidence. The Bosnian media, very often ethnically and politically biased, have tried to depict *Salafists* as a growing threat for safety and security not only in BiH but also in the rest of the Europe.’³⁷⁹ Arguably, some members of the *neo-salafi* movement had been related to an international terrorist network. Although there has been concern by both the Islamic Community of BiH and state officials about these claims, this topic has been often exaggerated, especially after 9/11, to attract public attention or to gain political attainments.

³⁷⁸ *Glas Srpske*, 9 March 2007, as cited in: Taji, p. 126.

³⁷⁹ Moreno, p. 30.

Conclusion

Islam has attained an opportunity to present itself appropriately through the media in the post-communist period. Muslims do not only educate and inform the public about their religion in the private religious media, but, equally with other religious groups, participate in state funded media programmes. Post-communism is characterized by the increased involvement of religious communities in general in commenting on everyday social and political events, responding to media reports and treatments of religion in the media; educating the public about the basic tenets of Islam or, in the case of the Serbs and Croats, Christianity, and informing their respective members, media outlets, political factors as well as international players about religious activities and organization. On the other hand, the involvement of the Islamic Communities in public life is seen by some media as Islamization of the society and politics. As a result, the representatives of the IC have been harshly criticized, in the majority of cases more than the leadership of the other two religious groups.

By examining some media, particularly in Serbia, one can notice a characteristic thread running from communism to the present, which is to depreciate Islam and Muslims, linking them with nationalism, terrorism and foreign agencies. This trend however came not as a result of communist policies, but rather as mythological and historical baggage of the Ottoman-Muslim presence in the Balkans. This goes further into the concern about foreign influence over the Balkan Muslims. In both periods, the media expressed concern about the influence of foreign governments, groups and organizations. In the section about the role of the mosque in the Balkan society, the attitude of the media towards construction of the new mosques, which has been seen as a sign of expansion of Islam and criticized in both periods, has been explained.

Although Islam has attained more attention in the media, both printed and broadcast, it has still remained a topic mainly on a socio-political level. This seems to be the case with other religions as well. Common topics shared by almost all the media outlets have been the significance and celebration of the Muslim religious holidays, *‘Īd*, *Ramadhan*, *ḥajj*, by the members of Muslim communities in the region. Also, the media has regularly and fairly followed the protocol activities of the Muslim leadership in the countries of the former Yugoslavia. The most common theme of almost all media in the post-communist period has been the occurrence of the *neo-salafī* practice and interpretation of Islam. This practice was introduced during and immediately after the Bosnian and Kosovo wars and represents an unusual episode for the Balkan region as a whole. It is not surprising that the presence and the way of life of *Vehabije*, commonly named both in the media and in the public, has been an attractive theme for journalists, not only because of its unusual practice for this region, but also because of political and security connotations.³⁸⁰

³⁸⁰ Taji, p. 173.

3.4. Public gatherings

Dale Eickelman and Armando Salvatore defined the term “Public Islam” as

‘the highly diverse invocations of Islam as ideas and practices that religious scholars, self-ascribed religious authorities, secular intellectuals, *Sufi* orders, mothers, students, workers, engineers, and many others make to civic debate and public life. In this “public” capacity, “Islam” makes a difference in configuring the politics and social life of large parts of the globe, and not just for self-ascribed religious authorities. It makes this difference not only as a template for ideas and practices but also as a way of envisioning alternative political realities and, increasingly, in acting on both local and global stages, thus reconfiguring established boundaries of civil and social life.’³⁸¹

In the preceding sections we have shown how Islam as an idea, a religion and an identifying factor was invoked in various aspects of public life of the Balkans. The above definition of the role of Islam in the public has enumerated the sections of society interested in the debate and the role of Islam. Public Islam thus has entered the media, art, educational institutions, and, as will be seen in the fifth chapter, politics. Moreover, one of the major public manifestations of Islam has been shown in large religious gatherings organized to celebrate Muslim identity and tradition, and, to a lesser extent, to educate and proselytise.

The communist law on religious communities anticipated that religious rites could be observed only within the precincts of places for worship, graveyards and private houses. This applied to all gatherings with religious characteristics. Those who defied the imposed prohibitions were accused of violating the law and were persecuted. On 19 September 1947, thirteen members of the organizing committee of *Ajvatovica*, the largest gathering with a

³⁸¹ Salvatore, A. and D. Eickelman, “Public Islam and the Common Good”, Preface to *Public Islam and the Common Good*, Edited by A. Salvatore and D. Eickelman, Brill: Leiden, Boston, 2004, p. xii.

centuries-long tradition in the Balkans, were given harsh sentences. For the next fifty years the Ajvatovica gathering was outlawed and nobody even dared to speak about it openly. Similar practices in other places were also stopped, either out of fear of prosecution or by direct state intervention.

However, despite these strict prohibitions, a certain latitude of flexibility existed during the liberal phase of communism. Jubilees, festivals and pilgrimages marked the end of the 1960s and the decade of the seventies. In 1969 the Serbian Church celebrated its 750th anniversary of Church independence. A central event was held in Belgrade where over 10,000 believers attended the jubilee. A series of jubilees continued throughout the seventies as the Serbian Church celebrated its 50th anniversary of the restoration of the Serbian patriarchate in 1970, the 300th anniversary of the hermitage of Saint Basil of Ostrog in 1971 and the 800th anniversary of Saint Sava's birth, among others.³⁸²

At the same time the Croatian Catholic Church organized the International Marian Congress, which hosted 126 theologians and experts from thirty countries on Marian spirituality. The Congress concluded at the newly consecrated national shrine at Marija Bistrica on 22 August 1971, where over 150,000 pilgrims paid tribute to the Madonna Queen of the Croats.³⁸³ Vjekoslav Perica, a Croatian journalist and researcher, described the year 1971 as one of 'the milestones in recent Croatian history,' because of the activities of the Catholic Church of Croatia. A number of mass pilgrimages were organized at the beginning of the decade including one to the shrine of Trsat near the Adriatic port of Rijeka, where 40,000 pilgrims celebrated the feast of the Assumption. The feast of the Assumption of Mary was also

³⁸² Perica, pp. 51, 52.

³⁸³ Ibid., p. 60.

celebrated in 1972 in Solin, with over 30,000 people attending. In September 1974, the Croatian episcopate announced the resumption of the Great Novena, a nine-year-long jubilee, to celebrate Thirteen Centuries of Christianity among the Croat People. The Great Novena consisted of dozens of religious festivals and pilgrimages with hundreds of thousands of people attending at different locations throughout the country.³⁸⁴

It seems that the Islamic Community was quite late in the organization of large public gatherings. The only large gatherings during the 1970s organized by the Islamic Community were mosque openings. These events had attributes of popular folk occasions with multi-purpose content. People of Muslim background, religious or not, came not only for the occasion of the religious building opening and to listen to the recitation of the Qur'an and lectures by prominent *qaris* and *muderrises*, but also to socialise, entertain and buy Islamic merchandise or food. This practice has continued after Communism, only to grow in both extent and content. Emulating the practice of the two other religious communities, the Islamic Community started a series of religious festivals as late as 1989. In June 1990, the sixteenth-century conversions to Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina were commemorated.

With the collapse of Communism, religion has regained its place within society. Large religious or cultural events with religious attributes are organized in any suitable public place. The first concerts of *ilahije* and *kaside*, Islamic spiritual songs, at the beginning of the 1990s, in sports and concert halls, marked the beginning of large scale religious manifestations in public for the next two decades. On 17 March 1990, the first of such gatherings was organized in the Olympic hall of Zetra in Sarajevo. A choir of students from the well-known *Gazi Husrev Begova Medresa* performed Islamic songs in front of thousands

³⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 60

of delighted spectators. Such concerts have been followed by CD and DVD recordings and documentaries, while prominent performers like Aziz Alili, Senad Podojak, Mensur Malkić, Sulejman Bugari and Zilka Spahić, have become national celebrities. Along the Islamic spiritual songs, popular singers of Muslim background, Safet Isović, Hanka Paldum, Zehra Deović, Muaz Borogovac, Zekerijah Đezić and Omer Pobrić recorded songs glorifying their Muslim or Ottoman heritage.

It seems that the Balkan Muslims have inspired their counterparts in the West to initiate similar gatherings in the cities of Britain, Germany or France. Cat Stevens, known after his conversion as Yusuf Islam, admitted that the young performers from the *Gazi Husrev Begova Medresa* motivated him to start singing religious songs after decades of abstaining from music.³⁸⁵

What differentiates the Western Muslims from those living in the Balkans is the popular places where religious gatherings are held. In the successor states of former Yugoslavia, Muslims have revived places where large gatherings and congregational prayers have been held for centuries. These places, popularly known as *dovišta* or places of supplication, go back as far as the pre-Islamic practices of Christian sects of the region. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the most popular are *Ajvatovica* and *Djevojačka Pećina*, where tens of thousands of people attend large public gatherings under the auspices of the Islamic Community and religious leadership. Of course, these gatherings were strictly banned during the Communist times, and have been revived only after the collapse of the regime. Yet, new circumstances have brought new opponents to the practice of *dovišta*. Ignorant of local customs, religious syncretism and interfaith traditions that flourished during Ottoman

³⁸⁵ He has publicly confirmed that on a number of occasions.

rule, the followers of *neo-Salafi* ideas and organizations frequently accuse the local populations and their religious leadership of innovations in religion, or *bid 'a*.³⁸⁶

A Muslim political party, SDA was established on 26 May 1990, for a first time in more than fifty years. Tens of thousands of people attended the party's conferences across the country, waving green flags and clearly displaying Muslim symbols such as the crescent, beads, fezes, etc. This practice has continued after the Balkan wars, but their intensity seems to have diminished as a result of the exploitation of religious feelings. Some authors also noticed that Muslims had only followed what had been going on within the other two religious communities.

The majority of Muslim intellectuals welcomed this state of affairs within the Islamic Community, as an indication of religious freedom in the new circumstances on the one hand, and revival of Muslim identity and practice on the other. As Kadribegović described, in the beginning it was thought that everyone would suddenly come to the mosques and become practicing Muslims. This was to a large extent a result of the events of aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later in Kosovo, when thousands of innocent Muslims were killed or tortured.

However, it could also be noticed that, apart from the opportunity to manifest their Muslim identity publicly, most Muslims retained their pre-war notions and practices of religion. After their initial zeal and eagerness to manifest their Islamic identity, most Muslims have gradually returned to the point where they had been in the late 1980s. Some argue that, despite the fact that numerous concerts, seminars, conferences, masters and doctoral theses,

³⁸⁶ Öktem, p. 20.

exhibitions and other cultural events with Islamic themes are organized regularly, there has been no fundamental change in the frequency of religious practice and morality.³⁸⁷ On the contrary, some indicators show a significant fall in the religious adherence and practice. Alcohol, drugs and premarital sex have been on the rise.³⁸⁸ However, as the statistical data shows, fifty years of atheization of the society has left a remarkable mark on religious belief and practice. The 1990 and 1991 surveys indicate that 'Bosnia had the highest percentage (29%) of any republic not declaring confessional orientation, and that Bosnian Muslims (88%) valued their affinity with Yugoslavia more than either Bosnia's Serbs (85%) or Bosnia's Croats (63%).'³⁸⁹ This prompted Ivan Iveković to claim that Bosnian Muslims are the most secularized national group in Bosnia and Herzegovina.³⁹⁰ Aziz Kadribegović from the *Preporod* newspaper agrees that the secularizing process has done considerable damage to Muslim religious practice, and decades will be needed to reverse this process.³⁹¹

³⁸⁷ Spahić.

³⁸⁸ UNDP, other sources

³⁸⁹ Gerard F. Powers, Religion, Conflict and Prospects for Peace in Bosnia, Croatia, and Yugoslavia, in Paul Mojzes, ed., Religion and the War in Bosnia, Scholars Press, Atlanta, p. 231.

³⁹⁰ Iveković, p. 531.

³⁹¹ Interview with Aziz Kadribegović, 20 May 2009.

4. INTELLECTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF BALKAN MUSLIMS DURING THE TWO PERIODS

Introduction

It has been noted above that the communist regime underwent at least two phases in its position towards religion. From 1946 to the 1960s the regime imposed drastic measures on religious communities by expropriating their properties, limiting religious freedoms, imprisoning the *imams* and priests, as well as intellectuals promoting religious thought, and abolishing religious institutions. During this first phase the intellectual contributions of Yugoslav Muslims were reduced to a minimum. The only regular publication was *Takvim*, published since 1954. In the second phase of Communism new publications appeared such as *Islamska Misao* (Islamic Thought), *Preporod* (Reform) and the *Glasnik* (Herald). The most essential books were written or translated during this period.

This chapter will explore the methods and directions of development of Islamic thought in the Balkans during communism. It will be particularly interesting to see whether the Muslim scholars of the time adapted their religious thinking in any way to the demands of the new times and specific circumstances of living in a socialist-communist state. There has been a common perception that Muslim scholars in a communist state such as Yugoslavia were not able to complement the trends in the great intellectual centres of the Muslim world. However, as it will be shown below, there was not only a direct influence from leading Muslim scholars of that time on the Yugoslav '*ulama*', but also, Balkan Muslim scholars

brought innovative practical solutions for their respective communities, which had a long term impact on religious practice and organization in the region.

Owing to the number and scope of texts and works written in the first, but particularly in the second period concerned, it would probably take several large research projects only to enumerate and describe what was written in the past. Only to those that demonstrate in the most outstanding way how Islamic religious thought developed and evolved in the two periods will be referred to here. The reader can always refer to the original texts quoted here for more elaborate findings and research.

4.1. The main intellectual contributions of the Muslims during Communist period

Two sorts of publication characterized the early phase of communism in former Yugoslavia. The first was the textbooks, often referred as *ilmihal*, written for *mektebs* for basic instruction in Islam.³⁹² Their focus was on children and young adults learning about the basics of their religion, most notably the *ṣalāh* and its pre-conditions such as *ghusl*, *wuḍu'*, *ṭahārah*. The importance of these first publications is evident in the number of copies and editions published, not only during the communist times, but also to date. One, *Ta'limul Islam*, has been printed in over fifty thousand copies and sixteen editions.³⁹³ Its significance is still present as the *imams* and *mu'allims* use it in religious instruction. A few other publications that survived are: *Sufara*, an initial textbook for *Qur'ānic* Arabic; *Tedžvid* for the correct reading of the *Qur'ān*, the collection of supplications (*Zbirka Dova*), how to

³⁹² See for instance: Fejzulah Hadžibajrić, *Ilmihal: Osnovi Islamske Vjere* (Sarajevo: Starješinstvo Islamske Zajednice U SR BiH, 1972); Naim Hadžiabdić, *Novi Ilmihal: Udžbenik Vjerske Obuke* (Sarajevo: Starješinstvo Islamske Zajednice, 1977).

³⁹³ Redžep Muminhodžić, *Ta'limul-islam: Udžbenik Za Drugi Stupanj Polaznika Vjerske Obuke* (Sarajevo: Starješinstvo Islamske Zajednice U SR Bosni i Hercegovini, 1981).

perform *ḥajj*, *sūrah Yasīn* - these have been mainly used for the preservation of the basics of Islamic practice among the Yugoslav Muslims.³⁹⁴

The general liberal attitude of communism towards religion later on, allowed Muslim authors in the seventies and eighties to embark upon larger projects. Muslim intellectual circles had for a long time insisted on the translation and publication of the relevant *ḥadīth* reference books, which was achieved by Hasan's Škapur translation of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Buhārī* published in 1977 in Sarajevo. The capital work of Teufik Muftić's Serbo-Croatian-Arabic dictionary marked the second half of the last century in Arabic linguistics in the Balkans.³⁹⁵ His contribution to the Arabic language as well as Islamic studies have had such an immense influence that his dictionary is still the most relevant work for students and scholars of Islam.

The other kind of publications has been periodicals and newspapers. The first issue of *Takvim* was published in 1935, and until 1951 it was edited only in the form of calendar. Since 1951 the calendar has been supplemented with religious and cultural texts. The texts in *Takvim* mainly focused on basic ethical, cultural, jurisprudential and historical themes. Emphasis was put on teachings on belief (*'aqā'id*), worship (*ibādah*), and, to a limited extent, social affairs (*mu'āmalāt*).³⁹⁶ During the seventies and eighties another publication, *Glasnik*, became most popular reading material among the public and was a vessel for the most influential scholars in Yugoslavia of that time to express their views. One of the most

³⁹⁴ Idris Demirović and Ešref Kovačević, *Uvod U Kur'ansko Pismo* (Sarajevo: Starješinstvo Islamske Zajednice U Bosni i Hercegovini, 1980); Kamil Silajžić, *Tedžvid: Pravilno Učenje Kur-ana* (Sarajevo: Starješinstvo Islamske Zajednice Za Bosnu i Hercegovinu, Hrvatsku i Sloveniju, 1980); Smail Fazlić and Muhamed Mrahorović *Zbirka Dôva* (Sarajevo: Starješinstvo Islamske Zajednice Bosne i Hercegovine, Hrvatske i Slovenije, 1986).

³⁹⁵ Teufik Muftić, *Arapsko-Srpskohrvatski Rječnik* (Sarajevo: Izvršni Odbor Udruženja Ilmije u SRBiH, 1973).

³⁹⁶ Fikret Karčić, 'Šta je to Islamska Tradicija Bosnjaka?' *Preporod*, 1 December 2006.

popular prominent scholars was Husein Đozo, who promoted his reformist ideas by writing in the questions and answers rubric.

One of the main themes prevailing in Muslim literature of that time was Muslim reform (*işlāh*), largely influenced by the Egyptian school of thought established by Muhammad ‘Abduh (1849-1905). Religious modernism became a dominant orientation within the Islamic Community. The indication of such a direction was evident in the newly established newspaper, *Preporod*, whose very name, *Reform-Renaissance*, should have reached the intentions of the Muslim intellectual leadership. The *Preporod* has been in existence for the last forty years and its motto on front page, ‘*Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves...Qur’ān, 13:11*’, has ever since called for an internal transformation of the whole Muslim population in the Balkans.³⁹⁷ In the articles published in *Preporod*, *Takvim*, *Glasnik* and *Islamska Misao*, the authors would mainly start their texts with a general analysis of the state of Muslims and their position globally. They wrote about poverty, decline, illiteracy, disorganization and the lack of institutions in the Muslim world.

The *Preporod* was established by one of the most prominent and productive scholars, Husein Đozo, who was, in a way, the official "pen" of the Islamic community of Yugoslavia as he wrote as one of the highest officials of the community. He belonged to the reformist and modernist school (*madrasatu'l-işlāhi wa't-tajdīdi*). His authorities and teachers were Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, Mustafa al-Maraghi and Mahmut Shaltut. An al-Azhar graduate, he was mainly influenced by the reformist ideas of the above scholars, particularly Muhammad Abduh. The influence of the Al-Azhar school of thought will be visible among

³⁹⁷ Fikret Karčić, *Islamske Teme i Perspektive* (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 2009), pp. 29-30.

other scholars in former Yugoslavia, as this oldest Islamic university was a place of study for dozens of Yugoslav students.³⁹⁸

Husein Dozo was a faithful follower of the compatibility of Islam with modern science. Dozo's approach to Islam was characterized by two important features: the absolute affirmation of the compatibility between the *Qur'ānic* revelation and reason and thus between Islam and Science, and his distinction between the eternal “concepts” contained in the *Qur'ānic* message and the historicity of the interpretation of these very concepts.³⁹⁹ ‘All which has been undertaken by the science with the aim of protection of human health is completely justified and permitted in *Shari ah*’ he wrote in one of his *fatwas* published in the Questions and Answers section of *Glasnik*⁴⁰⁰. In his strict adherence to science he went as far as to claim that the Darwinian evolution was not at odds with Islam: ‘The Darwin theory is to be considered as a solution for this problem (creation of humans). However, one has to admit that this theory has shown the right direction to solve this issue. It is almost certain that a human being was created by the way of evolution.’⁴⁰¹

The texts of *Glasnik*, *Takvim* and *Preporod* were to be dominated by Dozo’s reformist ideas. Dozo faithfully followed the main ideas of the global Islamic reformism of this period, namely: the return to the sources of Islamic teaching, critique of the theory of *taqlīd*, affirmation of *ijtihād*, compatibility of Islam with modern science and technology, the acceptance of the ideas of progress (*tarāqqī*), critique of teaching on predestination in theology (*jabr*), and finally teaching and the practice of numerous *darwish* orders which

³⁹⁸ See: Jusuf Ramić, *Bošnjaci na El-Azheru*, (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 1997).

³⁹⁹ Armina Omerika, ‘The Role of Islam in the Academic Discourses on the National Identity of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1950-1980’, *Islam and Muslim Societies: A Social Science Journal* 2.2 (2006), p. 364.

⁴⁰⁰ Aziz Hasanović and Husein Dozo, *Fetve* (Sarajevo: Bemust, 1999), p. 389.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

have been seen as an obstacle to the engagement of Muslims to realise Islam within social history.⁴⁰²

His reformist ideas start from the very definition of the *Qur'ān* as 'a God's Word, comprising the fundamental principles and concepts according to which one must live and develop life.'⁴⁰³ 'Đozo provided liberal interpretations of the *Shari'a*, thus reconciling Islamic religious practice with the social realities of Communist Yugoslavia without submitting to the previous servile practice of higher Islamic officials.'⁴⁰⁴ His main contribution therefore was his persistence with the reform of Islamic thought, (re)interpretation of the fundamental sources of Islam and their new application within the contemporary historical context.

Only this comprehension of the *Shari'a* could produce a legal opinion on the how *zakāh* and *ṣadakah al-fitr* should be collected and distributed in the Yugoslav context. He issued the *fatwa* that the contributions of these financial commitments of Muslim should be collected by the Islamic community and allocated for the establishment, construction and/or maintenance of the Islamic Theological Faculty and the *medresa*.⁴⁰⁵

'Đozo chose to make his spiritual homeland in Islamic modernism,' to quote one of his students, 'and he both began and ended his written oeuvre there.'⁴⁰⁶ Despite the fact that Đozo was active during the socialist period, 'a time when religious thought was allowed but little space, in fact a time when it stagnated on the margins;' he developed a fully fleshed

⁴⁰² Karčić, (2009) p. 24.

⁴⁰³ Karić (2004), p. 522.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 522.

⁴⁰⁵ See more about this *fatwa* in: Hazim Fazlic, *The Tafsīr Sources of Husein Đozo in His Fatwa on the Way of Collecting Zakāh* (Sarajevo: Faculty of Islamic Studies, 2000). Unpublished dissertation.

⁴⁰⁶ Karić (2004), p. 521.

Islamic thinking in the Balkans similar to, or in some aspects the same as, those in Egypt or other countries of the Muslim world. At the same time, his writings and teachings in the majority of cases were not in disagreement with the official ideology of the socialist order. It seems that Nasserist Egypt and Titoist Socialist Yugoslavia had much in common. Dozo, as well as a few other prominent scholars were given little, but very important, space to make considerable contributions towards the reaffirmation of religious life and thought in the Balkans.

Dozo was occupied with the questions of how to respond to the demands of the time. Their time was not an easy one, working out how Muslims should organize and practice their religion within a secular communist state. Insistence on *ijtihad* today does not mean diminishing the value of the Sunna ‘as one of the fundamental sources of Islamic jurisprudence,’ says Husein Dozo, continuing, ‘no one disputed the importance of the praxis of the Messenger of God and his companions. ...But what does that praxis consist of? Does it lie in accepting every individual aspect of that praxis as the final solution, one and for all, or in acceptance of praxis as a means of application of *Qur’ānic* thought to the problems of life? This is the essence of the question.’⁴⁰⁷

Dozo wrote about the current appalling state of Muslims and how to overcome the difficult situation. The Muslim authors were also concerned with questions of how to make it easier for Muslims to live in the West, how Muslims should use bank transactions, and avoid interest. Dozo at that time was waiting for the Islamic banks which operate nowadays in almost every major city in Europe.

⁴⁰⁷ Husein Dozo, *Islam u Vremenu* (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 2006), pp.15, 16.

‘The life has imposed the bank as the fundamental category of the economic development... The *‘ulama’* continuously and persistently talk about the prohibition of interest. They simply respond: the interest is *haram* according to Islam, not attempting to come out from this dead-end and to find a solution... We would recommend to the questioner and his friends to invest their money into the bank and take interests... It would be best to spend the interest... for the construction of a common water-pipe system, road, electrification, etc., or for general needs of the Islamic Community, such are the maintenance of *medresa*, establishment of the Islamic Theological Faculty or alike.’⁴⁰⁸

Đozo continues his support for the progress of the community not only in religious, spiritual terms, but also in material terms:

‘We are not striving only for a mosque and religious instruction. We are always demanding to have a school, health centre, library, community centre, good road, electricity, etc., along with religious instruction... We are striving equally for spiritual as well as material progress. We are not interested at all for an illiterate, economically unstable, culturally backward and politically non-engaged believer.’⁴⁰⁹

Another topic preoccupying the Muslim religious and secular scholars alike was the reaffirmation of Muslim national identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also in other parts of Yugoslavia. During the sixties the intellectual debates increased about the need for recognition of the nationality of the Bosnian Muslims. A number of books and scholarly articles were written about the Muslim national peculiarity. Until the 1970s the Bosnian Muslim were recognized as a religious group only, and not in a national sense. The sociologists and historians of the Muslim background, such as Enver Redžić, Muhammed Hadžijahić, Atif Purivatra, Salim Ćerić, and others, wrote about the “Social-historical aspects

⁴⁰⁸ Hasanović and Đozo, pp. 122, 123.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 328.

of national self-determination of the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina,”⁴¹⁰ “On Distinctiveness of Bosnia-Herzegovina Muslims,”⁴¹¹ “From Tradition to Identity: The Genesis of the National Question of the Bosnian Muslims,”⁴¹² etc. The *Preporod* and *Glasnik* became forums not only for Muslim religious scholars, but also integrated contributions of secular scholars on the social and cultural history and on the history of literature written by local Muslims.⁴¹³ It is significant that Muslim authors, most notably the above mentioned Husein Đozo, joined forces with the secular-Muslim sociologists and historians and sought religious justification and a platform for the affirmation of the Bosnian Muslim identity within Yugoslavia.

It should be also noted here that the problem of national identification of the Muslims of Bosnia and Sandžak had persisted before the formation of communist Yugoslavia and was inherited by the communist authorities. As the national states in the Balkans were mainly formed on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, the national movements, most markedly the Serbian one, were anti-Turkish orientated. In this case the majority of the Muslims were perceived as the remnants of the Ottomans, or as Serbs who had converted to Islam earlier. That is why some Serbian intellectuals, as early as from Vuk Kradžić (d. 1864), claimed that the Muslims should declare themselves as Serbs, or their nationality would not be recognized.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹⁰ Salim Ćerić, *Muslimani Srpskohrvatskog Jezika* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1968).

⁴¹¹ Enver Redžić, ‘O Posebnosti Bosanskohercegovačkih Muslimana’, *Pregled*, 14 (1970), pp. 457-488.

⁴¹² Muhamed Hadžijahić, *Od Tradicije do Identiteta: Geneza Nacionalnog Pitanja Bosanskih Muslimana* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1974); Muhamed Hadžijahić, *Etnogeneza Bosanskih Muslimana* (Sarajevo: Fakultet Političkih Nauka "Veljko Vlahović" - Institut za Društvena Istraživanja, 1975); Atif Purivatra, *Nacionalni i Politički Razvitak Muslimana - Rasprave i Članci* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1972); Salim Ćerić, *Muslimani Srpsko-Hrvatskog Jezika* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1968); Muhamed Hadžijahić/Atif Purivatra, *Stav Muslimana Bosne i Hercegovine u Pogledu Nacionalnog Opredjeljenja - Nacrt za Bibliografiju* (Sarajevo: Fakultet Političkih Nauka, 1968).

⁴¹³ Omerika, p. 365.

⁴¹⁴ See more in: Hadžijahić, (1974).

In the context of identity, which has been very often denied to the Balkan Muslims, other, less 'Islamic' texts should be observed. The above mentioned publications have almost the same number of articles about local poetry, and the role of Islam and Muslims in that poetry, as well as a number of articles on classical Islamic disciplines. Thus one will find texts about forgotten poems on love between 'a boatman Mujo and beautiful Uma,' on *Jannah* and *Jahannam* in the Muslim epic songs, or on a Muslim Homer, Avdo Međedovic and his twelve thousand line song *The wedding of Smailagić Meho*.⁴¹⁵

Through these published articles Muslims made an attempt to revitalize a golden age of Muslim thought in the Balkans which had its peak during the 16th and 17th centuries. Thus articles on Mustafa Ejubović (1561-1677),⁴¹⁶ Hasan Kafija Prušćak (1544-1615),⁴¹⁷ Abdul Vehab Ilhamija (1773-1821),⁴¹⁸ Abdullah Bošnjak (1584-1644)⁴¹⁹, and other famous local intellectuals were regularly written in these publications.⁴²⁰ The Muslim writers of the late seventies and eighties went further and persisted not only in discussing Muslim religious thought, but promoted local Muslim tradition and emphasized the value and distinctiveness

⁴¹⁵ Ibrahim Hodžić, Čolaković Enver - Akšam, Pjesma', *Islamska Misao*, December 1984, p. 46; Džemaludin Latić, 'Amberom Ti Cvali Puti', *Islamska Misao*, December 1980, pp. 32-39.

⁴¹⁶ Mustafa Yuyo b. Yusuf b. Murad Ayyubi-zade al-Mostari al-Bosnawi (1561-1677) was one of the most prominent Bosniak authors who wrote in Arabic. He wrote more than 60 scholarly treatises and books on logic and law. Mustafa Ejubović served as a *mufti*.

⁴¹⁷ Hasan Kafi b. Turhan b. Dawud, b. Ya'kub az-Zibi al-Aqhisari al-Bosnawi (1544-1615) was a *qāḍī* in the town of Prusac in Bosnia. Prušćak wrote 17 books on politics, philology, law, theology, and logic. His most famous work is *The Light of Genuine 'Spoznaje' in the Foundations of Belief*. In his writings he predicted the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

⁴¹⁸ Abdulvehab Ilhamija Žepčević (1773-1821) wrote in the Bosnian language. He was a *sufi* and a *shaykh* of the Naqshidandi *ṭarīqah*. He wrote religious poems and *kasidas*. For one of his *kasida*, *Čudan zeman nastade* (The strange time has come) he was executed by the local governor for political indoctrination.

⁴¹⁹ Abdullah effendi Bošnjak 'Abdi' bin Muhammad al-Bosnawi (1584-1644) was a disciple and shaykh of the Bayrami Malami *ṭarīqah*.

⁴²⁰ See for example: Ismet Kasumović, 'Bergivija Na Bosanskom Jeziku - Iz Teološko-Pedagoške Baštine Muslimana Bosne i Hercegovine', *Islamska Misao*, June 1991, pp. 22-28; B. I., 'Kafijina i Šejh-Jujina Logika', *Islamska Misao*, October 1985, pp. 41-42; Amir Brka, 'Abdulvehab Ilhamija - Nadahnuti Rob Božiji', *Islamska Misao*, September 1985, pp. 46-52; Fejzullah Hadžibajrić, 'Iz Uvodnih Tesavvufskih Interpretacija Abdulaha Bošnjaka', *Islamska Misao*, pp. 121, 39.

of their own identity. The affirmation of the Muslim religious identity as well as cultural, linguistic and social distinctiveness, is visible in almost every *Preporod*, *Takvim*, *Glasnik* or *Islamska Misao*. Articles about the extinct *medresas*, *waqfs*, mosques, Muslim town quarters, came along with the classical texts on *'Aqā'id*, *Ḥadīth*, *Tafsīr*, *Fiqh*; with the modern reflections on education and upbringing of Muslims, morality, history of Islam and Muslims and on Islam generally. Articles on the history of Balkan Islamization, and the distinctiveness of pre-Islamic inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*bogumili*) emphasized their Muslim identity.⁴²¹ "Islam and the cultural heritage of Yugoslavia," "The *waqfs* in *Slavonska Požega*," and "Islam in the Balkans during the post-Ottoman period," are some other articles in which Muslim intellectuals revitalized their cultural as well as religious heritage.⁴²²

It should be noted that members of other national groups in former Yugoslavia had their own *Academia*, which promoted their culture through state funded projects, educational institutes and school textbooks. Throughout the communist period, there was no institution to look after Muslim cultural traditions. The only institution with a genuine interest in Muslim heritage was the Oriental institute in Sarajevo which was destroyed in 1992 by the Bosnian Serb army. This is the reason why the official Islamic community as not only a champion of religious activism, but also as a guardian of Muslim national distinctiveness, embarked upon promoting and preserving the local cultural, linguistic, social and historical traditions of Muslims in former Yugoslavia.

⁴²¹ Hamid Tanović, 'Bogumilstvo i Islamizacija BiH', *Takvim*, 1976, p. 76-80.

⁴²² See among others: M. Ali Kettani, 'Islam na Balkanu u Postosmanskom Dobu', *Islamska Misao*, September 1990, pp. 18-29; Feti Mehdiu, 'Hercegovina Krajem XIX Veka Prema Podacima u Kamus al-Anam', *Islamska Misao*, February 1990, pp. 36-37; Fazileta Cviko, 'Vakufi u Slavonskoj Požegi u XVI Stoljeću', *Islamska Misao*, March 1985, pp. 18-20; Džemal Čelić, 'Islam i Kulturno Naslijedje Jugoslavije', *Islamska Misao*, November 1990, pp. 52-56; Hifzija Hasandedić, 'Bucak Mahale u Mostaru', *Islamska Misao*, February 1990, pp. 34-35.

The period of revival of Islam during 1970-1992 manifested in an increased (re)construction of mosques, and the development of Islamic education and publishing activities.⁴²³ The publishing was performed mainly within the official Islamic Community. As Karčić noticed ‘the detailed analysis of these publications was never carried out, but the readership during that period could familiarize themselves with a wide spectrum of interpretations of Islam: from traditional, reformist, modernist, revivalist, orientalist, etc.’⁴²⁴

Islamska Misao thus abounds with texts written by Arab, Iranian, Asian or European authors. Out of 850 articles published during 1978-1993, 310 were written by non-Yugoslav scholars and translated by local authors. It seems that the translators embarked upon their translation jobs according to their own affinities and wishes without any consistent selection of authors or themes. Thus one will find many articles written by prominent modern Muslim authors such as Seyyed Hussein Nasr, Abu Ala al-Mawdudi, Javed Iqbal, Fazlur Rahman, Muhammed Asad, Seyyid Qutb, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, Ismail Faruqi, Muhammed Hussein Heykel, Muhammed Arkoun, Muhammed Hamidullah, Subhi Salih, etc. At the same time the editorial of the magazines maintained the balance of the classical Muslim authors. Translations of the articles from the pens of Abu Hamid Muhammed Al-Ghazali, Ahmad ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzi, Abu Jafar al-Tahawi, Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, Ibn Hazm, Ibn Khaldun, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ibn Arabi, and others, were present in almost all issues of *Islamska Misao*, but also *Takvim*, *Preporod* and *Glasnik*.

⁴²³ Karčić (2009), pp. 31, 32.

⁴²⁴ Ibid., p. 31.

At the same time, numerous articles are found written by Western scholars such as Bernard Lewis, Anne Marie Schimmel and others. This shows the great interest the intellectual circles in the Balkans paid to their intellectual profile. In a way they were complementing their geographical position as a bridge between the East and the West, as they attempted to build intellectual bridges with the modern comprehensions of Islam and Muslims by the western, and in the case of, for example Edward Said, eastern orientalist. The authors and translators were also interested in Islam versus other religions as well as ideological worldviews. What is the position of Islam towards contra-revolutionary movements, what is the role of democracy in a modern Islamic state, what is the relationship between the *Qur'ān* and Einstein's theory, what is the relationship between Islam and the early orientalist; these were some of the issues the published articles attempted to answer.⁴²⁵ The Balkan Muslims had lived within the liberal European context and had experience of living with or by non-Muslims for centuries, so their interest in how others perceived Islam is visible in the translations of the most popular and widely-read Western authors of the time.

At the same time, Muslim scholars in the Balkans were interested in tolerant relationships with other religions as well as those without any religious belief. Thus for instance the Franciscan order in Bosnia had a special status in the Muslim literature of that time, most likely due to their dedication to the co-existence of all religious and ethnic groups on the territory of Yugoslavia and their patriotism towards Bosnia.

⁴²⁵ See among others: Gani Ašraf, 'Islam i Kontrarevolucionarni Pokreti', *Islamska Misao*, August 1990, pp. 28-37; Danijel Buzan, 'Islam i Evropa u Odnosu Novog Kulturnog Upoznavanja', *Islamska Misao*, April 1989, p. 6-19; Nusret Čančar, 'Djelo Koje Treba Dopisati - Maxime Rodinson, Marksizam i Muslimanski Svijet', *Islamska Misao*, August 1989, pp. 48-49; Džavid Ikbal, 'Demokratija i Moderna Islamska Država', *Islamska Misao*, August 1990, pp. 12-16; Abdul Hamid Irfan, 'Orijentalisti i Islam, Pionirski Pokušaj Razumijevanja Istorijskih Osnova Prirode Misaonih Prožimanja Islama i Zapada', *Islamska Misao*, December 1980, pp. 22-27; Jacques Berque, 'Islam i Sekularizam', *Islamska Misao*, August 1980, pp. 22-23.

In one of his answers Husein Đozo, discussing Mehmed-pasha Sokolović, a Serb convert and a grand vezir in Istanbul, said:

‘In Mehmed-pasha Sokolović spoke out of a common blood. Brother is dear regardless of religion. That common blood needs to speak out more strongly among the descendants who are even more connected by the common interests. In this way the *brotherhood and unity* is being built.’⁴²⁶

It is remarkable that one of the highest officials of the Islamic Community promotes the communist parole of *brotherhood and unity* in a religious publication, as ‘a most important legacy of the National Freedom Movement’ supporting his statements with historical, and in some other examples, religious facts.⁴²⁷ Thus on a question whether one is allowed to present *qurbāni* meat to a non-Muslim neighbour, he positively responds adding that ‘the preservation of good relationship with the non-Muslim neighbours is highly recommend and urged by Islam. It is therefore a duty upon a Muslim to strengthen and safeguard that relationship.’⁴²⁸ Forty years later, Muslim intellectual circles still maintain the cause of tolerance with others, although this relationship has been seriously damaged by the recent Balkan wars. The notion of *unity and brotherhood* has faded away and no serious religious scholar uses this universal parole, adopted and widely used by the communist regime in the past.

The interest in classical Islamic disciplines and their interpretations by traditional as well as modern Muslim scholars should not be disregarded. Most articles in all publications were written about Islam in general. “The system of life in Islam,” “Islam – the last and the primordial religion, universal and the single characteristics,” “Some important principles of

⁴²⁶ Đozo and Hasanović, p. 37.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., p. 339.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., p. 40.

Islam,” are translations written by some of the most prominent authors of the time.⁴²⁹ Articles about the fundamentals of Islam: *zakāh*, *ḥajj*, *ṣawm*, also dominated Muslim religious literature during this period.

This research cannot encompass the individual negative experiences of many Muslim authors, religious officers and ordinary Muslims during the communist period. There is no doubt that intimidation, interrogation and practical actions by the communist authorities were taken on numerous occasions. The case of the removal of an entire *Preporod* editorial has been mentioned before. Husein Đozo, the most active and productive scholar of the time, complained to one of his associates that he was regularly summoned to the local police station for an ‘official interview.’⁴³⁰

Authors who directly insulted the communist authorities with their writings were prosecuted and given long sentences. For the claims in his Islamic Declaration (*Islamska Deklaracija*) that Islam is incompatible with non-Islamic systems and that there can be no coexistence and peace between the Islamic faith and non-Islamic social and political institutions, Alija Izetbegović, was imprisoned in 1983 for eight years.⁴³¹ Although nowhere exactly were Yugoslav Muslims mentioned, the above statements as well as those that ‘there is no clear scientific, revolutionary, socialistic, or any other exclusively outward salvation for a human being and society,’ were enough reference to accuse him with. Another author, Muhamed

⁴²⁹ See among others: Abu-l-Ala al-Mawdudi, ‘Sistem Života u Islamu’, *Islamska Misao*, January 1992, pp. 16-22; Ali ibn Usman al-Hujwiri, ‘Siromaštvo - Izvod iz Knjige Kashf al-Mahjub’, *Islamska Misao*, December 1991, pp. 47-51; Bruce B. Lawrence, ‘Savremena Problematika u Proučavanju Islama - Prikaz Četiri Knjige Koje Govore o Islamu’, *Islamska Misao*, January 1991, pp. 58-66; el-Kajjim el-Dževzi, ‘Očinski Savjet Sinu’, *Islamska Misao*, March 1987, pp. 10-14; Ebu Hamid el-Gazali, ‘Fragmenti u Višim Ciljevima Hodočašća’, *Islamska Misao*, June 1989, pp. 3-4; Fazlu Rahman, ‘Kur’an o Čovjeku Kao Pojedincu’, *Islamska Misao*, September 1988, pp. 15-23.

⁴³⁰ Enes Karić, *Prilozi za Povijest Islamskog Mišljenja u Bosni i Hercegovini XX Stoljeća* (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 2004), p. 519.

⁴³¹ Alija Izetbegović, *Islamska Deklaracija* (Sarajevo: Bosna, 1990).

Filipović, dared to declare that ‘socialistic revolution was not the only revolution, there is also Islamic revolution.’⁴³² He went further on to compare the events and ‘developments of history in the streets of Gdansk and Teheran, Warsaw and Tabriz.’ He said that we must not understand these events in terms of common categories and the clichés of communist readings of history. Although the Polish and Iranian developments were revolutionary in form, the proponents of those revolutionary trends were not from the working class, but were from believers, followers of Islam and Christianity. The Poles and the Iranians were not demanding more bread, but more liberty, more faith.’⁴³³ The communist authorities condemned his statements, but he escaped any harsh sanctions due to his eminence and reputation in the academic circles of the former Yugoslavia.

The numerous articles about ‘*Aqā'id*,⁴³⁴ Islamic Philosophy,⁴³⁵ Islamic culture and civilization,⁴³⁶ *Tafsīr* and *Qur'ān*,⁴³⁷ History of Islam,⁴³⁸ History of Islam Islamic culture and

⁴³² Karić (2004), p. 639.

⁴³³ Ibid., p. 640.

⁴³⁴ Ahmed b. Tejmije, ‘Kitab et-Tevhid - Rasprava o Vjerovanju u Božiju Jedinost’, *Islamska Misao*, January 1988, pp. 6-11; Ahmed Smajlović, ‘Imam Ebu el-Hasan b. Ismail el-Eš'ari’, *Islamska Misao*, May 1987, pp. 13-14; Ahmed Behdžet, ‘Allah - Islamsko Poimanje i Vjerovanje’, *Islamska Misao*, August 1986, pp. 3-6; Mustafa Cerić, ‘el-Maturidi Kao Atomist - Izvod iz Doktorske Disertacije’, *Islamska Misao*, November 1988, pp. 40-41; Hasan Čengić, ‘Kur'an o Bogu – Tevhid’, *Islamska Misao*, January 1983, pp. 4-17.

⁴³⁵ Ahmed Fuad el-Ehvani, ‘Islamska Filozofija’, *Islamska Misao*, January – April 1983, pp. 39-44, 26-31, 26-31, 8-22; Senahid Bistrić, ‘Al-Arebi’, *Islamska Misao*, May 1981, p. 43; Henry Corbin, ‘Od Ibn Sinaovog Kazivanja do Attarove Mističke Epopeje’, *Islamska Misao*, June 1990, pp. 23-28.

⁴³⁶ Asin Amal, ‘Neki Aspekri Islamske Civilizacije’, *Islamska Misao*, May 1980, pp. 17-19; Predrag Matvejević, ‘Mediterranski Svijet na Starim Arapskim Kartama’, *Islamska Misao*, January 1989, pp. 48-50; Husein Fevzi, ‘Arapsko-Islamski Uticaj na Evropsku Renesansu u Pomorstvu’, *Islamska Misao*, October 1979, pp. 5-10; Muhammed Kamil Husein, ‘Arapsko-Islamski Uticaj na Evropsku Renesansu u Medicini’, *Islamska Misao*, November 1979, pp. 13-19.

⁴³⁷ Ahmed Hamani, ‘Ibn Badis i Njegova Metoda Tumačenja Kur'ana’, *Islamska Misao*, July 1982, pp. 16-21; Abdullah Budimlija, ‘Kur'an, Kiraet -Učenje Kur'ana’, *Islamska Misao*, March pp. 16-17; Muhammed Hamidullah, ‘Uvod u Tefsir’, *Islamska Misao*, July 1991, pp. 35-50.

⁴³⁸ Abulhalik Atije Nusajr, ‘Raniji Vjerovjesnici i Objave Najavili su Muhammedovo Poslanstvo’, *Islamska Misao*, November – December 1983, pp. 59-60, 30-32; Ali Sami Neššar, ‘Biografija Fahrudina Razije’, *Islamska Misao*, November 1984, pp. 32-37; Idriz Demiović, ‘Hidžra i Njen Značaj’, *Islamska Misao*, August 1987, pp. 3-7.

civilization,⁴³⁹ *Tasawwuf*,⁴⁴⁰ History of local Muslim thought and civilization, *Fiqh* and the *Shari ah* law,⁴⁴¹ Islamic economics,⁴⁴² Sociology of religion,⁴⁴³ Genocide⁴⁴⁴ indicate the relative freedom and wide space given to the translators and Muslim scholars of the time, particularly in the late eighties, to write on Islam. Analysing the religious literature of the seventies and eighties one can conclude that Muslim religious and cultural thought not only thrived, but complemented the main religious trends in the Muslim world.

4.2. After Communism

Introduction

This section is in a way a continuation of the previous one and it is primarily interested in the factors which have shaped Muslim intellectual discourse in the post-communist period. Here we are principally concerned with the main themes of the Muslim intellectuals and what prompted them to choose particular topics. There is not doubt that the praxis and teachings of the Balkan '*ulama*' present for centuries in the region was the main influence on modern

⁴³⁹ Amal Asin, 'Neki Aspekti Islamske Civilizacije', *Islamska Misao*, May 1980, pp. 17-19; Predrage Matvejević, 'Mediterranski Svijet na Starim Arapskim Kartama', *Islamska Misao*, December 1989, pp. 48-50; Muhammed Kjamil Husein, 'Arapsko-Islamski Uticaj na Evropsku Renesansu u Medicini', *Islamska Misao*, November 1979, pp. 13-19.

⁴⁴⁰ Ašk Gaši, 'O Tarikatskim Stupnjevima i Knjiga Tajni Šejha Abdul-Kadira Gejlanije i Deset Savjeta', *Islamska Misao*, October 1984, pp. 17-20; Ebu-l-Vefa el-Gunejmi et-Taftazani, 'Tesavvuf - Moral, Čistota i Djelo', *Islamska Misao*, January 1985, pp. 20-23; Fejzullah Hadžibajrić, 'Namaz Sufije', *Islamska Misao*, February – March 1986, pp. 97-98, 15-16.

⁴⁴¹ Amin Waltter, 'Namaska Vremena u Područjima Udaqljenim od Ekvadora', *Islamska Misao*, May 1988, pp. 31-32; Mehmed Begović, 'Šerijatsko Pravo o Državi i Državnoj Upravi', *Islamska Misao*, February 1988, pp. 9-19; Džadulhak Ali Džadulhak, 'Izdavanje Šerijatsko-Pravnih Mišljenja – Fetvi', *Islamska Misao*, January 1985, pp. 8-19; Bilal Hasanović, 'Pitanje Prisustva Muslimanke na Džumi-Namazu', *Islamska Misao*, January, pp. 9-10.

⁴⁴² Kasim Bukvić, 'Neka Razmišljanja o Zabrani Kamate', *Islamska Misao*, February 1990, pp. 7-16; Nedžmetin Erbakan, 'Pravedan Ekonomski Sistem', *Islamska Misao*, January 1992, pp. 38-45; Fehmi Huvejdj, 'Šta je Suština Kamate - Pitanja Koja je Potakla Nova Knjiga o Idžtihadu', *Islamska Misao*, May-June 1988, p. 33, 35.

⁴⁴³ Esad Ćimić, 'Vjera Između Svjetovnog i Duhovnog - Duhovni, Psihološki i Kulturni Aspekti Religijskog Fenomena', *Islamska Misao*, November 1989, pp. 14-21.

⁴⁴⁴ Halid Čaušević, 'Uvod u Sociologiju Genocida Nad Muslimanima', *Islamska Misao*, March 1992, pp. 47-51; Derviš Ahmed Nuruddin, 'Poruka Silovanim Muslimankama', *Islamska Misao*, April 1992, pp. 25-26; Rasim Muminović, 'Antropo-Etička Naznaka Genocida', *Islamska Misao*, January - February, pp. 4-10, 9-17.

Muslim thought there. This encompasses the *ahl-Sunnah* branch of Islam, including the *Maturīdi* teaching in 'Aqā'id and the *Ḥanafī madhhab* in *Fiqh*, as well as certain *sufī* orders (*tarīqah*); the Ottoman Islamic and cultural zone; the existence of the 'Islamized' praxis of the inhabitants of the pre-Ottoman Balkans; the tradition of Islamic reformism (*iṣlāḥ*) in the interpretation of Islam; the institutionalization of Islam in the form of the Islamic Community; and the praxis of observance of Islam within the secular state.⁴⁴⁵ All these attributes were present during the communist period and have, with some oscillations, continued to shape Muslim intellectual contributions in the beginning of the twenty first century.

4.2.1. Continuation and development of Islamic thought from previous periods

Muslim institutions and publications continued the modernist trend of writing about, analysing and exploring the traditional Muslim disciplines of *Tafsīr*, *Ḥadīth*, *Qur'ānic* Sciences, Arabic Language, *Fiqh*, etc., relying on the outcomes of the aforementioned rich intellectual and cultural heritage. Ismet Bušatlić, the dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies, has confirmed that his institution continues with the same sorts of publication as were present before. These publications are for specific needs and they have their readers, mostly graduates of this, and other faculties interested in Islamic studies, despite the fact that the majority of them did not bring any financial benefits for the Faculty.⁴⁴⁶ Indeed, when one reads the repertory of the works from the Faculty of Islamic Studies, the continuation of classical debates becomes apparent in the specialized studies of the principal Islamic disciplines.

⁴⁴⁵ I have mainly relied on the definition of the Islamic Tradition of Bosniaks by Fikret Karčić, which can, more or less be applied to the whole Balkan region. See: Fikret Karčić, 'Šta je To Islamska Tradicija Bošnjaka?' *Preporod*, December 2006.

⁴⁴⁶ Interview with Ismet Bušatlić, 20 May 2009.

Aziz Kadribegović, chief editor of the biweekly *Preporod* newspaper, argues that his editorial tends to maintain the same editorial politics and inclination towards religion and culture.⁴⁴⁷ However, he stresses that during the seventies and eighties the editorial had to be more cautious in commenting on social affairs as the Commission for Religious Affairs would have reacted immediately. There were instances when the whole editorial team was replaced for petty reasons. With the collapse of communism, state censorship over religious publications and newspapers disappeared.⁴⁴⁸ It is noticeable that more recent texts analyse the current social and political situation in the country as well as in the region.⁴⁴⁹ The determination of *Preporod* to follow the major intellectual trends of Islam of the contemporary Muslim world, but also of the West, has led to it recording most of the major currents of Islamic modernity and universalism and transferring them to the region.⁴⁵⁰ At the same time, *Preporod* continuously records local events, mosque openings, administrative changes within the IC, etc, in a coherent and comprehensive way, as it did during the communist period.

However, some would argue that *Preporod* should be more open to critical views about the IC, as the past decade has marked its firm affirmation and support for the current religious and administrative leadership. Professor Karić clearly distinguishes the two periods in its position towards the official Islamic Community:

⁴⁴⁷ Kadribegović.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ See for instance 'Political Polygon' the regular column in *Preporod*.

⁴⁵⁰ Enes Karić, *Preporod – Svjedok, Arhiva i Vremeplov Naše Novije Povijesti* (Sarajevo: Fakultet Islamskih Nauka, 2010) <http://www.fin.ba/index.php/download/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=966> [accessed 24 January 2011].

‘When it comes to the thematisation of the work and the role of the Islamic Community, two clear periods could be discerned in *Preporod*. From 1970 to 1993, *Preporod* had divergent attitudes on many of its pages towards both the socialist state and towards the Islamic Community. From 1993, because of a change in the state and social circumstances, *Preporod* is increasingly becoming a “position”. From that period onwards the leadership of the IC, namely, the *Reis ul-Ulema* and the *muftis*, are not only taking, but also assuming significant informative and commentary space in this informative newspaper. The critical, often polemical blade of *Preporod* is now directed towards the critics of the Islamic Community from the politics, media and the public life in general.’⁴⁵¹

Despite these observations, however, it is evident that *Preporod*, the oldest Islamic newspaper in the region, has maintained its consistent determination to remain current for both the general Muslim readership and the administrative leadership of the IC.

As for the publication of new books in last two decades, the situation is far from consistent. Although restrictive, Communist laws allowed only religious communities to publish and distribute religious publications, enabling the Islamic Community to carefully plan and print the materials needed for the community. Muslim officials were able to control publications and manage their direction. With the collapse of communism, small publishing companies, NGOs and individuals began to translate and print vast amounts of books. As the Islamic Community could not keep its unique position anymore, the market has been flooded with booklets and other more or less important books on Islam. Easy access to information, the availability of books and articles written by prominent Muslim scholars, as well as technical advancement in publishing and the freedom to publish, have enabled authors to translate and publish works on a variety of topics.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

The forest of publications range from modern authors such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Muhammad al-Ghazali, Muhammad Asad, to *salafī* such as Bin Baz, and populists such as Amr Khalid. Between 1,500 and 2000 books have been published on Islam in the last two decades.⁴⁵² During and immediately after the war, literature from *wahhabi*, *shi'a*, *sūfī* and other sources was available for free. The main criteria for writing/translating and publishing these books were mainly the promotion of particular beliefs, trends and ways of performing religious duties. Also, many published books were written or translated by incompetent authors, which resulted in a chaos in religious publications. Later on, the economic interests and saleability of books have prevailed as a main reason to publish.

The official Islamic Community has not been able to react effectively and manage the current situation. Arguably, even its publications have been deficient in quality, while most significant editions in religion, the Arabic language and cultural history of the Muslims in the last twenty years, have been published by private companies and secular institutions.⁴⁵³ A large gap in religious literature has been exploited by private companies, which have in past decade published hundreds of books. These are mainly books for the general public, such as those on the Prophet's medicine, interpretations of dreams and spiritual healing. As there are no definite criteria for publishing these sources apart from the economic one, a high level of anarchy prevails when compared to the communist era. The Islamic Community officials argue that this chaotic state will exist as long as no new law is brought in to regulate religious publications.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵² According to data collected from the main publishing houses: *El-Kalem*, *El-Kelimeh*, and *Libris*. www.el-kalem.ba, www.el-kelime.rs, www.logos-a.com.mk

⁴⁵³ Spahić, 2009.

⁴⁵⁴ Omerdić, 2008.

4.2.2. New challenges for Muslim intellectuals

The second stream of intellectual contributions from Balkan Muslims has been a response to the new realities occurring in the post-communist period. As Bušatlić explained, contemporary themes have been either imposed on Muslims or alleged of them.⁴⁵⁵ These new realities can be divided into several subdivisions, each corresponding to a specific issue in the region.

4.2.2.1. The Balkan wars

Chronologically, one of the first challenges Muslims faced after communism was an attack on the physical existence of the population and the destruction of religious buildings. More than a hundred thousand people were killed and more than a million expelled.⁴⁵⁶ At the same time, 640 mosques and other religious buildings were destroyed or seriously damaged.⁴⁵⁷ In the Muslim literature the notions of war, *jihād*, *shahīd*, genocide and ethnic cleansing have gained significant prominence. As the Muslim population in BiH and Kosovo suffered the greatest casualties, it seems understandable that post-communist Muslims in the Balkans are adopting some sort of post-conflict and post-genocide mentality.

In the last fifteen years, the religious literature has been full of texts describing acts of genocide, atrocities and the killing of Muslims.⁴⁵⁸ The noteworthy statement of Karić in his article '*Shahīd* – a witness of the magnificent purpose of his death' best illustrates this point:

⁴⁵⁵ Bušatlić interview, 2009.

⁴⁵⁶ *Okvirni Program Povratka Izbjeglica i Raseljenih Osoba u BiH za Period 2009-2014* (Sarajevo: Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, 2009)

<<http://www.unhcr.ba/images/stories/Spotlight/returnprogrammefinalbos.pdf>> [accessed 20 June 2011] (p. 6).

⁴⁵⁷ Nezim Halilović, *Dan Džamija – 1993 – 2007 Godina* (Sarajevo: Rijaset Islamske Zajednice BiH, 2007) <http://www.rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=966:dan-dramija&catid=119:nezim-ef-halilovicuderris&Itemid=57> [accessed 12 May 2008].

⁴⁵⁸ See for instance: 'Autobus – Bordel za Silovanja Bošnjakinja', *Takvim*, 2000, p. 125; Michael Sells, 'Vjera, Historija i Genocid u Bosni i Hercegovini', *Glasnik Islamske Zajednice*, January-February 1998, p. 133.

‘It is very important to note here that a *shahīd* strives to live, not to die, namely, he does not blindly haste to death, nor blindly offers his head ‘for the beauties of *jannah*.’ It is wrong to equalise the institution of *shahīd* with suicide which is in Islam most severely forbidden.’⁴⁵⁹

This article was written in 1994 in besieged Sarajevo during the war, when more than 100,000 Muslims perished. In one of the most difficult episodes of their history, Muslim scholars did not even contemplate suicide attacks, which nowadays fill titles in media publications.

As one can notice, the themes on genocide, war, *shahīd*, etc. have not been linked with any theological or religious aspect of Muslim intellectual life, but the very importance and the context in which genocide and conflict occurred have been emphasized in most of the religious and cultural literature of Muslims. The consciousness of distant historical facts related to the extinction of Muslims from some areas of the Balkans, as well as the very fear that similar circumstances might bring another final genocide, have instilled in Muslim authors the need to remind, document, promote and publish works describing the genocide during the war. In the absence of a national Muslim academia, it should not come as a surprise, then, that the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo has established a course in genocide studies.

As Ahmet Alibašić noted, Muslim thought is recovering from devastating wars and “digesting” new input from the wider Muslim world into which it has been reintegrated.⁴⁶⁰

The majority of Muslims see themselves as objects of brutal aggression. In the case of

⁴⁵⁹ Enes Karić, ‘Šehid – Svjedok Veličanstvenog Cilja Svoje Smrti, *Preporod*, January - February 1994.

⁴⁶⁰ Ahmet Alibašić, *The Profile of Bosnian Islam and What West European Muslims Could Benefit from it* (Stuttgart: Akademie der Diözese Rottenburg, 2007) <http://www.akademiers.de/fileadmin/user_upload/download_archive/interreligioeser-dialog/071116_albasic_bosnianislam.pdf> [accessed 12 June 2009] (p. 6).

Bosnia, it was aggression by Serbia, and to lesser extent Croatia. In the case of Muslims in the Sandžak region, they see themselves deprived of basic religious and national rights by the government of Serbia. The same applied to the Kosovo region until its independence when Kosovar Muslims took their destiny into their own hands.

The question arises here, how and when will Muslims overcome this victim mentality? In the case of Bosnia it is largely linked with the general political process in the country. Muslim political, as well as religious leadership, is attempting to correct and reverse the outcomes of the war in the case of Bosnia, or to (re)gain more political control over its destiny in the case of Macedonia and Kosovo. This is why the Islamic Communities in the region are actively involved in the political process in their respective countries. Muamer Zukorlić, the Sandžak *Mufti*, has even established a political party and won a number of seats in local constituencies. In other areas Islamic Communities call upon Muslims to give their vote to those who would best represent their national and religious interests. The head of the Islamic Community of BiH has regular meetings with Muslim political leadership, and with politicians from other two communities, ie. Serbs and Croats. This is a matter of expediency as returnees to their pre-war homes in the Serb or Croat controlled areas, when building a mosque or demanding other religious rights, need to work with the local authorities. Unfortunately Muslim politicians do not always help these returnees.

4.2.2.2. Islamic Pluralism

The second challenge has also mainly emerged during and as a consequence of the wars. In the last two decades the Balkan region became a melting pot where hundreds of humanitarian organizations, formal and informal groups, and individuals have been

promoting the teachings and practices of other *madhhabs* and other global Muslim trends. The puritan and vigorous behaviour of the advocates of these trends has been noticed in almost every corner in the Balkans, and this has gradually become a problem for official Islamic communities, which have more or less shaped religious life in the last hundred years. This state of affairs has inevitably been reflected in Muslim publications. The arguments of some Muslim scholars and influential *imams* have been explored in the third chapter. Here further reflections of some other Muslim intellectuals on the issue of extreme interpretations of Islam in the Balkans are presented.

Safvet Halilović of the Islamic Pedagogical Faculty in Zenica believes that the issue around the so-called *neo-salafis* and extremists has been exaggerated. He states that the media and those centres interested in accusing Bosniaks of extremism and terrorism in this way excuse those who killed them, slaughtered them and expelled them from their homes. He also argues that the '*ulama*' is to be asked when one talks about Islam and not "some" experts in terrorism, who very often bend the truth and accuse Islam of something that Islam has nothing to do with.⁴⁶¹ Reis Cerić, in one of his interviews, has confirmed that there are individuals who disturb us by their negative approach to local Bosnian tradition. Moreover, there are those who are in the zone of *takfīr* and *hijra*; that is, they are exclusive in religion and inapproachable in communication.⁴⁶² His observations were analysed in detail in *Preporod* two years later. Mirnes Kovač, a journalist, thus examined the extreme discourse in the Balkans of the neo-*takfīrī* ideology among Muslims of the Balkans.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶¹ Safvet Halilović, *Bošnjaci Su Narod Sa Burnom Prošlošću* (Novi Pazar: Mešihad Islamske Zajednice u Srbiji, 2010).

<http://www.islamskazajednica.org/index.php?option=com_ezine&task=read&page=2&category=12&article=3920> [accessed 2 May 2011].

⁴⁶² 'Bajramski Intervju Sa Reis-ul-Ulemom Mustafa ef. Cerićem', *Dnevni Avaz*, 29 December 2006.

⁴⁶³ Mirnes Kovač, 'Neo-Tekfirijaska Ideologija Među Muslimanima Balkana: Ideje, Pobornici i Koncepti', *Preporod*, 15 October 2008, pp. 42-43; 1 November 2008, pp. 30-31 and 15 November 2008, pp. 36-37.

Frequent arguments in mosques and the public arena have been reflected in the writings of Muslim authors. Common disagreements among traditional and so-called “radical” Muslims have centered around innovations in Islam (*bid‘ah*), such as celebration of the Prophet’s birthday (*mevlud*), the performance of prayers according to other *madhhabs*, or a disrespect for *madhhabs* at all, the use of beads in *dhikr*, congregational *dhikr*, the position of the legs in prayer, etc.⁴⁶⁴ Of course, the traditional ‘*ulama*’ have endeavoured to intellectually justify the centuries-long practices of local Muslims on the basis of classical books of *Fiqh*, *Ḥadīth* and other disciplines.⁴⁶⁵ On the other hand, the advocates of the radical interpretations of Islam have, through numerous books, pamphlets, articles and lectures, argued that various innovations (*bid‘ah*) had penetrated into the religious practice of local Muslims, therefore demanding for a drastic change of the so-called “communist Islam.”⁴⁶⁶ The frustration of the local Muslim population towards the new teachings has been best described in the remarkable observation on the practice of the raising hands in supplication (*du‘ā*) by the two authors, Fuad Sedić and Izet Terzić, who summarized the polemics on these issues in their article “Advice for the Muslim Youth” (*Savjeti muslimanskoj omladini*):

‘Very often one would be imprisoned without any reason or because of a statement which could be ambiguous. Muslims lived in a system in which one would be called to account only for raising the hands while reciting the *fātiha*, because this meant an opting for the religion of Islam. Today we find in those who believe that the raising hands while reciting a

⁴⁶⁴ See for instance: Ahmet Alibašić, ed., *Savremene Muslimanske Dileme* (Sarajevo: Centar za Napredne Studije, 2010), pp. 341-370.

⁴⁶⁵ Šefik Kurdić, *Ramazan i Teravij-namaz u Svjetlu Hanefijskog Mezheba* (Zenica: Islamska Pedagoška Akademija, 2002).

⁴⁶⁶ See for instance: *Cerić Upozorava na Pokušaje Nametanja Agresivnog Islama* (Zagreb: Dnevnik, 8 November 2006) < <http://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/svijet/ceric-upozorava-na-pokusaje-nametenja-agresivnog-islama.html> > [accessed 27 November 2009].

supplications (*du'ā*) is an innovation in religion (*bid'a*). These individuals do not know how to appreciate.⁴⁶⁷

Muslim intellectuals have been searching for adequate ways of dealing with this sensitive issue. A radical approach, they fear, would only make things worse. Their caution could be sensed in a statement of Reis Cerić stating that the IC will not repeat previous mistakes,⁴⁶⁸ and will respond to the provocations of inter-Muslim divisions and strive cautiously. 'The way of internal dialogue and tolerance is lengthy and thorny, but this is the only correct way to bring happiness for all,' repeated Cerić.⁴⁶⁹ The general feeling among the Muslim leadership is that these problems can not be dealt with *ad hoc*, but on the basis of arguments from the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* through discussions, articulation of identity and development of the sense of belonging to the Islamic Community.

4.2.2.3. Tradition and Modernity

To protect Muslim religious tradition against the oncoming new religious interpretations mirrored chiefly in neo-*salafī* ideas and practices, but also in other, more or less influential religious streams, Muslim authors were at first in doubt as to how to react. In the majority of cases, Islamic scholars faced communism and its aggressive atheism in protecting their religious identity. Then, almost overnight, they have had to deal with the extreme religious right which very often uses language and argument, although present for some time in the Muslim world, less familiar to Muslim activists and intellectuals in the Balkans.⁴⁷⁰ Muslim

⁴⁶⁷ Alibašić (2010), p. 355.

⁴⁶⁸ Referring to internal turmoils within the Islamic Community when the influential Muslim scholars such as Pandža, Handžić and Dobrača were proclaimed traitors and terrorists by the *Wakf* Assembly of the IC.

⁴⁶⁹ Bajramski Intervju, 29 December 2006.

⁴⁷⁰ Alibašić (2010), p. 12.

intellectuals are also aware that mere resolutions, statements and even decrees will not solve this problem. In this light a number of publications recently published on Abu Hanifah, his *madhhab* and the *fiqh* rules, his life and general teaching can be observed.

They have also realised that the uniform religious practice present during the 1945-1990 period is not possible any more. However, in order to protect its internal infrastructure and strength, the Islamic Community tends to develop Islamic thinking within legitimate Islamic pluralism. This pluralism is strongly anchored in the tradition of Islamic reformism (*iṣlāḥ*) orientated towards the Islamic centre (*al-waṣatiyya*).⁴⁷¹ This tendency is two-fold. Firstly it involves the translation of moderate contemporary Muslim authors, who are, as Safvet Halilović describes, ‘advocates of the moderate way (*al-wasatiyya*) in the interpretation of Islam.’⁴⁷² The works of Yusuf al-Qaradawi have been particularly popular, with about twenty books published in the region.⁴⁷³

Furthermore, there has recently been an increased tendency to emphasize the importance of tradition for local Muslim populations. Adnan Silajdžić from the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo warns that ‘there can thus be no religious people without their tradition, which forms the basis of individual identity; and this in turn means that one cannot be indifferent

⁴⁷¹ Ahmet Alibašić, *Pravci i Elementi Razvoja Islamske Tradicije Bošnjaka u Bosanskom Kontekstu* (Sarajevo: Fakultet Islamskih Nauka, 2007) <<http://www.fin.ba/nastavna-sredstva/tekstovi>> [accessed 17 April 2010] (p. 5).

⁴⁷² Safvet Halilović (2010).

⁴⁷³ Some of the books translated from this author are: Jusuf El-Karadavi, *Radosne Vijesti o Trijumfu Islama* (Sarajevo: Bemust, 2004); Jusuf El-Karadavi, *Sabur u Kur'ani Kerimu* (Novi Pazar: El-Kelimeh, 2001); Jusuf El-Karadavi, *Stazama Sreće i Spokoja: Utjecaj Vjere na Čovjekov Život* (Sarajevo: Bookline, 2006); Jusuf El-Karadavi, *Šerijat i Život* (Zenica: Selam, 2003); Jusuf El-Karadavi, *Univerzalni Model Društvenog Života* (Tuzla: 1999); Jusuf El-Karadavi, *Radosne Vijesti o Trijumfu Islama* (Sarajevo: Bemust, 2004); Jusuf El-Karadavi, *Razumijevanje Suneta* (Sarajevo: Bemust, 2001); Jusuf El-Karadavi, *Razumijevanje Prioriteta* (Sarajevo: Bemust, 2001); Jusuf El-Karadavi, *Islamski Preporod Između Anarhije i Ekstremizma* (Konjic: KPD Svjetlost, 2000); Jusuf El-Karadavi, *Kulturna Naobrazba Da'ije* (Konjic: KPD Svjetlost, 2000); Jusuf El-Karadavi, *Imam Gazali Između Simpatizera i Kritičara* (Sarajevo: Bookline, 2005); Jusuf El-Karadavi, *Suvremene Fetve: Izbor* (Tuzla: Harfo-Graf, 1997); Jusuf El-Karadavi, *Islam Civilizacija Budućnosti* (Novi Pazar: El-Kelimeh, 2004).

to, or take a neutral stance towards, tradition.’⁴⁷⁴ Whereas during the communist period Muslim identity was questioned by external factors and Muslim scholars responded and defended that identity, in the post-communist era, along with the Muslim identity, tradition has been attacked by ‘internal’ forces, rather than external elements. Silajdžić goes further to claim that ‘tradition shows us the direction our development should take, gives us strength, and empowers us,’ while, ‘rejecting tradition has extremely damaging implications.’⁴⁷⁵

He defines tradition as:

‘normative and intellectual tradition of a people: its constitutive and interpretative tradition. In graphic terms, if the entire range of the spiritual, intellectual and cultural experience of a given people is imagined as a single, much-branched tree, tradition in the finest sense of the word is its roots. For any tree to survive above ground and to continue to grow, it must have sound roots to provide it with nourishment and give off new shoots every year.’⁴⁷⁶

The second tendency involves revitalizing traditional schools of reformism in the Balkan region, such as the works of Mehmed ef. Handžić (d. 1944),⁴⁷⁷ Džemaludin ef. Čaušević (1938),⁴⁷⁸ Husein Đozo in Serbo-Croatian (Bosnian) and Sami Frashëri (1904),⁴⁷⁹ Hafiz Ali

⁴⁷⁴ Adnan Silajdžić, *Muslims in Search of an Identity*, Trans. Saba Risaluddin, (Sarajevo: Faculty of Islamic Studies, 2007), p. 54.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 54.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 54.

⁴⁷⁷ Mehmed Handžić (1906-1944) was a prominent *muderris* (lecturer), *vaiz* (preacher), prolific writer and community activist. He wrote in the field of *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth* and Islamic civilization. See more in: Mahmud Traljić, *Istaknuti Bošnjaci* (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 1998), pp. 114-125.

⁴⁷⁸ Džemaludin ef. Čaušević (1870-1938) was an influential Bosnian scholar and reformator. He served as *Reis ul-Ulema* from 1914 to 1930 and introduced many far-reaching changes within the organization of the Islamic Community, especially in education. In collaboration with Hafiz Muhammed Pandža, he translated the meaning of the *Qur’ān* into the Yugoslav language. Traljić, pp. 55-57.

⁴⁷⁹ Sami Frashëri (1850-1904) was an Albanian writer and philosopher. His most prominent works were focused on language studies, novels and drama. He wrote several Turkish-French dictionaries and one Turkish-Arabic dictionary. He was also a prominent figure of the Rilindja Kombetare (National Renaissance Movement of Albania).

Korça (d. 1957)⁴⁸⁰ and *Imam Vehbi Ismail* (2008),⁴⁸¹ in the Albanian language. This also includes the writings of Enes Karić and Nexhat Ibrahimî who belong to the contemporary Muslim thinkers.⁴⁸²

It is important here that tradition has not only been the subject of contemplation of Muslim scholars in the region. Authors belonging to the two other religious groups, Orthodox and Catholic, have also been stressing the need for the preservation and nurture of their traditions in the face of secularism, consumerism and modernity. Writing on the importance of tradition for the Orthodox Church, Mirko Blagojević stressed that ‘the Orthodox Church and tradition are so much intertwined, entangled and correlated phenomena that they can in many aspects be equalized.’⁴⁸³

The next challenge noticeable in the contemporary Muslim literature of the Balkan region has been modernity. Balkan Muslim authors are searching for role models or examples of how Muslims in Muslim majority countries have responded to modernity. Therefore, many of their texts reflect global trends present in the last two decades. Muslim intellectuals are attempting to find the answers to the challenges of modern times such as reduced religiosity, the relationship of tradition and modernity, globalization, interfaith dialogue, cloning,

⁴⁸⁰ Hafiz Ali Korça (1874-1957) was an Albanian writer and religious scholar. His most prominent works are *Mevludi*, *303 Words of Imam Ali*, *Joseph and Zelihanë*, *Gjylistani* and *Seven Dreams of Albania*. He also wrote *Tafsîr of the Qur’ân*, (over 2000 pages) and *Rubaijjati Khajjam* as well as some textbooks for schools.

⁴⁸¹ *Imam Vehbi Ismail* (1919-2008 in Shkoder, Albania. He pursued his studies at the Islamic Seminary in Tirana and at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. In 1949 he moved to the United States and became a religious leader of the Albanian Muslim Community in Detroit, Michigan. He established the first Albanian Mosque and Islamic Centre in the United States and became the editor of the two quarterly Islamic journals, *Albanian Muslim Life* and *Muslim Life*, the latter as the organ of The Federation of Islamic Associations in the USA and Canada. He has written and translated more than twenty five books, printed in Albanian. See more on: <<http://www.islamicpluralism.org/1184/Imam-vehbu-ismail-1919-2008>> [accessed 2 May 2009].

⁴⁸² Alibašić (2010), p. 5.

⁴⁸³ Mirko Blagojević, ‘Savremene Religijske Promene u Srbiji i Proces Integracije u Evropu’, *Filozofija i Društvo* 1 (Belgrade: Institut za Filozofiju i Društvenu Teoriju, 2006), pp. 102, 103.

Muslim identity, etc.⁴⁸⁴ The reflections of global religious communities on modern issues have been visible in many of the writings from the Balkans. Thus on the issue of cloning, for instance, Karić underscores the determination of all major religious communities to reject the very idea of human cloning.

‘The current condemnation of human cloning by religious communities active at a global level is being based above all on an ancient tradition of moderation. Human cloning is excessive and it has been looked at in religious literature as a kind of rebellion against God’s order in which His creations are created and born.’⁴⁸⁵

Questions of how to live and implement Islam in a modern, western and secular society are frequently being raised among Muslim theologians. How does one accept integration but avoid assimilation? Is one to follow ‘Abduh’s principle of assimilation, or the acceptance of western civilization, while proclaiming ... a strict loyalty to Islam?’⁴⁸⁶ Would it be wise to search for role models in those authors who advocated ‘a selective mix of elements from the Islamic intellectual heritage and features of modern civilization... or those who are in favour of religiosity in secularity, where religion would be confined to its primary mission.’⁴⁸⁷ Or is it better to ‘advocate a long-term transformation of religion, by which a functional rather than structural changes to religion,’ are proposed, following the examples of Muslim thinkers such as Garodi, Muhammad Ayyub, Arkoun, Talbi, Ali Marad, and Fatima Mernissi.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁴ See for instance: Dževad Jarebica, ‘Genetski Modificirana Hrana’, *Novi Muallim*, 29 September 2008, pp. 84, 85; Samir Beglerovic, ‘Savremeno Muslimansko Mišljenje Pred Izazovima Ekološke Krize’, *Novi Muallim*, 29 Septembar 2008, pp. 70-77; Abul Fahd Muhsin Ibrahim, *Biomedicina* (Sarajevo: Bemust, 2001); Osman Sinanović, Rešid Hafizović i Izet Pajević, *Duhovnost i Mentalno Zdravlje* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 2002).

⁴⁸⁵ Enes Karić, ‘Kloniranje – Filozofska, Etička i Religijska Razmatranja’, *Novi Muallim*, April-June 2003, p. 7.

⁴⁸⁶ Silajdžić, p. 64.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 64.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 65.

Adnan Silajdžić, professor of Islamic creeds (*'Aqā'id*) at the Faculty of Islamic Sciences, argues that, for Balkan Muslims 'the experience of the classical authors [who absorbed and integrated intellectual achievements of other peoples] provides an indispensable formula for a comprehensive, dynamic articulation of Islam.' In his opinion it would not be possible to 'create a new paradigm of understanding the world as referred to above, of course, without the living intellectual tradition that Muslims are required by the *Qur'ānic* text constantly to renew and rejuvenate from within.'⁴⁸⁹ His words are mirrored in a number of books by classical authors translated and published in the last two decades in the Balkans. For the first time the whole *Revitalisation of the Sciences of Religion*, the capital work of al-Ghazali, has been translated and published, with other thirteen books by the same author.⁴⁹⁰ Other classical authors such as Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Kathir, Tirmidhi, Ibn Tufail, and Ibn Arabi have also been translated.⁴⁹¹

Silajdžić goes further to claim that Muslims are

'living in this historical or cultural and civilizational modern era, which has led us, with its great myths of reason, science, material progress and consumption, democracy and extreme hedonisms, into the profoundly worrying state of pessimism that we are experiencing in the frivolity of leisure, environmental disasters, the misuse of genetic engineering, human loneliness in a world of state-of-the-art communications, technology, growing egotism and narcissism. In such an age, how are we to understand our own spiritual, cultural and religious

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 70.

⁴⁹⁰ Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Život Poslije Smrti*, Trans. Ismail Ahmetagić (Sarajevo: Dobra Knjiga, 2008); Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Niša Svjetlosti*, Trans. Enes Karić (Zagreb: Mešihat Islamske Zajednice u Republici Hrvatskoj, 1995); Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Izbavljenje iz Zablude*, Trans. Hilmo Nematlija (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 1998); Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Savjeti Vlastima*, Trans. Enes Karić (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 2001).

⁴⁹¹ See for instance: Ahmed Adilović, *Kazivanja o Vjerovjesnicima* (Bužim: Ilum, 2007); Enes Karić, *Ibn Haldun: Uvod u Čitanje Al-Muqaddime* (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 2008); Ibn Tufail, *Živi Sin Budnoga*, Trans. Tarik Haverić (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1985).

tradition, which is in the midst of a dual crisis, is typical of the modern age: a crisis of relevance, and a crisis of identity.⁴⁹²

Here Silajdžić actually voices other contemporary philosophers and sociologists regarding the state of humankind in general.⁴⁹³ We can note a difference between his writings concerned with modernity and challenges of progress, and the writings of Husein Đozo, where he called for progress reform. Both authors, although from different starting points (one philosopher/theologian, the other *mufassir*), are mirroring demands from their own time.

The conflict between modernity and traditional forms of Islam has further been explored by Silajdžić. Similar to Đozo and other authors of his time, Silajdžić recognizes the appalling condition of Muslims:

‘This dual crisis of religion in the modern world is one that Muslims in all seven climatic and cultural zones of the contemporary world are undergoing. More than ever before, they are in a cleft stick, caught between traditional forms of religiosity and modern modes of thought and conduct. As a result, at the beginning of the new century they are suffering the grave consequences of their inertia, powerlessness, and dislocation from global and historical events.’⁴⁹⁴

4.2.2.4. Terrorism

9/11 has become a paradigm for Islamic terrorism and the war on terrorism. Most influential Muslim scholars worldwide promptly responded to this issue with a number of statements, declarations, articles and books.⁴⁹⁵ What followed those and other terrorist attacks in Europe

⁴⁹² Silajdžić, pp. 59-60.

⁴⁹³ Hans Küng, *Christianity and World Religions: Paths of Dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1993).

⁴⁹⁴ Silajdžić, p. 60.

⁴⁹⁵ Scholars, activists and leaders such as: Mustafa Mashhur, The Muslim Brotherhood (Egypt); Kazi Husein Ahmad, emir Jamaat-e-Islam (Pakistan); Matiur Rahman Nizami, emir Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh

and elsewhere has in various ways affected Muslims in the Balkans. Suddenly they have become potential white al-Qaida members; their links with the Islamic world, organizations and agencies during the wars in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia have been scrutinized and a number of humanitarian organizations have been closed. Authors such as Cohlman, Woehrell, Schindler and others present the Balkans as a new breeding ground for Islamic terrorism.⁴⁹⁶ They have been supported by the Balkan orientalist and 'experts' on terrorism who frequently accused the local Muslim leadership of links with the most notorious terrorists. The scope of this work is not to either confirm or deny the statements and conclusions summarized in these publications. However, the intention of this section is to explore responses to those acts among Muslim scholars of the region.

The starting point of the region's Muslims in the discussions on terrorism has often been a correlation between terrorist attacks carried out in the world capitals of New York, London and Madrid with the killing and atrocities during the aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. It seems that Muslims are quite frustrated with the fact that the attacks on innocent civilians in Western cities provoked a large scale of international intervention at all levels, while at the same time, the massacres and genocide executed over innocent Muslim civilians in Bosnia and Kosovo were left without any major intervention from the international community. At the same time, Muslim authors are disturbed over the defining of terrorism in the West as a purely Islamic movement, while those who committed atrocities

(Bangladesh); Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, Islamic Resistance Movement (Palestine); Rashid al-Ghannushi, Ennahda Movement (Tunis); Fadzil Noor, The All Malaysian Party (Malaysia) and forty other Muslim scholars and politicians.

⁴⁹⁶ See among others: Shaul Shay, *Islamic Terror and the Balkans* (Herzliya: Interdisciplinary Center, 2007); Steven J. Woehrel, *Islamic Terrorism and the Balkans* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Information Service, Library of Congress, 2005); John R. Schindler, *Unholy Terror: Bosnia, Al-Qa'ida, and the Rise of Global Jihād* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith, 2007); Evan Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihād in Europe: the Afghan-Bosnian Network* (Oxford: Berg, 2004).

in the Balkans, belonging to the Orthodox Church and often blessed by it before going to war, have never been labelled 'Christian terrorists'. Reis Cerić therefore stressed that:

'the genocide in Srebrenica over my people is as shameful act as the terrorism in New York, with the exception that the genocide in Srebrenica, as a zone under protection of the UN, happened with the complete knowledge of who the perpetrators are. It is well known that Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić⁴⁹⁷ are Orthodox Christians, but their genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina has not been named as a Christian genocide. I do not intend, in any way, to suggest that Christianity, Orthodox or other, should be called a genocidal or terroristic religion... I insist, however, that Islam as a religion with almost one and a half billion adherents worldwide and with different races and nations, can not be attributed to terrorism, simply because the violence of an individual or a tiny group of any religion does not represent the peaceful majority of that religion.'⁴⁹⁸

Along these lines is the statement by Enes Karić that the use of the 'adjective "Islamic" with the word of "terrorism" is not only inaccurate and untrue, but this act complicates the position of Muslims in the West, and of the West in Muslim views.'⁴⁹⁹ In their texts and articles, Muslim scholars are unanimous that terrorist attacks are against the fundamental teachings of Islam and that they, like their counterparts in the Muslim world, explicitly condemn these irrational and preposterous acts. Furthermore, they are unequivocally clear that more than one billion Muslims must not be blamed for those acts of the few, and are therefore very critical towards those who do not make this distinction plain. In the literature there has been a desire by Muslim authors to define what terrorism generally is, who its

⁴⁹⁷ Radovan Karadžić is a Bosnian Serb politician accused by the International Court in the Hague for organizing atrocities and genocide against the non-Serb population during the Bosnian war. Ratko Mladić is a Bosnian Serb general accused of genocide in Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica. Both individuals were arrested and have been tried in the Hague.

⁴⁹⁸ Mustafa Cerić, 'Islam Protiv Terorizma', Proceedings of the NATO Conference on Terrorism in Viena on 14th of June 2002. See also Mustafa Cerić, *Islam I Državljanstvo U Europi* (Sarajevo: Vijeće Kongresa Bošnjackih Intelektualaca, 2000)

⁴⁹⁹ Enes Karić, 'Jesu li Subjekt Radnje Milijarda i Tri Stotine Miliona Muslimana?' *Novi Selam*, September, 2002, p. 9.

representatives are worldwide, why it has been occurring and what religious validity and fundamentals it contains. Thus, authors have translated and published the opinions of prominent international Muslim scholars and officials. They have also examined and presented proofs and religious fundamentals which confirm the negative stance of Islam towards any form of terrorising innocent people and gaining political or any other aims through terrorist activities of any kind. Of course, what Muslim authors in the Balkans write and think on the topic of terrorism is to a great extent a reflection of the writings of Muslim and other authors worldwide. The works of Harun Yahya, Ahmed Akbar, John Esposito and others are the best illustration of this connection.⁵⁰⁰

There are, however, authentic texts by Balkan authors who contemplate Islam and the challenges Muslims face, in an advanced scholarship. Terrorist activities, often referred to as ‘a *jihād* against Western enemies’ by their perpetrators, were defined by Karić long before the September 11th:

‘true *Jihād* of Muslims in contemporary world is not in the destruction of Western jumbo-jets, but the true *jihād* of present-day Muslims should be the construction and production of these and other powerful airplanes in Muslim factories. In addition, it is better for Muslims to have justification of their sincere religiosity in their own power, but not in criticising of the power of others.’⁵⁰¹

It is evident that terrorism, often referred to as “Islamic,” complicates the relationship between Muslims and other religious communities. On the other hand, the hot issue of

⁵⁰⁰ See: John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002); Muhammad J. Akbar, *The Shade of Swords: Jihād and the Conflict between Islam and Christianity* (London: Routledge, 2002); Harun Yahya, *Islam Denounces Terrorism* (Elmhurst, NY: Tahrike Tarsile *Qur’ān*, 2002).

⁵⁰¹ Karić (2009), p. 122.

terrorism has often been used at a local level by political parties and other ethnic groups to manipulate their followers/members or gain political ends.

4.2.2.5. Institutionalization of Islam vs. Islamic institutions

At the same time, as far as Balkan Muslims are concerned, in the light of post 9/11 context about their future, rights and recognition on European soil, Enes Karić believes that universal Muslim identity should overcome Muslim particularization in the West. According to him, the most urgent need of Muslim peoples and Muslim communities in the West ought to be self-affirmation and self-confirmation as a universal community that will interpret and practice Islam universally. It is hoped that thus Europe will be more “digestible” for Muslims, concludes Karić.⁵⁰²

His opinion is shared by the head of the Islamic Community in Bosnia, Reis Cerić. In his Declaration of European Muslims he calls upon the Muslims to fully engage in the European societies, demanding their rights, but at the same time fulfilling their duties and obligations.⁵⁰³

Muslims who live in Europe should present Islam to the Western audience as a universal *Weltanschauung*, and not as a tribal, ethnical, or national culture. Muslims cannot expect from Europeans to appreciate the universal message of Islam if they are constantly faced with an ethnical or national colour of Islam. It is not that the European Muslims can impress the European public by the universalism of Islam, but also

⁵⁰² Enes Karić, ‘Muslimansko Iskazivanje Vjere u Evropi Danas’, *Znakovi Vremena* 6.21 2003, p. 42.

⁵⁰³ See his other writings on this topic in: Mustafa Cerić, ‘Evropa je Za Muslimane Dom Sporazuma’, *Preporod*, 1 July 2003, pp. 8, 9; Mustafa Cerić, *Vjera, Narod i Domovina: Hutbe, Govori i Intervjui* (Sarajevo: Udruženje Ilmijje, 2002), pp. 284-287; *Islam i Državljanstvo u Evropi* (Sarajevo: VKBI, 2000).

Europe is a good place for the Muslims themselves to discover the power and beauty of the universality of Islam.⁵⁰⁴

Reis Cerić asserts the commitment of European Muslims to European values of the rule of law, tolerance, democracy and human rights. At the same time he expects the institutionalization of Islam in Europe, economic development, the development of Islamic schools to fulfil the needs of Muslims in multicultural societies, political freedom and representation in parliament, as well as the relaxation of restrictive immigration policies, the recognition of Muslim personal status law and protection from Islamophobia, ethnic cleansing and genocide.⁵⁰⁵ In the institutionalization of Islam Reis, Cerić is trying not only to export the Bosnian and Balkan model of a Muslim religious affairs organization to Europe, but also to assert the importance of the institution of the Islamic Community in Bosnia as a guardian of Muslim religious affairs. Although well received among some European politicians, it seems that a Bosnian religious organization can not simply be replicated at European level due to a number of factors, including cultural and language differences, as well as various interpretations of Islam. After all, the integration of European Muslims would be much more difficult than the unification of the Balkan Muslim institutions which, after being united prior to the 1990s, fell apart. Some critics object to *Reis Cerić* in that he attempts to unify European Muslims while he is not able to mollify two factions in Serbia.⁵⁰⁶

In a sense, Islam is becoming increasingly institutionalized in EU countries, whilst its institutional frameworks are weakening in Balkan countries. These developments should,

⁵⁰⁴ Mustafa Cerić, *Declaration of European Muslims* (Sarajevo: Rijaset Islamske Zajednice, 2008) <http://www.rijaset.ba/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=66> [accessed 14 May 2009].

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶ Adnan Silajdžić criticized Cerić in that he had not been able to defend unified Islamic community of former Yugoslavia, and now talks about the institutionalization of Islam at the European level. See more: Viladana Selimbegović, 'Reis Cerić Ne Zna Šta Radi – Intervju Sa Adnanom Silajdžićem, Profesorom Na Fakultetu Islamskih Nauka u Sarajevu', *Dani*, 5 May 2006.

however, be put into perspective. Since the starting points are different, apparently divergent processes can bring about a similar result – that is, the existence of representative bodies which play an important regulatory role in religious life, but cannot pretend to exercise a monopoly any more.⁵⁰⁷

Through the emphasis on the institutionalization of Islam in Europe, Muslim intellectuals are actually responding to ongoing attacks on the Islamic community and Muslim authorities from various groups in the Balkans, most notably *neo-salafi* circles. This especially relates to the *Shari ah* validation of the organization of the Islamic Community established by the Austro-Hungarian empire more than a century ago. Thus the importance of the institutionalization of Islam in a secular state has been the subject of further legal analysis by Fikret Karčić. According to this author, the original and historical model of the relationship between religious and political authority was their organic unity – *dīn we dawlah*. As the secular state requires their complete separation, Muslims, particularly those living as minorities, have developed an autonomous institutionalized structure, detached from the state. In the Balkans, most notably in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this structure encompassed the organization of the '*ulama*', *waqf* affairs, education (*ma'ārif*) and *Shari ah* courts. Later on, in Socialist Yugoslavia, the institutionalized structure further developed to contain Muslim representative bodies, executive bodies, a constitutional court, *waqf* and educational institutions.⁵⁰⁸ These institutions are responsible, in the light of the transformation of *Shari ah* norms to the level of only faith and moral norms of Muslims, for the interpretation

⁵⁰⁷ Bougarel (2005), p. 21.

⁵⁰⁸ Fikret Karčić, 'Islam u Sekularnoj Državi: Primjer Bosne i Hercegovine', in *Religija i Sekularna Država - Uloga i Značaj Religije u Sekularnom Društvu iz Muslimanske Kršćanske i Jevrejske Perspektive sa Fokusom na Jugoistočnu Evropu*, ed. by Ahmet Alibašić (Sarajevo: Fondacija Konrad Adenauer, 2007), pp. 23-36 (pp. 32-33).

and application of those norms. This will be achieved through established mechanisms of the interpretation of regulations (*ifta*), education and upbringing (*adab*), advice (*nasīḥah*), etc.⁵⁰⁹

On the other hand, a number of authors have emphasized the importance of institutionalized Islam in the Balkans. Thus, Ahmet Alibašić believes that the policies of the Islamic Community towards radicalism and extremism have been fruitful, as those phenomena are present in those regions and areas either in Bosnia or the Diaspora where the IC is not present with its infrastructure and activities.⁵¹⁰ At the same time Karić is critical of Muslim institutions, arguing that ‘a crisis of institutions is taking place among Muslims. He believes that Muslims in a way are not capable of establishing effective, mutually coordinated institutions.’⁵¹¹ Furthermore, he is even critical about the validation of the present institutions of Muslims in BiH. He believes that, compared with the Orthodox Church and particularly the Catholic Church, which have centuries-long experience of working in secular states, the Islamic Community is almost a pioneer in defining its positive role and place in a secular state. He concludes that:

‘It would be very difficult to claim that the position of the IC in any period since the Austro-Hungarian annexation to the dissolution of Socialist Yugoslavia can serve as an example of a conscious, planned and free determination of this religious community towards society and the state.’⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁹ Karčić (2007), p. 34.

⁵¹⁰ Ahmet Alibašić, *Militantni Ekstremisti Haridžije Našeg Doba* (Sarajevo: Centar za Napredne Studije, 2010) <http://cns.ba/docs/militantni_ekstremisti_haridzije_naseg_doba_ahmet_alibasic.pdf> [accessed 23 February 2011] (p. 9).

⁵¹¹ Enes Karić, *Islam i Muslimani Pred Savremenim Izazovima – Hrestomatija Tekstova, Eseja i Intervjua* (Bosna Muslim Media, 2009) <<http://bosnamuslimmedia.files.wordpress.com/2009/08/05-dr-enes-karic.pdf>> [accessed 15 June 2009] (p. 99).

⁵¹² Muhamed Jusic, *Vjera u Javnoj Sferi BiH* (Sarajevo: Puls Demokratije, 2007) <<http://www.pulsdemokratije.ba/index.php?l=bs&id=142>> [accessed 16 September 2009].

The lives and beliefs of Muslims in Europe has been the object of Balkan authors from another perspective, in this case, the legal one. If Muslims believe that Islam is a comprehensive way of life and that the *Shari ah* is a code according to which they should direct their lives, how then do they accept European secularized state systems? Fikret Karčić admits that Islam, along with other monotheistic religions, tends to regulate life in its totality while:

‘the secular state, on the other hand, requires a functional differentiation between the religious and the political sphere, looks at individuals as citizens irrespective of their religious adherence, and requires the loyalty of citizens to the law which is a result of a consensus or a majority decision of its citizens.’⁵¹³

Karčić argues that realistically religions have to renounce their total requirements in order to achieve “overlapping consensus” in society. Does this mean that Muslims, in order to live in and accept secular societies, have to renounce their adherence to *Shari ah* norms overall? He believes that generally ‘all the *Shari ah* norms which belong to the state, such as those which are: constitutional, administrative, criminal (corporal), international law, etc., can not be applied in a secular state.’ However, everything which is ordered or proscribed by those norms is still valid, but the sanctions for transgression of these can not be applied. As an example of such an approach he takes adultery (*zina*), which is still forbidden, but the sanction is not applied. ‘For Muslims living in a secular state *zina* is a big sin (*kabāir*) and is morally unacceptable behaviour, but it is not a crime (*jarīmah*), as the sanction (*ḥadd*) is not applied.’⁵¹⁴

⁵¹³ Karčić (2007), pp. 30-31.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., p. 32.

Nevertheless, the complexity of the relationship between religion, ethnicity/nationality, and identity in some Balkans states has been reflected in theoretical and practical solutions for the applications of *Shari ah* norms. An example is a hypothetical return to the *Shari ah* courts abolished in 1946 by the communist regime. The revival of this institution among Balkan Muslims would, according to Karčić, be illusory for a number of reasons:

‘Firstly, we would return to the concept of being, as Muslims, a religious minority which enjoys a personal autonomy. That model has been historically obsolete and Muslims of Europe nowadays need a new status paradigm, which is a full citizenship. Secondly, having a personal autonomy is not a sufficient assurance for protection of Islamic identity. Identity can not be preserved today by legal means. Thirdly, a demand for a personal autonomy of a religious community would contribute to a further dissolution of the state-legal system of homeland of Muslims.⁵¹⁵

His opinion is subject to further analysis where the above reasons might be disputed. But in reality this is a good starting point for resolving the actual issues of the interpretation and application of *Shari ah* among some communities in a secular state. Muslims are not alone in this search for religiosity in a secular state. More often the position of religion in a secular society has been contemplated and actualized in Europe by Christian communities.

Although the collapse of the Communist regimes led to an increased role for religious actors in the public arena, the restoration of the Islamic religious institutions to their historical structuring function did not occur. *Shari ah* courts abolished by the communists at the beginning of their rule have not been reintroduced, and no credible Islamic scholar is calling for their restoration. Despite serious efforts by the Islamic Communities to obtain the *waqf* properties, most of these nationalized legacies are still in the hands of the state and the

⁵¹⁵ Ibid., p. 34.

reversal process expected by the representatives of Islamic administrations has not taken place. In Kosovo, as in Macedonia, the main Albanian parties avoided supporting requests by the Islamic Communities to introduce religious education into public schools. ‘The situation is different in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the wearing of the veil is permitted in secondary schools and universities, and religious education was semi-mandatory during the war.’⁵¹⁶ It is obvious that communist policies have left an inerasable effect on the administration of Islamic affairs in the region.

4.2.2.6. Balkan Muslims – between Europe and the Muslim World

The Ottoman Empire was present in the Balkans for five centuries. Its long presence and influence on almost every aspect of life reflects a strong memory among local Muslims, particularly in the realms of religion and culture. However, under the pressure of isolated living among the Christian communities and within or close to European powers such as Austro-Hungary, Muslim intellectual elites began to distance themselves from the Empire and ‘sought to formulate a “local Islam” that would be compatible with Western modernity.’⁵¹⁷ The work of intellectuals such as Džemaludin Čaušević, Husein ef. Đozo and Mehmed Handžić searched for new models in the Arab world and Indian sub-continent and found inspiration in the writing of Jamaludin al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida.

The modernising communist policies of industrialization, urbanization and eviction of religious practice from the public arena have further contributed towards the alienation of the Muslim population from the East and its seeking to be more related and build strong

⁵¹⁶ Bougarel (2005), p. 15.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

relationships with the West. Although under Tito's notorious Interior Minister, Ranković, tens of thousands of Muslims found refuge in Turkey in the 1960s, a great number of Yugoslav workers, including a significant number of Muslims, sought to work in West Germany, Switzerland and Austria, thus contributing to the exchange of ideas as well as wealth for the benefit of their own communities in Yugoslavia. We have seen that a process of revitalization of the religious life during the seventies and an increased number of new build mosques occurred due to the influx of Deutschmarks from Yugoslav Muslims. It seemed that the end of the twentieth century did not find Balkan Muslims, only a highly secularized group, which was a product of the communist policies and modernization measures, but also one quite distant from Turkey and close to the European Union. However, the following two decades would seriously challenge this relationship.

During the Yugoslav conflicts Turkey showed a high level of restraint. As a NATO member and a close ally of America, Turkey sent a contingent of its soldiers on a peace-keeping mission to the Balkans, but was wary not to be labelled as another Muslim country that was supporting the local Muslim population. However, political changes in Turkey enabled more active engagement of both the state and religiously based brotherhoods and charities in the Balkans. As of 2000, Turkish religious organizations, especially the Gülen and Nurcu movements, began to establish a strong foothold in the areas of Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania. Their extent and influence has been discussed in more detail in Chapter Three of this work.

At a government level, Turkey's new role as a transnational Muslim power was welcomed by the majority of governments. One can agree with Öktem Kerem that 'in the eyes of the international community and states such as Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia,

Turkey was viewed as a country capable of promoting “moderate Islam” in the region.⁵¹⁸ Through its government agency TIKA,⁵¹⁹ and the *Diyanet* department,⁵²⁰ Turkey has channelled a significant amount of funds for reconstruction projects, capacity building schemes, and NGOs.⁵²¹ A surprising fact noticed by Öktem, is that different key players from Turkey, which otherwise would not co-operate in their home country, have joined forces in the Balkans and contributed to projects across the region. It might be that the driving force in this process has been the new political elite, led by the Turkish president Abdullah Gül (2007 -) and foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu (2009 -), who ‘introduced a new mode of politics that surpassed the confines of conventional diplomacy and high politics, reaching out into the micro-level of community organisations and grassroots politics.’⁵²²

It is evident therefore that Turkey is seeking more proactive involvement in the Balkans for reasons which are beyond this research. One may only discern the benefits for both the future position of Turkey as a regional power and local Muslim communities supported by their religiously inspired brothers. But the question rises here of the attitude of the same communities and their spiritual as well as political leadership, and intellectual elites, towards Turkey.

In the absence of a great Muslim power in the region, the closest country the diverse Muslim communities of the Balkans can rely on is Turkey, for not only religious, but also political

⁵¹⁸ Öktem, p. 24

⁵¹⁹ The Turkish Development Agency TIKA (or in full, the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency, *Türkiye İşbirliği ve Kalkınma İdaresi*) was initially established during Turgut Özal’s Presidency as an instrument for proactive foreign policy and ‘soft power’ projects aimed at gaining goodwill and popular support in the Central Asian republics and in the Balkans.

⁵²⁰ *Diyanet* is a governmental department responsible for religious affairs in Turkey.

⁵²¹ Öktem, p. 29.

⁵²² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

and economic, support. Turkish mentality, religious practice and *Ḥanaḫī madhab*, as well as the administration of religious affairs, is similar to that of the Balkan Muslims. All Islamic Communities in the region have, in administrative sense, evolved from Ottoman structures of religious governance.⁵²³ But the different areas of the Balkan region have slightly different attitudes towards the Ottoman legacy.

Although sympathy and intimacy towards Turkish involvement prevails in some areas of the Balkans, especially in Macedonia and Kosovo, in Bosnia, for instance, a high level of ambiguous scepticism exists towards the former Empire.⁵²⁴ Overall, one could conclude that local Muslim populations, despite the aforementioned facts, position themselves more as European Muslims, seeking to associate themselves with other nations belonging to the family of Europe. Despite the fact that some statements of Turkish politicians, particularly the foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, indicate the opposite, Balkan Muslims do not live neo-Ottoman dreams, and they rather hope to become a part of the EU in the future. All the help from modern Turkey is welcome, but despite similar mentalities, different political, social and geographical contexts drive local populations to rely more on their own forces and build self-financing institutions capable of supporting the religious as well as the political life of Muslims.

The Balkan Muslims are aware of their Islamic tradition, a moderate version of the Ottoman Muslim heritage. Being often frustrated by the fact that the European nations have cautiously observed the suffering of the Muslim populations of Bosnia and Kosovo, they are wondering whether it would have been any different had they been a Christian ethnic group suffering

⁵²³ Ibid., p. 12.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

from non-Christians. However, the fact remains that the advantages of belonging to Europe in administrative, economic, political and social senses are far more prevailing for the future not only of Muslims, but of other ethnic and religious groups and nations of the Balkans. Inevitably, Muslims of the Balkans, their religious as well as political leadership, see themselves as a part of Europe and a European nation. No serious religious or political figure would question the European future of their society, or offer an Islamic alternative to it. The so-called claims for “a green transversal”, stretching from western Bosnia, over southern Serbia, Kosovo and Macedonia to Turkey, and linking this region to the majority Muslim countries, is an illusionary work of Orientalists such as Darko Tanasković.⁵²⁵

Muslims of the region are often accused that their attachment to Muslims in other parts of the world supersedes the attachment to their Serb, Macedonian or Croat neighbours. However, it would be premature to claim that one attachment supersedes the other. Those attachments could be rather defined differently. Thus, in purely religious terms, ie. prayer, fasting, the *ḥajj*, Muslims would show more similarities with their counterparts in Turkey, Egypt or Malaysia. Despite some customary or *madhhabi* differences, Muslims of the Balkans, especially practising ones, feel a unifying bond and a close brotherhood with those from other regions. Also, an important part of this attachment lies in the humanitarian aspect of the Muslim connections, as those who suffered under the Serbs, Muslims of Bosnia and Kosovo, but also in other areas, have received large quantities of aid from all over the world. Notwithstanding the fact that many non-Muslim organizations such as UNHCR, Oxfam, Red Cross, Caritas, and others provided humanitarian aid to all people in the Balkan zones of conflict regardless of religion, the vast quantities of aid arrived from Muslim countries and

⁵²⁵ See for instance: Darko Tanasković, *Zelena Transferzala* (Banja Luka, Glas Srpske, 2007) <<http://www.glassrpske.com/vijest/11/jetset/3181/lat/Zelena-transverzala-1.html>> [accessed 23 January 2009].

organizations. This fact plays a significant role in the determination of the Muslims when it comes to their attachment to the Muslim *Umma*. Muslims have learnt that they were helped because of the bonds among their co-religionists across the globe.

An interesting polemic appeared in the Bosnian press between the professor of Islamic Creed at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Resid Hafizović, and Reis ul Ulama, Mustafa Cerić, who also teaches in the same institution. Hafizović claimed that *neo-salafis* coming from Saudi Arabia are a threat for Bosnian society. In the *Oslobođenje* newspaper he directly insulted the Saudi King for promoting the *wahhabi* movement in this region. A few days later a statement from Cerić was issued, in which he affirmed his determination for free speech and invaluable contribution of the local Muslim intellectuals. However, he also praised the role the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had played during and after the Bosnian war.

On the other hand, in the ways of life in terms of clothing, food, drinks, music, language etc., one will find striking similarities between Muslims and their Christian neighbours. In this sense, Muslims are more comfortable in dealing with Serbs or Croats for instance, than with the Arabs. This has particularly been apparent in the Bosnian-Muslim Diaspora, where other Muslim communities are found. In her doctoral thesis about the Bosnian community in the UK, Lionette Kelly has noticed that Bosnian Muslims like to distance themselves from the Asian or Arab Muslims.

Because they had no strong identity as Muslims in the religious sense Bosnians found it difficult, if not impossible, to identify themselves with British Muslims. Those advising and supporting Bosnian refugees in Britain had assumed that the presence of other Muslims in an area would be beneficial for the Bosnians. However, the Bosnians quickly found that they

had little in common with these other Muslims, apart from a religion to which they were largely indifferent.⁵²⁶

The reason for such approach lies probably in the drive of the British Muslims to guide the Bosnian Muslims in the practice of their religion. This was particularly annoying to Bosnians when it comes to *ḥalāl* food or dress code. Living fifty years under an oppressive regime and escaping the knives and bullets of their enemies only because they belonged to the Islamic faith, the last thing Bosnian Muslims wanted was someone preaching to them about the peripherals of their religion.

As for Muslim intellectuals in the Balkans, the majority of them have received some kind of education in the Arab world. Education in Arab countries and the famous universities of Al-Azhar, Bagdad or Tripoli, have been seen as superior among the general public. The ability to speak Arabic, read and interpret sources from Arabic and interact with influential guests from the Arab world is seen as advantage among the majority of the Balkan '*ulama*'. On the other hand, as the communist regime restricted the educational opportunities for Muslims to travel to Arab countries, many graduates of *medresas* were constrained to complete their undergraduate and postgraduate studies at the Yugoslav universities of sociology, philology, history and language. They were also encouraged to undertake study visits or further education at the Western universities and colleges, such as the Sorbonne, Cambridge, Yale and others. Thus in the late eighties a new class of Muslim scholars was formed who were trained in classical Islamic disciplines in their home country, but were well versed in the secular disciplines of the humanities. These scholars have not only been able to read

⁵²⁶ Lynnette C. Kelly, 'Programme, Policies, People: the Interaction Between Bosnian Refugees and British Society, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Warwick, 2001), p. 347.

Ghazali, Ibn Kathir or Maturidi in Arabic, both have also engaged with Weber, Gibbon or Burckhardt in English, German or French.

Having said that, the challenges Muslims of the Balkans are facing are definitely not the same or similar to their counterparts in Western Europe. Even if the nation states of Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina become members of the EU in the near future, as the majority of secular and spiritual actors desire, deep differences will still characterize the Muslim populations of Eastern Europe.

Xavier Bougarel is therefore correct in his analysis when he raised the main differentiating points which characterize Balkan Muslims when it comes to their Western counterparts. Firstly he focuses on the institutional and political context of the two. ‘Muslims in Western Europe want to be recognized as a legitimate and established religious community’ he argues, ‘which means that their ethnic origin loses some of its political significance.’ At the same time Muslims of the Balkans are more concerned with their national identity while rejecting ‘their traditional status as non-sovereign religious minorities in order to identify themselves with an already existing nation state,’ as is the case with the Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia ‘or to develop their own national project in the case of Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina.’⁵²⁷

That is why for instance, many analysts from the region criticize Reis Cerić who, as a religious figure with his white *ahmadiyya* hat, travels to the West and represents Bosnian Muslims. He thus gives perceptions that Bosnian Muslims are a religious group without their nationhood and credible political representatives. Bougarel further argues that, owing to the

⁵²⁷ Bougarel (2005), pp. 21, 22.

ongoing process of formation of national identities in the Balkans, Muslim political parties, constituted on an ethnic basis, challenge the very political institutions of their respective countries. These challenges may even go as far as demanding territorial autonomy or a right for independence. In Western Europe, Muslim organizations and associations have ‘made religious demands that may go as far as calling for the recognition of a specific family law, but they never challenge the political institutions.’⁵²⁸

Conclusion

Under the influx of different ideas and teachings, which, without a doubt, have left their impact on Muslim thought in the past decades, local scholars have nevertheless resisted, in a constructive and valid way, maintaining the authentic tradition of this region. This was possible by relying on the strong religious roots of the earlier generations of the ‘*ulama*’ from the Balkan region and the strong organizational structure of the Islamic Communities in the region. Thus the works which underline the importance of identity and the local tradition have again resurfaced in the past twenty years.

Comparing the two periods, it is evident that the development of modern Muslim thought in the Balkans has strongly relied on the rich heritage of the communist and pre-communist periods. This is visible in the increasing revitalization of the works of authors from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In that sense, one could talk about the consistent continuation and development of Muslim religious thought. On the other hand, new challenges imposed on Muslim communities have reflected themselves onto the pages of present-day authors. This process follows a natural line of development of thought in a contemporary setting.

⁵²⁸ Bougarel (2005), p. 21.

The only exception or anomaly to this natural process has been the debate on Islamic terrorism. Similar to their counterparts in other regions, Muslim scholars in the Balkans have condemned obvious terrorist attacks and the rise of Islamic extremism, while at the same time stressing the fact that the end of the twentieth century has marked a massive killing of innocent civilians in their own back yard. They highlight the difference between those who terrorise in the name of religion in the US, Western Europe, the Balkans or in any other part of the world is insignificant. The very discussions on this topic by the media (covered in previous chapter) and by Muslim intellectuals sometimes give an impression of an increased presence of radical Islam in the region. This also gives grounds for some authors to claim that a large scale of re-Islamization of society is taking place.

In the light of not only a post-Communist but also a post-conflict and a transitional social reality, Balkan Muslims have developed several currents within their intellectual spectrum. The concern for their very physical survival as well as ethnic and national identity has been reflected in the works of numerous authors. Although topics such as genocide, wars, aggression, nation, the state, etc., do not bear any theological significance in strict terms, at a practical level they are intrinsically attached to the Muslim intellectual discourse in the Balkans.

The second challenge which has rather been imposed onto practical and theoretical levels of the Muslim population is a response to increasing Muslim pluralism. Muslim intellectuals are attempting to theoretically justify the thought and praxis of the Balkans Muslims through works directed towards the reaffirmation of their own tradition, '*ulama*', and classical Islamic works, while at the same time searching for role models in the Muslim world. One

of the primary objectives in the future therefore would be a further ‘development of Islamic thought that insures Islamic legitimate answers to the challenges of the times and institutional development (of the IC) that should provide Muslims with the individual and collective manifestation of religion and protection of their identity.’⁵²⁹

Consequently, the third theme Muslim scholars have been preoccupied with in the last two decades has been a search for answers, on the basis of the primary sources of Islam, to the question of how to maintain Islamic practice in a secular society. It is inevitable that *Shari ah* norms will be reduced to a personal level, ie., the realms of individual religiosity and morality. However, in order to protect and further religious practice, Muslims need to be organized through an institution that will protect, interpret and apply *Shari ah* norms. The works of Fikret Karčić, Mustafa Cerić and a few other authors, have repeatedly, on the basis of Islamic tenets, emphasized the practical need, importance and significance of an organized Muslim institution embodied by the Islamic Community. However, the majority of the Islamic Communities emerging after the disintegration of the Yugoslav state have followed the administrative borders of their respective countries; hence the calls for a unified organization at a Balkan or even European level ignores the real prospects.

Despite the strong bonds connecting the Balkan Muslims with the Muslim world, the Muslim intellectuals are trying to formulate a local Islam which would be compatible with the circumstances and environment they are living in on European soil. The increased presence of the closest Muslim majority country, Turkey, has been seen as a positive sign among the majority of intellectuals, but at the same time the eyes of the Balkan Muslims are turned to Europe, where they geographically belong.

⁵²⁹ Karčić, 2006.

5. THE LEVEL OF RELIGIOSITY AMONG THE YUGOSLAV MUSLIMS AND THE REASONS FOR SURVIVAL OF ISLAM IN POST-COMMUNISM

Introduction

In previous chapters a gradual revival of Islam has presented itself mostly at the infrastructural level, i.e. the establishment of new schools, institutions, publications, building of new mosques etc. The Islamic communities in the region have enriched their education portfolios from two existing *medresas* active during the communist period to ten at present. New graduates from these and educational institutions abroad are strengthening the capabilities of Muslim religious institutions. Islam, along with other religions, is increasingly visible in almost all areas of public life. In many countries of the region, Islam as religion is taught in state schools and regularly presented in the media and the film industry. What was unthinkable thirty-forty years ago nowadays is becoming a norm.

Also, it has been noted that Islam has attained a significant place in society. This can be discerned from the media, but also through religious gatherings, establishment of new organizations, diversification of religious practice, etc.

The previous chapters have also shown areas of significant departure from the period under communism, especially in the freedom to manifest one's religiosity in public at both an individual and a collective level. The continuation of practices existing during the communist period has also been discussed. However, as the resurgence of institutionalized religion in the West is not equivalent to the revitalization of religion, the reappearance of

religion in the public domain does not necessary entail the rise of individual religiosity and the spiritualization of personal life. Has the religious revival on a personal level been more exaggerated than it genuinely appeared to be? The first section of this chapter, therefore, comparing the two periods of communism and post-communism, seeks to find out the extent to which the policies of the regime have affected the individual religiosity of Balkan Muslims.

5.1. The Level of Religiosity among Yugoslav Muslims

5.1.1. During communism

The increased visibility of Islam in the Balkans is often seen as equivalent to a “re-islamization” of Muslims in the region.⁵³⁰ To expose the current trends in this regard one needs to explore the extent to which Muslims have declared and practiced their adherence to Islam. It has to be noted that religions have always played an important social and cultural role in the Balkans, even during the communist period, when any increased public manifestation of religion was considered as an act against the state.⁵³¹ Thus, as early as 1921, Muslims, along with other religious communities, had an opportunity to declare religious affiliation.⁵³²

The first indication of the post-WWII religiosity of Yugoslav citizens, including the country’s large Muslim population, was demonstrated in the 1953 census, where citizens were able to state their religious affiliation or declare themselves as non-believers. As a

⁵³⁰ Bougarel (2005), p. 16.

⁵³¹ Iveković, p. 524.

⁵³² Srđan Vrcan, ‘Religion, Nation and Class in Contemporary Yugoslavia,’ in *The Influence of the Frankfurt School on Contemporary Theology: Critical Theory and the Future of Religion; Dubrovnik Papers in Honour of Rudolf J. Siebert*, ed. by Allen James Reimer and Rudolf J. Siebert (Lewiston: Mellen Pr., 1992), p. 92.

result about 12% of the whole Yugoslav population categorized themselves as atheists. As will be shown below, the lowest percentage of non-believers was among Bosnian and Albanian Muslims.⁵³³ It seems that religious and confessional identification was still very strong among the Muslims. This is most likely due to the large rural population, especially among Albanian Muslims in Kosovo and Macedonia, where the attachment to religious and traditional values was intense. Despite the fact that subsequent surveys and analyses three decades later indicated a seriously affected religiosity of all citizens in former Yugoslavia, the Muslims of Kosovo and Macedonia remained more religious throughout the communist period than their counterparts in Bosnia, as well as members of other religious communities.

Fifteen years after the 1953 census was held, a survey showed that religiosity among the Yugoslav citizens had dropped to more than half of the population. As research by Yugoslav sociologists shows, a particularly intense period of secularization occurred during the 1960s and 1970s, when the identification and practice of all religious activities was in decline. Cohen concluded that, according to empirical research by Yugoslav scholars in the early 1970s, 'religiosity was increasingly becoming a marginal aspect of citizen belief and a phenomenon which appeared to survive mainly in rural areas and among the less educationally advanced and older segments of the population.'⁵³⁴

The precise reasons for such developments may be difficult to ascertain. Some authors argue that the atrocities and sufferings during the WWII caused many people not only to lose their families and homes, but also their faith in God.⁵³⁵ However, it is difficult to reconcile these claims with the arguments of other authors who, writing about religiosity in the 1990s, again

⁵³³ David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg, eds., *Islam Outside the Arab World* (Richmond: Curzon, 1999), p. 308.

⁵³⁴ Lenard J. Cohen, 'Bosnia's Tribal Gods: the Role of Religion in Nationalist Politics', in *Religion and the War in Bosnia*, ed. by Paul Mojzes (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), pp. 47, 48.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

quoted war sufferings as the reason for a now increased belief. A very strong secularization process by the communist authorities seems to have given significant results. The popular ideas of *brotherhood and unity* superseded, at least temporarily, religious feelings. Furthermore, those who even believed in God and practised their religion did not want to declare their religious affiliation during official surveys from fear of repression and the unpopularity of religion in the given circumstances. Those openly declaring their faith were deprived of any major public office in the country and were subjected to regular intimidation by the authorities. Generally, although significantly decreased, religious belief and practice survived among at least half of the population in the Balkans. This approximately corresponds to the religious situation in the former Soviet Union, where after nearly fifty years of communist rule about 47 percent of all Soviets declared themselves to be atheists.⁵³⁶

Sociological studies carried out during the late seventies 'indicated that the secularization process appeared to have halted, or temporarily reached its limits, while other analyses suggested that a renaissance or revitalization of religiosity was taking place.'⁵³⁷ A 1985 survey of 6,500 people demonstrated an increase in religious belief, most notably in traditionally Catholic and Muslim regions of the country: 62.3% of Catholic families said they were religious, as compared with 43.8% from Muslim families and 26.2% from Orthodox families.⁵³⁸

It is suprising that the de-secularization process was more evident among younger generations of Yugoslavians. Thus 'a survey of young people throughout Yugoslavia carried

⁵³⁶ Froese, p. 63.

⁵³⁷ Lenard, p. 48

⁵³⁸ Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: Politics, Culture and Religion in Yugoslavia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1992), p. 140.

out by Srdjan Vrcan showed a high degree of religious belief.⁵³⁹ Most of the authors suggested political, ethnic and socio-economic problems in the country as the main reasons why people had lost their faith in communist utopian ideas and re-discovered the place of religion and ethnicity in their lives. Thus Alexandar Pavkovic argues that the failures of economic policy from 1979 to 1985 contributed to some extent toward religious revitalization: 'in this period,' he states 'net personal income per worker fell by 26%, foreign debt stood at 18 billion US Dollars and massive waste of foreign loans in less productive or unprofitable investments in the poorest regions, chiefly Kosovo and Macedonia, made repayment very difficult.'⁵⁴⁰

However, the very inability of the regime to erase national, religious and ethnic divisions in the country could have been a decisive factor in the turn to religion. Communism was seen as a messianic realization of the dreams of all Yugoslav peoples to live in peace and prosperity in one Slavic country. That is why the idea of communism found a fertile ground within the local population, to erase ethno-religious divisions and abandon religious beliefs. That is why for more than thirty years afterwards religiosity decreased and the secularization process was fruitful. Three decades later it has become apparent that the communist regime could not solve 'the national question' of the Yugoslav people, despite the claims of many that Titoism held Yugoslavia together. It is true that his authority and skill preserved Yugoslavia in his lifetime, but the post-Tito communist Yugoslavia could not survive.

As stated before, Muslims were one of the most religious communities in the country. The percentage of believers was greatest in Kosovo (91 per cent) and Bosnia and Herzegovina

⁵³⁹ 'A country-wide study of citizens employed in social sector, conducted the same year by Dragomir Pantić at the Institute of Social Sciences in Belgrade, indicated that the trend toward enhanced religiosity might actually be stronger among younger people than among the older generation.' Cohen, p. 51.

⁵⁴⁰ Aleksandar Pavković, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia: Nationalism in a Multinational State* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1997), p. 77.

(83.8 per cent), i.e. areas with a large Muslim population in 1964.⁵⁴¹ Twenty five years later, surveys showed that Muslims were becoming extremely secularized. Powers argues that Muslims ‘remained highly secularized and largely supportive of the Yugoslav state.’ The 1990 and 1991 surveys, on which he relies for his arguments, indicate that ‘Bosnia had the highest percentage (29%) of any republic not declaring confessional orientation, and that Bosnian Muslims (88%) valued their affinity with Yugoslavia more than either Bosnia's Serbs (85%) or Bosnia's Croats (63%).’⁵⁴² Powers further continues, agreeing with some western commentators ‘that Bosnian Muslims have had a traditionally secular and European outlook, and have tended to wear their faith lightly’.⁵⁴³ His opinion is shared by Ivan Iveković, who claims that Bosnian Muslims are the most secularized national group in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵⁴⁴ As the reasons for this he cites the large Muslim population present in the urban areas, traditionally ethno-religiously mixed surroundings. Also, Bosnian Muslims have been separated physically and culturally from the Muslim world for more than 100 years.⁵⁴⁵

Obviously, the communist regime has left a great impact on the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in terms of mixed marriages, attitude toward Yugoslavism, alienation from religious forms and rituals, etc. This tendency was more evident in the urban areas, rather than in villages and small towns. At the same time the Albanians of Macedonia and Kosovo have preserved their traditional attitude towards religion. According to a survey conducted in 1991, 64.3% of the citizens of Macedonia believe in God.⁵⁴⁶ This is well above the Yugoslav

⁵⁴¹ Westerlund and Svanberg, p. 308.

⁵⁴² Gerard F. Powers, ‘Religion, Conflict and Prospects for Peace in Bosnia, Croatia, and Yugoslavia, in Mojzes, p. 231.

⁵⁴³ Ibid., p. 232.

⁵⁴⁴ Iveković, p. 531.

⁵⁴⁵ Iveković, p. 531.

⁵⁴⁶ Ali Pajaziti, *Young People and Religion* (SouthEast Europe Review for Labour and Social Affairs, 2002) <www.ceeol.com> [accessed 8 June 2009] (p. 69).

average of 43%, from country-wide research performed a year earlier.⁵⁴⁷ The level of religiosity among the Balkan Muslims is not therefore consistent in the areas where Muslims live. In Bosnia it is at the lowest level, while in Macedonia and Kosovo it is significantly higher.

The reasons for a deep religiosity among the Macedonian Muslims lies above all in the deeply rooted tradition and large rural base of the Muslims. One of the important factors is the social cohesion of the Macedonian Albanians, predominantly Muslims, who protected their identity through maintaining strong customs, culture, language and religion. All of these differentiated them from the majority Orthodox Macedonians. The above mentioned survey 'indicated that 79.3% of respondents considered that religion was a factor in social homogeneity, integration and cohesion.'⁵⁴⁸ Other reasons for the religious revival mentioned above could be applied to Macedonia as well.

⁵⁴⁷ Cohen, p. 48.

⁵⁴⁸ Pajaziti, p. 76.

Table 2: Trends in Religiosity: Yugoslavia, 1953-1990 (In percent)⁵⁴⁹

	Census or Country-Wide Surveys						
	Adult Sample				Young People		
	1953a	1964b	1968c	1990d	1974	1985	1989
Religious/Believers	86.6	70.3	39.0	43.0e	11.0	17.0	34.0
Non-Religious & Atheists	12.6	29.2	51.0	48.0	64.0	59.0	57.0
Indifferent/Undecided/ 'Mixed Type'	0.8	0.2	10.0	9.0	25.0	24.0	9.0
<p>Census/general affiliation with a confession.</p> <p>Survey Question: 'What is your relationship to religion?'</p> <p>Survey Question: 'Do you believe in God?'</p> <p>Self-definition by respondents.</p> <p>In 1990, 84 percent of those surveyed expressed some type of confessional identity, a finding which may, to some extent, be compared with the 1953 percentage of religious/believers (86.6 percent).</p>							

⁵⁴⁹ Cohen, p. 48.

5.1.2. After Communism

In the 1989 study, Cohen examines religiosity and motives for church/mosque attendance of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The findings of this study show that 34% of young Muslims were religious, while another 10% had mixed feelings. Furthermore, 61% of the Bosnian youth did not attend mosques, compared with 14% who attended because of religious rituals, and another 14% because of tradition (See Table 3). ‘The situation completely changed a decade later: 89.5 % of the Croats and 78.3 % of the Bosniaks in the Bosnian Federation declared themselves as “religious persons” (Vrcan, 2001, 167); research in Doboj region in 2000 showed that 88% of the Croats, 84.8% of the Bosniaks, 81.6% of the Serbs and 16.7% of those nationally undefined declared themselves as “very religious” and “medium religious”.’⁵⁵⁰ This analysis corresponds to another survey carried out by the University of Stockholm in 1996 on a sample of 3,200 inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There more than 80% of the respondents declared their belief in God, while 90% identified themselves as members of the Islamic community. The same survey indicated that 27% of respondents attended mosques every week, and another 9% at least once a month.⁵⁵¹

In 1997-98, research was carried out among 300 students from ten faculties of the University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje. Almost half of the students (49.7 %) were Muslims. Fully 78% of the respondents declared their belief in the existence of God. Muslim students

⁵⁵⁰ Other researchers have confirmed this analysis. “Public opinion polls in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1988 showed that only 55.8 % of the Croats, 37.3 % of the Muslims/Bosniaks, 18.6 % of the Serbs and 2.3 % of the Yugoslavs declared themselves as believers. Mitja Velikonja, *In Hoc Signo Vincas: Religious Symbolism in the Balkan Wars 1991-1995* (Newberg: George Fox University, 2001) <http://www.georgefox.edu/academics/undergrad/departments/soc-swk/ree/Velikonja_In%20Hoc%20Signo%20Vincas_Oct%202001.pdf> [accessed 12 February 2011].

⁵⁵¹ Westerlund and Svanberg, p. 309.

were more convinced of the existence of God than the followers of other religions (97.3% compared to those of the Orthodox faith 59.5%).⁵⁵²

‘The Albanian students were more active in performing religious rituals than their Macedonian counterparts. Only 3% of Albanian students never performed religious rituals, while the percentage of Macedonians who never did so was much higher (14.4%). Almost exactly the same conclusion can be obtained for the variable of religious affiliation: 3.3% of young Muslims, but 12.1% of Orthodox ones, said they never performed religious rituals.’ (See Table 3)⁵⁵³

Table 3 – Performing religious rituals, by ethnicity.⁵⁵⁴

	Regularly	Occasionally	Would like to, but can not	Do not perform them	Total
Macedonians	19.8	54.8	10.3	14.4	100
Albanians	31.3	48.4	17.2	2.3	100
Others	34.7	38.4	19.3	7.6	100
Total	26	50.6	14	8.7	100

This data clearly shows increased religious belief or at least a declaration of that belief from the Bosnian and Macedonian Muslims within a decade of the fall of Communism. The data also shows that people were willing to declare themselves as Muslims and members of the Islamic Community as the easiest and simplest way to express one’s religiosity as a sign of

⁵⁵² Pajaziti, p. 74.

⁵⁵³ Ibid., p. 74.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 74.

religious freedom in the new circumstances. It seems that many factors have contributed towards the so-called revitalization of Islam in the Balkans.

The different identities and antagonism from other ethnic groups, namely the Serbs and the Croats, homogenized many Muslims in the late 1980s to reconsider their religious beliefs. In this context of ethno-national determination, a revitalization of belief and practice among the Bosnian Muslims could be observed. This has been noticed by other authors as well. Cohen hence argues that, ‘largely in response to the mobilization of Serbian nationalists in Bosnia, Muslims (and Croats) became more nationalistic in the late 1980s.’⁵⁵⁵ Attachment to an ethnic group and animosity towards other groups increased. ‘More than 70 % of Muslim and Christian communities were against marriages with persons of different confessions while just over 45% favoured ethnically homogeneous marriages. Similar trends could be observed in the choice of neighbours, colleagues, and friends’.⁵⁵⁶

Religion in the Balkans distinguishes people not only in religious terms, but also in ethnic and national terms. Filling the vacuum created by ‘the delegitimation of the communist project,’ religion has provided an integrating framework of new/old national identities.⁵⁵⁷

The role of politics and the process of so-called ‘religionization of politics should not be minimized when speaking about the return of religion in the public sphere. As in other parts of the world and in most advanced liberal democracies, religions have always been used and abused for political purposes.’⁵⁵⁸ I would agree therefore with Xavier Bourgarel who argues that:

⁵⁵⁵ Powers, p. 231.

⁵⁵⁶ Najcevska and others, p. 75.

⁵⁵⁷ Iveković, p. 534.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 534.

‘the use of religious institutions for nationalist and political purposes sheds light on the true nature and limits of the “revival of Islam” that many experts are talking about. The increased role played by religious actors in the public arena, due to the lifting of the former restrictions on their activities and a wider redefinition of the relationship between religion and politics, does not put into question deeper socio-cultural trends such as the decline in religious practice or the individualisation of faith. Moreover, this “return of religion” is not limited to Balkan Muslims, but is perceptible all over post-Communist Europe.’⁵⁵⁹

The influence of war is another important factor. The misery and suffering of war increased the desire of individuals to turn to God for assistance, comfort and hope. As the first democratic elections approached, people felt more free and confident to declare themselves to be Muslims. Sometimes this freedom was over-expressed, allowing some individuals, in response to other religious groups, to over-emphasize their religious affiliation through Islamic symbols, flags, songs, etc. It should be noted that there has been some genuine return to Islam, and to other religions, especially among the youth.

⁵⁵⁹ Bougarel (2005), p. 14.

Table 4: Young people in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1989 (in percent)⁵⁶⁰

	Ethnic Group			
	Muslims	Croats	Serbs	Yugoslavs
a) Religiosity				
Religious	34	53	21	12
Mixed Type	10	9	11	9
Non-Religious	56	38	68	79
b) Motives for Church				
Attendance				
Don't Attend	61	35	70	74
Attend Because of:				
Religious rituals	14	33	3	2
Tradition	14	24	16	8
Curiosity	5	5	6	6
Cultural Needs	4	2	5	10
Other Non-Religious				
Motives	2	1	-	-

The most prominent examples of genuine religious revival are members of the *neo-salafi* orientated organizations who, previously ignorant about Islam, have embraced conservative Islamic teachings completely and implemented their worldview in their lives. However, the quality of religious belief of the majority of population has either remained like that of the

⁵⁶⁰ Cohen, p. 53.

communist period or deteriorated. Data from UN surveys show that in the period of the last twenty years, an unprecedented number of drug users has been recorded. Although an official number of registered addicts does not exist, estimates are that there are approximately between 3000 and 5000 in Bosnia. Two research studies from 2001 and 2006 carried out among students in Bosnia showed that 22.5% of young people between 18 and 25 have tried drugs. The percentage rose to 31% in 2006. In Kosovo, it is estimated that there are about 1,500 drug users. The number of hard drug users has increased rapidly in the last ten years in Kosovo by about 53%.⁵⁶¹ A high rate of unemployment, disruption of the social structure, poverty and post-war depression have been quoted as major reasons behind young people misusing drugs and other addictive substances in the region.

The consumption of alcohol has always constituted an integral part of social and leisurely life of a great majority of the Balkan Muslims, but latest figures show that the consumption of beer, wine and spirits has drastically increased. According to the WHO Global Status Report on alcohol 2004, only 12% of male and 38% females totally abstain from alcohol.⁵⁶² Furthermore, according to the UNDP report on youth, 62% of the Bosnian youth approve of sex before marriage. Muslim youth do not differ significantly from those belonging to other ethnic groups.⁵⁶³ If a massive and genuine religious revival had taken place, these numbers would probably be significantly different.

⁵⁶¹ Edona Berisha Kida, *Psycho-sociological Factors Leading to Drug Abuse Among Children: The Need For New Integrative Methods of Social Inclusive Prevention Through Co- operation of All Actors in the Field: Problem Analyses - Examples From Kosovo* (Warsaw: University of Pristina, 2009) <<http://www.efsc-eu.org/uploads/fmanager/Presentation-Edona%20Berisha%20Kida.pdf>> [accessed 23 June 2011].

⁵⁶² WHO *Global Status Report on Alcohol 2004* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2004), <http://www.faslink.org/WHO_global_alcohol_status_report_2004.pdf> [accessed 23 June 2011] (p. 1).

⁵⁶³ *Human Development Report Bosnia and Herzegovina 2000 Youth*, (Sarajevo: Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues, 2000), p. 43.

It may seem that the increased number of worshipers in mosques is a sign of an increased level of religiosity, particularly among young people. However, dramatic demographic changes have occurred in the last two decades, leaving some regions completely deserted by Muslims, while inhabiting large urban centres with new war refugees and economic migrants. Those new migrants have mainly come from rural settings or from small towns (*čaršija*) where religion and tradition constitute an important part of daily life.

Conclusion

It is evident that Muslims were amongst the most religious communities in the former Yugoslavia, according to first post-war surveys on religiosity. It may not be possible to examine the quality of their religious life, which was maintained in close traditional settings. Thirty years on, communist policies and post-war depression resulted in Bosnian Muslims being one of the most secularized groups in the country. This however did not prevent them from widely declaring themselves as believers and members of the Islamic community in the 1990s, in a search for identity and as a response to the national homogenization of their neighbours, Serbs and Croats. The Albanian Muslims of Macedonia and Kosovo, through strong social and ethnic bonds, especially in rural areas where the majority of the population live, preserved their religiosity during communism, with a slight increase recorded in the post-communist period.

It is evident that the 1980s found a change in the religious belief and the declaration of that belief and practice in all religions. Some authors suggest that the process of de-secularization is closely linked with the nationalism and the defence of nations and their culture against others. This again means that, once the danger to the nation weakens, the readiness to defend

it will decline, followed by a steady decline in religious feelings and expressions. As the communist regime weakened and lost credence and ability to solve socio-economic problems of the country, religious feelings rose.

Notwithstanding the fact that a genuine return to Islamic practice did occur among a certain number of individuals and in some areas more than others, religiosity as a whole among Muslims of the Balkans did not increase, as some would expect. Their declarative public statements and manifestations of Islam in the public life have increased, but the very quality of religious life has remained either the same as during communism, or become worse. It is therefore premature to claim that, after more than four decades of active and effective secularization, a large Islamic revival in the Balkans has taken place within a few years.

5.2. Why did Islam survive?

Introduction

It is evident from previous chapters that Islam stayed alive through different phases of forty five years of communism, and in some aspects has been revived in the two decades of post-communism. Yet, the question remains: How has it been possible for Islam, firstly, to survive the oppression, relegation and antagonism of the communist regime, and, then, how was Islam revived, in whatever way this revival can be described and manifested, after almost half a century of the atheization of society? The term “religious revival” is taken here with considerable reservations, as a distinction has to be made between an increased development of Islamic institutions and also the amplified visibility of Islam in society on one hand, and individual religiosity on the other. In the sociology of religion, although not

completely accurate in our case, this is called intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity.⁵⁶⁴ It is expected that the reasons for the survival of Islam in the Balkans will help us to better understand the position of religion under the regime and more closely to discern religious changes and continuity of practice in last two decades. To reach an answer to the above question as accurately as possible one has to embark on a multidisciplinary approach involving the sociological, historical and psychological aspects of religious practice and belief.

5.2.1. Sociological approach

During the 1950s and 60s the “secularization theory” was coined by historians and sociologists, which basically stipulated that modernization will necessarily lead to a decline in religion, both in society and in the minds of individuals.⁵⁶⁵ In essence, secularization, in that early phase of the scientific approach to the phenomenon, entailed a decrease in the social importance of religion, particularly in politics, education, public life; namely, these were processes in modern society by which religious institutions, acts and consciousness were losing their social significance.⁵⁶⁶

The secularization theory corresponded to communist policies previously imposed onto religion and religious practice. Communists believed that by relegating religion and

⁵⁶⁴ See among others: Michael J Donahue, ‘Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiousness: Review and Meta-Analysis’, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 48.2 (1985), pp. 400-419.

⁵⁶⁵ Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World - Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999), p. 2. I am also aware that some sociologists of religion describe a general decline of religious faith and practice in Europe. To enumerate just a few: Bryan Wilson (1965, 1968, 1975, 1982), Steve Bruce (1992, 1993, 1995, 1996), Karel Dobbelaere (1987, 1989), Thomas Luckmann (1976), Tschannen (1991). See more in: Andrew M. Greeley, *Religion in Europe at the End of the Second Millennium: a Sociological Profile* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2003), p. ix.

⁵⁶⁶ Dino Abazović, ‘Sekularizam i Sekularizacija u Sadašnjem Javnom Diskursu – iz Nereligijske Perspektive’ in Alibašić (2008), p. 190.

minimizing its influence in private life, religion would gradually die out. This result would, they expected, come steadily without any social upheaval among religious people. Indeed, empirical findings of the time supported such expectations:

‘According to several independent polls, the total number of believers in Yugoslavia was steadily decreasing from 90 percent in 1953 to 70.3 percent in 1964 and 53.1 percent in 1969, reaching the lowest point in 1984 (45 percent).’⁵⁶⁷

Although modernization has had some secularizing effects, it has also provoked powerful movements of counter-secularization. The secularization theory has been proved as essentially wrong. ‘The world today... is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labelled “secularization theory” is essentially mistaken,’ claims Berger.⁵⁶⁸

The first group who noticed and wrote that religion as such will not vanish in Yugoslavia, regardless of the atheistic values of the society, were Yugoslav sociologists of religion. The main protagonists of the new approach were professors Esad Ćimić of the University of Sarajevo, Branko Bošnjak of Zagreb University, Zdenko Roter and Marko Kerševan of the University of Ljubljana, Srđan Vrcan of Split University, and Andrija Krešić of Belgrade University.⁵⁶⁹ It is not clear to what degree their approach influenced communist policies towards religion, but their sociological analysis, wrapped in a Marxist vocabulary, empirically proved that religion may serve some progressive roles.⁵⁷⁰ They firstly realised that religion as such will not die out. Bošnjak himself started as a critic of Christianity but conceded that religion is unlikely to die out even under conditions of socialism, because he

⁵⁶⁷ Perica., p. 38.

⁵⁶⁸ Berger, p. 2.

⁵⁶⁹ Mojzes, pp. 84, 85.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 85.

felt that there will always be those who out of fear of death will adhere to notion of life after death.⁵⁷¹ As Paul Mojzes noted:

In these empirical studies they departed from tendentious attacks on religion and came to see that socialism still engenders religious feeling (Ćimić) and that religion may serve some progressive social roles. Vatican II and the emergence abroad of theologians who were not *ipso facto* antagonistic to Marxism led them to look for positive signs of religiosity (Roter and Krešić). Some of them concluded that religion was not about to die out, if ever. Others stated that one ought to apply non-ideological approaches to religion; if religion furthers the cause of the victory of the proletariat, the Communists ought to cooperate with such churches or people; if it works against the working class, religion should be regarded as negative (Kerševan).⁵⁷²

It is clear therefore that significant intellectual discussions were taking place during the sixties and seventies on the role of religion in contemporary communist society. These arguments inevitably changed perceptions of religion during the second stage of the communist period in former Yugoslavia, among the state officials and members of the Communist Party. Although significant concessions were given to religious communities during the second stage, complete freedom was gained only after the collapse of communism and the emergence of multi-party systems in the region.

5.2.2. Existence of a strong religious memory

One will notice that the Yugoslav people are more religious when compared with peoples of other communist states, particularly those living in the states of the former Soviet Union. In a 1991 survey of religiosity, between a half and three-quarters of Russians believed in God,

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., p. 84.

⁵⁷² Ibid., p. 85.

depending on how the question was worded. The findings of the Gallup research have shown that religion plays an important part of their everyday life for 76.5% citizens of BiH. In Kosovo this percentage was even higher with 90% of those questioned. Compared with Croatia as a Catholic country, the percentage was only 69.7%. Thus society in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia has been in a much different position from that of neighbouring countries or other regions where communism existed. BiH was after Kosovo the state with the most religious people in the region. Why is this the case?

From a historical point of view it is important to emphasize the state of Islam, and other religions, when the communist regime came in immediately after WWII.⁵⁷³ Islamic institutions were not loosely scattered across the country, operating independently on their own. Muslims in the Balkans followed a centuries-long practice of religious hierarchy in the Ottoman style, with a highly centralized organization and religious ladder. This method of operation has more or less continued to exist to the present day.⁵⁷⁴ Although drastic measures were introduced immediately after WWII, the communists never managed to completely disrupt or extinguish the structure of the Islamic Community. Notwithstanding the fact that serious attempts were made to control and influence the leadership of all religious communities, including the Muslim one, the Islamic Community endured. The communists found a highly organized religious structure with a network of schools, mosques, *mektebs* and, above all, a capable '*ulama*' prepared to continue their religious mission. Although restrictive in the beginning, communist measures could not totally extinguish the activities of the Islamic Community, or of the Catholic and Orthodox churches.

⁵⁷³ For statistical data about the number of Muslims before the WWII and after, see: Srđan Vrcan, 'Critical Theory and the Future of Religion', in Allen James Reimer and Rudolf J. Siebert, eds., pp. 91, 93.

⁵⁷⁴ Karčić (2006).

Also, among the Muslim people a strong religious memory has existed for the last five decades. *Medresas*, *mektebs* and *musallas*, were in use for centuries in the region and to extract them from collective memory proved to be very difficult. An illustrative example is a small *mekteb* near the town of Trebinje, which was transformed into a grocery shop after the WWII. Forty years later the local population still ask their bus drivers to stop by the *mekteb*. The living memory of hundreds of such places prevented a complete alienation of religious beliefs and practice in the Balkans. However, had the communist regime existed one or two generations longer, the consequences would have been much graver for religious life. Communist policies have had much more influence in former Soviet republics where the regime has been present since 1917. The fifty years of communism in Yugoslavia have been relatively shorter than the ninety years of the Soviet Union, where more than one generation has died out.

5.2.3. The characteristics of Yugoslav communism

The 1946 constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia proclaimed equal rights for all citizens, including the freedom of religion, speech, association and assembly. According to the constitution and other legislative regulations, religious communities could engage in religious activities, establish and run schools for the training of priests and receive state funds. Yet as pointed out earlier, on a practical level the communist regime did all it could to relegate religion and decrease its influence on society.

A number of priests were persecuted for their so-called collaboration with enemies either during or immediately after the war. Recent excavations have discovered sixty four friars

killed immediately after the war in 1945.⁵⁷⁵ A letter to president Tito by the Serbian Patriarch in 1949 stated that sixty Orthodox priests have been imprisoned by the state.⁵⁷⁶ Six members of the *Mladi Muslimani* organization were prosecuted and executed in 1946 and hundreds of *imams* and religious officers were imprisoned for “anti-state activities.” All three religious groups embraced the communist struggle for liberation of the country, but not for a socialistic order which would relegate religion to the back yard, but after the war they could do little to reverse the socialist revolution.⁵⁷⁷

The hostility towards religion by the communist regime stemmed from two main sources: religion was considered as the opium of the people, according to the main protagonist of Communism, Marx, and the realization by the Communist Party that religion was antagonistic to its cause. That is why, ‘after the war, when the spirit of revenge exploded furiously all churches were made to suffer for the atrocities which some clergy in the name of the religion perpetrated during the war.’⁵⁷⁸ This prompted Paul Mojzes to distinguish four stages of the communist government attitude toward religion: ‘(1) All-out hostility (1944-1953); (2) De-escalation, gradual normalization of relations (1953-1962); (3) Increased toleration and permission to work within fairly liberal confines (1962-1967); and (4) Attempts at dialogue and fair scholarly study of religion, but still with continued remnants of constraint upon churches (1967-1980s).’⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁵ *Partizani Nisu Likvidirali Nasumice, Ubijali Su Prije Svega Intelektualce* (Zagreb: Hrvatski Informativni Centar, 2010) <<http://www.hic.hr/bih-IISvjetskiRat.htm>> [accessed 20 November 2010].

⁵⁷⁶ Velibor V. Džomić, *Pismo Patrijarha Srbskog Gavrila Dožića Maršalu Josipu Brozu 16 Marta 1949 Godine u Beogradu* (Pravoslavna Mitropolija Crnogorsko-Primorska, 2010) <http://www.mitropolija.co.me/istbibl/dzomic-stradkom/stradkom-prilog_1.html> [accessed 13 May 2011].

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⁵⁷⁸ Mojzes, p. 83.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 83.

And indeed, after being assured that religion did not represent an active threat for the regime, the communist leadership had a more liberal view towards it. 'Yugoslav Communists granted' as Mojzes noted, 'a fair degree of religious autonomy and are among the most liberal Eastern European Marxists in regard to religious policies today.' However, he continued to argue that it 'would be a vast exaggeration to say that there is true religious freedom in Yugoslavia, but on the other hand, remarkable latitude is allowed for the churches' work.'⁵⁸⁰

The abolition of *Shari ah* courts in 1946 and all elementary religious educational institutions in 1952, as well as the serious deterioration of *waqf* legacies throughout the communist period led to the extinction of three bases of religious life in former Yugoslavia: legal, educational and economic (*Shari ah* courts, *ma'ārif* and *waqf*). However, the liberal phase of communism in the 1970s and 1980s, an increased reconstruction of mosques, improved religious education, the publication and distribution of Islamic literature and textbooks and the use of Islamic social symbols motivated some authors to claim that an Islamic revival was taking place in Yugoslavia.⁵⁸¹ The Islamic Community of former Yugoslavia has recorded the greatest number of religious officers ever, over 1400, working in more than 3,000 mosques and *mesdžids* during the 1970s. At the same time, the Islamic Theological Faculty and Oriental institute employed 16 faculty members and researchers and had 35 students. There were two Islamic colleges, *medresas*, with 366 students, including a *medresa* for women in Sarajevo with 62 students, and a newly opened one in Skopje.⁵⁸²

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 84.

⁵⁸¹ Fikret Karčić, *Muslimani Balkana Istočno Pitanje u XX Vijeku* (Tuzla: Behrambegova Medresa, 2001), p. 128.

⁵⁸² Perica, p. 12.

It is important to note here that all three religious communities benefited in other ways from the liberal attitude of communism. ‘While expanding and flourishing under the liberal phase of communism since the 1960s, the Serbian Church, like other religious institutions in Yugoslavia whose leaders could freely travel abroad, was also receiving Western financial aid as one of the churches persecuted by the communists.’⁵⁸³ ‘Croatian Catholicism, unofficially calling itself the Church in the Croat People, experienced an unprecedented growth and success during late communism and in post-communism. Croatian Catholicism attained its largest size in history in communist Yugoslavia between the 1960s and 1980s.’⁵⁸⁴

Between 1966 and 1971, Yugoslavia normalized relations with the Vatican by signing a protocol on joint talks and exchanging diplomatic representatives. In 1970, Tito met with Pope Paul VI. The Council, among other things, urged an interfaith dialogue and dialogue with non-believers. In the 1960s, the Vatican also made an attempt to improve relations with the Orthodox Church and other denominations. In January 1966, the Catholic Church in all dioceses in Yugoslavia inaugurated a series of annual interfaith prayers and vigils, named the ‘Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity.’⁵⁸⁵

Yugoslav communists presented themselves as liberal and they were abundantly rewarded with loans for economic development and reconstruction by the Western powers, which, for their own interests, balanced the influence of the Soviet Union in this part of Europe. Also, the non-alignment movement enabled lucrative business deals in many African and Asian countries, many of them with significant Muslim populations. Construction companies such as *Hidrogradnja*, *Engergoinvest* and others built airbases in Iraq, water-pipes in Libya, and

⁵⁸³ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 31.

apartments in Algeria. Džemal Bijedić, a Muslim and Tito's prime minister, representing one of the brightest periods of the Yugoslav economy, was the symbol of the rising position of Muslims in the country. All this, directly or indirectly had an influence on the status of the Muslims. However, the Yugoslav communist leadership could have travelled a different route and followed, for instance, the example of Albania, which was proclaimed as the world's first atheist country in 1970. This would have left more serious consequences for the position of religion, but would have also damaged the Yugoslav reputation in the world and, of course, affected economic development.

Nonetheless, it would be too much to claim that Yugoslav communism in any way shared the liberal values of the West. The regime itself had maintained its restrictive measures and sanctioned, in the eyes of its leadership, any excessive or problematic use of free speech and religious freedom 'even at the height of liberalization in 1970-72, there were still localized outbursts of hostility and suspicion and attempts to limit religious activities...'⁵⁸⁶

5.2.4. The nature of religious belief

According to one of the reports quoted in *Religion in Europe at the End of the Second Millennium – A Sociological Profile*, nine out of ten Russians were not raised in the Orthodox Church and three out of four did not believe in God during communism. The author Andrew Greeley states that 'never before in human history has there been such a concerted effort to stamp out not merely a religion but all traces of religion.' It was evident that communism was pushing forward the inevitable process of secularization whereby

⁵⁸⁶Mojzes, p. 83.

religion would disappear from the face of the earth. The same process was unreservedly resisted by the believers and the Church through various means including demonstrations, protests and occasional violence. Despite the fact that the Party held absolute power over the State, it hesitated 'for differing reasons at different times, to utterly destroy Orthodoxy, perhaps because it realized that it could not. Notwithstanding seventy years of the atheization of the society, God seems to be 'alive and living in all Russia' in 1991'. Between a half and three-quarters of Russians believed in God, while two out of five believed in life after death. In 1991 half of Russians believed that God is personally concerned with each human. Around a third believed in heaven and hell, more than a quarter reported that they personally feel very close to God and two out of five believed in religious miracles.⁵⁸⁷ Whether or not one completely agrees with these sociological findings and arguments, it is apparent that religion as such survives the most extraordinary cycles of human existence.

When one of the main *imams* in Montenegro was asked for his explanation of the revival of Islam in the region, he pointed at two main reasons: the well educated '*ulama*' assuming positions in religious life of the Balkan peoples and the nature of Islam which eventually will prevail.⁵⁸⁸ The latter explanation is an interesting point shared by many prominent Muslims scholars and the general public. "Our" religion will survive because it is a "true" religion and the only reasonable one. However, the newly built Orthodox and Catholic churches are competing with the Islamic centres and new mosques in the area. Christians may have their own explanation for the survival and revival of Christianity. Despite the fact that each religious community favours their own reasons for sustaining their faith and a gradual revival of religious practice, it is evident that religion as such has survived.

⁵⁸⁷ Greeley, pp. 89-92.

⁵⁸⁸ Personal interview with Mujdin Miljaimi, vice president of the Assembly of the Islamic Community of Montenegro, 3 December 2010.

One may agree therefore with Nikola Skledar and Mislav Kukoč, Yugoslav sociologists of religion, who ascribe to religious belief essential attributes of physiological comfort and moral guidance in the circumstances of distress, weakness and failure:

‘Religion offers a religious person comfort and support when he is weak and threatened, comforts him when frustrated by failures and unexpected successes, and, finally, gives him a hope for everlasting life. It supplies him with moral and evaluatory definitions, with practical criteria for differentiating good from bad.’⁵⁸⁹

Although secularization has immediate impacts on morality and religious belief at the global level, it is however true that the sacred has also shown an exceptional power of survival.⁵⁹⁰ Throughout history, religious beliefs have survived and sometimes flourished under the harshest conditions.

This generation has seen instances of the limitations of religious expression in the East and to a lesser extent in the West. It seems that the need or desire to limit religious practice, as a result of racial, ideological, economic or political reasons, has always found astonishing resistance from people of faith. Nowadays some political parties with dubious political programmes in Europe have gained significant popularity and prominence because they initiated measures which directly affected the religious rights of their populations. The ban of minarets in Switzerland, or the *niqab* in France, or reductionist views about the *hijab* in Germany, limiting Muslim women from teaching in schools, exemplify such an attitude. On the other hand, Muslim identity is somehow strengthened by these measures. The number of

⁵⁸⁹ Nikola Skledar and Mislav Kukoč, ‘Variations of Historical Materialism in the Yugoslavian Sociology of Religion, in Allen J. Reimer and Rudolf J. Siebert, p. 113.

⁵⁹⁰ Blagojević, p. 96.

young girls with headscarves has significantly increased across European capitals and major cities. A similar situation exists in Xinjiang, the western province of China, where thousands of individuals protested in 2009 against the communist policies in their region, demanding religious as well as political rights.⁵⁹¹ It seems that religion is much too precious to some people to be simply extinguished or extracted from their hearts with the decrees and policies of state officials.

5.2.5. National and religious identity

Owing to a number of complicated historical reasons, some of which have been discussed in the introduction chapter, the national identities of the Balkan peoples developed relatively late compared to the majority of European states. Frequent changes at a political level, involving the suppression of ethnic groups not belonging to the ruling elite, caused established religious organizations to become the only guardians of the national identity of a particular ethnic group. Thus an intrinsic relationship between religion and nationalism has been one of the reasons for an increased religiosity, or increased visibility of religion, since the 1990s. In the Balkans, religious and ethno-national identities are tightly intertwined and analogous.⁵⁹² On the basis of that matrix, the Serbs declare themselves regularly as Orthodox, Croats as Catholics and Bosniaks as Muslims.

A number of authors have noticed that religious revival is interlinked with nationalist feelings. Dino Abazović from the University of Sarajevo thus argues that, along with the national revival and the rise of nationalism, came the rise of religiosity among the people in

⁵⁹¹ Eric T Schluessel, *Islam in Xinjiang: an ancient rival for a young China* (London: Guardian, 2009) <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2009/jul/14/ughur-china-islam>> [accessed 26 June 2011].

⁵⁹² Srđan Dušanić, *Psihološka Istraživanja Religioznosti* (Banjaluka: Filozofski Fakultet, 2007), p. 18.

the 90s. 'In that period,' he says, 'the simultaneous expansion of national and religious values and synthesis had emerged. These days one can also see intrinsic relationship of national and religious symbols.' He also noticed that during religious gatherings, next to the religious symbols (cross or crescent), one could frequently see relevant national flags.⁵⁹³ Another author, Muhamed Jusić, claims that the intertwining of national and religious identities is further supported by the aspiration to belong (to a community), which is sometimes even more important than religion itself. In the case of his home country he argues that 'BiH is a society which functions exclusively on the principle of collectivity and that may be one of the reasons for increased level of religiosity.'⁵⁹⁴ His opinion is shared by Davor Marko who believes that 'belonging is more important than religion and manifestation of religious feelings.'⁵⁹⁵

The importance of ethno-national identity has prompted some authors to argue that a real religious revival has never occurred in these areas. David Martin, writing about post-communist societies in Eastern Europe and Russia, treats the revival of religion as epiphenomenal, i.e. nationalist in essence, and only incidentally religious.⁵⁹⁶ Although his arguments are subject to a further analysis, as a number of empirical research studies have shown a gradual rise in individual religiosity, his observation about the overwhelming influence of nationalism on the rise of religiosity in post-communist society must be taken into consideration

⁵⁹³ Dino Abazović, *Religija u Tranziciji* (Sarajevo: Rabic, 2010), p. 33.

⁵⁹⁴ Dražen Simić i Alen Mujkanović, *Stanje Nacije Religija – BiH: Zemlja Pobožnih Ljudi* (Sarajevo: Žurnal, 2010) <http://www.zurnal.info/home/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1108:stanje-nacije-religija-bih-zemlja-pobonih-ljudi&catid=18:istraga&Itemid=27> [accessed 5 May 2011].

⁵⁹⁵ Davor Marko as cited in *Stanje Nacije Religija – BiH: Zemlja Pobožnih Ljudi*.

⁵⁹⁶ David Martin, 'The Secularization Issue: Prospect and Retrospect', *The British Journal of Sociology* (London: Blackwell Publishing) 423 (1991), pp. 465-474 (p. 466).

When it comes to the Islamic Communities, Reis Cerić and Naim Trnava of Kosovo have both stressed the importance of a national identification of Muslims. The statement by Cerić that ‘only Bosnian Muslims do not have their national state,’ sparked a series of controversies among the media and politicians from the other two ethnic communities. Also, a book consisting of his speeches and sermons, with an indicative title of *Religion, People and Homeland*, supports the above thesis.⁵⁹⁷

The link between religion and national identity can not be ignored by the politicians who have built their political programmes on unresolved national questions in the Balkans. It is a historical irony that with the collapse of communism, which suppressed nationalist tendencies in the country, capable communist officials have embarked on a nationalistic agenda in order to win votes and power in their respective countries. To achieve these aims, they have emphasized their devotion to a national identity and strengthened their ties with religious communities as custodians of national identities.

When the above statements and analysis are taken into account, as well as the use of religious institutions for nationalist and political purposes, one can discern the scope of, to use Bougarel’s words "the true nature and limits of the revival of Islam that many experts are talking about."⁵⁹⁸ However, it is evident that, as in many other instances, the two other religious communities have been in a similar, if not the same, position as the Islamic Communities across the region.

⁵⁹⁷ Mustafa Cerić, *Vjera, Narod i Domovina: Hutbe, Govori i Intervjui*, (Sarajevo: Udruženje Ilmijje Islamske Zajednice u BiH, 2002).

⁵⁹⁸ Bougarel (2005), p. 14.

5.2.6. Politicization of religion and religiozation of politics

Religiosity in the world has been linked with state organization and the political systems.⁵⁹⁹ Changes in society have been followed by changes in religiosity. Thus a particular phenomenon in the Balkans has been the relationship of religious communities with politics. According to Vrcan, in the Balkans, as compared to other countries of East and Central Europe, religion and the religious have attained far more distinctive attributes of political fact, while at the same time politics has been shaped as a religious fact.⁶⁰⁰ One of the reasons for a sudden expansion of religion in the region could be that politicians use religion for their own purposes in order to gain support from religious leaders, often making informal alliances with them. The coupling of politics and religion has been a further generator for the entrance of religion into the public sphere of the Balkans social and political life since the collapse of communism.

Politicians have used religion, religious leadership and religious feelings to strengthen their positions and attain political goals, while leaders, and often members, of all three religious communities have seen the return of their respective political leaders to the fold of God, expecting to gain as many privileges as possible through a close relationship with them. This process, coined in the sociology of religion as ‘a politicization of religion or religiozation of politics,’ has also had its influence on, if not an intrinsic, ie. genuine, inner, personal revival of religion, then at least on an extrinsic, or public display, of religious belief and practice. Why is this important for both sides? Politicians know that the local *imams* and priests have more credibility and trust among ordinary people than any politician. Religious officers are still leaders of their own communities, people who can be relied upon and trusted. Here we

⁵⁹⁹ Dušanić, p. 9.

⁶⁰⁰ Abazović (2008), p. 193.

may agree with Ivica Maštruko who argues that ‘religious institutions have never restricted their activity exclusively to meeting the religious needs of their congregations.’ According to him, they have always ‘shaped the social and political views of their members, thus influencing their organization of life.’⁶⁰¹ Having them on the “right” side, as a motivating factor in the process of collecting votes and influencing communities, represents a valuable asset.

On the other hand, after fifty years in the back yard, religious leaders have suddenly become those who are regularly invited to the public meetings, receptions, to the governmental officials, even to Parliaments. They have entered not only the public sphere of society, but also gained access to the upper levels of society. Furthermore, the restitution of religious properties is yet to take place, therefore any sign of willingness to concede an existing property to a religious community for “a temporary” use, until the new laws are passed, is received with exceptional delight by religious leaders.

5.2.7. Influence of war and the Balkan region

During the Bosnian war, a group of Muslim fighters were exposed to a constant bombardment by the enemy artillery. As the shelling increased, all except one began reciting short verses from the *Qur’ān* and appealing to God for their safety. When the silent one was urged to pray and recite along with the group, as otherwise they might perish, he revealed that he was ignorant of any verse of the Holy Book. Yet, after a few moments he was heard

⁶⁰¹ Ivica Maštruko, ‘Religious Mediation, Nationalism and Self-Management Socialism’, in Allen James Reimer James and Rudolf J. Siebert, p. 103.

to whisper “*Merhaba, merhaba, merhaba...*” a Turkish style greeting used among the Muslim population in Bosnia.⁶⁰²

This story, told by a partaker in this event, reveals three important points. Firstly, the knowledge and understanding of religion of those who were regarded as Muslims was extremely limited. Although the majority of Muslim children knew at least a few short *sūrahs*, it was not uncommon for Muslims to forget what they learned and not know anything from the *Qur’ān*. This led to often humorous situations like the one of a Muslim army leader addressing his comrades, attempts to cite a *ḥadīth* relating it to “the Prophet *alaikumussalam*.” It was often only a name and a vague feeling of belonging to Muslim tradition and a particular ethnic origin which differentiated Muslims from the other two groups. The observance of fundamental Islamic prescriptions such as *salah* or *zakāh* did not play any particular role among a large segment of the population and those who performed *ḥajj* were a rarity.

The second point the story exposes is about religious memory and tradition. Even though in purely religious terms the greeting *merhaba* does not represent anything, (it is not at the level of *salām*, for instance, which is a *Qur’ānic* term), within the given context the greeting has gained a significance of utmost piety and sincere religiosity. The fact that the one who prayed was not addressing God in Arabic and was not using established prayer formulas, because of his ignorance, does not question his sincerity in his relationship with God. It rather reveals that despite previous actions, mistakes and behaviour, despite ignorance of basic teachings of religion, a thin thread of belief, *imān* in Islam, can be established in a most distressing and hostile environment.

⁶⁰² An acquaintance of mine, wishing to stay anonymous, took part in this event and told me this story in 1995.

This leads us to the final point which re-questions individual religiosity in times of uncertainty and prospects of imminent death. Even though the vast majority of Muslims were not faithful to fundamental *Qur'ānic* prescriptions prior to the nineties, during the war a state of fear and insecurity ruled society, which suddenly prompted people to start searching for any source of stability and sanctuary.

Writing about revival of Islam at global level, John Esposito argues that the revival came as a response to the disappointment of Muslim intellectual elites and masses in Western policies and values. This led to the reinterpretation of Muslim classical tradition and 'a return to the Islamic principles and values that had made Muslim countries so powerful throughout history, insisting Muslims must reclaim their Arab-Islamic heritage, history, culture, and values.' This quest triggered a resurgence of Islam in politics and society and continues to impact Muslim politics today.⁶⁰³ Esposito goes further in his analysis stating that:

Despite the hopes and expectations of post-independence Muslim states and their adoption of Western political, economic, and military models and institutions, authoritarianism, failed economies, growing disparities between rich and poor, and corruption, the threat of Westernization to Arab/Islamic identity and culture prevailed.⁶⁰⁴

Individual religiosity in conflict zones of the Balkan region has also come as a consequence of, among other things, disenchantment with Western powers and their day-to-day promises of military intervention in Bosnia. The lack of international intervention and embargo on arms, (which affected mostly Muslims) was interpreted as a tacit approval of the actions of

⁶⁰³ John Esposito, *Future of Islam* (New York: Oxford UP, 2010), p. 61.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

the Serb and Croat forces in the execution of the Muslim population. The lack of food and basic hygienic provisions coupled with insecurity, uncertainty, fear and psychological pressure was a daily routine experienced by the Muslim population. After three years of killing, suffering, exhaustion and physical confinement, Muslims lost their expectations of the earthly assistance of the international community and strengthened their hopes in a Divine force. This is the context in which many discovered God. The experience of war thus differentiates the Balkan region from other post-communist societies where the resurgence of religion did not take such an ascending route.

5.2.8. Global trends

Some authors will argue that the most important proof of religious revival in post-communist societies is the change of public mood concerning religion.⁶⁰⁵ The general public has felt that communism deprived their societies not only of the freedom of speech and liberal values which characterize western societies, but also of the free expression of religious practice. For that reason as shown in Chapter Three of this work that the general public responded positively to the changes and showed unprecedented levels of religious consciousness which often resulted in an overstressed adherence and exaggeration. However it would be incorrect to argue that the post-communist societies of Balkan states are alone in this change of mood towards religious belief and practice. Although the Balkan region has its own characteristics, it is not however far different from the global trends in religiosity. These trends have shown an increased presence of religion in almost all major religious communities throughout the globe, from Orthodox Russia, to Jewish Israel to the far corners of the Catholic world. Dramatic religious growth has occurred throughout the former Soviet Union and more than

⁶⁰⁵ Tomka, p. 19.

100 million people joined religious groups for the first time.⁶⁰⁶ ‘The world today... is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever,’ writes Berger.⁶⁰⁷

Huntington explains the general phenomenon of the return of the sacred globally through the need for new sources of identity, new forms of stable community and new moral injunctions to provide them with feelings of purpose and aim.⁶⁰⁸ That could be among the reasons for the rise of Christian conservatism in the USA for instance, the reinforcement of radical Christianity in Latin America or the change of the strategy of Catholicism in Europe from adaptation to the modern world towards re-evangelization of the same world. ‘God continues to survive in Europe, therefore, ambiguously, problematically, uncertainly,’ claims Greeley, adding that atheism and agnosticism are not yet, not even at the end of the Second Millennium, popular choices.⁶⁰⁹

Despite the claims of some sociologists of religion, including Bruce, Tschannen and Wilson, that secularization continues to take place well into the twenty-first century, one can assert cautiously that there is no strong tendency for belief in God to be declining in Europe for the last twenty years and some surprising increases in former communist countries.⁶¹⁰ In this context the important role of the Church and religious communities in the annihilation of communism in Central and Eastern Europe can also be observed.⁶¹¹

When it comes to Islam, many authors point to several events which occurred in the sixties and seventies in the Muslim world as catalysts of the Islamic revival globally. Among these,

⁶⁰⁶ Froese, p. 57.

⁶⁰⁷ Berger, p. 2.

⁶⁰⁸ Blagojević, pp. 95, 96.

⁶⁰⁹ Greeley, p. 11.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid., p. 8.

⁶¹¹ Blagojević, p. 107, 108.

the humiliating Israeli defeat of Arab armies in the 1967 war, the Iranian Islamic Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the first Palestinian intifada in 1980 can be singled out.⁶¹² Muslim masses and intellectuals are becoming increasingly discontented with Western secular elites and with the failures of their nationalistic leaders at a political, economic and educational level. They are searching for new sources of identity, value and meaning on one side, and legal frameworks, order and freedoms on the other. We can agree therefore with Esposito that the religious revival in the Muslim world is not just about religion. It is a response to ‘political, economic, and social failures, to loss of a sense of identity, values, or meaning, to profound disillusionment or despair.’

‘The lure of revivalism is a return to an idealized or romanticized past, the period of the founder(s), an attempt to reappropriate those principles, beliefs, and values that represent divine guidance, a sense of purpose, meaning, and success.’⁶¹³

The above events, whether related to Christianity or to Islam, have inevitably left their mark on the lives of Muslims in the Balkans. Although humble in their scope and frequency, links with the Muslim world did exist, through the media, publications, student exchanges and work. Remarkable events related to Islam and Muslims across the globe resulted in many instances of individuals embracing Islamic activism and humbly manifesting their Islam. One of the illustrative examples of such a bond is an emergence of small photographs of *Imam* Homeini in the eighties in the Balkans. Some rebellious Muslim youth would even put the image of ‘*grandpa*’ on their t-shirts and jackets, while the elderly kept those photographs in their showcases. Yet a secret visit to Iran by a small group of Bosnian Muslims at the

⁶¹² John Esposito, *Claiming the Centre: Political Islam in Transition* (New York: United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, 2006) <http://www.unaoc.org/repository/Esposito_Political_Islam.pdf> [accessed 22 March 2010] p. 2.

⁶¹³ Esposito (2010), p. 60.

beginning of the 1980s cost them long prison sentences in the infamous Sarajevo process in 1983. Nevertheless, what occurred with the revival of religion at global level, had inevitable repercussions among the people of the Balkans, despite the rigidity of the regime and constrained society.

5.2.9. Religion – socially desirable phenomenon

Those who publicly declare themselves to be atheists have been a tiny minority within the last two decades, as compared with the period of communism during which it was not socially desirable to declare oneself as religious. Religion has entered into the public space overnight and filled the vacuum left after the departure of communism. Today, Islam is present in the media on an almost everyday basis; even Muslim communities have established their own media outlets in some countries. The public statements of Muslim leaders, their comments on social and political issues, traditional *‘Īd* receptions, *iftars*, fundraisings, large public gatherings, spiritual music evenings or *the evenings of ilahiya and qasida*, have been more or less recorded, broadcast or printed in the media outlets of the region.

Muslim religious officers are playing a significant role in the military, prisons and other state institutions. Young people have been accustomed to religious education being taught in the primary and secondary schools. Also, one of the most published genres in the post-communist period has been religion and theology. As mentioned before, over a thousand new titles and repeated editions have appeared on various themes and disciplines of Islam. New laws on religious communities, discussed in Chapter Two, have enabled a more active involvement of traditional religious communities in public life, which has inevitably caused

an increased visibility of Islam in the public sphere. As a result, these factors have created a perceptive and convivial atmosphere towards religion as a socially desirable phenomenon. It is not possible anymore to marginalize religion and to reduce it to the private sphere as was the case with communism.

The general acceptance of religion has probably been the most visible shift since the collapse of communism: a shift which enabled the whole society to move from a state of antagonism, relegation and rejection of the religious and of one segment of population, to a stage of acceptance and the objective portrayal of faith communities in the post-communist Balkans. This change is perceptible in almost every aspect of society, from education, the media and politics, which were dealt with in the previous chapters of this work, to arts, culture and entertainment. The recent film by Jasmila Žbanić on the *neo-salafi* style community living in southern Bosnia won an international prize and was well received by local critics.⁶¹⁴ More often *Ād* concerts, spiritual songs and Islamic calligraphy exhibitions are becoming a constituent part of the cultural as well as public life of the regions where Muslims are living in significant numbers. Within the two other ethnic communities, the Serb/ian and Croatian, religion carries even stronger importance.

Conclusion

On the basis of the previous analysis it is evident that several elements have been key factors in the survival, or in some cases revival, of Islam and religion generally in the Balkans. We have seen that religious revival globally has coincided with the liberal phase of communism and events in the Muslim world. The Balkan region has followed the global currents of de-

⁶¹⁴*On the Path* by Jasmila Žbanić, (The Match Factory, Cologne) < <http://www.the-match-factory.com/films/items/on-the-path.html> > [accessed 27 June 2012]

secularization and the return of religion into the public space. It should not be ignored that the very nature of Yugoslav communism, as the most liberal among similar regimes, has contributed to the survival of religious communities, particularly in the period after 1960. Communist laws from 1970 allowed a certain degree of freedom to religious communities to the extent that they were abolished or updated only recently. In this context one can discern a gradual change from the period where Islam and its practice was almost completely restricted to a steady liberalization and change of attitude toward religion, particularly in the late 1980s.

A second stage in the process of Islamic revival can be tracked throughout the transitional period which, was marked in some countries by bloody wars, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. These wars have left another precise mark on the religious consciousness of Balkan Muslims as they found themselves as victims only because of being Muslim in name. We can also see that the region itself has been susceptible towards religious revival as a transitional, post-conflict and post-communist space. The influence of the war, suffering, uncertainty and difficulties that the whole population experienced had a great impact on religious identity and consciousness.

This evoked the old tendencies of nationalistic domination over other ethnic groups and, at the same time, homogenized ethnic groups under the threat of others. This also gave a rise to the intertwining of national and religious identities and the need to belong to a certain ethnic/religious group or establishment, with or without a critical retrospection of that religious belief. Religion has filled a political vacuum that had existed since the communist worldview disappeared. People had more trust and confidence in the Church or Islamic Community, and local priests and *imams*, than in most politicians. As religion itself has

becoming a more popular and desirable phenomenon, local politicians have been searching for new ways to engage with their religious communities and their leaders. What was unimaginable during communist times, the intertwining of politics and religion, nowadays is often becoming a norm in the Balkans. However, the question remains as to for how long religious leadership will have influence over their respective communities, because of their frequent links with political establishments. Clearly, through the links with Churches and Islamic Communities, political parties can gain a lot, but religious communities in the long term can only lose their authority because of that synthesis.

One can expect in future that the leadership of all three religious communities will learn to be socially and politically more active in their traditional role, without compromising their position among believers by associating themselves with politicians.

The infrastructure and organization of the Islamic Community prior to the establishment of the communist state has also played a significant part in the maintaining of religious practice during communism. The strong and well organized Islamic Community would be very difficult to eradicate overnight. Although many important institutions were abolished, the Islamic Community managed to adapt to the new circumstances and preserve its basic activities with the support of a network of *imams* and *muderrises*. The strong religious memory of what used to be Islamic practice and tradition in the wider area of the Balkans has maintained the consciousness of belonging to a particular ethno-religious group. When the communist restrictions relaxed, this remembrance was coupled with the existing infrastructure of Islamic Communities and ethno-national belonging to produce the results we see today as a revival of Islam in the Balkans.

Although Islam has its own features which differentiate its position from the other two major religious traditions in the region, it seems that in the majority of cases all three traditions have shared a common destiny. Generally speaking, one can assert that most of the above reasons for the survival and the resurgence of Islam can be ascribed to Catholicism and Orthodoxy as well. Furthermore, the region itself is rather similar to other post-communist societies, chiefly that of the former Soviet Union. Consequently, one can talk about the same bonding elements of post-communist societies.

6. GENERAL CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters examined the most significant religious changes among the Muslims of the successor states of former Yugoslavia. The second chapter demonstrated that the European course of the majority of governments in the region has enabled the state-religion relationship to drastically improve and reach its unprecedented level. Among others, Muslims as individuals and communities have benefited from this state of affairs. Nonetheless, not all the countries have experienced such a balanced legislative as well as practical transformation; some regions have advanced more in dealing with religious communities than the others. Thus, for instance, the Muslim leadership in Croatia is satisfied with the opportunities given to them by the state, while the Muslims of the Sandžak area are still concerned with the attitude of the successive Serbian governments towards their religious and national rights.

The second chapter has also discussed how Muslim communities have overwhelmingly utilized new opportunities brought by the transformation of Balkan society from an exclusively communist one to one showing signs of a liberal democracy. At an institutional level, a high degree of revitalization of Islam has occurred. Mosques, educational institutions, publications and Muslim charitable organizations have resurfaced in significant numbers in the twenty years of post-communism. This has seen the revival and expansion of Islam in the first two decades since the collapse of communism. However, a significant number of these institutions had existed during communist period. One can argue therefore that the revival of Islam started in the 1970s, during the liberal phase of communism, while

the Islamic Communities have only expanded and further developed their major institutions since the 1990s. In this sense one can talk about the continuation of Islamic institutions in the Balkans, not only from during communism, but even from earlier periods.

The third chapter discussed the emergence of new Muslim organizations and trends in the Balkans. Despite the fact that some genuine acceptance of Islam has occurred, new organizations have mainly diversified religious practice without any significant effect on the overall religiosity of Muslims. On the basis of the previous analysis it is evident that the official Islamic Communities are still the main bearer and backbone of Muslim life in the region. This has been best illustrated through the examples of the construction and maintenance of mosques and the organization of religious education. Foreign elements, where they exist, have often been exaggerated in relation to the local forces that sustain the majority of religious life.

The Muslim leadership has also obtained an opportunity to inform and educate about Islam in the media, as this was not possible during communist times. Again, the extent of the media presence of Islam and Muslims and the how they are treated depends on the individual country and the general public attitude towards Islam. It seems that in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for instance, this freedom has been utilized mostly by broadcasting programmes related to Muslim practice and customs on both the state and private radio and TV stations. At the same time in Serbia the presence of Islam has been marked more by the socio-political context and a critical approach towards Muslim leadership or sensational topics. The most attractive themes for the media, such as the presence of foreign individuals and organizations related to different interpretations of Islam in the region, *neo-salafi* movements, and conflicts between different elements of the Islamic Community, have

sometimes been more prominent in the media than, for instance, more customary Muslim holidays.

When analysing newspaper articles and TV reports, one can perceive a similar attitude towards Muslims during and after communism. Negative statements about Islam and Muslims have often been related to deep historical antagonism towards Balkan Muslims as so-called ‘ancestors of Christian converts.’ In some media reports Muslims are seen as a foreign body, which does not belong to the fabric of the Balkans. This however does not have much to do with communism as such, but more with the traditional attitudes of some journalists and academics towards Muslims in both periods. Also, the 1990s conflicts and animosity among the recent warring sides play additional important roles in the perception of Muslims by the public. Moreover, post-communism has been characterized by serious concerns and critiques towards the presence of Arab Muslims in the Balkans. The local Muslim population has been mainly blamed for their arrival and influence. Also, the increased construction of mosques has furthermore been seen as a sign of Muslim expansion and has been criticized in both periods. Finally, while Islam is still perceived differently in some instances, it is generally seen as a social phenomenon equal with other phenomena in the social life of the Balkans.

The media and, to some extent, the general public has been alarmed by a number of large building projects such as the Saudi-funded King Abdullah Mosque and Cultural Centre in Sarajevo. An increase in mosque construction and the influence of foreign actors have been seen as proof of an Islamization of the Balkans. Yet recent evidence has shown that, in the majority of cases, the completion of mosques signalled the end of the involvement of foreign agencies and individuals, with the running and maintenance of a mosque resting on the

shoulders of the local Islamic Community. A similar situation exists with other capital projects such as the renovation and construction of *medresas*, faculties or libraries. A Qatar charitable foundation provided generous funds for the reconstruction of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo, but there is no evidence that an individual or organization from Qatar is present nowadays on the steering committee of the Faculty or influences its work in any way.

The fourth chapter has shown that, apart from a diversification of Islamic thought and new challenges for local scholars, foreign influences are generally reduced; they tend to be absorbed and adapted for the Balkan Muslim setting. Muslim intellectual contributions during the communist period were limited because of amplified pressure on the local *'ulama*. However, Muslim thought has shown a high degree of vigorousness. Through an innovative approach to some of the pressing issues, such as the internal organization and work under communism, financial stability as well as primary work on the education of Muslims, local intellectuals demonstrated an in-depth knowledge and understanding of Islam. The influences and an exchange of ideas were present even during communism, as has been shown in the case of Husain Đozo and the Egyptian school of reformism. However, in order to be generally accepted by society, they had often been wrapped in a Marxist-communist vocabulary.

When it comes to the post-communist period, democratic changes have enabled current Muslim scholarship to engage more freely and proactively with the contemporary issues Muslims face today. These issues range from terrorism as a global phenomenon, to the institutionalization of Islam and life within a secular society, which is a characteristic of the Muslim presence in Europe. A great number of books and articles have reinforced the

importance of previous generations of the *'ulama* in the Balkans and their understanding and practice of Islam. As the Balkan region has become more susceptible to the new interpretations of religion, local Muslim scholars have re-examined their own understanding and tradition of Islam, while translating works of the most prominent Muslim scholars from the classical and contemporary periods. In the end, Muslims are not the only religious group in the Balkans dealing with the issues above. Various external influences exist in the religious life, thought and practice of the two other religious communities, and their intellectuals and leaders have had to address them in a similar way to the Muslim intellectuals.

It is clear that Islam as a religion and way of life has survived the period of fifty years of the communist regime. During that period Muslims showed different levels of adherence to Islam' and a secularization attitude and policies produced significant effects on the individual and collective religiosity of, not only Muslims, but also followers of other religions. This trend coincided with an overall decreased religiosity at a global level, which was noticed by leading sociologists of religion. These scholars predicted that the influence of religion would drastically decrease, if not become extinct. Yet the first twenty years of post-communism in the successor states of the former Yugoslavia have revealed a gradual revival of religion, most notably at an institutional level. Although not following the pace of the revitalization of institutions, a few recent surveys demonstrate that this revival has occurred in some instances at an individual level as well. Many reasons have contributed to this phenomenon among them are the return of ethno-nationalism and the search for new sources of identity.

The differing political and social contexts of the past two centuries have left deep marks in the understanding of Islam, Islamic practice and organization of Balkan Muslims. The experience of living under communism, as a secular and atheistic regime, along other phases, has contributed to the life, thinking, religious practice and the level of organization of Muslims today. As a result of communist policies, Muslims in some areas became to a great extent secularized, their *waqfs* confiscated, the *medresas* closed down and *Shari ah* courts abolished. What was left were the rudiments of a religious hierarchy embodied in the organization of the Islamic Community.

At the same time, communism could not totally prevent the exchange of information and ideas coming both from the East and the West. These influences contributed towards the secularization policies of the early phase of communism and towards the de-secularization process in its later stage, as well as in post-communism. The interdependencies of the modern world make it even harder to isolate a population in a region to the extent that it would not have any perception of the outside world. Having said that, it is also worthwhile to notice that Yugoslav communism developed as a liberal national movement, attempting to maintain its position in the multinational country, while moving closer to the Western world. The Yugoslav communist regime therefore can hardly be considered equivalent to those of Albania, Poland or the Soviet Union.

After initial wobbling in the first decade post-WWII, the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia consolidated its internal structure and performed its work under the extremely difficult circumstances of the first phase of communism. The Muslim intellectual scene during this period was reduced to basic textbooks and other literature on Islam and Muslim identity. Yet, as communism was approaching and going through its liberal phase in the seventies, the

organizational capabilities of the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia strengthened. A number of new mosques, publishing projects, and the Islamic Faculty in Sarajevo laid foundations for the more rich intellectual contributions of Muslim scholars. This period produced a large body of literature on Islam and an innovative approach to some basic Islamic provisions, such as the *fatwa* on collection and distribution of *zakah*, given by a prominent Muslim scholar Husein Dozo. Although the majority of Islamic texts were censored by the authorities, Muslim intellectuals often wrapped their views on, and interpretations of, Islam in a communist vocabulary, which was more acceptable to the ruling establishment.

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia a number of separate organizational units were established along political administrative lines. The strength of these local Islamic Communities discussed in the second chapter is a vital factor in guarding Islam in the Balkans today in the form which survived not only communism, as most likely the greatest challenge of its history, but also different phases of an adversarial environment over the last two hundred years and particularly last two decades. These Communities as organizations have inherited a long experience in dealing with various challenges and administrative frameworks from Austro-Hungary, the Kingdom of Serbs Croats and Slovenes, Kingdom of Yugoslavia, to fascist puppet states during the WWII, i.e., Albania, the Independent State of Croatia, Serbia, communist Yugoslavia and its successors. On this basis, it would be imprudent today to underestimate the capabilities, human and material resources, as well as the acumen and intellectual potential, of these organizations.

The wars and post-communism have significantly contributed to a diversification of Islamic practice and pluralism, but they have not seriously endangered the overall structure, capacity and activities of the Islamic Communities. On the basis of the findings of this research, it is

expected that in the long term, local Islamic Communities will continue their role and will, with the financial support and help from grassroots communities, shape religious life in the region. Even though other actors should be taken into consideration, their scope is limited, mainly restricted to the construction of capital projects and initial running costs. The recent presence of Turkish governmental and grassroots organizations has shown particular success among the local population, especially in education, but their scope and funding is limited when compared with the official Islamic Communities and their institutions. The future of Islam in the Balkans therefore lies not in radicalization of region, or falling under the influence of external elements, but in the role of the Islamic Communities.

The new post-communist reality has enabled Balkan Muslims to establish more profound bonds with the rest of the Muslim world. The presence of dozens of Muslim humanitarian organizations and study programmes of Muslim students and academics at the leading educational institutions of the Muslim world best illustrate this tendency. While the student programmes are a steady project present even during the communist period and only further developed in the post-communism, the number and influence of foreign humanitarian organizations seem to have reduced.

Although new political and social circumstances have contributed to the considerable opportunities given to religious communities, the first two decades of post-communism have also brought new challenges and problems that Muslims have had to deal at individual and communitarian levels. Internal divisions have openly sprung up for first time in sixty years, as has been the case with the Islamic Community in Serbia. The establishment of new organizations and emergence of new religious trends that at times questioned the monopoly of the Islamic Communities seem to be fading in recent times. Nonetheless, the presence of

new interpretations of Islam and influence coming from other Muslim regions, although significantly weakened, are still visible.

Furthermore, hundreds of new publications on different views of Islam that emerged during post-communism have contributed to the diversification of Islamic thought in the Balkans. In a way, one should have expected such a growth of religious literature, considering the significant gap in publishing during the communist phase and the substantial economic gains from the book business. However, if this trend continues, the question arises here about the role and contribution of such literature in the future. Without a clear vision and planning, Muslim communities may find themselves torn between different teachings, trends, interpretations and groups, which will further endanger the unity of the Islamic Communities. For that reason one should expect some sort of regulatory measures by the Islamic Communities on published materials on Islam.

Relying on the considerable religious heritage of the previous generations of the local *'ulama* and on the well-built organizational structure of the Islamic Communities, Muslim scholars are trying to formulate a local Islam at the intellectual level, that would be compatible with the circumstances and environment in which they are living, on European soil, and faithful to the original tenets of the Islamic creed. In the institutionalization of Islam in the Balkans, maintaining a traditional form of the Islamic Community and religious life and practice in a secular society, among other areas, Muslim intellectuals see a successful prospects for their Islam in the region.

The Balkan Muslims are, more or less successfully, attempting to engage in society at political, cultural and economic levels. They see themselves as an integral part of society,

demanding not only religious rights, as demonstrated in the second chapter of this work, but to a greater extent their ethnic and national rights which differentiate them from their coreligionists in the West. The long presence of Muslims in the region has resulted, in the majority of cases, in Muslims not living as an isolated community or being separated from their Christian neighbours. Islam has shared a common destiny with two other religious traditions, and so it would be difficult therefore to look at this tradition as an isolated case. Whatever Islam has experienced in the last century, has been experienced similarly by the two other religions, to a lesser or greater extent.

Finally, this work lays the foundation for new questions to be answered and for new research to be pursued. As of 2009, of the successor states of former Yugoslavia, only Slovenia has become part of the European Union. It is expected, however, that all the countries of the Western Balkans, as this region is often referred to in Brussels, will become part of the European family. It is also expected that all the prospective candidates will adjust their legislation to the requirements of the EU. This new legislation is concerned with the economic as well as the social side of life. Almost all segments of Balkan society will be affected and experience change, including religious organizations. It is hoped that this change will lead to a better position for religious communities, especially in those areas where they represent a relative minority. It will be therefore beneficial to examine, on the basis of this work, the future legislative changes of the successor states of former Yugoslavia when it comes to the freedoms as well as the obligations of religious communities.

The question of the future Turkish role in the Balkans is also important in the development of the Islamic communities in the region. The Ottomans had been present in the Balkans for over five hundred years. As one of the sections in Chapter three has demonstrated, the recent

political, economic, educational and religious initiatives from the growing power have reinforced the Turkish role in this part of Europe. So far the Turkish involvement has been welcome, constructive and gradual. However, this major Euro-Asian country's prospect of joining the EU will inevitable have extraordinary consequences for not only Muslim communities and their life, but Balkan society overall. Will this Turkish influence increase? How will it expand? How will the EU react? How will Muslim and non-Muslim communities accept this involvement? These are the questions that remain for future research.

At the intellectual scene, Muslim scholars have mainly been educated in the East and a smaller number have pursued their studies in the West. This was because of the importance of traditional centres of Islamic knowledge such as Istanbul, Cairo, Baghdad and Medina for local Muslims. Yet recent trends show that many young Muslim scholars are obtaining their current postgraduate degrees in the West. A quick glance into the biographies of the lecturers at the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo, for instance, show that more than half of the teaching staff have had some kind of specialization or studies in Western centres of education such as Oxford, Yale or the Sorbonne. More recently, a number of graduates have even come from the Far East, particularly from Kuala Lumpur, where some Balkan scholars have been engaged in teaching. How will this new generation of *'ulama*, coming from different schools of thought and different interpretations of Islam, shape Islam in the Balkans? Will Islam become more pluralistic, as some recent trends indicate, or will the traditional understanding and organization of Islam prevail?

Glossary of terms

Adab (ar.) - upbringing

Ahl al-sunnah (ar.) – the followers of the tradition of the Prophet Muhammed

Ahmadiyya – a special hat (fez) with a white cloth around, used mainly by religious leaders in the Balkans and other parts of the former Ottoman empire

Ajvatovica – a place in central Bosnia famous for annual religious gatherings

'Aqā'id (ar.) – Islamic creed

Behar (bos. blossom) – a Bosniak newspaper established in the beginning of the twentieth century

Bektashi - a *darwish* order

Berećet (tur. blessing) – a humanitarian established by the Islamic Community of Kosovo

Bid'a or *bid'ah* (ar.) - innovation in Islam

Bogumils or *bogumili* (bos.) – members of medieval Bosnian Church

Čaršija (tur./bos.) – market, town

Četnički Ravnogorski Pokret (ser./bos.)– The Chetnik Ravna Gora Movement, Serbian nationalist and royalist paramilitary movement in the Second World War

Dahi (tur.) – a leader of janissary corps

Darwish (tur.) - a *sufi* aspirant

Da'wah (ar.) – call to Islam, proselytizing of Islam

Devshirme (tur.) - System of human taxation under the Ottoman Empire, from the 15th century until the 19th century

Dhikr (ar.) - remembrance of God

Dīn we dawlah (ar.) - religion and state

Dituria Islame (al. Islamic knowledge) – a publishing house in Kosovo

Diyanet (tur.) – presidency of religious affairs in Turkey

Djevojačka pećina (bos. The girl's cave) - a place in Bosnia famous for annual religious gatherings

Dovišta (bos.) - places of supplication

Du 'ā (ar.) - supplication

Džemat (ar./bos.) - congregation

Džematski odbor (bos.) - management committee

Džemijet party (bos.) – a political party of the Sandžak Muslims in the beginning of the twentieth century

Edukata Islame (al. Islamic education) – a Muslim quarterly magazine in Kosovo

El-hilāl (ar. crescent) - a humanitarian organization in Macedonia established in 1991.

Elif (ar. first letter of Arabic alphabet) – a monthly magazine published in the Bosnian and Albanian languages by the Islamic authorities of Montenegro

El-kamer from *al-qamar* (ar. moon) – a sport society of Bosnian Muslims established in the beginning of the twentieth century

Fatiha (ar.) – first chapter of the Qur'an

Fatwa (ar.) – a juristic ruling concerning Islamic law

Fiqh (ar.) – Islamic jurisprudence

Gajret (tur./bos.) – a humanitarian society established in Bosnia in the beginning of the twentieth century

Ghusl (ar.) - ritual washing

Glas islama (bos. The voice of Islam) – a newspaper of the Sandžak Muslims.

Glasnik (bos. Herald) – an official publication of the Islamic authorities in the former Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ḥadd (ar.) - the bounds of acceptable behaviour and the punishments for serious crimes in Islamic law

Ḥadīth (ar.) - is a saying or an act or tacit approval or disapproval ascribed to the Prophet Muhammed

Ḥajj (ar.)- pilgrimage

Hak from *ḥaqq* (ar.) – truth, right, reality

Ḥalāl (ar.) – permissible in Islam

Hamam (tur.) – a public or private bath

Ḥarām (ar.) – forbidden in Islam

Hatti sharif (tur.) – a royal decree by the Sultan

Hijra (ar.) – migration

Hijri (ar.) – *hijri* Muslim calendar is a lunar calendar consisting of twelve lunar months in a year

Hutba/ khutbah (ar.) – sermon

Ibādah (ar.) – worship

Ijtihād (ar.) – making a decision in Islamic law by a personal effort.

Ilahije (bos.) – religious songs.

Ilmihal (tur./bos.) - introduction to Islam textbook

Ilmijja association (bos.) – association of religious officers in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Īmān (ar.) – belief

Iṣlāh (ar.) – reform

Islamska Misao (bos. Islamic Thought) – a magazine published in the former Yugoslavia

Jabr (ar.) - teaching on predestination in Islamic theology

Jahannam (ar.) – hell.

Jannah (ar.) - paradise

Jarīmah (ar.)- crime

Jihād (ar.) – religious war or individual struggle

Kabāir (ar.)- big sins

Kaside from *qasīdah* (ar./bos.) – religious songs

Kelamul Šifa from *kalām al-shifa'* (ar.) magazine published by the *Tekija Masudija* in Bosnia.

Khalwati – a *darwish* order

Khaṭīb (ar.) – a person who delivers sermon

Kiraet from *qira'ah* (ar.)- correct reading of the Qur'an

Knez (bos.) – local noble

Kurban Bajram (tur.) – Islamic religious holiday of sacrifice, *qurban 'Id*

Ma'ārif (ar.) – educational affairs within the Islamic Communities of the Balkans

Madhab (ar.) - a school of law

Madrasatu 'l-iṣlāḥi wa't-tajdīdi (ar.) - the reformist and modernist school in Islam.

Mawlawi - a *darwish* order

Meclis (ar.) - financial/legal council

Meclisi šura (ar.) - executive council

Medresa (ar.) - a four-year secondary school

Mekteb (ar.) – primary or supplementary school for Islamic studies

Merhaba (tur.) – salutation or greeting

Merhamet (tur./bos. Mercy, charity) - Muslim charitable organization operating in some countries of the Balkans

Mesdžid from *masjid* (ar.) - mosque without minaret

Mešihat - assembly of the Islamic Community

Mevlud from *mawlid* (ar.) - festival celebrating the birth of the Prophet Muhammed

Mu'allim (ar.) - a male teacher

Mu'allimah (ar.) - a female teacher

Mufasssir (ar.) – an exegetist of the Qur'an

Mufti (ar.) - Islamic scholar and head of an administrative region

Mukabela from *muqābalah* (ar.) – recitation of the Qur'an in some mosques in the Balkans during the month of *Ramadhan*

Musafirhana from *misafirhane* (tur.) – guesthouse

Mutevelija from *mütevelli* (tur./bos.) - chairman of the trustees or manager

Nahija, pl. *nahije* from *naḥiyah* (tur./ar.) -region of a province

Nahj al Balāḡah (ar. Peak of Eloquence) - is the most famous collection of sermons, letters, *tafsīrs* and narrations attributed to the fourth *khalīfah* Ali

Nahla (ar. a bee) – Muslim women organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Naqshibandi - a *darwish* order

Nasīhah (ar.)- advice

Niqāb or *nikab* (ar.) - veil, face covering

Odbor Islamske Zajednice (bos.) – The Committee of the Islamic Community, a local organization of the Islamic Community in Montenegro

Ogledalo (bos. Mirror) – a Bosnian Muslim magazine

Pacta conventa (lat. articles of agreement) - an agreement between the Kingdom of Croatia and Hungary for leadership by a joint king signed in 1102.

Preporod (bos. revival) – Bosnian Muslim newspaper

Qādī (ar.) - judge

Qadiri - a *darwish* order

Qāri' (ar.) - a person who recites the Qur'an with the proper rules of recitation

Ramadhān (ar.) - holy month in Islam

Ramazan Bajram (tur.) – an Islamic holiday after the month of Ramadhan, *'Īdu l-Fiṭr*

Reis ul-uḷema (ar.)- head of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro

Rifa'i - a *darwish* order

Rijaset (ar.)- executive body of the Islamic Communities in the Balkans

Sabor - assembly of the Islamic Communities in the Balkans

Sa'di - a *darwish* order

Salafism - the term is associated with strict and literalist understanding and interpretation of Islam

Salāh (ar.)- prayer

Salām (ar. peace) – a greeting

Sawm (ar.)- fasting in Islam

Shadhili - a *darwish* order

Shahid (ar.) - martyr

Shaikh-ul-Islam (ar.) – the head of religious affairs in the Ottoman Empire

Shari'ah (ar.) - Islamic law

Shaykh (ar.) – elder, knowledgeable person, leader of a *darwish* order

Sinani - a *darwish* order

Spahi (tur.) - feudal cavalryman

Starješinstvo (bos.) – executive committee of the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia

Sufara (bos.) - textbook in Arabic used in the Balkans

Sūfi (ar.) - adherent of inner, mystical dimension of Islam

Sumeja (ar. proper name) – a Muslim women magazine and organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Sunna (ar.) – the practice of the Prophet

Sūrah (ar.)- a chapter or division of the Qur'an

Tafsīr (ar.) – exegesis of the Qur'an

Tahārah (ar.)- ritual purity in Islam

Takfīrī – (ar.) – a Muslim who accuses other Muslims for apostasy

Ta'limul Islam (ar.) - Islamic textbook used in the Balkans

Taqlīd (ar.) – imitation of previous generations in Islam

Tarīqah (ar.)- a way or path in sufism

Tasawwuf (ar.) – inner, mystical dimension of Islam

Tedžvid from *tajwīd* (ar.) - the rules governing pronunciation during recitation of the Qur'an

Tekke or *tekija* (bos.) - a sufi lodge

Tarāwih (ar.) - a prayer during the month of *Ramadhan*

Tevhid from *tawhīd* (ar. doctrine of oneness of God) – in Bosnian language used to denote a practice of religious supplications and *dhikr* in public events

Timar – a land granted by the Ottoman sultan

Turbet from *türbe* (tur.) – tomb or mausoleum

'Ulama' (ar.)- religious scholar/s

Ummah (ar.) – religious community of all Muslims

Ustaša – member of Croatian paramilitary and nationalist unit during the Second World War.

Vakuf – see *waqf*

Vezir (ar.) - governor

Vojna krajina (bos.) – military province

Waqf (ar.)- religious legacy

Waqfnama or *waqufnama* – the legacy document, the title deed

Waqif (ar.) – a founder of the *waqf* legacy

Wuḍū' (ar.)- ablution

Yāsīn (ar.)- chapter 36 of the Qur'an

Zavija from *zāwiyah* (ar. assembly) – in the thesis was used to denote a house where *dhikr* was practiced in the Balkans during communist times.

Zbirka dova - collection of supplications

Zbor (*sabor*) (bos.) - assembly

Zikr – see *dhikr*

Zina (ar.) - adultery

Acronyms

1. AIY - Active Islamic Youth
2. AVNOJ - Antifascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia
3. BDI - Union of Democratic Integration
4. BiH - Bosnia and Herzegovina
5. FIS - Faculty of Islamic Studies
6. HSC - High Saudi Commission for the Relief of Bosnian Muslims
7. IC - Islamic Community
8. ICY - Islamic Community of Yugoslavia
9. IHO- International Humanitarian Organization
10. IRC - Islamic Religious Community
11. Kingdom of SHS - Kingdom of Serbs Croats and Slovenes
12. LCY - League of Communists of Yugoslavia
13. MINA - Muslim News Agency
14. MNO - Muslim National Organization
15. NATO - An alliance of countries from North America and Europe committed to fulfilling the goals of the North Atlantic Treaty signed on 4 April 1949
16. PDSH - Democratic Party of Albanians
17. PPD - Party for Democratic Prosperity
18. SCICY - Supreme Council of the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia
19. SDA - Party for Democratic Action
20. SFOR - The Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina
21. SFRY - Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
22. SOC - Serbian Orthodox Church
23. TIKa - Turkish International Development Agency
24. UNMIK - United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
25. WWI - First World War
26. WWII - Second World War
27. YMO - Yugoslav Muslim Organization
28. YPA or JNA - Yugoslav People's Army
29. ZIDRA - Community of Islamic Darwish Orders of the SFRY

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