

Harun Karčić and Ivan Ejub Kostić

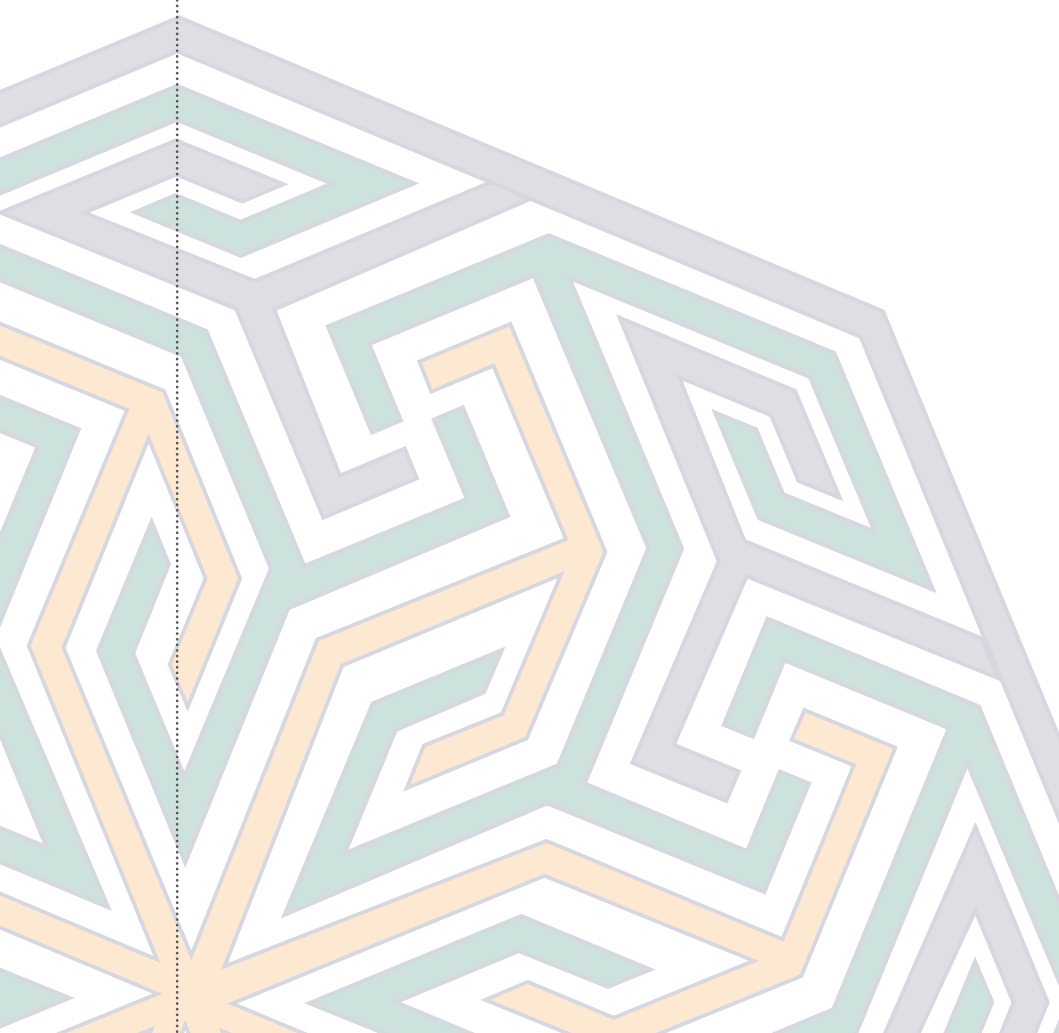
MEDIA DISCOURSE ON ISLAM IN THE WESTERN BALKANS



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Media Discourse on Islam
in the Western Balkans



Media Discourse on Islam in the Western Balkans
Harun Karčić and Ivan Ejub Kostić

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Content

Foreword	7
Constructing the Internal Enemy: A Discourse Analysis of the Representation of Islam and Muslims in Bosnian Media.....	9
Introduction	9
A note on the perception of Balkan Muslims	12
Design and method	15
Analysis and discussion.....	19
The notion of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a hotbed of Muslim extremism.....	31
Muslim migrants as a threat to Christian Europe	38
Conclusion.....	55
Attitudes toward Bosniak Muslims and Kosovar Albanians and historical revisionism in the Serbian media: Reaffirming the Greater Serbia project	57
Introduction	57
I. Bosnia and Herzegovina and the (Re)Affirmation of the Expansionist Politics of Serbian Nationalism	58
II. “Kosovo is the Heart of Serbia”	75
III. Memory Politics and Crimes Committed in the 1990s in B&H and Kosovo.....	87
Conclusion.....	93
References.....	95



Foreword

Since the September 11, 2001 attacks, there has been a spike in both the scholarly study of Islam as well as in the study of Muslims around the globe, with perhaps an over-emphasis on Arab Muslims living in the Middle East. At the same time, considerable scholarly attention has been paid to the negative media portrayals of Muslim populations living as minorities in Europe and the United States – where researchers have concluded that representations of Muslims in Western media are often associated with violence and conflict. Such Western representations of Islam and Muslims centered on notions of conflict and violence have established Islam as a perceived material threat to established ‘Western values’ and what is commonly referred to as the ‘Judeo-Christian heritage’.

However, though due attention has been paid to the representation of and discourse revolving around Muslims living in the West, there has been a lacuna in the study of Muslims living in the Balkans and how they are represented in media. This is a major gap in the study of Muslims living in a region where Islamophobic rhetoric peaked in the 1990s and played an instrumental role in justifying large-scale massacres of thousands of Bosniak Muslims and Kosovar Albanians that in the end resulted in

the first genocide committed on the European soil after World War II. Such dangerous rhetoric is, however, once again being utilized by Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat nationalist journalists and politicians, as well as by the same circles in neighboring Serbia and Croatia, to justify political instability and secessionist motives in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The aim of this work is to provide an insight into the major drivers and platforms of such rhetoric in two Western Balkan countries – Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. This work employs the critical discourse analysis method to study the pervasive representation of Islam and Muslims in a number of leading Bosnian Serb and Croat owned newspapers in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as in a number of high-circulation newspapers and tabloids in Serbia published over the course of one year (August 2018-August 2019). Following the collocation and concordance of the most frequent terms and words that revolve around the representation of Islam and Muslims, the findings indicated that in an overwhelming number of cases, Islam and Muslims are associated with violence, religious radicalism, ethnic nationalisms and political obstructionism.

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Authors



Constructing the Internal Enemy: A Discourse Analysis of the Representation of Islam and Muslims in Bosnian Media

Harun Karčić

INTRODUCTION

The media is a major source of information for the average person. It has undeniable power to shape not only the public's opinion but its system of values, beliefs, identities and social relations. Moreover, the media has strong influence on viewers due to its ability to organize and present information through framing: the organization of information into stories specifically tailored for the audience to comprehend. The discourse that it creates is one of the main sources of people's knowledge. According to the renowned French philosopher Michel Foucault, those who produce a discourse have the power to produce a "regime of truth" and to enforce its validity and factual status.¹

1 Eva Połońska-Kimunguyi and Marie Gillespie, "Terrorism Discourse on French International Broadcasting: France 24 and the Case of Charlie Hebdo Attacks in Paris", *European Journal of Communication* 31, no. 5, October 2016, pp. 568–83.

Muslims and Islam have been a major point of interest for the media in recent decades. Several empirical studies strongly support the notion that Muslims are a highly stigmatized and negatively associated category in Western media.² The association of Muslims with terrorism, violence and cultural otherness gained prominence and intensity in the years following the September 11 attacks and shows little sign of abating. According to a recent Pew Research Center study, between 8% and 26% of respondents polled in 15 West European countries felt that Islamic teachings promoted violence and between 23% and 41% agreed with the statement that “Muslims want to impose their religious law on everyone else.”³ Given the role played by media in shaping public opinion, the negative representation of Islam and Muslims further entrenches already existing stereotypes and plays a decisive role in how Muslims and Islam are perceived.

Despite Muslim voices becoming increasingly vocal in the West and awareness of Islamophobia growing, the climate of fear over Muslims and Islam as a religion has persisted and expanded, alongside the rise of right-wing populist leaders in major democracies such as the United States and European Union. While some media are blatantly Islamophobic, others are more subtle and their framing of Islam and Muslims implicit and ambivalent. *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Press* offers a meticulous study of one example of the discourse on Islam and Muslims in Europe.⁴ There have also been numerous reports and studies on other

2 “UK media’s portrayal of Muslims ‘misleading and negative’: study”, *Al Jazeera English*, July 9, 2019. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/07/uk-media-portrayal-muslims-misleading-negative-study-19070810455053_9.html, (accessed 14 September 2019).

3 E. Bleich, J. Souffrant, E. Stabler, and A. M. Van der Veen, “Media Coverage of Muslim Devotion: A Four-Country Analysis of Newspaper Articles, 1996–2016”, *Religions*, 2018, 9, 247.

4 P. Baker, C. Gabrielatos, and T. McEnery, *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Press* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

major European countries with sizeable Muslim populations, such as Germany, France and Austria.⁵

Even as Muslims in Western Europe have received significant academic and media attention, the Balkan Muslims remain understudied. Home to Muslims since the late 14th century, the region was more recently an arena in which Serb and Croat nationalists applied genocidal and irredentist policies to their Muslim neighbours and their territory. The 1992-1995 and 1998-1999 wars against the Bosniak Muslims and Kosovar Albanians led to Western media giving these persecuted populations unprecedented attention. Once the wars had ended, a lull ensued in journalistic interest in the region that lasted until the beginning of the Syrian war, when a disproportionate amount of media attention was again devoted to the relatively small number of Balkan Muslim volunteers fighting alongside different armed factions in Syria and Iraq.

So, how are Muslims depicted by their compatriots today and to what extent are ongoing political antagonisms reflected in the media? How are the images of Muslims and Islam constructed in the discourse of Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat newspapers? This remains a deeply understudied field.

This lacuna will be addressed in the following work. It will be done by scrutinizing the representation of and dominant discourse patterns regarding Islam and Muslims in Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers in order to find out how these and other ethno-nationalist references to Muslims are constructed *vis-à-vis* the context in which they are used. An analysis of major discursive patterns regarding Islam and Muslims in Bosniak Muslim-owned newspapers will also be provided, for a more holistic picture.

5 “The One Percent Problem: Muslims in the West and the Rise of the New Populists,” *Brookings*, <https://www.brookings.edu/product/muslims-in-the-west/> (accessed 14 September 2019).

A NOTE ON THE PERCEPTION OF BALKAN MUSLIMS

In contrast to Muslim migrant communities in Western Europe established in the mid-20th century, Balkan Muslims have been living with Catholic and Orthodox Christians for centuries. The Balkans are, therefore, currently experiencing a peculiar brand of Islamophobia deeply rooted in anti-Ottoman animosity, whereby Muslims are perceived as an alien element that has taken root in the region.

Analysing public discourse on Islam and Muslims requires a slightly different approach in the Balkans than in the West. This is because of the region's indigenous Muslim populations (Bosniaks, Albanians and Pomaks), which began to convert to Islam with the gradual Ottoman conquest of the peninsula, from the late 14th century onwards. They played an important and integral part in the Ottoman Empire, contributing to the running of its complex administration and military machinery. Insofar as these conversions to Islam began with the Ottoman conquest, however, the local populations that became Muslim came to be associated with the religion of the occupying Ottoman forces - the "Turks" as they were more commonly known.⁶ Being labelled a "Turk" has a derogatory connotation in Slavic languages, even compared to the use of the same word in English. A sinister prevalent association (in the popular imagination of the Balkan Christians) is of Slavic-Muslims not just as "Turks" but as "race traitors" who converted to Islam and abandoned Christ for personal gain and elevated social status.⁷ These perceptions of

6 Slobodan Drakulic, "Anti-Turkish obsession and the exodus of Balkan Muslims", *Patterns of Prejudice*, 43:3-4, pp. 233-249.

7 David Bruce MacDonald, *Balkan Holocausts?: Serbian and Croatian Victim Centred Propaganda and the War in Yugoslavia* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 232.

Slavic Muslims as “traitors” were a central theme in the creation of nation states and the development of nationalism.⁸

A particularly striking example for the development of Balkan nationalism was the 1389 Battle of Kosovo as presented in Serbian historiography, as the ultimate sacrifice by Serb warriors defending their nation and faith against the “Turkish oppressor.” Over the centuries, the battle’s significance far outgrew its original dimensions and was supplemented by mythology and legend. The myth of Serbia as the bulwark of Christianity (*antemurale Christianitas*) was constructed about this famous battle.⁹

As the Ottoman state weakened and the formation of Balkan nation states began in the 19th and early 20th century, numerous wars of independence were fought to establish those independent states and expel the Ottomans. These wars were described and presented to those involved and to sympathizers as struggles against the *Turkish occupiers* – a legitimate endeavour in the eyes of many. These “wars of liberation” as they were locally known were followed by brutal reductions in the Muslim populations, through killings and forced deportations. The boundaries between Ottoman combatants and Slavic Muslim non-combatants became so blurred that the categories were often equated.

For the Balkan Christian nationalist mind-set, liberation was to be followed by the physical destruction of Ottoman Islamic heritage. Within decades, Balkan Muslims went from being the dominant educated elite to an undesired and marginalized religious minority living in Christian majority states. In other words, after

8 Alexander Lopasic, “Islamization of the Balkans with special reference to Bosnia”, *Journal of Islamic Studies*, (5) No. 2 (1994), pp. 163-86. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26195614>.

9 Jason A. Edwards, “Bringing in Earthly Redemption: Slobodan Milosevic and the National Myth of Kosovo.” *Advances in the History of Rhetoric*, 18, sup 1, pp. 187-204, 2015. See also Zdenko Zlatar, “From Medieval to Modern: The Myth of Kosovo, “The Turks,” and Montenegro (A Lacanian Interpretation)” In: J. C. Frakes (ed.), *Contextualizing the Muslim Other in Medieval Christian Discourse. The New Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

the retreat of the Ottoman Empire, the remaining Balkan Muslims bore the brunt of anti-Ottoman hatred and centuries of perceived Ottoman injustice and oppression.

The myth of the Battle of Kosovo today serves as the basis of Serb anti-Muslim nationalism and is often translated into anti-Bosniak and anti-Albanian sentiment that views these two groups as physical remnants of the Ottoman Empire. While the Albanian Muslims are a separate ethnic group with their own culture and language, the Bosniak Muslims are considered by Serb nationalists to be “traitors” who accepted the religion of the occupying Ottoman empire. They are thus guilty of race betrayal and so detested even more. So strong is this sentiment regarding the Ottoman/Turkish occupation that, when Serb General Ratko Mladić and his forces overran Srebrenica in July 1995, he publicly declared “Here we are in Srebrenica on July 11, 1995. On the eve of yet another great Serb holiday. We present this city to the Serbian people as a gift. Finally, the time has come to take revenge on the Turks.” The ensuing industrial-scale killings of Bosniak Muslims have been characterized as genocide by the UN-established court in The Hague.

The genocide against the Bosniak Muslims offers a textbook example of how hatred towards the Ottoman Empire and the understanding of Slavic Muslims as *race traitors* translated into the slaughter and annihilation of the Empire’s perceived remnants in the Balkans – its Muslim populations. In other words, in Serbian public discourse, being Muslim is more or less synonymous with being a Turk. The extermination of Bosniak Muslims and Kosovar Albanians accordingly becomes a morality tale, avenging centuries of perceived Ottoman oppression and injustice.

DESIGN AND METHOD

Mass media has the exclusive power to present information in a way that shapes people's perceptions of reality and their interpretation of events. It can influence their beliefs, social relations and personal identities. It does so by presenting information through framing, understood as the organization of information through a particular lens or *frame* so that the audience is better able to comprehend events taking place.¹⁰ Media outlets and their journalists select what information is to be included and to what degree and what is to be omitted in the coverage of a particular story. Once this frame becomes established, it represents, in the words of Stephen D. Reese, the "organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world".¹¹

Media outlets and journalists are the primary definers of what is *important* and what is *correct* in the coverage of news.¹² Hence, media outlets establish the initial interpretation and frame for viewing a given topic or event. As Kimberly A. Powell notes, certain aspects of the reporter-perceived reality may become more salient than others and when these more salient elements become dominant, a frame is then created which impacts other journalists, who frame the same story identically, making it the dominant lens through which to view a given story.¹³ The audience and wider public adopt the hegemonic frame and identify and render moral judgement on repeated or similar

10 K. A. Powell, "Framing Islam/Creating Fear: An Analysis of U.S. Media Coverage of Terrorism from 2011–2016", *Religions*, 2018, 9, p. 257.

11 Stephen D. Reese, "Framing public life: A bridging model for media research" in *Framing Public Life*. Edited by Stephen D. Reese, Oscar H. Gandy Jr. and August E. Grand (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001), pp. 7-31.

12 Amir Saeed, "Media, Racism and Islamophobia: The Representation of Islam and Muslims in the Media", *Sociology Compass* ½, 2007, p. 449.

13 Powell, K. A. Powell, "Framing Islam/Creating Fear: An Analysis of U.S. Media Coverage of Terrorism from 2011–2016", p. 3.

future events through this established frame. When the audiences applying the framework have little or no real social contact with the target group, in this case Muslims, then the role of the media as sole provider of information and interpreter of events becomes crucial. Pervasive exposure to the same words, phrases and terms causes viewers unwittingly to adopt the opinions they in the media.

In post-communist and post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosniak Muslims, Croats and Serbs all live largely in ethnically homogenous regions and enclaves, reading newspapers and watching TV channels owned by members of their respective ethnic groups. This exacerbates the cleavage. The only exceptions are such larger towns as Sarajevo, Brčko and Tuzla where some semblance of the much talked-about Yugoslav-era multi-ethnic coexistence still exists.

The media's substantively linguistic and discursive nature means careful analysis of its deployment of linguistic tools is required in examining the representation of events. The present chapter applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to the representation of Islam and Muslims in Bosnian media. Norman Fairclough discusses the term CDA in his book *Language and Power*.¹⁴ He introduces concepts central to CDA, including "discourse, power, ideology, social practice and common sense". Discourse analysis plays a key role in showing how social phenomena are discursively constituted by demonstrating how things come to be as they are. According to Fairclough, discourse analysis follows a three-dimensional model: (i) textual; (ii) inter-textual; and (iii) contextual. The first focuses on the linguistic features and aspects of the text and examines the elements that are being placed in the discourse and how subjects are distinguished from each other, mostly in the form of binary opposition. The second analyses how authors of texts relate to already existing

14 Norman Fairclough, *Language and power* (London: Longman, 1989).

discourses to create *their* texts, while the third puts text into context and examines links between language and social practice.¹⁵ While the CDA approach can deploy a range of different techniques, the focus generally lies on the analysis of words and their textual context, including some not explicitly related to Muslims but often raised and discussed alongside any reference to Islam and Muslims. The analysis begins by presenting continuous topic categories that are then further exemplified using short quotes or headlines from articles within each category.

Newspapers are some of the oldest forms of political communication in the world and still retain significant influence, even with the emergence of the internet and social media as fora for mass communication. Research has shown that “even short exposure to a daily newspaper appears to influence voting behaviour and may affect turnout.”¹⁶ In other words, newspapers are still vital in shaping mass political orientation. Teon A. van Dijk argues in “Opinions and Ideologies in the Press” that the ideologies and opinions presented in newspapers are not personal and, even when they represent the author’s opinions and beliefs, they are in fact representing the views of the media outlet and are framed by their social, political and institutional context.¹⁷

Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into two highly autonomous political, security and administrative units – the predominantly Serb-populated *Republika Srpska* and the overwhelming Bosniak-Croat *Federation of BiH* – so we have selected high-circulation newspapers from both entities. The selection from the *Republika Srpska* is *Glas Srpske*, a major newspaper with a high

15 Połńska-Kimunguyi and Gillespie, “Terrorism Discourse on French International Broadcasting: France 24 and the Case of Charlie Hebdo Attacks in Paris”.

16 Alan S. Gerber, Dean Karlan, and Daniel Bergan, “Does the Media Matter? A Field Experiment Measuring the Effect of Newspapers on Voting Behavior and Political Opinions.” *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 1 (2), 2009, 35-52:47.

17 T. A. Dijk, “Opinions and ideologies in the press”, in A. Bell & P. Garrett (eds.), *Approaches to media discourse* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 21–63.

circulation.¹⁸ It is owned and read by Bosnian Serbs in the Republika Srpska, but also by Serb minorities living in the Federation and in Brčko District. The other major newspaper in the Republika Srpska is *Nezavisne novine*, which is, moreover, owned by the same company as *Glas Srpske*, so that its editorial policy hardly differs. As a result, only *Glas Srpske* was used in this study. The Bosnian Croat-owned *Dnevni list* and the Bosnian edition of *Večernji list*, a paper from neighbouring Croatia, are among the highest circulation dailies owned and read by Bosnian Croats living in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁹ Finally, two newspapers owned and read predominantly by Bosniak Muslims living in the Federation, *Dnevni Avaz* and the somewhat more liberal and civic-oriented *Oslobođenje*, were also selected.

In analysing political culture, we study newspaper articles and the discourse they create to understand how the arguments they contain legitimize or delegitimize a particular political behaviour. The newspapers selected here are among the most influential newspapers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The rationale behind choosing mainstream newspapers instead of yellow press is that the former are expected to be generally more nuanced and balanced in their reporting on Islam and Muslims than the latter. This research aims to find out whether more subtle patterns of reporting do actually exist in Bosnia's mainstream newspapers.

The study focuses on the period spanning August 1, 2018, to August 31, 2019. During the period, a total of 1,975 issues were produced by the above-mentioned five newspapers. As this represented an overwhelming amount of information, three filters were applied. First, we selected all newspaper articles

18 B. Vukojevic, and B. Vukojevic. *Dnevne novine u Republici Srpskoj*. [online] Evropska opservatorija za novinarstvo - EJO. Available at: <https://rs.ejo-online.eu/novinarstvo/dnevne-novine-u-republici-srpskoj> (accessed 16 September 2019).

19 "Dnevne Novine u BiH 2019", *Vzs.Ba*. <https://www.vzs.ba/index.php/vijece-za-stampu/printani-mediji-u-bih/200-dnevne-novine-u-bih>.

featuring the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian words for “Islam,” “Muslim,” “Bosniak,” “Bosnian Muslims” or “migrant” and “refugee,” terms used by journalists to refer to Muslim refugees arriving in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to avoid direct use of the religious label. All the articles containing these keywords were then reviewed again and those relating to Bosnia and Herzegovina were singled out. This was done to exclude the many articles covering news from the Middle East, United States, Europe, Africa and Asia. In the third phase of the study, 30 articles were selected randomly from each newspaper for the one-year time span and their content was analysed. This selection represented an average of 2.5 articles per month for the period. Cumulatively, 150 articles from the newspapers, including editorials, interviews, features, and news reports, were analysed.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Articles published in the newspapers chosen ranged from harsh political rhetoric exchanged between Bosniak, Serb and Croat media to the distastefully discriminatory, including both more subtle and overtly anti-Muslim invective. Careful analysis of the articles selected from the five newspapers revealed three major themes regarding Islam and Muslims: Bosniak Muslims as political troublemakers; Bosnian Muslims as religious extremists; and Europe as a Christian continent and Muslim migrants as a problem. Within each of these major themes, there were further salient features, common trends and patterns which are analysed below.

1. The narrative of Bosniak Muslims as political trouble-makers and Bosnia as an unstable country

Selected headlines from Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers

<i>Večernji list</i>	<i>Dnevni list</i>	<i>Glas Srpske</i>
"Vital national interest – Bosniaks play card 13 times, Croats only twice." ²⁰	"Croatian People's Assembly: Bosnia entering new turmoil as key political posts all held by Bosniaks." ²¹	"Bosniaks aim for Serb posts in Council of Ministers." ²²
"Bosniaks want to take everything away from Croats: their church, their history and their right to life in Bosnia." ²³	"Karamatić: Bosnia's end is nearing; Bosniaks will be begging for a statelet." ²⁴	"Scandalous: Bosniaks want Harvard University to fire Professor Israel." ²⁵

- 20 "Nacionalni interesi - Bošnjaci 'povlačili' 13, a Hrvati samo dva puta", *Večernji list*, July 14, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/nacionalni-interes-bosnjaci-povla-cili-13-a-hrvati-samo-dva-puta-1325932> (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 21 "HNS: BiH Ulazi U Novu Krizi Jer Sve Ključne Pozicije Drže Bošnjaci", *Dnevni list*, August 1, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/hns-bih-ulazi-u-novu-krizi-jer-sve-kljucne-pozicije-drze-bosnjaci> (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 22 Ž.D. "Bošnjaci naciljali srpska mjesta u Savjetu ministara", *Glas Srpske*, March 20, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Bosnjaci-naciljali-srpska-mjesta-u-Savjetu-ministara/280887 (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 23 Ivo Šimunović, "Bošnjaci žele uzeti sve od Hrvata: crkvu, povijest i pravo na život u Bosni" *Večernji list*, June 12, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/bosnjaci-zele-uzeti-sve-od-hrvata-crkvu-povijest-i-pravo-na-zivot-u-bosni-1325641> (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 24 "KARAMATIĆ: Bošnjaci Pričom o NATO-U Sprječavaju Dogovor U BiH", *Dnevni list*, August 27, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/karamatic-bosnjaci-pri-com-o-nato-u-sprjecavaju-dogovor-u-bih> (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 25 Darko Momić, "Skandalozan zahtjev: Bošnjaci traže da se Harvard odrekne Izraela", *Glas Srpske*, April 16, 2019. http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/SKANDALOZAN-ZAHTJEV-Bosnjaci-traze-da-se-Harvard-odre-kne-Izraela/282508.

Constructing the Internal Enemy

<p>“The political will is there, but Bosniaks are blocking the formation of a government.”²⁶</p>	<p>“Croatian People’s Assembly: Political Sarajevo is nervous and hysterical.”</p>	<p>“NATO understands what military neutrality means, but Bosniaks do not.”²⁷</p>
<p>“Croats put talk of their own entity on ice, Bosniaks should stop trying to dominate.”²⁸</p>	<p>“Coalition partners at ‘war’.”²⁹</p>	<p>“Bosniaks once again celebrate Turkish occupation.”³⁰</p>
<p>“The West has the most influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina but doesn’t know what to do with it.”³¹</p>	<p>“He returned from Austria to sow chaos among Croats and Bosniaks.”³²</p>	<p>“Orić’s friend calls for Bosniaks to take up arms.”³³</p>

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- 26 “Postoji spremnost za formiranje vlasti, ali Bošnjaci opstruiraju”, *Vecernji list*, May 11, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/nepostivanje-izvorne-volje-narodagovori-da-netko-zeli-majorizaciju-u-bih-1318647>
- 27 V.K., “NATO razumije politiku neutralnosti, ali Bošnjaci ne”, *Glas Srpske*, June 11, 2019. http://www.glassrpske.com/cir/novosti/vijesti_dana/NATO-razumije-politiku-neutralnosti-ali-Bosnjaci-ne/286085 (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 28 Zoran Krešić, “Hrvati ‘zamrznuli’ entitet, Bošnjaci bi se trebali odreći dominacije”, *Večernji list*, April 13, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/hrvati-zamrznuli-entitet-bosnjaci-bi-se-trebali-odreci-dominacije-1312948> (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 29 “‘Zaratile’ koalicioni partneri”, *Dnevni list*, July 29, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/zaratile-koalicioni-partneri/>.
- 30 Darko Momić, “Bošnjaci ponovo slavili tursku okupaciju”, *Glas Srpske*, March 20, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Bosnjaci-po-novo-slavili-tursku-okupaciju/280852 (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 31 Maja Ereš, “Zapad, koji je najutjecajniji u BiH, ne zna što bi s njom”, *Večernji list*, March 11, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/zapad-koji-je-najutjecajnijiu-bih-ne-zna-sto-bi-s-njom-1305870> (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 32 “Vratio se iz Austrije da izazove mržnju među Hrvatima i Bošnjacima”, *Dnevni list*, August 9, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/vratio-se-iz-austrije-da-izazove-mrznju-medu-hrvatima-i-bosnjacima/>.
- 33 “Orićev prijatelj poziva Bošnjake da se naoružaju”, *Glas Srpske*, April 21, 2019. http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Oricev-prijatelj-poziva-Bosnjake-da-se-naoruzaju/282887 (accessed 14 September 2019).

<p>“Bosniaks want to elect Serb representatives in the Herzegovina-Neretva canton.”³⁴</p>	<p>“Krajišnik: Muslims committed atrocities against themselves.”³⁵</p>	<p>“Cvijanović: Political Sarajevo is blocking everything in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the Serb Republic is functional.”³⁶</p>
<p>“Why it is dangerous and harmful for Bosniaks to elect the Croat member of the Presidency for the third time.”³⁷</p>	<p>“Banning the Pride parade would be shameful and proof that Sarajevo does not want European values.”³⁸</p>	<p>“Dramatic warnings from the few remaining Serbs: The Federation will soon be home only to Bosniaks and Croats.”³⁹</p>
<p>“Display of pathological hatred; Sarajevo is trying to silence Zagreb in advocating for Croat equality in Bosnia.”⁴⁰</p>	<p>“Karamatić: Bosniaks are using all the NATO talk to prevent the formation of government.”⁴¹</p>	<p>“Bosniaks are celebrating a non-existent holiday.”⁴²</p>

34 Marko Karačić, “Bošnjaci žele izabrati predstavnike Srba u HNŽ-u”, *Večernji list*, February 15, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/bosnjaci-zele-izabrati-predstavnike-srba-u-hnz-u-1301001> (accessed 14 September 2019).

35 “Krajišnik: Muslimani činili zločine protiv svog naroda”, *Dnevni list*, April 26, 2018. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/krajsnik-muslimani-cinili-zlocine-protiv-svog-naroda/> (accessed 18 December 2019).

36 “Cvijanović: Političko Sarajevo sve blokira u BiH, ali Srpska funkcioniše”, *Glas Srpske*, July 30, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/cvijanovic-politicko-sarajevo-sve-blokira-u-bih-ali-srpska-funkcionise/289552 (accessed 14 September 2019).

37 “Zašto je opasno i štetno da Bošnjaci u BiH i treći put biraju hrvatskog predstavnika”, *Večernji list*, September 17, 2018. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/zasto-je-opasno-i-stetno-da-bosnjaci-u-bih-i-treci-put-biraju-hrvatskog-predstavnika-1270271> (accessed 14 September 2019).

38 “Zabrana parade ponosa bi bila nevidena sramota i dokaz da Sarajevo ne želi europske vrijednosti!”, *Dnevni list*, August 26, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/zabrana-parade-ponosa-bi-bila-nevidena-sramota-i-dokaz-da-sarajevo-ne-zeli-europske-vrijednosti/>.

39 Željka Domazet, “Dramatično upozorenje malobrojnih Srba: U FBiH će ostati samo Bošnjaci i Hrvati”, *Glas Srpske*, May 15, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Dramaticno-upozorenje-malobrojnih-Srba-U-FBiH-ce-ostati-samo-Bosnjaci-i-Hrvati/284240.

40 Zoran Krešić, “Pokazala se patološka mržnja, Sarajevo pokušava ušutkati Zagreb u lobiranju za jednakopravnost Hrvata”, *Večernji list*, July 31, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/pokazala-se-patoloska-mrznja-sarajevo-pokusava-usutkati-zagreb-u-lobiranju-za-jednakopravnost-hrvata-1335729> (accessed 14 September 2019).

41 “KARAMATIĆ: Bošnjaci Pričom O NATO-U Sprječavaju Dogovor U BiH”, *Dnevni list*, August 27, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/karamatic-bosnjaci-pricom-o-nato-u-sprjecavaju-dogovor-u-bih> (accessed 14 September 2019).

42 D. Momić, Ž. Domazet, “Bošnjaci slave nepostojeći praznik”, *Glas Srpske*, November 26, 2018. https://www.glassrpske.com/cir/novosti/vijesti_dana/bosnjaci-slave-nepostojeci-praznik/274007 (accessed 14 September 2019).

Constructing the Internal Enemy

<p>“Dodik: Bosniaks have a long-term plan to destroy the Serb Republic, step-by-step.”⁴³</p>	<p>“Dodik: Bosniaks are risking the very existence of the country.”⁴⁴</p>	<p>“Why are all armaments factories in the hands of Bosniaks?”⁴⁵</p>
<p>“Bosniaks will not give in on a third entity, and Croats will never accept a unitary Bosnia and Herzegovina.”⁴⁶</p>	<p>“Croatian Democratic Party and Croatian National Assembly: Party of Democratic Action refuses to respect the choice of Bosnian voters.”⁴⁷</p>	<p>“Dodik: Bosniaks are seriously usurping Croat and Serbs rights.”⁴⁸</p>

By far, the most dominant theme regarding Muslims and Islam in the newspapers analysed was the notion of Bosniak Muslims as political troublemakers and uncompromising political obstructionists, while the country is depicted as politically unstable. Such depictions accord with the dominant narratives of Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb nationalist politicians and their respective political parties. Similarly, Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb journalists seem to be attempting to divert all blame towards the Bosniak Muslims, as, if not the sole, then the major political problem and obstacle to the functioning of the state. This is

43 “Dodik: Bošnjaci imaju dugoročan plan korak po korak devastirati RS”, *Večernji list*, January 29, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/dodik-bosnjaci-imaju-dugoro-can-plan-korak-po-korak-devastirati-rs-1297525> (accessed 14 September 2019).

44 “Dodik: Bošnjaci riskiraju da BiH ne postoji!”, *Dnevni list*, June 25, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/dodik-bosnjaci-riskiraju-da-bih-ne-postoji> (accessed 14 September 2019).

45 “Zašto su fabrike oružja u BiH u rukama Bošnjaka”, *Glas Srpske*, February 11, 2019. http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Zasto-su-fabrike-oruz-ja-u-BiH-u-rukama-Bosnjaka/278634 (accessed 14 September 2019).

46 “Kao što Bošnjaci odbijaju treći entitet, Hrvati nikad neće prihvatiti unitarnu BiH”, *Večernji List*, August 4, 2018. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/kao-sto-bosnjaci-odbijaju-treci-entitet-hrvati-nikad-neze-prihvatiti-unitarnu-bih-1262140> (accessed 14 September 2019).

47 “HDZ I HNS: SDA Izbjegava Poštivanje Izborne Volje Naroda U BiH”, *Dnevni list*, July 21, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/hdz-i-hns-sda-izbjegava-postiva-nje-izborne-volje-naroda-u-bih> (accessed 14 September 2019).

48 “Dodik: Bošnjaci teško uzurpiraju prava Srba i Hrvata”, *Glas Srpske*, August 27, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/dodik-bosnjaci-tesko-uzurpiraju-prava-srba-i-hrvata/291411 (accessed 14 September 2019).

manifested most saliently through the self-versus-other schema or the combination of positive self-representation and negative other-representation. The rhetorical strategy of discursive exclusion is articulated primarily by delineating Bosniak Muslims as the out-group.

A dominant narrative in articles such as “The political will is there, but the Bosniaks are blocking the formation of a government,”⁴⁹ “Karamatić: Bosniaks are using all the NATO talk to prevent formation of a government,”⁵⁰ “Croatian Democratic Party and Croatian National Assembly: Party of Democratic Action refuses to respect the choice of Bosnian voters,”⁵¹ “Croatian National Assembly: Bosnia and Herzegovina is entering a new political crisis as all key political posts held by Bosniaks”⁵² and “Dodik: Bosniaks are seriously usurping the rights of Croats and Serbs”⁵³ is that of Bosniak Muslims obstructing the proper functioning of the state. There is widespread use of the noun “Bosniaks” (*Bošnjaci*) as though Bosniak Muslims were a homogeneous group (despite being extremely fragmented politically and socially) with a common agenda to dominate Bosnian Croats and Serbs in the country’s decision-making bodies. Such pigeonholing of Bosniak Muslims as a single entity establishes the sense of intergroup differentiation required by Bosnian Croats

49 “Postoji spremnost za formiranje vlasti, ali Bošnjaci opstruiraju”, *Vecernji list*, May 11, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/nepostivanje-izvorne-volje-naroda-govori-da-netko-zeli-majorizaciju-u-bih-1318647>

50 “KARAMATIĆ: Bošnjaci Pričom o NATO-U Sprječavaju Dogovor U BiH”, *Dnevni list*, August 27, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/karamatic-bosnjaci-pricom-o-nato-u-sprjecavaju-dogovor-u-bih> (accessed 14 September 2019).

51 “HDZ I HNS: SDA Izbjegava Poštivanje Izborne Volje Naroda U BiH”, *Dnevni list*, July 21, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/hdz-i-hns-sda-izbjegava-postivanje-izborne-volje-naroda-u-bih> (accessed 14 September 2019).

52 “HNS: BiH Ulazi U Novu Krizi Jer Sve Ključne Pozicije Drže Bošnjaci”, *Dnevni list*, August 1, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/hns-bih-ulazi-u-novu-krizi-jer-sve-kljucne-pozicije-drze-bosnjaci> (accessed 14 September 2019).

53 “Dodik: Bošnjaci teško uzurpiraju prava Srba i Hrvata”, *Glas Srpske*, August 27, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/dodik-bosnjaci-teško-uzurpiraju-prava-srba-i-hrvata/291411 (accessed 14 September 2019).

and Bosnian Serb nationalists to establish the distinctiveness principle and their own sense of identity. Bosniak Muslim politicians are depicted as bearing the brunt of responsibility for the country's political crisis. Radical moves and harsh rhetoric coming from Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb politicians are shown as provoked by and in response to moves emanating from the Bosniak Muslim side. They hardly acknowledge, let alone highlight, mistakes made by politicians from *their own* ethno-national groups. Moreover, any attempt by Bosniak Muslim politicians to act jointly, despite often being politically on opposing ends, is interpreted by Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media as politically threatening and ultimately leading the country into further political crisis.

The second rhetorical strategy employed by Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers is negativization, whereby Bosniak Muslims are discussed in terms of negative social representations and presented as being in direct opposition to the in-group (here the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs). The negativization of Bosniak Muslims is made manifest through the contrast of the alleged "normality" of Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs and the *abnormality* of Bosniak Muslims. Examples may be seen in articles like "The display of pathological hatred: Sarajevo is trying to silence Zagreb in advocating for Croat equality in Bosnia,"⁵⁴ "NATO understands what military neutrality means, but Bosniaks do not,"⁵⁵ "Bosniaks are celebrating a non-existent holiday,"⁵⁶ "Banning the

54 Zoran Krešić, "Pokazala se patološka mržnja, Sarajevo pokušava ušutkati Zagreb u lobiranju za jednakopravnost Hrvata", *Večernji list*, July 31, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/pokazala-se-patoloska-mrznja-sarajevo-pokusava-usutkati-zagreb-u-lobiranju-za-jednakopravnost-hrvata-1335729> (accessed 14 September 2019).

55 V.K., "NATO razumije politiku neutralnosti, ali Bošnjaci ne", *Glas Srpske*, June 11, 2019. http://www.glassrpske.com/cir/novosti/vijesti_dana/NATO-razumije-politiku-neutralnosti-ali-Bosnjaci-ne/286085 (accessed 14 September 2019).

56 D. Momić, Ž. Domazet, "Bošnjaci slave nepostojeći praznik", *Glas Srpske*, November 26, 2018. https://www.glassrpske.com/cir/novosti/vijesti_dana/bosnjaci-slave-nepostojeći-praznik/274007 (accessed 14 September 2019).

Pride parade would be shameful and proof that Sarajevo does not want European values"⁵⁷ and "Bosniaks once again celebrate Turkish occupation"⁵⁸ (which accuses Bosniak Muslim of celebrating the Ottoman conquest of their native country). Their behaviour is presented as irrational and deviating from existing values, norms and principles. All political actions taken by Bosniak Muslim politicians and Bosniaks generally are considered from the Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb point of view. Those two groups are depicted as *normal* and Eurocentric and are positively socially represented, while the third group is the outlier. There is over-emphasis on the Bosniak Muslims' ethnicity and their cultural (i.e. Islamic) difference is depicted as being more complex than any of the other problems facing the country, such as high-unemployment, low-wages and rampant corruption. The Bosnian Croats in particular are depicted as the nation carrying and epitomizing *European* values, the same values Bosniak Muslims are depicted as lacking.

Then there is repeated use of the term *political Sarajevo*, which might at first sound benign to the average non-Bosnian reader. This is seen in such articles as "Cvijanović: political Sarajevo is blocking everything in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the Serb Republic is functioning"⁵⁹ and "Croatian People's Assembly: political Sarajevo is nervous and hysterical."⁶⁰ It is worth noting that Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media often use

57 "Zabrana parade ponosa bi bila nevidena sramota i dokaz da Sarajevo ne želi europske vrijednosti!" *Dnevni list*, August 26, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/zabrana-parade-ponosa-bi-bila-nevidena-sramota-i-dokaz-da-sarajevo-ne-zeli-europske-vrijednosti/>

58 Darko Momić, "Bošnjaci ponovo slavili tursku okupaciju", *Glas Srpske*, March 20, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Bosnjaci-ponovo-slavili-tursku-okupaciju/280852 (accessed 14 September 2019).

59 "Cvijanović: Političko Sarajevo sve blokira u BiH, ali Srpska funkcioniše." *Glas Srpske*, July 30, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/cvijanovic-politicko-sarajevo-sve-blokira-u-bih-ali-srpska-funkcionise/289552 (accessed 14 September 2019).

60 "HNS: Političko Sarajevo u nervozi i hysteriji." *Dnevni list*, July 31, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/hns-politicko-sarajevo-u-nervozi-i-hysteriji> (accessed 14 September 2019).

“political Sarajevo” as a euphemism for Bosniak Muslim politicians due to the capital city’s predominantly Muslim character and the significant concentration of Bosniak Muslim ethno-national political parties and organizations there. The conflict-based understanding of Bosniak Muslims presented in these articles is reinforced by continuous reference to their alleged unwillingness to cooperate. Another reason Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb journalists use the term *political Sarajevo* instead of ethno-religious markers is perhaps political correctness and to avoid being labelled racist or Islamophobic.

Bosniak Muslims are also depicted as being immoral in the sense of not law-abiding and not respectful of the rights of other citizens. They are portrayed as cunning and shrewd political opportunists who will stop at nothing to achieve their political goals. The tone of these articles creates a sense of distrust towards Bosniak Muslims, a feeling that they do not and will not respect the rights of other ethnic groups in the country. Example of such depiction are “Bosniaks want to take away everything from Croats: their church, their history and their right to life in Bosnia,”⁶¹ “Vital national interest – Bosniaks played the card 13 times, Croats only twice,”⁶² “Croats put talk of their own entity on ice, Bosniaks should stop trying to dominate,”⁶³ “Bosniaks want to elect Serb

61 Ivo Šimunović, “Bošnjaci žele uzeti sve od Hrvata: crkvu, povijest i pravo na život u Bosni.” *Večernji list*, June 12, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/bosnjaci-zele-uzeti-sve-od-hrvata-crkvu-povijest-i-pravo-na-zivot-u-bosni-1325641> (accessed 14 September 2019).

62 “Nacionalni interes - Bošnjaci ‘povlačili’ 13, a Hrvati samo dva puta”, *Večernji list*, July 14, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/nacionalni-interes-bosnjaci-povlacili-13-a-hrvati-samo-dva-puta-1325932> (accessed 14 September 2019). *The ‘vital national interest’ is a political veto enshrined in the Constitution of BiH which technically allows any given ethno-national political party to torpedo another ethno-national party’s parliamentary act/move if deemed dangerous to their national interests.

63 Zoran Krešić, “Hrvati ‘zamrznuli’ entitet, Bošnjaci bi se trebali odreći dominacije”, *Večernji list*, April 13, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/hrvati-zamrznuli-entitet-bosnjaci-bi-se-trebali-odreci-dominacije-1312948> (accessed 14 September 2019).

representatives in Herzegovina-Neretva canton”⁶⁴ and “Dodik: Bosniaks have a long term plan to destroy the Serb Republic, step-by-step.”⁶⁵ In the same articles, Bosniak Muslims are also depicted as wanting to dominate Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs politically and marginalize or exclude them from decision-making institutions. In a number of interviews, journalists accentuated this point and quoted statements referring to the alleged desire of Bosniak Muslims to dominate others. Thus, Davor Marijan, a historian at the Croatian Institute for History, told *Večernji list* in an interview “What the Bosniaks envisioned was nominally a liberal [citizenship-based] state, but one that would allow them to dominate the entire country.”⁶⁶ He added “...Bosniaks have in mind an essentially centralized unitary state, which is to say a nation state of their own that would be presented ostensibly as ‘civic’ but in which *they* would be the dominant group.”⁶⁷ Along the same lines, the subheading of an interview given by Bosnian Serb member of the tripartite Presidency Milorad Dodik to the Croatian daily *Večernji list* read “Bosniaks have a long-lasting desire to dominate first Croats, and then Serbs and the Serb Republic.”⁶⁸ It is noteworthy here that Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers openly oppose any restructuring of the country on liberal lines based on citizenship and one-person-one-vote, preferring the

64 Marko Karačić, “Bošnjaci žele izabrati predstavnike Srba u HNŽ-u.” *Večernji list*, February 15, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/bosnjaci-zele-izabrati-predstavnike-srba-u-hnz-u-1301001> (accessed 14 September 2019).

65 “Dodik: Bošnjaci imaju dugoročan plan korak po korak devastirati RS”, *Večernji list*, January 29, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/dodik-bosnjaci-ima-ju-dugorocan-plan-korak-po-korak-devastirati-rs-1297525> (accessed 14 September 2019).

66 Žarko Ivković, “Davor Marijan: Za rat Hrvata i Muslimana kriv je Alija Izetbegović”, *Večernji list*, December 8, 2018. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/davor-marijan-za-rat-hrvata-i-muslimana-kriv-je-alija-izetbegovic-1287712> (accessed 14 September 2019).

67 Žarko Ivković, “Davor Marijan: Za rat Hrvata i Muslimana kriv je Alija Izetbegović”.

68 Zoran Krešić, “Da je BiH normalna, u Predsjedništvu Hrvat ne bi bio protiv Pelješkog mosta.” *Večernji list*, July 21, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/da-je-bih-normalna-u-predsjednistvu-hrvat-ne-bi-bio-protiv-peljeskog-mosta-1333553> (accessed 14 September 2019).

current system that gives Croats a disproportionately high voice in decision- and law-making government bodies. A major reason they are against a fully democratic majoritarian system is their alleged fear of Muslim domination.

In other words, one can see a clear narrative of an alleged Bosniak Muslim will to dominate the two Christian ethno-religious groups being constructed in these interviews. Similarly, Fra Luka Marković, a Franciscan theologian, has said in an interview with *Večernji list* that “Everyone is playing games. Serbs are playing their game, Bosniaks talk about a liberal state, but what they have in mind in the long run is a Bosniak state.”⁶⁹ He added “... Serbs have their own entity, while Bosniaks are using all the means available to turn the Federation into theirs.”⁷⁰

Apart from these interviews, we also find the Bosniak Muslims’ alleged desire to lord it over their Catholic and Orthodox compatriots emphasised in a number of articles, e.g. “Dramatic warnings from the few remaining Serbs: the Federation will soon be home only to Bosniaks and Croats,”⁷¹ “Bosniaks after Serb posts in Council of Ministers,”⁷² “Why it is dangerous and harmful for Bosniaks to elect the Croat member of the Presidency for the third time”⁷³ and “Bosniaks will not give in on a third entity, just as

69 Ana Popović, “Građanski model dugoročno znači državu većinskoga bošnjačkog naroda”, *Večernji list*, December 3, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/gra-anski-model-dugorocno-znaci-drzavu-vecinskoga-bosnjackog-naroda-1286489> (accessed 14 September 2019).

70 Ana Popović, “Građanski model dugoročno znači državu većinskoga bošnjačkog naroda”.

71 Željka Domazet, “Dramatično upozorenje malobrojnih Srba: U FBiH će ostati samo Bošnjaci i Hrvati”, *Glas Srpske*, May 15, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Dramaticno-upozorenje-malobrojnih-Srba-U-FBiH-ce-ostati-samo-Bosnjaci-i-Hrvati/284240.

72 Ž.D. “Bošnjaci naciljali srpska mjesta u Savjetu ministara”, *Glas Srpske*, March 20, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Bosnjaci-naciljali-srpska-mjesta-u-Savjetu-ministara/280887 (accessed 14 September 2019).

73 “Zašto je opasno i štetno da Bošnjaci u BiH i treći put biraju hrvatskog predstavnika”, *Večernji list*, September 17, 2018. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/zasto-je-opasno-i-stetno-da-bosnjaci-u-bih-i-treci-put-biraju-hrvatskog-predstavnika-1270271> (accessed 14 September 2019).

roats will never accept a unitary Bosnia and Herzegovina.”⁷⁴ The type of domination discussed here is both real, in terms of numbers, and symbolic. It is interesting that both Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat newspapers accuse Bosniak Muslims of the same supposed intention and that the categorization of “us” and “them” as “in-group” and “out-group” respectively was very evident in both the Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media. Bosniak Croat and Bosnian Serb politicians are constantly represented as seeking compromise and making political concessions for the sake of the country’s higher objectives, but the same does not hold for Bosniak Muslims. Journalists from the ethnic media regularly highlight the positive aspects of “their” Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb politicians, while playing down any positive aspects of Bosniak Muslim politicians and stressing their negative aspects.

Finally, Bosniak Muslims are represented as responsible for their own victimhood and the current state of affairs in the country, losing the support even of their Western backers. This may be seen in “Karamatić: The end of Bosnia and Herzegovina is nearing, Bosniaks will be begging for a statelet,”⁷⁵ “Dodik: Bosniaks are putting at stake the very existence of the country,”⁷⁶ “The West has the most influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina but doesn’t know what to do with it”⁷⁷ and “Krajišnik: Muslims committed atrocities against themselves.” Bosnia and Herzegovina is depicted as a country dominated by Bosniak Muslims, ill-functioning, on the verge of political collapse, and increasingly abandoned by its former allies.

74 “Kao što Bošnjaci Odbijaju Treći Entitet, Hrvati Nikad Neće Prihvatiti Unitarnu BiH”, *Večernji List*, August 4, 2018. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/kao-sto-bosnjaci-odbijaju-treci-entitet-hrvati-nikad-nece-prihvatiti-unitarnu-bih-1262140> (accessed 14 September 2019).

75 “KARAMATIĆ: Bliži se kraj BiH, Bošnjaci će moliti za “bašča državicu”, *Dnevni list*, July 16, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/karamatic-bliži-se-kraj-bih-bosnjaci-ce-moliti-za-basca-drzavicu> (accessed 14 September 2019).

76 “Dodik: Bošnjaci riskiraju da BiH ne postoji!” *Dnevni list*, June 25, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/dodik-bosnjaci-riskiraju-da-bih-ne-postoji> (accessed 14 September 2019).

77 Maja Ereš, “Zapad, koji je najutjecajniji u BiH, ne zna što bi s njom”, *Večernji list*, March 11, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/zapad-koji-je-najutjecajniji-u-bih-ne-zna-sto-bi-s-njom-1305870> (accessed 14 September 2019).

II. THE NOTION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AS A HOTBED OF MUSLIM EXTREMISM

The second major discourse revolving around the terms “Muslim” and “Islam” in Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media is that of Muslim extremism, or more specifically the notion of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a hotbed of Muslim extremism. The central pattern here is the association of Bosniak Muslims with radicalism and global terrorist organizations. Crucially, these extremists are depicted as problematic for and contesting the country’s fragile peace, security and post-war inter-ethnic relations.

<i>Večernji list</i>	<i>Dnevni list</i>	<i>Glas Srpske</i>
“These are the individuals who have surrendered in Syria; they will be deported to Bosnia and Herzegovina.” ⁷⁸	“16.9% of Mostar citizens say they support ISIL.” ⁷⁹	“Bosniak officials praise terrorism.” ⁸⁰
“They came to Bosnia after fighting in Afghanistan. They waged jihad around the world.” ⁸¹	“Bosnian woman from ISIL sentenced to 6.5 years in US jail.” ⁸²	“The ever-growing list of terrorists from Bosnia and Herzegovina.” ⁸³

78 “Ovo su osobe koje su se predale u Siriji, oni će biti vraćeni u BiH”, *Večernji list*, March 13, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/ovo-su-osobe-koje-su-se-predale-u-siriji-oni-ce-bit-vraceni-u-bih-1306429> (accessed 14 September 2019).

79 “Čak 16,9% Mostaraca navelo da podržava ISIL”, *Dnevni list*, May 4, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/cak-169-mostaraca-navelo-da-podrzava-isil> (accessed 14 September 2019).

80 Darko Momić, “Bošnjački zvaničnici veličaju terorizam”, *Glas Srpske*, August 27, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/bosnjacki-zvanicnici-velicaju-terorizam/291373 (accessed 14 September 2019).

81 Hassan Haidar Diab, “U BiH su došli nakon ratovanja u Afganistanu. Išli su u džihad po cijelom svijetu”, *Večernji list*, February 17, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/u-bih-su-dosli-nakon-ratovanja-u-afganistanu-isli-su-u-dzihad-po-cijelom-svijetu-1301385> (accessed 14 September 2019).

82 “Bosanka iz ISIL-a osuđena na 6,5 godina zatvora u SAD-u”, *Dnevni list*, <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/bosanka-iz-isil-a-osuđena-na-65-godina-zatvora-u-sad-u/>

83 Darko Momić, “Spisak terorista iz BiH sve veći”, *Glas Srpske*, June 29, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Spisak-terorista-iz-BiH-sve-veci/287340 (accessed 14 September 2019).

<p>“Croatia faces a huge security challenge: Who are the jihadis that are returning to Bosnia and Herzegovina?”⁸⁴</p>	<p>“Ibro Ćufurović indicted for joining ISIL.”⁸⁵</p>	<p>“Bosnia once again at the centre of world attention because of terrorism.”⁸⁶</p>
<p>“These are the leaders of Balkan jihadis.”⁸⁷</p>	<p>“A poke in the eye of the West: Bosniak religious and political elite pays tribute to the leader of Muslim brotherhood.”⁸⁸</p>	<p>“A high-risk country.”⁸⁹</p>
<p>“Hundreds of ISIL fighters are returning to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croatia’s Security and Intelligence Agency is stepping up security checks.”⁹⁰</p>	<p>“War-time mujahedeen fighters spread fear throughout Bosnia.”⁹¹</p>	<p>“Republika Srpska warns of terrorism threat and migrant crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina.”⁹²</p>

- 84 Hassan Haidar Diab, “Hrvatska pred velikim sigurnosnim izazovom: Tko su džihadisti koji se vraćaju u BiH?” *Večernji list*, February 24, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/svijet/hrvatska-pred-velikim-sigurnosnim-izazovom-tko-su-dzihadisti-koji-se-vracaju-u-bih-1302901> (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 85 “Zbog pridruživanja ISIL-u podignuta optužnica protiv Ibre Ćufurovića”, *Dnevni list*, July 15, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/zbog-pridruzivanja-isil-u-podignuta-optuznica-protiv-ibre-cufurovica> (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 86 Darko Momić, “BiH ponovo u centru svjetske pažnje zbog terorizma”, *Glas Srpske*, June 28, 2019. http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/BiH-ponovo-u-centru-svjetske-paznje-zbog-terorizma/287269 (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 87 “Ovo su vođe balkanskih džihadista”, *Večernji list*, January 27, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/ovo-su-vo-e-balkanskih-dzihadista-1297130> (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 88 “PRST U OKO ZAPADU: Bošnjačka vjerska i politička elita odala počast lideru Muslimanskog bratstva”, *Dnevni list*, June 24, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/prst-u-oko-zapadu-bosnjacka-vjerska-i-politicka-elita-odala-pocast-lideru-muslimanskog-bratstva> (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 89 Dragana Orlović, “Zemlja rizika”, *Glas Srpske*, July 24, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/cir/komentar/komentar_dana/zemlja-rizika/3608 (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 90 Davor Ivanković, “U BiH se vraća stotinu boraca ISIL-a, SOA pojačava provjere”, *Večernji list*, March 20, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/svijet/u-bih-se-vraca-stotinu-boraca-isil-a-soa-pojacava-provjere-1307924> (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 91 Zoran Krešić, Goran Sudar. “Muđžahedini iz rata siju smrt po BiH u miru”, *Večernji list*, February 13, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/mudzahedini-iz-rata-siju-smrt-po-bih-u-miru-1300549> (accessed 14 September 2019).
- 92 “Srpska upozorava na rizik od terorizma i migrantske krize u BiH”, *Glas Srpske*, May 6, 2019. http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Srpska-upozorava-na-rizik-od-terorizma-i-migrantske-krize-u-BiH/283759.

Constructing the Internal Enemy

<p>“Without additional security measures, Bosnia at higher risk of facing terrorism from returning ISIL fighters.”⁹³</p>	<p>“ISIL terrorist: Edvin Babić, known as Osman from Sarajevo, surrenders.”⁹⁴</p>	<p>“Terrorism a constant threat.”⁹⁵</p>
<p>“Former ISIL fighters soon returning to Bosnia and Herzegovina.”⁹⁶</p>	<p>“ISIL member from Bosnia and Herzegovina sentenced in Berlin.”⁹⁷</p>	<p>“Bosnian terrorist flees Syria to Libya?”⁹⁸</p>
<p>“Deported from Slovenia because of radicalism. They returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina.”⁹⁹</p>	<p>“Intelligence agencies preparing new operation: Women and children of Bosnian ISIL fighters to be deported to Bosnia?”¹⁰⁰</p>	<p>“Jihadi Delić under special surveillance.”¹⁰¹</p>

93 Zoran Krešić, “Bez mjera veći rizik od terorizma u BiH i na Balkanu povratkom ratnika iz ISIL-a”, *Večernji list*, May 20, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/bez-mjera-veci-rizik-od-terorizma-u-bih-i-na-balkanu-povratkom-ratnika-iz-isil-a-1320360> (accessed 14 September 2019).

94 “TERORIST ISIL-a: Predao se Edvin Babić zvani Osman iz Sarajeva”, *Dnevni list*, March 5, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/terorist-isil-a-predao-se-edvin-babic-zvani-osman-iz-sarajeva> (accessed 14 September 2019).

95 “Terorizam stalna prijetnja”, *Glas Srpska*, January 21, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/terorizam-stalna-prijetnja/277284.

96 Zoran Krešić, “Bivši pripadnici ISIL-a uskoro stižu u BiH.” *Večernji list*, May 15, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/bivsi-pripadnici-isil-a-uskoro-stizu-u-bih-1319294> (accessed 14 September 2019).

97 “Pristaša ISIL-a iz BiH osuđen u Berlinu”, *Dnevni list*, February 27, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/pristasa-isil-a-iz-bih-osuden-u-berlinu> (accessed 27 February 2019).

98 “Terorista iz BiH iz Sirije pobjegao u Libiju?” *Glas Srpske*, March 3, 2019. http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Terrorista-iz-BiH-iz-Sirije-pobjegao-u-Libiju/279916 (accessed 14 September 2019).

99 “Protjerani iz Slovenije zbog radikalizma. Vratili se u BiH”, *Večernji list*, March 24, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/protjerani-iz-slovenije-zbog-radikalizma-vratili-se-u-bih-1308744> (accessed 14 September 2019).

100 “OBAVJEŠTAJNE SLUŽBE PRIPREMAJU AKCIJU: Organizira se povratak žena i djece bosanskih ISIL-ovaca?” *Dnevni list*, February 19, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/obavjestajne-sluzbe-pripremaju-akciju-organizira-se-povratak-zena-i-djece-bosanskih-isil-ovaca> (accessed 14 September 2019).

101 V.Z., “Džihadlija Delić pod posebnom prismotrom”, *Glas Srpske*, January 17, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Dzihadlija-Delic-pod-posebnom-prismotrom/277062 (accessed 14 September 2019).

"It is a fact: Islamists in Bosnia and Herzegovina are a threat."¹⁰²

"Children of dead Bosnian terrorist resettled in Australia."¹⁰³

"10,000 Bosnian mujahedeen ready for jihad."¹⁰⁴

Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media display a pervasive tendency to focus on the allegedly threatening nature of Bosniak Muslims, depicting them as prone to religious radicalism. This connection is established through chains of association with international terrorist groups (mostly ISIL) and a range of narrative elements (e.g. Bosniak Muslim *mujahedeen* fighters). Such threats are depicted as both realistic, in the sense that they may cause physical harm to other ethno-national groups (Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs), and symbolic, in the sense that they may pose a challenge or threat to the established cultural and religious values of those groups.

First, the most common association made between Bosniak Muslims and terrorism in these media is of them being an extension of existing global terrorist networks, specifically ISIL and, to a lesser extent, Al Qaida. Many articles from the period in question focus on Bosnian ISIL fighters from Syria and Iraq and the threat they do or may pose to the country and region. In articles such as "These are the individuals who have surrendered in Syria, who will be deported to Bosnia and Herzegovina,"¹⁰⁵ "Croatia faces a huge security challenge: Who are the jihadis

102 Davor Ivanković, "Ne treba izmišljati, islamisti iz BiH jesu prijetnja." *Večernji list*, March 15, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.hr/premium/ne-treba-izmišljati-islamisti-iz-bih-jesu-prijetnja-1306848> (accessed 14 September 2019).

103 "Australija preuzima djecu poginulog bosanskog teroriste", *Dnevni list*, June 26, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/australija-preuzima-djecu-poginulog-bosanskog-teroriste> (accessed 14 September 2019).

104 Veljko Zeljković, "Za džihad u BiH spremno 10.000 mudžahidina" *Glas Srpske*, January 16, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Za-dzihad-u-BiH-spremano-10000-mudzahedina/277007 (accessed 14 September 2019).

105 "Ovo su osobe koje su se predale u Siriji, oni će biti vraćeni u BiH" *Večernji list*, March 13, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/ovo-su-osobe-koje-su-se-predale-u-siriji-oni-ce-biti-vraceni-u-bih-1306429> (accessed 14 September 2019).

returning to Bosnia and Herzegovina,”¹⁰⁶ “Intelligence agencies preparing new operation: Women and children of Bosnian ISIL fighters to be deported to Bosnia”¹⁰⁷ and “They came to Bosnia after fighting in Afghanistan, then waged jihad around the world”¹⁰⁸ a direct link is posited between the Bosniak Muslims and global radical Muslim groups. These newspapers systematically chose international events that fit their negative interpretations of Islam and stereotypes of Muslims, while the structures of their articles attempt to show a spill-over effect of Middle Eastern conflicts onto the Balkans. In “Croatia faces a huge security challenge: Who are the jihadis returning to Bosnia and Herzegovina?”, the journalist also claims that “Unlike member states of the European Union, Bosnia and Herzegovina has agreed to take back any citizens who fought on the side of the terrorist Islamic state group...”¹⁰⁹ Speaking of returning Bosnian ISIL fighters, the author adds “They are returning with a bloodthirsty ideology, ready to die in the name of Allah, for the very same reasons they went to fight in Syria and Iraq. Security agencies must pay close attention to the many sympathizers that ISIL has in Bosnia, who finance the organization and share its ideology. They are far more dangerous, as they are in hiding and waiting.”¹¹⁰

106 Hassan Haidar Diab, “Hrvatska pred velikim sigurnosnim izazovom: Tko su džihadisti koji se vraćaju u BiH?” *Večernji list*, February 24, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/svijet/hrvatska-pred-velikim-sigurnosnim-izazovom-tko-su-dzihadisti-koji-se-vracaju-u-bih-1302901> (accessed 14 September 2019).

107 “OBAVJEŠTAJNE SLUŽBE PRIPREMaju AKCIJU: Organizira se povratak žena i djece bosanskih ISIL-ovaca?” *Dnevni list*, February 19, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/obavjestajne-sluzbe-pripremaju-akciju-organizira-se-povratak-zena-i-djece-bosanskih-isil-ovaca> (accessed 14 September 2019).

108 Hassan Haidar Diab, “U BiH su došli nakon ratovanja u Afganistanu. Išli su u džihad po cijelom svijetu”, *Večernji list*, February 17, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/u-bih-su-dosli-nakon-ratovanja-u-afganistanu-isli-su-u-dzihad-po-cijelom-svijetu-1301385> (accessed 14 September 2019).

109 Hassan Haidar Diab, “Hrvatska pred velikim sigurnosnim izazovom: Tko su džihadisti koji se vraćaju u BiH?” *Večernji list*, February 24, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/svijet/hrvatska-pred-velikim-sigurnosnim-izazovom-tko-su-dzihadisti-koji-se-vracaju-u-bih-1302901> (accessed 14 September 2019).

110 Hassan Haidar Diab, “Hrvatska pred velikim sigurnosnim izazovom: Tko su džihadisti koji se vraćaju u BiH?”.

In other words, Bosniak Muslims are depicted as the medium through which radicalism is transmitted from the Middle East to Europe. One sees the same in an article entitled “A poke in the eye of the West: Bosniak religious and political elite pays tribute to the leader of Muslim brotherhood”,¹¹¹ which accused the entire Bosniak Muslim political elite of being sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood Islamist movement. The authors of these texts deploy radicalism as a frame for understanding Middle Eastern conflicts, while subtly utilising Islam, the religion of Bosniak Muslims, as a threat-marker posed to the rest of the country and region. As a means of emphasizing their alleged connections to Middle Eastern terrorist groups, Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers often juxtapose photographs of masked non-Bosnian fighters from the Syrian and Iraqi warzones with articles on the increased risk of terrorist activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There is also the management of *vagueness* and *clarity* in the discourse on radicalism. Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat media remain rather vague about Croat and Serb fighters who have travelled to fight in the Ukraine with pro-Russian separatists or the role played by Orthodox Christianity. On the other hand, their *clarity* in reporting on the relatively small number of Bosniak Muslim volunteers to have travelled to join extremist groups in Middle Eastern countries has acted as a catalyst in constructing Bosniak Muslims as an alleged security threat. In articles such as “These are the leaders of Balkan jihadis”,¹¹² “Children of dead Bosnian terrorist resettled in Australia”,¹¹³ “ISIL terrorist: Edvin

111 “PRST U OKO ZAPADU: Bošnjačka vjerska i politička elita odala počast lideru Muslimanskog bratstva”, *Dnevni list*, June 24, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/prst-u-okozapadu-bosnjacka-vjerska-i-politicka-elita-odala-pocast-lideru-muslimanskog-bratstva> (accessed 14 September 2019).

112 “Ovo su vođe balkanskih džihadista”, *Večernji list*, January 27, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/ovo-su-vo-e-balkanskih-dzihadista-1297130> (accessed 14 September 2019).

113 “Australija preuzima djecu poginulog bosanskog teroriste”, *Dnevni list*, June 26, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/australija-preuzima-djecu-poginulog-bosanskog-teroriste> (accessed 14 September 2019).

Babić, known as Osman from Sarajevo, surrenders”¹¹⁴ and “Ibro Ćufurović indicted for joining ISIL”¹¹⁵ the accent is on the ethno-national affiliation of the ISIL fighters, whether explicitly or implicitly. Such identity markers point to a link between Bosniaks, Islam and terrorism and only act to strengthen the ideological dimension of the intended discourse. The war in Syria and Iraq and the atrocities committed by ISIL serve to amplify Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media’s culturally framed discourses and integrate them with the framing of national security debates. The juxtaposition of Bosniak Muslim radicals domestically and Muslim extremist groups internationally only serves to strengthen the construction of an overreaching “Islamic threat” linked to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such association of Bosniak Muslims with violent extremists around the world creates a sense of insecurity and distrust among the other two ethno-national groups, with potential repercussions for the general social representation of Bosniak Muslims in the country and region.

Finally, the alleged arming of Bosniak Muslims is used to denote possible transitions from rhetoric towards violent conflict in the country and consequently as posing a threat to the region. This was the theme in articles like “Orić’s friend calls for Bosniaks to arm themselves”¹¹⁶ and “Why are all armaments factories in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the hands of Bosniaks?”¹¹⁷ The notion being put forward is that not only are Bosniak Muslims ready to

114 “TERORIST ISIL-a: Predao se Edvin Babić zvani Osman iz Sarajeva”, *Dnevni list*, March 5, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/terorist-isil-a-predao-se-edvin-babic-zvani-osman-iz-sarajeva> (accessed 14 September 2019).

115 “Zbog pridruživanja ISIL-u podignuta optužnica protiv Ibre Ćufurovića”, *Dnevni list*, July 15, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/zbog-pridruzivanja-isil-u-podignuta-optuznica-protiv-ibre-cufurovica> (accessed 14 September 2019).

116 “Orićev prijatelj poziva Bošnjake da se naoružaju”, *Glas Srpske*, April 21, 2019. http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Oricev-prijatelj-poziva-Bosnjake-da-se-naoruzaju/282887 (accessed 14 September 2019).

117 “Zašto su fabrike oružja u BiH u rukama Bošnjaka”, *Glas Srpske*, February 11, 2019. http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Zasto-su-fabrike-oruzja-u-BiH-u-rukama-Bosnjaka/278634 (accessed 14 September 2019).

arm themselves but, in case of another war, they will have plenty of weapons at their disposal. Similarly, in articles such as “10,000 Bosnian mujahedeen ready for jihad,” “A high-risk country,” “These are the leaders of Balkan jihadis,” “Bosnia once again at the centre of world attention because of terrorism,” and “16.9% of Mostar citizens say they support ISIL,” Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media deploy the number game as an ideological tool to strengthen their argument that Bosniak Muslims pose a security threat, without however backing up their figures with reliable sources. The reference to “mujahedeen” fighters, a now non-existent war-time military unit, is a clear attempt to link alleged Bosniak Muslim extremists today to the 1992-1995 war for independence and, however retroactively, present the Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb war against Bosniak Muslims as a “war on terror.” Moreover, all this talk of radical Bosniak Muslim fighters being ready and waiting to wage war frames them in a *sleeping cell* narrative and casts suspicion on them (and on anyone displaying similar physical features) as a potential security threat. Such a suspicious tone towards Bosniak Muslims intertwines with the Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat public’s opinion of the recent war and heightens fears of Bosniaks as the dominant ethno-national population. It also casts doubt on them as a “suspect community” and a symbolic threat to the two other ethnonational groups - Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs.

III. MUSLIM MIGRANTS AS A THREAT TO CHRISTIAN EUROPE

The third major theme associated with the terms “Muslim” and “Islam” is the issue of migrants and the notion of a Christian Europe. Even though the term “Christianity” was initially not

envisioned as part of this research, in the ensuing analyses it became evident how many depictions of refugees and migrants deployed the backdrop of a purportedly “Christian” Europe. In most discussion centring on the foundations of Europe as a continent and how Europeans perceive themselves and their values, it has been a commonplace to refer to Europe’s “Christian” character and its Christian roots, subtly or overtly. In this category, the following articles were analysed:

<i>Večernji list</i>	<i>Dnevni list</i>	<i>Glas Srpske</i>
“The number of Catholics in Bosnia and Herzegovina is decreasing; they do not enjoy the same rights as other citizens” ¹¹⁸	“The Hagia Sofia of Jajce: Islamic Community claims that the church is their mosque, but Franciscans call for a joint cultural centre” ¹¹⁹	“Styrian guard defending country’s borders against Muslims.” ¹²⁰
“They gave refuge to migrants in Ljubuški, but migrants destroyed their homes and threw out crucifixes.” ¹²¹	“A new migrant route across Bosnia and Herzegovina in the making.”	“The Battle of Kosovo is a battle for a Christian Europe.” ¹²²

118 “Katolika u BiH sve manje, ne uživaju ista prava kao i drugi građani”, *Večernji list*, August 3, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/katolika-u-bih-sve-manje-ne-uzivaju-ista-prava-kao-i-drugi-gra-ani-1262051> (accessed 14 September 2019).

119 “JAJAČKA AJA SOFIJA’ Medzlis tvrdi da je crkva njihova džamija, a franjevci žele zajednički spomenik kulture”, *Dnevni list*, July 30, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/jajacka-aja-sofija-medzlis-tvrdi-da-je-crkva-njihova-dzamija-a-franjevci-zele-zajednicki-spomenik-kulture> (accessed 14 September 2019).

120 “Štajerska garda’ brani granice od muslimana”, *Glas Srpske*, September 5, 2018. <https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/region/Stajerska-garda-brani-granice-od-muslimana/269026>

121 “Dovodili migrante u kuće kod Ljubuškog, a oni uništili sve što se uništiti moglo i pobacali križeve”, *Večernji list*, August 20, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/dovodili-migrante-u-kuce-kod-ljubuskog-a-oni-unistili-sve-sto-se-unistiti-moglo-i-pobacali-krizeve-1339731> (accessed 14 September 2019).

122 “Fotije: Kosovska bitka je borba za čitavu hrišćansku Evropu”, *Glas Srpske*, June 27, 2019. <http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/drustvo/vijesti/Fotije-Kosovska-bitka-je-borba-za-citavu-hriscansku-Evropu/287251>

<p>“Which countries are migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina coming from?”¹²³</p>	<p>“Dodik: The solution is: division of Bosnia and Herzegovina.”¹²⁴</p>	<p>“Statue to John Hunyadi unveiled.”¹²⁵</p>
<p>“Migrants may cause collapse of Europe’s economy; in Bosnia and Herzegovina they may even create conflict.”¹²⁶</p>	<p>“The Balkans are becoming a buffer zone for migrants.”¹²⁷</p>	<p>“Notre Dame Cathedral bells rang in honour of Serbian army in 1389.”¹²⁸</p>
<p>“Does Europe have a Christian identity or is it just a myth?”¹²⁹</p>	<p>“Will migrants stay permanently in Bosnia and Herzegovina?”¹³⁰</p>	<p>“Migrants becoming a serious problem in Banja Luka.”¹³¹</p>

123 “Iz kojih i kakvih zemalja dolazi najviše migranata u BiH”, Večernji list, August 12, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/iz-kjih-i-kakvih-zemalja-dolazi-najvise-migranata-u-bih-1337793> (accessed 14 September 2019).

124 “Dodik: Rješenje da se BiH podijeli”, *Dnevni list*, August 6, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/dodik-rjesenje-da-se-bih-podijeli/>.

125 “Otkriven spomenik Janku Sibirjaninu”, *Glas Srpske*, July 22, 2019. <https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/srbija/otkriven-spomenik-janku-sibirjaninu/288979>.

126 Željko Andrijić, “Migranti mogu urušiti gospodarstvo Europe, a u BiH može doći do sukoba”, Večernji list, July 4, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/migranti-mogu-urusiti-gospodarstvo-europe-a-u-bih-moze-doci-do-sukoba-1329981> (accessed 14 September 2019).

127 “Balkan postaje tampon zona za migrante”, *Dnevni list*, July 15, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/balkan-postaje-tampon-zona-za-migrante> (accessed 14 September 2019).

128 “Notr Dam zvonio u čast srpske vojske”, *Glas Srpske*, April 15, 2019. <http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/plus/istorija/Notr-Dam-zvonio-u-cast-srpske-vojske-1389/282493>.

129 Ivan Markešić, “Postoji li kršćanski identitet zapadne Europe ili je on mit?”, Večernji list, april 23, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/postoji-li-krscan-ski-identitet-zapadne-europe-ili-je-on-mit-1314819>.

130 “HOĆE LI MIGRANTI TRAJNO OSTATI U BiH?”, *Dnevni list*, August 27, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/hoce-li-migranti-trajno-ostati-u-bih> (accessed 14 September 2019).

131 Veljko Zeljković, “Migranti u Banjaluci postali ozbiljan problem”, *Glas Srpske*, February 6, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Migranti-u-Banjaluci-postali-ozbiljan-problem/278295.

<p>“Migrants creating chaos in Bihac”¹³²</p>	<p>Worst yet to come: migrant route expanding along Herzegovina Neretva Canton, West Herzegovina Canton and Herzeg-Bosnia Canton.¹³³</p>	<p>Lukač: Migrants will not be allowed to stay in the Serb Republic.¹³⁴</p>
<p>Violent migrants creating fear in Hercegovina.¹³⁵</p>	<p>“The crisis is escalating, but the state has no solution to it.”¹³⁶</p>	<p>“We have become only remaining bulwark against migrants entering the EU.”¹³⁷</p>
<p>“Serbs against migrant centre in Medeno Polje.”¹³⁸</p>	<p>“The number of migrants in West Hercegovina Canton increasing, security stepped up.”¹³⁹</p>	<p>“They lie to migrants in Sarajevo about receiving a warm welcome in Banjaluka.”¹⁴⁰</p>

The discourse on migrants and refugee flows in Bosnia and Herzegovina often depicts them in the context of security threat, as coming from unsafe Muslim majority countries with major

132 “Migranti prave kaos u Bihacu: Jednog napali sjekirom, drugi teško ozlijeđen”, *Večernji list*, August 11, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/crna-kronika/migranti-prave-kaos-u-bihacu-jednog-napali-sjekirom-drugi-tesko-ozlije-je-en-1337828> (accessed 14 September 2019).

133 “Najteže tek dolazi, migrantska trasa širi se na HNŽ, ŽZH i HBŽ”, *Dnevni list*, August 10, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/najteze-tek-dolazi-migrantska-trasa-siri-se-na-hnz-zzh-i-hbz> (accessed 14 September 2019).

134 Darko Mamić, “Lukač: Migranti neće ostati u Srpskoj”, *Glas Srpske*, July 17, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/lukac-migranti-nece-ostati-u-srpskoj/288594 (accessed 18 December 2019).

135 Braco Selimović, “Nasilni migranti siju strah po Hercegovini”, *Večernji list*, April 26, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/nasilni-migranti-siju-strah-po-hercegovini-1315490>

136 “Križa eskalira, država bez odgovora”, *Dnevni list*, June 6, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/kriza-eskalira-drzava-bez-odgovora/>.

137 “Karan: Postali smo posljednja brana migrantima za ulazak u EU”, *Glas Srpske*, June 18, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Karan-Postali-smo-posljednja-brana-migrantima-za-ulazak-u-EU/286617.

138 “Srbi protiv migrantskog centra u Medenom Polju”, *Večernji list*, August 26, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/srbi-protiv-migrantskog-centra-u-medenom-polju-1340857>.

139 “Povećan broj migranata u ZHŽ-u, pojačana kontrola”, *Dnevni list*, August 5, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/povecan-broj-migranata-u-zhz-u-pojacana-kontrola/>.

140 Darko Momić, “Migrantima u Sarajevu svjesno lažu o dočeku u Banjaluci”, *Glas Srpske*, February 7, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Migrantima-u-Sarajevu-svjesno-lazu-o-docek-u-Banjaluci/279509 (accessed 14 September 2019).

security concerns and so as having the potential to escalate the country's existing economic woes. In an article published in *Večernji list*, "Which countries are migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina coming from,"¹⁴¹ the emphasis is on their ethnicity and that they come from Muslim-majority countries. The article also lists recent suicide- and terrorist-attacks in those countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh), clearly framing them as unstable and Muslim and so prone to terrorism, and implying that their citizens (migrants passing through Bosnia) are potential carriers of such instability and insecurity. Significantly, the culturalist approach adopted sometimes, if not always, by these newspapers tends to focus on the migrants' culture and religion of origin rather than the broader political, economic and social contexts that have led them to flee their countries in the first place. In other articles, such as "Migrants creating chaos in Bihać"¹⁴² and "Migrants may produce collapse of Europe's economy, in Bosnia and Herzegovina they may even create conflict,"¹⁴³ the accent is on migrants as an economic and security threat to Bosnia's native population. Their allegedly violent nature is accentuated and there is an interesting attempt to show them as having anti-Christian sentiments. A case in point is an article entitled "They gave refuge to migrants in Ljubuški, but the migrants destroyed their homes and threw out the crucifixes,"¹⁴⁴ where migrants are depicted as ungrateful and

141 "Iz kojih i kakvih zemalja dolazi najviše migranata u BiH", *Večernji list*, August 12, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/iz-kjih-i-kakvih-zemalja-dolazi-najvise-migranata-u-bih-1337793> (accessed 14 September 2019).

142 "Migranti prave kaos u Bihaću: Jednog napali sjekirom, drugi teško ozlijeđen", *Večernji list*, August 11, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/crna-kronika/migranti-prave-kaos-u-bihacu-jednog-napali-sjekirom-drugi-tesko-ozlijeđen-1337828> (accessed 14 September 2019).

143 Željko Andrijačić, "Migranti mogu urušiti gospodarstvo Europe, a u BiH može doći do sukoba", *Večernji list*, July 4, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/migranti-mogu-urusiti-gospodarstvo-europe-a-u-bih-moze-doci-do-sukoba-1329981> (accessed 14 September 2019).

144 "Dovodili migrante u kuće kod Ljubuškog, a oni uništili sve što se uništiti moglo i pobacali križeve", *Večernji list*, August 20, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/dovodili-migrante-u-kuce-kod-ljubuskog-a-oni-unistili-sve-sto-se-unistiti-moglo-i-pobacali-krizeve-1339731> (accessed 14 September 2019).

violent – going so far as to throw out the crucifixes from the houses of Croat-Catholics who were kind enough to host them.

Then there is the narrative of migrants and refugees as presenting an active cultural threat. The threat is conceptualised on perceived cultural differences between native Bosnians as the in-group and Muslim migrants as the out-group. Bosniak Muslims are often portrayed as being the most welcoming towards migrants and refugees. Without stating it directly, the articles allude to their shared religious affiliation with Middle Eastern and Asian migrants. On the opposite end, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats are depicted as vigilant and wary of the presence of Muslim migrants in the country. This is evident in articles like “The number of migrants in the West Hercegovina Canton is increasing, security stepped up,”¹⁴⁵ “Serbs against a migrant centre in Medeno Polje”¹⁴⁶ and in the afore-mentioned article “They gave refuge to migrants in Ljubuški, but migrants destroyed their homes and threw out the crucifixes.”¹⁴⁷ It was also apparent in “Violent migrants sowing fear in Hercegovina,”¹⁴⁸ which painted migrants from Algeria, Syria and Libya as causing trouble, robbing businesses and terrifying the local population in the town of Čapljina, which is inhabited predominantly by Bosnian Croats. The references in these articles to *Hercegovina*, *West Hercegovina Canton*, and the towns of Čapljina and *Ljubuški* are no accident. Anyone acquainted with Bosnian ethnic demo-

145 “Povećan broj migranata u ZHŽ-u, pojačana kontrola”, *Dnevni list*, August 5, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/povecan-broj-migranata-u-zhz-u-pojacana-kontrola/>.

146 “Srbi protiv migrantskog centra u Medenom Polju”, *Večernji list*, August 26, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/srbi-protiv-migrantskog-centra-u-medenom-polju-1340857>.

147 “Dovodili migrante u kuće kod Ljubuškog, a oni uništili sve što se uništiti moglo i pobacali križeve”, *Večernji list*, August 20, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/dovodili-migrante-u-kuce-kod-ljubuskog-a-oni-unistili-sve-sto-se-uništiti-moglo-i-pobacali-krizeve-1339731>.

148 Braco Selimović, “Nasilni migranti siju strah po Hercegovini”, *Večernji list*, April 26, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/nasilni-migranti-siju-strah-po-hercegovini-1315490>.

graphics knows that West Herzegovina Canton is nearly 98% inhabited by Bosnian Croats/Catholics and that Ljubuški is that Canton's biggest town. Likewise, in the article "Migrants will not be allowed to stay in the Serb Republic"¹⁴⁹ and "Migrants becoming a serious problem in Banja Luka,"¹⁵⁰ there is a stress on Middle Eastern and Asian migrants not being welcome in the Republika Srpska, the almost homogenously Orthodox-Christian and semi-autonomous half of the country. Observing this from within a broader perspective, the influx of refugees is inextricably linked not only to crossing state and cantonal borders, but to crossing cultural and religious borders. A confined territory in Bosnia and Herzegovina, whether the Bosnian Croat towns of Ljubuški and Čapljina or the Republika Srpska, becomes a cultural-spatial container marked by a precise distinction between a Christian culture and intruding Muslim migrants. All three articles subtly put forward the notion that Orthodox Christian Serbs and Catholic Croats are very much opposed to the influx of (Muslim) migrants. Non-state borders, such as those of the Croat majority canton or the Serb majority entity, gain a cultural and religious connotation. This use of political and geographical allegory may not at first be so clear to the outside observer as to the local audience, but references to West Herzegovina Canton are at the same time clearly references to a Catholic majority territory that has for years been ruled by the right-wing Croat Democratic Party (HDZ).

The underlying narrative of Europe as having Christian foundations is an integral part of depicting Europe as a Christian continent and Bosnian Serbs and Croats as Christian *insiders* and Muslim as *outsiders*. In some articles, this narrative is unconcealed and

149 Darko Momić, "Darko Čulum za Glas Srpske: Migranti neće ostati u Srpskoj", *Glas Srpske*, August 4, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Darko-Culum-za-Glas-Srpske-Migranti-nece-ostati-u-Srpskoj/266937.

150 Veljko Zeljković, "Migranti u Banjaluci postali ozbiljan problem", *Glas Srpske*, February 6, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Migranti-u-Banjaluci-postali-ozbiljan-problem/278295.

obvious. For example, the article “Statue to John Hunyadi unveiled”¹⁵¹ presents the Hungarian military and political figure as a hero who defended Serbia and Christian Europe from the marauding Ottoman Turks. It is worth noting that John Hunyadi is considered a hero not only by Hungarians and Romanians, but also by Serbs. In an article titled “*Styrian guard defend country’s borders against Muslims*,”¹⁵² the accent is on a self-organized paramilitary unit defending Europe’s borders against allegedly intruding Muslim migrants. An interesting article trying to establish a link between Serbs and European Christianity was published on the day Notre Dame Cathedral was in flames. The article entitled “Notre Dame Cathedral bells rang in honour of Serbian army in 1389”¹⁵³ was published in *Glas Srpske* and related a somewhat tenuous story of how the bells of the famed Parisian cathedral rang in 1389 during the Battle of Kosovo, which Serbian mythology celebrates as epitomising the struggle against the Ottoman Turks. In fact, the article defines the Battle of Kosovo as a “major Serbian-led Christian victory” over invading Muslim forces.

A similar narrative is also clearly being painted in an interview published by *Večernji list* with Vinko Puljić, Bosnian Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church and current Archbishop of Vrhbosna, who stated, “Europe must once again rediscover its roots, its Christian identity, only that way will it not fear Islamic radicalism.”¹⁵⁴ Speaking of his native Bosnia and Herzegovina,

151 “Otkriven spomenik Janku Sibirjaninu”, *Glas Srpske*, July 22, 2019. <https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/srbija/otkriven-spomenik-janku-sibirjaninu/288979> (accessed 18 December 2019).

152 “Štajerska garda’ brani granice od muslimana”, *Glas Srpske*, September 5, 2018. <https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/region/Stajerska-garda-brani-granice-od-muslimana/269026>.

153 “Notr Dam zvonio u čast srpske vojske 1389”, *Glas Srpske*, April 15, 2019. <http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/plus/istorija/Notr-Dam-zvonio-u-cast-srpske-vojske-1389/282493>.

154 “Katolika u BiH sve manje, ne uživaju ista prava kao i drugi građani”, *Večernji list*, August 3, 2018. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/katolika-u-bih-sve-manje-ne-uzivaju-ista-prava-kao-i-drugi-gra-ani-1262051>.

he added, “Large investments from the Arab world are preparing the way for the construction of mosques” and that “unfortunately, Europe does not know what it means to live side by side with Islamic radicalism.”¹⁵⁵

The only Muslims living side by side with Bosnian Croats are Bosniak Muslims; hence, the Cardinal was clearly trying to associate Bosniak Muslims with Islamic radicalism.

Something like this is also present in an interview by Konstanin Dobrilović of Austria’s Christian-Freedom Platform. Of Serb origin, in an interview with *Glas Srpske*, he stated that “A strong European far right is important for the Republika Srpska”¹⁵⁶ and that “The basis of our program is for Europe to remain firmly founded on Christian tradition and culture, especially in times when we are witnessing an ever more aggressive Islamic intrusion into Europe.”¹⁵⁷ An article published in *Glas Srpske* and entitled “The Battle of Kosovo is a battle for a Christian Europe”¹⁵⁸ subtly presented Bosnian Serbs along similar lines, in light of the Kosovo political issue, as defending Christian Europe against Muslim Albanians. In other words, Serbs were presented, or rather they tried to present themselves, as being the bulwark of Christianity in a wider battle against Muslims (here personified in the form of Albanian Muslims).

The *Glas Srpske* newspaper, citing the General Secretary of the Republika Srpska, Siniša Karan, similarly presents the Serb Republic as the only remaining bulwark against migrants com-

155 “Katolika u BiH sve manje, ne uživaju ista prava kao i drugi građani”, *Večernji list*.

156 Darko Momić, “Konstanin Dobrilović, lider austrijske Hrišćanske-slobodarske platforme: Snažna evropska desnica važna i za Srpsku”, *Glas Srpske*, May 16, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/konstanin-dobrilovic-lider-austrijske-hriscanske-slobodarske-platforme-snazna-evropska-desnica-važna-i-za-srpsku/284313

157 Darko Momić, “Konstanin Dobrilović, lider austrijske Hrišćanske-slobodarske platforme: Snažna evropska desnica važna i za Srpsku”.

158 “Fotije: Kosovska bitka je borba za čitavu hrišćansku Evropu”, *Glas Srpske*, June 27, 2019. <http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/drustvo/vijesti/Fotije-Kosovska-bitka-je-borba-za-citavu-hriscansku-Evropu/287251>.

ing from Pakistan, Syria, Iran and Iraq.¹⁵⁹ It is worth noting that the term “Christianity” in the articles cited above seems to be used more often to refer to a vague set of values and cultural concepts than in any religious sense. The anti-migrant and anti-Muslim narratives that now dominate Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers seem to have been imported from Western European far-right discourses, in which Islam is framed in the context of a cultural war between the Christian West and the Muslim world. Despite both being highly fragmented in reality, Muslim and Christian Europeans are both thus depicted as monolithic communities united in possession of their respective unitary cultures, ideologies and values.

A counter narrative? The discourse of Islam and Muslims in Bosniak-owned newspapers

<i>Oslobođenje</i>	<i>Dnevni Avaz</i>
“Wives of former ISIL fighters are not shooting targets.” ¹⁶⁰	“Croatian intelligence agency: We deny allegations of arming Salafis, we demand explanations from Bosnia’s intelligence.” ¹⁶¹
“Are Muslims in Bosnia a problem?” ¹⁶²	“Why Bosniaks do not want to look like Bakir Izetbegović.” ¹⁶³

159 “Karan: Postali smo posljednja brana migrantima za ulazak u EU”, *Glas Srpske*, June 18, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Karan-Postali-smo-posljednja-brana-migrantima-za-ulazak-u-EU/286617.

160 Adem Džaferović, “Žene bivših boraca ISIL-a nisu mete za odstrel”, *Oslobođenje*, March 13, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/zene-bivsih-boraca-isil-a-nisu-mete-za-odstrel-440507>.

161 “SOA: Odbacujemo sve navode o naoružavanju selefija, tražili mo od OSA-e da se očituje”, *Dnevni avaz*, March 13, 2019. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/466297/soa-odbacujemo-sve-navode-o-naoruzavanju-selefija-trazili-smo-od-osa-e-da-se-ocituje>.

162 Ibrahim Prohić, “Jesu li muslimani u BiH problem?”, *Oslobođenje*, August 1, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/jesu-li-muslimani-u-bih-problem-478467>.

163 “Zašto Bošnjaci neće da liče na Bakira Izetbegovića”, *Dnevni avaz*, august 12, 2018. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/404994/zasto-bosnjaci-nece-da-lice-na-bakira-izetbegovica>.

<p>"Islamophobia: lessons from the Srebrenica genocide."¹⁶⁴</p>	<p>"Are we ready for the return of jihadis and the remnants of ISIL?"¹⁶⁵</p>
<p>"Fra Ivo Marković: Christians did not understand what Islam and Muslims are. Shocked, they answered with attacks and war."¹⁶⁶</p>	<p>"Who is trying to create a <i>green left</i> and why?"¹⁶⁷</p>
<p>"Migrants fearing upcoming winter. Volunteers exhausted."¹⁶⁸</p>	<p>"SBB: Dodik intentionally insulting the victims of genocide and Bosniaks as a nation."¹⁶⁹</p>
<p>"What Kolinda denied saying."¹⁷⁰</p>	<p>"Muslims are the major victims of terrorism."¹⁷¹</p>

164 Dunja Mijatović, "Islamofobija: pouke iz srebreničkog genocida", *Oslobođenje*, July 10, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/dosjei/kolumne/islamofobija-pouke-iz-srebrenickog-genocida-472013>.

165 Amina Nuhanović, "Jesmo li spremni za povratak džihadista i zaostavštinu Islamske države!", *Dnevni avaz*, Aroil 14, 2019. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/475535/jesmo-li-spremni-za-povratak-dzihadista-i-zaostavstinu-islamske-drzave>.

166 Alena Beširević, "Fra Ivo Marković: Kršćani nisu pogledali šta je islam i ko su muslimani, te šokirani širenjem odgovarali su samo napadima i ratovima", *Oslobođenje*, March 24, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/fra-ivo-markovic-krscani-nisu-pogledali-sta-je-islam-i-ko-su-muslimani-te-sokirani-sirenjem-odgovarali-su-samo-napadima-i-ratovima-443818>.

167 E. Maslo, "Ko i zbog čega pravi 'zelenu ljevicu'?", *Dnevni avaz*, August 28, 2018. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/512355/tragom-izjave-nermina-niksica-ko-i-zbog-cega-pravi-zelenu-ljevicu> (accessed 18 December 2019).

168 "Migranti u strahu od jeseni, volonteri na izmaku snaga", *Oslobođenje*, September 7, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/migranti-u-strahu-od-jeseni-volonteri-na-izmaku-snaga-488118>.

169 "SBB: Dodik planirano nastavlja da vrijeđa žrtve genocida i Bošnjake", *Dnevni avaz*, August 20, 2018. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/406979/sbb-dodik-planirano-nastavlja-da-vrijeda-zrtve-genocida-i-bosnjake> (accessed 18 December 2019).

170 Hajrudin Somun, "Šta je Kolinda porekla da je rekla", *Oslobođenje*, August 9, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/dosjei/kolumne/sta-je-kolinda-porekla-da-je-rekla-480338>.

171 S. Numanović, "Muslimani i dalje najbrojnije žrtve terorističkih napada", *Dnevni avaz*, August 16, 2018. <https://avaz.ba/globus/svijet/406131/muslimani-i-dalje-najbrojnije-zrtve-teroristickih-napada>.

Constructing the Internal Enemy

<p>“Close to one hundred Bosnian citizens waiting to be returned to Bosnia from Syrian camps. A chance for a new life?”¹⁷²</p>	<p>“Salafis from Dubnice disenchanting: they are painting targets on our backs.”¹⁷³</p>
<p>“Nermin Ogrišević: Bosniaks are currently the most oppressed nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.”¹⁷⁴</p>	<p>“A new wave of migrants is coming to Bosnia and Herzegovina.”¹⁷⁵</p>
<p>“Migrants have brought certain benefits to Krajina: people see them coming, but not leaving.”¹⁷⁶</p>	<p>“The Dutch sent people to their deaths, now they are poking fun at them.”¹⁷⁷</p>
<p>“Tuđman: There will not be any Muslim areas, except as a small part of the Croatian state.”¹⁷⁸</p>	<p>“25,000 new migrants coming to Bosnia and Herzegovina.”¹⁷⁹</p>

- 172 Aldijana Zorlak, “Blizu stotinu bh. državljana čeka na povratak u BiH iz sirijskih kampova: Šansa za drugi život?” *Oslobođenje*, June 27, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/blizu-stotinu-bh-drzavljanica-ceka-na-povratak-u-bih-iz-sirijskih-kampova-sansa-za-drugi-zivot-468504>.
- 173 E. Trako, “Selefije iz Dubice ogorčene: Prave od nas mete”, *Dnevni Avaz*, March 17, 2019. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/467123/selefije-iz-dubnice-ogorcene-prave-od-nas-mete>.
- 174 Fahrudin Bender, “Nermin Ogrišević: Bošnjaci su narod koji je trenutno najugroženiji u BiH”, *Oslobođenje*, February 14, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/dosjei/intervjui/nermin-ogresevic-bosnjaci-su-narod-koji-je-trenutno-najugrozeniji-u-bih-433251>.
- 175 E. Halimić, “Novi migrantski val dolazi u BiH”, *Dnevni avaz*, October 13, 2019. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/422298/novi-migrantski-val-dolazi-u-bih>.
- 176 Edina Kamenica, “Migranti su Krajini donijeli i benefite: Ljudi vide nove migrante kada dolaze, ali ih ne vide i kada odlaze”, *Oslobođenje*, October 23, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/migranti-su-krajini-donijeli-i-benefite-ljudi-vidi-nove-migrante-kada-dolaze-ali-ih-ne-vidi-i-kada-odlaze-403055>.
- 177 S. Degirmendžić, “Duraković: Holandani su poslali ljude u smrt, a presudom se izruguju i vrijeđaju nas”, *Dnevni avaz*, July 19, 2019. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/503478/durakovic-holandani-su-poslali-ljude-u-smrt-a-presudom-se-izruguju-i-vrijeđaju-nas> (accessed December 18, 2019).
- 178 “Tuđman: Neće biti muslimanskih područja, osim kao mali dio hrvatske države”, *Oslobođenje*, March 31, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/region/tudman-nece-bit-muslimanskih-podrucja-osim-kao-mali-dio-hrvatske-drzave-445715>.
- 179 K. Kešmer, “U BiH stiže novih 25.000 migranata!”, *Dnevni avaz*, February 16, 2019. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/458760/u-bih-stize-novih-25-000-migranata>.

In the final section of this work, we shall be analysing the discourse on Islam and Muslims in Bosniak-owned media. *Dnevni Avaz* is a newspaper owned by Fahrudin Radončić, leader of the *Union for a Better Future of BiH* (SBB) political party, while *Oslobođenje* is owned by Mujo Selimović, an influential businessman.

In the two newspapers being analysed, the dominant topics were mostly inter-Bosniak political debates, the war-related past, and the socio-political position of Bosniak Muslims in the country. Compared to the Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers analysed previous, which tended to present Muslims and Islam as monolithic and homogeneous, the Bosniak-owned newspapers were rather more nuanced and objective in their coverage of Islam and Muslims in Bosnia. In articles such as "On the Muslim question in Europe,"¹⁸⁰ "Fra Ivo Marković: Christians did not understand what Islam was and who Muslims were. Shocked, they answered with attacks and war,"¹⁸¹ "Are Muslims in Bosnia a problem"¹⁸² published in *Oslobođenje* and "A battle for the national identity and recognition of Bosniaks and their rights"¹⁸³ published in *Dnevni Avaz*, the authors tried to do the exact opposite of what Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media were doing – namely, to present Bosniak Muslims and generally Muslims in Europe not as a threat but as the victims of in-

180 Fikret Karčić, "O muslimanskom pitanju u Evropi", *Oslobođenje*, August 22, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/dosjei/kolum-ne/o-muslimanskom-pitanju-u-evropi-483670>.

181 Alena Beširević, "Fra Ivo Marković: Kršćani nisu pogledali šta je islam i ko su muslimani, te šokirani širenjem odgovarali su samo napadima i ratovima", *Oslobođenje*, March 24, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/fra-ivo-markovic-krscani-nisu-pogledali-sta-je-islam-i-ko-su-muslimani-te-sokirani-sirenjem-odgovarali-su-samo-napadima-i-ratovima-443818>.

182 Ibrahim Prohić, "Jesu li muslimani u BiH problem?", *Oslobođenje*, August 1, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/jesu-li-muslimani-u-bih-problem-478467>.

183 Muhamed Filipović, "Borba Bošnjaka za nacionalni identitet i priznavanje njihovih državnih i građanskih prava", *Dnevni avaz*, June 9, 2019. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/kolumne/492473/borba-bosnjaka-za-nacionalni-identitet-i-priznavanje-njihovih-drzavnih-i-gradanskih-prava>.

creased anti-Muslim sentiment and rising right-wing populism. They also tried to portray Islam and Bosniak Muslims as having been an integral part of the European continent for centuries.

Internal political differences among Bosniak Muslims have been elaborated on numerous occasions in *Dnevni Avaz*, not least because of its owner's political affiliation meaning he is often at odds with the other major Bosniak Muslim political party, the Party of Democratic Action. The extent of their mutual disagreement may be seen in articles like "Why Bosniaks do not want to look like Bakir Izetbegović" and "Who is trying to create a *green [Islamic] left* and why?" both of which showed how fragmented the Bosniak Muslims are along ideological, religious and political fault lines. This is in stark contrast to Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media, which tend to frame all Bosniak Muslims as a homogeneous body and use the all-encompassing noun *Bosniaks* ("Bošnjaci") to refer to any and all Bosniak Muslim politicians and ordinary citizens.

It is noteworthy that in both these newspapers, in spite of the political bickering between Bosniak Muslim politicians and their relations with other political parties being a dominant theme, quite a number of articles do seem to have been written to defend against accusations emanating from Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb politicians and media outlets. For example, in the articles "What Kolinda denied saying"¹⁸⁴, "Salafis from Dubnice disenchanting: they are painting targets on our backs"¹⁸⁵ and "Croatian intelligence agency: We deny allegations of arming Salafis, we demand explanations from Bosnia's intelligence,"¹⁸⁶

184 Hajrudin Somun, "Šta je Kolinda porekla da je rekla", *Oslobođenje*, August 9, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/dosjei/kolumne/sta-je-kolinda-porekla-da-je-rekla-480338>.

185 E. Trako, "Selefije iz Dubice ogorčene: Prave od nas mete", *Dnevni Avaz*, March 17, 2019. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/467123/selefije-iz-dubnice-ogorcene-prave-od-nas-mete>.

186 "SOA: Odbacujemo sve navode o naoružavanju selefija, tražili mo od OSA-e da se očituje", *Dnevni avaz*, March 13, 2019. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/466297/soa-od-bacujemo-sve-navode-o-naoruzavanju-selefija-trazili-smo-od-osa-e-da-se-ocituje>.

there is a clear response to accusations from the Bosnian Croat media (and media from neighbouring Croatia) over the alleged presence of a radical Muslim threat in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Bosniak-owned newspapers seem, in fact, to have stood in defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a country against unfounded allegations from Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers. Bosnian Muslims and Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina are presented as moderate and pro-European, while Muslim radicals are depicted as isolated cases and unrepresentative of the Bosniak Muslim population. *Dnevni avaz's* line was variable, at times accusing Bakir Izetbegović and the Party of Democratic Action of being sympathetic to radical interpretations of Islam, while at others clearly defending the country against the self-same accusations from other ethno-national circles. The reason for this was the owner of *Dnevni avaz's* political orientation and his political party's being at loggerheads with Bakir Izetbegović and the Party of Democratic Action.

There was also significant coverage of issues related to re-turning ISIL fighters. Articles in *Oslobođenje* such as "Wives of former ISIL fighters are not shooting targets"¹⁸⁷ accented the need to re-socialize the wives and children of former ISIL fighters. The need for a fair and transparent trial for Bosnian ISIL fighters was also stressed. This was in stark contrast with Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media, which presented entire families as security threats. This was not, however, the case with *Dnevni Avaz*, which showed clear political tendencies in its reporting on terrorism and foreign fighters. This is because that newspaper's owner, Fahrudin Radončić, was a former state-level Minister of Security and had introduced a bill to punish Bosnian citizens fighting with armed foreign paramilitary groups. This move is often lauded by

187 Adem Džaferović, "Žene bivših boraca ISIL-a nisu mete za odstrel", *Oslobođenje*, March 13, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/zene-bivsih-boraca-isil-a-nisu-mete-za-odstrel-440507>.

the journalists of *Dnevni Avaz*, while at the same time harshly criticising many of the later political moves and measures by their archenemy, the Party of Democratic Action (SDA).

There was a significant number of texts about the 1992-1995 genocide of Bosniak Muslims and its repercussions today, either in the form of discrimination against Bosniak Muslims in the *Republika Srpska* or Islamophobic statements coming from Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat politicians. For example, “Dodik intentionally insulting the victims of genocide and Bosniaks as a nation” and “The Dutch sent people to their deaths, now they are poking fun at them” touch on the plight of Bosniak Muslims living in a post-genocidal society – particularly Srebrenica – and the everyday challenges they face. Unlike Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers, which frame Bosniak Muslims as responsible for the war, the Bosniak-owned newspapers depict them as the actual victims and the Bosnian Croats and Serbs as perpetrators.¹⁸⁸

When it comes to migrants and refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Dnevni Avaz* has been significantly more sensationalist and negative in its reporting, with such headlines as “25,000 new migrants coming to Bosnia and Herzegovina,”¹⁸⁹ “Apocalyptic scenes from Velečeva near Ključ: this is where the women and children are living.”¹⁹⁰ and “A new wave of migrants coming to Bosnia and Herzegovina.”¹⁹¹ It often used references to natural

188 “SBB: Dodik planirano nastavlja da vrijeđa žrtve genocida i Bošnjake”, *Dnevni avaz*, August 20, 2018. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/406979/sbb-dodik-planirano-nastavlja-da-vrijeđa-zrtve-genocida-i-bosnjake>; S. Degirmendžić, “Dukuravić: Holandani su poslali ljude u smrt, a presudom se izruguju i vrijeđaju nas”, *Dnevni avaz*, July 19, 2019. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/503478/durakovic-holandani-su-poslali-ljude-u-smrt-a-presudom-se-izruguju-i-vrijeđaju-nas> (accessed 18 December 2019).

189 K. Kešmer, “U BiH stiže novih 25.000 migranata!”, *Dnevni avaz*, February 16, 2019. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/458760/u-bih-stize-novih-25-000-migranata>.

190 “Apokaliptične slike iz Velečeva kod Ključa: Ovdje borave djeca, žene, trudnice...”, *Dnevni avaz*, July 29, 2019. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/505756/apokalipticne-slike-iz-veleceva-kod-kljuc-a-ovdje-borave-djeca-zene-trudnice>.

191 E. Halimić, “Novi migrantski val dolazi u BiH”, *Dnevni avaz*, October 13, 2019. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/422298/novi-migrantski-val-dolazi-u-bih>.

disasters and terms such as “flood” and “wave” in speaking of migrants and refugees, depicting them as uncontrollable forces that pose a potential threat to the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the other hand, *Oslobođenje* had sympathetic articles about migrants and refugees that did not present them as a security threat to the country. This is clearly seen in the articles cited above, namely “Migrants fearing upcoming winter. Volunteers exhausted” and “Migrants have brought benefits to Krajina: people see them coming, but not leaving.” In the first of these articles, the inhumane living conditions of migrants, the cold weather, and the lack of food and medicine are described. As are the extraordinary efforts of Bosnian volunteers to help migrants without much state support. In the second article, the stress is on the economic benefits and mini economic boom the town of Bihać experienced due to the migrants – in the form of renting rooms to the better-off among them, who can afford to pay rent, and small businesses making a good profit selling foodstuffs to migrants, volunteers, and workers in international non-governmental organizations.

Overall, both *Oslobođenje* and *Dnevni Avaz* were much more nuanced in their reporting on Muslims and Islam. Unlike Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers, which sometimes had palpably Islamophobic articles, the two Bosniak-owned newspapers more often than not presented Bosniaks as the real victims of the recent war and ongoing political commotions. On international issues, they mostly presented Muslims as victims of discrimination, wars, and poverty. Rarely did they engage in negative depictions of and fearmongering regarding Muslims and when they did – mostly *Dnevni Avaz* in their reporting on political Islamism, ISIL fighters and migrants – it was motivated by Bosniak political infighting between the owner of *Dnevni Avaz* Fahrudin Radončić and his nemesis Bakir Izetbegović, president of the Party of Democratic Action, and the latter’s contacts with the Muslim world.

CONCLUSION

These topics from the five daily newspapers analysed capture the discursive landscape of Muslims and Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This landscape is highly polarized in line with the existing ethno-national, political and administrative divisions in the country. Broadly focused on a range of issues, the three major discourses on Muslims are those of Bosniak Muslims as politically aggressive and uncompromising, and of Bosniak Muslims as prone to religious extremism and linked to international terror groups, and finally of migrants as presenting a threat to Christian Europe. The Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media's focus on these three major themes has contributed to the social representation of Muslims and Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a multifaceted threat to the two other ethno-religious groups, viz. the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs.

This suggests that the discourse on Muslims in the Balkans is more or less in line with that described in existing research on Muslims in Western media, albeit with a somewhat milder tone than in certain conservative European newspapers. The construction of Bosniak Muslims and Islam as being directly opposed to the self-understanding of the other two ethno-national groups represents an amalgamation of hybridized threat – as it is both realistic and symbolic. The depiction of Bosniak Muslims as unwilling to cooperate politically helps create a sense of their responsibility for the country's current political tensions and worsening of inter-ethnic relations. The Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media's construction of Islam and Muslims as such seems to be contributing to and perhaps encouraging the social representation of Bosniak Muslims and their religion as a multifaceted threat to the country. The boundaries between Bosniak Muslims and Islam as symbolic/realistic threat is blurred in the media's representation of them. There seems to be a spill-over

of populist readings of Islam and Bosniak Muslims as a marker of cultural and societal difference from the European populist right to the Bosnian mainstream.

This is in line with what Van Dijk earlier identified as the four basic strategies used to legitimize the self and delegitimize the other: (i) emphasizing positive things about “us”; (ii) emphasizing negative things about “them”; (iii) deemphasizing negative things about us; (iv) de-emphasizing positive things about “them.”¹⁹² Aside from these continuous narratives, there are a number of episodically salient topic categories that are related to Islam and Muslims – such as articles related to Islamic dress and religious practices, the reconstruction of mosques and Islamic monuments destroyed during the war, and war crimes committed during the war against Bosniak Muslims.

Perhaps more worrying is the fact that such negative representation of Islam and Muslims is present in the mainstream Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media and not just in right-wing tabloids. Such media representation, if uncritically accepted and reproduced, may in theory lead to a hegemonic social representation among the non-Muslim masses.

192 M. H. Khan, H. M. Adnan, S. Kaur, R. A. Khuhro, R. Asghar, and S. Jabeen, “Muslims’ Representation in Donald Trump’s Anti-Muslim-Islam Statement: A Critical Discourse Analysis”, *Religions*, 2019, 10, 115.



Attitudes toward Bosniak Muslims and Kosovar Albanians and historical revisionism in the Serbian media: Reaffirming the Greater Serbia project

Ivan Ejub Kostić

INTRODUCTION

In this part, we monitored three daily newspapers in Serbia, *Politika*, *Novosti* and *Informer*, from August 1, 2018, to August 31, 2019. Over the period, the three papers printed a total of 1,020 daily issues. Given the significant amount of data involved, we selected only newspaper articles that featured the Serbian words for “Islam,” “Muslim/s,” “Bosnia,” “Bosniak,” “Bosnian Muslims,” “Kosovo,” “Kosovar Albanians” and “Albanians”. All articles containing these keywords were then further filtered for ones on Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), Kosovo, or Serbia. For this chapter, we randomly selected 38 articles from each newspaper for critical discourse analysis, hoping to disclose the ideological assumptions implicit in written text or oral speech.¹ It aims to explore systematically the

1 S.L.T. McGregor, *Critical Discourse Analysis: A Primer* (Halifax: Mount Saint Vincent University, 2010).

often opaque relationships between discursive practices, texts, and events and wider social and cultural structures, (power) relations, and processes. The number 38 yields an average of approximately three articles per month. Cumulatively, we have analyzed 115 articles, including opinion pieces, editorials, interviews, feature articles, and news reports. Our research has disclosed three dominant topics in the Serbian media: 1. Undermining the statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina and (re)affirming the expansionist politics of Serbian nationalism; 2. "Kosovo is the heart of Serbia" and (Kosovar) Albanians are consequently an existential threat; and 3. The politics of remembrance and crimes committed by Serb forces during the 1990s in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. The first two topics are reminiscent of narratives and the aspirations of Serbian nationalist politics from the early 1990s, which led to genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Bosniak population in B&H and the Albanian population in Kosovo. The third clearly indicates that a process of (self-reflexive) confrontation with crimes from the past has yet to begin in Serbia, where historical facts remain distorted by a continuing historical revisionism that avoids responsibility for crimes and cherishes the idea of Greater Serbia as a legitimate aim and the aspirations of Serbian nationalist politics as something to be accomplished in either the near or distant future. In such a socio-political atmosphere, created and fostered in the media, Bosniak Muslims, Albanians, and other Muslim members of ethnic minorities in Serbia feel extremely unsafe, more or less second-class citizens.

I. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND THE (RE)AFFIRMATION OF THE EXPANSIONIST POLITICS OF SERBIAN NATIONALISM

Attempts to undermine B&H and see part of its territory secede and ultimately be annexed by Serbia have historically had serious

repercussions for the Muslim population of B&H and the Sandžak region. Since the mid-19th century, the Serbian national idea of a Greater Serbia, which seeks to integrate all territories inhabited by Serbs (part of Croatia, B&H and Kosovo) within a single state, has led to mass casualties and the expulsion of Muslim populations. When the Serbian national identity was being formed, Serbian national ideology was not yet fully focused on expelling and physically eliminating all Muslims, seeking rather to assimilate them in line with Herder's principle of "culture and language". In the years that followed, however, and in particular during the Balkan Wars and World War II, the idea of assimilation was largely replaced by brutal killing campaigns carried out by Orthodox Serbs against Muslim population in eastern B&H, the Sandžak and Kosovo. This was when the first tracts and books were written openly advocating the physical elimination of Muslims from territories that the Serbian national ideology held belonged to Serbia. Striking examples of the promotion of such ideas include *The Expulsion of the Arnauts* by Vaso Čubrilović,² which exhibited a pathological intolerance of Albanians, and *Homogeneous Serbia* by Stevan Moljević, ideologist of the Chetnik movement, a tract admired by Dragoljub Draža Mihailović, leader of the Yugoslav Army in the Homeland during World War II.³

The Greater Serbia idea was only partially realized during the Balkan Wars and World War II, but it reappeared with the disintegration of Yugoslavia under the populist and nationalist regime of Slobodan Milošević, which came to power in Serbia in

2 Vaso Čubrilović, *Isterivanje Arnauta* (1937). Čubrilović wrote this pamphlet as a memorandum in the form of a proposal for a solution of the Albanian question in southern Serbia and Kosovo for the Government of Milan Stojadinović.

3 For a detailed account of crimes against Muslims by the Chetnik movement led by Draža Mihailović during World War II in eastern B&H and the Sandžak, see V. Dedijer and A. Miletić, (1990), *Genocid nad muslimanima, 1941-1945, zbornik dokumenata i svjedočenja*, Sarajevo, Svjetlost, and M. Radanović, (2015), *Kazna i zločin: snage kolaboracije u Srbiji: odgovornost za ratne zločine (1941-1944) i vojni gubici (1944-1945)*, Belgrade, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Regional Office for Southeast Europe.

1989. Under Milošević's regime, Serbia decided to launch military strikes and attack the internationally recognized states of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In B&H, the Bosnian Serbs, led by Radovan Karadžić, since convicted for war crimes, and with the assistance of the Serbian regime in Belgrade, decided to employ the same methods of ethnic cleansing and genocide against the Muslim population as had been used during the Balkan Wars and World War II.

It is this context of the 1990s that must be borne in mind as we seek to understand and interpret the present-day post-conflict condition in Serbia now, as (ultra)nationalist ideology, once again the dominant political force, reaffirms itself in full vigour, especially since 2012, when power was taken by many of the same political players as had held it during the 1990s. Serbian political elites today hope to achieve the decades-old goal of securing a part of B&H and annexing it to Serbia "peacefully". To put it in other words, their idea has been to "consolidate" the reality achieved on the ground by ethnic cleansing and genocidal politics during the wars of the 1990s and to finalize matters in a "peaceful manner". Needless to say, such political aspirations inevitably affect the lives of ghettoized Muslims in Serbia and across the wider region, who live with a constant feeling of physical endangerment. A major role in pursuing these nationalist pretensions is played by the media, which dispute the very existence of B&H in many ways, while presenting Bosniak Muslims as essentially opposed to the identity and interests of Orthodox Serbs, as the texts selected for our qualitative discourse analysis clearly show (Table 1).

Reaffirming the Greater Serbia project

Selected Articles from the daily newspapers, *Politika*, *Novosti* and *Informer*

<i>Politika</i>	<i>Novosti</i>	<i>Informer</i>
Weekly Interview: Milorad Dodik, Chair And Serb Member Of B&H Presidency – Serbs Have Never Got Anything From Bosnia	Chair Of B&H Presidency Projects His Idea On The Map– Dodik ‘Unites’ Territories Of Serbia And Srpska	Heavy Blow For Serbia – Naser Orić Released In Sarajevo In Spite Of Evidence He Personally Slaughtered Serbs And Gouged Out Their Eyes
Weekly Interview: Mladen Ivanić, Member Of B&H Presidency From RS – Bosniaks Need A Leader To Take Historical Step Forward	National Holiday Of Republika Srpska Threatened – Bosniaks And Croats Strike At Republika Srpska	Steven Meyer, Former Head Of CIA, Supports Serbs – RS Has Right To Unite With Serbia
Last Night In Belgrade: Festival Of The Republika Srpska	SDA Demand Ordered By The West – Undermining Srpska To Cut Off Russian Influence	Russian Beasts Coming To Bijeljina
Serb People Disappearing From B&H Federation	SDA Initiative – Bosniaks Want To Undo Republika Srpska	Sabre-Rattling In Sarajevo: Naser Orić’s Follower Calls For A New War Against Serbs
Izetbegović: B&H Must Arm Itself	Novosti Exclusive – Sarajevo Makes Blacklist Of Serbs	Bakir Threatens Dodik: B&H Will Join Nato Or US Will Destroy You
Dodik: Izetbegović Must Come To His Senses Quickly Or Regret It For Long Time	Three Serbs Tortured – Brutally Beaten By Sarajevo Police	Serbs In Srpska United Thanks To NATO: Bosniaks Risking Biggest Crisis In B&H With No Way Out!
Kitarović: B&H Unstable, Controlled By Militant Isla	Dodik Tells Novosti – Džaferović Watched Executions Of Dozens Of Serbs	Bosnian Serb Leader At Gunpoint: Plan To Assassinate Dodik
Person Suspected Of Assault On US Mission In Sarajevo Arrested	RS Police File On Former Official Of So-Called Republic Of B&H Sent To B&H War Crimes Prosecutor’s Office – Haris Silajdžić Suspected Of Link To Concentration Camps	Bosniaks Erect Monument To Honour Turkish Conquest Of Bosnia! Descendants Of Turkish Slaves Celebrate Invaders Of Their Land

Bosniaks Celebrate Turkish Victory At Gallipoli	Dodik Comments On Presidency Session: Rights Of Serbs Being Usurped By Bosniaks	Galijašević: Bin Laden And Gang Granted Citizenship By Advocates Of Unitary Bosnia
19% Of Young People In B&H Have Never Read A Single Book	Exclusive – B&H Chief Intelligence Officer Murdered Serbs For Fun	SDA President’s Diabolical Plan: Bakir Sends Afghanis To Settle In Serbian Municipalities And Chase Serbs Out Of B&H
Jihadi Families Waiting For Housing Solution In Mostar	Rajko Petrov Nogo–Darkness Over Sarajevo	Dževad Galijašević – New York Attackers Were Citizens Of B&H
23 Years After War Still Segregation Among Schoolchildren	Our Neighbours Are Getting Us Involved In The New Zealand Massacre	Bosnia On Alert! Two Hard-Boiled ISIS Terrorists Coming Back From Syria!
Bosniaks In Mostar Infuriated By <i>Prosvjeta</i> “Stepa Stepanović” Book Award	B&H Held Hostage By Bosniaks!	Smells Like The 1990s! U.S. Infiltrating Jihadists Into B&H And Preparing Alija Izetbegović’s Scenario

Table 1

Undermining the Statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina

As already mentioned, the dominant narrative on B&H in the Serbian media monitored for this study consists largely of undermining the country’s statehood and insisting on the goal of unifying the Republika Srpska and the Republic of Serbia at some point in the near future. In an interview for *Politika* on Sunday, June 30, 2019, Milorad Dodik, Chair and Serb member of the B&H Presidency, stated unequivocally that “Serbs have never got anything from Bosnia” which was established on “idealistic and ideological grounds” and so “can never succeed”. In other words, “B&H has in fact already collapsed due to the fact that it is unfeasible as a state”. Dodik also stressed that the overriding task of politicians from the Republika Srpska was to “strengthen [the entity’s] sovereignty” and that “it would have been best for B&H to have split up in 1995”

after the end of the war. In the same interview, Dodik referred to crimes committed in the 1990s as “myths and lies”. Of the crimes that have been turned into myth, Dodik singled out the genocide in Srebrenica, which he stated was never proved at the Hague Tribunal. According to Dodik, the Srebrenica myth was created with the political purpose of “tarnishing the Serbian people” and using it as needed to provide a rationale and legitimacy for attacking Serbia, as with the NATO bombing campaign in 1999.⁴ In an interview a year earlier, Mladen Ivanić, the then Serb member of the B&H Presidency, said Serbs had to follow the example of the Kosovar Albanians “who enjoyed the status of an autonomous province for decades, while the Republika Srpska has existed for barely two decades”. According to him, that is precisely where potential solutions for the future are to be found, because “what is currently unrealistic will not necessarily remain so for ever”. Ivanić was of course alluding unequivocally to the secession of Kosovo from the Republic of Serbia as an example for the Serbs in the Republika Srpska to imitate patiently.⁵ An article entitled “Chair Of B&H Presidency Projects His Idea On Map – Dodik ‘Unites’ Territories of Serbia and Srpska”⁶ in *Novosti* provides probably the most glaring example of attempts to achieve the unification of the Republika Srpska with the Republic of Serbia. It referred to a recent interview given by Milorad Dodik

4 Opinion pieces featured in *Politika* reflect their authors’ views. Regular contributors include Prof. Nenad Kecmanović, PhD, formerly of the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade and now Political Advisor to Milorad Dodik. In his opinion pieces, like Dodik, Professor Kecmanović insists on the impossibility of Serbs surviving within Bosnia and Herzegovina due to its “centralization, unitarization, i.e. Bosniak hegemony” (*Politika*, 4 December 2018). According to him, B&H is in a “terminal phase” just like the SFRY before its breakup (*Politika*, 2nd November 2018). Also like Dodik, he denies the Srebrenica genocide, which he says “places the Republika Srpska under international anathema, ignoring the context of local Serb casualties and the political causes of the outbreak of civil war (in B&H)”. In the same article, Kecmanović accuses the Bosniak leadership of falsifying the recent census to make B&H a “Bosniak/Muslim” majority state. He holds that in this process of “demographic engineering” Bosniak political elites rely on “mujahideen and Salafis” and in future will also count on “migrants from Muslim countries” (*Politika*, 9 September 2019).

5 *Politika*, 26 August 2018.

6 *Novosti*, 9 April 2019.

to the Serbian newspaper *Espresso* in which he not only explicitly talked about his idea of unification but provided concrete maps depicting the future state. Interestingly the maps presented by Dodik also include parts of Montenegro. Like Ivanić, Dodik emphasized that it was unrealistic to expect the unification of Serbia and the Republika Srpska to happen immediately but that the goal would be achieved at some point in the 21st century, as something of the sort is only natural, since “Serbs in B&H have always looked to Belgrade not Sarajevo”. To support these efforts, *Informer*, a daily pro-regime tabloid, published a statement by Steven Meyer, former CIA deputy chief for the Balkans, who, it claims, said in a lecture at the Faculty of Security Sciences in Belgrade that “The Republika Srpska has the right to a referendum on self-determination and to unite with Serbia if that is what it wants”.⁷

Messages asserting the unity of the Republika Srpska and the Republic of Serbia in a similar vein were also to be heard at the “Festival of the Republika Srpska” held in Belgrade. Reporting on it, *Politika* quoted Milorad Dodik as saying:

There are those who are trying to show us we are small, not worthy of making decisions about our own lives. That is why it is important we are here now in Belgrade to show you that the Republika Srpska belongs to you and to tell you that Serbia belongs to us... [and that] The Serb people today need to gather around their state and national ideas and finish what was left unfinished in the past.

Milorad Dodik finished his speech with the exclamation: “Long live Serbia, long live the Republika Srpska, long live the Serb people and long live our Orthodox Church”.⁸ In addition to directly undermining the statehood and even the existence of B&H, such irredentist statements unequivocally affirm the notion that Serb national identity is synonymous with and tantamount

7 <https://www.serbianmonitor.com/en/former-cia-director-for-balkans-steven-meyer-america-accepts-border-change-in-balkans/> (accessed 1 October 2019).

8 *Politika*, 4 September 2018.

to adherence to the Serbian Orthodox Church. It was precisely in this context that a PEW Research Center survey conducted in 2018 showed that Serbs ranked third among European nations in believing denominational adherence to be a necessary prerequisite to membership in a national-ethnic group.⁹

Threats to the survival of the Republika Srpska and the systematic political and biological cleansing of Serbs from Bosnia

In addition to this constant undermining of B&H's statehood and promotion of the expansionist ideology of a Greater Serbia that resulted in anti-Muslim genocide in B&H and Kosovo in the 1990s, a second topic regularly brought up in the Serbian media is the alleged threat to the survival of the Republika Srpska and the physical threat posed by Bosniaks to Serbs in B&H. Articles from the above table that fall into this group include: "SDA Demand Ordered By West – Undermine Srpska To Cut Off Russian Influence",¹⁰ "SDA Initiative – Bosniaks Want To Undo Republika Srpska",¹¹ "National Holiday Of Republika Srpska Threatened – Bosniaks And Croats Strike At Republika Srpska",¹² "Bakir Threatens Dodik: B&H Will Join NATO Or US Will Destroy You",¹³ "Serbs In Srpska United Thanks To NATO: Bosniaks Risking Biggest Crisis In B&H With No Way Out!",¹⁴ "Bosnian Serb Leader At Gunpoint: Plan To Assassinate Dodik",¹⁵ "Izetbegović: B&H Must Arm Itself",¹⁶ "Dodik: Izetbegović Must Come To Senses Quickly Or Regret It For Long Time",¹⁷ "

9 <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/12/05/how-do-european-countries-differ-in-religious-commitment/> (accessed 1 October 2019).

10 *Novosti*, 25 January 2019.

11 *Novosti*, 25 January 2019.

12 *Novosti*, 30 March 2019.

13 *Informer*, 16 August 2019.

14 *Informer*, 14 February 2019.

15 *Informer*, 30 November 2018.

16 *Politika*, 19 November 2019.

17 *Politika*, 31 July 2019.

Heavy Blow For Serbia – Naser Orić Released In Sarajevo In Spite Of Evidence He Personally Slaughtered Serbs And Gouged Out Their Eyes”,¹⁸ “*Novosti* Exclusive – Sarajevo Makes Blacklist Of Serbs”,¹⁹ “Serbian People Disappearing From B&H Federation”,²⁰ “Three Serbs Tortured – Brutally Beaten By Sarajevo Police”.²¹

The essential purpose of these texts is clearly to question the integrity of B&H, but in this case through the claim to victimhood and by affirming a narrative of an existential threat facing Serbs in B&H which renders survival of the Republika Srpska impossible. These texts strongly emphasize geopolitical and geo-strategic issues, insistently underlining the Republika Srpska’s special ties with the Russian Federation and its opposition to B&H’s membership in NATO, a goal advocated by Bosniak representatives. It is in this context that *Novosti* insists particularly on the Republika Srpska as a bastion of Russian geo-strategic interests in the region. The article “SDA Demand Ordered By West – Undermine Srpska To Cut off Russian Influence” presents a case taken by Bakir Izetbegović and the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) before the Constitutional Court to change the name of the Republika Srpska as an “indirect message sent by Western centres of power to the Srpska leadership to ‘loosen’ ties with Serbia and Russia, accept B&H’s accession to NATO, and recognize Kosovo”. The same text in *Novosti* includes an infographic presenting in chronological order all the attempts by Bosniak representatives to change the name of the Republika Srpska since 2004, interpreted as “much more than just renaming one of the two constituent entities”, as it would actually have a “domino effect... resulting in changes to the B&H Constitution and essentially destroying the Dayton Agreement and so nullifying everything the Serbs had accomplished through it. In other words, changing the name would mean the end of the Republika Srpska”.²² The texts,

18 *Informer*, 1 December 2018.

19 *Novosti*, 9 November 2018.

20 *Politika*, 25 October 2018.

21 *Novosti*, 10 November 2018.

22 *Novosti*, 25 January 2019.

“SDA Initiative - Bosniaks Want To Undo Srpska”²³ and “National Holiday Of Republika Srpska Threatened – Bosniaks And Croats Strike At Republika Srpska”,²⁴ also published in *Novosti*, follow on with the same narrative. These articles similarly insist that the Republika Srpska is under direct threat of elimination by Bosniak and Croat (political) forces, which is why the Republika Srpska’s representatives must “present flagrant breaches of the Dayton Accords to the RS National Assembly” so as to “reach a decision on the future of the Republika Srpska” and “launch an initiative for secession”. With regard to these developments, Milorad Dodik was once again quite explicit in his irredentist endeavours, saying “there is no point in saying Srpska cannot secede, as Valentin Incko does. The Republika Srpska has no intention of suffering in silence, as it awaits the outcome of court proceedings. It is evident that the Bosniaks do not want anyone else in B&H and that there is no place for Serbs in it.” Informer has carried similar stories about threats to the existence of the Republika Srpska in feature articles, “Bakir Warns Dodik: B&H Will Join NATO Or US Will Destroy You”²⁵ and “Serbs In Srpska United Thanks To NATO: Bosniaks Risking Biggest Crisis In B&H With No Way Out!”, the only difference being a focus on the anti-NATO narrative rather than the Russian Federation.

It is, however, texts that highlight the physical threat to Serb survival in B&H, such as “Bosnian Serb Leader At Gunpoint: Plan To Assassinate Dodik”,²⁶ “Serbian People Disappearing From B&H Federation”,²⁷ and “Three Serbs Tortured – Brutally Beaten By Sarajevo Police”,²⁸ which produce the most disturbing effects. In the last of these articles, the *Novosti* journalist, by name Matavulj, reports on three Serbs questioned by police at a Sarajevo police station as part of an investigation into the murder of two Sarajevo

23 *Novosti*, 24 January 2019

24 *Novosti*, 30 March 2019.

25 *Informer*, 16 August 2019.

26 *Informer*, 30 November 2018.

27 *Politika*, 25 October 2018.

28 *Novosti*, 10 November 2018.

police officers. The author places the entire case in a context of Bosniak ethnic and religious intolerance for Serbs, stating that the police tortured the three detainees using “electrocution” and “testicle crushing”, shouting at them “you’ll end up childless... you mother-fucking Chetniks”, and that the three Serbs being interrogated were “violated with umbrellas and forced to listen to *Adhan* and to pray *Salat al-Janazah* (the Islamic funerary prayer)”. This narrative is a vulgar manifestation and continuation of such texts as “Serbian People Disappearing From B&H Federation” from *Politika*, which accuses Bosniaks from the B&H Federation of “not want[ing] to see Croats let alone Serbs in it”, while implying that they are carrying out national-ethnic engineering with the aim of “cleansing the Federation of Serbs systematically” in both a “political and a biological” sense.²⁹ The existential threat at the political level is presented in an article entitled “Bosnian Serb Leader At Gunpoint: Plan To Assassinate Dodik”, published in *Informer*. In this text, the claim is made that the Director of Coordination of B&H Police Units has issued orders forbidding the Republika Srpska Police entry to Sarajevo, which apparently suggests a covert operation aimed at paving the way for the assassination of Milorad Dodik, just as, *Informer* claims, happened at Potočari, in an incident that nearly “nearly ended in the assassination of Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić”. The same article also features an official statement from the Republika Srpska cabinet, stating that Milorad Dodik and his associates had received death threats that they would be “burned alive”.

Bosniaks as descendants of the Turks

The third group of texts listed in the above table includes those that present Bosniaks as “descendants of Turkish slaves” who, by adopting Islam, had embraced the Ottoman Empire and so “the invaders”, which is why they still celebrate the victory of the Turkish

29 *Politika*, 25 October 2018.

army at Gallipoli, as *Politika* and *Informer* both reported under the headlines, “Bosniaks Celebrate Turkish Victory At Gallipoli”³⁰ and “Bosniaks Erect Monument In Honour Of Turkish Conquest Of Bosnia! Descendants Of Turkish Slaves Celebrate Invaders Of Their Own Land!”³¹ This narrative of the Bosnian Muslims as ultimate Other was used by Serbian nationalist circles during the 1980s and 1990s to frame them as bearing a threat of Islamic fundamentalism endangering Christian Europe and, so, Serbia as an Orthodox country and last defence against “Islamic invasion”. As mentioned in the introduction, it was precisely this way of presenting Bosnian Muslims as infidels and collaborators with the Ottoman occupation that led to ethnic cleansing and genocide in B&H during the Serbian attack on Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992-1995. Perfect examples that show how present such thoughts and politics are in Serbian society and the mainstream media there, even two and a half decades after the conflict ended, are to be found in the following texts: “Smells Like The 1990s! U.S. Infiltrating Jihadists Into B&H And Preparing Alija Izetbegović’s Scenario”,³² “SDA President’s Diabolical Plan: Bakir Sends Afghanis To Settle In Serbian Municipalities And Chase Serbs Out Of B&H”,³³ “Dževad Galijašević – New York Attackers Were Citizens Of B&H”,³⁴ “Bosnia On Alert! Two Hard-Boiled ISIS Terrorists Coming Back From Syria-!”,³⁵ “Galijašević: Bin Laden And His Gang Granted Citizenship By Advocates Of Unified Bosnia”,³⁶ “Kitarović: B&H Unstable, Controlled By Militant Islam”,³⁷ “Suspect For Assault On US Mission In Sarajevo Arrested”,³⁸ and “Jihadi Families Waiting For Housing In

30 *Politika*, 22 March 2019.

31 *Informer*, 10 March 2019.

32 *Informer*, 14 October 2019.

33 *Informer*, 27 August 2019.

34 *Informer*, 27 April 2019.

35 *Informer*, 9 March 2019.

36 *Informer*, 18 September 2019.

37 *Politika*, 31 July 2019.

38 *Politika*, 24 November 2018.

Mostar”.³⁹ All these texts aim to link B&H and Bosniak Muslims to violent paramilitary *takfir*-jihadist groups such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Syria and the Levant, while at the same time “rationalizing” attempts by Bosnian Serbs to break away from a state union that is “dysfunctional” and of “questionable value”. In the text entitled “Smells Like The 1990s!...”, Dževad Galijašević, a vocal proponent of conspiracy theories and Islamophobic ideas in Serbian society, comments:

Just recall the 1990s and how wars in the Middle East were transplanted to the Balkans by the political agency of Western countries. All of this is reminiscent of that period. The United States is withdrawing its military from Syria, reducing its presence in the Middle East, while concentrating its troops and forces towards Iran and the Balkans. American forerunners have already arrived in the Balkans. ...[evident in the] soldiers of the defeated so-called Islamic State, [and B&H has] is prepared to receive them... and they will not come there unorganized.

The other texts serve basically the same purpose, using a range of topics to achieve their aim, applying various perspectives to affirm the idea that Bosnia is fertile ground for the extremist ideology of radical Islamic groups that threaten the stability of the country and the region and the safety of the Serb people. To name a few, there are allegations of links between Bosnian Muslim political parties and al-Qaeda and the individuals who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks on New York, claims of plans by the Bosniak political ruling party to cleanse the country of Serbs and replace them with Afghan settlers, assertions about returnees from Syrian battlefields to be given a warm welcome by the Bosniak Muslims, etc. In addition to the texts listed in the table, the idea of “Islamic threat” was prominently featured as topic of the week in *Politika* on 14 July 2019, in an article entitled “The Green Transversal: The Balkan Corridor Of Instability”, which we will now analyse in more detail.

39 *Politika*, 6 July 2019.

Reaffirmation of Old Anti-Muslim Tropes – “The Green Transversal: the Balkan Corridor of Instability”

“The Green Transversal” was a common term in Serbian nationalist circles in the late 1980s and early 1990s, employed to pave the way for expansionist incursions by Serb forces and forays into B&H and Kosovo. In *U.S. Policy and the Geopolitics of Jihad: The Green Transversal in the Balkans*, Srdja Trifković, a radical proponent of the theory of Islamic threat, says that “Green Transversal” can have two meanings. The first implies that the “long-term goal of Islamist ideologues, both in the Balkans and throughout the Muslim world, is to create a unified territory to include predominantly Muslim cities located along the route from Turkey in the southeast to Bosnia in the northwest”. The second, according to Trifković, relates to the threat of “increased ethno-religious self-identification in traditional Muslim communities in the Balkans”. According to Trifković, these two different concepts and aspirations are not at all mutually exclusive. They reinforce each another and pose a threat to the Serb national idea of a “Greater Serbia”. To support his thesis, Trifković cites the words of Sir Alfred Sherman, former adviser to Margaret Thatcher and founder of the Lord Byron Foundation, who claimed, during the Serbian attack on B&H, that the Muslim goal was to create a “Green Transversal” stretching from Bosnia through the Sandžak to Kosovo, to allow the Muslims to separate Serbia territorially from Montenegro and so establish a compact predominantly Muslim territorial entity. Sherman also accused the Western powers of “supporting the creation of this Islamistan”, primarily through their “close cooperation with Iran, whose aim was to establish a base on European soil for further political activities”, but also because they had enabled Turkey to engage in military actions through NATO, even though the country had abandoned Atatürk’s secular ideology for neo-Ottomanism and

pan-Islamist aspirations.⁴⁰ In the wake of democratic change in Serbia in 2000 and the overthrow of Slobodan Milošević and his nationalist regime, intellectuals who espoused such narratives found themselves side-lined. When the first democratic prime minister of Serbia, Zoran Djindjić, was assassinated in 2003 by members of the “Hague Lobby”, however, things started gradually to revert towards a reaffirmation of nationalist aspirations and tendencies. The right-wing Democratic Party of Serbia, which won power in 2004 in the first parliamentary elections after the assassination, bears a special responsibility for this turn. As a result of such developments, the intellectuals who had sown hatred of Balkan Muslims during the 1990s regained, over the following 15 years, considerable space in public discourse and the mainstream media in Serbia. This is especially true of the period since 2012, when power was seized by the right-wing populist Serbian Progressive Party, founded by former top-ranking officials of the far-right Serbian Radical Party, whose leader Vojislav Šešelj was sentenced by the Hague Tribunal to ten years in prison for crimes including incitement to persecution and the deportation and forcible displacement and resettlement of Croats from the village of Hrtkovci, in Vojvodina, in 1992.

On 14 July, 2019, the oldest and most important Serbian daily, *Politika*, published a feuilleton, “The Green Transversal: The Balkan Corridor Of Instability”, that offers an excellent example of this reaffirmation of the Serbian nationalist narrative of “Islamic threat” and insistence on the image of Bosniak and Albanian Muslims as part of a pan-Islamic conspiracy network aimed at conquering Europe. It is important to note that the feuilleton was published as the five-page *Topic of the Week* section during the anniversary week of the genocide of Bosniak Muslims in Srebrenica on 11 July 1995. The editorial board did not consider it appropriate to mark 11 July

40 <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2009/05/green-corridor-in-balkans.html> (accessed 1 October 2019).

as the Day of Remembrance of the Srebrenica Genocide in any way, even though it is commemorated in countries around the world and in the institutions of the European Union and the Council of Europe. Instead it opted to feature a small piece of news on 12 July, about the commemorative rally held annually at the Potočari Memorial Centre on 11 July.⁴¹ In this context, given the socio-political atmosphere prevailing in Serbian society, it is difficult to believe that choosing to address the issue of the “Green Transversal” during the same calendar week was pure coincidence.

The feature on “The Green Transversal: The Balkan Corridor Of Instability” included texts on “Myth or Reality”, “The Balkan Corridor of Instability”, “Cutting Serbia and Russia off from the Mediterranean” and an opinion piece on “The Geopolitical Phenomenon” written by the aforementioned Srdja Trifković, with contents basically identical to those of his *U.S. Policy and the Geopolitics of Jihad: The Green Transversal in the Balkans*, analysed above. In addition to Trifković, the feuilleton also featured the Islamophobe Dževad Galijašević prominently, as interlocutor of the author of the text on “Myth or Reality”, in which he set out the goals of the Green Transversal as follows:

This idea implies that Turkey will reach out across Albania and Kosovo and Metohija, along the route that extends from Ulcinj to the Preševo Valley, thus separating Serbia and Montenegro, penetrating through the Sandžak and across Užice, to reach Sarajevo. It

41 In July 2019, nine non-governmental organizations issued a public statement commenting that it was “shameful and disgusting” that not one Serbian state official had characterized Srebrenica as genocide since 1995, confirming the continuity of genocide denialism by the state and the society alike. The statement read, “The official politics of genocide denial is particularly reinforced by the continuous refusal of incumbent Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić and Prime Minister Ana Brnabić to call the Srebrenica crime a genocide, in which they are followed not only by politicians from the ruling coalition but a large portion of the opposition”, adding that Srebrenica genocide is a forbidden phrase for Serbian state institutions, while genocide deniers are given ample space and freedom in pro-government media. For more on the statement, see <https://www.autonomija.info/nvo-iz-srbije-shame-and-defeat-the-fact-the-official-serbia-neglect-genocide-in-srebrenica.html> (accessed 1 October 2019).

involves a route from Sarajevo to Istanbul, a swathe of land that will eventually encompass isolated areas that stretch from Macedonia towards the Bulgarian border and are populated by Turcophone populations. It is supposed to be a broad project of Turkey's return to the Balkans.

Galijašević claims that this route, with B&H as its stronghold, includes “Saudi Arabian outposts and radical bases that would prove useful in causing destabilization and chaos and serve to redefine borders if necessary”. In addition to Trifković's article and Galijašević's expertise, the feature also included short “humorous puns” by satirist Dragutin Minić Karlo, such as “With the Serbs down there stopping Europe turning green, Europe is far from turning red in shame” and “In addition to the green transversal, there's a white line, and it's powdery”, along with a map entitled “The Green Transversal Route” (figure 1).



The “Green Transversal Route” map, *Politika*, 14/07/2019 (figure 1)

It was, however, the text on “The Balkan Corridor Of Instability” by Prof Milan Mijalkovski, PhD, of the Faculty of Security Studies at Belgrade University that included the most disturbing claims, framing Balkan Muslims as a security risk in the most direct and dangerous way. In the spirit of Serbian nationalist intellectuals at the turn of the century, he repeated the “mantra” that an entire project to Islamise the Balkans had begun back in the mid-1980s. He went on to recall the presence of mujahideen in the wars of the 1990s, fighting against the Serbs in B&H and Kosovo, which he then (in)directly related to Bosnian and Kosovo Muslims going to Syria today to fight for Islamic State, whose goal is “in its first phase, to reclaim everything that was once Islamic, that is, all the territory of the Ottoman Empire, including present-day B&H”. He also points unambiguously to the threat posed by Islamic terrorists in the region, especially in B&H, the Sandžak, and Kosovo, where they are free to organize and carry out serious terrorist attacks at any time.

II. “KOSOVO IS THE HEART OF SERBIA”

In the introductory part of this chapter, we emphasized the significance of the battle of Kosovo for the creation of Serbian national identity, which is essentially opposed to the “Turk”. The Battle of Kosovo took place on 28 June 1389 on “Kosovo Field, near where the Lab flows into the Sitnica”, not far from Prishtina, the current capital of Kosovo. During the battle, Serbian troops led by Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović, his son-in-law Vuk Branković, and Bosnian Duke Vlatko Vuković clashed with an Ottoman army led by Sultan Murad I and his sons Bajezid and Yakub Çelebi.⁴² Reliable historical sources for the battle are scarce, which has over time left ample room for the construction and affirmation of legends and myths

42 Olga Zirojević, *Iz osmanske baštine* (Belgrade: Balkanski centar za Bliski Istok), p. 127.

that stress the values of the Serb people's "martyrdom, sacrifice and fearlessness", while at the same time promoting a very specific religious and national symbolism. This is all expressed primarily in a very rich cycle of epic poetry on various aspects of the *Battle of Kosovo*, which dates largely from the period when the Serbian national identity was being formed in the 19th century and was therefore used as the cornerstone for building the national ideology, by combining two very powerful narratives permeated by distinct anti-Islamic sentiment, name a clerical-ecclesiastical and a national-romantic narrative. American scholar of Islam Michael Sells has defined the nationalist ideology created by amalgamation of these two narratives through his coinage *Christoslavism*. This ideology's main characteristic is the emphasis it puts on the Kosovo Battle as a "cosmic conflict between good and evil", that is, a conflict between Serb Christian knights led by Prince Lazar, represented in epic poetry as embodiment of the entire Serb nation, on one side, and Muslims or Turks, characterized as "heathen" and "detractors of the Cross", on the other side.⁴³ Identifying Prince Lazar with the entire Serb nation means his death at the Battle of Kosovo also meant the "death of the Serbian nation", for which the Turks/Muslims were responsible. It is precisely on this basis that the role of archetypal enemy, the ultimate Other, in Serb national consciousness was transferred to those Southern Slavs who adopted Islam as their religion later on in history. Seen as having sided with the invaders, they were perceived as "race traitors" who had betrayed the "faith of their ancestors". This is why Muslim South Slavs and Kosovar Albanians have been systematically racialized in Serb tradition and depicted as "genetically faulty" "moral freaks". Over the centuries, such ideas have begotten a deeply ingrained urge for and obsession with revenge that Serb nationalists nurtured and directed against South Slav Muslims and Kosovar

43 Michael Sells, "Islam in Serbian Religious Mythology", in Maya Shaztmiller, *Islam and Bosnia: Conflict Resolution and Foreign Policy in Multi-Ethnic States* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), p. 63.

Albanians.⁴⁴ The first opportunity for revenge came after Serbia gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878. From then on, the nationalist Serbian political elite systematically strove to enlarge Serbia's territory to encompass everywhere Serbs lived and any regions they believed Serbia had an "historical" right to. The first opportunity to pursue these goals arose with the outbreak of the Balkan Wars (1912-1914) and then during and after the First World War (1914-1918). During that period, numerous atrocities and crimes were committed against the Muslim populations of central and southern Serbia, Kosovo, and the Sandžak. To this day, these pogroms remain unfortunately under-researched, especially with regard to ethnic cleansing of the Turkish population of the Balkans as the Slavic, non-Muslim nation-states of Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro were being created. American historian Justin McCarthy, a leading authority on this issue in his very valuable book *Death and Exile: Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821-1922*, has tried to shed light on the atrocities committed against Muslims in the Western Balkans during the 19th and first half of the 20th century. Other important sources also outline unambiguously the fate of Balkan Muslims in the early 20th century, including the Carnegie Foundation's *Report on the Balkan Wars*, published in 1914, and the very valuable first-hand reports of Russian Marxist Leon Trotsky, who was sent in 1912 by the *Kievskaya Myslin* newspaper as its correspondent to cover the events of the Balkan Wars. The statistics provided by McCarthy tell us that the Muslim population on the territories that would later be incorporated into Yugoslavia dropped from 1,241,076 to 566,478, or by as much as 64 percent, between 1911 and 1923.⁴⁵ The Carnegie Foundation's Report states that 80% of Muslim villages were demolished and burned

44 Ivan Ejub Kostić, *Religija, verovanje i građanski identitet* (Belgrade: Balkanski Centar za Bliski istok, 2019).

45 Justin McCarthy, *Stanovništvo osmanlijske Evrope prije i posle pada carstva* (Sarajevo, Belgrade: Center for Advanced Studies & Balkan Centre for Middle East, 2017), pp. 48-52.

in areas where the newly established and predominantly Christian nation-states waged military operations in their effort to create “pure monoethnic states”. In the case of Serbia, the pogroms occurred primarily in the south and on the territory of Kosovo and were against the Muslim Albanian population.⁴⁶ In retrospect it is clear that the ethnic cleansing of the first half of the 20th century was very similar to how Serb military, police and paramilitary formations operated in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo during the wars of the 1990s, with the unambiguous aim of ethnically cleansing those territories of Bosniak Muslims and Kosovar Albanians. In the Kosovan context, President Slobodan Milošević delivered a famous speech in Gazimestan in June 1989, on the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, to a crowd of approximately 300,000 people. Many believe this speech heralded the bloody dissolution of the former Yugoslavia.⁴⁷ Following a series of socio-political developments in the 1990s, open conflict broke out in Kosovo in 1998, between the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which sought independence from Serbia, and special forces of the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MUP) and the Yugoslav Army. The conflict soon escalated into the Kosovo War, which ended with NATO intervention in 1999 against the Serbian forces.

According to a ruling of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia during the Kosovo War, the Yugoslav Army and the Serbian MUP used “excessive and indiscriminate force”, resulting in the destruction of villages, massacres of Albanian civilians, and their mass displacement.⁴⁸ The conflict’s final epilogue came on February 17, 2008, when the Kosovo Assembly unilaterally declared independence from the Republic

46 Dubravka Stojanović, *Ulje na vodi* (Belgrade: Pešćanik, 2010), pp. 263-266.

47 During his speech, among other things, Milošević famously said “We are again becoming engaged in battles and facing battles. They are not armed battles, but such things cannot be excluded yet.”

48 D. Pavlica, *Savremena istorija Kosova*, available on: <https://pescanik.net/savremena-istorija-kosova/> (2011).

of Serbia.⁴⁹ The Kosovo Parliament’s decision for independence and the ongoing battle over the status of Kosovo remain highly controversial issues and burning questions in political and social life in Serbia, which is why the role of archetypal enemy, imposed on the Turks from the 13th to the 19th century, has now been transferred in public discourse to the Kosovar Albanians. In other words, Kosovar Albanians have been given the role of being out to steal Kosovo – the “heart of the Serbian” nation.

After this brief contextual introduction required to allow us a deeper understanding of the motives for the strong animosity expressed towards Kosovar Albanians within the Serbian national ideology, we may now turn to our discursive analysis of the texts selected from the daily newspapers (Table 2).

Articles selected from *Politika*, *Novosti* and *Informer*

<i>Politika</i>	<i>Novosti</i>	<i>Informer</i>
Kosovo – Fake State Founded On Terrorism	KFOR Also Backs Thaçi’s Assault	Emergency! Shqiptars Preparing Criminal Plan: Greater Albania To Be Realized By New Year
Independent Kosovo A Risk To World Peace	On-The-Scene With Representatives Of Our People In Gjakova: Albanians Aim To Eradicate All Serbian Traces	Great Menace Lurking! Shqiptars Plotting Diabolical Plan Against Serbia: Revolt Underway In Preševo
Greater Albania By Back Door	West Threatens Serbia: Set Foot In Kosovo And You Will Be At War With NATO	Emergency! Shqiptars On Rampage Over Kosovo And Metohija: Shqiptars Attack Serbs Using Teargas And Bats

49 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kosovo-serbia/kosovo-declares-independence-from-serbia-idUSHAM53437920080217> (accessed 1 October 2019).

Rama: Strategy For Albanian Unification By 2025	CIA Arming Albanians	Extreme Danger! West Openly Supports Albanian Extremists: Ustashe Train Shqiptars For Assault On Serbian Border
Vučić Comments On Kosovar Albanian Platform – Get That Paper Out Of My Sight, You Prishtina Thugs	Vučić Receives Lynch Threats Just Like Djurić	Alarming! Shqiptars Set Date For Attack On Serbs: War In Kosovo To Begin On 15 December
Vučić: Kosovar Army Could End In Tragedy	EULEX And KFOR Tolerate KLA War Veteran Shoot-Outs	Northern Macedonia Overrun By Shqiptars
Debate Of The Week: Marko Djurić, Head Of Office For Kosovo And Metohija: KFOR Must Disarm Kosovar Paramilitaries	Pacoli's Government Led By Kiddie-Killer	Prishtina Assembly Working Against Peaceful Solution With Belgrade: Shqiptars Declare War On Serbia!
Vulin: Paramilitary Formations Formed In Kosovo	Ramush Defends 'Borders' And Calls For War	Vučić Not Bluffing: Will Send Army To Kosovo
Kosovo Paramilitary Pushes Region Over Edge	Serbs Shot At, Old People Beaten Up	Serbs In Kosovo Still Being Tortured By Shqiptars!
Western Balkans Operation Flash Preparation For Northern Kosovo	Vučić Comments On Moves By Prishtina: They Want To Cleanse Kosovo Of All Serbs	Danger! Madmen From Prishtina Getting Crazier: Shqiptars Want War
West Gives Green Light For New Attack On Northern Kosovo And Metohija	Albanians And KFOR Train To Attack Serbian Tanks	They Really Want To Start A War! Haradinaj And Thaçi Threaten New Round Of Arrests In Northern Kosovo
Prishtina Special Forces Terrorize Northern Kosovo And Metohija: Brutal And Indiscriminate Attack On Serbs, Dozens Beaten Up, Four Injured	Minister Vulin In Beijing Warns About Threats To Peace And Stability In This Part Of Europe: Greater Albania Will Set The Balkans On Fire	Shqiptars Have Diabolical Plan: Assault On Northern Kosovo Planned For June 5?!

Reaffirming the Greater Serbia project

Ana Brnabić: Prishtina Discriminates Against Anything Serbian	Combat Readiness Of Armed Forces Raised To Highest Level: Serbian Army Ready To Fight!	Horror! Terrorists' Wicked Plans In Kosovo: Shqiptars Planned To Slaughter Serbs
Stefanović: Prishtina Aim Is To Expel Serbs From Kosovo And Metohija	ROSU Assault: They Threatened To Open Fire On Us	Realization Of Criminal Project, Serious Provocation From Peć: Shqiptars Create Greater Albania
Prishtina Has Started To Carry Out Economic Ethnic Cleansing	New Weapon Of The Great Powers: Creating A Kosovar Orthodox Church	Two Devils Join Forces: Milo Andthaçi Usurp Serbian Churches
Serbia Considers Using Military In Kosovo And Metohija	Perfidious Action By Government In Prishtina: Serbian Churches Turned Into Catholic Temples	Serbian Church Under NATO Attack
Next Year In Prizren	KLA Was Terrorist International: Jihadists From Košare On Killing Spree In London	Shqiptars Want To Occupy Northern Kosovo Before Hillary Clinton's Visit On June 12, While Putin's Intelligence Officers Claim Shqiptars From ISIS Engaged For Action

Table 2

Kosovo as a Fake State

Unlike the texts dealing with Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are primarily aimed at undermining its statehood, the language employed in the media in the case of Kosovo and the Kosovar Albanians is openly warlike and as such constantly fosters a sense of instability and a pre-war atmosphere in both Serbia and Kosovo. Such writings may naturally have unpredictable consequences for the region and for the integration of Kosovar Albanians living in Serbia proper. It is of particular importance to note the openly belligerent statements coming from top-ranking officials of the Republic of Serbia, including the President Aleksandar Vučić,

Prime Minister Ana Brnabić, Defence Minister Aleksandar Vulin, and Interior Minister Nebojša Stefanović. Before turning to their statements, however, one should note how the Serbian media present the idea of an independent state of Kosovo. In texts such as “Kosovo – A Fake State Founded On Terrorism”,⁵⁰ “Independent Kosovo Risk To World Peace”,⁵¹ “Greater Albania By Back Door”,⁵² “Rama: Strategy For Albanian Unification By 2025”,⁵³ and “Realization Of Criminal Project, Serious Provocation From Peć: Shqiptars Creating Greater Albania”⁵⁴, the state of Kosovo is pictured as a “fake” and “criminogenic entity” thanks to the activities of the separatist and terrorist organization that is the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which “financed itself from human trafficking, narcotics, weapons and organ trafficking” during the war. There is also a constant insistence that Kosovo’s independence is actually only a first step towards achieving the ultimate goal, the establishment of a “Greater Albania” by unification of the territories of Kosovo and Metohija and Albania. The arguments published in *Politika* on 27 November 2018 to support such claims include the words of Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama, who presented the concept of a “national project for the unification of Albania and Kosovo, and called on Ramush Haradinaj, at the time Kosovar Prime Minister, to start developing a common strategy for the unification of Albanians by 2025” at a joint meeting of Albanians from Kosovo and Albania. Such articles on the potential creation of a “Greater Albania” provide strong support for the thesis put forward for decades by nationalist Serbian circles insisting that the goal of Kosovar Albanian separatism is to unification with Albania in a single state. In this way, the narrative of the Serbian nationalist intellectuals is given extra weight, while presenting itself as a kind of “prophecy”.

50 *Politika*, 24 November 2018.

51 *Politika*, 1 July 2019.

52 *Politika*, 8 August 2019.

53 *Politika*, 26 November 2018.

54 *Informer*, 27 November 2018.

Kosovo Albanians as Existential Threat

As well as being presented in the media as a “criminogenic creation”, Kosovo is also regularly written about as a territory where Serbian heritage, medieval Orthodox monasteries, and the Serbian population generally are threatened by the Prishtina authorities and Kosovar security intelligence services, which, with the tacit support of Western countries, are carrying out systematic aggression against Serbs in Kosovo with the aim of ethnically cleansing them. The number of texts conveying such messages is extremely high and they serve to create an atmosphere of profound indignation among Serbs living in Serbia, as well as national homogenization that could potentially be used to mobilize the Serb population should military force be employed and armed conflict with Kosovar Albanians break out again.⁵⁵

As already noted, these accounts acquire additional weight in the light of statements made by top government officials of the Republic of Serbia, who directly threaten war or the use of force against Kosovo. Such statements were especially frequent in November and December 2018, after information emerged that the Kosovan Security Forces were being transformed into a Kosovan Army. President Vučić commented that, if this were to happen, “Serbia will find itself in a hopeless situation”, implicitly

55 Texts from Table 2 foreground the vulnerability of Serbs in Kosovo and the risk of ethnic cleansing and so help create a febrile atmosphere in Serbia. The following texts spread this kind of victimhood propaganda: “Vučić Comments On Moves By Pristina: They Want To Cleanse Kosovo Of All Serbs” (*Novosti*, 22 November 2018), “On-The-Scene With Representatives Of Our People In Gjakova: Albanians Aim To Eradicate All Serbian Traces” (*Novosti*, 2 September 2018), “Horror! Wicked Plans Of Terrorists In Kosovo: Shqiptars Planned To Slaughter Serbs” (*Informër*, 26 July 2019), “Serbs On Kosovo Still Tortured By Shqiptars!” (*Informër*, 15 Jun 2019), “Emergency! Shqiptars On Rampage On Kosovo And Metohija: Shqiptars Attack Serbs Using Teargas And Bats” (*Informër*, 4 May 2019), “Ana Brnabić: Prishtina Discriminates Against Anything Serbian” (*Politika*, 20 November 2018), “Stefanović: Prishtina Aims To Expel Serbs From Kosovo And Metohija” (*Politika*, 11 December 2018), “Prishtina Has Started To Carry Out Economic Ethnic Cleansing” (*Politika*, 22 November 2018), “Serbs Shot At, Old People Beaten Up” (*Novosti*, 29 May 2019).

telling the public what Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabić had already stated openly on November 6, 2018, viz. that if a Kosovan Army were formed Serbia would “consider using military force to prevent any new ethnic cleansing of Kosovo Serbs”. The Prime Minister’s statement was followed by statements by other senior Serbian officials, such as Defence Minister Aleksandar Vulin, who said “it is clear to everyone that the Kosovan Army is not an army but a terrorist organization” with only one goal, “to clash with Serbia and Serbs”, adding “that it may have grave consequences and jeopardise the security of the entire region”. These statements by Brnabić and Vulin were followed by basically identical messages from Marko Djurić, the Head of the Office for Kosovo and Metohija, and Interior Minister Nebojša Stefanović, who both accused the Kosovo authorities of systematically striving to expel Serbs and labelled the Kosovo Army “paramilitary”, just as their fellow government officials had done. Another thing to provoke uproar among Serbian officials was the decision by Kosovo officials in November 2018 to impose a 100% tariff on Serbian exports to Kosovo. Following this decision by the Kosovo authorities, negotiations on normalizing relations between Serbia and Kosovo, mediated by EU officials, were suspended.⁵⁶

56 Texts from Table 2 that (in)directly contribute to the warmongering atmosphere, whether by reference to potential threats of attack by Kosovar Albanians against Serbs living in northern Kosovo and Serbia or threats that Serbia may use its military might against Kosovo, include: “Serbia Considers Using Military On Kosovo And Metohija” (*Politika*, 6 September 2018), “Vučić Not Bluffing: Will Send Army To Kosovo” (*Informer*, 30 May 2019), “Combat Readiness Of Armed Forces Raised To Highest Level: Serbian Army Ready To Fight!” (*Novosti*, 30 September 2018), “Vučić: Kosovar Army Could End In Tragedy” (*Politika*, 20 October 2018), “Debate Of The Week: Marko Djurić, Head Of Office For Kosovo And Metohija: KFOR Must Disarm Kosovar Paramilitaries” (*Politika*, 9 December 2018), “Vulin: Paramilitary Formations Forming In Kosovo” (*Politika*, 13 November 2018), “Kosovo Paramilitaries Push Region Over Edge” (*Politika*, 5 December 2018), “Danger! Madmen From Prishtina Getting Crazier: Shqiptars Want War” (*Informer*, 19 May 2019), “Prishtina Assembly Working Against Peaceful Solution With Belgrade: Shqiptars Declare War On Serbia!” (*Informer*, 8 March 2019), “Great Menace Lurking! Shqiptars Plotting Diabolical Plan Against Serbia: Revolt In Preševo Under Way” (*Informer*, 1 July 2019), “Extreme Danger! West Openly Supports Albanian

Indeed, the European Union, as mediator in the dialogue, and the United States are framed as pursuing “anti-Serb ideas” and supporting the “war” against the Serbs by arming the Kosovar Albanian security forces and providing logistical and military assistance for their operations in the north of the country. Units of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) are presented as destabilizing agents whose aim is to help the Kosovo authorities in Prishtina meet their goals to the detriment of Serbs and their rights.⁵⁷

Media coverage also plays on the religious feelings of readers. In the texts, “Serbian Church Under NATO Attack”,⁵⁸ “New Weapons Of The Great Powers: Creating A Kosovar Orthodox Church”,⁵⁹ “Perfidious Action By Government in Prishtina: Serbian Churches Turned Into Catholic Temples”,⁶⁰ and “Two Devils Join Forces: Milo And Thaçi Usurp Serbian Churches”,⁶¹ the claim is made that the Kosovo authorities, helped by NATO and Western countries, have plans to “steal” Serbian monasteries and churches, including some of the oldest and most significant temples of the Serbian Orthodox Church, like the monasteries of Gračanica (erected in 1321) and Visoki Dečani (1335) and most important of all, the monastery of the Patriarchate of Peć, which served as seat of the Serbian Orthodox Church from 1346-1463 and 1557-1776 (under Ottoman rule). These monasteries have great emotional value for Orthodox Serbs,

Extremists: Ustashe Train Shqiptars To Assault Serbian Border” (*Informer*, 4 Jun 2019), “Alarming! Shqiptars Set Date For Attack On Serbs: War In Kosovo Will Begin On 15 December” (*Informer*, 4 December 2018).

57 The following texts from the table affirm this narrative: “EULEX And KFOR Tolerate KLA War Veterans Shoot-Outs” (*Novosti*, 11 September 2018), “West Threatens Serbia: Set Foot In Kosovo And You’ll Be At War With NATO” (*Novosti*, 4 October 2018), “CIA Arms Albanians” (*Novosti*, 5 December 2018), “Western Balkans Operation Flash Preparation For Northern Kosovo” (*Politika*, 2 April 2019), “West Gives Green Light For New Attack On Northern Kosovo And Metohija” (*Politika*, 12 Jun 2019).

58 *Informer*, 22 July 2019.

59 *Novosti*, 7 September 2018.

60 *Novosti*, 7 June 2019.

61 *Informer*, 15 June 2019.

who regard them as a pillar of their religious and national identity, which is why such media accounts can incite popular indignation and anger against Kosovar Albanians and especially Islam. In this context of fake media coverage of the potential “theft” of churches or attacks on them, it is appropriate to recall how the Belgrade Bay-rakli Mosque was set on fire in retaliation for a number of Serbian monasteries in Kosovo attacked in 2004.

Kosovo Liberation Army: radical paramilitary jihadists

Texts linking the KLA to radical paramilitary *takfir*-jihadist organizations and Islamic State of Syria and the Levant (ISIL) aim to place Islam in a confrontation with Orthodox Christianity and Serbia, which in turn are framed as forces standing in defence of a Christian Europe unaware of the lurking danger from Muslims. An article in *Novosti* entitled “KLA Was Terrorist International: Jihadists From Košare On Killing Spree In London”⁶² includes the claim that “Mujahideen led by al-Zawahiri, bin Laden’s right-hand man” responsible for “massacres in Britain, Belgium, Israel, France and Syria” fought against Serbia in the 1990s. The same text includes the claim that the KLA was trained by the CIA, Green Berets, and the SAS Regiment of the British Special Forces during the 1990s. The text ends with the conclusion that Western countries’ cooperation with “Islamic terrorists” in Kosovo “backfired on them” on September 11, 2001, and again in 2005 with the bomb attack on the London underground. Another article, “Assault On Northern Kosovo Planned For June 5?!”,⁶³ in *Informer*, has the claim that “Shqiptars” from ISIL “joined Kosovo ROSU special forces, which have the consent of the US Administration and backup training of official Albanian troops to invade the north of Kosovo”, where the Serbian population is in the majority.

62 *Novosti*, 9 April 2019.

63 *Novosti*, 23 April 2019.

III. MEMORY POLITICS AND CRIMES COMMITTED IN THE 1990S IN B&H AND KOSOVO

The politics of remembrance is strongly emphasised in the monitored media. In particular, it plays on readers' feelings by insisting on the (nationalist) politics of remembering Serb victims, taken to include not only those of the 1990s but also of the distant past, especially from World Wars I and II. It is worth noting the key role that the politics of remembrance play in creating both the present and the future. Nenad Dimitrijević offers three possibilities for how a collective or group can relate to its past: a) to promote official memory, based on officially established truth; b) to affirm the politics of oblivion and espouse the ideology of a new beginning; or c) to adjust the past to particular political, social and cultural goals.⁶⁴ The last of these three possibilities has been the dominant pattern in Serbia ever since Slobodan Milošević came to power in 1989. That is when the politics of remembrance and of the past itself came increasingly to be deployed in very brutal ways for the fulfilment of the goals of the Serbian expansionist national ideology and the "rationalization of intolerance". Using the politics of remembrance in this way in the 1990s led to genocide and the ethnic cleansing of Muslims in the B&H and Kosovo.

Attitudes towards the Serbian nationalist ideology and its (ab)use of the politics of remembrance did not change substantially even after the democratic changes of 2000, when Slobodan Milošević was ousted from power, even if the criminal politics of the 1990s were subjected by the new authorities to "various forms of interpretative negation". Things nonetheless got much worse in 2012, when the Serbian Progressive Party, led by Aleksandar Vučić, former vice-president of the neo-fascist Serbian

64 Nenad Dimitrijević, „Sjećanje na zločine u naše ime“ in Hikmet Karčić (ed.), *Sjećanje na bosanski genocid: pravda, pamćenje i poricanje* (Sarajevo, Institute for the Islamic Tradition of Bosniaks, 2017), p. 97.

Radical Party, and the Socialist Party of Serbia, which had ruled the country during the criminal 1990s, took power. From that point on, there has been a rise in most direct forms of:

refusal to accept responsibility for crimes committed in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo; vindication of the destructive essence of nationalism; promotion of war criminals and setting them on a pedestal as national heroes, and refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Public discourse has been colonized by an authoritarian friend-enemy dichotomy, where the enemies are non-Serbs, the international community, and any individual or organization in Serbia trying to examine the past with open eyes and insist the country's path to democracy requires prior condemnation of crime and a straightforward rejection of the nationalist heritage.⁶⁵

Reaffirming a radical nationalist politics of remembrance meant undertaking a far-reaching historical revisionism to ensure a positive image of the "national past" and erase any atrocities that had been committed. That is why the media keeps emphasizing the heroism of the Serbian people and their sufferings, for which the world has shown so little understanding or respect. This goes hand-in-hand with the systematic construction of Others, who are thereby turned into enemies of the Serbian people. In general, the main figures of the enemy are Croats, Bosniaks, (Kosovar) Albanians, and Western countries. Hence, the monitored media places a strong emphasis on the torments suffered by Serbs under the Ustashe regime in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) and the Jasenovac concentration camp during World War II, for which the Croats have never been punished.⁶⁶ As well as to

65 Dimitrijević, „Sjećanje na zločine u naše ime“, p. 100.

66 "Letter From Former Jasenovac Prisoners To The United Nations: A Warning To The World That The Ustashe Are Back" (*Politika*, 4 April 2019); "Croatia In Shock Bleiburg Commemoration Prohibited" (*Politika*, 10 March 2019); "Ivo Goldstein Given Bad Press Over Jasenovac And Bleiburg" (*Politika*, 10 March 2019); "Šibenik: Nazi Graffiti Sprayed On Monument To Anti-Fascist Victims" (10 March 2018); "Wikipedia Describes Jasenovac As Labour Camp" (*Novosti*, 1 September 2018); "Stepinac Killed Serbs With Blessing Of Holy See" (*Novosti*, 9 September 2018); "Ustashe Salutation In Parliament" (16 November 2018).

Serbian casualties during World War II, special attention is paid to Operation Storm from 1995, when 250,000 Serbs fled Croatia as a result of Croatian military operations, and the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia, which was, as already mentioned, the international community's response to the ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians by Serbian special police forces and the Yugoslav Army. In the cases of Operation Storm⁶⁷ and the NATO bombing campaign⁶⁸, just as with the NDH and World War II, Serbs are presented as ultimate victims, absolutely guiltless and denied justice because the perpetrators of those crimes have not been adequately convicted of their crimes. In the same way, it is insistently claimed that no one has been found guilty at international tribunals for the suffering of Serbian victims of the wars of the 1990s in B&H⁶⁹ and Kosovo.⁷⁰

67 "Commemoration Of Operation Storm At Krušedol Monastery: Pogrom Must Never Be Forgotten" (*Politika*, 5 August 2019); "Croatia Celebrates While Candles Lit In Serbia" (*Politika*, 5 August 2019); "Requiems To Victims Of Operation Storm Served In Belgrade And Banja Luka" (*Politika*, 6 August 2019); "Croats Keep Silent: Where Have 500,000 Serbs Gone?" (*Novosti*, 4 August 2019); "Twenty-Four Years From Criminal Croatian Operation, Largest Ethnic Cleansing In Europe Since World War II: Screams Were Louder Than Words, Death Easier Than Life" (*Novosti*, 4 August 2019); "Celebrating Pogroms In Croatia: Threats Of New Storm Coming From Knin" (6 August 2019).

68 "Amfilohije: NATO Aggression Like Nazis" (*Politika*, 26 March 2019); "Topic Of The Week: Twenty Years Since NATO Aggression – Heroic Defense Of Serbia, Speeches By Obrad Stevanović, Božidar Delić And Spasoje Smiljanić" (*Politika*, 25 March 2019); "Commemorating Day Of Remembrance For Those Killed In NATO Bombings: We Will Not Remember The Words Of Our Enemies But The Silence Of Our Friends" (*Politika*, 25 March 2019).

69 "Day Of Remembrance For Children From Serb Sarajevo Killed" (*Politika*, 12 March 2019); "Investigation Opened Into Killings Of Serbs In Sarajevo" (*Politika*, 26 March 2019); "No Justice For Tuzla Column Incident" (*Politika*, 16 May 2019); "Naser Orić Found Not Guilty Of Crimes Against Serbs" (*Politika*, 1 December 2018); "European Hypocrisy: We Are Labelled Genocidal, While Butcher Orić Is Acquitted" (*Novosti*, 1 December 2018); "How The West Concealed Detailed List Of Podrinje Victims In 1993: *Novosti* Reveals Hidden Report On Massacre Of 1,000 Serbs"; "Seven Islamic Terrorists Who Sowed Death In Tuzla" (*Novosti*, 4 March 2019).

70 "Twenty Years Since Massacre Of 14 Serbian Harvesters: Old Gacko, Life And Sacrifice" (*Politika*, 24 July 2019); "Srna: Body Organs Of Kidnapped Serbs Went All The Way To Damascus" (*Politika*, 31 July 2018); "Tribunal Concealed

The most important aspect for this chapter, however, is the attitude taken by the media we monitored to crimes committed against the Muslim population in B&H and Kosovo, which they constantly relativize, minimize or completely negate. The most blatant example is the reporting in *Informer*, *Politika* and *Novosti* on the final verdict of the Appeals Chamber of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals in the case of Radovan Karadžić, who was found responsible for genocide in Srebrenica, crimes against humanity, and violation of the laws and customs of war in B&H. All three newspapers either (in)directly questioned or directly challenged the verdict against Karadžić and unequivocally defined the Hague Tribunal as a “political court” that had failed to deliver justice and showed bias, because it was “founded with the aim of pronouncing only Serbs and their leaders guilty for the civil war in B&H”. *Informer* published a piece on the Karadžić verdict entitled “Hague Crime; Radovan Karadžić Sentenced To Life”,⁷¹ decrying the verdict as “shameful and disgraceful” and “the terrible violation of Serbs continuing in the court in Scheveningen”. The text quoted the words of Karadžić himself, claiming the verdict had “nothing to do with justice”, and of his brother Luka, who maintained that Serbs “should feel pride for [Radovan Karadžić’s] establishment of the first Serbian state across the Drina, regardless of who admits it”.⁷² The next day the same paper featured an article with a message from Radovan Karadžić from The Hague proclaiming “Brother Serbs, we have won! The Republika Srpska is our victory”. *Novosti* also featured

Evidence Of Yellow House” (*Politika*, 7 December 2018); “Announcement Of Captain Leshi Day In Bujanovac: Why Is Prosecutor Silent?” (*Politika*, 23 May 2019). As well as on these cases, particular emphasis tends to be placed on three events: the Tuzla Column Incident, the crime at the Markale Market in Sarajevo, and the fate of the “Sarajevo Serbs” reportedly expelled from the city. All three cases are subjected to ideological interpretation in line with the dominant Serbian nationalist version of the wars of the 1990s.

71 *Informer*, 21 March 2019.

72 *Novosti*, 22 March 2019. A similar statement by Luka Karadžić was also published in *Politika*.

an article dedicated to the defence of the Republika Srpska, stating that in light of the “(court) ruling that there was no genocide in seven B&H municipalities... Srpska is not in danger”, as it had deprived “Sarajevo [of] its trump cards for dismantling the Republika Srpska”. On the day the sentence was handed down, *Novosti’s* correspondents were in Pale, in the Republika Srpska, where they spent time with local citizens watching the verdict live on television. *Novosti* cited the words of locals: “We would still follow Karadžić all over again. We will not run away and we will not forsake our Radovan. A man like this is born only once. We Serbs are proud of our first president. We are thankful for our Republika Srpska, which he created along with his people. The verdict is shameful.”⁷³ As well as glorifying Radovan Karadžić, *Novosti* reported that the public were angry with The Hague Tribunal: “Our Radovan remains a legendary figure for the Serbian people. As for the international gangsters who handed down that sentence, shame on them, not on Serbia.”⁷⁴

Another very illustrative example of attitudes towards crimes against Muslims in B&H is the media silence on 11 July, when the Srebrenica genocide is commemorated. *Informer* and *Novosti* didn’t carry a word on the genocide or any report on the commemorative rallies at the Potočari Memorial Centre, held every year on July 11. On the other hand, as discussed above, *Politika* did something even more shameful and perfidious by publishing its series of articles on July 14 in its “Theme of the Week” section on the “Green Transversal”. On July 12, unlike *Novosti* or *Informer*, *Politika* did feature a piece on the commemorative rally at the Potočari Memorial Centre, but failed to mention that the crime was committed by Serb forces, instead presenting the perpetrators of genocide in completely “depersonalized” terms. Needless to say, the three media monitored for this chapter kept their silence not only for Srebrenica but

73 *Novosti*, 21 March 2019.

74 *Novosti*, 21 March 2019.

also for many other cases of war crimes or ethnic cleansing committed in B&H and Kosovo, which they have never covered. We mention only a few: Prijedor, Foča, Banja Luka, Višegrad, the siege of Sarajevo, the massacre in Tuzla, Račak, Suva Reka, Vučitrn, Orahovac, Pusto Selo, Izbica, Štrpce, and many others.

Such media coverage has, of course, significant implications for how the public perceives the wars of the 1990s, best evidenced by a survey on “The Public’s Knowledge of the 1990s, War Crimes, and War Crimes Trials” conducted by Demostat.⁷⁵ When asked what had happened in Srebrenica in 1995, only 12% of the sample said it was genocide, with as many as 40% saying they did not know. Even more disturbing is that, when asked “which city was under siege for four years during the wars of the 1990s”, 78% of the population claimed not to know. Particularly important in the context of an uninformed citizenry is that the youngest respondents were least well-informed about the events of the 1990s (only 6% were well-informed while 84% were uninformed).

To conclude this section of our analysis on the politics of remembrance, it is worth noting a thirty-part feuilleton published in *Politika* that presented a completely distorted and revisionist picture of the role of Patriarch Pavle and the Serbian Orthodox Church during the wars of the 1990s. The feuilleton featured excerpts of a book by Deacon Aleksandar Praščević, *Patriarch Pavle on Islam and Muslims (1990-1997)*. The parts published in *Politika* abounded in inconsistencies and deliberate disregard for the ample historical sources on Patriarch Pavle and the Serbian Orthodox Church’s attitude during the wars of the 1990s and their shameful (in)direct support to the genocidal politics of Serb forces in B&H.⁷⁶

75 http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Istrazivanje_javnog_mnjenja_Sudjenja_za_ratne_zlocine_Demostat.pdf (accessed 1 October 2019).

76 For more details on Aleksandar Praščević’s feuilleton, see Ivan Ejub Kostić, “Prećutkivanje istine” in *Preporod*, no. 22/1128, 2018, pp. 16-17.

CONCLUSION

The dissemination of the nationalist politics of remembrance and revisionist narratives about crimes committed in the 1990s is highly effectively carried out through the mass media, whose language and style help them reach “ordinary” people and the masses. It results in war criminals being perceived as national heroes and the crimes themselves “rationalized”, as explained in the above quote from Nenad Dimitrijević. In our conclusion, it is worth looking at *The Ten Stages of Genocide* written by Gregory Stanton, professor at George Mason University.⁷⁷ Professor Stanton defines denial as the last, tenth, stage of genocide. During this post-genocidal stage, mass graves are excavated, and attempts are made to conceal the evidence of crimes committed and the perpetrators themselves. There is a denial that the crimes were even committed, while the victims are blamed for what happened to them. Serbia has already passed through most of this stage and is now in an eleventh phase of “triumphalism”, added to the aforementioned ten stages by Professor Hariz Halilovich, in his paper on “Globalization and Genocide”. According to Halilovich, the stage of “triumphalism” is characterized by the fact “that the perpetrators, their sponsors, and the politics and ideologies behind them no longer seek to deny the atrocities, but rather to glorify them, celebrating and humiliating the survivors by erecting monuments to the perpetrators of crimes in the places of massacres”.⁷⁸ This creates a “culture of triumphalism” in which the media play a key role. We have already cited a survey on how unaware the Serbian public is of the crimes committed in the 1990s, but another important aspect of the survey should be pointed out, namely the ethnic distance revealed

77 Gregory Stanton, “The ten stages of genocide”, in *Genocide Watch*, 2017. Available via <http://www.genocidewatch.org/genocide/tenstagesofgenocide.html> (accessed 1 October 2019).

78 Hariz Halilovich, “Globalization and Genocide”, in Ali Farazmand (ed.), *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance* (Springer International Publishing AG, 2017).

regarding Muslim ethnic groups, such as Bosniaks and Albanians, with only 8% of the public responding that they feel any kinship with Bosniaks and only 2% doing so for Albanians. This highly disturbing and alarming piece of information should not surprise, given the constant demonisation of these two ethnic groups in the media which has turned them into archetypal enemies based on their religious and ethnic affiliations. For several decades, efforts have been steadily made to prevent Serbia from being constituted as a civil and inclusive state of all its citizens, insisting on its status as a monoethnic state and cradle of Orthodoxy. An illustrative example is a text entitled “France Is Not A Civil State Either”, published in *Politika* and written by Miroljub Jevtić, a highly vocal Islamophobe who sowed hatred against Muslims during the 1980s and 1990s, paving the way for their physical extermination. In his text, Jevtić openly claims that, historically speaking, “Serbia is the patrimony of the Serbian Orthodox Church”, so that all its tenants, no matter whether they are Orthodox or of another faith, are under an obligation to “kiss the hand of the patriarch”. He also says it must be made clear to everyone that “Prince Lazar did not fight for the Serbs but for Christianity and that his enemies were not Turks but Muslims who aimed to destroy Christianity”.⁷⁹

In light of the terrorist massacres committed by Andreas Breivik and Brenton Tarrant, Jevtić’s words resonate even more strongly, not least because his words express the guiding thoughts of the idols who inspired both Breivik and Tarrant, i.e. Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, in their acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing against Muslims in B&H in the 1990s.⁸⁰ Once this is taken into account, it becomes clear that the reaffirmed Serbian nationalist ideology reaches far beyond the borders of Serbia and the Balkan region and reverberates strongly with ultra-right racist and fascist movements around the world that harbour a deep hatred and intolerance of Muslims and Islam.

79 *Politika*, 28 May 2019.

80 Both have cited Karadžić and Mladić as their idols.



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The aim of this work is to provide an insight into the major drivers and platforms of such rhetoric in two Western Balkan countries – Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. This work employs the critical discourse analysis method to study the pervasive representation of Islam and Muslims in a number of leading Bosnian Serb and Croat owned newspapers in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as in a number of high-circulation newspapers and tabloids in Serbia published over the course of one year (August 2018-August 2019).

Following the collocation and concordance of the most frequent terms and words that revolve around the representation of Islam and Muslims, the findings indicated that in an overwhelming number of cases, Islam and Muslims are associated with violence, religious radicalism, ethnic nationalisms and political obstructionism.



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