

IMAGES OF THE RELIGIOUS OTHER



# Images of the Religious Other

*Discourse and Distance in the Western Balkans*

edited by

Christian Moe

CEIR

in cooperation with the  
Kotor Network

Novi Sad  
2008

Published by  
CEIR (Novi Sad)  
in cooperation with the Kotor Network

Copyright © 2008 Christian Moe  
Copyright to individual chapters is held  
by the authors

Reviewers: Prof. dr. Đuro Šušnjić and prof. dr. Anne Stensvold  
Cover illustration and design: Marija and Marko Borović  
Printed by: Čigoja Štampa

*The Kotor Network gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs via the Dept. of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, University of Oslo. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the institutions mentioned.*

ISBN 978-86-84111-10-6

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	7
Introduction.....	9
<i>Christian Moe</i>	
PART ONE: THE OTHER IN HISTORY	
Images of the Ottomans and Islam in Serbian History Textbooks.....	17
<i>Milan Urkomanović</i>	
Images of the Ottomans in History Textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina .....	39
<i>Ahmet Alibašić</i>	
PART TWO: TEACHING ABOUT THE OTHER	
Images of the Religious Other in Religious Instruction Textbooks in Croatia.....	75
<i>Ankica Marinović</i>	
Images of Religious Others in Religious Education Textbooks for Primary Schools in Bosnia-Herzegovina .....	97
<i>Aid Smajić</i>	
PART THREE: RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY DISCOURSES	
The Serbian Orthodox Church's Images of Religious Others ...	125
<i>Zlatiborka Popov-Momčinović</i>	
The Image of Woman in Religious Community Magazines in Bosnia-Herzegovina.....	147
<i>Zilka Spahić-Šiljak</i>	
Images of the Religious Other in Serbia .....	167
<i>Zorica Kuburic</i>	
PART FOUR: DISTANCE TO THE OTHER	
Religious Distance in Croatia.....	201
<i>Dinka Marinović Jerolimov</i>	
Religious Distance in Vojvodina.....	219

Contributors .....	233
Alphabetical Index.....	235

Index of Tables

Table 4.1: Confessional structure of the Republic of Croatia .....	76
Table 7.1: Texts of female authors by subject matter .....	153
Table 7.2: Texts about women by subject matter .....	154
Table 7.3: Family roles of persons pictured .....	159
Table 7.4: Roles or occupations of women depicted.....	161
Table 7.5: Roles or occupations of men depicted .....	161
Table 9.1: Confessional structure of the Republic of Croatia .....	204
Table 9.2: Indicators of religiosity in Croatia 2004 (in %) .....	205
Table 9.3: Social distance towards the members of different religious groups (% and mean).....	208
Table 9.4: Religious distance according to religious affiliation, religiosity and religious practice.....	211
Table 9.5: Religious distance according to gender, age, education, place of residence and region .....	212
Table 10.1: Desirability of confession by social role, Vojvodina .....	221
Table 10.2: Would you want your country's president to be... ..	223
Table 10.3: Would you want your spouse to be... ..	223
Table 10.4: Would you want your teacher to be... ..	224
Table 10.5: Would you want your boss to be... ..	224
Table 10.6: Would you want your neighbor to be... ..	224
Table 10.7: Would you want your business partner to be... ..	224
Table 10.8: Desirability of confession in role of neighbor .....	226
Table 10.9: Would you want a Nazarene as a neighbor? .....	228

Illustration Index

Figure 7.1: Male/female authorship of signed texts.....	152
Figure 7.2: Gender distribution of persons pictured .....	159
Figure 10.1: Desirability of adherents to different religious communities as spouse .....	223
Figure 10.2: Would you want a Catholic/Nazarene as a spouse? .....	225

## Acknowledgments

The editor wishes to thank Mr Jan Braathu and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as project manager Professor Anne Stensvold and the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages at the University of Oslo, for making this project possible; Professor Zorica Kuburić and CEIR in Novi Sad for the effort put into publishing the results; and the authors for their valuable contributions and for their considerable patience.

All chapters were originally commissioned in 2006 for the joint research project of the Kotor Network. Before this book went into print, however, versions of several texts had been published, by permission, in journals or other forms. It seems helpful to mention these other versions here.

Ahmet Alibašić's "Images of the Ottomans in History Textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina" has been published, under the same title, in *İslâm Araştırmaları Dergisi* (Turkish Journal of Islamic Studies), no. 17 (2007), 103–137. A shorter Bosnian version was published as: "Imidž Osmanlija u historijskim udžbenicima u Bosni i Hercegovini," *Novi Muallim*, no. 32 (2007), 55–64.

Parts of Zorica Kuburić's contributions have been published in: "Slika o sebi i religijski drugom u Srbiji iz perspektive pravoslavlja i katolicizma," *Religija i tolerancija* 5, no. 7 (January-June 2007), 41–54; "Kakvo mesto daju građani Vojvodine religijski drugom," *Godišnjak Filozofskog fakulteta u Novom Sadu* 33, no. 1 (2008), 91–108;

"The Role of Religion in Identity Formation and Social Distancing in the Balkans," *Divided God and Intercultural Dialog* (Ljubljana: Dijački dom Ivana Cankarja and KUD Pozitiv, 2008), 153–170. Chapter 10 is based on research in the project "Socijalno-ekonomske i kulturne karakteristike i potencijali Vojvodine kao cinilac regionalnog povezivanja i integracije u Evropu", no. 149013, funded by the Ministry of Science and Technological Development of Serbia.

A version of Aid Smajić's "Images of Religious Others in Religious Education Textbooks for Primary Schools in Bosnia-Herzegovina" is published in *Islamic Studies* (2008). A part is published in Bosnian in *Zbornik radova Fakulteta islamskih*

*nauka u Sarajevu*, no. 12 (2007).

Material in Zilka Spahić-Šiljak's "The Image of Woman in Religious Community Magazines in Bosnia-Herzegovina" also

forms part of her book *Žene, Religija i politika* (Sarajevo: IMIC, CIPS and TPO, 2007), 292-304.

For supplements, corrections and updates,  
see the homepage for this book:

<http://kotor-network.info/imagesbook>



## Chapter One

### Introduction

# 1 Introduction

*Christian Moe*

This book contains the fruits of a 2006 joint research project of the Kotor Network on Religion in Plural Societies.<sup>1</sup> The contributors come from countries of the former Yugoslavia: Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina (B&H), and Serbia. They write about “images” of religious others, that is, about conceptions, perceptions, descriptions,

---

1. <sup>1</sup> The Kotor Network (<http://kotor-network.info>) brings together Balkans-based scholars of religious studies. It was formed in 2004 on an initiative from the “Religion and Nationalism in the Western Balkans Project,” led by Professor Anne Stensvold at the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, University of Oslo, and was funded until 2007 by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

understandings, attitudes, and depictions. The “others,” for the most part, are people who belong to a religion other than the dominant religion in their society, the latter being the religion with which the dominant ethnic nation more or less strongly identifies. Religion is a significant marker of the ethnic identities of the Catholic Croats, the Orthodox Serbs, and the Muslim Bosniaks, who are all South Slavs speaking roughly the same language.<sup>2</sup>

The former Yugoslavia was violently dissolved by wars in Slovenia (1991), Croatia (1991–1992) and B&H (1992–1995), followed by Kosovo (1999) and a brief conflict in Macedonia (2001). The post-war picture of B&H and Kosovo, in particular, has been dominated by inter-ethnic hostility that is at the same time also inter-religious hostility. Though most observers concur that these wars were not “religious” wars, religion must have played *some* role.<sup>3</sup> At any rate, this cruel experience must surely have poisoned inter-religious relations and attitudes. Readers are likely to brace themselves for grim insights into the demonization of others, and may therefore be surprised (hopefully not disappointed!) to find rather less of that than they expected.

This, namely, is a peacetime study. The contributors do deal with war and hostility to varying degrees, but they have not gone looking for the causes of the war, or for hostile images in particular. They have looked to the various discourses likely to have an impact on the religious public’s perceptions of other religious groups: in particular school textbooks, and mass media published by the religious communities. As a result, this book presents features of inter-religious relations in the Western Balkans that are easily overlooked in research focusing only on post-conflict and security aspects.

In particular, it becomes clear that the religious leaderships of the major communities are circumspect about how they depict each other in public discourse, but reserve their open vituperation for small communities and New Religious Movements (NRMs) that are branded “sects” and “cults.” The general public, too, turns out to keep the

---

2. <sup>2</sup> Albanian ethnicity, on the other hand, is marked by the wholly different Albanian language, whereas religion is neither unifying nor distinctive for the multi-religious Albanian nation. In the eyes of their neighbors, however, the Albanians in the former Yugoslavia are strongly identified with Islam.

3. <sup>3</sup> I have elsewhere attempted a survey of theories about the role of religion in these conflicts (Moe, 2007).

greatest social distance to fringe Protestant groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh-Day Adventists.

Ethno-religious conflict has brought to the fore relations between the three major historically present religious communities: the Catholic and Orthodox Christians, and the Muslims. To understand Christian perceptions of Muslims, as well as Muslim self-perceptions, in the region today requires understanding the historical experience of Muslim rule by the Ottoman empire, and how this experience has been portrayed in the literature and historiography of modern Christian nation-states engaged in nation-building projects. There is a considerable literature on hostile images conflating "Muslims" with "Turks" and presenting the centuries of Ottoman rule as the dark age of the "Turkish yoke." The opening chapters of this book, by Milan Vukomanović and Ahmet Alibašić, examine in detail how contemporary history textbooks in Serbia and B&H, respectively, present the Ottomans, the Turks, and Islam. The resulting picture is a relatively nuanced one, for the textbooks have undergone recent bouts of vetting and revision, particularly in B&H under the auspices of the international community. Still, both authors find that work remains to be done for history textbooks to meet modern standards and not inculcate distorted stereotypes. The minute differences between their evaluations not only show the possibility of scholarly consensus, they also perhaps map out the space for reasonable disagreement over controversial aspects of the Ottoman era.

Textbooks provide a particularly accessible window on a society's self-image, or at least on the attitudes and knowledge that social elites seek to reproduce through socializing the young. The previous Kotor Network project focused on religious education, but as we remarked at the time (Kuburić and Moe 2006: 167), we were only able to scratch the surface of what a rigorous content analysis of textbooks might reveal. The challenge is taken up in this book by Ankica Marinović, who looks at Catholic religious education textbooks in Croatia, and Aid Smajić, who compares textbooks of all three confessions in B&H.

These textbooks are controlled by the respective religious communities, and discuss religious others in a confessional framework, which raises many challenges, not least in dealing with the schisms and sects of one's own tradition. Crude biases, such as recurrent hostile images of "Turks", are clearly problematic. But as Marinović notes, the biases at work may also be subtle, involving the selection and framing rather than the explicit evaluation of facts. It is not always clear where it

would be right to draw the line against such biases (inherent to the confessional outlook) in a subject that is at once confessional and provided by public schools. Both authors note that much of the discussion, however tolerant and neutral, deals with the other religion, rather than with other believers – or at best, with religious others as abstract figures rather than living co-citizens and classmates. The treatment of sects and new religious movements is problematic throughout, whether they are explained as a consequence of alienation, cynic manipulation, or foreign plots. Atheists are not to so much to be understood as to be diagnosed – as unnatural or unstable. And half a century after the Holocaust, Christians still feel the need to bring up the blame of (at least some of the) “Jews” when teaching children about the death of Christ.

In the third part, we move on to analyse the discourses produced by religious leaders and intellectuals in their speeches, writings, and communal media. The chapters on the religious press follow the pattern of the religious textbook section, in that we have both a close-up of the dominant confession in a country (this time Serbia), and a comparative study of all the three largest confessions in B&H.

Zlatiborka Popov-Momčinović has studied the treatment of religious others in *Pravoslavlje* (Orthodoxy) magazine. She finds a pervasive call for the unity of religion, the Church, the nation-state, and personal identity; restoring this unity and the socio-political ascendancy of the Church is seen as a condition for communal survival. Present in Muslim and Catholic discourses too, this line of thinking is perhaps most explicit in the Orthodox materials. Religious others are viewed through a national lens – other religions are those of other nations – and through a binary opposition between the alienated West and the spiritual East. There is a notable philo-Semitism, with analogies between Jewish and Serb experience; a quite negative view of (Muslim) Turks and Albanians; hostility to atheism (identified with communism); and a conviction that the world is prejudiced against Serbs.

Zilka Spahić-Šiljak, too, has studied *Pravoslavlje*, as well as its Muslim and Catholic equivalents in B&H, but with a twist: her chapter deals with Woman, rather than the Muslim, Christian or Jew, as the Other in religious discourse. A significant topic in its own right, the female as other is also closely connected with images of religious others in the more conventional sense. Women are often made to symbolize their community; group self-understanding expresses itself in norms for female character and behavior, and defines itself against religious

others perceived to violate such norms – from the recurrent reactions against the seductions of idolatrous “foreign wives” in the Bible, to present-day heated debates about the relative role and status of “Muslim” and “Western” women. Such polarized images should be treated with caution, particularly since, as Spahić-Šiljak clearly shows, patriarchy cuts across religious borders.

Zorica Kuburić rounds off this part with an extended tour of the different confessions and denominations, large and small, in Serbia, particularly in religiously diverse Vojvodina. We get to share in her conversations with diverse religious representatives over many years, as far as these concern the topic of this book. There are tantalizing glimpses here of the real-life complexity behind the clear-cut categories of official discourse, such as the Muslim leader in Belgrade who complains that Christians cast spells on each other and pester him for magical remedies. An Orthodox intellectual appeals to the example of laïcist, “Latin” France, to justify repression of “cults.” Some of the small Protestant groups facing social exclusion are themselves highly exclusivist, raising the question to which extent they are marginal by choice.

This takes us to the last part of the book, which explores the phenomenon of religious distance, or social distance between religious groups, as measured by questionnaire surveys. The Bogardus scale of social distance is a social science classic. It makes good sense to apply variants of this approach to religious affiliation, as is done here by Dinka Marinović Jerolimov for the Zagreb region of re-traditionalized Catholic Croatia, and by Zorica Kuburić for the ethnically and religiously diverse (but predominantly Orthodox) Vojvodina province of Serbia. Once again, there are surprises: Who would have thought that people might be more picky about the religion of their president than that of their spouse?

The studies are based on differently structured surveys, and are not directly comparable, but in very broad terms, they do paint similar pictures. Moreover, the picture shown by these quantitative studies fits in some respects with the qualitative discourse analysis in the preceding chapters. Not in all respects: the non-religious and atheists appear from the survey data to be more socially accepted than religious elite discourses might lead one to expect. But consistently with such discourses, one’s own confession is obviously the closest, there is social distance to the other “traditional” communities, but the greatest distance to the new or fairly recently arrived smaller communities.

It is fitting, therefore, that these last chapters should leave us with the question: To what extent is the social distance found towards religious others a product of the religious elite discourses analyzed in the preceding chapters? The answer clearly matters for peaceful and productive relations between all parts of the religiously and ethnically diverse societies of the Western Balkans, and further research is needed to address it. I believe this volume shows the usefulness of the scientific study of religion carried out in international and interdisciplinary cooperation between locally grounded scholars representing a diversity of worldviews.

#### References

- Kuburić, Zorica and Christian Moe, eds. 2006. *Religion and Pluralism in Education: Comparative Approaches in the Western Balkans*. Novi Sad: CEIR. <http://kotor-network.info/research/joint/2005/RelPlurEdu.pdf>.
- Moe, Christian. 2007. "Religion in the Yugoslav Conflicts: Post-war Perspectives." In *Exercising Power: The Role of Religions in Concord and Conflict*, ed. Tore Ahlbäck, 256–275. (Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis; 19). Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell.

## PART ONE: THE OTHER IN HISTORY





## Chapter Two

### Images of the Ottomans and Islam in Serbian History Textbooks

## **2 Ottomans and Islam in Serbian History Books**

*Milan Uukomanović*

#### Introduction

Previous comparative research into the programs and textbooks of history education in Southeast Europe (Koulouri, 2002), referring mainly to the period of the 1990s, indicated a rather strong ethnocentric tendency in various Balkan countries and Turkey. Serbia was no exception. Two recent changes to the textbook programs (in 1993 and 2000) clearly indicated the correspondence between the

transformations of the society and changes introduced to textbooks by their authors, as well as by the Ministry of Education that controls and verifies this process as the qualified governmental institution. In the history textbooks written in 1993, this ethnocentric and nationalist distortion of history was particularly emphasized. The past was remolded according to various political concerns of the moment, ranging from the omission, minimization or exaggeration of certain historical facts, to emphasizing one's own nation as both the victim and "winner" of history (Stojanović, 2000). The national history has most often been portrayed as a nationalist history, with an emphasis laid on conflict (or antagonistic tolerance<sup>4</sup> at best) rather than coexistence. Various derogatory terms and expressions referring to the national, ethnic, political or religious Other (such as tyranny, yoke, despotism, backwardness, etc.)<sup>5</sup> were normally part of that vocabulary. On the one hand, such negative stereotypes and representational practices engaged emotions and attitudes towards the antagonistic Other(s); on the other, they reflected a very specific "politics of representation" (Hall, 1997: 226) that served the needs of the political and military leaderships during the recent ethnic conflicts and wars. The history textbooks were thus, as in the communist period, used to serve the purposes of political establishments, their current policies and ideologies. Consequently, Serbian history textbooks of the 1990s were visibly the casualties of the political and ideological confusion in Serbian society during that decade (Stojanović, 2006: 77; 2000: 100).

The first significant changes in this respect took place after the political breakthrough of 2000 and the new policies of a democratic government in Serbia, including its Ministry of Education. This positive (but still incomplete) change has been felt in the textbooks published during the last several years.<sup>6</sup>

---

1. <sup>4</sup> The term recently employed by the American anthropologist Robert Hayden for the inter-religious context of the Balkans and South Asia (see Hayden, 2002; cf. also Duijzings, 2000).

2. <sup>5</sup> On the use of some of these terms in Greek historiography see Anagnostopoulou (2002).

3. <sup>6</sup> A noteworthy example of such change in the more general context of the Balkans is a series of historical readers and alternative educational materials edited by Christina Koulouri and published by the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (CDRSEE), an NGO based in Thessalonica. Especially relevant for our research has been the *Historical Reader 1*, dealing with the Ottoman Empire and edited by Halil

The main subject of my research is the images of the Ottoman Empire and Islam seen as the historical-political, cultural and religious Other in the history textbooks for the secondary schools in Serbia. This analysis covers the standard textbooks for the second, third and fourth grade of secondary schools oriented towards social studies and languages, as well as for the third grade of vocational schools and secondary schools oriented towards natural sciences and mathematics. The textbooks for the first grade of those schools deal with ancient history, and make no mention of the Ottomans or Islam whatsoever. Accordingly, they have not been analyzed in this paper.

The image of the Ottoman Turks as the “favorite enemy” has been clearly discerned in various history textbooks of the Balkan peoples (Greeks, Bulgarians, Macedonians, Serbs): “The Ottoman Empire, associated with the Orient and all its negative connotations, constituted a negative example and was held to be the main cause for the ‘backwardness’ of the other Balkan peoples. Although the Turks remained in the Balkans for half a millennium, they were always considered as outsiders and their presence was seen as temporary” (Koulouri, 2002: 27). On the other hand, Turkish historiography has tended to portray the Ottoman period, with its religious tolerance founded in Islam, as a sort of “golden age” of the Balkans, which was later disturbed by various nationalist movements.

The gradual changes in the predominant historical narratives and discourses in the history textbooks took place relatively recently and are certainly worth considering. I will therefore analyze in greater detail the most recently published textbooks (2003 and 2005) for secondary schools by using the methods of text and discourse analysis. The categories of this qualitative analysis will include the type of a historian’s discourse (descriptive or normative, biased or neutral, etc.), his/her methods of presentation, selection of topics, as well as the qualities (characteristics) ascribed to the Ottomans as the political, economic, historical and religious power in the Balkans. In this analysis, special attention is paid to all those instances in which Islam is directly mentioned or represented as the religion of the Ottomans and/or the local population. Apart from the text itself, the textbook illustrations and their explanations, as well as other supportive material (exercises, questions and assignments) are also taken into consideration.

---

Berktaj and Bogdan Murgescu (Berktaj and Murgescu 2005).

## Analysis of the history textbooks

All three history textbooks for the Serbian secondary schools that will be analyzed in this chapter, were published in Belgrade by the major state publisher, the Institute for Textbooks and Teaching Supplies (*Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva*). Until recently, this publisher had a monopoly on the production of all textbooks in Serbia.<sup>7</sup> These three books were approved for use either by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia (Perović and Novaković, 2003; Nikolić et al., 2005), or by the Educational Council of the Republic of Serbia (Marjanović-Dušanić and Šuica, 2005). I will consider only those chapters that include topics relevant for our inquiry into the perception of the Ottoman Empire and Islam.

### *Topics and Method*

The Marjanović-Dušanić and Šuica textbook for the second grade covers, in its six chapters, the European, Balkan and Serbian medieval history. The last chapter, "Incursion of the Turks into Europe and the Balkan States," is the only segment dealing with the Ottoman Empire and its presence on the Balkan Peninsula. It consists of the following sub-chapters: The Dissolution of the Serbian Empire and the Incursion of the Turks into the Balkan Peninsula; the Serbian Despot State; The End of the State Independence of the Balkan States; Migrations of the Serbs; and End of the Medieval World.

The relevant topics that are included in this chapter are as follows: the Ottoman Turks – a new power in the Balkans; the constitution of the Ottoman state; the tactics of Turkish conquests; the battles of Marica (Maritsa) and Kosovo; the Serbian despot state; Mehmed II – the conqueror of Byzantium and Serbia; the fall of Bosnia-Herzegovina under the Turks; Serb migrations.

The authors' Foreword at the beginning of the textbook explains, to a certain extent, their orientation and method. In contrast to the typical, impersonal prefaces to this kind of literature, this Foreword, written in the form of a letter to the high school students, the principal users of this book, provides a warm, welcoming introduction to its subject

---

4. <sup>7</sup> In the last few years, other publishers have also been able to compete with this Institute in producing new textbooks for primary and secondary schools, while the teachers are now the main authorities in terms of choosing which textbooks will be assigned for their classes.

matter. In the manner of modern textbooks, it emphasizes the plurality of methods and approaches to medieval history. Besides the importance of Christianity for the rise and development of the medieval spirit and civilization, the authors point out the significance of *other* cultures that came into contact with and changed medieval Christian states. I would single out their statement that “a complex mixture of different values created the modern world and prompted its open-mindedness and restlessness” (Marjanović-Dušanić and Šuica, 2005: 3). The authors, furthermore, emphasize the importance of interactivity in using their book, so that teachers and students do not appear just as the passive users of the provided material. Marjanović-Dušanić and Šuica also contend that their textbook is not just a record of historical events, but an effort to represent medieval life, its organization, as well as people’s views regarding God, love and death.

This fresh perspective is only partially implemented in the chapter dealing with the Ottoman presence in Europe and the Balkans. Although it represents a national rather than a nationalist history of the medieval Serbian states, this textbook, at least as regards its selection of the aforementioned topics, remains on the level of the standard history textbooks in Serbia. It deals primarily with the *military-political history* of the Balkans, Serbia and the Ottoman Empire, while the social, cultural or religious history hardly finds any place in this chapter. Accordingly, one learns very little about the population, its social and cultural life, social groups or religious institutions. A young reader of this book misses, therefore, an opportunity to learn something outside of his/her own national history: e.g. a description of the population that accepted Islam as their religion or, for that matter, facts about Islam as a new religion in the Balkans. For example, more space is dedicated to the tactics of the Turkish conquest (an entire page) than to the organization of the Ottoman state (half a page). Nothing is said, unfortunately, about the medieval family (Serbian or Ottoman), education system or inter-religious relations. In the conclusion of this textbook, entitled “The End of the Middle Ages in the Balkans,” the authors note that “the new [Ottoman] state, uniting the region within its boundaries, brought a different religion and different system of rule, rights and attitudes towards its subjects” (2005: 225), but they miss the opportunity to elaborate on this new system.

The same applies to other ethnic communities in the Balkans. The Serbs occupy the central and predominant space and, apart from the Ottoman Turks, it appears that almost no other ethnic groups occupied

these territories. The Albanians are mentioned only once (on p. 217), in a separate paragraph on Skenderbey and Albanian resistance to the Ottoman authorities. Croats are also mentioned only once in this chapter, at the bottom of p. 222, in a paragraph dealing with the Battle at Krbavsko Polje in 1493.

In comparison with other textbooks of this kind, a positive novelty is a series of explanations of terms, persons and institutions provided in separate, usually colored or shaded areas on the margins of this textbook. Some less familiar concepts (such as *Shari'a*, *ferman*, *timar* or *raya*) are explained in separate vocabularies as well.<sup>8</sup> But the questions at the end of the book (p. 231), designed as exercises for students, are, again, predominantly concerned with military and political issues, such as the war equipment of the Serbian nobles and Ottoman warriors, combat tactics, political situation in Byzantium, or the decline of the military power of the Serbian medieval state.

In contrast to this textbook, the history textbook for the third grade of secondary schools (Perović and Novaković, 2003, 8th edition) was originally approved by the state back in 1992, which means that its first edition belonged to the period of the Milošević government in Serbia and the wars in Croatia and B&H. This fact alone may have some significance for our further analysis. The textbook itself deals with the modern period in the history of Europe and the Balkans from the 15th to the 18th century and includes three major segments. While the first chapter tackles European and world history, two other chapters are more relevant for our research. They are entitled "The South Slavs and Their Neighbors under Foreign Rule from the 16th to the Late 18th Century" and "The South Slavs and Their Neighbors in the First Half of the 19th Century."

The topics pertinent to our analysis that are included in these two chapters are as follows: political and social organization of the Ottoman Empire; the position of the Christian subject population within the Ottoman Empire; modes of resistance of the subjected population to the Ottoman authorities; the wars of the Christian powers against the Ottomans and the uprisings of South Slavic peoples; cultural conditions in the South Slavic countries under Ottoman rule; the battle of the South Slavs against the Ottoman Empire.

---

5. <sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, some of these explanations (such as the one dealing with the concept of *Shari'a*) are far from adequate. See the section "View of Islam below."

This textbook does not have a preface to explain the authors' approach to their subject matter. It has, however, a small, one-page introduction that basically summarizes its contents.

At the first glance, the topics listed above could suggest that this book would go beyond the political and military history of the Ottoman Empire and the South Slavic population under its rule and authority. This, unfortunately, is not the case. Much more than the 2005 textbook for the second grade, this volume remains on the level of the standard Serbian history textbooks of the 1990s. More precisely, the authors do not escape the trap of slipping from national history into a nationalist history of the period, characterized by selectiveness, ideological bias and prejudiced, normative discourse.

Considering the titles of the two chapters that we are going to analyze, we first note that Muslims/Bosniaks are hardly mentioned or included in the discourse about the "South Slavs." This phrase is predominantly reserved for the Serbs, and occasionally Croats, in the Balkans. The reader gets the impression that local Muslims/Bosniaks lost their South Slavic identity through the process of Islamization and that they belonged to some other geographic or ethnic circle.

In the chapter entitled "South Slavs and their Neighbors under the Foreign Rule from the 16th to the late 18th Century", the authors begin their exposition with a discussion of the Ottoman state and social organization, including the position of the Christian population in the Empire, but again, we do not find any social or cultural history in this section. First, they repeat the list of some institutions of the Ottoman state that are already mentioned in the textbook for the second grade, with the notable difference that the Ottomans are here represented in a more antagonistic light. Perović and Novaković use "epic" terms such as the "tribute in blood" (*danak u krvi*) no less than three times in explaining the origin of the Janissaries and the hardship of the Christian *raya*, while the first illustration in this chapter is the one dealing with the institution of slavery in the Ottoman Empire. In order to further explain the concept of *devşirme*, the authors refer their young readers to the fictional, emotional and considerably anti-Muslim chapters of Ivo Andrić's novel *The Bridge on the Drina* (*Na Drini ćuprija*).

The textbook for the fourth grade (Nikolić et al., 2005) covers, in its nine chapters, a period of more than one century in the history of Serbia and Yugoslavia (from the late 19th century through the collapse of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the 1990s).

This period includes two Balkan wars, two world wars, the history of socialist Yugoslavia and the most recent wars of the 1990s. Consequently, the view of the Ottoman Empire is related only to a small segment of this book, dealing with the Serb people in the Turkish state during the late 19th and early 20th century, as well as with the First and the Second Balkan Wars. This text occupies only ten pages of the textbook's second chapter (Nikolić et al., 2005: 40–49) and, thus, demands a much less comprehensive analysis than was the case with the previous two textbooks. Due to its brevity, I will treat this textual segment as one unit.

The topics covered in those ten pages are: territory and population; migrations of the Serbs from Kosovo; society and economy; church and faith; Serbian political organizations; the First Balkan War; the Second Balkan War. This textbook does not have any preface or introduction with a statement of the authors' intent or explanation of their approach and method.

Except for two smaller paragraphs (Society and Economy; Church and Faith), this entire ten-page segment is concerned only with the political and military history of the Serbian state (kingdom) and the Balkan wars of 1912–1913.

### *Type of Discourse: Qualities of the Ottomans*

Compared with the Serbian history textbooks of the 1990s, Marjanović-Dušanić and Šuica's work is characterized by a much more descriptive, neutral, "politically correct" language. The typical Serbian history textbooks covering the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans are more or less obsessed with the issue of *devşirme*, i. e. how local boys were taken from their families in order to become part of the Janissaries or military administration, portrayed as a form of human taxation – suggestively called a "tribute in blood."<sup>9</sup> Marjanović-Dušanić and Šuica mention this practice only once and abstain from using the grisly term "tribute in blood" or "blood-tax". This is, for example, how they put the term *devşirme* in context:

"The Janissaries were the elite infantry units. They were also the

---

6. <sup>9</sup> Compare, for example, the history textbook for the seventh grade of the elementary school written by Radoš Ljušić (2003: 44), who – in a relatively small chapter on Serbs in the Ottoman Empire (pp. 42–53), the sub-chapter "Tribute in Blood and Islamization" (*Danak u krvi i islamizacija*) – mentions this practice no less than four times.



sultan's guard units. They were recruited as children, mainly from the ranks of the subject population. This obligation was called *devşirme*. Children were separated from their families, converted to Islam and educated under special conditions" (Marjanović-Dušanić and Šuica 2005: 200). In the same passage, the authors, furthermore, objectively state that many Serbian, Byzantine and Bulgarian rulers and lords participated in wars on behalf of the Ottomans, against their former allies and religious affiliates.

The Battle of Kosovo, the cornerstone of the Serbian mythology, is also depicted in more neutral terms. A warrior like Miloš Obilić is not an undisputed hero any more (as portrayed in earlier textbooks), but a historically shadowy figure who killed Sultan Murad I by trick and deceit (2005: 204).

And yet, some of the stereotypical modes of discourse still appear in this textbook. Already in the second sentence of the chapter under our consideration, the Ottoman state is described as "an eastern despot state headed by a sultan who had absolute power" (2005: 198). Such an Orientalist description sets the tone for the rest of this chapter's depiction of the Ottoman Empire and its institutions. However, similar descriptions are never used for the representation of the Serbian despot states (or, for that matter, the empire ruled by Tsar Dušan).

Alternatively, the Ottoman Empire is presented as a state "immersed in closed feudalism"<sup>10</sup> (2005: 221), while such qualifications are missing in the descriptions of Serbian feudalism. On many occasions, the crises of the Serbian medieval states are typically explained by the internal disunity of the nobility and local feudal lords.<sup>11</sup> When they do mention the Ottoman Empire in somewhat affirmative terms (as, for example, during the rule of Suleyman the Magnificent), the authors do not elaborate further on why this state "reached the peak of its power" in that period.

In contrast to the predominantly unbiased tone of the previous textbook, Perović and Novaković (2003) regularly explain the relationship between the Ottomans and the Christian population under their jurisdiction in simple, binary terms and polarizations, characteristic of stereotypical representation, such as: dominant/subjected, slave-owners/slaves, conquerors/freedom-

---

7. <sup>10</sup> One could also question the applicability of the Western term feudalism in explaining the Ottoman *timar* system, cf. Inalcik (1973: 109).

8. <sup>11</sup> E.g. on pp. 201, 207, 214, 218.

fighters, etc. On p. 74 the Ottoman Empire is, for instance, described as “a conquering feudal state in which many conquered peoples, including the Serbs, lived.” While the West was experiencing an economic rise and the discovery of the New World, described in chapter one of this textbook, “the Ottoman conquests had a grievous effect on the cultural development of the repressed Christian population” (p. 90).

The Ottoman state apparatus is, furthermore, labeled as “violent” (p. 75), while “corruption, violence, robbery and parasitism were the main characteristics of its administration.” The general conditions in the late Ottoman Empire are described in normative terms: “Turkey, a backward feudal state, was gradually immersed in the economic dependence and debts that destroyed its financial system...At the same time, a primitive and corrupt state apparatus that took away and sucked the last juices of life, also dissolved” (2003: 155).

On p. 76, the reasons for the *jizya* tax<sup>12</sup> are not explained, and when the authors do have an opportunity to shed more light on the Ottoman culture and literature (e.g on p. 78), they fail to grasp it. The same applies to their references to the peak of the Ottoman power under Sultan Suleyman. During his rule, claim the authors, the state spread over three continents, with about 20 million inhabitants; regrettably, this is the only, scanty reference to the Ottoman *grandeur*.<sup>13</sup> A sentence below, on the same page (2003: 72), this state is already in crisis, and the main reason for that is simply “the feudal system based on the natural economy.” The position of the Serbs under the Ottoman rule is explained as extremely hard, but in the same context Perović and Novaković speak about the significant renewal of the Serbian monasteries and churches (2003: 77 and 91). Moreover, the Serbian Orthodox Church is typically mentioned as an institution that preserved the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Serbs, but, on the

---

9. <sup>12</sup> A special poll-tax paid by Jewish and Christian males (“peoples of the Book”) that exempted them from service in the Ottoman army. As a result of that, they were accorded protection as *dhimmis* or client communities, a status that the religious minorities in 17th- century Western Europe could only dream about. It is also true, however, that *dhimmis* remained discriminated second-class citizens from the standpoint of the modern human rights theory.

10. <sup>13</sup> Without an appropriate and complete map of the Ottoman Empire of this period, it is hard to imagine the outer limits of this state (see my concluding comments below).

other hand, it is also said to have actively participated in Serbian rebellions of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries (2003: 77). The reader may wonder how such a renewal or preservation was possible under those circumstances.

It is interesting that one of the major institutions of the Ottoman Empire, its *millet* system,<sup>14</sup> is not explained either in this textbook or in any other under our scrutiny. However, an interpretation of this model could certainly aid high school students in understanding inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in the Ottoman Empire, as well as the Empire's position regarding various nations and religious communities that found themselves within its borders. For example, on p. 88, the role of the Serbian Orthodox Church and its leaders, the patriarchs, is emphasized in the context of various rebellions that took place before the abolition of the Patriarchate in Peć. This would have been a good opportunity to elaborate how Serbian *religious* leaders found themselves in the position of *political* leaders. A proper understanding of the nature of the *millet* system could certainly be helpful in that regard. But the authors are silent on this issue.

The rest of this chapter (and others) deals, expectedly, with various wars, rebellions and fights against the Turks. Among the Serbian freedom fighters we find *hajduks*, but their role in this textbook is somewhat ambiguous, to say the least. The authors themselves generously contribute to that ambiguity. *Hajduks* are first represented as the most widespread form of resistance to the Ottoman authorities: "The causes for their appearance lie in the difficult social and political position of the Christian *raya* – tax pressures and violence of every kind" (2003: 84). In the eyes of the authors, *hajduks* are fearless, noble warriors (a sort of domestic Robin Hoods) who defended the local population from the Turks, which is a typical stereotype inherited from the Serbian epic and folk literature. On the other hand, the authors admit that it was not always easy to distinguish the *hajduks* from plain robbers. In the section dealing with the "material patriarchal culture"

---

11. <sup>14</sup> The *millet* or ethnarchic system was the system of protection under which the Christian churches and other non-Muslim religious communities functioned within the Ottoman Empire. All the non-Muslim minorities (Jews, Copts, Armenians and Orthodox) were divided into communities (*millets*) under the leadership of their own highest ecclesiastical authority. The community alone determined an individual's status and position in Turkish society (see Ramet, 1988: 45).

(2003: 91), they even explicitly state that the poor and exhausted local population in the low-land areas was exposed to the constant incursions of the violent authorities *and* of the *hajduks*. It seems, then, that *hajduks* themselves contributed to the hardship of the local Serbian peasants and other people as well, which entails the need for re-assessment of their role and motives in the Serbian uprisings.

On one occasion, in the sub-chapter “Bosnia-Herzegovina under Turkish rule in the late 18th and early 19th century” (2003: 179–182), the uprisings of the local Muslim Slav population against the Ottomans are also noted, but are immediately characterized as conservative and separatist. Such a resistance, explain the authors, was directed against the (progressive) reforms of the Turkish government. This, in fact, is one of the rare instances where Turks are presented in a favorable light, in order to be contrasted with the local Muslim/Bosniak population.

In some other instances the authors do not even hide their nationalism and chauvinism. They claim, for example, that, despite the “cruel reality” of their situation, the Serbian people were “aware of their origin and *historical greatness*” (2003: 91). Offensive language is used on p. 73, below an illustration depicting the Old Bridge in Mostar. It is said that the bridge was destroyed in 1994 by the Croatian *Ustaše*, which is a term used for the Croatian fascist units during the Second World War. Labeling Croats *Ustaše* is a typical derogative strategy used by various Serbian and other nationalists in the Balkans. It is not clear whether the caption was written by the authors themselves or, perhaps, by the editors and publishers. At any rate, this phrase could have been removed at various stages of the textbook’s preparation.

In Nikolić et al. (2005: 40–41) we find another derogative term, this time used for ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, who are twice called *Šiptara*. When used by Albanians, the term *Shqiptar* means simply “Albanian,”<sup>15</sup> but when employed by Serbs (Serbian nationalists), *Šiptar* acquires an offensive tone and meaning. In general, the authors of this textbook are much more preoccupied with the Albanian Muslims than with the Ottoman Turks, because they analyze the history of Kosovo, which is still a sensitive topic in present-day Serbian politics. Thus, the dominant discourse of this part of the textbook is heavily influenced by the current ideological and political concerns. The authors emphasize the population migrations affecting the Serbs

---

12.

<sup>15</sup>

Accordingly, *Shqiptaria* is the Albanian word for “Albania”.

who lived in Old Serbia, including various pressures imposed on the Serbian population, such as forceful expulsions, attacks, rapes and Islamization. As a result, the exodus of the Christian population from Kosovo was followed by the Muslim settlement in Kosovo and Macedonia (p. 40). The hardship of the Christian population in these areas is put in the context of the creation of Greater Albania, the alleged long-term goal of Albanian nationalists. On the other hand, the Balkan wars that resulted in considerable extensions of the Serbian territories are regarded as the national liberation of Christian peoples in the Balkans. But the authors still mourn the Serbs' loss of the opportunity to reach the Adriatic Sea, because "with the creation of an Albanian state, Serbia was left without a significant part of the territory that *should have belonged to it*" (Nikolić et al, 2005: 48, emphasis added). The readers may wonder, of course, why this territory *should* have belonged to Serbia, because the Serbs did not inhabit it in the past. On the other hand, Albanians were also the subjects of the Ottoman Empire, fighting, like the Serbs, for their own national liberation. At the end of this section we learn, however, about the reasons for such a distribution of power in the Balkans:

In both Balkan wars, Austria-Hungary sought to prevent and diminish the successes of the Serbian military. Due mostly to these efforts, an Albanian state was created in the Balkans, a state which would become an instability factor in this part of Europe and always antagonistic to Serbia. (Nikolić et al., 2005: 49)

In other words, Serbia remained a toy of the imperial ambitions of both the Ottoman Empire and European Great Powers, especially Austria-Hungary. As a result of that, it was doubly excluded from Europe, stuck between the Oriental East and Western Europe and their "selfish interests" in the Balkan region.

What we have observed thus far in this section is a typical tendency of ethnocentric history textbooks to present one's own national history as something continual in the political (and statehood) sense. In this textbook we note, for example, a tendency to present the history of Serbs in Kosovo as an uninterrupted continuum between the Old Serbia and present-day Serbia, neglecting, to a significant degree, the many centuries that divide them. It seems that the Ottoman period, which lasted one half of a millennium, is observed as something rather temporary, as a period of time constantly interrupted by various noble attempts to liberate the country from the foreign invaders. In that

context, losing the territory of Old Serbia is presented as a result of historical misfortunes, internal disunity and conquests, and this is a process in which great powers (both eastern and western) played significant roles, always at the expense of the local Serbian population. On the other hand, the territorial gains, such as the ones that took place during the two Balkan wars, are considered as something normal, logical, “deserved” and a result of the just war for liberation of the country. Hence the normative expressions such as the one cited above: “Serbia was left without a significant part of the territory that *should have belonged to it.*”

“What Serbia achieved in war – it lost in peace” has been one of the favorite slogans of many Serbian nationalists, from Dobrica Ćosić to Slobodan Milošević. Unfortunately, the authors of this textbook did not escape the trap of a similar ideology and reasoning that gained even more strength in Serbia within the context of the recent peace agreements of the 1990s.

### *Illustrations*

Chapter six of the Marjanović-Dušanić and Šuica textbook (“Incursion of the Turks into Europe and the Balkan States,” pp. 198–225) has a total of 47 illustrations, almost two illustrations per page. Most of them are in color and depict the following motifs: various Serbian, Ottoman and other rulers (16), warriors in the military equipment (9), coats of arms (5), fortresses (6), scenes of battles (3), maps (3), religious facilities (one mosque and one fortified Orthodox monastery), written documents, legal acts (2), the Sultan’s *diwan* (1), a *qadi* (1) and a merchant of Dubrovnik (1). One may easily note that 43 of these illustrations pertain to political and military history, while only four of them (religious objects, a *qadi* and a merchant of Dubrovnik) shed light on the social and religious life of the period. This is in complete accordance with the selection of topics listed above, and our initial conclusion that the social, cultural or religious history of the Ottoman period hardly finds any place within this book. Students may, indeed, learn very little about the general population, their everyday life, various social groups or religious institutions. Illustrations containing Turkish miniatures, calligraphy, various other portraits of merchants, craftsmen, notaries, men and women in their everyday and festive robes, religious representatives (patriarchs, priests, rabbis, muftis and imams), house and palace interiors, schools, *madrassas*, etc., could

certainly shed more light on those other aspects of living in the Ottoman Empire, but they are characteristically absent even from the most recent, revised history textbooks for the Serbian secondary schools.

Speaking of the third-grade textbook (Perović and Novaković, 2003), there are 13 illustrations on the 22 pages of its second chapter, and 21 on the 30 pages of the third chapter. They are all black-and-white, because the textbook was not printed in color. In comparison with the textbook for the second grade, in chapter 3 of this book we find a similar ratio of illustrations pertaining to political-military history, on the one hand, and social-cultural history, on the other. The motifs depicted in the illustrations supporting this chapter are as follows: various political leaders and statesmen (9); military and historical maps (6); the gathering of the Serbs before their uprising (1); various armament used by the rebels (1); the tower of skulls of the slain Serbs (1); the monastery in Cetinje (1); the portrait of Vuk Karadžić, a Serbian linguistic reformer (1); a Bosnian peasant plowing (1). Again, the vast majority of those illustrations (18) pertain to political and military history, while only three of them (the last three) are linked to culture, religion and everyday life. This corresponds to the selection of topics in the third chapter and our previous conclusion that the social, cultural or religious history of the Ottoman period is conspicuously omitted from the analyzed history textbooks.

The list of illustrations in chapter two is somewhat better balanced between the political-military and social-cultural history. Out of 13 illustrations, four depict Serbian monasteries, while three others contain the pictures of a mosque, a *hamam* and a bridge (which adds up to more than 50% of the total number of illustrations). The other six pictures include maps (3), political leaders and statesmen (2), and a painting depicting the migrations of Serbs. However, the text of this chapter predominantly covers political and military history and, thus, confirms an overall orientation of this textbook towards the standard topics that we have discussed above.

Finally, in the analyzed chapter of Nikolić et al. (2005), there are altogether 14 illustrations: four maps, four portraits of rulers and military commanders, three photos of the Serbian and Montenegrin soldiers in various battles, one photo of the Serbian consulate in Priština (from 1889), a painting called "A father teaches his son fencing" and, finally, a picture of the market in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Only the last illustration pertains to the social-cultural history of this period,

while all the others illustrate the Serbian military-political history at the turn of the century. This, of course, is in line with the general tone of that part of the book and in accordance with the thematic compositions of the textbooks that we have already analyzed.

### *View of Islam*

What has been said thus far indicates that religious history and inter-religious relations occupy very little space in our textbooks. Islam, as a religion of the Ottoman Turks, is mentioned in Marjanović-Dušanić and Šuica (2005) on only a few occasions, and the same applies to Christianity. On p. 199, the authors argue that the Ottomans were “turned towards Islam and followed its religious laws and principles, one of them being the subjugation of the non-Muslim world, which motivated their further conquests and expansions.” This is the first mentioning of Islam in this part of the book, and it is immediately linked to the Ottoman military history and conquests, providing a rather stereotypical image of this religion as bellicose and militant. Indeed, a little bit further in the text, the authors claim that the Ottoman state was, in religious terms, relatively tolerant towards Christian vassals and their church, but this, again, is explained as “a political *weapon* for controlling the subjects and maintaining peace. Spreading of Islam and the expansion of the Ottoman Empire were considered the most important tasks” (2005: 199, emphasis added). The term *tool* would probably be more accurate than *weapon* in this context, considering the tradition of religious pluralism in Islam.

On the same page, the authors explain the meaning of *Shari'a* as “the basic, unchangeable law of Islam, respect for which was unconditional,” which is a too simplistic, inadequate and even prejudicial definition of this term. The students, thus, miss an opportunity to learn something about the nuances and complexities of this concept. The term *kharaj* (poll-tax) is explained on p. 206 as “the tax paid by non-Muslims in Islamic states,” but the more elaborate meaning of the alternative concept of *jizya*,<sup>16</sup> or, for that matter, the reasons for such taxation are not explained. Furthermore, the students will not learn that the Muslims *themselves* paid taxes in their own state

---

13. <sup>16</sup> On *jizya* (Tur. *cizye*), see note 9 above. *Kharaj* (Tur. *haraç*) originally meant a land tax on non-Muslims; in Ottoman usage, it came to include the poll-tax.



and that the major social divide was, in fact, between the tax-paying *raya* and the tax-collecting *askeri*, a class of imperial administrators, army and state officials in the Ottoman Empire (Malcolm 1994: 48-9).<sup>17</sup>

Our earlier analysis of the perception of the Ottomans in the Perović and Novaković textbook may suggest that the view of Islam in this textbook could hardly be positive. A more detailed survey of the Islam-related discourse confirms the expectation. Islam is mentioned six times in its pertinent chapters, mostly in the context of the Islamization process in the Balkans. On p. 72, the authors refer to the origin of the Janissaries and their conversion to Islam. Islam is here mentioned in the very negative context of the *devşirme* or “tribute in blood” imposed on the local, non-Muslim population. On p. 76 the authors discuss other reasons for conversion to Islam, such as the protection of property, avoiding an unequal social position, and acquiring various privileges. All three reasons are, of course, pragmatic and put Islam, as a religion, in less favorable light. The process of Islamization is explained, again, on p. 90: Islamization caused a significant part of the population to reject its ethnic origin, albeit the Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina preserved their language, some customs, and partly, a blurred awareness of their Slavic origin.

Already in the next sentence, the authors claim that the Bosnian Muslim population “linked itself to the Ottoman rulers by fiercely harassing and religiously persecuting their Christian compatriots.” But they do not provide any evidence for this persecution. Finally, on p. 180 of this textbook, we read that Islamization was stronger in Bosnia-Herzegovina than in other areas under the Turkish rule.

It is clear, I think, that the quoted references provide a rather biased image of Islam as religion of an oppressor that was more or less imposed on the local population, which was frequently persecuted on a religious basis. The authors, on the other hand, do not explain one of the major Ottoman institutions (the *millet* system) that provided conditions for religious tolerance, or, for that matter, the status of *dhimmi* ascribed to the local population that confessed “religions of the Book”. The reader is also short of an explanation as to how it was possible to restore the Serbian churches and monasteries under religious persecution and constant oppression on religious basis. In

---

14. <sup>17</sup> I am thankful to Christian Moe for some very insightful comments and suggestions regarding this, and some other passages in this paper.

fact, the *millet* system strengthened the *religious* institutions of the non-Muslim population and vested the Orthodox Patriarchate with both ecclesiastical and civil jurisdiction, with administrative and legal functions, including the institution of the patriarchal courts.

Islam is explicitly mentioned only three times in the Nikolić et al. chapter (pp. 40–49). Already on p. 40 it is said that the “official Turkey returned to the religion of Islam and pan-Islamic ideology (strengthening of the caliphate).” This statement is presented without any further elaboration, although the young readers of this book hardly know anything about the institution of the caliphate. The term itself, or the concept of pan-Islamism, are not explained in this book, either.

The second mention of Islam in the same chapter is also put in a very partial context. This time the authors refer to the Serbian migrations from Albania (*sic*), resulting from the attacks on their women and children, rape, and Islamization of entire villages. The only bolded sentence in this paragraph (Nikolić et al. 2005: 41) reads that 400,000 Serbs left Old Serbia (Kosovo-Metohija), the Sandžak and Macedonia in the period between 1876 and 1912. It is also added that this resulted in an altered ethnic balance between Serbs and Albanians (here called *Šiptars*, an offensive term already discussed above).

Finally, the third instance in which Islam is mentioned is also linked to the process of (late) Islamization of the Serbs in Kosovo and Macedonia (Nikolić et al., 2005: 43). The authors argue that the conversion of Serbs to Islam led to their de-nationalization, because abandoning one’s faith means losing one’s nationhood or ethnic identity: “Hence numerous Arnauts [old Turkish term for Albanians – M.V.], according to contemporary research, were Islamized Serbs” (*ibid.*). At the bottom of this passage, it is added that the conditions became unbearable for the Christian nations, but the Balkan wars brought the solution to this problem.

It is apparent that, in this context, the authors regard religion in strictly mono-confessional terms (i.e. one religion = one nation or ethnic group), so that a conversion from one religion into another means, simultaneously, the change of one’s ethnic identity. The authors, however, do not mention that the Albanians belong to three different religious communities (Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim); they leave an impression that Islam, rather than ethnic nationalism, played a greater part in the conflict between Serbs and Albanians.

## Conclusion

The politics of history education in former Yugoslavia (and, for that matter, in the former Socialist Republic of Serbia) was considerably influenced by the then dominant Marxist ideology. Another, indigenous ideology of “brotherhood and unity” led to the characteristic division of those textbooks into three predominant units, dealing with the more general (world and European) history, national history, and history of the other, mainly South Slav nations in the Balkans. In this regard, three events dramatically influenced the change of focus in the early nineties. The collapse of former Yugoslavia and communist ideology resulted, on the one hand, in significant “de-ideologization” (Koren, 2002: 193–194; Stojanović, 2000: 100) of the textbooks in most of the formerly Yugoslav republics, as well as their neglect of other Yugoslav nations’ history. On the other hand, the context of civil war and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans brought some other political and ideological focuses and interests into play. The national histories started to be written anew from a strong ethnocentric perspective, and this tendency did not pass over the history textbooks in the primary and secondary schools of most of the Western Balkan countries, including Serbia. This tendency was particularly pronounced in Serbia during the 1990s, while the political changes of the year 2000 resulted in some positive developments. The textbooks started to present their subject matter in a more balanced and neutral way, while the textbook design, illustrations and other supportive material (including interactive questions and assignments) contributed to their more modern look.

The history textbooks that have been analyzed in this paper were all published after the collapse of the Milošević regime in Serbia. They are typically divided into chapters dealing with general (mostly European) history, on the one hand, and Serbian national history, on the other. Chapters such as the “South Slavs under the Foreign Rule...” are only the distant remnants of the formerly Yugoslav histories, but today, these chapters are, again, predominantly concerned with Serbian national history. In the Marjanović-Dušanić and Šuica textbook, the ratio between the general and national history is, roughly, even: about 50% of the total number of pages are dedicated to each segment. The same applies to the Perović and Novaković textbook, whereas in the Nikolić et al. book only about 25% is dedicated to the general history of the late 19th and 20th century, while the rest of it deals with the

national history of Serbs.

In all three textbooks, the Ottoman history is tightly connected with the Serbian national history and this, in turn, has heavily influenced the authors' focus and way of presentation. There is no doubt whatsoever that, according to these works, the Ottomans are foreign invaders coming from the East and bringing their own, rather militant religion of Islam. Although offensive language was explicitly used only in a few isolated cases, the overall tone of these textbooks, their selection and interpretation of Ottoman history (and Serbian history under the Ottomans) is far from unbiased. However, such a bias is much less visible in the post-2000 textbooks than in the 1990s editions.

After a more detailed consideration of the Serbian history textbooks for the second, third and fourth grades of the secondary schools, I would single out the Marjanović-Dušanić and Šuica work as an example of the direction in which future textbooks could be developed. This textbook alone expresses an interest in presenting social and cultural history side by side with the military-political history, albeit this ambition has not been fully realized in the text itself. Furthermore, the authors of this book take into account some competing arguments and rival hypotheses in explaining historical events related to both Serbian and Ottoman medieval history. Unfortunately, such an effort has not been made in other two textbooks. The future textbooks could certainly go much further in the direction of aiding pupils and students in understanding historical processes and developing critical skills while reading their material.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned differences between the three analyzed textbooks, we might contend that all of them deal predominantly with the *military-political* history of the Balkans, Serbia and the Ottoman Empire, while the social, cultural or religious history seldom find any meaningful place within the analyzed chapters. Their young readers, as well as the professors who teach history in the secondary schools, learn, indeed, very little about the population, both in terms of historical demography, socio-cultural history and everyday life, including various social groups and religious communities. The chapters concerning the Ottoman Turks hardly go beyond the *Serbian* national history *under* the Ottoman Empire. Interestingly enough, in none of the three textbooks do we find any complete map of the Ottoman Empire, but only fragmentary maps showing the parts of the former Serbian Kingdom under the jurisdiction of a new ruler. Such a complete map would, however, significantly shift the perspective of

students from their own national history to a more global history of the Ottoman Commonwealth.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from the maps, other illustrations basically pertain to the political and military history, these including pictures and photos of rulers, military commanders, armies, and weapons, with only occasional pictures of religious facilities or motifs relevant for the study of the social and cultural life of the population.

In our analysis, we have also been able to point out the differences of discourse between the first and the other two textbooks. While Marjanović-Dušanić and Šuica clearly demonstrate an effort to present the historical material in a more descriptive, neutral, “politically correct” language, the other two textbooks do not escape the trap of falling into typical nationalist discourse, a remnant of the 1990s. This is particularly so with the Perović and Novaković book, whose first edition, not accidentally, goes back to 1992. In this volume, the relationship between the Ottomans and Christians is regularly explained in simple, binary polarizations, such as dominant/subjected, slave-owners/slaves, conquerors/freedom-fighters, which is characteristic of stereotypical representation. In both this and the following textbook (Nikolić et al., 2005) we were also able to detect several very offensive terms labeling other nations in the Balkans: Croats are called *Ustaše*, and Albanians are called *Šiptars* on three occasions in these books.

Concerning the presentation of Islam as a dominant religion of the Ottoman Empire, we noted that the authors of the third- and fourth-grade textbooks regard religion in exclusively mono-confessional terms: a conversion from one religion into another means, automatically, the change of one’s ethnic identity. This is especially emphasized in the case of Islam, a religion most often viewed in a negative light. Even if the authors claim, on rare occasions, that the Ottoman state was, in religious terms, relatively tolerant towards Christians and their churches (Marjanović-Dušanić and Šuica 2005: 199), this kind of tolerance is interpreted as “a political *weapon* for controlling the subjects and maintaining peace.”

One of the characteristic features of all three textbooks in their dealing with Islam, is that they do not pay enough attention to some important religious-political and social systems of the Ottoman Empire

---

15. <sup>18</sup> Cf. a notable example of such an effort in Berktaĵ and Murgesku (2005: 138–139).

(such as the *millet* system) that could put their discussion of Islam in a proper context. The status of *dhimmis*, ascribed to the local Christian and Jewish population that worshipped “religions of the Book,” has not been tackled either, although it would present the Ottoman tradition of religious tolerance in its appropriate context. A description of Ottoman religious, cultural and social life would certainly present this cultural and religious Other in a more comprehensive, comparative and nuanced manner, thus questioning at least some of the stereotypes about Turkey and Islam that have burdened many generations of Serbian high school students.

## References

- Anagnostopoulou, Sia. 2002. “‘Tyranny’ and ‘Despotism’ as National and Historical Terms in Greek Historiography.” In *Clio in the Balkans*, ed. C. Kolouri, 81–90. Thessaloniki: CDRSEE.
- Berktaj, Halil and Bogdan Murgesku. 2005. *Osmansko carstvo: Istorijaska čitanka 1*. Beograd: Prosvetni pregled, Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (CDRSEE).
- Duijzings, Ger. 2000. *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Hall, Stewart, ed. 1997. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage and Open University.
- Hayden, Robert. 2002. “Antagonistic Tolerance.” *Current Anthropology* 43, no. 2 (April 2002): 205–219.
- Inalcik, Halil. 1973. *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300–1600*. London: Phoenix.
- Koren, Snježana. 2002. “Yugoslavia: A Look in the Broken Mirror. Who is the ‘Other’?” In *Clio in the Balkans*, ed. C. Koulouri, 193–202. Thessaloniki: CDRSEE.
- Koulouri, Christina, ed. 2002. *Clio in the Balkans: The Politics of History Education*. Thessaloniki: CDRSEE.
- Ljušić, Radoš. 2003. *Istorija za 7. razred osnovne škole*. Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva.
- Malcolm, Noel. 1994. *Bosnia: A Short History*. London: Macmillan.
- Marjanović-Dušanić, Smilja and Marko Šuica. 2005. *Istorija za 99 razred gimnazije opšteg i društveno-jezičkog smera*. Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva.
- Nikolić, Kosta et al. 2005. *Istorija za 999 razred gimnazije prirodno*

- matematičkog smera i 9U razred gimnazije opšteg i društveno-jezičkog smera.* Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva.
- Perović, Milutin and Relja Novaković. 2003. *Istorija za 999 razred gimnazije (opšti tip i društveno-jezički smer) i stručnih škola.* 8th ed. Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva.
- Ramet, Pedro, ed. 1988. *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century.* Durham and London: Durham University Press
- Stojanović, Dubravka. 2000. "Udžbenici istorije kao ogledalo vremena." In *Uvod u mirovne studije*, ed. D. Popadić, 93-122. Beograd: Grupa Most.
- — —. 2006. "Konstrukcija prošlosti - Slučaj srpskih udžbenika istorije." In *Preteći znaci fundamentalizma: Feministički odgovori*, ed. S. Zajović, 77-79. Beograd: Žene u crnom.

## Chapter Three

### Images of the Ottomans in History Textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina

#### **3 Ottomans in B&H History Textbooks**

*Ahmet Alibašić*

The association of Balkan Muslims and Islam with the Ottoman Turks is so strong that not only non-Muslims in the Balkans have used the term “Turk” for Muslims, but so have Muslims themselves, with a dose of pride – at least until recently. Throughout the ages, friends and enemies perceived the Ottomans first and foremost as Muslims. That would not have mattered much today, had not the Islamization process resulted in permanent demographic changes in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter B&H) and the emergence of a new religious group of Muslims. Since the period in which one Bosnian-Herzegovinan (BH) religious group was born is considered the worst period of national history by two other BH groups, how the Ottomans



are represented in history textbooks is of relevance for the image of the religious other in Bosnia today.

There is a number of ways one could deal with this topic. Here we will first compare the perspectives from which Ottoman history is presented in BH elementary school textbooks: Is it the perspective of one of the three BH nations, or of all the three? And what history is covered: military, political, social, cultural or economic? Choices made in this regard strongly influence the images of the Ottomans that are produced. Political and military histories generally tend to be more divisive than cultural ones, for instance. Then we will compare the ways in which the key issues in Ottoman history are handled, such as: the Kosovo battle, the Islamization process, the relative position of Muslim and non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, demographic changes in the aftermath of the Ottoman conquest, moral qualities of the Ottomans as compared with others, etc. By looking at these issues we hope to establish the main contours of the image of the Ottomans drawn in various textbooks. Finally, we will look at the illustrations used, and how they contribute to the depiction of the Ottomans.

### Research Scope

I will analyze history textbooks used in the primary schools of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is plenty of material on the Ottomans in Bosnian- and Serbian-language textbooks, while the Croatian ones spend considerably less time on the Ottomans. The Serbian-language textbooks are in use mainly in the Serb Republic (Republika Srpska, ca 49% of B&H). These textbooks are produced by the Institute for Textbooks and Teaching Tools, Eastern Sarajevo (*Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, Istočno Sarajevo*). I have analyzed the following textbooks:

- S7 Rade Mihaljčić, *Istorija 7*, 2005
- S7a Rade Mihaljčić, *Istorijska čitanka za šesti razred osnovne škole*, 2001 (history reader book used as supplement to seventh-grade textbook)
- S8 Milutin Perović, Borislav Stanojlović and Milo Strugar, *Istorija 8*, 2005
- S9 Ranko Pejić, *Istorija 9*, 2005

In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croats use textbooks published by *Školska naklada* (School Publisher) in Mostar. I have

reviewed the following two textbooks:

- C6 Ivo Makek and Andrija Nikić, *Povijest 6*, 2001
- C7 Ivan Dukić, Krešimir Erdelja, Andrija Nikić, and Igor Stojaković, *Povijest 7*, 2001

Schools following the Bosnian-language curriculum use a number of textbooks published by independent publishers. Here I reviewed the following:

- B6 Enes Pelidija and Fahrudin Isaković, *Historija 6*, Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 2001
- B7a Fahrudin Isaković and Enes Pelidija, *Historija 7*, Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 2001
- B7b Edin Radušić, Aladin Husić, and Vehid Smriko, *Historija 7*, Sarajevo: Sarajevo Publishing, 2003
- B7c Hadžija Hadžiabdić and Edis Dervišagić, *Historija 7*, Sarajevo: Sarajevo Publishing, 2005.

The findings and conclusions of this paper are also valid for some high school textbooks by the same authors. This is especially true of Bosnian textbooks.<sup>19</sup> Since there are many similarities in the way textbooks from these three groups treat the Ottomans, we will often refer to Serbian, Croat and Bosnian treatments of the subject, naming the textbook groups by the language they use. Where necessary I will point out differences between the textbooks of the same group, most often the Bosnian textbooks. Individual textbooks will from now on be referred to by their abbreviations indicating language (*B*osnian, *C*roatian, *S*erbian) and grade level (grades 6–9).

Whose and what history?

Before we embark on the comparison of the Ottoman image in BH history textbooks, two observations should be made regarding the kind

---

1. <sup>19</sup> Rade Mihaljčić is coauthor of a history textbook for the second year of gymnasium for natural and mathematical sciences. Borislav Stanojlović is coauthor of the history textbook for the second year of four-year vocational schools too. Pelidija and Isaković coauthored the textbook for the second year of gymnasium, which is actually very similar to *Historija 6* (B6) only sometimes more extensive. Isaković is coauthor of the same textbook for the third year of gymnasium. Hadžiabdić and Dervišagić are authors of the textbook for the third year of gymnasium, which again is but an expanded version of their *Historija 7* (B7c).

of history taught and its reference frame. History textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been attracting the special attention of the international community and individual researchers for some time now, although to the best of my knowledge, the present analysis is the first on its topic. The Office of the High Representative (OHR), the World Bank, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and UNESCO have all played some role in the process of textbook revision in B&H, which started in Sarajevo Canton in 1998, and was soon broadened to include the whole country. On 18 May 1998 the Federation of B&H and the Serb Republic educational authorities signed the "Agreement Regarding Textbook Review and Removal of Offensive Material." The commitment to this Agreement was reiterated on 23 June of the same year with the deadlines being pushed back for a month. This general agreement was followed on 19 July 1999 by "The Agreement on Removal of Objectionable Material from Textbooks to be used in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1999-2000 School Year," signed in Mostar. This time Bosnia and Herzegovina was applying for Council of Europe membership and was asked to remove potentially offensive materials from its textbooks. Probably because there were various problems and attempts to evade taking meaningful action in this regard, another document, entitled "Implementation of the Agreement of 19 July 1999 on Removal of Objectionable Material from Textbooks to be used in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1999-2000 School Year" was signed in August 1999 in Banja Luka. On 10 May 2000, ministers signed another "Agreement," and issued a "Declaration," which went beyond simple removal of objectionable material from the textbooks, and started the process of building "shared, core elements" in all curricula "in order to enable today's school-age generation to grow up with a sense of common identity and citizenship of BiH." It was also reiterated that "(n)ational subjects textbooks which do not refer to BiH are unsuitable for use in BiH."<sup>20</sup>

So, the first phase was to remove objectionable parts from the textbooks, while the second phase would include production of new textbooks. Objectionable materials were to be identified by entity committees, and where they could not agree, Independent Commissions for Textbook Review established by the OHR in cooperation with the Council of Europe and UNESCO were to

---

2. <sup>20</sup> See "Textbook Revision Process in Bosnia and Herzegovina". ([http://www.ffzg.hr/seetn/states/bih/textbook\\_revision\\_process.htm](http://www.ffzg.hr/seetn/states/bih/textbook_revision_process.htm)).

arbitrate. There were two types of texts to deal with: some passages were to be blacked out with non-transparent markers until new editions could be printed, others were to be stamped with the following text in one of the BH languages: "The following passage contains material of which the truth has not been established, or that may be offensive or misleading; the material is currently under review." Initially, there were many attempts to evade the procedure, and in 2002 and 2003, apparently, many schools were still using old textbooks. Some schools were even exhibiting unchanged pages on bulletin boards or telling children how to read the blackened paragraphs (Torsti, 2003: 158).<sup>21</sup> These agreements dealt with primary- and secondary-school textbooks in geography, mother languages, visual culture, music culture, music, economy and society, and knowledge of the society. I could not get hold of the report on revision of history school books, but all the fragmentary reports that I came across pointed out that committees had much more work to do on Serbian and Croatian textbooks than on Bosnian ones.<sup>22</sup>

The next step toward better history teaching was taken in May 2004, when education ministers agreed to establish commissions for the development of guidelines on textbook writing for the subjects of history and geography in B&H. In April 2005, the Commission prepared "Guidelines for Writing and Evaluation of History Textbooks for Primary and Secondary Schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (hereafter "Guidelines") that were accepted by all BH ministries in charge of education at all levels in the country. The aims of the Guidelines, *inter alia*, is to prepare the ground for the development of textbooks where 1) students would receive a basic understanding of the history and geography of all three constituent peoples and national minorities, 2) Bosnia and Herzegovina is used as a main reference point, and 3) the three constituent peoples and national minorities are represented in a non-offensive manner which respects the feelings of all three constituent

---

3. <sup>21</sup> Torsti's revised doctoral dissertation is the most extensive treatment of BH history textbooks, dealing with teaching of 20th century history including the topics of war, peace, and nation. See also Karge (1999) and Low-Beer (2001). Denisa Kostovicova (2002) has done an excellent analysis of the Ottoman image in the post-1990 Albanian history textbooks.

4. <sup>22</sup> See for instance Torsti (2003: 169-70). According to Torsti, no objectionable material was found in the Bosnian *History 8* during the revision of 1999/2000. I failed to get any information on possible objections to parts of B6 and B7a.

peoples and national minorities. To achieve that, the Commission – among other things – suggested that textbooks should “decrease the quantity of information relating to political history,” aim at “building mutual understanding, reconciliation and peace in B&H,” and apply “the principle of multi-perspectivity, in order to enable the pupils to learn tolerance.” Furthermore,

national history should be presented in the regional context of B&H and neighboring countries, with examples taken from Bosnia and Herzegovina and reflecting diversities as a factor of enrichment. In general, the language used in the textbooks should be free of expressions and definitions which induce hatred and create an image of enemies, especially when speaking about neighboring countries. ... From general and national history, there should be equal coverage of personalities who marked a specific time...<sup>23</sup>

Textbooks written in accordance with these recommendations should have been in use from September 2006, but they are not. Currently, the OSCE mission in B&H is trying to train potential history textbook authors. In this they are very much relying on the services of the Georg-Eckert Institute for International Textbook research in Germany.

How do the textbooks presently in use measure up to the standards of the “Guidelines”?

The Serbian textbooks have the most difficulty passing these tests, for they do not take Bosnia and Herzegovina as their frame of reference, but rather the Serbian nation and Serbian state. The result is that other peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina can hardly identify with what supposedly should be their own history. Specifically, in these textbooks Croats are mentioned only on the margin, while Bosniaks are treated mostly as collaborators or oppressors of Christians, worse than the Sultan himself: Even when the Sultan wanted to grant equal rights to his subjects in the 19th century, Bosniaks (or “Islamized Serbs” as the textbooks S7a and S7 call them) resisted their implementation. Events and personalities from Serbian history outside Bosnia get the lion’s share of space in these textbooks. So, for instance, in S7 medieval Serbian king Stefan Lazarević gets two pages and the Kosovo Battle three; Serb migrations get 14 pages altogether (summed over S7, S7a and S8); uprisings in Serbia get 25 pages in S8; and Serbs in Austria and

---

5. <sup>23</sup> “Guidelines”, 2-3.

Venice several pages in S8. That is several times the space dedicated to all the medieval Bosnian kings, who are hardly mentioned; the fall of Bosnia to the Ottomans, which got half a page in S7; Bosniak migrations from Serbia (six words in S9); Croatian migrations from Bosnia or Serbian settlement in Bosnia (only briefly mentioned); or Bosniaks in Bosnia and their revolts in the 1820s and early 1830s (half a page in S8). The section on the Balkan peninsula in the late 18th and early 19th century in S8 has 26 pages on developments in Serbia, seven pages on Montenegro, five on Bosnia and Herzegovina, four on Slavs in Austria-Hungary, five and a half on Serbs in Austria-Hungary, six on the 1848–9 revolution, and another five pages on Vojvodina in 1848–9. The chapter on the second half of the 19th century gives five and a half pages to developments in Serbia, another five and a half pages to Montenegro, and eight pages to Bosnia and Herzegovina, almost exclusively dedicated to the status of Serbs and their uprising. One book spends fifteen pages on the decline and fall of the medieval Serbian kingdom (S7: 161–75), compared to only four pages dealing with the decline and fall of the medieval Bosnian kingdom (S7: 176–79). The history of B&H is lost in the history of neighboring countries. Not only is the history covered predominantly Serbo-Montenegrin, it is also almost exclusively military and political. This is exactly what the aforementioned “Guidelines” want changed.

Altogether, Croatian textbooks devote less space to the Ottomans than either Serbian or Bosnian-language textbooks (nineteen of 158 pages in C6, only three in C7). There is more balance between the BH and Croatian perspectives, although the Croatian one is given priority even where it is illogical, as in the subtitle “The Turkish Threat Approaches Croatia and Bosnia” (C6: 88), as if the Ottomans attacked Croatia first. In fact, one book deals twice with the Ottoman conquest of B&H (C6: 89–90, 93–94 and 154–158). Most probably, this was an attempt to make the originally Croatian textbook more suitable to the BH context by tacking on a chapter with more BH history at the end, where it (chrono)logically does not belong. However, very little is said about Bosniaks and Serbs, or rather Muslim and Orthodox inhabitants of Bosnia.<sup>24</sup> (Muslims are referred to as “people of Muslim religion”,

---

6. <sup>24</sup> In the Foreword to the history textbook for the second year of high school, the authors explicitly state that in this textbook “the focus of attention is on people and events from the thousand-year-long history of Croats” (Mirošević et al., 2001: 4).

C7: 64). In these textbooks there is also a little more balance between military and political history on the one side and other aspects of history on the other, although there is an emphasis on military developments, particularly in the depiction of the Ottomans.

While there are no precise measurements that could be applied, Bosnian textbooks seem closer to satisfying the “Guidelines,” especially textbooks written anew in 2003 and 2005 (B7b and B7c). Both of these have a great deal to say about economic, social, and cultural aspects of Ottoman history, not only political and military. They also do a far better job on the multi-perspectivity principle. According to the publisher of B7b, this book has in fact passed reviews for potentially offensive contents by both entity committees for textbook revision.<sup>25</sup> Books B6 and B7a were originally written in 1994, but still their focus is Bosnia with its all three peoples. Much less is said about Serbia under the Ottomans in B6. The Kosovo battle, for instance, is dealt with in a few lines only (B6: 86). B7a allows more space for developments in Serbia and other Balkan and “South Slavic countries”. Together with B6, it is also the only one of the textbooks that is printed partly in Latin and partly in Cyrillic script. The other books are either in Latin or Cyrillic. Although written and used mainly by Bosniaks, these textbooks at least try – not always successfully, as we will see – to provide a BH perspective on the history under our scrutiny.

These general observations regarding the kind of history dealt with in the textbooks under review provide a background for the following discussion of the key topics of Ottoman history in these BH history textbooks, through which I hope to reconstruct the textbooks’ images of the Ottomans.

## Key Issues of Ottoman History in BH History Textbooks

### *The Kosovo Battle of 1389*

Predictably, the Kosovo Battle of 1389 occupies a different place in different BH textbooks. B6 spares only five lines to observe that Ottoman expansion was made easier after the victory of its army at Kosovo on 28 June 1389 over the forces of Serb and, partly, other

---

7. <sup>25</sup> Symbolically, perhaps, both textbooks have only *Historija* on the cover page but inside the title is given as *Historija / Istorija / Povijest*.

Balkan feudal lords. After the battle many of the defeated feudal lords became Ottoman vassals, as did the newly established Serbian *Despotovina* (B6: 86). B7b and B7c do not deal with 14th-century history, and therefore do not mention the Kosovo battle. C6 only says that “in 1389 they (the Ottomans) defeated the army of Serb prince Lazar on Kosovo field” (C6: 73).

As one would expect, S7 devotes much more space – three full pages – to the Kosovo battle (S7: 163–5) and refers pupils to the supplementary reader for a further four pages on the battle and the legend of Kosovo (S7a: 86–90). About two thirds of both texts are devoted to the Kosovo legend. Serbia is presented as the *antemurale christianitatis* that successfully repelled the Turks on several occasions. However, prior to the Kosovo battle, Turkey was a world power spreading over two continents. Sultan Murad brought to the battle troops from both continents, experienced commanders, and also his sons, which indicates that Kosovo was not a minor clash for him. He was also supported by his vassals, some of them Christians. Serbia at the time was too small, and not all the Serbian ruler’s relatives and friends sent their troops to the battle whose “details and outcome are not known” (S7: 163). The Serbian and Turkish rulers lost their lives. Sultan Murad was killed by the Serb warrior Miloš Obilić/Kobilić. Murad’s younger son Yaqub lost his life, too, at the order of the new sultan, his older brother Bayazit. This battle, says the textbook, had a strong impact around the world: everybody now knew the power of the Ottomans. Hence the exploit of the Kosovo heroes set off a storm of enthusiasm even in the most distant parts of Christendom. Because of the sultan’s death, many initially believed that the Turks had been defeated. However, the great losses on both sides proved a blow only to the Serb lands that were left without warriors and therefore eventually acknowledged the sultan’s suzerainty. Few reliable witness accounts remained, and the battle was quickly turned into a legend. However, it is not an ordinary story, claims the textbook. It is based on a real clash, and the legend itself served as the foundation of “popular historical consciousness. Its core is real, historical event” (S7: 164).

In line with its overall very didactical inclination, the text concludes that the betrayal of some Serb warriors, and the heroism of others, served respectively as a warning to the vacillating and low-spirited among later Serb rebels, and to embolden the courageous among them. The Ottoman conqueror was mighty indeed, a formidable foe, but Serb heroes were not frightened. Several verses from a popular epic about



the Ottoman numbers at Kosovo are quoted (S7: 163-5). The accompanying reader brings an excerpt from the letter of "Florence municipality" to king Tvrtko of Bosnia, who had sent troops to the battle, congratulating him on the victory over the "savage enemy" who intended to "exterminate the Christian name from the face of the Earth" (S7a: 87). This is followed by a popular vision of the battle, with the two rulers as "enemies by law, faith and empires." Sultan Murad is a tyrant and barbarian, but a proud and mighty enemy. His fellow Turks are cunning people, and the whole battle is unjust and tragic. Miloš's assassination of the sultan is told in detail (S7a: 88-90). Unlike the textbook, the reader notes several times that the battle took place on St. Vid's day (*Vidovdan*). The text is followed by an illustration of Miloš Obilić dressed for battle (S7a: 89). Probably, the authors felt that telling all the legends about the Kosovo battle would not be appropriate in a textbook. However, they could not pass over the opportunity to teach the pupils the lesson about Kosovo, so they used the supplementary reader to get around the problem.

### *Islamization in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

The most important and controversial process that took place during the Ottoman period in Bosnia was the conversion to Islam of many of its inhabitants, and at times a majority. The presentation of this process has direct contemporary political implications. It is a common practice of Serbian and some Croatian historians to deny its voluntary nature. A Croatian textbook under scrutiny, however, affirms that Turks did not force Christians to adopt Islam:

Christians lived under the sultan's protection but in exchange had to pay heavily: *kharaj* in gold - the emperor's tax on males. That induced many Christians to voluntarily convert to Islam, since that was a way to escape paying heavy *kharaj*. Besides, if they converted to Islam they would belong to a favored class and could enter various lucrative services. The Islamized aristocracy preserved its possessions and serfs. Yes, Turks did forcefully Islamize some through the so-called 'tax in blood' - by taking strong and healthy boys and young men for their janissary units. (C6: 156).

Another one only mentions in passing that "(i)n the Bosnian pashaluk lived a significant number of people of Muslim faith" (C7: 64). Under the subheading "general consequences of the Turkish

conquest," a Serbian textbook makes the short observation that "(a) portion of the vanquished population accepted Islam – the *conqueror's religion*" (S7: 186, emphasis added). S8 notes that "in its constant wars against Christian neighbors the Ottoman government found an ally in local Muslims, who were more numerous here than in any other part of the subjugated Balkans, except for Albania, where the majority of the population (65%) was Islamized" (S8: 28). Three pages on, the chapter summary has it that "(a) significant part of the Christians converted to Islam in order to make their life easier" (S8: 31). In one instance, there is an indication that Jašar Pasha of Kosovo forced the Serbs there to convert to Islam (S8: 101).<sup>26</sup> In presenting the complex Islamization process in such a one-sided way, Serbian-language history textbooks grossly neglect the rich scholarship on this issue, and simply continue a Serb historiographic practice of presenting Bosnian Muslims as progeny of greedy landlords, thieves, slaves, poor, mentally ill, lazy, outcasts, prisoners, or at best defeated and confused Serbs who chose to follow the religion of their enemies.<sup>27</sup>

Textbook B6: 110–11 has a little over a page on the "process of conversion to Islam." Here a more complex process is presented, with several factors at work.<sup>28</sup> This process, say the authors, was more pronounced in Bosnia and Herzegovina than in areas where the Catholic and Orthodox Churches established themselves earlier, pointing to a probably decisive factor in the more massive Islamization of Bosnia than of any other Balkan country except Albania. The authors add that it might also be due to the teaching of the Bosnian Church that was the majority church in the medieval Bosnian state, which is a favorite Bosniak explanation. Besides ordinary Christians, members of famous feudal families also converted to Islam. Often whole villages

---

8. <sup>26</sup> S8 rarely calls Muslims by their proper name. Instead they are referred to as "Islamized Serbs" (S8: 101) or Serbs' "fellow nationals of Islamic religion" (S8: 29). They are never mentioned in a positive context.

9. <sup>27</sup> One source puts it this way: "an act of human confusion and collective feeble-mindedness (*maloumlja*)" (Imamović 1998: 148). In a private conversation Dr. Mustafa Imamović gave the following source for this quote: Radovan Samardžić, "Prodor islama u Jugoistočnu Evropu," *Uporedna istraživanja* 3 (1991), published in Belgrade.

10. <sup>28</sup> Pelidija tries to avoid the use of the term "Islamization" because of the overtones of force in it. I do not believe that using the cumbersome "conversion to Islam" resolves the historiographic dispute in any meaningful way.

and regions converted, especially in the second half of the 16th century. In urban centers, merchants and craftsmen were among the first to convert. However, those who did not experienced no trouble because of that decision. The role of *devşirme* in the Islamization process is described as follows:

The spread of Islam was influenced by high-ranking officials of the Ottoman state, especially those taken into janissary service. They received huge possessions and secured *timars* for members of their families. Although there was no forceful conversion to Islam, which is also a Qur'anic principle, there were those who accepted the new religion in order to make their military or political career. Through janissary recruitment (*devşirme*), the circle of those converting to Islam widened too (B6: 111).

This makes it sound as if Christians thought of *devşirme* as a privilege, or as if young Christian boys gathered through *devşirme* had a choice to convert or to stay Christians. A little more honesty would not harm the overall claim about the voluntary nature of the process as a whole. It is reiterated that members of all classes converted to Islam until in the 17th century, 75% of the population of the then Bosnian province became Muslims. In the 18th century, the percentage of Muslims declined, mainly due to the loss of Muslim lives in the constant wars and plagues that ravaged mostly Muslim urban centers (B6: 111).

B7b considers Islamization the most important change that happened under the Ottomans in this region. The process was "gradual and *completely* voluntary" (B7b: 65, emphasis added). The conversion of young Christian boys through *devşirme* is not mentioned. Islamization was particularly intensive in the first half of the 16th century, after which few non-Muslims remained. It often happened that one family had Muslims and non-Muslims living together. People of all classes and religious backgrounds accepted Islam. Again, the scale of conversion is explained by the absence of a strong unified church organization in Bosnia, mounting pressure from neighboring church centers on the Bosnian Church, and persecution of the same church by the two last Bosnian kings. At the end of the process, the old BH religious triangle - Bosnian, Catholic, and Orthodox Churches - was replaced by a new religious mosaic in which Islam took the place of the Bosnian Church (B7: 65-66). The authors of B7c mostly agree with this presentation. They point out that by accepting Islam, the Muslim

population became privileged, but only in political matters, since it was eligible to participate in the administration of the country. At the same time they were burdened by the defense of the Empire (B7c: 48–49). The overall picture of the Islamization painted in Bosnian language textbooks is somewhat idealized, and quite unnecessarily so.

### *The status of other religious communities and religious tolerance*

Bosnian textbooks are keen on highlighting the tolerant attitude of the Ottomans towards their Christian and Jewish subjects. One book says that the Ottoman state was tolerant towards adherents of other religions: Orthodox Serbs belonged to the Peć Patriarchate after its restoration in the mid-16th Century, and the activities of the Catholic Church were legalized by sultan Mehmed Fatih's *Ahdnama* from 1463 (B7c). The text is illustrated by a copy of the *Ahdnama*. In a separate lesson dedicated to religious tolerance, it is conceded that there were certain differences in rights and obligations, mainly to do with the military service, taxes, and the right to actively participate in the administration of the Empire. Muslims had all the rights and did not pay *kharaj*, but paid a very high price in lives on the front lines defending the state. Otherwise "all were *equal* in exercising their religious rights and freedoms" (B7c: 62, emphasis added). The different religious sites erected during the Ottoman time within a very small area in Sarajevo, the granting of the *Ahdnama*, the restoration of the Peć Patriarchate and the immigration of Jews all testify to that. Guild membership was multi-religious, and the ceremonies of initiation and promotion within the guild were held according to the rites of the religion to which that particular member belonged. "This is a testimony that in an Ottoman religious environment such as Bosnia of that time, there existed a very strong consciousness of mutual respect and recognition" (B7c: 61–62). Interestingly, I could not find any reference to the "*millet* system." The subsequent division between Muslims and Christians in Bosnia was the result of numerous wars that raged in the 18th century. Because of the additional taxes that were introduced, the status of Christians deteriorated rapidly. Consequently, they started inclining toward Christian countries, the effective enemies of the Ottomans, while Muslims were dying on the front lines fighting those same countries. As a result, the division between Christians and Muslims in Bosnia became more pronounced (B7c: 135).

Others also insist that

...the Ottomans did not persecute non-Muslims from the conquered territory. They enabled them to continue living under the sultan's rule, granting them the right to life, honor, and property. ... In that sense, the Ottoman state was for a long time the only state in Europe where adherents of different religions could live together. However, in certain aspects of life Christians were in a worse situation than Muslims. Sometimes it was state policy and sometimes abuse of power by state officials. One of the most difficult obligations of Christian population was *devşirme*, which was a way of securing officials and soldiers for the state" (B7b: 37).

Some pages later it is repeated that "the Ottoman state was very tolerant toward its subjects of different religions ... (B7b: 66). The result was the preservation of Orthodox and Catholic communities as well as immigration of persecuted Jews from Spain, despite the spread of Islam, which the state did not impose (B7b: 66). An image of the *Ahdname* is reproduced in this book too. However, it is mentioned that Catholic priests were harassed on suspicion of being enemy spies (B7b: 67). These authors also mention the promotion of guild members according to their own religious tradition (B7b: 73).

A third Bosnian book emphasizes the cooperation of Husein-kapetan Gradašćević with non-Muslims (B7a: 60), as well as joint rebellions of Muslims and Christians against Ottoman policies (B7a: 64). The same authors note in B6 that religious tolerance was very much present during the sultan's rule. They are quick to add (between parentheses) that a certain change in this regard happened during the crisis in the Ottoman Empire. Over time, "consciousness of mutual respect and recognition" developed. It often happened that members of the same family belonged to different religions. Muslims and Christians visited each others' sacred places, while some Muslim authors demanded equal treatment for Muslims and Christians. "Despite centuries of Ottoman rule the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina retained their Bosnian language" (B6: 114). The differences were overcome through the development of good neighborly relations. Eventually Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs and Jews in Bosnia and Herzegovina established "the cult of *komšilik* (neighborhood)." It was a widespread popular belief that a neighbor's right is stronger than that of relatives, say these authors (B6: 114).

Fairly enough, a Croatian book has it that "Turkey" during its first period was a "refuge for the religiously persecuted because of its religious tolerance" (C6: 158). Yet, Croat Catholics suffered the most

under the Ottomans. Their numbers were drastically reduced in villages and urban centers. Turks showed enmity toward Catholic clergy, while the Orthodox clergy lived in a “privileged position” and performed their services without problems. Franciscans fared somewhat better than the rest of the Catholic clergy (C6: 157). C7 too states that in the 19th century, Catholics were in the worst position because of the constant enmity between Istanbul and the Vatican. Again, Franciscans were allowed to operate from the time of the conquest of Bosnia (C7: 64). The *Ahdnama* is not explicitly mentioned.

The Serbian eighth-grade book has nothing positive to say about Ottoman religious policy either. The reestablishment of the Peć Patriarchate (1557–1766) was the result of the role played by the “Islamized Serb” Mehmet Pasha Sokolović, as well as the Serbs’ potential for helping or hindering Turkish conquests (S8: 33–34). While the reconstruction of churches and monasteries is mentioned twice, it is not related in any way to the Ottoman religious policies (S8: 35–36).<sup>29</sup> In 1594, the Turks even burned the relics of St. Sava in order to frighten Serbs (S8: 46). S6 only mentions that the Turks after conquering Smederevo destroyed church bells and desecrated churches, turning them into mosques (94).

To sum up, without questioning the sincerity of authors of Bosnian-language textbooks, one cannot overlook their tendency to paint the picture of Ottoman Bosnia a little rosier than historical evidence tells. For instance, Christians had many problems with the construction and even reconstruction of their religious sites that Muslims did not. A sort of tolerance can be ascribed to the Ottomans, but not, by any stretch of imagination, equal treatment of different religious communities. Furthermore, the reestablishment of the Peć Patriarchate is mentioned, but not its abolition. On the other side, both Croat and Serb authors try to project an image of their respective peoples as the greatest victims of Ottoman religious policy, though the Croats are much fairer and closer to the historical evidence. Without glorifying Ottoman practices, they could have acknowledged the positive aspects of their religious policies and the role of the *Shari’a* in it, as many South Slavic historians have

---

11. <sup>29</sup> Boris Nilević notes that in the first few decades after the establishment of the Peć Patriarchate over one hundred Orthodox sites were reconstructed or built anew in the territories under its jurisdiction (Nilević 1990: 114, 215). He also gives details of the (re)construction of many Orthodox churches and monasteries during Ottoman times (1990: 143–71).

already done (Mirković, 1965: 151–54, 167–72; Nilević, 1990: 99).

### *Devşirme*

*Devşirme* is obviously a very sensitive topic. Up to two hundred thousands young Balkan boys were – most often forcibly – taken away from their parents to serve the sultan as court officials or soldiers. That was a practice unheard of in the annals of Muslim history before the Ottomans or after them. Authors of Serb textbooks do not fail to remind their young readers of this cruel practice, even when they do not deal with the period in which it was practiced. Sometimes they use the famous poetic phrase *danak u krvi* or “tax in blood” to describe the practice (S7: 157; S8: 27). In addition, S8 brings a moving picture of the collection of this tax, with boys crying from above the horses taking them away, Ottoman soldiers whipping their desperate parents, and houses burning in the background. The picture on its own is enough to induce very strong emotions toward Turks, as they are called. Speaking of janissaries, a Croatian book simply states that they were recruited from the imprisoned and captured Christian children (C6: 72).

Perhaps this is the most difficult single issue for Bosniak authors to deal with, and some of them seem to fail to address it frankly and sincerely. Outside the main text, one book says that:

Through *devşirme* mainly Christian children were collected and sent for *accommodation* to Anatolian families. There they learned Turkish and were converted to Islam. Children received special education in Istanbul and Edirne. The especially gifted occupied the highest political and military posts in the Empire. However, most went to serve as janissaries. (B7b: 37, emphasis added)

Another book defines it as “recruitment of healthy boys for military service and administrative tasks,” but notes that it is often called “tribute in blood” (B7c: 63). Yet others write that:

Since the time of Sultan Mehmed II Fatih the inhabitants of Bosnia were given the *privilege* (emphasis added) to send their sons to rejuvenate the Sultan’s court (*sultanski dvorski podmladak, acemi oqlan*) under the system of recruitment of janissaries (*devşirme*). This practice enabled many to graduate from the highest schools and occupy prominent offices in the state administration and military.<sup>30</sup> Some of them were

---

12. <sup>30</sup> Surprisingly, B. Nilević partially agrees with such a view (Nilević, 1990: 118).

brought up inside the Islamic spiritual order (*Ulama*)... Most of them did not cut off the relations with the home country, while many returned to Bosnia and worked there (B6: 116).

While it seems true that some Bosnian Muslims did ask the sultan to include their children in this practice, it is undeniable that forced separation of children from their Christian parents must have been an extremely difficult experience for both parents and children. The future prospects of these children could not serve as consolation for their Christian parents. A little more sensitivity towards the emotions involved in the issue would improve the credentials of Bosnian textbooks and support their claim to be giving impartial all-BH perspective of events.

### *The Ottoman state before and after the Great Vienna War in 1683*

Historically, the situation of the Ottoman subjects changed together with the state's worsening fortunes on the battlefield and the decreasing ability of the central government to control local elites. Reforms were supposed to prevent external defeats and internal disintegration, but they ultimately failed to rescue the state. The way in which various periods of Ottoman history are presented can also serve as a test of the impartiality of a book. One Croatian textbook takes these processes into account by briefly stating: "In the early period of her history, Turkey was envied by Europe because of her strength and appealing social system" (C6: 158). Another, dealing with the 19th century, already paints the picture of a lawless state where the local elites do with Christians whatever they please (C7: 65). A Serbian book devotes one paragraph to the issue saying that the *raya* were always oppressed, but it became worse over time (S8: 28). During later stages, Sultans tried to improve the status of serfs by introducing reforms and laws. However these measures only worsened the situation (S8: 39).

A Bosnian textbook refers to the gradual deterioration of the situation on several occasions (B7b: 36, 43, 66). Moreover, the authors devote one section to the distinctive features of three periods of Ottoman history: rise, decline and crisis (B7b: 58). In the brief exposition that follows, the first period is described as one of stability and military success, while later the situation went from bad to worse. Comparing Ottoman and European feudal systems during the 16th century, the Ottoman one is described as more friendly towards its subjects. All this changed in the 18th century, when lost wars, hunger,



plagues, and *hajduk* rebellions all contributed to the deterioration of the status of Christian subjects (B7b: 83). These difficult conditions led not only to polarization between Muslims and Christians in the state, but also between the local Muslim population and the central government in Istanbul (83). The introduction of the practice of tax farming (*çiftluk*) was fatal for society and state (B7b: 84–86, 142–44). Later reforms improved the conditions of Christians, but that was too little, too late (B7b: 153). B7c too considers the introduction of *çiftluk* one of the key causes of the decline and disintegration of the Ottoman state (B7b: 56–57). As in other regions, this practice caused the resistance of the BH population to Istanbul (B7b: 130). B6 links the deterioration of subjects' position to the crises of 17th and 18th centuries. New, difficult conditions caused resistance and rebellions among both Muslims and Christians (B6: 114). B7a positively assesses the attempts at reform after Omer Pasha Latas in Bosnia in the 1860s (B7a: 84).

Thus, Serbian textbooks missed another opportunity to say at least a few nice words about the early Ottomans, while Croatian ones seized that opportunity. Bosniak authors felt that the obvious change taking place in the late 17th Ottoman state was a good opportunity to start dissociating Bosniaks from the Ottomans, preparing the terrain for their independent Bosniak history that would culminate in the uprising of Husein-kapetan Gradašćević.

### *The Sultan and the local elites*

Ottoman history occupies a special place in the memories of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina because of the local Muslim population, who are perceived by Serbs and Croats as descendants and successors of the Ottomans. Yet, they are not fully identified with the Ottomans, whose interests often clashed with those of the local population. In this section we are looking at the relative image of the central Ottoman authorities, personified in the sultan, and local, mainly Muslim elites. Because of the repercussions for inter-ethnic relations in Bosnia today, it is very significant to see who was portrayed as the good or bad guy.

According to one Bosnian textbook, Bosnia enjoyed a special, privileged status within the Ottoman state (B7b: 64). Local *sipahis* were responsible landlords, while the *timar* system was misused mainly by foreigners and from the center (B7b: 77–78). A few pages later, however, it is admitted that local authorities often abused their

authority while collecting taxes (B7b: 83). There is no word on the ethnic origin of these local authorities, who could be foreigners, but most probably were overwhelmingly of local background. Reforms created a gulf of distrust between the central government and Bosniaks, who believed that the sultan did not care about Bosnia anymore (B7b: 132-3, 137, 151). Others, too, note that by the early 18th Century, Bosniaks had already lost trust in the Porte (B7c: 131). However, united in their interest to defend and preserve Bosnia within the Ottoman state, Bosniaks had an ambivalent attitude toward the sultan (B7c: 134-5). They were unhappy about the rising number of Bosniak youths laying down their lives for the sultan all over the Empire, but they could not do without the sultan in defending their own homeland, Bosnia. (More on this in the section on rebellions.)

Somewhat similarly, the authors of B7a devote a section to the attitude of Bosniaks toward the central government in the late 18th and early 19th century (B7a: 35-36). According to them, representatives of the Ottoman government did not enjoy any respect in the eyes of the local population (B7a: 35). Bosniaks felt increasingly alone (B7a: 37). During the reforms, this feeling developed into open rebellion against the perceived attempt by the central authorities to destroy "*authentic Bosnian institutions* that were formed within the *sipahi-timar* system: the janissaries' order, *kapetanijas*, *sipahiluks*, *ayans*, *asnafs*, etc." (B7a: 38, emphasis added). There were additional reasons for this attitude of Bosniaks toward the center. Bosniaks severely criticized the Porte for its soft line towards Serbs and excesses in collecting taxes (B7a: 59). From the 18th century onward, Bosniaks increasingly perceived the Ottomans as foreigners who came to enrich themselves and who enabled Christians to take over first the economic and then the political power (B7a: 66). Finally, in 1878, there was a strong feeling that the sultan had sold Bosnia to the Austrians (B7a: 93). B6 speaks extensively about the resistance of Bosniaks to the Porte policies and their prominent role in defending Bosnia (B6: 122-123).

Croatian textbooks depict the sultan as protector of the *raya* (C6: 156), or contrasts the role of the sultan as protector of the *raya* with the predatory attitude of local "Turks" whom the sultan could not control (C7: 64-65). Similarly, in a Serbian textbook the sultan's reforms are positively assessed. However, they failed miserably because of the resistance of local landlords and of the majority of the Muslim population (S8: 83, 148).

The emerging pattern is very consistent with the three national

historiographies. Bosnian textbooks try to dissociate Bosniaks from the Ottomans and adopt a more nationalist attitude toward the Ottomans from the 18th century, trying to avoid the association of Bosniaks with the oppression of later Ottoman times and the bad memories of Serbs and Croats. On the other hand, Croat and Serb authors represent local Muslims, the grandfathers of today's Bosniaks, as actually worse than the Ottomans from Istanbul themselves, which is consistent with the infamous saying: *poturica gori od Jurčina* (a convert to Islam is worse than a Turk).

### *The relative positions and roles of Muslims and Christians*

Croatian textbooks repeatedly stress that Catholics were the biggest losers under the Ottomans (C6: 155–157; C7: 64). Fairly enough, it is noted that Muslims too were *raya* (C6: 156). There is nothing about Christians as Ottoman partners in war and peace. A Serbian book briefly mentions Christian landlords (*sipahis*) and Serb vassals of the Ottomans (S7: 156, 173). Another observes that Serbs were important for Ottoman conquests, whether as their allies or enemies (S8: 37). However, it was local Muslims who supported the Ottomans in their wars against their Christian neighbors (S8: 28). Serbs made up the majority of the productive class of *raya*; there were Muslims in the *raya* class, but they were privileged as members of the ruling religion (S8: 29). The Catholic minority in western Herzegovina and Central Bosnia lived under the same conditions as Orthodox Christians. Constant wars, migrations of Serbs and their fighting with their “fellow nationals of Islamic religion” spoiled the religious and social relations in Bosnia until the end of Ottoman rule. Some Christians were incorporated into the ruling class and eventually converted to Islam (S8: 29). When sultans tried to reform the state, local conservative Muslims opposed the reforms and eventually rebelled against the sultan (S8: 119, 148, 164).

Bosnian textbooks downplay the privileges of Muslims; they bring to the fore similarities between their condition and that of the others, and instances of cooperation between Muslims and Christians against oppression by representatives of the Ottoman government. B6 points out that the majority of Muslims belonged not to the ruling class but to the producers, *raya*. Their status was quite similar to that of the Christian *raya* (B6: 113). Muslim *raya* did not have to pay *kharaj* but had to answer the sultan's call to go to war (B6: 109). Consequently,

from the 17th century both Muslims and Christians resisted Ottoman policies (B6: 114, 115). B7b notes that already by the 16th century, the majority of the *raya* class in Bosnia were Muslims. They were in “exactly the same position” as Christian *raya*. Both were subjugated. The taxes they paid were also quite similar. Christians paid *kharaj* but Muslims had to go to the army (B7b: 69). The despised owners of *čifluks* (*čifluk* *sahibije*) were both rich Muslims and non-Muslims (B7b: 139). The leader of the major Bosniak revolt from the 1820s, Husein-kapetan Gradašević, maintained very good relations with Christians, had their support and enjoyed popularity in both communities. He allowed a church, a monastery and a school to be built without consulting the sultan (B7b: 133, 135). B7c too stresses that both Muslims and non-Muslims were *raya* (B7c: 50). Muslims and Christians were unequal only in administration and defense (B7c: 49). Otherwise they enjoyed the equal protection of the state (B7c: 61–62). Significant political participation of Christians in BH government bodies after the reforms is highlighted (B7c: 147).

Overall, Bosnian language textbooks try to hammer out as many similarities between the positions of the three peoples under the Ottomans as the basis for a common destiny today, while especially Serbian textbooks associate Bosnian Muslims as closely as possible with the “Ottoman occupiers.”

### *Migrations and demographic changes*

Centuries of Ottoman rule permanently reshaped the demographic composition of the Balkans. Some people moved voluntarily, but often they were forced to do so. Migrations did not stop with the departure of the Ottomans. Muslims who remained in the territories left by the Ottomans soon had to follow them. Here we look at how this painful chapter of Ottoman history in the Balkans is presented.

Among Bosnian textbooks, B7b deals with this issue only within the BH context, without always being very explicit about the religious or ethnic background of migrating population. The conquest of Bosnia caused migrations especially in Herzegovina and lands on the border with Hungary. The deserted regions were populated by people from neighboring lands, mostly Vlachs, which caused major demographic and ethnic changes especially west of the river Vrbas (B7b: 67). An Orthodox population left territories under Catholic rule and settled in

Ottoman Bosnia because of lower taxes and greater religious freedoms (B7b: 86). Speaking of the 19th century, three types of migration are mentioned. First, there were migrations from Bosnia due to wars. It is not specified what religious or ethnic group was leaving Bosnia. Second, Orthodox people from Montenegro, Eastern Herzegovina and Dalmatia settled in the eastern and western parts of Bosnia, especially in the late 18th and early 19th century. They often filled the vacuum left by plagues in previously Muslim areas. Finally, Muslims expelled from Serbia settled in Bosnia (B7b: 141).

B7c also cites wars as a major cause of the migrations that especially affected Herzegovina and areas adjacent to Hungary. The majority of those who settled in Bosnia were Vlachs (B7c: 49). In the 18th century, Venetians managed to convince some Christians from Ottoman territories to come over to them and fight the Ottomans from their territory. Depopulated regions were filled up by Vlachs, which changed the demographic structure of the Bosnian province. The suffering of the BH population in border areas during this period is said to be described in epic poems of the time (B7c: 66). The fate of Muslims in the territories lost by the Ottomans is not dealt with separately, but there is a hint that they did not fare well under either Austrians or Venetians (B7c: 130).

According to B6, in the 16th century Ottoman conquests caused northward migrations toward southern Hungary and today's Vojvodina in Serbia. With the aim of reviving economic life in the conquered territories, the Ottomans themselves moved populations to thinly populated or deserted areas. In the process they brought Vlach cattle breeders to Bosnia. From Bosnia they settled farmers in Slavonia (Croatia) and in the Dalmatian hinterland there were colonists from Metohija and Bosnia. The result of all these migrations was the ethnic dominance of South Slavs in the central and southwestern Balkans. "Common customs, way of life, cloth etc. spread throughout the region" (B6: 110). In the 18th century, the fate that met Muslims in the territories that the Ottomans lost after Great Vienna War (1683-99) was the main motive for Bosniaks to fight for their homeland, without expecting too much help from Istanbul (B6: 122). What happened to them after the Ottomans departed Slavonia, Dalmatia, Lika and Kordun amounted to genocide. Actually, that was the first in a series of genocides that happened to Bosniaks in modern history because of their religion (B6: 124). A page is spent on describing the fate of Bosniaks in these territories, where all traces of Islam were erased. The

expulsion of Bosniaks continued in the form of the "*istraga poturica*" (extermination of converts to Turkish religion) in Montenegro during the 18th century. The same authors emphasize the fate of Muslims in Serbia after the uprisings in the early 19th century and in the 1860s (B7a: 29–30, 84).

A Croatian book stresses Croat migrations from Bosnia to Slavonia and Srijem (C6: 92). After the campaign of Eugene of Savoy (1697), some 30,000 Serbs too had to leave Serbia and move to Hungary fearing Ottoman reprisals (C6: 137). An Orthodox population was resettled in areas previously populated by Catholics. Those were mainly Vlachs but also Serbs who followed Ottomans withdrawing to Bosnia after they lost Slavonia in Croatia (C6: 156).

While Croat and Bosnian textbooks give at least fragmentary information about the fate of the other two BH nations, Serb textbooks completely neglect their migrations. There is nothing on the conversion of Catholic churches and monasteries in Dalmatia into Orthodox ones (discussed in Nilević, 1990: 115). One book devotes three pages to Serb migrations in the 15th and 16th centuries to Hungary, where they served as a "human shield" against the Turks (S7: 184–186). Another has two pieces on Serb migrations to Hungary in the 14th and 15th centuries (S6: 102–104). According to these texts, in the autumn of 1480 alone, 60,000 Serbs crossed the Sava (S6: 104). The text describes how the heads of 300 Turks killed in one of the border battles were brought before Serb military leaders (S6: 104). S8 tells the story of Ottoman resettlement of Serbs along their borders with Hungary, and how these lands by the late 16th century were called "Serbia." It also elaborates on the settlement of other Serbs along the other side of the border (S6: 47–48). A whole chapter is dedicated to Serb migrations to southern Hungary after 1683, when tens of thousands of Serb families are said to have moved there (49–55). The only reference to Muslim migrations is in S9, where it is said that after the establishment of the Novi Pazar *sandžak* in 1852, many Albanians, Turks and Muslims settled there after leaving the liberated Serb lands (S9: 39).

Generally, there is little empathy for the suffering of others in BH textbooks. The authors of B7b, B7c, and C6 show some impartiality. Most problematic are the Serbian textbooks, which show no empathy for the pains of Croats or Bosniaks, and simply gloss over the migrations under the Ottomans that enabled Serbs to populate areas where they had not lived before like most of Bosnia. Similarly problematic is the way B6 uses the term genocide exclusively for forced

Muslim migrations from the 17th century onwards.

### *Rebellions and Uprisings*

Who forced the Ottomans to leave the Balkans? According to a Croatian book "Turks," i.e., local Muslims, did rebel, not against the Ottomans, but against reforms that threatened their privileges (C7: 65). Bosnian textbooks speak of a multitude of uprisings and rebellions in which both Muslims and Christians rose up against the Ottomans. Uprisings were caused by Ottoman cruelty, excessive taxes, reforms that were perceived by Bosniaks as anti-Islamic, and Bosniak demands for autonomy (B7a: 32, 59–60). According to B7b, the uprisings in 1875 were caused by hardship and severe policies, "provoked" by misrule, and joined by foreigners too (B7b: 119, 149). B7c describes in detail how Bosniaks rebelled against the Ottomans in the 19th century (B7b: 138–143). The last uprising of the Orthodox and Catholic population that dealt the final blow to Ottoman rule in Bosnia was caused by their economic status (B7b: 146–50). Attempts to involve Muslims in this uprising failed. Overall, the uprising was extremely bloody. Over three years of conflict, in Bosnia alone some 150,000 people died.

A Serbian textbook glorifies the first rebels against the Ottomans, the *hajduks*, and states that if caught, their punishment was impalement (S8: 29–30, 118). Orthodox Christians led by their Church rebelled almost regularly though unsuccessfully from the 16th century onwards (S8: 46–47). Unlike the uprising of Husein-kapetan Gradašević, which only gets half a page (S8: 119–20), special attention is paid to the Serb uprisings in Serbia in 1804 and 1815 (S8: 82–109). The development of both uprisings is followed in detail, including the reprisals and repression by the "Turks" (S8: 91, 96, 101, 155).<sup>31</sup> Serb uprisings in Bosnia intensified by the early 19th century because of increased taxes and the worsening situation of the serfs (S8: 120). They culminated in the uprising of 1875, which was caused by the unresolved "agrarian issue" over land ownership. The uprising is described in detail, including the fact that Muslims were repeatedly invited to join it (S8: 164–70). The focus is all the time on Bosnian Serbs.

Bosnian textbooks thus continue their effort to distance Bosniaks from the later Ottomans and show the role of Bosniaks in the struggle for an independent Bosnia, while Serbian textbooks try to demonstrate

---

13. <sup>31</sup> However, Vuk Karadžić is cited as saying that the rule of Miloš Obilić was even worse (S6: 99, 102).

that it was Serbs who actually liberated everybody in Bosnia and the region against the wishes of local Muslims.

### *Ottoman influence on local culture*

Bosnian textbooks generally point out that the economy of the Ottoman society was based on agriculture. Other important sectors were mining, which stagnated under the Ottomans; commerce; and craftsmanship, which prospered in the same period. The first industrial developments took place in the mid-19th century. There is not much analysis as to why industry and road infrastructure were underdeveloped by the early 19th century. Oriental-Islamic culture is said to have enriched local culture, and the mixing of peoples and cultures that happened during Ottoman times is “the ethnic basis” of contemporary BH society. B6 spends quite some time on the cultural achievements within all four major religious communities (B7b: 72–74, 144–45; B7c: 57–60, 153, 156; B6: 125–9; B7a, 87–8).

Comparing the Ottoman economy with its European counterparts, a Croatian book observes that it relied primarily on a rural economy that was at the level of an early medieval economy, while European states were developing market economies, establishing themselves as absolutist monarchies, and modernizing their armies (C6: 135). The influence of Islamic culture is given positive coverage. Many Muslims and Franciscans are said to have been active in literature and science during the period. Islamic culture influenced even Christian customs. An example of religious architecture is the magnificent building of the (Ghazi) Husrev-Bey mosque in Sarajevo, allegedly by the architect Sinan. The infrastructure was built to support trade, while religious foundations took care of social needs of the people. During its first period, because of its religious tolerance, its strength, and the appeal of its social system, the Ottoman state was the envy of Europeans, who borrowed many things from them. Nothing is said about Serbian or Jewish culture in Bosnia under the Ottomans (C6: 157–58).

According to a Serbian book, the “(m)ore primitive Turkish feudal system significantly slowed down the economic and social development of the subjugated peoples” (S7: 186). Production fell, especially in mining. Trade was dying; instead of a monetary economy, the barter one was reviving (S8: 186). S8 positively assesses the development of trade and craftsmanship from the 16th to the 18th century, in which people of all religions partook. However, cultural life



developed within religious communities, and Serbs had many difficulties regarding religious freedom (S8: 29). In the 19th century, the Ottoman government dealt especially strictly with any manifestation of Serb national consciousness. Allegedly it was forbidden to publicly use the Serb name and the name of the Serbian language and Serbian script. Import of books from Serbia was forbidden or strictly controlled. The government tried to promote the idea of a "Bosnian" language (S8: 165, quotes in original). S9 concludes that in the 19th century, "(t)he Turkish feudal system and corrupt administration left these regions least developed economically and culturally.... It slowed down the development of capitalism and a local middle class... The sultan's reforms only made things worse" (39).

Unlike Croatian and Bosnian textbooks that manage to be relatively fair in their assessment of Ottoman influence on local cultures, Serbian ones deny the Ottomans any contribution to their culture, despite the huge number of Oriental words in the Serbian vocabulary and the Ottoman influence on Serbian everyday life, customs, music, and so on.

### *Moral qualities of the Ottomans and the author's nation*

During the six centuries of Ottoman presence on three continents, there were good and bad rulers, soldiers, administrators, and ordinary men and women. One could make just about any claim, good or bad, about Ottomans, and be able to find an example to illustrate it. What picture of the Ottomans emerges therefore depends very much on the focus of the textbook. For instance, C6 is extraordinarily focused on *akincis*, jihad, and booty: *akincis* are mentioned four times as special units that "set ablaze and burned" (*žarili i palili*) everything along the border (72), "pillaged and looted Croatian and Slavic lands" (92), "raided villages and committed horrors" (93). For the Turkish army "every war was jihad - holy war against infidels. In addition, motivated by booty the Turkish army was a frightening force" (C6: 72). In the end it is not clear what motivated the Ottomans more: religious or worldly reasons. A 15th-century Archbishop of Split is quoted as crying in Rome: "They tear small kids from the breasts of their mothers, ravish women in front of their husbands, tear girls out of their mothers' embrace, cut down old parents in front of their sons..." ("Dječicu trgaju s majčinih prsa, žene pred očima muževa oskvrnjuju, djevojke grabe iz majčina zagrljaja, stare roditelje na očigled sinova sijeku...," C6: 93). The resulting image of the Ottomans is one of savage barbarians. The same

textbook paints starkly different pictures of Turks who were looting Balkan states (C6: 73) and the “brilliant” or “glittering” Crusader armies of European knights (C6: 73, 87). The Ottomans, according to C6, knew no ethics and could not be trusted. Sultan Fatih killed the last Bosnian king despite all his promises (C6: 90, 154). Admittedly, Eugene of Savoy was not much better; he was only able to pillage Bosnia (C6: 136). Speaking of Ali Pasha Rizvanbegović, C7 uses epic language: “The ‘Raya’ was breathing its last breaths under the oppression of his sons and tax officials who asked for kharaj and took taxes even for those up to six years dead. The Turks swore that they would uproot Christians from Mostar. In 1840 they expelled all Catholics from the city and surrounding villages. In this way about 320 families were banished” (C7: 66). The reader may suspect that the authors of this paragraph – by dramatizing and giving much significance to one episode among hundreds of population movements in all directions in the Balkans – are trying to justify ethnic cleansing by Croatian forces around Mostar in the 1990s. As Christina Koulouri observed: “Contemporary conflicts are projected onto the past to appear as constant and unchanging throughout history” (Koulouri, 2002: 26).

In Bosnian textbooks, the image of the Ottomans deteriorates in the second half of their rule when, it is said, they became corrupt and cruel (B7b: 130, 133, 136; B7a: 89).

Serbian textbooks paint the Ottomans as bloody conquerors and ruthless rulers throughout. Looting, burning, enslavement and fear was the way they conquered the Balkans (S7: 168, 184). “Corruption, violence, looting and parasitism were the main characteristics of their administration” (S8: 28). Similar assertions are repeated on pages 98 and 148. They practiced violence and oppression of all sorts (S8: 30, 83, 84, 86).<sup>32</sup> S6, in a piece from Turkish chronicle of an ex-janissary, describes the Ottoman conquest of Novo Brdo and the treatment of the conquered population. The Ottomans are said to have separated out the young men from the rest. The most prominent men were killed, while the rest were allowed to go to their homes that were not touched. The sultan distributed some 320 young men and 700 women among his subjects, while he took an unspecified number of youths for his janissary units (S6: 92). Again, because of the resemblance between this

---

14. <sup>32</sup> Boris Nilević advises historians to take contemporary accounts of Ottoman oppression both as true and as “reactions against the episodic lawlessness and autocracy of Turks” (Nilević, 1990: 101).

story and what happened in 1992-1995 in Bosnia, the possibility that this text was selected to justify modern ethnic cleansing cannot escape the reader's mind.

### *Illustrations*

Illustrations generally follow the text. Illustrations of military and political history dominate: cavalry, troops, rulers, rebel leaders, battles, and maps showing borders changing after wars.

In C6, perhaps the most interesting illustration is a sequence of small pictures depicting "feudal taxes" (C6: 154): hard-working peasants in the field, a *sipahi* on a horse, a soldier on horse driving six boys to the sultan, a humble subject submitting his taxes to an Ottoman official sitting on a sofa with his legs and hands crossed. At the top, the sultan stands with his hands on his stomach and the Aya Sofia Mosque in the background. C7 does not spend much time on the Ottoman period anyway, and the illustrations are few: three men in 19th-century folk costume, Omer Pasha Latas, and a Franciscan church.

B6 has been variously illustrated since its first wartime edition, but there have been no particularly interesting changes. In the edition under review, apart from rulers and maps, there are street pictures showing what Muslims and non-Muslims wore at the turn of 20th century; three illustrations from the Sarajevo *Haggada*; and architecture: the Old Bridge in Mostar, the Sephardic synagogue, Počitelj, the period interior of a Muslim house, a housing complex from Stolac, Žitomislići monastery, and Ferhat Pasha's mosque in Banja Luka. Some of these are famous landmarks destroyed in the 1992-1995 war, but the captions give only the year of construction. While thematically balanced, these illustrations seem to be too few given the wealth of information they accompany, and the Croat component of BH culture and history seems to be underrepresented.

Apart from mainly Muslim rulers, rebels, and maps, B7a has period pictures of 19th-century Mostar and life in Sarajevo's market streets (Bašćaršija). Generally, both text and illustrations are of low print quality. There could have been many more pictures to illustrate the extensive text covering the Ottoman period. However, I could not identify any problematic illustration. The 1994 edition featured two pictures from the last Ottoman days, Bosnians battling the Austrian army near Ali Pasha's mosque, and the Austrian army crossing the Sava river; these are missing in the later edition. Probably these

pictures seemed inappropriate in 2001 when B&H was effectively ruled by Austrian diplomat Wolfgang Petritsch and seeking closer ties with the EU.

B7b is beautifully designed and well illustrated. Apart from the Ottoman rulers, maps, and battle scenes, there are street scenes; glimpses of peasant life; mosques, churches, monasteries, and a Jewish graveyard; towns and bridges; and books such as Mehmet Pasha Sokolović's *Mushaf* (copy of the Qur'an), Gospels from the Old Orthodox Church in Sarajevo, and a page from an Oriental astrological work.

B7c, again, mainly shows maps, rulers (including non-Muslims such as Eugene of Savoy, Miloš Obrenović, and Petar Petrović Njegoš), and armies, along with some bridges and fortresses, houses of worship, and religious icons of the different faiths.

The illustrations of S7 are predominantly military, political, and Serbian: portraits, seals and coins of Serbian kings; Miloš Obilić killing sultan Murad; the fall of Constantinople and the Turkish siege of Belgrade; weapons; and maps. There are some churches and a monastery. There is no illustration referring to non-Serbian culture or life-style, unless you count two illustrations of Ottoman cavalymen. S8 includes a moving illustration of the Ottomans taking young boys from their desperate parents with burning houses in the background (S8: 27). Otherwise, it focuses on Serbian rulers, rebels, and church leaders, maps, and documents, along with some Orthodox monasteries and practices. As in S7, non-Serbs are given hardly any attention. S9 speaks only of Balkan wars, and only pictures of Serb military leaders and battles are shown. Finally, S6 is illustrated by pictures of Kraljević Marko and Miloš Obilić together, Miloš Obilić alone, Novo Brdo, Smederevo, sultan Mehmed II, the seal of king Stefan Tvrtko I with coat of arms of Bosnian bans and Serbian kings, Bobovac, an old map of Srem, Bačka and Banat, and the battle at Mohacs in 1526.

The map and picture language of these textbooks show more or less the same tendencies as the text itself. National political and military themes dominate, while "others" are under-represented or ignored, especially in Serbian textbooks. Sarajevo Publishing does by far the best job with its seventh-grade history books (B7b and B7c).

### *Factual inaccuracies and language*

One would expect the textbooks to be well researched and free of

outright factual mistakes. However, that is not the case. A Bosnian book wrongly asserts that when a Muslim sued a Christian, a church court had jurisdiction over the case (B7b: 66). Another inaccurately writes that sultan Sulayman died while besieging Vienna (B7c: 41) and that the Mufti was the chief religious justice or judge (B7c: 48). According to a Croatian book, Sultan Fatih conquered between 70 and 300 cities in Bosnia and took away about 100,000 ordinary people and 30,000 young men for janissaries (C6: 154), all of which is extremely unlikely. The whole of Bosnia today does not have 300 cities, and to take so many people would mean to leave the land without people and therefore to reduce the tax base, which contradicts Ottoman practice. The same textbook also says that the (Ghazi Husrev) Bey's mosque in Sarajevo was built by Sinan, which is not the case (C6: 157). Another claims that until the 19th century, the army was composed of the young men of subdued peoples (C7: 65). In fact, during the great days of the Ottoman state, janissaries were not its most numerous military units. Furthermore, the practice of taking *devşirme* for the Ottoman army stopped soon after Sultan Sulayman (most probably in 1638), because janissaries managed to get permission to marry while in uniform, and then did everything to have their sons recruited instead of *acemi oğlan*. A Serbian book mentions Venice and the Venetian Republic as members of an anti-Ottoman alliance, as if they were two different states (S8: 49).

The language used in BH textbooks generally fits the overall attitude of its authors toward the Ottomans and their legacy. Serbian textbooks often juxtapose "Turks" with "Christian lands" (S7: 157-59). Battles with Turks, the Turkish army, and fear of Turks are described in epic manner (S7: 159, 165). Students are encouraged to memorize epic poems (S8: 32). The relationship between Turks and their subjects are often described as "enslavement," "repression," and "social exploitation" (S8: 27-28). Turks "oppress," "burn to the ground," "take into slavery," etc. (S9: 39-49). One book describes the Ottoman period simply as "the worst of all times" (S6: 86). In a few instances, Bosnian authors use the same language: Serbia and Montenegro were "enslaved" (*porobljene*) by the Ottomans (B7c: 41); Greek rebels "liberated" most of Morea (B7a: 32); on a map of the 1875 uprising in Bosnia, the south-west region is labeled "liberated area" (B7a: 90). In accordance with the systematic denial of the statehood of B&H before the Dayton peace accords, both a Croatian and a Serbian book treat Bosnia and Herzegovina during Ottoman times not as a single country

but as two regions (C7: 64; S8: 117,121).

## Conclusion

It is said that wars of historiography often precede and continue after wars in real history. To a certain extent, that is true of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is certainly most unfortunate that eleven years after the war, BH history textbooks contain materials that incite mistrust of others to say the least. Not all these books are alike. There is a clear difference between those BH history textbooks that try to cultivate attitudes conducive to living together, and those that have been written as if only one people lives in Bosnia.

Authors of the textbooks in Bosnian language, being in a particularly delicate position, try to highlight the best from the past as the basis for contemporary coexistence, while Serbian textbooks and sometimes Croatian ones bring to students' attention the worst of it. Especially in the case of Serbian textbooks, the history of the other two peoples is completely omitted, as are less admirable episodes in one's own past,<sup>33</sup> while such episodes are stressed in the past of others. Simultaneously, the achievements of one's nation are highlighted and those of other nations are neglected.<sup>34</sup> Information that could disturb the nationalistic narrative is withheld. The myths that other authors have recognized in Serbian historiography and public opinion, namely *ante murale, sui generis* and antiquity (Antić, 2003) are heavily present in Serbian history textbooks for elementary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The *ante murale* myth of being Europe's "front wall" against Islam is explicitly present in Croatian textbooks too. Especially disturbing in Serbian textbooks are the multiple references to alleged impalements of Serbs by the Ottomans. It is very probable that such insistence on repeating the image of impalement disposed some Serbs to take bodily revenge against contemporary Muslims during the recent war as acceptable.<sup>35</sup> The focus on such historically doubtful but

---

15. <sup>33</sup> For instance, Serb textbooks nowhere mention the role that the Serbian Church played with regard to Catholics in Bosnia. See Nilević (1990: 198–208).

16. <sup>34</sup> In this regard Serbian textbooks fit the prevalent SEE pattern (Carras, 2002: 13).

17. <sup>35</sup> For one interesting, if problematic argument along these lines, see Boose (2002: 90).

very divisive episodes cultivates animosity between children of different nationalities. Too graphic accounts of crimes and interethnic violence serve no pedagogical objective. They undermine the confidence and trust that good textbooks should help foster.

Textbooks in Bosnian language, for their part, try to idealize certain aspects of the Ottoman history. They seem to be too reluctant to take an impartial if not critical stance toward certain less bright pages of Ottoman history, as in the case of *devşirme*. The same could be said of the claims about the equal rights of all Ottoman subjects. To various degrees, all textbooks have selective memories, remembering one's own suffering and forgetting the suffering of others. They also have problems taking a critical approach to roles played by one's own nation. Because of this, Heike Karge has even proposed that the concept of the history textbook itself should be revised: "Until now this concept has dealt with the presentation of historical facts and not with the aim of developing a critical consciousness of history among pupils" (Karge, 1999).

Certainly, if we look only at the treatment of the Ottoman period, the Serbian textbooks surveyed would get the lowest score on any evaluation scale for a good history textbook in the 21st century. They systematically and persistently project negative stereotypes of the Ottomans. The result is a much simpler picture of the Ottoman period than the evidence warrants: the Ottomans were oppressors; Serbs (and sometimes Croats) were freedom fighters from day one to the First Balkan Wars. In fact, the social history of B&H under the Ottomans was particularly complex, with the Serbian Church and privileged strata of the non-Muslim population often siding with the Ottomans in order to preserve their privileges, the same way local Muslims resisted reforms.

How nationalism has distorted historiography in Bosnia can best be seen by comparing contemporary history textbooks with the Chronicle of the Franciscan Nikola Lašvanin from Central Bosnia from the first half of the 18th century (Lašvanin, 2003), or other contemporary Christian sources. Unlike in the modern Serbian and some Croatian textbooks the Ottoman governors can be "very wise ... and good by nature" (207), others are such good rulers that "during their rule the poor did not know what evil was" (231), and still others are "good men and just" (232); local Muslim clerics speak to Ottoman administrators in favor of local Franciscans (220); some Bosnian *Ulama* are friends of Franciscans (224); the sultan punishes governors for slaughtering prisoners of war (203): etc. Similarly, the respected historian Boris

Nilević notes that “sources from this period (15th century, A.A.) do not present such a black picture” (Nilević, 1990: 103, also 121, 216).

Finally, if it is true that school books are not only means of propaganda but also “a mirror of the society that produces them”; if it is true that “they rarely contain stereotypes and values unacceptable to society”; and if it is true that “history books, in particular, may reflect the image a human society has of its past and, indirectly, the way it imagines its future” (Koulouri, 2002: 31-2), then most BH textbooks need urgent rewriting to include others in a meaningful way.

## References

- Antić, Ana. 2003. “Evolucija i uloga tri kompleksa istorijskih mitova u srpskom akademskom i javnom mnjenju u posljednjih deset godina.” In *Historijski mitovi na Balkanu: Zbornik radova*, 258-289. Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju.
- Boose, Lynda E. 2002. “Crossing the River Drina: Bosnia Rape Camps, Turkish Impalement, and Serb Cultural memory.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 1: 71-96.
- Carras, Costa. 2002. “Preface.” In *Clio in the Balkans: The Politics of History Education*, ed. Christina Koulouri, 11-14. Thessaloniki: The Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe.
- Dukić, Ivan, Krešimir Erdelja, Andrija Nikić, and Igor Stojaković. 2001. *Povijest 7*. Mostar: Šolska naklada.
- Hadžiabdić, Hadžija and Edis Dervišagić. 2005. *Historija 7*. Sarajevo: Sarajevo Publishing.
- Imamović, Mustafa. 1998. *Historija Bošnjaka*. Sarajevo: Bošnjačka zajednica kulture Preporod.
- Isaković, Fahrudin and Enes Pelidija. 2001. *Historija 7*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost.
- Karge, Heike. 1999. “History after the war: Examples of how controversial issues are dealt with in history textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” Paper presented at the seminar “Teaching Controversial and Sensitive Issues in History at Secondary Level” organized by the Council of Europe, Sarajevo, 19-20 November 1999. [http://www.ffzg.hr/seetn/states/B&H/history\\_after\\_the\\_war.htm](http://www.ffzg.hr/seetn/states/B&H/history_after_the_war.htm).
- Kostovicova, Denisa. 2002. “The portrayal of the yoke: The Ottomans and their rule in the post-1990 Albanian-language history textbooks.” *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 24: 257-78.
- Koulouri, Christina. 2002. “Introduction.” In *Clio in the Balkans: The*



- Politics of History Education.*, ed. Christina Koulouri, 15–48. Thessaloniki: The Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe.
- Lašvanin, Nikola. 2003. *Ljetopis*. Sarajevo/Zagreb: Synopsis.
- Low-Beer, Ann. 2001. "Politics, school textbooks and cultural identity: the struggle in Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Paradigm* 2, no. 3 or *International Textbook Research*, no. 2.
- Makek, Ivo and Andrija Nikić. 2001. *Povijest 6*. Mostar: Šolska naklada.
- Mihaljčić, Rade. 2005. *Istorija 7*. Istočno Sarajevo: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva.
- Mihaljčić, Rade. 2001. *Istorijska čitanka za šesti razred osnovne škole*. Istočno Sarajevo: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva.
- Mirković, Mirko. 1965. *Pravni položaj i karakter Srpske crkve pod turskom vlašću (1459–1766)* [Legal Status of the Serbian Church and its Character under the Turkish Rule (1459–1766)]. Beograd: Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika SR Srbije.
- Mirošević, Franko et al. 2001. *Povijest 2*. Mostar: Školska naklada.
- Nilević, Boris. 1990. *Srpska pravoslavna crkva u Bosni i Hercegovini do obnove Pečke patrijaršije 1557. godine* [Serbian Orthodox Church in Bosnia and Hercegovina until the reestablishment of the Peć Patriarchy in 1557]. Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša.
- Pejić, Ranko. 2005. *Istorija 9*. Istočno Sarajevo: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva.
- Pelidija, Enes and Fahrudin Isaković. 2001. *Historija 6*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost.
- Perović, Milutin, Borislav Stanojlović and Milo Strugar. 2005. *Istorija 8*. Istočno Sarajevo: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva.
- Radušić, Edin, Aladin Husić, and Vehid Smriko. 2003. *Historija 7*. Sarajevo: Sarajevo Publishing.
- Torsti, Pilvi. 2003. *Divergent Stories, Convergent Attitudes*. Helsinki: Taifuuni.



PART TWO:  
TEACHING ABOUT THE OTHER



## Chapter Four

### Images of the Religious Other in Religious Instruction Textbooks in Croatia

#### **4 Religious Instruction in Croatia**

*Ankica Marinović*

Introduction: The social and religious context in Croatia

In the last fifteen years, Croatia has been facing the revival of a traditional role for the Church and religion. The population has come to identify almost completely with religion and the church which places Croatia among the countries and regions with the highest level of religiosity in Europe (behind Poland, Romanian Transylvania, Malta, Portugal, Italy, and Ireland).

According to the 2001 census, 94 percent of the population belong to

some religion and 6 percent are agnostics, undeclared, not religious, or listed as unknown. However, the vast majority (87.83 percent) declared themselves Catholics. Adherence to different religious communities was as follows (Table 4.1):



*Table 1: Confessional structure of the Republic of Croatia*

	N	%
Roman Catholic Church	3,897,332	87.83
Orthodox Churches	195,969	4.42
Agnostics and undeclared	132,532	2.99
Not religious	98,376	2.22
Islamic Religious Community	56,777	1.28
Unknown	25,874	0.58
Greek Catholic Church	6,219	0.14
Jehovah's Witnesses	6,094	0.14
Other religions	4,764	0.11
Other Protestant churches	4,068	0.09
Evangelical Church	3,339	0.08
Adventist Church	3,001	0.07
Baptist Church	1,981	0.04
Jewish Religious Community	495	0.01
Christ's Pentecostal Church	336	0.01
Old Catholic Church	303	0.01

*Source: Census 2001*

The high number of declared Catholics, together with a high level of religious identification, religious socialisation, and religious belief and practice, points to a highly visible trend towards the revitalisation of religiosity after the fall of communism. Various studies among both the adult population and youth have pointed to this fact (Boneta, 2000; Cifrić, 2000; Črpić and Kušar, 1998; Goja, 2000; Mandarić, 2000; Marinović Jerolimov, 2000; Vrcan, 2001; Zrinščak, Črpić and Kušar,



2000).

The results of socio-religious research in Croatia show a significant increase of religiosity in all dimensions studied so far. They show that the prevailing type of religiosity in Croatia is still traditional, church-oriented, collectivist religiosity (the same findings were made in studies in the 1970s and 1980s); that it is firmly associated with the nation, with the family, and with a high degree of confessional identification; and that it is mediated by family socialization, with characteristic elements such as: the sequence of the sacraments from baptism to last rites, attending religious instruction, religious education within the family, and at least occasional church attendance. The indicators of traditional religiosity have significantly increased: the number of baptisms, first communions, confirmations (of children and adults), church weddings, and religious instruction attendance (Črpić and Kušar, 1998; Marinović Jerolimov, 2000, 2005); the number of pilgrims has also grown. This thesis of a traditional type of religiosity is also substantiated by the fact that Biblical teachings are chiefly mediated through a priest or religious instructor, and that only a small number of believers reads the Bible on their own (Marinović Bobinac, 2000).<sup>36</sup> Consequently, the prevailing traditional religiosity is mostly lived through inherited forms, and it is above all a symbol of a historical provenance and a sign of social and cultural belonging to the nation.

The Catholic Church is present as an active protagonist in almost all aspects of social life in Croatia: political, social, economic, pedagogical, educational, and cultural. This means that religion has generally become more important in social life. We should point out that when speaking of religious changes in Croatia, the process that is underway is the reverse of the one taking place in the countries of the Western Europe, where religious institutions such as churches and sects give way to denominations and cults. The latter is a process of individualization of religion in which Berger's (1967) "sacred canopy" – a general religious frame organizationally expressed as a universal

---

1. <sup>36</sup> The results of the study show that the respondents are very poorly acquainted with the contents of the Bible (81% of the respondents never or rarely read the Bible, and only 0.95% read it every day), and that they are absolutely uninformed about events in the Catholic Church: 90% of the respondents have never heard of the Second Vatican Council, or they have heard of it but do not know anything about it (Marinović Bobinac, 2000).

church – disappears. In Croatia, there is a quite opposite process that is directed towards the strengthening of such a frame (a role assumed by the Catholic Church) and the strengthening of a collectivist type of religiosity. This is a case of revitalization of religion through a regathering around ecclesiastic institutions (Vrcan, 2001).

#### Religious instruction in the education system in Croatia

Crucial for our theme is the fact that religion and churches have entered the education system in Croatia. Pursuant to the decision of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Croatia, in 1991/1992 confessional religious instruction was introduced in schools as an elective subject. Religious communities were given a mandate to define how it should be taught, to produce the textbooks, and to train and provide the necessary number of instructors.

The Croatian Conference of Bishops in 1990 formed a special working group for religious instruction in secondary schools that drew up the *Program of religious instruction for secondary school*, approved by Croatian bishops in 1991. A difference from primary school is that there is an alternative subject to religious instruction, ethics, and that both of them are taught one hour per week.

According to the *Program*, Catholic religious instruction emphasizes an integral education and upbringing, bearing in mind the religious dimension and the promotion of personal and social values, both general human values and believers' values. The confessional nature of religious instruction is based on the universal educational and cultural meaning of the religious fact for the person, culture and society as a whole. The principles of school religious instruction are the following: devotion to God and man, ecumenical openness and openness to dialogue, correlation of religious upbringing and education (correlation among the subjects according to the principle of an integral education of pupils), and an intercultural approach to religious instruction (HBK, 2002).

The stated purpose of Catholic religious education is a theologically, ecclesiological and anthropologically harmonized and systematic pedagogical connection of revelation and church tradition with the worldly experience of the pupil. Its goal is to realize a systematic, complete, ecumenical, and dialogical introduction of the Catholic faith on the levels of information, cognition, perception and action, in order

to bring the pupils to a mature Christian faith and give them a wholesome human and religious education.

One of the goals of religious instruction in secondary schools, relevant for our theme, should be stressed: getting to know and respect different cultures, denominations and religions.

#### Methodological remarks

We should first define the basic notions, religious education and religious other.

Mediation of religious content in schools can be realized in at least two ways – in the form of confessional religious instruction and in a non-confessional form. Confessional education promotes commitment to a certain religion. Non-confessional education gives information on religion(s), to encourage an understanding of religion in general and to train the students how to perceive different religions and philosophies of life, enabling them to make their own informed choice.

In the context of the Croatian religious situation, where the Catholics prevail (87%), it is not difficult to determine who the religious other is. All denominations that are listed in the Census belong to the group of religious others, no matter where they come from.

The aim of this project is to find out how “religious others” are presented in the Catholic religious education textbooks for secondary schools. In order to accomplish that, the attitudes towards religious others in textbooks for secondary schools (from 1st to 4th grade) will be analyzed. For this purpose “religious others” have been divided into four groups:

1. Other Christian confessions:
  - a) Serbian Orthodox Church
  - b) Traditional Protestant denominations
  - c) Other denominations of Protestant heritage
2. Non-Christian religions:
  - a) Judaism
  - b) Islam
  - c) Hinduism and Buddhism
3. New religious movements
4. Non-religious people

The method of qualitative content analysis will be used.

The aims of this paper are as follows:

1. Gaining scientific insight into the attitudes regarding “the religious other” mediated by the Catholic Church in Croatia through religious education textbooks.
2. Finding out to which extent the development of intercultural skills has been included in religious education textbooks.
3. Finding out how objectively the Catholic Church presents the religious other through its religious education textbooks, and how the religious other is evaluated.

#### General framework of the textbooks

A previous analysis of religious instruction textbooks for primary schools<sup>37</sup> has shown that there is a generally tolerant attitude towards all people, regardless of race, nation and religion, co-existing with an emphasis on struggle against the evil in the world. The analysis of primary school textbooks shows that they emphasize the formative nature of the Christian (Catholic) values in education – helping to form the Christian (Catholic) identity. As mentioned above, one of the principles of school religious instruction is “ecumenic and dialogical openness.” Respecting this principle, textbook authors present both monotheistic religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam) and Oriental religions (Hinduism, Buddhism). Non-Catholic religions have been treated systematically and tolerantly. But, the tolerant and dialogical approach is abandoned in the case of new religious movements, whose authenticity and distinctiveness is denied. New religious movements and atheism are presented as a consequence of various shortcomings of society and the church. The terms “sect” and “cult” as used in the context of new religious movements carry negative connotations.

Religious education textbooks for high schools also promote the idea of a dialogue with different religions, especially the Christian ones, as can clearly be seen in the introduction to the second-grade textbook signed by Bishop M. Srakić, the President of the Catechisation

---

2. <sup>37</sup> The results were presented at the Kotor Network Conference “*Images of the Religious Other*” in Sarajevo on 19–21 May 2006 (Marinović Bobinac, Ankica; Marinović Jerolimov, Dinka: *Images of Religious Other in Religious Instruction Textbooks for Primary Schools in Croatia*).

Council of the Croatian Bishop's Conference: "The Catholic Church promotes a dialogue with other Christian Churches, trying to revive a disrupted unity" (in Gadža et al., 2006a: 5).

However, immediately after that follows a sentence that may serve as a frame of this analysis since it is found in all the four textbooks. It shows how the Catholic Church thinks that those who believe otherwise (who are not Christians) should be evangelized: "In many parts of Europe the first announcement of the Gospel is needed: there are more and more who are non-baptized, which is due to the increased number of immigrants who belong to other religions, or to the previous communist regimes, or to the widespread religious indifference" (Gadža et al., 2006a: 24). The questions and items that follow that statement include a question addressed to the pupils: Should the Gospel be announced to those who are already baptized? The question whether the Gospel should be announced to those who belong to other religions is avoided.

In the textbook for the first class of secondary school, the introduction to religious instruction starts with a discussion of the "ultimate questions" of the meaning of life – the origins of suffering and evil, man's awareness of his death and transitoriness. Then follows a remark that culture and art, literature and philosophy, and many different religions have tried to answer these questions over the centuries. In a historical review, various worldviews are briefly presented together with the answers they offer: Stoicism, Epicureism, Manichaeism, Atheism and Nihilism (Marx, Nietzsche, Camus), Materialism, teachings on Reincarnation, and Christianity, with definitions of all the mentioned concepts.<sup>3</sup> The relationship of religion and magic to mystery is also discussed.

After elaborating on the statement that man is a religious being, and defining religion, magic and atheism, some characteristics and dimensions of each religion are also briefly presented. There follows an overview of the development of religions from the very beginning, with a division between the pre-historic and historic period. Various approaches to the development of religions (the relationship between monotheism and polytheism) are discussed, with arguments by researchers and theoreticians such as Hume, Lang, Schmidt, and

---

3. <sup>3</sup> The concepts of death in different cultures and religions are also mentioned (the Incas, the ancient Middle East, the ancient Egyptians, ancient Greece, Hinduism, Taoism, Islam, and Christianity).

Tylor.<sup>38</sup> Various types of religion are presented – those that appear in the two mentioned periods: animatism, animism, monotheism and polytheism. Polytheistic and monotheistic religions in particular are presented in greater detail.

#### Relationship with other Christian confessions

In the textbooks for the second and fourth grade dealing with other Christian denominations, regret is expressed because the Christians are divided. The reasons for division are put forward impartially. The reasons can be found, firstly, in human sin; and secondly, in theological disagreements because of a wish to present religious truths to the contemporaries in an understandable way, so the search for true expressions resulted in wrong teaching. Furthermore, the reasons may be of political nature, or they may be due to the subjective experiences of individuals who at a certain historical moment became spokespersons of desired changes, and to different psychological, social and cultural conditions.

The textbooks also mention the rise of many heresies and heterodoxies (Arianism, Nestorianism, independent church communities in North Africa, Asia Minor and the Middle East in the first centuries of Christianity); the Great Schism in the 11th century; as well as the Reformation in the 16th century.

The concept of ecumenism and its three meanings is defined and presented at length in the following terms (Pranjić and Stojić, 2006: 263):

1. Meeting of the representatives of different religions who by devoted prayer follow the development of inter-religious relationships in a wish to contribute to universal peace;
2. Bonding of all Christian communities, whose members are connected by baptism and by some other elements of legitimate Christian heritage;
3. Witnessing of authentic Christianity by one's own life.

Good sides and noble endeavors of ecumenism are emphasized. The Protestant context out of which ecumenism has arisen is also explained, together with its Catholic aspect stressed by the Second Vatican Council, in the decree *Unitatis redintegratio*. Besides this, the authors

---

4. <sup>38</sup> 18th-19th century evolutionist theorists.

mention the document *The Ecumenical Directory* and the institutions founded by the conciliar popes in the Council years: the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, the Secretariat for Non-Christians (later renamed the Pontifical Commission for Interreligious Dialogue), the Secretariat for Non-Believers, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and *Iustitia et Pax*.

A chapter speaking of “a wounded church unity” and “painful breakups” says: “By force of Catholicism, the true Church stands out among all other groups and communities. Some of them accept only a part of the truth and become separate sects. Others want to be the Church only for a certain group or civilization” (Gadža et al., 2006a: 26). It is not completely clear whether the “true Church” refers only to the Catholic Church, or also to the the communities that are said to be in “imperfect unity with the Church” – the Orthodox and some Protestant groups.

Namely, a quotation from the Council document *Dominus Iesus* (which marks the exclusivism of the Catholic Church in relation to all other Christian communities) puts forward a division of Christian religious communities into the only authentic universal church, true local churches that are in “imperfect unity” with the Catholic Church, and all other communities, which are not.

Therefore, there exists a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him. The Churches which, while not existing in perfect communion with the Catholic Church, remain united to her by means of the closest bonds, that is, by apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist, are true particular Churches... On the other hand, the ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery, are not Churches in the proper sense... (*Dominus Iesus*, quoted in Gadža et al., 2006a: 30).

This division is at the same time an introduction to the presentation of these three groups.

### *The Serbian Orthodox Church*

The origins of the Orthodox Church and the circumstances that caused the Great Schism are put forward without bias. There is also a mention of the attempts at re-unification and an expression of regret that the schism has remained till today. There is a detailed presentation of the

organization of the Orthodox Churches in the world, of all nine Orthodox patriarchates connected by a shared belief, along with a description of Byzantine ritual and Canon Law.

It is also emphasized that the Orthodox believers are the closest to the Catholics. "From all the religious communities that have arisen who call on Christ as their focal point, the Orthodox and Catholics have the most in common: the Holy Scripture, the creed, the sacraments, the apostolic succession' (Pranjić and Stojić, 2006: 266). There is also a remark on the historic ecumenical meeting of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Atenagora that took place in 1965 in Jerusalem, when they both revoked their reciprocal excommunications. It is also emphasized that in our region, special attention should be given to the relations between the Catholic and Orthodox Church. There is no explicit mention of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Croatia (except in the presentation of the Orthodox Patriarchates).

### *Traditional Protestant Denominations*

The authors objectively present the socio-historic context and circumstances of the emergence of Protestantism; the main novelties brought by the movement (the doctrine, attitude towards the sacramental structure of the Church, the relationship with the papacy and the institutional Church); the life of Martin Luther; and the further development of the Protestantism (Ulrich Zwingli, Baptists, Mennonites, Calvinists, Adventists, rise of the Anglican Church). The emergence of ecumenism in the Protestant milieu is also mentioned.

There is no mention of the Protestant Churches in Croatia, or anything that could be relevant to the present situation of the Protestant and other churches of the Reformation heritage whether in the world or in Croatia.

### *Other denominations of the Protestant heritage*

Since they are not considered true churches (as they have not preserved a valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery), no other denominations of Protestant heritage are specifically mentioned.



## Relationship with non-Christian religions

Non-Christian religions are divided into polytheistic and monotheistic ones. The polytheisms are Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. The reason for presenting them is also emphasized – to encourage a fruitful dialogue with their members and better understanding of their often very rich and complex religious and cultural heritage.

### *Hinduism*

Following the previously mentioned scheme of basic elements of each religion, the history, sacred texts, teachings, cult and ethics of Hinduism are impartially presented. The basic concepts of *Om*, Veda, Sutra, Brahman, castes, Avatar, Upanishad, and reincarnation are explained, with extracts quoted from from the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. There are several pictures that are not explained, but it is obvious that they belong to an Indian context, and there is a photograph of a ceremonial bath in the Ganges river. The text also mentions that the Indian statesman and peacemaker Mahatma Gandhi was a Hindu, and it is emphasized that the Hindus “deem that in comparison to all other religions, Hinduism is superior” (Gadža et al., 2006b: 68).{

### *Buddhism*

Buddhism is also presented through unbiased definitions of the basic elements and concepts: Hinayana, Mahayana, Siddharta, Theravada, Dharma, Karma, Samsara, stupa, pagoda, tantra and yoga. There is a drawing of an eight-spoked Dharma wheel symbolizing the Noble Eightfold Path, and the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism are presented and explained in a well laid out table. There is also a table presenting research on religiosity in 1984, with the questions “do you believe in reincarnation”<sup>4</sup> (for Europe) and “after death I would like to go to Heaven or to be reborn...” (for Italy). The results of the second question were quite devastating for predominantly Catholic Italy,

---

5. <sup>4</sup> With regard to religious affiliation, the cited results are as follows: 23% of the Catholics believe in reincarnation, 21% of the Protestants, and 12% of the non-religious. The study from which these results were taken is not named.

where only 38% wanted to go to Heaven and 61.9% wanted to be reborn, but they are not commented on.

There is no attitude expressed towards Buddhism that could be said to be biased.

### *Confucianism and Taoism*

Confucianism and Taoism are presented in the same way, objectively and value-neutrally. Besides the major elements in both religions, several thoughts of Confucius are also cited, the Confucian principles of interrelatedness are presented in a table, and there are two drawings of Confucius and a Chinese Imperial Court official. In the chapter on Taoism, the drawing represents a Taoist symbol of balance and interrelation – Yin and Yang, described as a life force that rules the universe. The ideas of Tao, quietism are explained, and there is a drawing of the Taoist pantheon with the saints, spirits of the ancestors and immortals (Ching dynasty, 1644–1911). The pupils are offered a text each on Taoism and Confucianism for their study and consideration.

The following sentence serves as an instruction to the believers on how to look upon polytheistic religions:

With open and careful observation, a deep immersion in religious meaning can be noticed in the members of polytheistic religions – the Hindus and Buddhists too, try to understand the mystery of God. The followers of many other religions all over the world also constantly seek for the answer to the agitation of their heart. (Gadža et al., 2006b: 102).

This is followed by a quotation from *Nostra Aetate*: “The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions.”

Monotheistic religions are presented in greater detail. Their common characteristics are underlined: belief in one God and revelation – a conviction that God sent people the message how to live according to this belief. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are presented in particular.

### *Judaism*

Judaism is presented according to the same principle as polytheistic religions, only in more detail. All the mentioned elements (sacred texts, history, teaching, ethics, cult) are comprehensively explained. At the

beginning of the chapter, there is a drawing of the Menorah, the seven-branched candelabrum. It is said to be a symbol of God's omnipresence, and this idea is explained in broad terms. The history of Judaism is presented in a well laid out table by periods (Biblical, Hellenistic, Rabbinical and Modern Judaism). Many key notions and persons are explained: A.J. Heschel, Maimonides, the Mishna, the Torah, the Talmud, the Tanakh, the Kabbalah, Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews, and rabbis. Jewish holidays, the Jewish week and the calendar are described, along with a full presentation of the Ten Commandments. There is a photograph of the Jewish believers praying in front of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. For further study, pupils are offered the following passages from *Nostra Aetate* about the attitude of Catholicism towards the crisis points in the relationship of the Jews and Christians:

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues.

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ. Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone. (*Nostra Aetate*, quoted in Gadža et al., 2006b:88)

In the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, they encourage a doctrinal and practical dialogue of Jews and Christians, forgiveness, compassion for the sufferings of the Jews, and a cautious and careful presentation of their history.

*Islam*

Besides the basic elements of Islam (history, the founder, sacred texts, teaching, cult and ethics), the text explains some major facts, symbols and notions (the crescent moon, Allah, imam, Islam, Qur'an, Muslim). It contains a religious poem by the Bosnian-Herzegovinan poet Musa Ćazim Ćatić, and a photograph of the Gazi Husrev-beg mosque in Sarajevo. The five pillars of Islam are clearly set out and presented. There is also an explanation of the etymology of the word Islam according to the author Jean-Reneu Milot. For their study and consideration the pupils are offered a text by Adel Theodor Khoury on Muhammad's knowledge of Christianity.<sup>39</sup>

It is also underlined that the Second Vatican Council calls for respecting the Muslims, who, "Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, ... revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion" (from *Nostra Aetate*, quoted in Gadža et al., 2006b: 101).

There is no mention of the Islamic religious community in Croatia.

A separate chapter ("Many religions but only one Christ") is dedicated to the attitude of the Catholic Church towards non-Christian religions as a guideline for the Christians how to treat the members of other religions. An emphasis is placed on inter-religious dialogue and ecumenism as important endeavors "in a time of globalization, when the members of different religions and worldviews often dwell in the immediate neighborhood, or in the same flat or building, one beside the other" (Gadža et al., 2006b: 99).

So the question of how to treat the others of different religions and worldviews has become increasingly important. The authors refer to the above-mentioned conciliar declaration *Nostra Aetate* on the relationship of the Catholic Church to non-Christian religions. "Christians are requested to respect the followers of other religions as well as non-believers. God really wishes for the salvation of all people" (Gadža et al., 2006b: 100). Citing the words of Pope John Paul II, various kinds of dialogue are mentioned: exchanges of scholars and theologians or official representatives, cooperation for the purpose of

---

6. <sup>39</sup> Milot is a professor of Islamic studies in Canada; Khoury is a Lebanese-born professor of theology in Germany (both retired). Both have been concerned with Christian-Muslim dialogue.

preserving religious values, communication of relevant spiritual experiences, and a “dialogue of life” – when believers of different religions in their everyday life tell each other about their own human and spiritual values, and help each other, together building a more righteous and more brotherly society. (Gadža et al., 2006b: 103).

#### Relationship with new religious movements

Several topics are discussed within the theme “In quest for existential and religious identity”: adolescence, friendship and love; the family as the pillar of human life; the search for values and the dangers arising from alienation; from self-consciousness to addiction; the offer of happiness in new religious movements. “This emptiness above all means the lack of true values. All this provokes in [the young] a strong feeling of uncertainty so they can easily fall into various forms of alienation” (Gadža et al., 2006a: 142).

There follows a diagnosis of the modern religious situation that is characterized by increased “supply” in the religious “marketplace” – sects and cults, or new religious movements (together with various pseudo-religious associations and organizations) that present themselves as an alternative to the Christian message of salvation and to other already existing religious groups and religions. Besides the big world religions, such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and others, today the Catholic Church recognizes other groups as well (without mentioning their names):

1. groups of Jewish-Christian inspiration (appealing to the Bible, expecting the imminent end of time, placing special stress on the role of the Holy Ghost);
2. groups of Eastern inspiration (emphasizing mystic experience, giving a prominent role to the leader and teacher, based on Hinduism, Buddhism and Islamic mystic experience);
3. mystic groups (emphasizing the importance of insight or gnosis, appealing to the Bible, and accepting many things from other religions. Jesus is a teacher for them, but not the Son of God).

Furthermore, the authors, when speaking of new religious movements, say that they may be a great challenge for the community.

They quote only unfortunate examples from their history (financial and moral scandals, suicides, assassinations and multiple murders). Their main characteristic, according to the text, is a belief that they themselves are the only bearers of the truth.

The question is posed: Why do they appear and what contributes to their rapid spread? What is it that attracts people to join them? The reasons that are stressed for their emergence are the disappearance of traditional values, accompanied by the loss of a feeling of belonging and security.

When elaborating the new religious movements, as a general starting point, the authors quote Bartz (a Catholic theologian): "It is unrealistic not to take the sects seriously, it is a sin to make jokes about them, it is ecumenical to understand and listen to their appeals, and it is a brotherly duty to communicate the Gospel to them by belief and love," from which we can deduce a programmatic attitude of the Catholic Church towards the new religious movements: understand and evangelize.

The main concepts are defined: sect, cult, syncretism, gnosticism, gnosis, the church-sect distinction, religious movements, religion, and New Age.

Followers of the new religious movements and their internal relationships are mostly described by stereotypes (by describing what happens when an individual joins the sect): "self-conscious followers," "strong spiritual leadership," "often hysterical worship of the leader," "frustrated followers," "careful choice of the way to approach an individual," "in the cold urban environment a newcomer is surrounded by attention, care and love," "by offering something new, a newcomer is dragged out of a dull and problem-burdened everyday life," "lavished with love, attention and enthusiasm, he/she doesn't have enough time to think," "little by little, out of rapture and admiration, a newcomer submits him/herself completely to the will of the leader," "sometimes it is a matter of a true brainwashing that a candidate can hardly be aware of," "a new worldview and a new way of thinking are gradually imposed on a newcomer to which he/she later becomes addicted," "this trained behavior stands in stark contrast to a free, aware and responsible decision-making," "in most cases the victims of such techniques are the young, older people, unstable persons, traumatized persons or living under stress, so in need for attention and closeness of others," "the first encounter is usually

pleasant," "it is easy to join them but often it is very hard to quit and get out" (Gadža et al., 2006a: 155-157).

The only new religious movements mentioned are those connected with the most extreme cases such as murders and suicides of the members (People's Temple, Branch Davidians, Order of the Solar Temple...).

A substantial part of the text is dedicated to the teaching of the new religious movements - especially from the aspect of comparison with "the true Christian (Catholic) teaching." In most cases, the focus is on Christian movements and their dubious teachings regarding some religious tenets that are seemingly similar to the true Christian (Catholic) beliefs.

- Salvation - understood by new religious movements as self-salvation reached by one's own powers, whereas true salvation is mediated by Christ.
- Sacraments - many religious movements that deem themselves Christian accept only baptism and reject all other sacraments. They are compared to 'the Jews who were waiting for Moses at the foot of Mt. Sinai to bring them the Commandments'... so 'after some time they made and worshiped the golden calf...'
- The Holy Trinity - their teachings on this point are in contrast with the Bible and the oldest Christian tradition.
- Anthropology - they deem man to be a divine revelation, that man, God and the world are one, whereas according to the Bible it is unthinkable that man is equal to God.

The conclusion is as follows: There are some Christian elements in the teachings of Christian religious movements, but there are also ideas that have nothing much in common with Christianity. They proclaim themselves the only true churches and the only interpreters of the real truth, although their origins can be traced to only a few hundred years ago. They are non-Christian in their teaching, since their ideas about all religious questions of any importance are generally incompatible with Christian belief, or more often, contradict it completely. In spite of the fact that they are dubbed non-Christian sects, however, the believers are not recommended to confront and completely reject them, but to discern truth from falsehood and to accept facts and values discovered in them as valuable and worthy. There is no mention of new religious movements existing in Croatia.

### Relationship with non-religious worldviews and people

The text begins with the statement that all over the world, religious people live side by side with atheists, “who claim there is no God or any other-worldly being” (Gadža et al., 2006b: 54). It is said that atheism is over 2,000 years old; examples are given of how the term was used in ancient India and by the Romans, who called the first Christians atheists. A special form of theoretical atheism is mentioned – the militant atheism advocated by the communist systems in the 20th century. There is an emphasis on the existence of practical atheism, when people live and act as if there is no God, without any particular ideology or distinct theoretical system.

The discussion of non-religious worldviews starts with a diagnosis of the present situation in the world (especially in Europe): One witnesses a dechristianisation and envisages a need for the New Evangelization about which Pope John Paul II so often spoke. Sociological indicators of dechristianisation are also mentioned: an increasing number of non-baptized people, whether immigrants belonging to other religions, or persons socialized to a non-religious life (whether in the period of communism, or due to widespread religious indifference); the religious illiteracy of the adult population who declare themselves as Christians (sociological atheism); various forms of agnosticism and practical atheism that intensify a disparity between religion and life; immanentist humanism that weakens faith and often leads to its complete abandonment; and detachment of the great values of European culture from the Gospel (Gadža et al., 2006a: 24).

Even when speaking of the Crusades and Inquisition (dubbed as the saddest periods in the history of the Church, without further explanation) the text does not neglect to mention the evil brought about by various non-religious worldviews. Catholic theologian Renato Fisichella is quoted: ‘Seeking forgiveness for the mistakes of the past must not lead Christians to neglect the present life... The believers’ view should also be directed to the various dark regions that overshadow our time: religious indifference, ethical relativism, secularism...’ (Gadža et al., 2006a: 77).

The Enlightenment (together with rationalism, agnosticism, materialism, religious indifference and atheism) is presented objectively, with its good and bad sides. It is admitted that it contributed to rectifying some mistakes in the Church: it abolished trials of witches and heretics, purified religion of religious formalism



and various forms of superstition and magic, led to a reform of theological studies, improved the quality of its education, and related to the present time. The concept and phenomenon of secularization are explained, together with their socio-historical context: the abolition of feudalism, the French Revolution, the Human Rights Declaration, equality of all citizens before the law, etc. The new circumstances that the Church faces in the 19th and 20th century are also mentioned, together with a short presentation of liberalism (good and bad sides). Socialism (especially as it relates to religion), communism (the Eastern European model) and nazism are put together in the same chapter (under the title "Man Denied and the Ostracized Church"). The role of the Croat archbishop Alojzije Stepinac (1898–1960) and his relations with nazism and communism are also mentioned.

### Conclusion

At the most general level, one can conclude that the authors of the textbooks of religious instruction have endeavored to give a comprehensive presentation of all those religious groups that the concept "religious other" can be applied to. There is enough information for the pupils to acquire basic knowledge about those who believe in a different way or not at all. There are ample guidelines on how to behave in contact with the "religious other," and they all point to a need for understanding and tolerance.

While the authors of the textbooks avoid explicit evaluations and strive to present objective "facts", other religions are presented from the particular viewpoint of the Catholic Church, which means there is a selection bias in the facts that are presented and emphasized. Christian religions are presented through the common ground with Catholicism, which is, according to recommendations of the Second Vatican Council, the starting point of ecumenical dialogue. The Catholic understanding of ecumenical dialogue is restricted: dialogue is always, at least to some extent, evangelization. The textbook authors approach non-Christian religions in the same way, emphasizing common ground with the Catholic religion or what is acceptable in a certain religion from the Catholic standpoint (for example: Muhammad is presented in terms of what he knew of Christianity). The values of other religions are presented not as values per se but as values from the Catholic point of view.

All these “religious others” in the textbooks of Catholic instruction seem to be somehow artificial, like cardboard figures. There is no mention of their existence in Croatia (except for one sentence referring to the relationship of the Catholic and Orthodox), although it is generally said that in a pluralistic society “religious others” work and live around us. Without live examples from the closest neighborhood, understanding and tolerance is bound to remain an empty phrase that becomes increasingly meaningless as time goes (as was the case with the socialist phrase of “brotherhood and unity”). Therefore, the aim of development of the intercultural skills of the pupils seems to have been only halfway met in these textbooks for secondary schools.

The presentation of the new religious movements is characterized to a great extent by over-generalization, stereotypes and extreme examples, such as those of mass murders and suicides of the members of the sects and cults. As Jakov Jukić wrote, extreme cases as the mentioned ones happened in some places but they have always been unusual and very few (Jukić, 1991:160). However, all social forms have had their negative examples, and it is not clear why the new religious communities should be an exception.

A certain rigidity and caution can be noticed when the authors speak of religious others. A focus on dialogue and tolerance is not at all an issue. What is an issue is to what extent such relationships should be realized in the concrete territory of Croatia. It seems as if they know *what* should be done – one should follow the conciliar instructions about tolerance and dialogue with those who believe and think otherwise – but they don’t know *how*, since there are no specific guidelines. So the writers seem to stop at half way: between the awareness that the students live in a pluralizing society and need to get directives how to act, and the limitations of a traditional preconiliar Church stance on education.

#### References

- Berger, P. 1967. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.
- Boneta, Ž. 2000. “Stabilizacija vjerničke strukture i/ili njihanje klatna: Religioznost u Istri – Prilog socio-religijskoj karti Hrvatske.” *Revija za sociologiju*, no. 3–4: 133–151.
- Cifrić, I. 2000. “Percepcija nekih odnosa crkve i države i uloga crkve i

- religije u društvu." *Sociologija sela*, no. 1-2 (147-148): 227-269.
- Črpić, G. and S. Kušar. 1998. "Neki aspekti religioznosti u Hrvatskoj." *Bogoslovska smotra* 68, no. 4: 513-563.
- Gadža, V. et al. 2006a. *Odvažni svjedoci: vjeronaučni udžbenik za drugi razred srednje škole*. Zagreb: Katehetski salezijanski centar.
- Gadža, V. et al. 2006b. *Tražitelji smisla: vjeronaučni udžbenik za prvi razred srednje škole*. Zagreb: Katehetski salezijanski centar.
- Goja, J. 2000. "Neki aspekti religioznosti hrvatske mladeži 1986. i 1999. godine." *Politička misao*, no. 1: 148-159.
- Jukić, J. 1991. *Budućnost religije*. Split: Crkva u svijetu.
- Mandarić, V. 2000. *Religiozni identitet zagrebačkih adolescenata*. (Studija; 3). Zagreb: Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar.
- Marinović Bobinac, A. 2000. "Dimenzija religijskog znanja." *Sociologija sela*, no. 1-2 (147-148): 81-94.
- Marinović Jerolimov, D. 2000. "Religijske promjene u tranzicijskim uvjetima u Hrvatskoj: promjene u dimenzijama religijske identifikacije i prakse." *Sociologija sela*, no. 1-2 (147-148): 43-80.
- Marinović Jerolimov, D. 2005. "Tradicionalna religioznost u Hrvatskoj 2004.; između kolektivnoga i individualnoga." *Sociologija sela* 43, no. 2: 303-338.
- Pranjić, M. and A. Stojić. 2006. *Životu ususret: vjeronaučni udžbenik za četvrti razred srednje škole*. Zagreb: Katehetski salezijanski centar.
- Pranjić, M. 2006. *Na izvorima: vjeronaučni udžbenik za treći razred srednje škole*. Zagreb: Katehetski salezijanski centar.
- HBK. 2002. *Program nastave katoličkog vjeronauka za srednje škole*. Zagreb: Hrvatska biskupska konferencija.
- Vrcan, S. 2001. *Ujera u vrtlozima tranzicije*. Split: Dalmatinska akcija.
- Zrinščak, S., G. Črpić and S. Kušar 2000. "Vjerovanje i religioznost." *Bogoslovska smotra* 70, no. 2: 233-235.





## Chapter Five

### Images of Religious Others in Religious Education Textbooks for Primary Schools in Bosnia-Herzegovina

## 5 Religious Education in B&H

*Aid Smajić*

### Introduction

The fall of the communist regime in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s gave the members of different ethnic and religious traditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina a freedom to publicly express their religion that they certainly did not enjoy during communist rule. As result, the Ministry

of Education in Bosnia started a campaign for introducing courses of religious education in public schools, which in 1994 resulted in the adoption of the "Plan and Program of Religious Education for the Islamic, Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, and Adventist religion".<sup>40</sup> The course was introduced during the last war, and then adapted in 1996 to accord with the new constitutional order established by the Dayton Agreement.

The *Law on freedom of religion and the legal position of churches and religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina* adopted in 2004<sup>41</sup> further confirmed the right of Bosnian pupils to religious education and determined that such education should be provided exclusively by persons approved by the respective Church or religious community, both in public and private pre-school institutions, primary schools and higher education. The exclusive right to write and publish textbooks for the course of Religious Education is reserved for official representatives of the respective religious communities, which gives them almost unlimited freedom in editing their content. In that sense, religious communities and their representatives in educational institutions were given a great opportunity and responsibility to constructively participate not only in rebuilding the inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue, trust, and peaceful coexistence that were seriously damaged during the last war, but also in building a tolerant and peaceful society ready to accept all those who do not share their worldview.

The portrayal of religious others is certainly an important means in motivating (or de-motivating, as the case may be) co-members of one's religious community to take a positive part in the above-mentioned process. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to analyze images of religious others in textbooks of Catholic, Orthodox and Islamic Religious Education for public primary schools in Bosnia and

---

1. <sup>40</sup> See the report of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport in Bosnia and Herzegovina on cantonal laws regulating pre-school, primary and secondary education (Ministry of Education, 2001: 8).

2. <sup>41</sup> For the entire text of the Law on freedom of religion and the legal position of churches and religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, see "Zakon o slobodi vjere i pravnom položaju crkava i vjerskih zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini" in the references.

Herzegovina published after their first and so far last revision in 2002.<sup>42</sup> The first part of the paper will seek to contextualize the topic, by briefly presenting the legal status of Religious Education in the educational system of Bosnia and Herzegovina in more detail, as well as some historical and socio-political issues surrounding the question of how public schools should teach religion. We then turn to the Religious Education textbooks of the respective confessions, firstly to identify the different categories of religious others represented, and then, using appropriate units of analysis, to trace the image of religious others as it is portrayed in this literature.

#### Textbook revision in context

It is important to appreciate the complexity of Bosnian constitutional and educational system and its socio-political and historical background, as well as the heaviness of the burden that education in general, and Religious Education in particular, has to carry in the post-war society of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Constitutionally, today Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of two entities, namely the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska, with the city Brčko being a separate administrative district. They all have separate legal systems. Importantly, the Federation is further divided into ten cantons, each of which, again, enjoys an independence in education matters that, if not absolute, is certainly huge.<sup>43</sup> While Orthodox Serbs form the majority in the

---

3. <sup>42</sup> For a broader comparative analysis of the status of Religious Education in other republics of the former Yugoslavia and cursory descriptions of the image of religious others in the respective textbooks of Religious Education, see the well-informed collection of articles by Kuburić and Moe (2006).

4. <sup>43</sup> When it comes to the legislative and educational power of the cantons, some reports even go so far as to say that in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina alone, there are eleven different systems of education. See for example Low-Beer (2001: 1). For the very same reason, the status of Religious Education in primary and secondary schools in the Federation varies from one canton to another; it is compulsory in some and optional in others. In the Republika Srpska, Religious Education is only taught in primary schools, where it is a compulsory subject if there are at least 30 students to attend the



Republika Srpska entity, Bosnian Muslims form the majority in five cantons, and Croat Catholics in three, leaving two cantons without an ethnic majority. It takes only a cursory look to understand that this constitutional structure was primarily to confirm the tripartite division of Bosnian society into three areas of ethnic influence established by the 1992–1995 war.<sup>44</sup> By doing so, even more importantly, it further deepened the tripartite Bosnian perception of history and reality, which is certainly one of the main sources of ethno-religious antagonism and divisions in all social institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including education.<sup>45</sup>

Therefore different authors are right when they observe that the problem of the educational system in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not limited only to the course of Religious Education; rather, it extends to all courses concerned with creating national identity, or the “national subjects,” as they have come to be known (e. g. in Low-Beer 2001: 1): courses like language and literature, history, nature and society, even geography, fine arts and music, which not only transmit knowledge, but seek to promote particular social and political norms.

The process of textbook revision in Bosnia and Herzegovina started with the Canton of Sarajevo in 1998, and during the same year spread to the rest of the country. The revision, which was coordinated and jointly implemented by the international community and local institutions,<sup>46</sup> primarily aimed to remove objectionable parts from

---

course. For more details on the legal status of Religious Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, see Popov and Ofstad (2006: 74–79).

5. <sup>44</sup> The causes, nature, and the very name (“war” or aggression”) of the 1992–1995 conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina remain issues of ongoing heated debate, not only among Bosnian intellectuals and historians, but among ordinary people as well.

6. <sup>45</sup> The author of the article firmly believes that some of these perceptions are certainly much closer to the truth than the others, but that issue is not the subject of this paper.

7. <sup>46</sup> The role of the international community in the whole process is, to put it bluntly, to make sure that representatives of the respective ethno-religious communities come to some agreement, whatever it takes. When Bosnia and Herzegovina applied for membership in the Council of Europe, the withdrawal of potentially offensive material from textbooks before the beginning of the 1999/2000 school year was one of the minimum requirements put to the Parliamentary Assembly. It is of course another issue whether the

textbooks and produce new textbooks (OSCE BiH, 2002). In the case of Religious Education, implementation of the agreements reached by the respective ministries was left to the representatives of the religious communities, as they are legally responsible for training and appointing teachers of Religious Education as well as for preparing curriculum and textbooks for the course (Popov and Ofstad, 2006: 74–77).<sup>47</sup>

The first and so far the last official revision of textbooks of Religious Education for the public primary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina was done in 2002 by a commission consisting of representatives of the Catholic, Orthodox and Islamic religious communities, on the initiative of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The revision was concerned with the removal of potentially offending materials for other religious communities, and proved relatively successful in that endeavor. To ensure the success of the 2002 revision, the commission members were to read the textbooks of the other religious communities, and make objections and suggest possible solutions in regard to those parts of the textbooks concerning portrayal of their own religious tradition.<sup>48</sup> Although the present analysis is primarily concerned with

---

international community is (un)biased in assuming the role of arbiter, whether it is at all possible to take a neutral stand, and what logic and rationale it is following or should be following in the revision process. For more details about the role of the international community in the revision process, see Low-Beer (2001: 2–4); see also ch. 3 in this book.

8. <sup>47</sup> Thus, the school control of the subject is very limited. It should be noted, however, that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in cooperation with the Goethe Institute in Sarajevo in 2000 started the project of introducing a non-confessional course in secondary schools, that would teach students about the main religions in the country in a neutral and non-normative way. Culture of Religions, as the subject came to be named, was meant to be under full jurisdiction of the school authority. The project is still in its pilot phase, and is faced with many problems, including the fact that representatives of all religious communities in the country oppose its introduction, due to the fear that it eventually might replace the Religious Education course itself. For more details about the project, see Popov and Ofstad (2006: 96–99); OSCE BiH (2007).

9. <sup>48</sup> During my conversation with Mr. Pero Jukić, a representative of the Catholic Church in the 2002 revision, he proudly

the portrayal of religious others in the religious textbooks published after the 2002 revision, in order to clearly illustrate the improvements made, we will occasionally make appropriate comparison with textbooks prior to 2002.

### Textbooks of Catholic Religious Education

One of the basic aims of Catholic Religious Education at the primary level, as can be deduced from the Plan and Program of Catholic Religious Education for Primary Schools, is not only to learn about one's own religious identity and nurture it, but also to be informed about the identity of religious others and learn to respect it (BKBiH, 2003: 10–11). Accordingly, textbooks of Catholic Religious Education (CRE) give considerable space to religious others. They begin introducing pupils to religious others as early as the first grade of primary school (Jakšić and Mićanović, 2004: 2, 11). In what follows we will analyze the content of the books of CRE for primary schools in terms of their classification of religious others, the qualities ascribed to them, and the type of discourse adopted towards them.

#### *Classifying Religious Others*

As expected, the CRE textbooks recognize different categories of religious others. For the purpose of our study, they could be grouped as follows: other Christian confessions, non-Christian confessions, new religious movements and non-religious people or atheists.

Under other Christian confessions, the CRE textbooks discuss Greek-Catholics, the Orthodox Church, and Protestantism with its three branches, that is, Lutheranism, Calvinism and Anglicanism.<sup>49</sup> As for the non-Christian religious traditions discussed in Catholic textbooks, they could be divided into non-Christian monotheistic

---

claimed that the use of this mechanism for such a purpose has no parallel in the recent history of modern Europe, and that its success somehow went unnoticed by the international community and local media. The last impression is also shared by Mr. Ševko Sulejmanović and Mr. Krsto Dubravac, the commission members from the Islamic and Orthodox communities. Interviews with the author, February 11 and 12, 2008.

10. <sup>49</sup> Periš et al., 2004a: 102–104, 110–11, 125–132.

religions such as Islam and Judaism on the one hand,<sup>50</sup> and other non-Christian confessions like Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism on the other.<sup>51</sup> Under the category of new religious movements (NRM), Catholic textbooks offer the pupils relatively brief information about sects established in the last two centuries, such as Transcendental Meditation, Hare Krishna, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons (Latter-Day Saints), the Children of God (The Family International), the Church of Unity and the New Age movement, dividing them along the lines of their origins into those stemming from Eastern non-Christian religious traditions, primarily Hinduism and Buddhism, on the one side, and those with origins in Christianity on the other.<sup>52</sup> Finally, atheists and the religiously indifferent are also treated at some length in the textbook of Catholic Religious Education for the eighth grade.<sup>53</sup>

### *Discourse about Religious Others*

We should note at the outset that textbooks of CRE devote the greatest amount of space about other religions to Judaism. All eight textbooks of CRE for primary schools contain a relatively lengthy discussion of Judaism, its history and teachings. The textbook of CRE for the seventh grade, for example, takes thirteen pages to delineate the history and teachings of Judaism, and the importance of Jewish and Christian interreligious dialogue.<sup>54</sup> As some authors explain, the basic reason for this is the fact that "Christianity has its roots in Judaism" (Jurišić, 2004: 66). However, it should be noted that the social interaction of Bosnian Catholics with religious traditions other than Judaism – with Orthodox Christianity and Islam for instance – is much more intensive, given the current demographical makeup of the country.

---

11. <sup>50</sup> Pažin et al., 2004: 30–50; Pažin and Pavlović, 2004: 65, 67, 70–71, 75, 82, 86; Razum, 2004a: 20–21, 28–29, 60–91; Razum, 2004b: 20–49; Periš et al., 2004: 52–63.

12. <sup>51</sup> Razum, 2004a: 20; Razum, 2004b: 10.

13. <sup>52</sup> Periš et al., 2004b: 43–49.

14. <sup>53</sup> Ibid: 38–40.

15. <sup>54</sup> Ibid: 52–6. In the CRE textbook for third grade, there are as many as eighteen pages (Pažin et al., 2004: 30–48).

### *Other Christian Confessions*

Other Christian confessions are discussed in the CRE textbooks mainly in the context of Christian disunity. The books mostly provide factual information about the history and origins of the division between Catholics on the one side and Greek-Catholics, the Orthodox Church, and Protestantism on the other, as well as about the latter's teachings, the number of their followers, and their presence in the world.<sup>55</sup> Explicitly normative evaluation is made in the case of Patriarch Michael Cerularius (1043–1058),<sup>56</sup> who is described as vain and egoistic, but only in the seventh-grade textbook published in 2004, while the newest edition of the book from 2007 omitted this description.<sup>57</sup> There is no such change in the evaluation of Martin Luther (1483–1546), founder of the Lutheran Church, who is described, both in the 2004 and 2007 editions of the same textbook, as “too radical and inflexible” in his views on religious reformation, which eventually led him to separate himself from mainstream Catholic Christianity.<sup>58</sup> The previous explicit evaluative statements about the founder of Anglicanism in England, King Henry VIII, on the other hand, were excluded from the 2007 version.<sup>59</sup> Importantly, the chapter on Christian disunity concludes

---

16. <sup>55</sup> Periš et al., 2004b: 102–132.

17. <sup>56</sup> The Orthodox Patriarch in Constantinople, a direct participant in the negotiations that ended with the mutual excommunication of Catholic and Orthodox representatives, thus dividing Christianity into the Orthodox Church in the East and the Catholic Church in the West. Ibid: 103.

18. <sup>57</sup> In the earlier edition from 2004, the Patriarch was described as a “praise-loving person,” who for his personal and egoistic reasons basically failed the entire negotiation between Catholics and Orthodox. The book thus mainly blames the Orthodox side for the great schism of Christianity in 1054. For comparison between the two editions, see Periš et al., 2004b: 103 and 2007: 113–117.

19. <sup>58</sup> Compare Periš et al., 2004b: 130 and 2007: 120.

20. <sup>59</sup> In the 2004 edition, historical narratives were reported about the main reason for his rebellion against the Pope and Catholicism and his attitude towards Catholics in England, highlighting the bad temper and cruelty of King Henry VIII. Compare Periš et al., 2004b: 111–112 and 2007: 122.

with an emphasis on the ecumenical movement and the struggle for peace, cooperation and unity among Christian Churches. Thus, non-Catholic Churches are recognized to be in possession of some truth. Interestingly, the remark made in the 2004 edition that the first characteristic of the Church of Jesus is that "it is the One (Holy, *Catholic* and Apostolic)" has been omitted in the 2007 version.<sup>60</sup>

### *Non-Christian Confessions*

Under non-Christian confessions, the CRE textbooks treat Judaism and Islam, apportioning considerable space to the former in every book of religious education for primary schools, while Islam is discussed mainly in the fifth grade textbook.<sup>61</sup> As for Judaism and Jews, the CRE books discuss their history, origins, teachings and rituals, the Biblical account about Prophet Moses and people of Israel, their exodus from Egypt, the Promised Land, the closeness of Judaism to Christianity, etc.<sup>62</sup> In this context, the Jews are described in a positive manner as a pious and hard-working people and as victims of Pharaoh's terror, who were eventually helped and saved by God, and who received His revelation through the prophet Moses. However, the image of Jews gradually and partly changes with the appearance of Jesus, for whose death textbooks of CRE at some points openly blame the corrupted religious leaders of the Jews. Without making direct reference to the Holocaust crimes, the CRE books denounce religious discrimination, anti-Semitism, and *all kinds of mistreatment to which Jews were exposed at one time or another*. They repeatedly remind the readers that Jesus himself was a Jew,<sup>63</sup> but also that corrupted religious leaders of Jews used to mock and unjustly criticize Jesus, and that they insisted on his horrible death. In that regard, the CRE books for instance say:

The Second Vatican Council also teaches us that blame for the death of Jesus should not be ascribed to all Jews, even though the Jewish

---

21. <sup>60</sup> Compare Periš et al., 2004b: 123 and 2007: 124–127.

22. <sup>61</sup> Razum, 2004a: 20–21, 28, 60; cf. Razum, 2004b: 11; Periš et al., 2004a: 96–98.

23. <sup>62</sup> Pažin et al., 2004: 30–46; and Pažin and Pavlović, 2004: 65–67, 70–94.

24. <sup>63</sup> See for example Pažin et al., 2004: 30; and Periš et al., 2004b: 61.

authorities and those who followed their path pressed for his death. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, because that does not follow from the Holy Scripture. On the contrary, according to St. Paul, they remain dear to God, and all of them, together with the prophets and apostles, wait for the day known only to God, when all nations will call on God in a single voice.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, although CRE textbooks describe the Jews as "our brothers" and declare the common values and origins of Judaism and Christianity, inviting to mutual respect for differences, the reader is somehow left on his own to deal with the cognitive dissonance that might be caused by the relatively negative description of Jesus' Jewish contemporaries.

Islamic teachings and origins are given only a one-page description, besides not more than five passing remarks and a short historical analysis of war between Turks and Croatians.<sup>65</sup> Islamic sources, teachings and history are discussed in the lesson on the history of religions, using a descriptive approach and providing factual and neutral information about the subject.<sup>66</sup> Muslims are described elsewhere as people sharing living space as well as common values and origins with followers of other religions. Thus, the prophet Abraham is described as the father not only of Jews and Christians, but of Muslims as well; the Qur'an is the Islamic Holy Book, which in its verses promotes sincere piety and universal values; and Muslims are moral neighbors, who equally contribute to the future wellbeing of society.<sup>67</sup>

However, there is also a lesson on Croatian national history, and this is where the authors chose to discuss the nearly five centuries of Turkish presence in Croatia and Bosnia, as well as the Turkish-Croatian wars and the situation of Catholics under Ottoman rule during that period. Given that the Turks are usually perceived in the region as

---

25. <sup>64</sup> Periš et al., 2004b: 62. Compare the text of the encyclical *Nostra Aetate* (1965), section 4. For this conclusion see also Pažin et al., 2004: 80; Pažin and Pavlović, 2004: 75; and Razum, 2004a: 91.

26. <sup>65</sup> See Razum, 2004a: 20–21, 28, 60; Razum, 2004b: 11; and Periš et al., 2004a: 96–98.

27. <sup>66</sup> Razum, 2004a: 28.

28. <sup>67</sup> Razum, 2004a: 20, 60; and Razum, 2004b: 11.

synonymous with Muslims, due to their historical role in bringing Islam to the Balkans, I find it appropriate to briefly discuss also the image of Turks as presented in the CRE books. In the lesson on “the Catholic Church and Christianity among Croats,” the Turks are described in the following manner:

Although some Islamic laws were generally tolerant towards the Christian faith, Christians in the Ottoman Empire were *second-class citizens*. They could not conduct any public services, nor carry weapons and ride horses. Many Christian Churches were destroyed. They paid high and unjust taxes... Because the Turks were afraid that the Pope would unite the Christian world and initiate a war to free the Christian lands, they tormented the Catholics with heavy taxes... Catholics from Srijem and Eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina saw their safety in converting to Orthodox Christianity, as its followers enjoyed a privileged status in comparison to Catholics. At the beginning of the 17th century the forced Islamization of Bosnia, Slavonija and Srijem started. As result, numerous Catholics converted to Islam so that eventually the percentage of Catholic population was suddenly reduced... During the Turkish occupation, the Catholic faith was persecuted, and the life of Catholics was made more difficult and complicated.<sup>68</sup>

Our purpose here is not to judge the validity of these accounts,<sup>69</sup> but simply to give an account of the image of religious others in the CRE textbooks. It is obvious that the Turks or the first encounter of Croats with Muslims in the above-mentioned quotations is represented in an explicitly evaluative and negative manner.

Finally, under this category Buddhism, Hinduism and the Confucian tradition are also discussed. Thus, the presence of Buddhists in the multi-religious reality of human life on the earth is

---

29. <sup>68</sup> Periš et al., 2004a: 97, emphasis in original. Apart from this quotation, at the margins of the same page one can also find a description of *devşirme*, the Ottoman practice (otherwise unheard of in Muslim history) of taking Balkan boys – most often forcibly – from their parents, and recruiting them to serve the Sultan as court officials or soldiers.

30. <sup>69</sup> For a more balanced view of the status of non-Muslims in the Balkan region under Ottoman rule, one could refer inter alia to the following works: Filipović, 2005; Malcolm, 1996; Braude and Lewis, 1982.



acknowledged, while the history of Buddhism and some of the Buddha's teachings are briefly presented with factual information in a descriptive and neutral manner.<sup>70</sup> Unlike Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism are presented in only two-three sentences, but again using a descriptive and neutral approach, without any negative evaluations and connotations.<sup>71</sup>

Importantly for our analysis, CRE books express their view of non-Christian religious traditions with regard to their claims of truth possession. Referring to the Second Vatican Council in 1962–1965 when the Catholic Church opened the door more widely for interreligious dialogue, the CRE books cite the Vatican's statement that:

The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ "the way, the truth, and the life" ..., in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself.<sup>72</sup>

This and similar statements manifest the openness of the Catholic Church to dialogue with and respect for religious others in principle, but also proclaim the Catholic Church to be the holder of ultimate truth and final criteria for the authenticity of other religious traditions.

### *New Religious Movements (NRMs)*

Catholic textbooks offer the pupils relatively brief information about sects established during the last two centuries, dividing them on the basis of the origins of their teachings into those rooted in Eastern non-Christian religious traditions, primarily Hinduism and Buddhism, on the one side, and those rooted in Christianity on the other. Before

---

31. <sup>70</sup> Razum, 2004a: 20–21, 27; Razum, 2004b: 10; Periš et al., 2004a: 42.

32. <sup>71</sup> Razum, 2004b: 10.

33. <sup>72</sup> Razum, 2004a: 33, cf. *Nostra Aetate*, section 2. In the later 2007 edition, this part of the lesson has been significantly enriched with statements cherishing values of interreligious dialogue and tolerance. Razum, 2007: 26–27.

discussing their history and teachings in more details, the CRE book expresses the view of Catholic Church with regard to their authenticity, repeating the above-mentioned Second Vatican Council statement on the authenticity of other non-Christian traditions, albeit in a slightly shorter version.<sup>73</sup>

However, compared with the earlier discussion of non-Christian religions, CRE textbooks take a significantly different approach to describing the teachings of NRMs. They not only try to provide factual and neutral information about their teachings, but also expose them to explicit critique from the point of view of the Catholic Church. Thus, teachings of reincarnation and pantheism – which are very often promoted in NRMs influenced by Eastern religious traditions like Buddhism and Hinduism – are denounced as going against the Christian teaching that human beings are created in the image of God. Similarly, yoga and meditation are said to be based on the belief that sinful people can attain spiritual excellence and salvation on their own without looking for refuge to Jesus, thus going against one of basic beliefs in Christianity.<sup>74</sup>

CRE textbooks are especially critical of NRMs claiming theological roots in Christianity, like Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and the Children of God (The Family). Their historical origins and teachings are discussed under the subtitle “Deceit about the End of the World and Paradise on Earth,”<sup>75</sup> which on its own clearly implies a negative evaluation of these sects and their beliefs. Such an evaluation follows in more details. Thus, the alleged belief of Jehovah’s Witnesses in an exact date when the world will be destroyed and the Mormon teaching that the reign of Jesus Christ will be established in the USA, are denounced as the erroneous result of their biased or corrupted interpretations of the Bible. In a similar fashion, absolute obedience to the sect – a norm allegedly promoted by the Children of God as a means to accomplish the goals of sect – is ridiculed as an irrational prescription and as even allowing prostitution for that purpose.<sup>76</sup>

Similarly, the New Age movement is placed in a negative context

---

34. <sup>73</sup> Periš et al., 2004a: 43.

35. <sup>74</sup> Ibid: 44–45.

36. <sup>75</sup> Ibid: 46–47.

37. <sup>76</sup> Ibid: 46.

and described as “a godless religious movement,” which borrows something from all religious traditions and interprets it in the light of its “unnatural” and essentially “self-contradicting” attempt to unite all world religions.<sup>77</sup>

### *Atheists and Religiously Ambivalent People*

The CRE textbook for the eighth grade briefly talks about atheism, and not about atheists. This is the textbooks’ usual approach in accounting for religious others, that is, dealing with other religious orientations, and not with their followers. By doing so, they in a sense avoid direct confrontation with the followers of other (non-)religious beliefs. Thus, we are very often left to deduce their view of religious others as persons from their descriptions of other religious traditions.

As for atheism, it is described as an *unnatural tendency*, because of the Christian belief in an inborn inclination of the human soul towards God.<sup>78</sup> The CRE book is more concrete when discussing “practical atheism”: it talks about people who, deluded by their intellectual capabilities, scientific achievements and celebrity, remove God from the daily life of society, and either forget any moral principles whatsoever, or proclaim their own irreligious ethics, or limit religiosity to ritual ceremonies inside churches,<sup>79</sup> alluding with the last to secularism. Although at the end of the discussion on atheism, the eighth-grade textbook of CRE invites believers to tolerance and dialogue with atheists as well as an attitude of love towards them, it explicitly declares religious ambivalence to be an unacceptable attitude from the standpoint of Christianity, implicitly describing it as a man-centered ideology and worldview and its followers as, sometimes, aggressive enemies of Christianity and religion in general.<sup>80</sup> The same approach to presenting atheism is found in the newest 2007 edition of

---

38. <sup>77</sup> Ibid: 48. This description of NRMs is retained in the new 2007 edition (pp. 41–49) of the textbook without any significant modification.

39. <sup>78</sup> Ibid: 38. The same notion also can be found in Islamic theology under the term of *fitra* or inborn human tendency to believe in and obey God. For detailed account of this notion and its theological, ethical and psychological implications, see Mohamed, 1998.

40. <sup>79</sup> Ibid: 39.

41. <sup>80</sup> Ibid: 39–40.

the textbook for the eighth grade.<sup>81</sup>Textbooks of Orthodox Religious Education

The plan and program of Orthodox Religious Education (ORE) for primary schools as one of its main aims mentions introducing the students to other religious traditions existing in their neighborhood. In what follows we will see how this aim is realized in terms of the image of religious others presented in the ORE textbooks.

### *Classifying Religious Others*

Like books of CRE, textbooks of ORE for primary schools also recognize different categories of religious others. Compared with the CRE books, religious others are discussed in a significantly briefer manner. ORE textbooks are generally modest in terms of size and design if compared with the CRE books; it is clear, however, that the ORE textbooks, irrespective of their size, are significantly more assertive and straightforward in evaluating and denouncing the teachings of other religious traditions than the CRE ones. For the purpose of our research, these categories could be divided into other Christian confessions, non-Christian confessions, new religious movements and non-religious people or atheists.

Under the category of other Christian confessions the ORE textbooks treat the Western Church or Roman-Catholic Church,<sup>82</sup> Protestantism,<sup>83</sup> and the Old Catholic Church<sup>84</sup> on the one hand, and other Orthodox Churches on the other.<sup>85</sup> Judaism and Islam are the only religious traditions treated under the category of non-Christian confessions,<sup>86</sup> while under the category of sects or New Religious Movements, they treat Jehovah's Witnesses, Satanists, Adventists and

---

42. <sup>81</sup> Ibid: 38–40 (2007 ed.)

43. <sup>82</sup> See Mojsilović, 2001: 39–41; or the revised edition, Mojsilović, 2007: 39–41.

44. <sup>83</sup> Ibid: 45–48 (both editions).

45. <sup>84</sup> Ibid: 52 (both editions).

46. <sup>85</sup> Ibid: 48, 52 (both editions).

47. <sup>86</sup> Dubravac, 2001: 54, 72; Jević, 2001: 11, 17, 19, 32; Mojsilović, 2001: 7, 9–13, 30–31, 43–44.

Pentecostals, categorizing them by origin.<sup>87</sup> Atheists are very briefly discussed in the ORE textbook for ninth-grade pupils.<sup>88</sup>

### *Other Christian Confessions*

Like the CRE textbooks, books of Orthodox Religious Education usually prefer discussing the history and teachings of other religious traditions, rather than tackling directly the characteristics of their followers, that is, representing the image of the other as such. Only rarely do the ORE books describe them in a direct manner, and these instances are usually associated with historic events that took place in the past or, infrequently, with the teachings of other religions. Thus, the reader is very often – though less often than in case of the CRE textbooks – left to derive their image of religious others from the representation of other religions and their teachings.

In representing the Catholic Church, the ORE textbooks generally devote special attention to the history and etiology of the great schism between the Western and Eastern Church that took place in 1054, delineating the events and theological differences that eventually led to the mutual excommunication of Catholic and Orthodox representatives. While presenting theological differences between the two Churches, apart from offering factual and neutral information relevant for the topic, at some points religious authorities of Catholic Church are accused of “not respecting the early tradition of Church” and “organizing the Church on the basis of their wishful thinking.”<sup>89</sup> The origins and teachings of other Christian Churches, like Protestantism and the Old Catholic Church, are briefly presented in a fairly neutral manner, providing relevant factual information. Other Orthodox churches are simply listed.<sup>90</sup> The same approach is followed in the new edition of the textbook as well.<sup>91</sup>

---

48. <sup>87</sup> Stojanović, 2001: 33–37.

49. <sup>88</sup> Vrhovac, 2001: 61–62.

50. <sup>89</sup> Mojsilović, 2001: 41. Here it should be recalled that the newest edition of the corresponding CRE textbooks left out the negative portrayal of the actors of this great schism in Christianity. See the above text and footnote 57.

51. <sup>90</sup> Ibid: 45–48, 52.

52. <sup>91</sup> For this comparison see Mojsilović, 2007: 41.

However, the chapter on ecumenism and on the inter-religious dialogue initiated by the World Council of Churches (WCC) takes a significantly different attitude towards the religious authorities of other confessions. The author of the ORE textbook for the fifth grade refuses the possibility of collective communion of Orthodox with Catholics and Protestants with the justification that they do not share the same religion “because the latter with their erroneous thinking have spoiled it.”<sup>92</sup> Similarly, the new initiative of the WCC for inviting representatives of non-Christian religious traditions to take part in its activities is denounced as “approaching the positions of the Masons,” whose aim is to “establish a universal religion that will borrow something from all religions,” therefore “Orthodox Churches should leave WCC as soon as possible.”<sup>93</sup> The same anti-WCC and anti-ecumenism position, with a very slight modification in wording, has been kept in the new edition from 2007.<sup>94</sup>

However, the author of the ORE textbook for the ninth grade invites Orthodox pupils to be “kind and friendly towards non-Orthodox Christians and to be concerned about their wellbeing, because every believer in Jesus is praying [in a way] to the same God to Whom we pray, and he also accepts the existence of eternal life and tries his best to earn eternal life through faith in the Lord Jesus and His Gospel.”<sup>95</sup>

### *Non-Christian Confessions*

Under this category, the ORE books discuss Judaism and Islam. Judaism is primarily treated through a historical exposition of its origins and a critique of the attitude of its followers towards God's revelation in general and towards the first Christians and Jesus himself in particular, making no reference to today's Jews and Judaism, nor to World War II and the Holocaust crimes. Thus, Jews are most intensively treated within a period covering the first three centuries of Christianity, and they are often described as disobedient recipients of

---

53. <sup>92</sup> Mojsilović, 2001: 55.

54. <sup>93</sup> Ibid.

55. <sup>94</sup> See Mojsilović, 2007: 54–55.

56. <sup>95</sup> Vrhovac, 2001: 62. The same message can be found in the new 2007 edition.

God's revelation;<sup>96</sup> as thieves;<sup>97</sup> as people whose priests plotted against Jesus and participated in his killing;<sup>98</sup> and as the anxious enemies, persecutors and killers of the first Christians.<sup>99</sup> They are said to have been eventually punished by God through the Romans for their misbehavior and mistreatment of Jesus.<sup>100</sup>

The origins and teachings of Islam are described in a two-page discussion in the ORE textbook for the fifth grade, which combines a descriptive and a normative approach in presenting relevant information. In a few instances, factual information offered in the text on Islamic teachings contain wrong spellings of some basic Islamic terminology, or do not use original Islamic terminology. Similarly, this lesson repeatedly provides students with wrong information and oversimplification of some Islamic teachings. Thus, according to the textbook, the period of strictly prescribed fasting in Islam is called "bajram".<sup>101</sup> For the "virtues of faith, hope and love," which represent foundations of Christian ethics, Islam substitutes - rather completely - the fear of God.<sup>102</sup> Finally, the Prophet Muhammad is described as a man who "borrowed many teachings of his religion from Jews and Christians and then modified them as he liked."<sup>103</sup> Importantly, this

---

57. <sup>96</sup> Dubravac, 2001: 54, 72.

58. <sup>97</sup> Jević, 2001: 17.

59. <sup>98</sup> Ibid: 32.

60. <sup>99</sup> Mojsilović, 2001 (and 2007): 7, 9, 10-11.

61. <sup>100</sup> Ibid: 12 (both editions).

62. <sup>101</sup> Ibid: 31 (both editions). This pillar of Islam, obligatory fasting, in fact takes place during the month of Ramadan, while *Bajram* (Arabic 'Id) is a festive day when Muslims are strictly prohibited from fasting.

63. <sup>102</sup> Mojsilović, 2001: 30. This part is omitted in the 2007 edition. It should be briefly noted that fear of God is considered to be one of basic principles of Islamic ethics. However, for Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111 CE), to mention only one of the greatest classical Muslim scholars, sincere love of God above everything else is the highest level of spiritual and ethical excellence in Islam, not fear of Him.

64. <sup>103</sup> Mojsilović, 2001 (and 2007): 31. This statement represents a classical accusation made against the Prophet. Muslim scholars usually reply that the Prophet was illiterate, and that his contacts with Jews and Christians were so limited that he could not have borrowed anything from earlier

account is not accompanied by any stipulation that this statement represents one Christian view on the issue, and not a Muslim view. It is portrayed as a universally accepted belief.

Although these polemical representations cannot be ignored, much more offensive and direct portrayals of Turks – for which read “Muslims” – are made in chapters on the historical contribution of the Serbian Orthodox Church to the Serbian rebellion against the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of a Serbian state. As noted in the case of textbooks of Catholic Religious Education, the portrayal of Turks is included in the analysis because of the association of Balkan Muslims and Islam with the Ottoman Turks. (This association is so strong that not only non-Muslims have used the term “Turk” for Muslims, but so have Muslims themselves, at least until recently, as a way to show their pride.) This association can easily be found in ORE textbooks as well. For example, the famous Grand Vizier Mehmet Pasha Sokolović – “a Turkish pasha... originally from Sokolovići, a village near Višegrad”<sup>104</sup> in Bosnia – is described in the ORE textbook for the sixth grade as a “*poturčenjak*”<sup>105</sup> (a convert to the Turkish religion).

In the ORE textbooks, the Turks are described as the cruel masters of Serbs,<sup>106</sup> killing innocent people and Orthodox priests, ruining Orthodox shrines or transforming Orthodox churches into mosques,<sup>107</sup> etc. These images of Turks – for which read “Muslims” – in the ORE textbook would not be that problematic if the very same literature did not openly promote a *Kosovo ethical code*, which explicitly nurses “the consciousness of the need for avenging Kosovo”<sup>108</sup> – revenge that is obviously to be taken on Turks or any other Muslims that happen to live in the neighborhood: Here, one cannot but recall the words of the war criminal Ratko Mladić in 2005, as he entered the UN protected-enclave of Srebrenica, which was shortly to become the place of the first genocide in Europe after World War II: “Finally the moment has

---

revelations to Moses and Jesus.

65. <sup>104</sup> Pajić, 2001: 38. In the 2007 edition, all references to the Turks have been moved to pp. 42–85.

66. <sup>105</sup> Pajić, 2001: 42–85.

67. <sup>106</sup> Ibid: 34.

68. <sup>107</sup> Ibid: 35, 40, 47, 50, 60.

69. <sup>108</sup> Ibid: 34–35.



come when – after the rebellion against the *dahis* – we take revenge on the Turks here.”<sup>109</sup> Interestingly, textbooks of ORE make no reference to the recent war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but they do remind readers that Kosovo has again fallen into the hands of strangers, for which reason all the advice given in the lesson on the history of war against the Turks in Kosovo and Serbia should be taken seriously.<sup>110</sup> Importantly, all these rather lengthy portrayals of Turks survived the textbook revision in 2002, and are found in the 2007 edition of the ORE textbooks.<sup>111</sup> *Sects or NRMs*

The ORE textbooks give considerable space to exposing the origins and teachings of NRMs or sects. The analysis opens with a definition of sects and a warning to the reader about their fundamental goals, which are “destroying individuals, the family and eventually the entire society.”<sup>112</sup> Thus, the entire further discussion of the history and teachings of Jehovah’s Witnesses, Adventists, Satanists and Pentecostals<sup>113</sup> is introduced by a negative evaluation of these as destructive, manipulative and autocratic.

### *Non-Religious People and Atheists*

Atheism is very briefly discussed in the ORE textbook for ninth grade. In this short exposition of the Orthodox attitude towards non-believing individuals, the Orthodox believers are recommended to love even those who do not believe in Jesus, because all of them are “created in

---

70. <sup>109</sup> Mladić was referring to the Serbian rebellion against the *dahis* (four unjust janissaries or Turkish infantry officers) in Belgrade in 1804. The *dahis* – according to Serbian history – divided Serbia among themselves and introduced a dictatorship, which ended up with the selective killing of 70 Serbian noblemen and public personalities plotting against Turkish rule. In Serbian history books, the last event is known as “*sječica knezova*” (the Massacre of Princes). The rebellion and massacre are mentioned in the ORE textbook for the sixth grade. Ibid: 47.

71. <sup>110</sup> Ibid: 35.

72. <sup>111</sup> Pajić, 2007: 42–85.

73. <sup>112</sup> Stojanović, 2001: 33–34; Vrhovac, 2001: 61.

74. <sup>113</sup> Stojanović, 2001: 35–37.

the image of God".<sup>114</sup>Textbooks of Islamic Religious Education

### *Classifying Religious Others*

Although the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) textbooks for primary schools speak only very briefly about other religious traditions and groups, they nevertheless identify several categories of religious others. These could be divided into three categories, namely Muslim groups (and sects), People of the Book, and Atheists. Under the category of Muslim groups, the IRE textbooks deal with different theological and juridical schools in Islam, like Sunnis, Shi'is, Hanafis, Malikis, Shafi'is, Hanbalis, Sufis and Wahhabis.<sup>115</sup> Wahhabis, Ahmadis, Qadianis and Baha'is are included under the category of "sects."<sup>116</sup>

The People of the Book category basically covers Jews and Catholic and Orthodox Christians.<sup>117</sup> Atheists and atheism are discussed in the IRE textbook for the sixth grade in a chapter on *kufur* (disbelief).<sup>118</sup> *Muslim Groups*

In their lesson on Muslim groups and *madhhabs* (schools), the authors of the IRE textbook for eighth grade generally give brief factual information about the historical origins, present geographic distribution, and teachings of these Muslim groups. The same descriptive approach is applied to Sufis and Sufism. The authors explain the appearance and historical significance of Sufism in Islam and elaborate on its basic terminology, rituals, different groups and representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>119</sup>

The exception to this approach is the case of so-called "sects" of Baha'is and Ahmadis,<sup>120</sup> who are described as followers of corrupted

---

75. <sup>114</sup> Vrhovac, 2001: 62.

76. <sup>115</sup> Sulejmanović and Kapetanović, 2005: 62–67.

77. <sup>116</sup> Ibid: 62.

78. <sup>117</sup> See for instance Ćatić, 2005: 24; Račić et al., 2006: 10–11; Omerdić and Kalajdžisalihović, 2005: 66, 71–73; Sulejmanović and Kapetanović, 2005: 10–13.

79. <sup>118</sup> See Ćatović, 2005: 19–23.

80. <sup>119</sup> Sulejmanović and Kapetanović, 2005: 64–67.

81. <sup>120</sup> Ibid: 62.

teachings that were borrowed from other religions and that severely conflict with basic Islamic principles.<sup>121</sup> No explicit description of Wahhabis can be found. As some authors rightly point out (Grabus, 2004: 93), Wahhabis are wrongly included in this category together with Ahmadis, Qadianis and Baha'is.<sup>122</sup> Theologically speaking, Wahhabism is rather considered to be a tendency of conservative interpretation of Islam, which does not go against basic Islamic principles, unlike the above mentioned sects, who have practically been excommunicated from the Islamic community for their beliefs.

### *The People of the Book*

Christians and Jews, or People of the Book, are dealt with in IRE textbooks in significantly different contexts, which in turn implicitly determine the way in which they are portrayed. Thus, the author of a fourth-grade textbook narrates the positive experience the first Muslims had during their migration to Abyssinia and their encounter with its Christian king Negus, who is described as a "kind and just ruler"<sup>123</sup> and protector of Muslims who, after being persecuted by polytheists from Mecca, were allowed to stay in his country as "dear guests".<sup>124</sup>

Furthermore, the IRE textbooks deal with the People of the Book in the context of the six pillars of belief in Islam, two of which, namely, require Muslims to believe in all earlier prophets and revelations of God. Accordingly, authors of IRE books regularly discuss the Islamic standpoint on earlier prophets and revelations, including Musa (Moses) and 'Isa (Jesus). Here, Muslim children are invited to belief in earlier prophets and revelations, and they are given basic information about Musa (Moses) and 'Isa (Jesus) and about the respective books revealed to them by God.<sup>125</sup> However, the textbook for the eighth grade states that "the original version of Tawrah (Torah), revealed to the Jews

---

82. <sup>121</sup> Ibid.

83. <sup>122</sup> See Sulejmanović and Kapetanović, 2005: 62.

84. <sup>123</sup> Ćatić, 2005: 24.

85. <sup>124</sup> Ibid: 26.

86. <sup>125</sup> Sulejmanović and Kapetanović, 2005: 10-12; and Račić et al., 2006: 10-11, 110-111.

by God Himself, does not exist, because they did not preserve it"<sup>126</sup> and because, according to the Qur'an, "they believed in one part of Tawrah, negated its second part, and forgot the third one",<sup>127</sup> thus repeating an Islamic official standpoint in that regard. The authors then continue outlining the principles and teachings of Tawrah as they are described in the Qur'an.<sup>128</sup> Similarly, the IRE textbooks descriptively talk about the four Gospels of the Bible and present Christian teachings about 'Isa (Jesus) and his mother Maryam (Mary), simultaneously offering Qur'anic verses that negate these teachings and constitute the Islamic view on these issues.<sup>129</sup>

Editions of the IRE textbooks prior to the last revision in 2005 employed pictures of mosques destroyed during the last war by Bosnian Croats and Serbs to describe members of the Catholic and Orthodox religious community. Thus in a few instances, images of destroyed mosques were captioned "destroyed by Serbs"<sup>130</sup> or "destroyed by Croats", which made the over-generalization of a destructive and aggressive image to all Croats and Serbs more plausible. In revised editions from 2005, however, these images have been removed and replaced by pictures free of such messages.<sup>131</sup> *Atheism and Atheists*

The IRE textbooks deal with atheism and atheists in the sixth grade. Atheists are mentioned and, in a way, defined as unbelievers or *kafirs* that "do not believe or their belief is wrong"<sup>132</sup> and "negate basic principles of Islam or deny the prescriptions and prohibitions established by religion."<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, they are portrayed as

---

87. <sup>126</sup> Sulejmanović and Kapetanović, 2005: 10. As noted before, representatives of Jewish Community did not participate in the revision; had they done so, they would probably have objected to such statements.

88. <sup>127</sup> Ibid.

89. <sup>128</sup> Ibid, 10-11.

90. <sup>129</sup> Ibid: 12-13.

91. <sup>130</sup> See these earlier editions: Ćatović, 1997: 45; Omerdić and Kalajdžisalihović, 1998: 34, 46, 87.

92. <sup>131</sup> For this comparison, see the latest editions: Ćatović, 2005: 45; Omerdić and Kalajdžisalihović, 2005: 34, 46, 87.

93. <sup>132</sup> Ćatović, 2005: 19.

94. <sup>133</sup> Ibid. The earlier edition of the same textbook in its

“unstable people without self-confidence”<sup>134</sup> who should be pitied and introduced to “the real virtues of life and the beauty of faith.”<sup>135</sup> Hypocrites or *munafiqs* – a particular kind of unbelievers who publicly show themselves as believers but who in their hearts do not believe and who secretly fight against Islam and Muslims - are threatened with the “lowest place in Hell.”<sup>136</sup> In a previous edition of the textbook, pupils were warned by many Qur’anic verses against aggressive and dangerous followers of *kufri* who do not share the same principles of life with Muslims, and who apply principles of human rights to Muslims in an unjust and unfair manner.<sup>137</sup> The most recent edition of the textbook has removed that description.

## Conclusion

Our analysis has shown that textbooks of Religious Education for primary schools, be it Catholic, Orthodox or Islamic, deal with religious others as one of the inevitable topics suggested by the respective plans and programs of religious education. In terms of quantity and diversity, the most attention to religious others is given in the CRE textbooks, which, however, unequally allocate lessons at different grades to various categories of religious others. The study of religious others in the IRE textbooks is rather fragmented and less developed, even compared with the ORE textbooks.

The revision in 2002 noticeably modified the way textbooks of CRE and IRE portray major religious traditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The changes, if any, are least visible in the ORE books. For example, prior to the official revisions in 2002 and 2005, generally all textbooks occasionally brought up explicit negative portrayals of members of the other two major confessions, but only in the context of historical events, whether recent or long past. History was the only context in which

---

definition of non-believers also included the phrase “or deny even single word from Qur’an,” which is omitted in the 2005 revised edition.

95. <sup>134</sup> Ibid.

96. <sup>135</sup> Ibid.

97. <sup>136</sup> Ibid: 20.

98. <sup>137</sup> Čatović, 1997: 22; compare the 2005 edition.

“members” of other religious communities were portrayed, rather than the “teachings” of other religious traditions, the latter being the general focus in these textbooks where religious others are concerned. Such an approach in principle leaves the reader to deduce for himself an image of religious others on the basis of available implicit information. However, the revised editions of CRE and IRE textbooks (but not ORE books) avoid even such historically contextualized negative portrayals of members of the other two major confessions in the country.

Nevertheless, exceptions do exist: the directly negative description of today’s unbelievers and atheists; occasionally negative historical accounts of Jews in the textbooks of all three confessions; the directly negative account of today’s New Religious Movements in CRE and ORE textbooks; and the negative attitude of the CRE and especially ORE historical accounts towards Turks. Although an inclusive generalization is difficult, it seems that the members of the revision commissions were greatly influenced by the combined effect of both the intention to protect the image of their own ethno-religious community only, on one hand, and the perspective from which they were addressing the issue of religious others, be it theological, sociological or historical, on the other. Future revisions in textbooks of Religious Education in public schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina will depend on both international and local actors. Internationally, given that all the ethno-religious communities have clear aspirations to join the EU, this may become the most decisive external driving force for such revisions, depending on whether member states’ educational standards about teaching religion and portraying religious others in public schools, including NRMs and atheists, significantly differ from Bosnian ones, and to what extent the EU will insist on unification of these standards. Nevertheless, given the current disunity of European countries around the standards of teaching religion in public schools, the next revisions of Religious Education textbooks in Bosnia may wait for while.<sup>138</sup> Locally, moves to overcome the tripartite perception of history discussed above might prove to be the most decisive factor behind future revisions of religious education textbooks. The textbooks

---

99. <sup>138</sup> For debates and differences in standards of teaching religion in EU public schools, see Arnold (2005). For all international agreements that Bosnia and Herzegovina so far has signed in the area of education, see OSCE BiH (n.d.).

of CRE and especially ORE, for instance, employ historical narratives about the first encounter with Turks and Islam, which indirectly influence the portrayal of their Muslim neighbors through usage of the historical and non-religious category. Future revisions of RE textbooks may depend for their success on the ability of historians – rather than religious representatives – to work out a shared and non-offensive version of history. On the other hand, this will depend also on the readiness of religious representatives in Bosnia to spare Religious Education textbooks from questionable historical accounts that are offensive to others; to distance themselves from ethno-political agendas; and to sensitize themselves about relating to the religious other.

## References

- Arnold, Ingun. 2005. "Teaching Religion the European Way." <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,1564,1552191,00.html>. Retrieved on February 26, 2008.
- BKBiH. 2003. *Plan i program katoličkoga vjeronauka u osnovnoj školi*. 2nd rev. ed. Zagreb/Sarajevo: Biskupska konferencija Bosne i Hercegovine.
- Braude, Benjamin and Bernard Lewis (eds.). 1982. *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, vol. 1, *The Central Lands*. New York: Holmes & Meier.
- Čatić, Refik. 2002. *Vjeronauka za četvrti razred osnovne škole*. 4th ed. Sarajevo: El-Kalem.
- — —. 2005. *Vjeronauka za četvrti razred osnovne škole*. 6th rev. ed. Sarajevo: El-Kalem.
- Čatović, Mensura. 1997. *Vjeronauka za šesti razred osnovne škole*. 4th ed. Sarajevo: El-Kalem.
- — —. 2005. *Vjeronauka za šesti razred osnovne škole*. 5th rev. ed. Sarajevo: El-Kalem.
- Dubravac, Krstan. 2001. *Pravoslavna vjeronauka za prvi razred osnovne škole*. Banja Luka: Katihetski odbor.
- . 2007. *Pravoslavna vjeronauka za drugi razred osnovne škole*. Banja Luka: Katihetski odbor.
- Filipović, Nedim. 2005. *Islamizacija u Bosni i Hercegovini*. Tešanj: Centar za kulturu i obrazovanje.
- Grabus, Nedžad. 2004. "Iskustvo sa školskim vjeronaukom u BiH i kako

- vlastiti vjeronaučni priručnici prikazuju druge učenicima pluralne sredine". *Urbosnensia*, no. 1 (2004): 87–94.
- Jakšić, Josip and Karolina Manda Mićanović. 2004. *Učimo ljubiti Boga i ljude: vjeronaučni udžbenik za prvi razred osnovne škole*. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Glas Koncila.
- — —. 2004. *Rastimo u zahvalnosti: vjeronaučni udžbenik za drugi razred osnovne škole*. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Glas Koncila.
- Jević, Hrizostom. 2001. *Pravoslavna vjeronauka za treći razred osnovne škole*. Banja Luka: Katihetski odbor.
- — —. 2007. *Pravoslavna vjeronauka za četvrti razred osnovne škole*. Banja Luka: Katihetski odbor.
- Jurišić, Pavo. 2004. "Iskustvo sa školskim vjeronaukom u BiH: kako katolički vjeronaučni udžbenici prikazuju druge učenice." *Urbosnensia*, no. 1 (2004): 61–78.
- Kuburić, Zorica and Christian Moe (eds.). 2006. *Religion and Pluralism in Education: Comparative Approaches in the Western Balkans*. Novi Sad: CEIR.
- Low-Beer, Ann. 2001. "Politics, school textbooks and cultural identity: the struggle in Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Paradigm 2*, no. 3 or *International Textbook Research*, no. 2 (2001): 1–6.
- Malcolm, Noel. 1996. *Bosnia: A Short History*. NYU Press.
- Ministry of Education. 2001. "Analiza kantonalnih propisa u oblasti obrazovanja: predškolsko, osnovno i srednje obrazovanje." Sarajevo: Federalno ministarstvo obrazovanja, nauke, kulture i sporta Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine. [http://www.see-educoop.net/education\\_in/pdf/anal\\_kant-fbh-bos-t04.pdf](http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/anal_kant-fbh-bos-t04.pdf). Retrieved on January 20, 2008.
- Mohamed, Yasien. 1998. *Human Nature in Islam*. Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Hayathi.
- Mojsilović, Niko. 2001. *Istorija hrišćanske crkve: pravoslavna vjeronauka za peti razred osnovne škole*. Banja Luka: Katihetski odbor.
- — —. 2007. *Istorija hrišćanske crkve: pravoslavna vjeronauka za VI razred osnovne škole*. Banja Luka: Katihetski odbor.
- OSCE BiH. 2002. "Implementation plan for the Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children" at <http://www.oscebih.org/documents/29-bos.pdf>. Retrieved on February 26, 2008.
- — —. 2007. "Na putu ka vjerskom suživotu i razumijevanju u Bosni i



Hercegovini: Izvještaj o provedbi pilot-projekta Kultura religija". Misija OSCE-a u Bosni i Hercegovini, Odjel za obrazovanje. <http://www.oscebih.org/documents/9906-ser.pdf>. Retrieved on February 7, 2008.

- Nostra Aetate*. [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii). Retrieved on September 24, 2007.
- Omerdić, Muharem and Fahira Kalajdžisalihović. 1998. *Ujeronauka za sedmi razred osnovne škole*. Sarajevo: El-Kalem.
- — —. 2005. *Ujeronauka za sedmi razred osnovne škole*. 2nd revised ed. Sarajevo: El-Kalem.
- Pajić, Nedeljko. 2001. *Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve sa narodnom istorijom: udžbenik iz vjeronauke za šesti razred osnovne škole*. Banja Luka: Katihetski odbor. (Reprinted in 2007.)
- Pažin, Ivan and Ante Pavlović. 2004. *Na putu vjere: udžbenik za 4. razred osnovne škole*. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.
- Pažin, Ivica et al. 2004. *Za stolom ljubavi i pomirenja: vjeronaučni udžbenik za 3. razred osnovne škole*. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.
- Periš, Josip et al. 2004a. *S Kristom u život: vjeronaučni udžbenik za osmi razred osnovne škole*. Zagreb-Sarajevo: Kršćanska sadašnjost. (A 3rd ed. was published in 2007.)
- — —. 2004b. *Zajedno u ljubavi: vjeronaučni udžbenik za sedmi razred osnovne škole*. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.
- — —. 2007. *Zajedno u ljubavi: vjeronaučni udžbenik za sedmi razred osnovne škole*. 5th improved ed. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.
- Popov, Zlatiborka and Anne Mette Ofstad. "Religious Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina". In *Religion and Pluralism in Education: Comparative Approaches in the Western Balkans*, ed. Zorica Kuburić and Christian Moe, 73–106. Novi Sad: CEIR.
- Račić, Ajša et al. 2002. *Ujeronauka za peti razred osnovne škole*. 4th ed. Sarajevo: El-Kalem. 5th revised edition 2006);
- — —. 2006. *Ujeronauka za peti razred osnovne škole*. 5th rev. ed. Sarajevo: El-Kalem.
- OSCE BiH. n. d. "Raising Debate: Is BiH Respecting its International Commitments in the Field of Education – Questions for the Citizens of BiH." <http://www.oscebih.org/documents/1501-eng.pdf>. Retrieved on February 26, 2008.
- Razum, Ružica. 2004a. *Ia sam put: vjeronaučni udžbenik za 5 razred osnovne škole*. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.

- — —. 2004b. *Pozvani na slobodu: vjeronaučni udžbenik za 6 razred osnovne škole*. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.
- — —. 2007. *Ja sam put: vjeronaučni udžbenik za 5 razred osnovne škole*. 5th improved ed. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.
- Stojanović, Veljko. 2001. *Dogmatsko bogoslovlje: udžbenik vjeronauke za sedmi razred osnovne škole*. Banja Luka: Katihetski odbor.
- Sulejmanović, Ševko and Esmā Kapetanović. 2002. *Vjeronauka za osmi razred osnovne škole*. Sarajevo: El-Kalem.
- — —. 2005. *Vjeronauka za osmi razred osnovne škole*. 2nd revised edition. Sarajevo: El-Kalem.
- Vrhovac, Slobodan. 2001. *Pravoslavna etika: pravoslavna vjeronauka za deveti razred osnovne škole*. Banja Luka: Katihetski odbor. (Reprinted in 2007.)
- “Zakon o slobodi vjere i pravnom položaju crkava i vjerskih zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini.” *Službeni glasnik BiH*, no 5 (March 9, 2004): 332.  
<http://www.zakoni.ba/index1.php?act=rsearch&uid=000OZ040050332AA&lng=BS&typ=cls>. Retrieved on February 7, 2008.

PART THREE:  
RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY DISCOURSES



## Chapter Six

### The Serbian Orthodox Church's Images of Religious Others

## 6 Serbian Orthodox Church

*Zlatiborka Popov-Momčinović*

#### Introduction

As a contribution to the project of discovering the images of religious others that are held and promoted by the major religious communities in the Western Balkans, I have analyzed the contents of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) magazine *Pravoslavlje* ("Orthodoxy") for the year 2005.

*Pravoslavljje* is published twice a month, and the first issue appeared in 1967. It covers topics such as significant Orthodox holidays; Orthodox theological issues, which are discussed in an accessible and popular style; the life and work of the founders and historically important members of the SOC; social events of interest from the church's point of view; and letters to the editor, book reviews, etc. The magazine also deals with significant social problems such as violence in the family and society in general, poverty, the emergence of a consumer society, the commercialization of the media, the influence of technology in the modern world etc. Thus, although this magazine mostly deals with questions of self-definition, it also offers a general world-view within which religious others have their place.

The magazine was chosen for this analysis for the following reasons. It is the official magazine of the Serbian Patriarchate.<sup>139</sup> Its content is simplified and adjusted to the understanding of the broader population, and therefore influential in shaping public attitudes. At the same time, as the official magazine it reflects to a high extent the attitudes of religious elites, which are of high importance because of the hierarchical organization of the SOC, its significant role on the public scene in both Serbia and the Republic of Srpska (one of the two entities in B&H), and the constant striving of SOC officials to gain not only spiritual but also political influence in societies with a predominantly Serbian Orthodox population. Finally, the magazine was chosen because of its widespread distribution and frequent issuance. This continuous circulation allows it to constantly influence the process of shaping and reshaping its readers' images of religious others.

The contents of *Pravoslavljje* can be useful not only for exploring the attitudes of Serbian Orthodox Church toward religious others, but also in revealing the real relations between different religious groups and the general atmosphere in which these relations are conducted.<sup>140</sup> To what extent real inter-religious relations are shaped by the attitudes

---

100. <sup>139</sup> The magazine is published by the Informative-Publishing Institution of the SOC, with the blessing of Patriarch Pavle.

101. <sup>140</sup> On the reliability of the religious press as an indicator of events and situations in the area where it is issued, see Marijana Radulović's analysis of the contents of *Pravoslavljje* and the Catholic *Glas Koncila* in the period between 1989 and 1991 (Radulović, 2001).

expressed in religious mass media (or vice versa) is a difficult question to answer, but nevertheless their influence should not be neglected, especially in Balkan areas where a authoritarian mentality prevails.<sup>141</sup> The importance of these issues is underlined by the fact that religion was ideologically abused for the purposes of justifying the wars in the area of former Yugoslavia, and that it may be so abused again to justify and even generate future social conflicts.

The year 2005 was selected as the most recent, and also because of the significant events and milestones that marked this year, which were a great challenge for SOC and for the Serbian state, nation, and region in general: the fall-out from the previous year's riots in Kosovo, during which many churches and medieval monasteries were damaged; the still undefined status of Kosovo; the tenth anniversary of the Dayton agreement; the disputed status of the Republic of Srpska in B&H; the fifth anniversary of the democratic changes in Serbia; and problems in relations with the EU.

#### Four underlying theses on religion and identity

Almost all the articles published in this year, whether they deal with more sacred or more secular topics, share the following underlying claims:

- Religion is essential for one's identity and moral integrity, both individual and communal;
- The Serbian Orthodox Church is inseparable from the Serbian national state;
- Serb identity is defined through history, and although constantly endangered, survived thanks to the significant role held by the SOC among the Serb people.
- The significance of the SOC must be (re)gained and preserved on

---

102. <sup>141</sup> Many empirical studies of the prevailing model of political culture, both during (Havelka and Rot, 1973) and after the fall of communism (Kuzmanovic, 1998; Gredelj, 1994), show the dominance of authoritarian values and behavior models. Therefore, the influence of the attitudes of church officials and religious media on popular attitudes should not be neglected, especially as the Serbian Orthodox Church is the most enduring institution in the turbulent Serbian history and it has had an important public function after the fall of communism.

the social level, especially in areas with predominantly Serb population and/or where Serbs have some form of national state (Serbia and Republic of Srpska).

Firstly, abandoning one's religious heritage on the one hand leads to individual moral disunity, and makes people vulnerable to many negative influences and temptations (e.g. alcohol, drugs, adultery, promiscuity); on the other, it also leads to the weakening of communal bonds. Without religion, people are keen to avoid fulfilling their duties toward themselves (e.g. to take care of their health) and others (to respect them, to help them in trouble, to love them as they love themselves, etc.), and the firm basis of community perishes. This is said to be proved by the many negative features marking the periods when the Orthodox people lost their faith, as did Russians and Serbs under communism.<sup>142</sup> The neglect of religion in the modern period (secularization) has also brought about an "era of high technology and jungle ethics" (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 915: 14), in which many values are distorted and people have lost their orientation in life.

Secondly, there is much praise for the medieval period, during which the SOC and the state supported each other – the SOC by giving spiritual legitimacy to the state, and the state by giving material support to the church. The symbol of this golden period and this connection is the son of the Serbian ruler Stevan Nemanja, St. Sava, who abandoned the secular life of the royal court and escaped to the Holy Mount (Mt. Athos) to become a monk. With his zeal and diplomatic abilities, St. Sava gained the status of an independent archbishopric for the SOC, and in that way secured the spiritual basis for the independence and further rise of the state. With genius, Sava successfully combined Christian universality and national authenticity. Sava's enormous contribution to the development of Serbian medieval culture and education, and the fact that, under his influence, many of the Serbian rulers, who were members of his family, supported the Church and nurtured Orthodox culture, places him at the peak position in both national and religious culture. Although Serbs lost their

---

103. <sup>142</sup> For example, it is mentioned that the communist USSR was the first country to legalize abortion, described as the killing of unborn human beings.



national state during the Turkish rule, the link between church and state, or between religion and politics, was not lost even in that turbulent period. Namely, as the only institution allowed to continue under foreign rule, the SOC preserved within itself the Serb cultural heritage, self-awareness and identity. Therefore, "the Serb people is unimaginable without the Church tradition" (*Pravoslavije*, no. 919: 16).

Thirdly, then, Serbs have survived the many historical difficulties because they have preserved their identity. The Serb nation was especially endangered because it settled in an area between East and West. In order to survive both physically and spiritually, Serbs needed an essential moral and spiritual strength. Thanks to the SOC, especially to the work of St. Sava (in the medieval period) and Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović (in modern times), we have survived.<sup>143</sup> Without St. Sava, we are "European paupers, a spiritually empty, shapeless mass incapable of resistance" (*Pravoslavije*, no. 907-908: 28). Whereas St. Sava helped us to survive in the period of slavery under the Turks, Bishop Nikolaj helps us to resist a modern "spiritual occupation" (*Pravoslavije*, no. 914: 26-27). Moving forward is possible only with an awareness and respect for the past, and for the ancestors who gave their lives for "the honorable cross and glorious freedom," as a stock phrase of poetry puts it. Therefore, the "Kosovo ethic" is an integral part of the Serb spiritual being: our ancestors knew that they were weaker and less numerous than the Turks, but by choosing to fight, they chose to serve the kingdom of heaven. This view of our identity, stressing what has been inherited (not chosen) and has passed the judgment of time, gives a special place to the historical dimension through which that identity was defined and survived in spite of all difficulties. This is very important for our topic, for encounters with different others can endanger the maintenance of our own identity, and potentially lead to our disappearing. The claim that the SOC and prominent figures within the church helped to maintain this identity and to resist many dangers,<sup>144</sup> and the claim of every religion to answer

---

104. <sup>143</sup> Of course, the magazine paid tribute to many statesmen, military leaders, theologians, artists and scientists, but these two religious figures are the most often mentioned in this context.

105. <sup>144</sup> "We must bless our monks who maintained our monasteries where our priests learned and preserved our faith and rituals, so we didn't become Turks or Catholics" (*Pravoslavije*, no. 915: 35).

ultimate questions about the meaning of life, provides the church with a firm basis to define who and what are the others.

From these three theses derives the fourth, about the importance of religion (in this case Serbian Orthodoxy) for society in general. This is especially important for the Balkans area after the fall of communism, when there emerged a process of (re)gaining and (re)establishing national and religious identity, formerly suppressed by communist ideology and one-party monopoly. As other differences (e.g. language) were not "sharp" enough to mark the border lines between different ethnic groups in former Yugoslavia, religious differences have played a significant role in the process of reestablishing a lost national consciousness and state. Therefore, a situation more characteristic of the pre-modern world, where religion directly legitimized all aspects of society and religion and government formed an integrated system, reemerged in the Balkan version of Fukuyama's "end of history." Analyzing the Catholic *Glas Koncila* and the Orthodox *Pravoslavlje* in that period, Radulović describes the way two Christian churches, moving from the private to the public sphere, stepped into the political arena. In 1990, *Glas Koncila* was full of headlines such as "The first victory of democracy," "The new constitution, inspired by the Gospel itself, gives back the dignity to the Croatian people," and "Bishops paid tribute to voters," as well as photographs of President Franjo Tudjman and Cardinal Kuharić (Radulović, 2001: 259). The Serbian Orthodox Church participated less directly in the actual politics, mostly because President Milošević and his Socialist Party did not renounce their communist heritage, but as Yugoslavia disintegrated, it became strongly involved in the problems of the status of the Serb population outside Serbia, first of all in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (ibid.).<sup>145</sup>

Almost ten years after the end of the war(s) in the former Yugoslavia, churches still have pretensions to an important political role in Balkan societies. In issues of *Pravoslavlje* published in 2005, one

---

106. <sup>145</sup> Radulović quotes the letter of Patriarch Pavle to Lord Carrington, which states: "...The Croatian borders are neither historical nor ethnic, but designed by Josip Broz Tito, the leader of the communist revolution in Yugoslavia, who was a Croat. Those who centuries ago converted to Catholicism, and who during the Second World War exterminated Serbs only because they were Serbs and Orthodox, cannot be trusted."

perceives a strong opposition to reducing religion (or the SOC) to the private sphere. This is, on the one hand, a consequence of the challenges faced by the Serb population in the post-war period – economic difficulties, unconsolidated democracy, the burden of (the main) guilt for the last war, riots in Kosovo, pressure for abolishing the RS in B&H – and as an organized national institution, the church cannot remain indifferent. On the other hand, however, this is also a consequence of the church's will to power and influence in society, a problem that always emerges when religious institutions try to deal with issues of this world, especially political ones. In this connection, *Pravoslavlje* gives a positive picture of politicians who support a more influential role for the Church in society. In an interview with the then president of the Republic of Srpska, Dragan Čavić, the journalist claims that the relationship between church and state in the RS is a good model for Serbia, because the SOC has a more prominent role in this B&H entity than in Serbia. The minister of religious affairs in the RS government perceives the SOC as the cornerstone of the RS, and claims that “our roots, our emotive connections” give us the right to strive for a greater presence of the Orthodox Church in society (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 917: 9). Politicians with more critical attitudes toward church and its interference in politics are described in negative terms, as are similarly oriented NGOs and mass media. For example, in one article, NGOs that promote the reduction of religion to a private matter are accused of deploying an Orwellian “Newspeak” full of hatred against the SOC and trying to transform the SOC, a centuries-old national institution of the Serbian people, into just another NGO (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 910: 14–15). Thus “whoever attacks the Church, libels the people.”<sup>146</sup> In general, it is stated that the reduction of religion to the private sphere and the separation of private and public causes spiritual schizophrenia and a paradoxical situation where only atheists can enjoy their civil rights (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 930: 28).

#### Religious Others in General

As the historical churches (including the SOC) in the former Yugoslavia

---

107. <sup>146</sup> As Matija Bečković, a poet from Montenegro, put it in an interview (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 915: 10).

have been involved in the process of national state-building and the regaining of national consciousness, the SOC's images of religious others are mostly constructed in relation to national questions. Thus different religious others are most often perceived through nations belonging to "other" confessions. So the Muslims are rarely perceived in terms of the characteristics of Islam in general, but as Turks, Bosniaks, Albanians, etc.; Catholics as Croats, Slovenes and Westerners in general; Protestants as Americans and Westerners, etc. Although many articles call for peace, mutual respect, dialogue, and tolerance (most often cited is Jesus's call to love one's enemies and the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians about the importance of love), they remain mostly on the level of generalities. The moment they leave the pure theological ground and turn to more practical issues, the "purity" of religious norms is lost and rather abstract religious others become concrete nations whose images, for practical reasons (wars, conflicts, mutual hostilities and accusations), are hard to portray in a neutral light.

Thus the public function of the SOC in the process of rebuilding national awareness and a national state influences the images of religious others. These images especially depend on how the SOC perceives the relations between the Serb population and various others in history up to the present time. The best illustration is the meeting of the Holy Synod, in May 2005, which besides organizational issues also dealt with the problems faced by the Serb population and Serbian Church in areas where it has minority or disputed status. According to the Synod, there are problems in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Macedonia. The other nations living in these areas are perceived as the "significant others" at the present time, and are therefore the most often mentioned in different articles.

Taking into account that the SOC, through articles published in *Pravoslavlje*, offers a more or less well-defined general world-view, within which religious others are also defined, we will first pay attention to this general context. The modern world is perceived as full of crises which are economical, political, but first of all spiritual in character, for in this senseless world, everything is for sale (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 910: 2). The preservation of cultural identity is especially imperiled. As the rejection and loss of one's identity lead both to individual and communal moral disintegration, identity must

be preserved. Christianity is described as the only religion that offers the solution to the modern moral crisis, as it did during the decay of the Roman Empire's (*Pravoslavje*, no. 915: 25). In some interviews with famous Serbian athletes and intellectuals, it is stressed that the only religion that has preserved "true faith and true values" is Orthodoxy. But, the process of globalization and western domination endangers "small" nations and cultures, a perception that contributes to the shaping of rather xenophobic images of (religious) others. Thus the small Serb nation is depicted as surrounded by many enemies lying in wait for their moment (*Pravoslavje*, no. 907-908: 28). For example, it is said that during the last war Croatian Catholics and Bosnian and Albanian Muslims, with the help of European-American fascists, tried to destroy the Serbian people (ibid.: 19).

In the Balkans, the idea of the nation has not primarily been connected with the idea of free individuals constituting a political and national community (as in some Western schools of thought and political practices), but is rather based on the idea of ethnicity, of a cultural group different from others, which has shaped and preserved its distinct characteristics through historical tribulations. Therefore, one important aspect of the creation of images of religious others is placing them in a historical dimension and highlighting mutual distinctions. The use and abuse of history is based on presenting one's own religious group as especially endangered and oppressed through history. As Christianity in general celebrates the self-sacrifice of the son of God for the salvation of all people, and the martyrdom of his followers who would not abandon his path even under terrible pressure and torture, this aspect of Christianity is used in describing relations to religious others (mostly from the Balkans) and in the more or less conscious creation of their images, presenting them as oppressors. Kosovo, which is claimed to be a Serbian Jerusalem, is most often used as a symbol of our devotion to Christianity and of the suffering caused by various others (Turks, Albanians, the NATO alliance) because we would not renounce this holy land, a symbol of our identity. The most used phrase in presenting and celebrating this martyrdom is: "A Serb belongs to Christ, he is cheerful in dying, and there is no more beautiful faith than Christianity."<sup>147</sup> These processes of

---

108. <sup>147</sup> Allegedly, this is the statement of St. Avakum (1794-1815), a young deacon who was tortured and killed by the Turks after an uprising.

victimization of one's religious group and/or nation were, according to Vrcan, typical for all major confessions in Balkan.<sup>148</sup> Constant insistence on their own victims and martyrdom make churches vulnerable to political and ideological abuse. This move from the theological into the practical-political sphere (Radulović, 2002: 261) in the turbulent Balkans contributes to creating a rather intolerant general atmosphere, which complicates relations between different religious communities. Such a form of practical theology causes the images of religious others to be shaped by our perceptions and evaluations of mutual conflicts and hostilities, rather than by more factual information about the others' religions and religiosity. Thus, the brief news items at the end of every issue of *Pravoslavlje*<sup>149</sup> show both by their placement and their content that descriptive, factual information about the other is subordinate to the evaluative discourse (both explicit and implicit) in the main articles of the magazine.

## Christian Religious Others

### *Catholics and Protestants*

Images of and attitudes to Catholics and Protestants are constructed in

---

109. <sup>148</sup> For Croatian Catholicism, Croatia was for centuries a bulwark for defending Christianity under continuous siege; Serbian Orthodoxy sees itself as a guardian of Orthodoxy from constant Catholic proselytism, Uniate schemes, and Islamic invasion; and Bosnian Islam views itself as constantly oppressed since 1878, when it was separated from the Ottoman Empire (Vrcan, 2004: 95).

110. <sup>149</sup> These news cover significant religious events taking place among different religious communities, as well as current events, incidents and conflicts in which the Orthodox are most often the endangered group. Every news item consists of three to ten sentences, and there are no comments accompanying this more or less factual information. However, it seems that even these brief news, which at the first glance inform about what is happening in the world of religion, match the evaluations of religious others elsewhere in the magazine: for example, news reports on problems experienced by Orthodox believers in Catholic and Muslim countries (Croatia, Turkey) match the negative connotations and evaluations of these groups in the more analytical articles.

the context of relations with Western countries and culture, on the one hand, and with various nations (Croats, Slovenians, and so-called ethnic minorities) with whom Serbs live, or used to live, in the same state. However, there are also some articles which, stressing the differences between Eastern and Western theology and religious teachings, remain on a more theological ground.

In the majority of these articles, the differences between the so-called Western and Eastern schools of thought is highlighted. According to Oliver Subotić, in the article "Search for the Lost Identity" (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 915: 28-29), the question of identity is one of the key disputes between Western and Eastern theology. Starting from Augustine, Western theology stresses self-awareness as the basis of identity, and this has enormous negative consequences for society and nature. On the other hand, the East has always had a broader horizon, and Eastern theologians have since the fourth century highlighted that the basis of identity is one's relationship with others and with God. Beyond that, humans fall into tragic individualism (Adam and Eve were the first to fall). Only through the church and through love for God and other human beings can humans can reestablish their identity. One of the greatest weaknesses of the Western and modern world is rationalism, which is based on human vanity ("I want to know all") and greed ("I want to have all"). One of the consequences of Western rationalism is uncontrolled development of technology, thanks to which, it is said, people will soon come to live in Orwell's *1984* (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 907-908: 38-39).

An article which more systematically covers the problem of relations with the West and its culture was written by the monk Nikodim (Bogosavljević) and published in three issues of magazine. In the article "Orthodox and Western Culture" (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 925: 10-12), the author claims that the spiritual basis of Western culture is humanism, concern for man, but in practice, Western culture is in the service of oligarchy. In contrast, the essence of Orthodox culture is spiritual, both divine and human, and creates a true community of persons. Western culture is anthropocentric, utilitarian and materialistic, and reduced to accumulation of material things, absolute power and control over all humanity. Contemporary European and American cultures are a product of the development of Western Christianity. The author depicts this process as a distortion of the

Gospel, which culminated in the creation of the Vatican State. The rational, impersonal and dispassionate Roman Catholic theology, says the author (quoting Christos Yannaras), imposes the intellectual subordination of individuals to the authority of dogma, which leads to the possibility of social and political subordination to the Church. The consequence was the appearance of the first form of totalitarianism in Europe. Catholic collectivism gave birth to Protestant individualism, as Gothic cathedrals (symbols of anthropocentric aspirations) were replaced by tall apartment blocks and skyscrapers, modern towers of Babylon. They symbolize the essence of Western culture: the isolated, impersonal, nameless and frightened individual, on whom is based the modern totalitarianism that culminates in liberal capitalism.

In general, Western Christianity is perceived as too formalized and rationalized. The Roman Catholic Church functions very well in the institutional sense, at the cost of neglecting the Christian ethos, which is life itself. Protestants have many problems, partly because they place too much stress on the apocalypse, and partly because of their intellectual interpretation of Scripture, which prevails over spiritual understanding. Instead of human subordination to God's truth, this leads to human mastering of truth and to the continuous diminishing of truth (*Pravoslavije*, no. 916: 40). Western religiosity is described as anthropocentric and incapable of integrating people in true communion with God, which provides the space for ever-growing secularization. Its intellectualization of religion causes the loss of spirituality and imagination and provides the modern market economy with fertile soil for the commercialization of faith (*Pravoslavije*, no. 930: 27-28). Many negative phenomena in the modern world are due to the permanent distortion of the genuine Christian message in the West (*Pravoslavije*, no. 929: 14).

Images of Catholics depend not only on the above-mentioned "spiritual" differences, but also on the SOC's memories of historical encounters and conflicts between countries with prevalently Orthodox and Catholic populations. The Orthodox should never forget that the "Latins" destroyed Constantinople during the Crusades (*Pravoslavije*, no. 907-908: 44), and the fact that the West didn't help Orthodox Byzantium to defend itself from the Muslim Turks. The situation is said to be very similar today, for Western countries have allowed the Albanians to occupy Kosovo (*Pravoslavije*, no. 912: 34) and pay no



attention to the process of Islamization of Bosnia and Kosovo<sup>150</sup> (*Pravoslavije*, no. 929: 22–23). Also, the Vatican policy is described as a constant overt proselytism to convert the Orthodox.<sup>151</sup> This can supposedly be seen in today's Ukraine, where the Greek-Catholics have "expansionist intentions."

Taking into account the public role of the church in so-called Serb lands, and the persistent problems between major religious communities in post-war Balkans, it seems that images of other Christians will still depend mostly on SOC perceptions of current relations in this region.

Almost every issue published in 2005 mentions problems in the relations between Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats. The most space is given to the genocide against Serbs in the NDH (the WW II-era Independent Croatian State led by the fascist Ustaša), often illustrated with photographs of the Ustaša's concentration camps. The policy of the NDH in that period, according to one of its ministers, was to expel one third of the Orthodox, to convert one third to Catholicism, and to kill the remaining third. It is also mentioned that the late Pope John Paul II never visited Jasenovac, a concentration camp where, according to *Pravoslavije*, 700,000 Serbs were tortured and killed. The present situation of Orthodox Serbs in Croatia is also very difficult for, according to *Pravoslavije*, many Orthodox Churches have been destroyed and damaged, and many incidents still take place. At the end of every magazine, the news in brief from the world of religion include problems experienced by the SOC and its members in today's Croatia. Many churches have been broken into, and graffiti full of hatred against Serbs has been written on the walls of churches, including fascist symbols (*Pravoslavije*, no. 915).

Behind *Pravoslavije's* ascription of the above-mentioned characteristics to Western Christianity lies the implicit claim to exclusive possession of the truth. For example, an American deacon who used to be Lutheran but has converted to Orthodoxy cites as the

---

111. <sup>150</sup> According to Boško Obradović, this is proof of Western hypocrisy, for there is a strong anti-Muslim wave in European countries.

112. <sup>151</sup> For that reason, a delegation of the Greek Orthodox Church declined the pope's recent invitation to visit the Vatican (*Pravoslavije*, no. 907–8., p. 4).

reason for his conversion that Orthodoxy preserves the “fullness of the apostles’ faith” (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 923: 23). Yet, there are some articles that lay more stress on common ground and similarities between different Christian communities. In one report from a meeting between Orthodox and Catholic officials, both sides agreed that the Christian churches and their common heritage is of high importance for the future of Europe. The statement of Pope John Paul II that Europe should breathe with “both lungs” shows the importance of both Orthodoxy and Catholicism for European integration (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 915: 45). Some positive encounters are mentioned. For example, the Croatian ministry for education and sport supported the opening of a Serbian Orthodox gymnasium in Zagreb, and the mayor of Metkovići helped the Orthodox Church council with the reconstruction of the Orthodox monastery in this Croatian town (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 917: 45). There are reports about conferences and meetings for the promotion of inter-Christian dialogue. A conference of the role of churches in the promotion of religious, cultural and international cooperation, organized in Subotica and Bečka, was presented as follows: “Serbs in Bačka,<sup>152</sup> together with Hungarians, Croats, Slovaks, Jews and other nations, have for centuries lived praising the Lord and earning their daily bread. The soil they live on and the heaven above them connect them. Their religious and cultural differences have created a collage of beauty which makes Bačka the pearl of Europe” (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 915: 42). Although there are not many articles written in that style, they give hope that in the future, the images of religious others will be less burdened with mutual hostilities and conflicts, and more open to mutual understanding, recognition and forgiveness among different religious communities.

## Images of Other Religions

### *Jews*

From the issues of *Pravoslavlje* published in 2005 it appears that the

---

113. <sup>152</sup> Bačka is a region in Vojvodina, an autonomous province of Serbia. Bečka is a small town.

Jews are the religious other with the most positive image. Jews are not mentioned very often, but their religion and religiosity is described in positive terms, e.g., they are often called God's people and the chosen people. In one issue, special attention is paid to the problem of anti-Semitism and the alleged appearance of anti-Semitic groups in Serbia. According to *Pravoslavje*, Judaism is the root of Christianity, and rejecting our roots lead us to accepting of ideology of "blood and soil" (*Blut und Boden*). The Jews were the first to understand that true community is possible only through communion with God. One aspect of Judaism, which has influenced Christian doctrine, is its understanding of time: it broke with the pagan cyclical view of time, which leads to a fatalistic understanding of human nature where there is no place for human responsibility. In Judaism, everything is valued through God and related to God, and time is therefore perceived as directed toward eschatological meaning. This perception provides human life with deeper meaning and highlights the importance of human freedom and responsibility (*Pravoslavje*, no. 914: 10-11). However, in one article about the work of the apostle Paul, the differences between Christianity and Judaism are discussed. It is stressed that Paul understood that Christianity could not remain within Judaism, due to the Old Testament's formalism and insistence on superfluous regulations such as circumcision (*Pravoslavje*, no. 921-922: 10-11).

Jews are placed among the significant religious others not only because of their theological influence on Christianity, regardless whether Christians accepted, redefined or rejected some aspects of Jewish teaching, but also as a particular ethnic group which was exposed to many trials and much oppression through history. Their martyrdom as slaves in Egypt, exiles in Babylon, and victims of the Holocaust is compared with Serbian martyrdom in Kosovo and Jasenovac. It is stated that Jews and Serbs used to live together under Serbian kings, and one of the reasons for punishing Serbs during fascist occupation is said to be their joining the sons of Israel in the recognition of God (*Pravoslavje*, no. 914: 20).

Although Jews are the most tolerated religious others and are presented in a positive light, the insistence on common suffering, particularly in the fascist Independent State of Croatia during War World II, serves to underline the SOC's public position as guardian of

the historical memory of Serb victims, a position which has, unfortunately, often been abused for much or less disguised intervention in the political sphere in the post-communist Balkans.

### *Muslims*

In 2005 there were no articles concerning Islam as a religion in general. Images of Islam are shaped through images of national groups such as Turks, Albanians, and Bosniaks. The images of Muslim Turks illustrate the above-mentioned role of the historical context and mutual encounters, as well as the intermingling of the religious and the national, in shaping the images both of the others and of ourselves. The Turks are usually depicted as “non-Christian”<sup>153</sup> conquerors,” a “wild horde” which interrupted the development of the Serbian medieval state, and “brought darkness and bars on cultural, economical and political development” (*Pravoslavje*, no. 916: 14). The Turkish occupation is usually depicted as a period of slavery, persecution, and torment. During that time, many Orthodox churches were damaged, or turned into mosques, and minarets were added to some churches. The remaining churches were not allowed to have church bells, and many of them were in bad condition: icons and other works of religious art were exposed to decay and ruin, and stones used to fall down from vaults (*Pravoslavje*, no. 920: 35). Christians were forced to build churches away from the roads and high in the mountains to keep them from damage. In order to avoid insults and oppression, priests very rarely went into towns, and Christian women usually covered themselves with headscarves like Turkish women (*Pravoslavje*, no. 919: 35). Turks still preserve the role of significant (religious) other today, not only in history. The news in brief at the end of every magazine report the problems Christians have in the “allegedly secular” Turkish state: Christian cultural heritage in Turkey is not under the protection of the state; the government does not allow the opening of Orthodox theological schools; churches are not allowed to possess land; the government gives some privileges to Islamic institutions but denies them to Christian ones; Turkey still denies the genocide committed against the Armenians 90 years ago; etc. In Turkey

---

114. <sup>153</sup> It should be stressed that in Serbian, the term *nekrst* has pejorative connotations which go beyond the basic meaning “non-Christian.”

there is said to live a significant number of so-called crypto-Christians, who were forced to declare themselves Muslims but confess Christianity in private (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 916: 41). It is very often mentioned that many European Christian communities and countries are opposed to Turkish EU membership, due to the “differences of civilization,” and that Turkey shall have to stop discrimination against Christians if it wants to get closer to Europe.

As the so-called Kosovo ethic forms an essential part of the SOC’s definition of the “Serbian spiritual being,” and as the conflicts and hostilities in this part of Serbia are still ongoing, Albanians are mentioned in every issue of magazine. Kosovo is the core of the Serbian medieval state, and the fact that Serbs are in the minority in this area is only a consequence of persecution and genocide during the Turkish rule, World War II, the communist dictatorship, and the NATO intervention. Special place is given to the riots of the Albanians in March 2004, when more than 34 monasteries were destroyed. Albanians are very often mentioned in connection with terms such as aggression, extremism, violence, radicalism, wild acts, crimes, etc. In almost every issue of the magazine, photographs of damaged and desecrated churches, monasteries and shrines are shown. The picture of Gračanica Monastery<sup>154</sup> surrounded by barbed wire also symbolizes the position of Serbs in Kosovo, who live in ghettos under constant threat from Albanians. Because of the problems in Kosovo, the cradle of the Serbian state and the treasure of Serbian medieval and religious culture, the SOC retains a public role, which can be seen in the numerous diplomatic activities and negotiations undertaken with the participation of SOC representatives in this period. SOC officials (e. g. Bishop Grigorije of Zahum and Hercegovina) claim to strive for the implementation of democratic standards in Kosovo and a civilized life for all inhabitants, and not to negotiate about the status of Kosovo (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 915: 23). Current public activities and problems in mutual relations, then, place Albanians among the significant (religious) others.

Generally speaking, analyzing the contents of all articles published in 2005 we may conclude that the (Muslim) Turks are the least tolerated

---

115. <sup>154</sup> This monastery was included on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2006 (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 910: 9).

(religious) other in history, whereas (Muslim) Albanians<sup>155</sup> have taken that role in the present time. Although the conflicts with Muslim Bosniaks in B&H were no less severe and bloody during the 1990s, they were much less often mentioned, perhaps due to the fact that there had been no serious eruption of violence since the implementation of Dayton peace agreement. However, here and there the problems of unitarism in B&H are mentioned,<sup>156</sup> and the reduced presence of Christians in Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, is perceived as especially problematic (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 914: 2). Also, in the part of B&H where Serbs are a minority (the Federation of B&H), many demolished and damaged churches have not been reconstructed, and economic difficulties in post-war Bosnia also discourage the return of the Serb population. However, some more positive examples are also mentioned: the resurrection of the monastery Žitomislići, a cultural center of Orthodox Serbs in the Neretva valley, which was completely destroyed by Croat forces in 1992 (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 917: 23–27). The fact that the government of the Federation has financially supported this project gives space for a more positive perspective on mutual relations in this multi-religious country.

Speaking in general, although there is no factual information nor any explicit evaluation about Islam in general, we may conclude from the stress on both historical and current conflicts with particular nations of Islamic religion that the implicit images presented of Islam are rather negative and conflictive. The images and encounters with different others are explicitly recognized as important for the creation of our self-image: thus it is said that our martyrdom under Islamic domination (during five centuries of slavery in the Ottoman Empire, and in Kosovo today) helps us to preserve the awareness of ourselves as a distinctive group from the Muslim oppressors, and to prove the

---

116. <sup>155</sup> Although Albanians confess not only Islam, but also Catholicism and Orthodoxy, the great majority of the Albanians living in Kosovo are Muslim.

117. <sup>156</sup> Unitarism here refers to the strengthening of central state institutions at the expense of the federal entities. For example, in an interview with Thomas Fleming, president of the Rockford Institute (a conservative Christian think-tank in the U.S.), it is stated that in Bosnia, under the mask of multiculturalism, a Muslim-dominated state is being established (*Pravoslavlje*, no 919: 15).

strength of the Christian ethos (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 919: 12–13). So, when the Muslim ruler Sinan Pasha (1506–1596) ordered the burning of Saint Sava’s relics in 1594, “his ashes, spread all around Serbia, became a firm basis for faith” (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 918: 47).

#### Atheists: The Least Tolerated Religious Others

Referring to an article in *Pravoslavlje* published in February 2001,<sup>157</sup> Olga Popović-Obradović notes that: “Intolerance toward atheists is stronger than intolerance toward members of different religious communities” (Popović-Obradović, 2004: 136). Although we have mentioned in the previous section that the Turks (historically) and Albanians (currently) are the least tolerated groups, there is little direct evidence in our material for an overall intolerance toward the religion of Islam as such. In contrast, it may safely be concluded that atheism is not tolerated. Every issue of the magazine published in 2005 mentions atheism with negative connotations. Atheism is not considered as a possible worldview, or in terms of the human right not to believe in God and not to confess any religion. Rather, it is identified with communism. The consequences of atheism and communist dictatorship are regarded as catastrophic. They can be measured both quantitatively (in terms of the number of people murdered and prosecuted by the communists) and qualitatively (in terms of distorted values, loss of national and religious identity, etc.).

It is often claimed that the atheist former communists and their children still dominate some media and political parties, and constantly attack SOC. According to Boško Obradović, some intellectuals employed in the media in Serbia are hostile toward the church and toward every manifestation of national identity, and this is a legacy of communism (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 918: 20). Ex-Marxists who have become neo-liberal, together with some media (B92 is most often mentioned in this connection), non-governmental organizations and political parties, are accused of continuing this anti-church and anti-Serbian politics.

---

118. <sup>157</sup> Olga Popović-Obradović, illustrating her thesis with a number of statements by Serbian Orthodox Church officials and articles published in both daily papers and *Pravoslavlje*, defines the Church’s anti-atheistic discourse not as intolerant but as hate speech.

Therefore, it is considered very important to expose the evil of communism in public (by discovering the number of victims of the communist regime, rehabilitating prosecuted Serbian intellectuals, opening the secret files and uncovering the names of all who worked and cooperated with the UDBa secret police, banning from political activities all those who were members of the Communist Party, etc.). In Obradović's opinion, the first crimes against humanity in Serbian history were committed by Serbs who had renounced God, that is to say by atheists. This is also the source of crimes committed in the name of the Serb people, for ex-communists became democrats, atheists became nationalists, the communist Yugoslav Army turned into the Serbian Army, and the secret police recruited paramilitary formations.

Communists and atheists are charged in the pages of *Pravoslavije* with a variety of "sins." The monk Nikodim thinks that atheism has created a cultural vacuum, which was fertile soil for the invasion of other cultures and patterns of life: the example of so-called *turbo-folk*, a popular music genre of low artistic worth performed by singers looking like a cross between an American Barbie doll and an Oriental belly dancer, illustrates how negative this foreign influence is that was allowed by the communists. Of course, one of the greatest sins of the communists is the loss of Serbian national and religious identity. The communists have also invented new nations (Macedonians and Muslims), and therefore created a setting for future conflicts in the region (*Pravoslavije*, no. 927: 19).

Atheism is generally depicted as aggressive, as trying to invade every aspect of society. By abusing Darwin's theory, atheism gained scientific legitimacy and "conquered" the schools as an important agency of socialization and forming of young people's personality (*Pravoslavije*, no. 916: 18-19). The aggressiveness of atheism can also be seen in the work of many non-governmental organizations, politicians, and media: they do not use physical coercion against Orthodoxy (as did "the old atheism," i. e. communism), but they try to impose a world view and a model of the relation between church and state, religion and society where religion and the Church are considered a private matter (*Pravoslavije*, no. 910: 14-16).

Such assertions and accusations imply an underlying claim that the SOC has a monopoly on the protection of national identity and the socialization of Serbian youth, and also support the SOC's aspirations



to (re)gain an important public position. Targeting atheism with primitive anti-communistic discourse and marking certain organizations and public persons as anti-church and therefore anti-Serbian, the SOC assumes the position of an important political actor and arbiter in the change and turbulence of transitional societies.

### The Others' Images of Us

The SOC's "images of the others' images of us" are best presented in a review of a book titled *On Serbophobia Through the Centuries* (Blagojević et al., 2004). The authors' stated motive for writing was that a controversial Catholic official connected with the genocidal Ustaša regime had been canonized (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 907-908: 43). According to the authors, Serbophobia was part of a "Latin" politics that shrewdly ascribed its own crimes to others. The imposition of negative images of Serbs has a long history from the great schism in 1054, through the Congress of Berlin in 1887, the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the genocide in World War II up to the recent Balkan wars.

Many articles in *Pravoslavlje* mention negative views that others have of Orthodoxy, the SOC, Serbia, and Serbs in general. According to Miodrag Popović, the editor of the magazine, not only Serbs but Christians in general are the object of many prejudices. For instance, the first Christians were accused of cannibalism. The Orthodox are often accused of idolatry, because of their respect for icons. However, this is not idolatry, he explains, because the Orthodox do not worship the material the icons are made of, but what is represented in them (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 927: 5).

Authors and journalists mentioning the views of others claim that Serbs and the SOC are generally accused of intolerance, genocide, and territorial aspirations. Many Western thinkers have had and still have many prejudices against our church and people, prejudices which are nowadays almost unanimously accepted. E.g., Boško Obradović quotes the view of French thinker Gustave Le Bon (1841-1931) that slavery under Turkish rule was the most suitable form of political regime for the primitive mentality of the Balkans (*Pravoslavlje*, no. 920: 14-15). One of the "popular" accusations against Serbs, namely, of anti-

Semitism, is said to be a project of modern historical revisionism, one of the greatest examples of false images spread by the media, and a campaign in which many prominent Croats have taken the lead: many prejudices and false images of Orthodox Serbs have been spread since the 19th century by some Croatian religious figures (e.g. bishop Josip Juraj Štrosmajer [Strossmayer], 1815–1905), historians, and influential public persons. Stereotypes against Serbs such as the accusation of anti-Semitism and territorial aspirations are said to be part of a project for a purely Catholic independent Croatia within the “new world order.”

Often, writings about the negative images that Catholic Croats supposedly hold of Serbian Orthodoxy seem an obstacle to the process of reconciliation between these two ethnic and religious groups, as well as to the dialogue between Eastern and Western Christianity that is proclaimed as desirable on the level of declarations.

## Conclusion

The issues of *Pravoslavlje* published during 2005 can be a significant indicator of current streams of thought in Serbian Orthodox Church. First of all, it can be concluded that due to the long historical connection between the Serbian state and the Serbian Church, and to the essential role of religions in the process of (re)building particular national identities in the post-communist Balkans, images of different religious others depend to a high extent on the images of different nations belonging to certain religions. As these processes were accompanied by hostilities and wars, the building and preserving of national identity was to a greater or lesser extent based on a perception of the nation's martyrdom and victimization, and religious symbolism proved suitable for this kind of discourse. So, a specific form of nationalistic and political abuse of religion has taken and still takes place in the Balkans. This can best be perceived in the SOC's images of Islam, which are not based on the characteristics of Islam as a religion in general, but on remembered negative experiences with specific Muslim nations. Conversely, the positive images of Judaism in *Pravoslavlje* are not only due to the Christian roots in Jewish religion, but also to the stipulated common suffering of both Jews and Orthodox Serbs through history.

Images of Christian religious others tend to be more discordant. The

negative sides of Western Christianity are much more expressed, but here and there mutual connections and similarities are regarded as more important than differences, so that there is space for the (re)shaping of more tolerant views on other forms of Christianity. However, this leads to a rather self-contradictory view of Western Christianity and culture in general: religiosity in the West is said to be too authoritarian and too free, too permissive and too restrictive, too secular and too Catholic or Protestant. Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox are seen as very similar while compared to Muslims, but as all too different when compared among themselves.

Although various authors and Serbian Orthodox representatives claim that the SOC strives for dialogue and tolerance, for the acceptance of what is good from different cultures, it is never explained how this acceptance and how mutual dialogue should be conducted in practice. Although there are calls for breaking down the walls that separate people all around the world, dialogue is most often mentioned only in connection with Western Christianity. However, the frequent pointing out of differences and negative aspects of Western Christian theology and policies of Western countries in history up to the present makes it harder to have such encounters. The contradictory position we see with regard to religious others is also evident in negative writings on some Serbian intellectuals (e. g. Dositej Obradović, an Enlightenment philosopher) who have tried to bring our culture closer to the West.

In my opinion, the influence of globalization - the problems of which are dealt with in many *Pravoslavlje* articles - on the prevalence of rather negative, even xenophobic, and contradictory images of others should not be neglected. New religious groups and movements appear, old borders are erased and new ones created, information appears and vanishes in a wink, and it is difficult to find their creators. In this context, what the others are is difficult to define. Globalization and the enormous circulation of information also offers different models of identity, enables encounters with different cultures and world views and endangers the traditional carriers of defined value systems (e.g. churches). In such circumstances, the Serbian Orthodox Church, accustomed to a privileged status as the guardian of a Serbian identity inseparable from Serbian Orthodoxy, and trying to regain the public function it had before communism, tends to be suspicious

toward current world trends. This generates a negative atmosphere within which images toward different others are created, and also partly explains why there is such an insistence on negative images that others have of us.

## References

- Blagojević, Lazar, Rajko Ilišković and Ilija Pavlović. 2004. *O srbofobiji kroz vijekove*. Šamac: Prosvjeta.
- Blagojević, Mirko. 2005. *Religija i crkva u transformacijama društva*. Beograd: Filip Višnjić.
- Kuzmanović, B. 1998. "Retradicionalizacija političke kulture." In *Fragmenti političke kulture*, ed. M. Vasović et al., 257–284. Beograd: Institut društvenih nauka.
- Gredelj, S. 1994. "Dominantne vrednosne orijentacije." In *Razaranje društva*, ed. M. Lazić. Beograd: Filip Višnjić
- Lošonc, Alpar 2002. "Kulturna pluralnost: Apoteoza različitosti ili praksa prihvatanja." *Nova srpska politička misao* 8, no. 1–4: 7–23.
- Milošević, Zoran. 2004. *Tranzicija i srpska crkva*. Beograd: Institut za političke studije.
- Popović-Obradović, Olga. 2004. "Crkva, nacija, država: Srpska pravoslavna crkva i tranzicija u Srbiji." In *Između autoritarizma i demokratije: Srbija, Crna Gora, Hrvatska*, ed. Dragica Vujadinović, 133–149. Beograd: CEDET.
- Pravoslavlje*, all issues published in 2005.
- Radulović, Marijana. 2001. "Religijska (ne)tolerancija u Glasu Koncila i Pravoslavlju (1989.-1991.): Studija slučaja." *Nova srpska politička misao* 8, no. 1–4: 251–267.
- Rot, N. and Havelka, N. 1973. *Nacionalna vezanost i vrednosti kod srednjoškolske omladine*. Beograd: Institut za psihologiju / IDN.
- Vrcan, Srđan. 2004. "Religija i politika." in *Između autoritarizma i demokratije: Srbija, Crna Gora, Hrvatska*, ed. Dragica Vujadinović, 149–165. Beograd: CEDET.
- Vukomanović, Milan. 2001. *Šveto i mnoštvo: Izazovi religijskog pluralizma*. Beograd: Čigoja štampa.

## Chapter Seven

### The Image of Woman in Religious Community Magazines in Bosnia-Herzegovina

## 7 Image of Woman in B&H

*Zilka Spahić-Šiljak*

### Introduction

The subject of this analysis is the image of woman promoted by religious communities through their official organs, that is, through print media aimed primarily at their members, but also at the broader BH public. The reason for analyzing the image of woman in the

framework of a project on the “religious other” is that woman is conceived as other with regard to man (de Beauvoir, 1989) and that she does not participate in the representation of the group to which she belongs (Lacan, 1977).

There are several definitions of otherness, but the most prominent are those that concern the other sex and another culture. The other and otherness has become a category of philosophy, mainly as a result of Simone de Beauvoir’s definition of woman in patriarchal society as a being different from man. A different definition of otherness and the other is that of Orientalism – the Western conception of the Orient (Said, 1978). Edward Said demonstrates how European culture defines the East as radically other, not based on its knowledge of Asia or of non-European cultures, but simply as an opposite to its self-conception.

It is well known that women have for centuries been systematically excluded from the sphere of public life and from positions of power. Among the most influential factors promoting such a policy have been the churches and religious communities, whose rules and interpretations imposed a patriarchal value system with a distinctively hierarchical power structure. Given that religious communities enjoy great authority and popular trust (Tomić-Koludrović and Kunac, 2000), it is important to examine what model of womanhood they promote and what messages they send to male and female believers. On the one hand, this greatly influences the system of values in a society, and on the other, it reflects the actual status of woman in that society.

### Theoretical framework

There are various theoretical accounts for how we understand the other. On one account, the way we look at and represent the other and the different is circumscribed by language and by visual symbols that contain the meaning(s) of our messages. The key question is why we pay attention to the other and the different, and the answer is that difference is essential to understanding and to the very existence of meaning. Jacques Derrida argues that there is always a question of bipolar power relations – upper class/lower class, man/woman, black/white and so on – and that one pole is always dominant with respect to the other (Derrida, 1981).

Another account is also tied to language, but from a different angle.

Difference is necessary because meaning can be constructed and created only in dialogue with the other and the different. However, the Russian linguist Bakhtin argues that meaning does not belong to either speaker in the dialogue but emerges in the very process and interaction of give-and-take (Bakhtin, 1981).

A third, more anthropological account seeks to show that culture depends on the meanings that one social group imposes on the rest of the world, placing those meanings in an organized system of classification (Douglas, 1966). Lévi-Strauss, too, has worked on this problem and has asserted that classification can be done on multiple levels, taking differences between cultures into account (Lévi-Strauss, 1970).

A fourth account is a psychoanalytical one, with the key argument that otherness is essential to the constitution of self. Lacan explained that the child does not have a conception of itself and its self, its identity, until it distinguishes itself from the mother, or until it sees itself from the position of the other (Lacan, 1977).

It is clear from the above accounts, then, that from linguistic, anthropological and psychoanalytic perspectives, we can understand the question of the other and the different as one in which we construct our identity and our self. The subject of the present analysis of the contents of religious media is to what extent and in what way women are represented in the texts and in the accompanying symbols, and how this shows their position as other in relation to men in their own religious discourse. This is, furthermore, closely connected with the question of power. Very often, the concept of power is understood in the sense of economic power, physical coercion, prohibition or control; however, there also exist other kinds of power, namely the cultural and symbolic power that is often found in the media with their powerful influence on public opinion.

Symbolic and cultural power works through stereotypical images of the other and the different to create unequal relations between social and gender groups. This power is particularly evident in gender relations, which are dominated by stereotypical images of the roles of men and women and the hierarchy of patriarchal society. If these images are imposed by the official establishment of a religious community, which has great influence on the forming of attitudes to oneself and to others, it is extremely important to examine what

messages we receive through the official organs of religious communities.

#### Aim and method

The aim of the analysis is to find out, using quantitative and qualitative methods, how the organs of religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina represent woman and what value system they promote and defend, in terms of the following four questions:

- to what extent are women represented as authors of texts in religious organs;
- what topics and questions about women are represented;
- what roles, functions, qualities and attributes are ascribed to women in the text contents and in the accompanying pictorial symbols (illustrations); and
- what messages and images prevail in these texts and illustrations.

The basic hypotheses, confirmed in previous analyses of religious organs (Savić, 1995), are:

- that religious communities perceive woman as otherness;
- that women are not equally represented in the hierarchical structures of religious communities;
- that women are mainly represented in the fields of education, social and medical care-giving, and other service activities;
- that the role of mother and child-raiser is glorified as one by which women gain a special place both in the community and before God.

The present analysis may confirm these hypotheses are confirmed, or may find a different concept of gender politics.

The method used will be quantitative and qualitative content analysis of religious newspapers (Savić, 1995), to establish the number, kinds and contents of messages sent by the official organs of religious communities in B&H about the role and position of woman in the family and society.



## Sample

For this purpose, we have selected three official religious organs for the period January–March 2006:

- *Katolički tjednik* (Catholic Church, B&H);
- *Preporod* (Islamic Community, B&H);
- *Pravoslavlje* (Orthodox Patriarchate, Belgrade).

The *Pravoslavlje* and *Preporod* newspapers appear twice a month, and *Katolički tjednik* once a week, while *Preporod* is considerably larger than the other two, so quantitatively, there is more material for *Katolički tjednik* and *Preporod*. Even so, there is sufficient material for a comparative analysis of these three religious magazines, since the qualitative part of the analysis, in which one can see the actual attitudes and views of religious communities concerning woman's role in society, is by far the more important part. For all three magazines, the text (including headline, text body, byline), its content, and its accompanying illustrations will be analyzed. The analysis will include the categories unsigned and signed texts (whether signed by full name, initials, monastic name, religious title, or pseudonym).

*Katolički tjednik* ("Catholic Weekly") is the official organ of the Catholic Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its founder and publisher is the ordinariate of the Archdiocese of Vrhbosna (Sarajevo). It appears weekly and is also distributed outside B&H in Croatia and to the worldwide Croat diaspora. The format is approximately A4, and every issue has 42 pages. It is printed in B&H in the Croatian language, with color illustrations.

*Preporod* ("Rebirth", subtitled "Islamic informative newspaper") is published by the Rijaset (executive) of the Islamic Community in B&H as an official organ appearing twice a month. It is distributed in all the countries of the former Yugoslavia as well as in the congregations of the worldwide Bosniak diaspora. The format is A3, with a variable number of pages from 40 to 56. It is printed in B&H in Bosnian language, mainly in black and white, though with some color illustrations.

*Pravoslavlje* is published in Belgrade, but it is aimed also at a readership in B&H and the other countries of the region as well as worldwide diaspora communities. The Serbian Orthodox Church is organized so that the Orthodox Church in B&H is under the

jurisdiction of the Orthodox Patriarchate in Belgrade. The Patriarchate's most widespread and influential print medium is *Pravoslavlje*. The other religious periodicals of the Orthodox Church, published by the individual eparchies, do not enjoy the same authority and geographical coverage. The format is A4, and each issue has 51 pages. The magazine appears twice a month, and is distributed in the countries of the former Yugoslavia and in the Serb diaspora. It is printed in Belgrade in Serbian language with Cyrillic script.

## Results

The results fall under four headings: the relative frequency of male and female authors, and the kinds of the texts they write; the frequency of topics dedicated to women; the roles of men and women; and text content analysis.

### *Male and female authors, their texts and topics*

We will first present quantitative data about the number of women and men who appear as authors of the texts and creators of illustrations and other accompanying materials, as well as women's representation in editorial policy. There will follow an analysis of what kinds of text are written about women and by women in the three publications.

The total number of texts analyzed is 1,146, of which 498 in *Katolički tjednik* (12 issues), 234 in *Pravoslavlje* (6 issues), and 414 in *Preporod* (6 issues), all from the period January–March 2006. Of these, a total of 748 were signed with a full name, allowing us to determine the sex of the author (Figure 7.1), while the rest were unsigned, signed with initials only, or from news agencies.

In *Katolički tjednik*, there are 278 signed texts, 53 of them (19%) by women. *Preporod* has a significantly larger number and proportion of signed texts – 338 – but only 26 of them (7.7% of the total) are signed by women, a share nearly three times lower than in *Katolički tjednik*. *Pravoslavlje* has a total of 132 signed texts, 27 of them (20.5%) signed by women. This is the highest percentage of female authorship. Women, then, have a small share in the authorship of texts, especially in *Preporod*, but it is also important to analyze what women write about.

*Table 2: Texts of female authors by subject matter*

Subject	Preporod	Pravoslavlje	Katolički tjednik	Sum
Religious life	18	19	18	55

and culture				
History and politics	2	6	8	16
Theology	0	0	11	11
Family	0	2	7	9
Youth	0	0	9	9
Cooking	6	0	0	6
Total	26	27	53	106

In *Katolički tjednik*, the greatest share of the texts signed by women relates to religious life and culture (18 texts, 34%). Women most often write short reports about religious and cultural events in which, judging by the illustrations, both men and women participate, though the pictures are predominantly of men, especially pictures of religious authorities and important persons from religious and cultural life. Second most numerous are theological texts; it is positive that women write, comment, and discuss theological questions (11 texts, 21%). Third come texts about young people, their activities in the church and in the framework of church events (9 texts, 17%). Fourth come texts from the fields of history and politics, presentations of historical persons and events (8 texts, 15%). Finally, there are topics related to family and everyday life, and on how to overcome frustration with the help of faith (7 texts, 13%).

In *Preporod*, the greatest share of the texts signed by women relates to religious life and culture; they are about religious and cultural events, public talks, and religious weddings (18 texts, 69%). The second group are texts about cooking, or recipes for housewives (6 texts, 23%), and the third is connected with history and politics (2 texts, 8%), of which one is a translation and the other is a report on the founding of a Women's forum for protection of the rights of Muslim women in Europe). In *Preporod*, then, women do not deal with theological topics at all. But neither do they write on family matters, which is otherwise what women most often deal with when they are given space to write. It is also interesting that there is no topic on young people and their participation in religious life.

In *Pravoslavije* as in the two foregoing magazines, the greatest share

of texts with women authors concerns religious life and culture (19 texts, 70.4%). This is followed by texts on history and politics, tied to the current political events in Kosovo (6 texts, 22.2%) and finally texts on family life and child-raising (2 texts, 7.4%). As in *Preporod*, women in this magazine do not write about theological topics. Such topics are the exclusive preserve of male authors.

### *Texts about women*

In this section we will present the texts that deal with women, whether they are entirely dedicated to women or only indirectly relate to them. The aim is to spot the messages that directly or indirectly tell the readers what roles the religious community promotes for women.

*Table 3: Texts about women by subject matter*

Subject matter	Preporod	Pravoslavlje	Katolički tjednik	Sum
Theology	1	0	9	10
Religious and humanitarian activities	13	0	10	23
Saints' lives	0	0	5	5
Historical personalities	0	0	4	4
Art	4	0	0	4
Family life	0	2	7	9
Total	18	2	35	55

Table 7.1 shows the number of texts about women by subject matter, that is, the context and activities in which women are mentioned. It is clear that women do not only mostly write about religious and cultural events, they are also most often written about in these spheres of activity.

As we see, *Katolički tjednik* devotes the greatest number of texts about the role of women to family life and the role of mother and child-raiser. The remainder of the texts devoted to the lives of saints and famous historical personalities in Christian tradition sends a clear message that if woman is not a mother and is not raising children, it is best for her to be devoted to the service of God or to care for others, as

do religious sisters in the framework of the church.

The other most important kind of topic devoted to women is in the field of theology (9 texts, 32% of the total number of texts about women). Two women regularly write on topics concerning the preservation of spirituality, morality, and life according to Christian teachings.

Since women are only pictured twice in decision-making positions in public life, in the context of a visit by a female Croatian government minister to the Banja Luka parish office about refugee return, it is clear that this kind of engagement is relegated to the back of the drawer. Compared with the number of male politicians that are presented both in words and pictures (29 pictures), it is clear that the sphere of politics and decision-making is mainly reserved for men. Nor are other occupations better represented. Women appear pictured in three other kinds of profession: six writers and poets, seven journalists and two teachers (see ). Besides church callings as nuns and religious sisters (who in two cases appear also as the conductors of church choirs), then, women are most frequently represented in the arts, journalism, and education, the fields in which women are generally present in high percentages in society (so-called female occupations).

Although one gets the impression from the illustrations that there is a high percentage of women represented, because of the photos of nuns and other women who are active in the fields of family life, education, and cultural events, the textual contents do not follow the same proportion. Furthermore, it is clear that only men appear on the first ten pages (and sometimes more), and that the topics here are exclusively connected with men. If one bears in mind that in journalism, the first pages or first part of the newspaper are used for the most important and striking topics, it is clear who, in the official messages of the religious community, is "more equal" (in the Orwellian sense), who is the norm to which all must conform (Lacan, 1977) - and who is the other with respect to that norm.

Women are also outside the hierarchy. They are not found in high-level religious delegations, nor as representatives of the official religious community. This is also attested to by the findings of an unofficial survey (student research essays under my guidance) showing that women are not found in the hierarchical structure of the religious communities at all, let alone in their more important

positions.

The general impression is that there prevails in the texts a stereotypical positioning of male and female persons, which goes to confirm the thesis that the messages sent to believers by the religious communities on the one hand influence the value system, and on the other hand reflect the actual position of women in society (Spahić-Šiljak, 2005). The latter is attested by a study on the socio-economic situation of women in BiH (STAR, 2003) that shows the dichotomy between a male/public and a female/private sphere of activity, and the restriction of women to motherhood and fields of work that are a natural extension of her duties in the private sphere.

Based on the messages sent by *Katolički tjednik*, the position of woman is second-class, marginal, and mainly restricted to the “naturally conditioned” role of mother, spouse, or nun. In other social positions she is represented very rarely, and without power or influence.

Regarding *Pravoslavlje*, it is important to stress that though the magazine has a high percentage of female authors, *it has no texts about women at all*. There is not a single topic wholly or even partly devoted to women. Since there are no texts on women, one may conclude that the Orthodox Church promotes a policy of disregard. These questions simply are not in the church’s field of interest and attention, unlike the other historical, cultural, and political topics that female authors, too, write about in *Pravoslavlje*. In *Pravoslavlje*, women have space to write about these topics that interest the church, but they have no space to write about women’s issues, not even about the purely religious topics that one might expect in the contents of this magazine.

The official message of the church, then, promotes the negation of the other, who is not even interesting enough to be an other, but is completely isolated and excluded. In this way, women and questions that directly or indirectly touch on women fall into oblivion, which is worse than criticism or open confrontation, for in an open dialogue, one arrives at some solution, but the disregarded and forgotten person ceases to exist and to be relevant (Mernissi, 1993). The conclusion is that women have to struggle not only against the position of the other and the second-class, but also against the policy of disregard that excludes them from the collective memory and history of a people,

community, or group.

*Preporod* (unlike *Katolički tjednik*) does not deal with family issues at all, or at least, in the issues analyzed there is not a single text about it. Topics from religious and cultural life and humanitarian activities take up the most space, whether the authors are men or women. The role of women in religious life (see ) is mainly limited to the celebration of women who have become *hafizas* (who have learned the whole Qur'an by heart); women who participate in religious gatherings, whether as choir members or taking their final examinations (*hatma*) in religious instruction in the *mekteb*. In one interview with a young *hafiza*, the girl repeats a stereotypical image of woman as having a concentration deficit due to menstruation and as being more emotional, and therefore more easily upset by small difficulties, than men are (*Preporod*, 15 February 2006: 21).

The second most notable role of women is in the field of culture and the arts – in this case motion pictures, because there is extensive coverage of the movie *Žravnica* for which the director Jasmila Žbanić received the Golden Bear award (four texts, 22%). Although the director is celebrated, the articles are mostly about the content of the movie: the women who suffered in the recent war, against whom the crime of rape was committed, but who received neither legal nor social protection in BH society.

In the third place is the role of the female journalist, who writes about various everyday topics, reports from religious and cultural events, or writes about cooking.

Woman as leader, whether as a manager, director, or politician, is almost invisible, for there appears only one woman in each of those roles, in the frame of some “more important” topic. For instance, a woman director appears once in a text about the recognition awarded to deserving individuals by the Gazi Husrev-beg *medresa* in Sarajevo. Women do not at all appear as theologians, nor do they write on significant issues in fields where rules and value systems are created. Taking into consideration that a large number of women have graduated in theology since the study was founded, it is surprising that there are no women writing, commenting on, and translating texts of that kind. There are no women in the official delegations of the Islamic Community, whether in the high delegations led by the *Reis ul-ulema* or



in the delegations led by muftis or other representatives of the lower bodies of the Islamic Community,. The reason is that there are no women in the hierarchical structure of the community or in decision-making positions, save an insignificant number of women members of the Assembly of the Islamic Community, who are not many enough to influence the passing of any decisions (in 2006 there were three women, making up less than 4% of the 83 members).

Women, then, have a marginal position in the textual contents. Questions strictly concerning women are hardly discussed. Women do not appear on the first pages of *Preporod* except in a few cases (as writers of letters to the editor, in connection with world events, or as converts to Islam), and as already mentioned, the first pages always carry the key news. The position of woman is the position of the other, who is not only different but also second-class in all spheres of religious, cultural, and political life. Women are mainly the implementers of established policies, norms, and standards that are always created for them by someone else. This is also confirmed by data from the above-mentioned study on the socio-economic position of women in BiH, which shows that women are under-represented in positions of power, decision-making and policy-making, and that the traditional division of labor and roles between men and women is still the preferred one (STAR, 2003).

#### *The visual depiction of male and female roles*

Since women often appear in illustrations, especially in *Preporod* and *Katolički tjednik* and less often in *Pravoslavlje* (Figure 7.2), it is important to analyze the kind of roles in which women are represented. The following data on the visual depiction of male and female roles, then, will tell us something about the gender policy of the religious community.

Table 7.3 shows the frequency of the male and female family roles depicted in the illustrations of *Katolički tjednik* and *Preporod*. In *Pravoslavlje*, there are no such pictures at all (this magazine is generally less illustrated than the two others.)

It is not surprising that the roles of mother and daughter are the most frequently represented, followed by the roles of father, wife, husband, and son. The mother is the paradigm of the homeland and hearth, as is symbolically underlined by a *Preporod* heading: "Bosnia is

like the face of a mother" (*Preporod*, no. 5, 1 March 2006: 19).

All the texts promote the model of the pious woman, whether the connection is to the Mother of God, to a saint, to some other historical person, or to pious women in a present-day context. She is, above all, a good mother, whose most sacred task is to bring up her family and fulfill the sacred duty she has been given. In one of the texts signed by Don Jozo Ančić, the author stresses that children's upbringing is the most exalted and holy task of the mother, for it is the mother who shapes the character of the child ("Odgojna zadaća žene, majke," *Katolički tjednik*, no. 11: 32). Other texts by the same author thematically devoted to women have similar messages, confining the role of woman to motherhood, piety, and giving her love to others.

*Table 4: Family roles of persons pictured*

Role	Preporod	Katolički tjednik	Sum
Mother	11	10	21
Daughter	5	9	14
Father	7	6	13
Wife	6	5	11
Husband	6	5	11

Son	3	5	8
Grandmother	0	2	2
Grandfather	0	1	1
Brother	0	1	1
Sister	0	1	1
Total	38	45	83

Androcentric interpretations within the religious discourse of monotheist religions define woman as “otherness” with respect to man and a male God, reducing her personality to an object, which results in the subordinate position of women. This is why feminist theologians insist on reconceptualizing a language and intellectual framework in which both man and woman would be subjects of culture and scientific discourse (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1996). In this way one might deconstruct the social construction of gender that was created and institutionalized by the patriarchal elite (de Beauvoir, 1989). The language of religious discourse in the monotheist traditions is highly masculinized, so that all these traditions are dominated by the father figure or figure of God the Father who has power and authority, and by grammatically masculine nouns: pope, bishop, *reis*, mufti, cardinal, metropolitan, Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox, believer, follower, etc.<sup>158</sup>

The illustrations sometimes correspond to and follow the contents of the text, but sometimes they are not strictly tied to it. For example, in *Katolički tjednik* the role of mother appears not only in illustrations of texts about family life, but also in other texts.<sup>159</sup>

In *Preporod*, sadly, the figure of the mother appears most often in connection with the suffering of Bosniaks, the sons lost in the war in BiH, and the search for missing family members, or in current war zones around the Muslim world. Mothers are unfortunately still connected with the suffering and pain that dominates Bosniak political discourse.

In this section, we analyze the occupations and religious roles of

---

1. <sup>158</sup> All of which are grammatically masculine in Bosnian, or have a masculine and a feminine form, with the former most often used.

2. <sup>159</sup> See e. g. “Vjera ljubi i tješi,” *Katolički tjednik*, no. 1 (8 January 2006).

women as well as men to indicate the range and kinds of roles of each, and to more explicitly show the position of the “other” in the official discourse of religious communities (Table 7.4, Table 7.5).

The greatest number of pictures of women in various religious roles and occupations is in *Katolički tjednik* (79 pictures). Nuns and religious sisters appear in half of these (40 pictures). This is followed by pictures of saints from Catholic history (9), Mary the Mother of God (7), journalists (7), disciples of Jesus (6), and poets. Other everyday roles such as teachers, directors, or politicians are quite marginal. The illustrations depicting women, then, are dominated by pictures of religious sisters engaged in education, aid work, and care for the ill and the weak, which is a direct message to the readership what kind of female person is preferred in the Catholic church.

*Table 5: Roles or occupations of women depicted*

Katolički tjednik		Pravoslavlje		Preporod	
Role	N	Role	N	Role	N
Nun	40	Mother of God	6	Artist	7
Saint	9	Nun	3	Journalist	6
Mother of God	7	Saint	1	<i>Muallima</i>	4
Journalist	7	Disciple of Jesus	1	<i>Hafiza</i>	4
Disciple of Jesus	6			Educator	2
Poet	6			Legator ( <i>vakif</i> )	1
Politician	2			Politician	1
Educator	2			Director	1
				IC local board member	1
SUM	79		11		27

*Muallima*: teacher of religion. *Hafiza*: someone who knows the Qur’an by heart.

*Table 6: Roles or occupations of men depicted*

Katolički tjednik		Pravoslavlje		Preporod	
Role	N	Role	N	Role	N
Cardinal or bishop	104	Priest	37	Imam	75
Pope	62	Bishop or metropolitan	27	Politician	58
Priest	55	Archbishop or bishop	18	Prof./theologian	52
Professor	54	Politician	17	Reis ul-ulema	37
Reporter	35	Saint	13	Artist	16
Jesus Christ	29	Christ	9	Mufti	15
Politician	29	Patriarch	9	Reporter	11
Artist	16	Soldier or hero	7	Scientist	6
Apostle or saint	15	Scientist	7	Businessman	4
Soldier or hero	7	Artist	5	Soldier or hero	4
Businessman	6	Prof./theologian	5	Sufi	4
Scientist	5	Businessman	1	President of the community	3
SUM	417		155		285

In comparison, it is clear that pictures of males are more frequent and that they are dominated by pictures of cardinals and bishops (104), popes (61), and priests of various ranks (55), followed by educators and theologians (54). Politicians appear on 29 pictures, which is not a high share (6%) of the total number of males depicted. Male figures, then, occupy the most important positions in the church and in religious life, positions that are characterized by power. This kind of spiritual power has a strong effect on the minds of male and female believers, for the pictures presented establish the domination of the male sex over the female sex (in the terms suggested by Derrida, 1981).

*Preporod* has a significantly lower number of pictures of women compared with *Katolički tjednik*. The greatest number is of female artists (7) who have distinguished themselves in defense of human

rights, especially the human rights of women who suffered in the past war. They are followed by journalists (6) appearing as authors of texts, and *muallimas* (religion teachers, 4) and *hafizas* (who know the Qur'an by heart, 4). Compared to *Katolički tjednik*, where pictures of nuns predominate, the pictures of *muallimas* in Preporod are hard to notice, although they work in the same activities – education and cultural events – as the nuns in the Catholic magazine. This is evidence that the traditional division of labor is promoted and that women continue to be most strongly represented in so-called “female occupations.” The image of woman as director, teacher, and politician is presented once each.

The general impression is that there really are not any women in the pictures, except in the background of some religious, cultural, or political event. Women are not present at a single significant gathering organized by the Islamic Community or meeting attended by its representatives, except somewhere in the background or as service staff at receptions or official visits.<sup>160</sup>

In comparison, men occupy the majority of the illustrations. Most of these show imams (75 pictures) in the framework of various religious, cultural, and political activities. Imams, then, are the key figures in the Islamic community and they officially represent it, while *muallimas* are in a second-class position, for they appear only as participants in certain events, but not as representatives. There follow 58 pictures of politicians (20.4% of the pictures of males), which is a rather large number for a religious newspaper. The reason may be the large number of pictures in the column “News from the Islamic world,” where sadly there is a large number of wars going on, and so the number of such news is fairly large. Besides, a large number of politicians’ pictures appears in connection with the visits of official delegations of the Islamic Community to the authorities of B&H and other countries to solve problems regarding the religious freedoms and rights of Muslims in B&H and in the diaspora.

The conclusion is that women are entirely marginalized in the pictorial messages, which presents a clear message about the status and positions of men and women. Men dominate in roles of power and

---

3. <sup>160</sup> See *Preporod*, no. 1 (1 January 2006): 4; *Preporod*, no. 3 (1 February 2006): 14.

authority, and women in secondary roles tied to questions of education, culture, and conversion to Islam. This signifies a strict polarity and domination of one sex over the other (again, in the terms of Derrida, 1981).

*Pravoslavljje* has the fewest pictures compared to the other two organs, and the number of pictures of women is also very low in comparison. Women appear only in eleven illustrations, of which six show the Mother of God (*Bogorodica, theotokos*), but only as accompanying pictorial symbols in a text that deals with some other, "more important" historical, political, or cultural topic.<sup>161</sup>

There are also three pictures of nuns, shown in the background of some other "more important" event, namely as witnesses to the destruction of the churches in Kosovo (*Pravoslavljje*, no. 936, 15 March 2006).

When we compare with the pictures of men, we see that the situation is the same as with the previous two papers, for the pictures of religious leaders of various ranks in the hierarchy predominate. Priests appear on the greatest number of pictures (37), followed by bishops, metropolitans and the Patriarch (36). Politicians appear on 17 pictures (11% of male pictures).

In conclusion, women are entirely relegated to the back of the drawer, for they appear only incidentally in the framework of other and more important topics. Their role is reduced to the point where one gets the first impression that there are no women in this magazine at all. The domination of male figures clearly shows who has the authority, power, and position to define the rules and establish the norms. As in the two other papers, man is the norm and woman is otherness deep in the man's shadow (Lacan, 1977).

## Conclusion

The analysis of the texts, illustrations, authorship, the numbers and kinds of texts by or about women, and the depiction of male and female figures in the three religious organs *Katolički tjednik*, *Preporod* and *Pravoslavljje* confirms the initial hypotheses:

---

4. <sup>161</sup> See *Pravoslavljje*, no. 931–932 (1–15 February 2006): 26–27.

1. The religious communities perceive woman as otherness, and very often ignore her completely in their texts and illustrations, as is the case with the magazine *Pravoslavlje*.
2. Women are not equally represented in the hierarchical structures of the religious communities. They are not found in their official bodies and delegations. This is characteristic of all three religious organs.
3. Women are mainly represented in the fields of education, social and health care, and culinary and other service activities, which are extensions of housework and the duties that women carry out every day.
4. Female authors are under-represented relative to males. For the most part, they write neither about women, nor about theological issues, except in *Katolički tjednik*, where female theologians have the space to deal with the most important topics of a religious organ.
5. The role of mother and child-raiser is glorified as one in which women gain a special position in the community and before God. This is particularly stressed in *Katolički tjednik*.

#### References

- Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- de Beauvoir, Simone. 1989 [1949]. *The Second Sex*, transl. H. M. Parshley. Penguin.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1981. *Positions*. Chicago University Press.
- Douglas, Mary. 1966. *Purity and Danger*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1970. *The Raw and the Cooked*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Lacan, Jacques. 1977. *Écrits: A Selection*. London: Tavistock.
- Mernissi, F. *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*. Reprint ed. University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Said, E. *Orientalism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978.
- Savić, Svenka. 1995. "Još jedan primer (ne)vidljivosti žene u udžbeniku."



- Feminističke sveske*, no. 3–4. (Belgrade.)
- — —. 2002. *Feministička teologija*. Novi Sad: Futura Publikacija.
- Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. 1996. *The Power of Naming*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Spahić Šiljak, Zilka. 2008. "Analysis on the Image of Woman in the School: Religious Textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina." In *Ženy a náboženství / Women and Religions 2*, ed. Michaela Moravčíková and Lucia Grešková. Bratislava: Ústav pre vzťahy št. a cirkví.
- STAR. 2003. Socio-Economic Status of Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. (STAR Network World Learning, BiH). Sarajevo: Jež.
- Tomić-Koludrović, Inga and Suzana Kunac. 2000. *Rizici modernizacije: Žene u Hrvatskoj devedesetih*. Split: U. G. Stope Nade.



## Chapter Eight

### Images of the Religious Other in Serbia

## 8 The Religious Other in Serbia

*Zorica Kuburić*

The image of the religious other is first and most directly formed in the family. But since the family is only a mediator of social values, which it has adopted whether as historical heritage or as a personal choice, I hold that the formation of identity, of self-image, and in particular the image of the religious other, is also significantly influenced by religious representatives, who by their words and behaviour also influence the drawing of boundaries between “us” and “them.”

We will reflect on some important fields of communication that tie together interpersonal relationships and makes them close or more or less distant. In this chapter, we will pay attention to the understanding

of the religious other in the writings of influential representatives of the dominant religious community in Serbia, and in the thoughts of representatives of different religious communities about the other communities. A companion chapter (Chapter 10) will examine attitudes among the general population in Vojvodina. By studying the general population, we can map dominant and marginal groups, and indicate where the adherents of certain religious communities are located on that map. Together, these two chapters will trace a comprehensive image of the religious other and present the situation of adherents to minority religious communities and their opportunities for self-realization in professional, personal and social life in a multi-confessional society like Serbia.

Generally speaking, in Serbia we can trace four levels of distancing in law and practice. The Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) as the representative of the nationally based religious community is central to the formation of the public's image of the other, and its views are closest to those of the general population, as will be shown in the study of social distance in Vojvodina. The second level is that of traditional churches which have the same rights as the SOC; religious education for these confessions in public schools is an attempt to give rights to religious others based on their historical presence and recognition. The third religious others are those religious communities that are called sects; these are not seen as ours, and they are thought to be spies, traitors, or to care more for money than for faith. On the fourth level are the various "cults" whose representatives and organization are not well known, but which cause the most fear. Unlike the SOC, which is the dominant, national and historical Church, all other churches and religious communities have their seat in some other country, and a far smaller number of local believers.

We can study attitudes to other religious communities from the perspective of the priesthood and religious leaders, who, on the one hand, maintain official relations with the representatives of other religious communities, and on the other hand, influence their own believers in the intimate circle of relations on the personal level, in the family, and in the religious community, as well as during religious instruction classes recently re-introduced in public schools. Religious instruction textbooks have been analyzed elsewhere (Kuburić and Moe, 2006). We will focus our attention on the views of religious community

representatives as we find them in published writings, or in the personal conversations I have had over the past few years.

What place do religious leaders give to the religious other in their writings?

I will cite only a few typical works from different periods, approximately the last 100 years, which illustrate the attitudes of spiritual leaders towards different beliefs and their ways of guarding their believers against proselytism. I will focus on Vojvodina, where the Orthodox are dominant (58%), and the religious others are chiefly Catholics (23%) and Protestants (4%). Protestantism began to spread in Vojvodina only 20 years after it appeared in Germany. Although the first Protestant groups here were Lutheran and Reformed, a particular group called the Nazarenes spread in the Serb population in the 19th century, which provoked particular reactions by Orthodox priests (Bjelajac, 2004).

I will begin by going back more than a century and citing Vladimir Dimitrijević's *Nazarenstvo: njegova istorija i suština* (Nazarenism: Its History and Essence, 1894), which at the time received a prize from the *Matica Srpska* cultural society. The author opens by saying: "Amid all our misery and troubles, Nazarenism, too, is spreading like some vicious leprosy through our national body. It sneaks into our flock like a true swindler." The author mentions several possible ways of combating its spread. Above all, he stresses that the Nazarenes, "that unpleasant phenomenon," should be studied scientifically, to discover its essence, character, institutions and customs. He notes that "there are many who say that all this is not really necessary, and that the best means against the Nazarenes is to ignore them, to scorn them altogether, to take no notice of them." However, the author opposes this view, because it would be like idly watching a criminal take your belongings. He calls for Nazarenism to be prevented from its conquest. In order to serve his Orthodox church, the author takes it upon himself to shed light on the truth about Nazarenes. At the end of the book, Dimitrijević calls on the clergy to unite, for only by joining forces, in all places and positions, can it fight against the evil that has surrounded the entire body, and acting on one's own is worthless. So both priests, monks, and theologians are called to go to war, whether by their spoken word or by their pen, against this invasion by a new religion

(Dimitrijević, 1894: 165). There was, then, a fear that Protestantism would provoke schisms in the Orthodox Church by its preachings, for there was great popular interest in this faith.

In a 1908 article in the adventist magazine *Zions-Waechter*, titled "Croatia, Serbia and Bulgaria" (16 November 1908), one H. F. Schuberth described these countries as a mission field, but noted that the mission of Protestant communities in Serbia, with its 85% Orthodox population, had not been too successful, because, as the pastor put it, "in this country too, the clergy of the state Church has succeeded in preventing the appearance of every other religious community; however, where the state authorities are concerned, greater freedom rules, and nothing stands in the way of peddling books" (Šušljic, 2004:140).

A century later, in Serbia (excluding Kosovo and Metohija) nearly 85% of the population continues to declare themselves Orthodox. Like the *novoverci* ("newfathers") then, the New Religious Movements today provoke some to join them, others to oppose them. The public seems to be more repelled the smaller is the religious group, i. e. the more it is treated as a "sect." Religious leaders feel called to preserve their flocks, by various means. Some study these groups and write negatively about them, others spread fear and prejudice, or ignore them, or blame them. What is new in our time is the power of the media to amplify the reverberations around other religions and to make them seem scary and threatening. However, I hold that the media do not create this message; rather, they are able to blow it out of proportion and spread it quickly. We can first discern the image of the religious other in the religious community, from whence it is transmitted to the family and other agents of socialization.

Among the significant religious figures in the Serbian Orthodox Church that have influenced cultural life in Serbia, I will highlight a few names. Two broadly educated theologians were Nikolaj Velimirović and Justin Popović. Well-known professors at the Theological Faculty in Belgrade since its inception were Emilijan Čarnić and Lazar Milin. The first editor of the journal *Teološki pogledi* (Theological Views), published in Belgrade since 1968, was Vladan Popović. The contemporary scene is marked by the journal *Philotheos*, edited by Bogoljub Šijaković. Professor Radovan Bigović, the former dean of the Theological Faculty, is well-liked and influential among the

students, respected and loved among the believers of the church in Zemun, and often present at public debates, conferences, and in the media. In the following, I wish to highlight the texts and thoughts of a sample of these figures in the Serbian Orthodox Church regarding attitudes to the religious other.

Nikolaj Velimirović (1882–1956) is a much-loved author, whose works were printed in huge numbers at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, considerably expanding his influence in Serbia. Velimirović wrote numerous works in Serbian, English, and German. The first book, published in 1911 at the age of 29, was *Religija Njegoševa* (Religion of Njegoš), which has seen a number of editions. The publisher's note to the 1987 edition ends with the message: "May this book serve as a signpost and lighthouse on the stormy sea of our modern life, as a compass and a bearing on the road to a brighter and happier future for our people, which is always ready to follow its intellectuals on the right path." What interests us here is the understanding of the religious other. Speaking of Njegoš, and setting out his understanding of chivalry, Bishop Nikolaj writes:

Njegoš's life was filled with the struggle against injustice and the preaching of justice... Montenegrins and Turks are mainly personifications of justice and injustice; in truth, there is injustice also among Montenegrins, as there is justice also among Turks, but in the main, we hold that for Njegoš, Montenegrins and Turks are justice and wrongdoing... Njegoš unreservedly and without second thoughts preaches opposition to injustice or, what is one and the same, opposition to evil. (Velimirović, 1987: 164)

In Serbia, religious identity was formed in relation to the centuries-long opposition to the powerful Turkish domination. This defensive stance Bishop Nikolaj calls chivalry that opposes evil. One gets the impression that this borderland of Serbia and Montenegro has kept up its guard, like an early trauma that becomes an integral part of life and cannot easily be healed. He writes:

Always, as long as Montenegro has existed as a Slav land, there one has only known the theory of opposition to evil. This theory was preached in the churches with the Cross and the Gospel, it was preached at the assemblies with songs and *gusle*, it was preached by the old and the young, the holy and the wise, women and men. And this preaching so lifted the spirit of the small Montenegrin tribe, that for centuries, it was

able to resist the greatest evil that history ever visited on the Aryan European race—the all-conquering power of the Ottomans. (Velimirović, 1987: 165)

Where the attitude to the religious other is concerned, Nikolaj Velimirović is criticized for the anti-Semitism in his works. A young author of Serbian-English origin, Jovan Byford, comments that:

In the early stages of his clerical career, Velimirović was a progressive theologian, widely perceived as a liberal force within the Church, and as a person who might be able to guide Serbian Orthodoxy down a modernist path. He was believed to be an anglophile with an affinity towards Protestantism acquired during his studies in Bern, Genova, and Oxford. (Byford 2004: 3)

However, he underwent a “profound personal transformation” from 1920, turning to “a xenophobic strand of Serbian clerical nationalism and populism,” which by 1939 had acquired “overtly racist overtones.” He famously ascribed “modern ideas including democracy, and strikes, and socialism, and atheism, and religious tolerance, and pacifism, and global revolution, and capitalism, and communism” to Jews or, as he put it, to “their father, the Devil” (Byford 2004: 4-7).

Lazar Milin, an apologist in the SOC and long a professor at the Theological Faculty, tried to reconcile exclusivism and ecumenism at the end of his book *Naučno opravdanje religije* (Scientific Justification of Religion).

This apologetic does not show hatred to anyone. It anathemizes nobody, it casts aspersions on nobody, it calls nobody by offensive expressions. Its writer is aware that love is the supreme law of the Gospel and takes care to make no mistakes about that law in this apologetic. Well, a critic may ask: what kind of love is this, when in this book such dark pictures and crushing criticisms are made of Islam, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism, and of all other religions except Orthodoxy? This reproach obviously rests on a mistaken understanding of love. Love should not be understood as some kind of coddling, currying favour, flattery, and closing one’s eyes to that which goes against the evangelical truth. Love and truth cannot and must not be in two opposing camps... It is not an absence of love if, between two opposite opinions, apologetics openly says which of those two opinions is correct. (Milin, 1993: 409)



Recently, in 2003, there appeared a book titled *Judin poljubac: Apostasija 'Srpske pravoslavne crkve'* (The Kiss of Judas: The Apostasy of the "Serbian Orthodox Church"). The publisher is the Holy Mount Orthodox Mission of the Esphigmenou Monastery of the Holy Ascension; the introduction is signed John the Bulgarian, but otherwise, the anonymous authors are Serb Zealots.<sup>162</sup> They severely condemn their church for all that ties it to communism, ecumenism, and praying together with heretics and apostates from the Orthodox faith. They sharply criticize all those who in any way contribute to the betrayal of Orthodoxy, and show numerous photos of high Church officials who by their meetings with the religious others have sunken into the "church of the cunning." In their view, as all the heresies and all the non-Christian religions have united, the Tower of Babylon has been rebuilt; every individual heresy or false religion is incomparably less dangerous than this one general religion of all heresies and religions (Anon, 2003). The Serb Zealots are, in short, a tiny group that distances itself both from its "apostate brothers" and from other religions, wishing to preserve the pure Orthodox faith.

Finally, I would like to cite the book *Crkva i društvo* (Church and Society) by Radovan Bigović, the former dean of the Theological Faculty of the SOC in Belgrade (Bigović, 2000). He writes that the Other is something we cannot be without, our other "I", the condition for our personality and existence, for without the other there is no fullness of existence and personal identity. Bigović stresses that the essence and tragedy of every human sin lies precisely in the severing of a relation with the other, rather than in the violation of moral norms or customs. He considers repentance to include trust in the other, whoever he may be and whatever he may be like, for the potential for good is not completely destroyed in any human being. The context from which he speaks is understood to be the relations between the peoples in the former Yugoslavia, who were placed by history on the borderline

---

1. <sup>162</sup> The Zealots are Orthodox who broke communion with the Patriarchate over calendar change (1924) and ecumenism (the 1960s); the Esphigmenou (Serbian: Esfigmen) monastery on Mount Athos is controlled by Zealot holdouts, and is out of communion with the other monasteries (Speake 2002: 164-166). The "Mission" (*Svetogorska Pravoslavna Misija Svetovaznesenjskog manastira Esfigmen*) appears to be a civic association in Belgrade. -Ed.

between different civilizations and opposing worlds. Here, many circumstances led to national self-love and arrogant pride, with each of the three major religious communities feeling that it can realize and preserve its national identity only by separating and liberating itself from the other two. Both in this text and in Bigović's many public talks, there is a critical look at his own Church and an attempt at reform.

The forming of public opinion is not only under the influence of dominant churches and religious communities. Let me cite a few more writings on the religious other.

In Subotica, Roman Miz, a Greek Catholic priest from Novi Sad and professor of ecumenical theology at the Institute of Theology and Catechism, has published *Od Boga do sotone* (From God to Satan, 1999). He writes about the sect phenomenon: the term and its meaning, its current interest, its main characteristics, the causes of its origin and the reasons for its success. Criticizing the distinction between small and large religious communities, which only refers to externals that may change over time (Miz, 1999: 42), he opts instead for the division of religious communities set out by Juraj Kolarić (1976: 66) according to internal, ecclesial and dogmatic criteria.

We consider as *churches* (along with the Catholic, the Orthodox, and the Oriental Churches: the Nestorians, Jacobites, Armenians, Copts, and Ethiopians); those religious communities that arose in the Reformation: the Lutheran, Evangelical, and Reformed (Calvinist) Church; as well as those Christian communities that arose by separating from the Anglican Church, the Episcopalians and Presbyterians. In this group we also include the Old Catholics that arose in the past century by separating from the Catholic Church. (Miz, 1999: 43, emphasis added)

The next category is *free churches*, which reject organizing or dividing the church on national or territorial bases, and who baptize adults when they confess the faith. This includes Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, and Congregationalists. The third group, *religious communities*, are of Protestant origin and tend towards individualism, elitism, and religious rigor, and includes Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Mormons.

Miz cites the Holy See's document *Sects or New Religious Movements: Pastoral Challenge*, which discusses how sects represent a danger but also a challenge (Miz, 1999: 58). The document focuses on

the need for evangelization, catechization and education of believers in Biblical, theological, and ecumenical matters; as Miz understands it, it seems to be too late for legal bans and restrictions on the spread of sects, and this might not be successful.

Miz further writes about Jehovah's Witnesses, in a 20-page detailed chapter including statistics and street addresses:

The ever more dominant view and position is that the witnesses of Jehovah cannot be considered a Christian community, for it lacks the two leading and basic elements: to them, Jesus is not God, nor is the Holy Spirit, nor do they respect the Cross, regardless of whether the form of the cross on which Jesus was crucified was precisely like the one that is traditionally shown today. Therefore there is no basis for ecumenical dialogue with them. (Miz, 1999: 80-81)

However, Miz states that they can be a model of zeal in bearing witness to one's faith.

If the members of other communities were better acquainted with the Bible, Jehovah's Witnesses would not have such success. They care for the sick and help them. They are ready to give every help, but that too is a method of recruiting [*pridobijanja*] for their teachings, a form of proselytism. (Miz, 1999: 81)

The preface to Miz's book is written by Andrija Kopilović, vice-president of the Theological and Catechetical Institute, who holds that in the West, new religious movements arise as an alternative to traditional religions, but in the European East, where so-called scientific materialism ruled for years, they begin as a protest against communist ideology.

What is so to speak on offer in the religious *marketplace* is tempting, and can drive the hungry Easterner into whatever religious orientation, as long as he is no longer in the world of atheism. Since he does not know the religious phenomenon systematically enough, he may opt for the *first* offer, and thus in the East, too, a multi-confessional society comes into being... (Kopilović, in Miz, 1999: 6)

The image of religious others varies from an accentuated distance to a principled acceptance out of religious obligation. The authors cited above, from theology professors to anonymous monks, have written cautions and condemnations. It is of course always relevant to learn what official representatives think and say about other religions, since

their influence is undoubtedly the greatest, and it is essential to know what the dominant religious community thinks about others and what image it forms in the minds of its believers. However, it is not only the official position that reflects the reality within a community, and it is not only the majority religion that is responsible for inter-religious relations. In this study, we wish to see different answers to the questions of attitudes to other religions and religious communities, and to get to know the general climate of inter-religious dialogue in Serbia.

#### Images of religious communities in Serbia: Perspectives of religious community representatives

Self-image is the individual's representation of himself as he thinks he is and as he wishes to be. The real and the ideal image of the self exist in a tense developmental relationship which is constantly and gradually constructed under the influence of others' expectations, opinions and evaluations, depending on the current events in one's life in which significant others play a role.

Religions that support patriarchy are strongly oriented towards the family and religious transmission. The family as a human community is the basis for the preservation and transmission of religious values. In modern society, however, a fundamental value is human rights and freedoms, and one of these is the right to free choice of religious affiliation, which is very hard to reconcile with the traditional religions in which one belongs to a religion by birth, a criterium in which biological heritage is tied to the spiritual one. The competition between traditional religions turns into cooperation where distancing themselves from religious communities based on freedom of religious affiliation is concerned. That is why in Serbia traditional Churches and religious communities are more equal than others, and are recognized as such by law.

A religious community also forms its self-image and image of others based on its fundamental values. Some believers value material riches, others value renunciation of material things; some take pride in belonging to a numerous, powerful and magnificent religious community, others in belonging to a small, persecuted, and modest one. Victory and power, as well as renunciation, suffering and non-violence, are values on which religious communities base themselves,

forming their views of others from their own position.

From these theoretical considerations about the image of religious others, we must go on to experiential knowledge of the views and behavior both of believers and of those who are teachers of the faith, for according to empirical studies, it is especially the latter that hold extreme religious positions: Namely, while comparing the lifestyle of Protestants and the general population in Serbia's Orthodox environment, we made the interesting finding that preachers stood most strongly for the value system of the religion they belong to, with regard to the examined variables: self-image, life-style, and religiosity. In fact, it was not only the preachers but even more their wives and children who showed stronger indicators of religiosity. Some of the questions asked related to belief, the meaning of life, regular Bible reading, setting apart time for prayer, the conviction that God guides their lives, and life-style matters such as respecting religious dietary prohibitions, church-going habits and ritual participation (Kuburić, 1995; 2001; 2003; 2005; 2006; 2007).

Visiting different religious communities and attending their services has been an exciting part of the research behind the present work. I have talked with representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC), the Roman Catholic Church, the Islamic Community, the Jewish Community, the Christian Adventist Church, the Christian Baptist Church, the Pentecostal Church, and Jehovah's Witnesses. The questions for my talks with religious leaders were prepared in advance, but were also adapted to the interlocutor and to the flow of the conversation. In the following, therefore, we will not be comparing answers to the same questions, but looking at those particulars from the material that concern the image of the religious others. The representatives of individual churches and religious communities in Serbia, whether they spoke in the name of their churches or only in their own name, are indicators of the spiritual climate in Serbia. I consider their views relevant because of their intensity and their influence on the general population, as the number of believers in Serbia has risen steeply. The persons whose views I have selected for discussion here represent a broad range of variation, including official and unofficial church representatives.

## *Orthodoxy*

Dr. Radovan Bigović is a professor at the Theological Faculty of the Serbian Orthodox Church. He is a former dean of the faculty, and heads both the church in Zemun and the Christian Cultural Center (CCC),<sup>163</sup> an NGO that organizes conferences devoted to learning to know other religions. I have spoken with him several times, as well as listening to him at numerous conferences, debates, lectures, and on television. Here I will discuss only those parts of these extensive materials that concern our topic, and at the same time represent a position with a significant but not dominant place in the SOC.

Bigović begins by observing that everyone asks for the official position of Orthodoxy, but no such official position exists; rather, there are different positions founded on the Orthodox tradition.<sup>164</sup> Among these different positions within the Orthodox confession, Bigović has opted for dialogue. The CCC has published the book *Sve religije sveta* (All the World's Religions; Balta et al., 2006), confirming its wish to open Orthodoxy up to others, with a positive image of the others and readiness to get to know each other. To the same end, Bigović's book *Crkva i društvo* (Church and Society, 2000) was promoted in Osijek on Reformation Day in 2006 (the author was one of the speakers).

Bigović asks how two views can coexist in a single "free" and united world: those who see the other as a brother, as the image ("icon") of God, as the most sacred of things, as a necessary condition for the fullness of existence and personal identity; and those who see the other as a threat to their own existence, an enemy, an opponent, a necessary evil that must be endured or tolerated, or as a means to be used to satisfy their own needs and interests. In Bigović's view, a new ethos, common to all, is needed to realize the spiritual unity of Europe and the world. The Orthodox Church, he thinks, can bear witness and serve through theological dialogues on the institutional level and in the framework of ecumenical dialogue. Any other path would lead the Church into isolation, a ghetto, and would turn it into a sect incapable of serving and making its contribution to a spiritual renewal. However, he places even greater importance on the non-institutionalized dialogue with atheism, godless humanism, technocracy, radical

---

2. <sup>163</sup> The CCC is on-line at <http://www.ccc.org.yu>.

3. <sup>164</sup> Interview with Radovan Bigović, 7 October 2006.

individualism, hedonism (drugs, alcoholism, prostitution), communism, and the religion of the market in the contemporary “free” world. The strength of Orthodoxy, Bigović says, lies in its ethos, its functioning as a liturgical community, that is, as a Church.

Regarding the religious other, Bigović asks himself why Islam is such a popular and attractive religion.<sup>165</sup> This question made me understand that Islam is the religious other that Orthodoxy has worn itself out on for centuries, and that Orthodoxy feels itself the loser.

Bigović’s associate Aleksandar Đakovac, the executive director of the CCC and its coordinator of religious education, adds that there is a fundamental disagreement between Christians and Muslims over the question of state-religion relations, for Islam is a state-building (*državotvorna*) religion, while Christianity is based on the separation of church and state. Đakovac asserts: “Our faith does not bid us to create a religious state. What we have as theology, is legislation in Islam. Where the Muslims are the majority population, they want to have a religious state. The problem is that Muslims do not accept the state they live in as their own, and that some Muslims conceive of the non-Muslim state as hostile.”

Bogoljub Šijaković is professor of philosophy and associate dean of the Theological Faculty, University of Belgrade. Before that, he was at the Faculty of Arts in Nikšić, Montenegro, and was briefly a minister of religions in the federal government. He is the founder and editor of the journal *Philotheos*, which has appeared since 2001 with texts in several languages by representatives of various religious communities. I spoke with him in October 2006.

At the beginning of our conversation, when asked about the religious other, Šijaković recommended to me Joseph Ratzinger’s (now Pope Benedict XVI) book *Truth and Tolerance* (Ratzinger, 2004), which he says has very interesting and theologically well-founded thoughts on this question. This, he said, is because people in the West confronted the problems of religious pluralism in a world characterised by the individualist ideology of human rights much earlier than we did. He went on to suggest that acceptance of the individualist ideology of human rights should not conflict with our fundamental Christian convictions, especially since the concept of the person, as the holder of

human rights and human dignity, is a Christian achievement. Šijaković said:

Accepting the absolute validity of human rights understood in an individualist sense could lead to the rejection of some of our fundamental Christian convictions, which would mean renouncing the Christian culture we live in. If the right to difference and to formal freedom of choice is absolutized, if in this way for instance the marriage of same-sex persons is accepted, certain values are rejected. A Christian culture implies accepting certain values that have constituted the cultural environment of Europe, and not only of Europe. So, if the acceptance of some position is justified by the formal principle of tolerance and human rights as an absolute value, the question is whether someone else is thereby forced to reject his own position and accept what is unacceptable from the point of view of the traditional values he leans on, at the same time as his own position has lost the right to be accepted. I don't see any reason to give up my Christian convictions to satisfy someone who feels he has the right to something that is opposed to those convictions, and who therefore wants somehow to force me to give up my convictions.

When I asked whether, in this dialogue, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church are approaching the same positions, Šijaković answered that they are historically the closest. As for the question of a papal visit to the Serbian Orthodox Church, Šijaković felt that this had recently been over-politicized and over-dramatized. "The leaders of the two churches are bishops: the Pope is the Bishop of Rome, our Patriarch is the Bishop of Belgrade, and their meeting is the meeting of two bishops who have things to talk about."

When asked about his view of sects, Šijaković gave a more political than theological reply, and one that I had heard before from the Ministry of Religions. He believes that in the majority of cases, it is not a matter of religion or theology, but a financial matter. That is, in many cases, they are organizations that circulate money for certain purposes. He mentioned the example of France, where, even though state and church are strictly separated, there is an inter-ministerial mission that keeps track of the sects' activities. Šijaković mentioned having read several times in *Le Monde Diplomatique* the accusation that the sects are Trojan horses of America in Europe.

This is how the liberal French put it. Germany does not allow the



registration of, say, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Moon sect, or the Scientologists.<sup>166</sup> They have a big dispute with the Scientologists, because they are an influential financial organization that wants to be recognized as a religious organization in order to be exempt from financial controls and the tax system (this is clearly connected with huge sums of money).

As for Jehovah's Witnesses, Šidaković stresses the problem that they require their followers to adopt principles that directly endanger their lives, such as a prohibition on blood transfusions. He questions whether anyone has the right even to decide that for himself, considering that there is no right to self-destruction. But where children are concerned, he believes no-one, even the parents, has the right to forbid a blood transfusion, for even the parents cannot decide on the child's life or death.

Since in Serbia, the media often talk about religious others by using the term "sect" to mean the greatest of evils, and they almost never have the opportunity to talk about themselves, I asked my interlocutor if one ought to invite someone from the religious community in question to represent himself, or whether he can be equally legitimately represented by an expert.

Everyone should within reasonable limits have the opportunity to represent himself, and everyone does so by the very choice of the one who represents him. But there is a principle that Peter is not just what Peter says he is, but also what Paul, John, and Mark say about Peter. That is to say, no-one is simply what he says he is, but also what others say he is. Accepting that the so-called other has an absolute right to self-definition (*samoodređenje*) leads to a certain paradox: If we recognize the absoluteness of the other – to whom is he then the other? To be the other always implies some relationship that is simultaneously characterized by identity and difference. Absolutization of the other (which is the post-modernist way) leads to a break in communication, for if someone is the absolute other, in what way can we enter into

---

5. <sup>166</sup> (The Church of Scientology and the Unification Church are registered associations in Germany, though in late 2007, moves were afoot to deprive Scientology of its tax-exempt status. They do not enjoy the "public-law corporation" status granted to select religious organizations. This status was, however, extended to Jehovah's Witnesses by the city-state of Berlin in 2006. – Ed.)

some kind of communicative relationship? Discourse itself as a field of meaning falls apart if the other is absolutized.

To make more concrete the understanding of the religious other, our conversation turned to the attitude of Orthodoxy to other monotheist religions and the question of “our” religious distance to “them,” as we live on the cross-roads or border of three religions. Regarding Islam, Šijaković stresses that in the Balkans the attitude of Orthodoxy to Islam is not only a matter of dogma, but also historically conditioned, carrying the burden of many both internal and external factors. It would be reasonable and responsible, he says, to liberate ourselves from these burdens of history without the intervention of others. Regarding anti-Semitism, Šijaković believes there is no such thing among the Serb people, who have also suffered persecution, pogroms, and stigmatization through history, and that one should be very cautious even when some unmotivated graffiti gives cause to speak about an element of anti-Semitism. Šijaković recalls all the negative writings around the world about the Serbs, asking, What if we were to characterize all those peoples as racist or Nazi?

Šijaković’s comment on social distance in questions of marriage is interesting:

When someone polls you on whether you would want your daughter to marry someone belonging to one ethnic or religious group or another – then he has already placed you in a scheme where you could be accused of political incorrectness if you make use of your freedom of choice. The very question is incorrect at least inasmuch as it intentionally overlooks the fact that it is concrete persons that marry, not affiliates of national and religious entities. My answer would be that the key question here is how the marriage tie is understood, whether it is a contractual interest-based relationship between two (legally) abstract individuals, or a bond between two people who share the same cultural, religious, ideal values, a common world-view. If married people share the same convictions, it matters less what ethnic groups they belong to; but shared convictions are precisely one of the important reasons why those who marry prefers a person belonging to the same religion and nation.

At the end of our conversation, Šijaković summarized his views of the relationship between Orthodox and others in this country in its historically conditioned context. He held that many times in history,

the Serb people has been denied a chance to decide for itself about itself; that it is a people that has been killed and burned many times (*mnogo puta pobijen i popaljen*); that it did not choose to be in the Ottoman empire, where there also was no free choice of religion; that neither did it choose the world wars, in which it suffered harm threatening its physical existence, even though it chose the right side. As a paradox, he asked himself how then anyone can make an epoch-making menace out of this people that has barely had the strength to survive. Propaganda and reality must be distinguished, Šijaković stressed, and pointed out that this was in fact a technique of justifying what was done to this people, appealed to by those who have the power to crush others, both symbolically and in reality.

Šijaković further pointed to the problem of those religious communities that – in a Christian culture of personal freedom and dignity – seek to make people dependent by teachings that lead to the destruction of the personality, to the blind following of imposed norms of behavior. A person who is a blind “believer” renounces his personality and its freedom, and thus separates himself from an authentically Christian culture. Religious freedoms and the change of religious conviction becomes culturally unacceptable when it destroys the person, which happens in religious communities where people lose or sever their family ties and distance themselves from their near ones. Šijaković held that such an ideology of individualistically conceived, absolutized human rights could be seen as an epoch-making force imposing its ideology with the aim of tearing apart traditional communities (in the sense of institutions that preserve stable values). If we take the stance that values are completely relative, and that everyone has the right to institute them according to their interests, Šijaković went on, then the category of values itself no longer exists, for there are no values if they have been entirely relativized.

Looking at the Orthodox view of the religious other, then, we find a paradox. On the one hand, the value of personal freedom is asserted, and on the other, there is a claim to be rooted in traditional values in which nation and religion are firmly tied together: so firmly that the effect is not only elitist (a claim to Orthodox monopoly on the true faith), but hostile to personal choice, as whoever changes religion is considered a traitor to his nation. The boundaries between us and them, whoever they are, are firmly guarded. The inseparability of

religion and nation, in the sense that "Serb" is synonymous with "Orthodox," strengthens an identity that is seen to be threatened by the religious others who live in the same area, whether they are the historical Ottoman Turks or New Religious Movements. Therefore the religious other is a constant challenge and threat to one's own identity, which is kept awake and extremely firm by the tension of the centuries-long proximity of the religious other.

### *Catholicism*

I have spoken with these Roman Catholic Church representatives: Archbishop Stanislav Hočevar, Sister Ines, the priest of the church on Banovo Brdo in Belgrade, Tomislav Žigmanov in Novi Sad, and Dr. Andrija Kopilović in Subotica.

The Archbishop of Belgrade, Stanislav Hočevar, emphasized how important it is in our time for all who seek "truth in love and love in truth," that is to say people of all religions, to hold conversations or enter into a more profound dialogue, in order to free the world from a dangerous "reductionism of human dignity," which is connected to atheism in theory and practice. In this regard, he said, it would be very useful to arrange a meeting in Serbia with Pope Benedict XVI, for he represents the "heart" of Christianity and all religions, Archbishop Hočevar said. There was a mutual wish that Benedict might come to Serbia, but it was uncertain when it would happen. In my talks, official representatives of the Roman Catholic Church were visibly enthusiastic about their religious leader, the Pope, and his efforts to establish a dialogue with other religions.

Another man of dialogue is Dr. Andrija Kopilović, an author of Catholic textbooks of religious instruction, member of the Commission for religious education, and professor at the Catechetical Institute of the Diocese of Subotica. Asked whether he feels in a minority, he says that they actually feel like a majority, for Catholics are more numerous locally in the Diocese of Subotica, as well as globally. This sentiment is also evident in his efforts to help the Orthodox Church with religious education, for although the SOC is in the majority, it is not as well organized. Kopilović seeks to maintain good relations with the traditional churches and religious communities.

With regard to majority and minority in Serbia, Tomislav Žigmanov, a professor of pastoral psychology at the Catechetical

Institute of the Diocese of Subotica, suggested that I read a text of his (Žigmanov, 2001). Here, he argues that a radical and positive acceptance of others, including minorities, is an explicit imperative of Christian doctrine deriving from its essential commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself (Mt 22:37-39) and from the Golden Rule (Mt 7:12).

I have many times met Sister Ines, of the women's congregation Adorers of the Blood of Christ<sup>167</sup> at the Belgrade Archdiocese, at conferences where the Catholic Church sought a rapprochement with the SOC and other religious communities in Serbia. In my talk with her, I learned details that help us understand the role of the Catholic Church in Serbia.

I had asked Sister Ines about my personal dilemma whether I should be the one to present other religious communities when teaching about world religions. Sister Ines thought it best for each religion to present itself. However, she connected the question *which* religious communities can present themselves to the issue of the Law on Religious Communities and to the problem of registering religious communities, a current concern in Serbia. There are many religious communities that have applied for registration. But it is clear that all the traditional churches are recognized, and if they want to present themselves, Sister Ines thinks that is fine.

The Catholics sometimes criticize others for proselytism. Sister Ines says:

That is when someone... makes it a condition for another to accept that religion; that is, when he does some good deed for him, he also seeks that he accept his religious community. That kind of stance does no good to anybody. The difference between mission and proselytism is that mission is every community presenting itself, that everyone does good, and no-one forbids it from doing that. But if someone presents himself with big promises, or defames other communities, or stresses that they have not done something well, or says that one can find salvation only with them, that arouses distrust. We tell ordinary people to grow in their own faith, to develop from their own roots...

Regarding religiously mixed families, Sister Ines said:

---

6. <sup>167</sup> Serbian: Klanjateljice Krvi Kristusove. This Catholic women's congregation is on-line at <http://www.asc.pcn.net/>.

In the case of mixed families, every member can remain in his own faith and enrich the others with the best of his tradition and practice. If someone wishes, for deeper personal reasons, to change his religious practice or to be accepted into full communion (in the case of someone who belongs to a different Christian community), there is first a period of study and deliberation, and if his reasons are justified, he is accepted. As for children, it is in practice most often the case that one of the parents who is more deeply into the faith manages to give more to the children, but we urge them to also get to know the faith of the other parent. If two young people want to get married in the Catholic Church, the other side is expected not to prevent the children from accepting the religion of that [i. e. the Catholic] parent. We do not ask for the other side to become Catholic, but for them to jointly guarantee the children acquaintance with Christian values and Catholic tradition.

I wondered if believers of other churches and religious communities could take part in prayers. Sister Ines answered that anyone can attend prayers, there are no prohibitions, but only a person who has been baptized in the Catholic Church or, in exceptional cases, in another Christian church, can be admitted to the sacrament of the Eucharist; this is the regular practice of other Christian churches as well. Mutual respect between churches also includes respect for the discipline of the Church, including the holy mystery that it celebrates in its own way. Therefore drawing closer, understanding, and praying together is important, but so is waiting until the Churches grow so close that they can also take the Eucharist together.

As an example of inter-religious relations, Sister Ines mentioned a conference in Novi Sad. I had participated in the conference myself; there were representatives of different religious communities, joint lectures and prayers. All cooperated and no-one was passive; each bishop gave his blessings according to his custom. Sister Ines also mentioned a meeting of Protestant churches in Osijek where other Christian communities also take part, and observed: "In all the Churches something is in motion, a deeper acquaintance is being made, with the necessary respect for limits. And as it goes on, step by step, the limits are being slowly pushed back and gradually erased."

How far will it go? Sister Ines says every religious community has its own structure, which inevitably also leads to the drawing of boundaries. On the other hand, there is always the possibility of joint

prayer and good works, creating a unity in diversity and complementarity. Everyone does not have to pray and work in the same way. Just as the believers of the same religious community pray in different languages, and have somewhat different religious customs in other cultures, but still feel bound together by the same religious community, Christians too can have many differences, and still feel essentially bound together in the one that is the person of Jesus Christ. Sister Ines thinks the believers get closer to each other the closer they are to Christ.

Where Islam is concerned, Sister Ines holds that a different religious practice is not a problem. True Muslim believers recognize and respect other believers.

A Muslim is a person who submits to God, and in the religious field there doesn't have to be a problem. We have religious differences, but that does not bother us. What can be a difficulty is that often, others are not accepted among an Islamic majority. We wish to make Muslims able to live and witness their faith in our surroundings, and we expect Christians to be able to have the same rights in Islamic and other countries. The Church seeks respect for its believers everywhere, but it argues equally for the rights of others.

Regarding Jehovah's Witnesses, she says people have sometimes had bad experiences with them, though that of course does not apply to all Jehovah's Witnesses.

At the end of our talk, Sister Ines pointed to the need for tolerance and respect for the other, without proselytism. Regardless of the differences that exist between religious communities, she felt it important to organize meetings and show what can be done for each community to contribute its best features. There needs to be respect for difference. Both in human relations and on the spiritual plane, greater cooperation between all religious communities is needed. Together, they could achieve more success in the struggle with poverty and a more visible solidarity with all those in need, they could advocate good relations between people, and help organize society more humanely. She mentioned some concrete attempts to work together, e. g. aid for orphans, visits to handicapped children and nursing homes; sometimes through existing institutions, sometimes through small humanitarian enterprises. "We can build good interfaith relations on the local level, and that is important because it has wider repercussions, though we

are aware that we cannot solve all problems on the global level," she says.

On the local level, let us look at the concrete problems that Catholics face in Belgrade. The priest of the church on Banovo Brdo in Belgrade, where there is also a convent, is a graduate of the theological faculty in Ljubljana, and has worked here for 28 years. Interestingly, he notes as the main reason why his believers rarely attend services that they are blending with the local culture, where the Orthodox population is not accustomed to going to church; conversely, when I talked to Andrija Kopilović in Subotica, he commented that the Orthodox believers there go far more often to church, because they follow the example of the Catholics, who are the local majority.

Regarding religious belonging in public, the priest says that in Serbia, being a Catholic is not normal, the way it is in countries where the Roman Catholic Church is dominant, and therefore, it is better for the believers not to tell anyone they are Catholics if they don't have to, so as not to attract any trouble. To be sure, the priest emphasized that any trouble does not come from the state, but from individuals who do not like anyone to be anything else than Orthodox. The faithful do not have any particular trouble or problems because of their confession, except for jeering and ridicule by other children in school or colleagues in the workplace.

It is clear, then, that the problems of those who do not belong to the dominant majority are manifest even among Catholics; one wonders how it must be for those who neither belong to a global majority, nor are locally recognized as a traditional church or religious community, but are characterized as a sect.

Where the sects are concerned, the priest took the position that the existence of sects, or other religious communities and churches, is acceptable, but only up to the point where they begin to threaten people's physical and mental welfare. For as long as sects do not coerce anyone in anyway, but make use of generally accepted methods, their presence in society is justified. To be sure, he by no means approves of the existence of Satanist sects, but sects that lead people to Christ may exist, for it is less important how people worship God than that they believe in Him. After all, God has different ways to call His children to Him.

The priest thought ecumenism was not only desirable, but the



ultimate aim of Christianity. There must be a tolerant dialogue and convergence over positions that do not differ greatly. He pointed to the need for love and fellowship among Christians, for Christ is love, and one cannot preach the gospel of love to people and at the same time show them religious intolerance and competition in practice. However, there is also an external form to this unification in Christ. The priest said there had to be an institution to lead the whole thing. Jesus entrusted this to Peter, and his successor the Pope must have his Holy See. The pope, to be sure, is not here to rule but to serve.

The Greek Catholics in Belgrade and Novi Sad say that they do not have any major problems at work or in school because of their religion. The reason is that they mostly declare themselves to be Orthodox, as they of course essentially are, and usually keep silent about this being Western Orthodoxy.

The Greek Catholic priests Dušan, Vladislav and Serafim, with whom we spoke in Belgrade in 1998, consider the term "sect" inappropriate and think that it is better to use the term "religious community." They consider the existence of the sects acceptable, but again, only as long as they do not begin to threaten people's physical and mental welfare. They do not approve of what they call violent and mystical sects from the East, and they condemn every sect that has ties to Satanism and black magic, or with parapsychological phenomena of whatever kind. They reproach the dominant church for a lack of toleration and civilized dialogue with the other religious communities. They also hold that the importance of a religious community cannot be marginalized just because of its number of believers. They also criticize the constant stress on and equalization of nation and confession.

### *The Protestant perspective*

In 1998, I organized a project together with sociology students and members of the Association for Religious Freedom, to visit a large number of religious communities across Serbia and talk with their representatives. Here, I will only present the parts that relate to Protestant religious communities that we visited in Belgrade, Niš, Vrnjačka Banja, Kragujevac, Zrenjanin, Stara Pazova, Sombor, Subotica, Kikinda and Novi Itabej.<sup>168</sup> This will show the self-image and image of

---

7. <sup>168</sup> In cooperation with Goran Deškovski, Marija Lazanovska,

religious others held by those who belong to the circle of so-called small religious communities, called *novoverci* ("newfaithers") in Serbia, and who despite their missionary activities and evangelical spirit form only 1-2% of the population.

In Belgrade, I spoke with Aleksandar Birviš, dean of the Protestant Theological Faculty in Novi Sad and Osijek, and a professor of classical philology who speaks some 18 languages. He graduated from an Orthodox seminary, has worked as a translator for the *Politika* daily, and has been a preacher in the Baptist Church. Asked what he thinks about the sects, the dominant church, and the Baptists, he answered that the principle is to speak, not *against* anyone, but *for* Christ. They had fired one preacher because he had attacked other religious communities, both Orthodox and Adventists. Their attitude to the dominant church is a positive one, and they do not work against it. Regarding his own church, Birviš says: "We are not elitists, but we hold that we should be in the world, but not of the world." It is characteristic for Baptists that the church in each city is independent. They strongly advocate religious freedom and adult baptism. Baptists are not members of any ecumenical organization, but cooperate wherever it is in the interest of the Gospel. Regarding marriage with an adherent of another faith, he says it is ideal for both to be from the community, but this is not feasible because "there is a natural surplus of women."

The pastor of the Baptist church in Vrnjačka Banja says that the social situation of his believers is relatively favorable. There is a certain degree of tolerance in communications with the dominant church. Of course, he says, this only applies to official communications, while everyday life is made difficult by prejudices. Baptists, however, do not have any beliefs that would separate them from others, and their diet and day of rest is no different from that of their surroundings, so the believers face less pressure and problems than some other groups, but they are still affected by the *novoverci* syndrome.

According to Pastor Orčić, the Baptists in Kikinda are not particularly engaged in political life, so they do not influence the development of political and social events. He emphasizes that the

---

Dejan Garić, Bela Đulai, Dejan Mirčeta, Jovica Stojković, Marko Lukić, David Rančić, Zorica Tasić, Dušanka Tojanović, Ivana Đurić, Milan Gugleta, Violeta Sivčev, Dragana Božić and Igor Mitrović.

problem of believers being rejected by non-believers is very pronounced, but that is still on the individual level. Young believers often find themselves in unwanted situations where they have to suffer insults and humiliation by people close to them: their pals or their family. The Christian Baptist Church is called a "sect," as are many Protestant communities. The Baptists themselves understand "sect" to mean people who have strayed away from God, those who have no Biblical foundation for what they preach. In their attitude to the dominant Serbian Orthodox Church and to the Roman Catholic Church, the Baptists emphasize friendship and brotherhood. They are disposed towards mutual respect as long as the position of the other side does not clash with the stance of the Bible. However, the dominant churches' constant use of the expression "sect" for smaller religious communities makes cooperation extraordinarily difficult. The Baptists make use of every opportunity to express their faith and evangelical spirit when in contact with people who do not know God. As for ecumenism, they hold that spiritual community is possible only where people are converted. The Baptists think the traditional churches do not know about being born again in the Biblical sense, and it is therefore very difficult to talk with the unconverted.

The Pentecostal Church of Christ in Kikinda, when asked whether Pentecostals are a sect, answer that if they are a sect, so were certainly the believers of the Church in the time of the Apostles. If what the Pentecostals teach and practice is fanatical and sectarian, then so was the teaching of the Apostles. The only ones they consider a sect are Jehovah's Witnesses, since they go from door to door, and other religious communities do not. The believers anyway do not have a problem with non-believers, except perhaps some occasional jeering. Comparing the present with the period of the atheist Communist regime, they say it is better now. It has never happened that anyone has lost a job or been thrown out of school for belonging to the Pentecostal Church.

In Niš, there is a rich religious life, and the number of different Protestant communities is ever larger. These communities' believers and their pastors say that they are well received by those non-believers who know them well, but not accepted by those who don't know them. In his book *Hrista razapinju zar ne?* (They Crucify Christ, Don't They?), Goran Maksimović (1995), a Pentecostal who is pastor of the

Evangelical Church, highlights the discrimination of small religious communities by society as a whole and by the Orthodox Church. Mass media also have a rather negative influence, for they present the religious communities to the public in a negative light, and accuse them of being sects that are destroying the Serb people from within. They are not allowed to present themselves through the media.

Asked what they understand by sects, they say that those are communities that do not believe in salvation through Jesus Christ, and that to them, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and various Satanist groups are sects. With regard to the Serbian Orthodox Church, they expect it to teach the people about Christ, but do not like its interfering in politics, nor its tradition, which they describe as pagan, mystical, and magical. They consider it a classical case of a national church that is intolerant and far from Christian conduct, though this does not apply to all its believers.

A representative of the Evangelical Church in Zrenjanin says that they are not a sect. They often have problems with their environment, because there is often a lack of acceptance by family members, colleagues and friends. The dominant church, he says, is a spiritual Babylon. A representative of the Baptist church in Zrenjanin likewise notes that, like other Protestant communities in Serbia, they have problems; he also agrees with the above description of the dominant church. Jehovah's Witnesses in Zrenjanin consider themselves the only true church. I also spoke with Jehovah's Witnesses in Zemun, who say they are aware of the traditional churches' position not to recognize them, but neither do they want to place themselves in the company of the Protestant communities; they take an elitist view of themselves. The Methodists in Stara Pazova do not consider themselves a sect either. They oppose a formal piety of keeping to customs without strong faith, which they think is strongly represented in the traditional, Orthodox church.

The pastor of the Pentecostal Church in Belgrade says that they feel that people can evaluate others objectively only to the extent that they know their own religion. Since society is generally ignorant of religion, it cannot have an objective view. One deep-rooted view is that in this country one can only be what Serbdom (*Srpsstvo*) teaches, that is, an Orthodox. This is a general view, though there are intellectuals and young people who think for themselves. The pastor wonders aloud if it

is enough that they are not being touched – what if they wanted to actively achieve something, could they do so in a peaceful, democratic way? They consider “sects” to be those groups who do not correctly teach the teaching of the Holy Writ. They take a positive view of the dominant church, in the sense that they pray for an awakening of the Orthodox priesthood, for they feel the priesthood here has an enormous influence that is made very little use of.

The pastor of the Pentecostal church in Kragujevac considers the relationship with the dominant Orthodox Church very good, and there are even joint actions to ward off the sects.

The Pentecostals in Sombor may be said to be rather closed to relations with other religious communities. They view the dominant church as abiding in ignorance, and their attitude to smaller religious communities is shot through with intolerance.

The Christian Nazarene Community in Zemun<sup>169</sup> was a subject of our research several times. When we entered the building, we noticed the armored door and the bars in the windows. The problems were visible. The Nazarenes do not publicly preach their faith to the masses. This is because of their belief in predestination, according to which those enter the church who are called and determined by God. When they speak of themselves, they stress that they are on the right path. It is, however, with a note of regret that they observe that the teaching of predestination has reduced the number of believers. It is also stressed that they are oriented inwards rather than towards society. People around them often see them as religious fanatics, accusing them of being against the state because they will not carry arms, or of being brain-washed. They are also aware of having problems with the dominant church. The SOC makes trouble for them with its tendentious statements that the sects are destroying the Serb people. The Nazarenes pray to God to be left in peace by the dominant church.

Interestingly, in the many public talks the Orthodox Church has organized on “the Church and the sects”, it has placed Adventists and Jehovah’s Witnesses in a negative context, listing them along with Satanists.

In a talk with the dean of the Adventist Theological Faculty in Belgrade, we learned that the Christian Adventist Church has gone

---

8. <sup>169</sup> On the Nazarenes, see note 179 to ch. 179 (p. 220 below).

through two periods in its relation to others. The first, until the 1960s, might be called exclusivist: Adventists were understood to be a chosen people with the task of bringing the world the Three Angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12. Remnant theology is particularly important to this religious community, which presents itself as the seventh church, the church of the last days, founded on the Decalogue and the gift of prophecy. From this view of themselves stems their view of others: of the traditional Christian churches as having strayed from the true faith of early Christianity and Biblical teaching in their development, and of the Protestant communities who share the same roots as having remained on the path in the process of the Reformation, but not having completed their return to the whole truth.

The second period began with the publication by the Church of Questions of Doctrine (1957), a precursor to the 27 Fundamentals (1980). This is a period of dialogue and attempts to better understand one's own identity, a rethinking of the movement. Whereas before, they defined themselves in relation to others based on what they were not (resting on Sundays, eating pork, etc.), now, they are exploring what they are, in an attempt at dialogue with others.

A century of exclusivism contributed to the rapid spread of Adventism. Their conservative stance, based on both Old Testament and New Testament aspects of religiosity, has brought them close to Judaism, and not only in their teachings and lifestyle: they cooperate with the Jewish community on the global level through conferences and visits, including one that took place in Belgrade. At the same time as they identify with Jews, they hold themselves to supersede them, because they have also accepted Jesus Christ and have thus become the "olive tree grafted in" in the Pauline image of Jews and Gentiles (Romans 11:17). But they believe that Saturday is the Sabbath that God commands in the Ten Commandments, and they connect this with the people of God which still keeps the Sabbath holy, and which they believe will recognize Christ as the Messiah. The exclusivism connected with their choice of Saturday rather than Sunday as a holy day thus at the same time has an inclusivist aspect. Religious perfectionists, they wish to be the best of churches and the last church to await the coming of Christ.

We find the image of the religious other, then, in the writings as well as spoken views of the representatives of religious communities.

That religious other is always someone who believes something different from what we believe, who helps us form our self-image and identity through distancing ourselves from that other. There are various nuances of this relationship within the Christian religion, from distancing to a rapprochement in the ecumenical movement. There is always some dominant religion, in terms of numbers and influence, and there is always some other from which one needs to distance oneself, to take care not to fall into the same “basket” of rejection.

*Brief glimpses from Jewish and Islamic perspectives*

I have several times had the opportunity to talk with the Jewish Community in Belgrade and Novi Sad about how accepted or rejected they feel by their surroundings. I have heard comments indicating that they do not like to declare their religious affiliation, that it has never been popular. I have also heard many memories of past sufferings, which I do not need to go into here. The Rabbi in Belgrade is very open to cooperation, and responds to the many invitations of other religious communities to lecture and talk about the belief of the Jews. His lectures, which I have largely attended, and his statements have always been well received, pointing as they do to common monotheist roots.

Several times since 1998, I have interviewed the Mufti of Belgrade, Mr Hamdija Jusufspahić and his son Muhamed, as representatives of the Islamic community. As with the Catholics, the picture is twofold; there is a sense of Islam as a world religion and a majority mentality, but also a problematic sense of rejection in their local surroundings by the majority religion. They reproach the Orthodox for being disunited, and for casting spells (*da jedni drugima prave čini*) on each other: afflicted Orthodox believers very often come to an imam for help, seeming to trust in the religion of Islam as a kind of private healing practice. The Muslims, namely, believe that the word of God has healing power, and it is popularly believed that a written amulet can help. When I asked about the sects, I was told that they are most concerned about Jehovah's Witnesses and their style of missionary activity. We spoke of how one becomes a Muslim, and I asked whether there is any possibility of ceasing to be a Muslim, of leaving the faith, as happens in Christianity. I got a short and decisive answer that everyone must think carefully about becoming a Muslim, for there is no leaving the faith.

## Conclusion

The perspectives of various religious communities on the religious other show that processes of integration are taking place, within groups that integrate according to various criteria and value orientation. In Serbia, the religious scene is fairly rich and the relations are complicated. It is not easy to gain a full overview of all the actors and their ideas about each other. Still, we can picture a number of concentric circles drawing the boundaries against the other, who is evaluated as a challenge or a danger to one's own identity.

The image of the religious other has been formed for centuries and transmitted from generation to generation, based on a historical legacy but interpreted in the light of current events. The Balkans have been in a ferment of constant conflicts, migrations, divisions, mutual distance and distrust. Clashes between local populations and incoming conquerors were symbolically also clashes of religious orientations, and talk of the religious other cannot be wholly separated from ethnic and national labels.

There is a resistance and a lack of respect for reciprocity. Stojković (1996) notes that states do not show themselves ready to let minorities enjoy the minority rights that they seek for their own minorities in neighbouring countries. The same problem shows up in the relationships between different religions. Reciprocity is demanded, but religious communities are based on different value systems and are not equally caught up in the process of modernization. The dynamics of their relations is inevitably affected by their acceptance or rejection of each other's "modernism" or "authoritarianism", whether because of different value commitments or because of national and political differences.

Being acquainted with other religions and correctly interpreting their teachings and intentions has become an imperative of our time. In the past, people were not inclined to believe that there is anything good in other religions. Misinterpretations were common and were amplified as in a game of Chinese whispers; worse yet, there were intentional misreadings, and one spoke ill of the other, subjected him to sharp criticism, spread fear of him and kept him at a distance. The past is preserved in many people's mind as a distrust of difference and a view of the other as a menace.



In the field of inter-religious relations and images held about one another, first of all by religious community representatives and then by the believers of those communities, we find ideas of dialogue and cooperation in which a mutual convergence is based on similarities and the good will to get to know the other directly. The meetings of representatives of different religions enable them to form a more realistic image of the other, and reduce the tensions and hostilities that often derive from the fear of a competitive other.

Speaking in the context of a state that still has not defined its borders, that has changed its name, its territory, its population and its national and religious population structure as a result of brutal conflicts and wars, I can note that religious identity has become a very important source of support. The historical memory of conflicts between the adherents of different religious traditions maintains a negative and frightening image of the other. In Serbia, that religious other is, on the one hand, Islam, as a competing religion some Orthodox believers consider a "scourge of God," a punishment for their own deviations from the faith and their own sins. On the other hand, there are foreign faiths that come from the West, previously known as *novoverci* and today as sects. In their efforts to preserve the faith of their flock, in their fear that their believers might be deceived and led on a wrong path, religious representatives use various methods, among which prevails the painting of a negative image of the others and the spreading of fear.

In the context of a "critique of Balkanist discourse," Šijaković (2002) remarks that the powerful decide how the other is represented. The discourse about the other produces knowledge of the other as an extension of power over the other. He therefore holds that intellectuals have the duty to subvert the power of knowledge that is an extension of political power, to question such knowledge and to question, as far as possible, the very political power that determines the mode of representation of the other without the other's participation. The intellectual should resist a discourse that seeks, from the viewpoint of power, to construct for the other such an identity that it would free the one who holds the power of definition of any responsibility for what he does to the other.

The intellectual is often mediated through the media, which are a great advantage but also often an obstacle to genuine communication,

and which are able to generate public opinion. In the present work, however, we have avoided speaking about the power of the media to influence public opinion and produce a true or constructed image of the others. Instead, we have looked for connections with the attitudes of religious leaders who express their views by their writings and spoken statements. We will go on, in Chapter 10, to analyze the attitudes of Vojvodina's citizens.

As mediators of knowledge both about their own religion and the religions of others, religious leaders are a significant factor in the forming of attitudes to other churches and religious communities, and in the defense of their own truth, their own believers and their own values. Each gives himself the right to draw the boundaries between "us" and "them." However, modern life has enabled an unforeseeable degree of communication, giving each individual the opportunity to form his own image of the other directly. In this way, the transmission of wrong and tendentious testimonies about the other has become dangerous to the transmitter as well. Once upon a time it was not so important what a Christian thought about a Muslim, since they did not have any opportunity to meet, but today it matters, for they meet both in the real world and in the virtual one.

Peace and preservation of life is an imperative in every religion, and hence so is cooperation as a better form of communication, which is possible above all if it starts in the mind of every believer through the forming of a positive and realistic image of self and other. The educational role of religious leaders is crucially important in the formation of attitudes to religious others that are quietly accumulated and directly transmitted. However, it is indispensable that the principle of reciprocity be respected between every religion that takes part in the communication. This is a condition for building good relations in the inter-religious field. The representatives of religious communities are becoming more and more aware of this, and insist on it when they speak of the image of the religious other.

## References

- Anon. 2004. *Judin poljubac: Apostasija "Srpske pravoslavne crkve."* Svetogorska Pravoslavna Misija and Svetovaznesenjski manastir Esfigmen.

- Balta, P. et al. 2006. *Sve religije sveta: Za sve ljude u svim vremenima*. Beograd: Hrišćanski kulturni centar.
- Bigović, R. 2000. *Crkva i društvo*. Beograd: Hilendarski fond pri Bogoslovskom fakultetu SPC.
- Bjelajac, Branko. 2003. *Protestantizam u Srbiji: Prilozi za istoriju reformacijskog nasleđa u Srbiji*. Vol. 1. Beograd: Alfa i Omega.
- Bjelajac, Branko. 2004. "Rani protestantizam u Srbiji." *Religija i tolerancija*, no. 2: 109-122.
- Blagojević, M. 2005. *Religija i crkva u transformacijama društva: Sociološko-istorijska analiza religijske situacije u srpsko-crnogorskom i ruskom (post)komunističkom društvu*. Beograd: Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju "Filip Višnjić."
- Byford, J. 2004. *From 'Traitor' to 'Saint': Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović in Serbian Public Memory*. (Analysis of Current Trends in Anti-Semitism; 22). The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA).
- Dimitrijević, V. 1894. *Nazarenstvo: Njegova istorija i suština*. Novi Sad: Srpska Manastirska Štamparija.
- Kolarić, J. 1976. *Kršćanin na drugi način*. Zagreb: Veritas.
- Kuburić, Z. 1995. *Slika o sebi adolescenata u protestantskoj porodici*. Doktorska disertacija: Filozofski fakultet, Beograd.
- Kuburić, Z. 2001. *Vera i sloboda: Verske zajednice u Jugoslaviji*, 2nd ed. Novi Sad: CEIR.
- Kuburić, Z. 2003. "Život u verski homogenoj ili heterogenoj sredini." In *Uvažavanje različitosti i obrazovanje*, ed. J. Šefer, S. Maksić and S. Joksimović. Beograd: Institut za pedagoška istraživanja.
- Kuburić, Z. and Stojković, N. 2004. "Religijski self u transformaciji: Društvene promene i religioznost građana Vojvodine." *Sociološki pregled*, no. 1-2 (January-June): 321-342.
- Kuburić, Z. and Kuburić, A. 2004. "Slika o sebi između svetovnog i duhovnog identiteta." *Religija i tolerancija*, no. 2: 17-36.
- Kuburić, Z. 2005. "Religious and National Identity in Process of Globalization of Serbia." In *Religion and Globalization*, ed. Danijela Gavrilović. Niš: JUNIR.
- Kuburić, Z. 2006. "Crkve i verske zajednice u Srbiji i Crnoj Gori." In *Susret kultura: Zbornik radova, 90 međunarodni interdisciplinarni simpozijum*, ed. L. Subotić. Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet.
- Kuburić, Z. 2007. *Religija, porodica i mladi*. Second edititon, Novi Sad:

- CEIR, Beograd: Cigoja stampa.
- Kuburić, Z. and C. Moe, eds. 2006. *Religion and Pluralism in Education: Comparative Approaches in the Western Balkans*. Novi Sad: CEIR.
- Maksimović, G. 1995. *Hrista razapinju zar ne? O međusobnoj toleranciji i položaju protestantskih crkava u SRJ*. Niš: G. Maksimović.
- Milin, L. 1993. *Naučno opravdanje religije: Apologetika*, vol. 5: *Natprirodno otkrivena religija*. Šid: Grafosrem.
- Miz, R. 1999. *Od Boga do sotone: Slobodne crkve, sljedbe i kultovi*. Subotica: Katolički institut za kulturu, povijest i duhovnost "Ivan Antunović.
- Ratzinger, J. 2004. *Truth and Tolerance: Christian Belief and World Religions*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.
- Speake, G. 2002. *Mount Athos: Renewal in Paradise*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Stojković, M. 1996. "Istorijski razvoj zaštite manjina i savremena međunarodna aktuelnost manjinskog pitanja u balkanskim odnosima." In *Položaj manjina u Saveznoj Republici Jugoslaviji: zbornik radova sa naučnog skupa održanog 11, 12, i 13. januara 1995*, ed. M. Macura and V. Stanovčić. Beograd: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti.
- Šijaković, B. 2002. *Pred licem drugog: Fuga u ogledima*. Beograd: Službeni list SRJ; Nikšić: Jasen.
- Šušljic, Milan. 2004. *Bićete mi svedoci: Prilozi za istoriju Hrišćanske adventističke crkve na području Jugoistočne Evrope*. Beograd: Preporod.
- Velimirović, N. 1987. *Religija Njegoševa*. Šabac: „Glas Crkve“.
- Žigmanov, Tomislav 2001. "Fenomenologijska struktura kršćanskog govora o manjinama." In *Vere manjina i manjinske vere: Zbornik JUNIRA*, ed. D. B. Đorđević, D. M. Todorović and J. Živković, 21–30. Niš: JUNIR.

## PART FOUR: DISTANCE TO THE OTHER



## Chapter Nine

### Religious Distance in Croatia

# 9 Religious Distance in Croatia

*Dinka Marinović Jerolimov*

#### Introduction

In the post-communist transitional period, the position and the role of religion and churches in Croatia was completely changed. As in all post-communist countries, they became present in public life, in the media and in the educational system as well. The openness of the political structures and society on the whole towards religion and the church (especially the Catholic Church) was reflected in institutional and legal solutions and thus in the social position of religious

communities. They are no longer publicly “invisible.” The state regulated its relationship with religious communities through the Law on the legal position of religious communities (2002) and through the agreements signed with some of them (2002, 2003), the model being the four agreements the Government of Croatia first signed with the Catholic Church in 1996 and 1998.

Although the Croatian population is predominantly Catholic, on the religious scene in Croatia there are many different religious communities and groups. They all contribute to religious diversity and a plural religious situation, but relations between those in majority and minority positions may (and occasionally do) involve some tensions.<sup>170</sup> Also, some relatively recent legal solutions can cause tensions between the state and religious communities, between different religious communities and between members of different religious communities in Croatia.<sup>171</sup> It is also not irrelevant who shapes public opinion about the “religious others.” All these factors can influence people’s attitudes towards different religious groups, their degree of prejudice or tolerance, openness or closeness.

The previous social and political context, together with recent events – disintegration of the former state, followed by Serbian aggression and tragic war in Croatia and neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina – also has to be taken into consideration in understanding distance towards members of some ethnic/religious groups in Croatia. To identify these attitudes, it can be helpful to study social distance towards different groups.

In Croatia, social distance has predominantly been researched with regard to ethnic groups. Since the end of the 1980s, there have been several such studies (Banovac and Boneta, 2006; Katunarić, 1991; Malenica, 2003; Malešević and Uzelac, 1997; Previšić, 1996; Šiber, 1997), but only a few studies about religious distance, i.e. social distance towards various religious groups (Previšić, 1996). Among secondary school attendants, Previšić found the greatest ethnic social distance

---

1. <sup>170</sup> For instance, the Catholic Church strongly opposed an initiative to introduce yoga for school teachers in primary and secondary schools, and they succeeded in stopping this initiative.

2. <sup>171</sup> By an executive regulation, the Government of Croatia made it impossible to sign the contract with three small religious communities, which reacted with a lawsuit.



towards Serbs, and the greatest religious social distance towards the Orthodox. Having all this in mind, a part of the survey "Religious changes and values in Croatian society" conducted by the Institute for Social Research in the Zagreb region in 1999 included research on religious distance towards different religious groups: Catholics, Muslims, Jews, Orthodox, Baptists, Adventists, Evangelicals, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and members of Hare Krishna. The analysis showed the smallest distance to Catholics and the greatest distance to Hare Krishna members; with religious distance being greater among religious respondents, those with regular religious observance, the less educated, farmers, workers, and small-town inhabitants.<sup>172</sup>

It should be mentioned that the connection between religiosity and ethnic distance and intolerance has been confirmed not only in Croatia but also elsewhere: individuals who are more religious express greater social distance towards other (different) ethnic groups (Šiber, 1997; Norris and Inglehart, 2004; Sekulić et al., 2004). In this context, the level of information and knowledge about the "religious others" is also important. The analysis from the Zagreb region pointed to a great deal of ignorance among Catholic respondents not only concerning different world religions, but also concerning the content of their own religion (Marinović Bobinac, 2000). Another interesting finding in Croatia is from the analysis of the primary school textbooks for Catholic religious instruction, which showed negative connotations concerning the new religious movements (Marinović Bobinac and Marinović Jerolimov, 2006).<sup>173</sup>

The *aim* of this paper is to investigate attitudes of respondents belonging to different confessional, religious, socio-demographic, socio-structural and socio-cultural strata within the dominant Catholic population towards "religious others" - members of other main branches of the same religion in Croatia (Catholic/Orthodox/Protestant), members of other religions (Islam, Judaism), members of "sects" or New Religious Movements, and non-

---

3. <sup>172</sup> Data about social distance towards various religious groups in the Zagreb region from the study *Religious changes and values in Croatian society* conducted in 1999 were presented at the CESNUR conference in London, 2001 ([http://www.cesnur.org/conferences/london2001\\_prg.htm](http://www.cesnur.org/conferences/london2001_prg.htm)).

4. <sup>173</sup> Paper presented at the Kotor Network conference "Images of the Religious Other" in Sarajevo, 2006.

religious people – through the use of Bogardus’ social distance scale. Although a strict comparison with the previous results from the Zagreb region is not possible, they could point to religious groups towards which the social distance is greater than towards other groups, thus indicating (possible) changes in attitudes and in the general “social climate” in Croatian society.<sup>174</sup>

Some basic information about religiosity in Croatia is needed in order to frame the interpretation of the data. First of all it should be stressed that in the post-communist period, a revitalisation of religion and individual religiosity has been observed both among the adult population and the youth (Boneta, 2000; Cifrić, 2000; Črpić and Kušar, 1998; Goja, 2000; Mandarić, 2000; Marinović Jerolimov, 2000, 2001, 2002; Zrinščak, Črpić and Kušar, 2000; Vrcan, 2001). The strong identification with religion and the church became almost complete among population, which places Croatia among the countries and regions with the highest level of religiosity in Europe (behind Poland, Romanian Transylvania, Malta, Portugal, Italy and Ireland) (Aračić, Črpić and Nikodem, 2003; Davie, 2000; Zrinščak, Črpić and Kušar, 2000). The data about confessional identification in Croatia are presented in Table 9.1.

*Table 7: Confessional structure of the Republic of Croatia*

	Republic of Croatia	
	N	%
Roman Catholic Church	3 897 332	87.83
Orthodox Churches	195 969	4.42
Agnostics and undeclared	132 532	2.99
Not religious	98 376	2.22

5. <sup>174</sup> A strict comparison is not possible for two reasons: 1) respondents in Zagreb and the Zagreb region are predominantly urban; and 2) the above-mentioned study from Zagreb region conducted in 1999 used a different model of administering the Bogardus scale, with answers for every item.

Islamic Religious Community	56 777	1.28
Unknown	25 874	0.58
Greek Catholic Church	6219	0.14
Jehovah's Witnesses	6094	0.14
Other religions	4764	0.11
Other Protestant churches	4068	0.09
Evangelical Church	3339	0.08
Adventist Church	3001	0.07
Baptist Church	1981	0.04
Pentecostal Church of Christ	336	0.01
Old Catholic Church	303	0.01

Source: Census 2001

According to the data from the 2001 census, the majority of the Croatian population belongs to the Catholic Church (88%) while only 6.38% belong to the other religious communities. Agnostics, the undeclared, the non-religious and the unknown make up 5.79%. The basic indicators of religiosity – dominant religious affiliation, religious self-identification, religious socialisation, religious practice on a personal and family level and acceptance of beliefs – from the study “Social and Religious Changes in Croatian Society” conducted in 2004 are presented in Table 9.2.

*Table 8: Indicators of religiosity in Croatia 2004 (in %)*

Are Catholics	90	Fast regularly before religious holidays	55
Are religious	78	Regularly celebrate religious holidays	86

Are baptized	94	Believe in God	82
Had a religious upbringing in the family	81	Believe that God created the world and human beings	72
Attended religious education	83	Believe in life after death	52
Had first communion	85	Believe in destiny	63
Had confirmation	81	Believe in ghosts	23
Married in church	60	Believe in reincarnation	17
Baptized their own children	91	Believe in horoscopes	20
Bring their children up religiously	82	Go to church on Sunday	27

---

Among these listed indicators, we can observe that the predominant forms of religiosity are related to socialisation in the family, celebrating holidays, and popular customs, and especially to the religious celebration of the life cycle – that is, to the common *traditional cultural pattern* not only of religious but also of less religious and non-religious parts of the population. However, the deeper analysis showed that besides the process of revitalisation, de-secularisation and de-privatisation of religion, in Croatia one can also notice signs of parallel but opposite processes on an individual level. This is manifested in dissolution of the dogmatic system, in the adoption of alternative extra-church beliefs, in the discrepancy between the level of belief and religious practice, and in the respondents' divergence from the moral norms of the church. All this makes the religious situation in Croatia more complex than can be perceived at first sight (Marinović Jerolimov, 2005).

#### Method and materials/data used

The religious distance was empirically tested through the use of the Bogardus scale of social distance. The notion of social distance refers to the continuum described by R. E. Park in 1902 (following the ideas of G. Simmel) as degrees of understanding and intimacy that designate

pre-social and social relationships in general, the continuum from an intimate and warm relationship through indifference to hostility (Supek, 1981). Bogardus (1925) created this psychometric scale to empirically measure the degrees of closeness with members of diverse social groups, primarily ethnic and racial. However, the scale can be used to measure social distance towards any kind of social group, including religious ones. The original scale is a continuum of seven items, starting with the item that expresses the highest degree of closeness which one person is ready to accept with an average person belonging to a certain group, to seventh item that expresses hostility.<sup>175</sup> A shortened scale is more often used, because the first five items have or are assumed to have relatively equal intervals in comparison to the last two items. According to their research aims, researchers occasionally also use different variations on the original scale. The question about social distance towards different religious groups was included in the questionnaire of the ISSP survey "The Role of Government," conducted by the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb in 2006 on a representative national sample (N=1200) of the Croatian adult population aged 18 years or more. We asked respondents to mark which of the following relationships they would be ready to accept with members of different (listed) religious groups: 1) as close kin by marriage; 2) as a close friend; 3) as a neighbour; 4) as a co-worker; 5) as a citizen of Croatia; 6) as a tourist; 7) would expel him/her from Croatia; 8) don't know.

The score 1 indicates no social distance, and the score 7 the greatest social distance. The listed religious groups were as follows: Adventists, Baptists, Buddhists, Catholics, Hare Krishna, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews, Moslems, Mormons, Orthodox, Pentecostals and Scientologists. The non-religious were also listed.

Religious affiliation differences on the religious/nonreligious continuum, frequency of religious practice, together with socio-

---

6. <sup>175</sup> Some critical remarks have been made about the construction of the scale: that it is aprioristic because it logically presupposes the degree of closeness; also about the presupposition of equal distance between the items and that each item includes all the previous ones; and about the possibilities for scale validation (Zvonarević, 1978:164; Supek, 1981:279). Nevertheless, the scale is still in relatively frequent use and could point to prejudice or tolerance toward different groups.

demographic, socio-structural and socio-cultural indicators (gender, age, education, place of residence, region) were analysed in order to identify which characteristics of respondents are stronger predictors of social/religious distance. Several *hypotheses* were made, the most general being that *there is a different level of social distance toward different religious groups in Croatia*. The more specific hypotheses are as follows:

- H1 Religious respondents express greater social distance towards different religious groups than the non-religious.
- H2 Religious practitioners express greater social distance towards different religious groups than non-practitioners.
- H3 Different socio-demographic characteristics of respondents have an impact on the social distance toward different religious groups.

Statistical methods used in the analysis were frequencies, means, the t-test and analysis of variance with the Scheffe post-hoc test.

## Results

The distribution of answers to the question on social distance can point to differences in attitudes.

As the results show (Table 9.3), the smallest social distance is expressed towards Catholics. Even with regard to the first degree of social distance, marriage kinship, 70.1% of respondents declare acceptance. The distance towards all other religious groups is much greater. It is interesting that the distance is smaller towards the non-religious than towards all religious groups except Catholics.

*Table 9: Social distance towards the members of different religious groups  
(% and mean)*

	As close relatives by marriage	As my close personal friends	As neighbours on the same street	As co-workers in the same occupation	As citizens in my country	As only visitors in my country	Would exclude from my country	Don't know	
Catholics	70.1	11.9	4.2	1.0	5.9	1.4	0.8	4.7	1.62
Non-religious	18.0	24.4	16.8	5.1	18.5	6.1	3.2	8.0	3.14
Orthodox	14.0	20.6	17.2	4.6	21.3	8.6	5.0	8.8	3.49
Jews	10.3	20.1	16.7	5.5	24.4	10.4	4.1	8.6	3.67
Adventists	9.3	15.5	19.2	5.1	23.9	10.3	2.8	13.9	3.71
Muslims	10.2	19.2	17.2	5.0	22.5	10.1	7.3	8.7	3.76
Baptists	8.8	14.3	18.3	4.7	24.6	10.9	3.0	15.4	3.79
Buddhists	8.4	15.3	14.8	4.4	24.1	16.0	3.3	13.7	3.95
Mormons	11.2	10.8	12.9	4.3	20.1	13.8	5.5	21.4	3.95
Pentecostals	7.0	9.3	10.8	3.3	21.1	12.2	5.3	31.2	4.16
Scientologists	7.8	9.6	11.9	4.0	21.4	13.3	6.4	25.7	4.17
Hare Krishna	7.0	11.5	14.4	4.4	23.6	17.9	6.8	14.3	4.25

Jehovah's Witnesses	6.9	10.5	15.8	4.7	27.3	14.4	9.8	10.7	4.31
------------------------	-----	------	------	-----	------	------	-----	------	------

---

Besides Catholics, the most respondents are willing to marry the non-religious (18%), followed by Orthodox (14%), Mormons (11.2%), Jews (10.3%) and Muslims (10.2%). All others are accepted by less than 10%.

In the first degree of closeness, the greatest social distance is expressed towards Jehovah's Witnesses, members of Hare Krishna, Pentecostals and Scientologists. Respondents would predominantly accept the non-religious as friends, while other religious groups would predominantly be accepted as citizens of Croatia.

Toward all the religious groups, hostility ("would exclude from my country") is expressed at a very low level, most frequently towards Jehovah's Witnesses (9.8%) and Muslims (7.3%).

Also interesting is the high percentage of "Don't know" answers,<sup>176</sup> which is the highest for Pentecostals (31.2%), Scientologists (25.7%), Mormons (21.4%), Hare Krishna (14.3%) and Jehovah's Witnesses (10.7%). This fact is important for the interpretation of the gathered data about social distance in Croatia. The lack of knowledge about "religious other" can be a predictor of greater social distance towards them. At the same time, the negative perception of the way Jehovah's Witnesses proselytize is probably the reason for greater social distance towards them.

The smallest distance (besides that toward Catholics) is expressed towards the members of traditional churches historically present in Croatia for centuries - the Orthodox Church, the Jewish community and Muslims. The distance is greater towards so-called "sects" that have been present in the area for only about a century or so. The predominant belonging to Catholic Church is presumably the reason for the greater social distance towards them, which may partly reflect the Church's attitude that the teachings of "sects" are basically wrong. The presented data confirms the general hypothesis that there is a different social distance towards different religious groups.

---

7. <sup>176</sup> Respondents didn't give answers for religious groups they know nothing about.



Do respondents differ in social distance according to their religious affiliation or non-affiliation, the level of their religiosity, and the frequency of their religious practice? Who is more and who is less tolerant in this respect?

The religious affiliation (answers “yes” and “no”) was analyzed by the use of the t-test. For the analysis of the religiosity/non-religiosity continuum and the frequency of religious practice, analysis of variance was used with the Scheffe post-hoc test.

According to the data (Table 9.4) there are differences between the *religiously affiliated* and the *unaffiliated* in the level of social distance towards different religious groups. Religiously affiliated respondents express greater distance towards all religious groups and towards non-religious respondents than do those without religious affiliation. The exception is in the attitude towards Catholics - here the distance is smaller among the religiously affiliated. The reason is obvious: most religiously identified respondents are Catholics.

Concerning *religiosity/non-religiosity*, post hoc analysis showed that there is no difference between religious and non-religious respondents in social distance towards Mormons and Scientologists. The difference is present towards all other groups. More non-religious respondents express smaller distance towards all religious groups (except towards Catholics), and more religious respondents greater distance (except towards Catholics). Differences appear also concerning *religious practice*. They exist between those who never go to church, who express smaller religious distance, and all others who express greater distance. There are no differences in distance towards Catholics according to this indicator. The hypothesis concerning greater distance on the part of the religiously affiliated, the self-identified religious and the religiously observant is confirmed.

#### *Religious distance and socio-demographic characteristics of respondents*

Starting from the assumption that one's position in the social structure is connected to one's lifestyle, value orientation and attitudes of tolerance or intolerance, the different socio-demographic characteristics of respondents were analyzed in order to validate their possible influence on social distance. Age groups were divided into five (18-29; 30-39; 40-49; 50-59; 60+). Levels of education were divided into four groups (primary school, secondary industrial schools, grammar schools

and faculty). Place of residence included big towns, small towns and villages, while regions were divided into Zagreb region, Istria and Primorje, North Croatia, Slavonija, Lika and Banovina, and Dalmatia.

*Table 10: Religious distance according to religious affiliation, religiosity and religious practice*

	Religious affiliation	Religious self-identification	Frequency of religious practice
Catholics	t = -2,59 df=1142 sig=0,010	F=2,51 Sig=0,040	
Non-religious	t = 4,29 df=1102 sig=0,000	F=20,13 Sig=0,000	F=28,73 Sig=0,000
Orthodox	t = 2,78 df=1093 sig=0,006	F=12,61 Sig=0,000	F=25,23 Sig=0,000
Jews	t = 2,88 df=1095 sig=0,004	F=9,74 Sig=0,000	F=20,71 Sig=0,000
Adventists	t = 3,65 df=1031 sig=0,000	F=8,18 Sig=0,000	F=23,19 Sig=0,000
Moslems	t = 3,11 df=1094 sig=0,002	F=8,78 Sig=0,000	F=18,80 Sig=0,000
Baptists	t = 3,29 df=1013 sig=0,001	F=8,51 Sig=0,000	F=22,23 Sig=0,000
Buddhists	t = 4,14 df=1034 sig=0,000	F=9,05 Sig=0,000	F=21,99 Sig=0,000
Mormons	t = 2,47 df=941 sig=0,014	F=3,14 Sig=0,014	F=9,64 Sig=0,000
Pentecostals	t = 3,20 df=824 sig=0,001	F=5,12 Sig=0,000	F=13,05 Sig=0,000
Scientologists	t = 3,73	F=6,94	F=17,36

	df=890 sig=0,000	Sig=0,000	Sig=0,000
Hare Krishna	t = 4,72 df=1026 sig=0,000	F=10,98 Sig=0,000	F=24,41 Sig=0,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	t = 3,73 df=1070 sig=0,000	F=11,96 Sig=0,000	F=23,26 Sig=0,000

*Table 11: Religious distance according to gender, age, education, place of residence and region*

	Gender	Age	Education	Residence	Region
Catholics				F=5.02 Sig.=0.007	F=3.58 Sig.= 0.000
Non-religious	t=-1.99 df=1102 Sig=0.046		F=10.24 Sig.=0.001	F=5.76 Sig.=0.003	F=11.19 Sig.= 0.000
Orthodox			F=7.35 Sig.=0.000	F=4.02 Sig.=0.18	F=4.68 Sig.= 0.000
Jews			F=5.08 Sig.=0.002		F=9.24 Sig.= 0.000
Adventists			F=8.9 Sig.=0.000		F=12.38 Sig.=0.000
Muslims			F=6.19 Sig.=0.000	F=8.71 Sig.=0.000	F=9.83 Sig.= 0.000
Baptists			F=7.35 Sig.=0.000		F=10.26 Sig.= 0.000
Buddhists		F=5.23 Sig.=0.000	F=13.79 Sig.=0.000	F=8.66 Sig.=0.000	F=10.83 Sig.= 0.000
Mormons			F=7.34 Sig.=0.000	F=5.70 Sig.=0.003	F=8.31 Sig.= 0.000
Pentecostals			F=5.70	F=4.14	F=7.99

	Sig.=0.001	Sig.=0.016	Sig.= 0.000
Scientists	F=3.33 Sig.=0.019		F=3.13 Sig.= 0.000
Hare Krishna	F=5.78 Sig.=0.001		F=4.05 Sig.= 0.000
Jehovah's Witnesses			F=4.72 Sig.= 0.000

The analysis concerning various socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (Table 9.5) showed that there were no statistically significant differences in distance toward any religious groups according to *gender*. Gender differences appear only towards the non-religious: here, women showed the greatest social distance. But this is not surprising if we take into account that women are slightly more religious than men.

According to *age*, the differences appear only towards Buddhists. The youngest age group between 18 and 29 years expressed the smallest distance towards them, while all other age groups showed greater distance. This could be explained by the popularity of Buddhism within the youth counter-culture and also by its role as one of the bases for new forms of spirituality.

Respondents with different levels of *education* show different levels of religious distance toward all religious groups except Catholics and Jehovah's Witnesses. Again, the majority Catholic population may be the explanatory variable for the former exception, and generally more negative perception of Jehovah's Witnesses (because of the type of their proselytising) for the latter. Those who finished grammar school and those who finished university show the smallest distance, and those who finished only primary school show the greatest distance towards all other religious groups. Obviously, higher education makes people more open. But these differences are not so great.

The differences appeared also according to *place of residence*, towards Buddhists, Catholics, Mormons, Muslims, Pentecostals, Orthodox, and the non-religious. The differences appeared between respondents from big towns, who show the smallest distance, and respondents from the villages who show the greatest distance. There were no differences in attitudes towards Adventists, Baptists, Hare

Krishna members, Jehovah's Witnesses and Jews. A possible explanation for these differences could be the non-existence of minority religious communities in most small towns and villages, which leads to intolerance simply because of the lack of knowledge and practice in mutual relations. On the other hand, people from villages are more religious (predominantly Catholic), which possibly also makes them also more intolerant toward "religious others," especially "sects" and NRMs.

Belonging to a specific *region* produces differences as well. Such differences did not appear in social distance towards Scientologists and members of the Hare Krishna movement. But there are differences according to regional belonging in the distance towards all other groups. Respondents from Istria and Primorje and from the Zagreb region show the smallest distance, while respondents from Dalmatia and Lika and Banovina show the biggest distance. Part of the explanation for this could be in the fact that Istria and Primorje together with the Zagreb region are less religious than other parts of Croatia, especially Lika and Banovina. As we have seen, higher religiosity is a predictor of greater social distance towards "religious other."

The hypothesis that different socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents have an impact on social distance towards different religious groups has been confirmed. The predictors of greater social distance are lower education, rural place of residence (i.e living in villages), and living in Lika and Banovina or Dalmatia.

## Conclusion

First of all, it should be stressed that it is difficult to make conclusions about such a sensitive matter as social distance towards religious groups on the basis of a few questions and a single indicator, and without deeper and more complex analysis, which would include a system of complex variables. These limitations should be stressed at the beginning. Nevertheless, several conclusions can be made.

In the transitional period, Croatia became a country with a great majority of Croats and Catholics in the population. Croats had expressed a high level of religious affiliation to Catholic Church even in the communist period, and this was a traditional cultural pattern which highlighted the historical connection between nation and religion,

although not on the level of official cultural transmission. This connection became even stronger during the recent war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, resulting in national and religious homogenisation. This was mostly the basis for generally closed rather than open and tolerant attitudes towards specific others, in this case towards Orthodox (Serbs) and Muslims.

Two things observed in the data should be stressed:

- the general social distance towards all religious others besides Catholics; and
- the fact that the social distance is smaller towards the non-religious than towards “the religious other.”

The Catholic Church, from its standpoint of “one true religion,” denies the same quality and value to “religious others,” especially “sects” and NRMs. After all, it teaches this in primary and secondary school textbooks. Therefore, it is not surprising that the distance is smaller towards non-religious people who are always potential converts to Catholicism. In the culture where a part of the self-described non-religious declare themselves Catholics, this is understandable. The fact that the official atheistic or nonreligious worldview – which prevailed for decades – disappeared overnight could not erase people’s experience with it, be it negative or positive.

The explanation for distance towards the “religious other,” besides the characteristics of the dominant religion, could lie in the lack of knowledge about them. This is especially the case with Pentecostals, Scientologists, members of Hare Krishna, and Mormons. But as mentioned above, Catholics in Croatia show ignorance even about the basics of their religion; therefore, it is not surprising that they know almost nothing about other religions.<sup>177</sup>

Unlike the case of ethnicity,<sup>178</sup> in the case of religion the rule “the more distant, the closer” obviously does not function. Those who are “distant” stay “distant”. It has already been said that part of the explanation for religious distance towards Orthodox and Muslims lies

---

8. <sup>177</sup> This is not the “speciality” of Croatia alone. A lack of knowledge about one’s own religion is the norm in Europe, too (Davie, 2000).

9. <sup>178</sup> In Croatia social distance is smaller towards members of nations that do not live in the close surroundings and with whom there has been no (negative) experience. Also, ethnic mobilization in the pre-war and war period resulted in increased social distance towards Serbs, Muslims (as nationality), Yugoslavs and Slovenians (Katurnarić, 1991).

in the recent aggression against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. But on the other hand, according to these data they are both socially closer to the Croat population than members of other religious communities which are new or which have not been present in this area for more than one century.

There is not enough religious dialogue or knowledge about religious culture and different religious groups in Croatia. A contribution to a better situation is the introduction of *Ethics* in the secondary school curriculum, as well as the basic information about major traditional religions historically present in Croatia in the textbooks for confessional religious education in primary schools. But an analysis of Catholic confessional primary school textbooks points to negative attitudes towards "sects" and new religious movements, which may be reflected in majority attitudes and therefore make for greater social distance towards their members in Croatian society in the future.

More inter-religious dialogue and more knowledge about "religious others" is needed, together with the cultivation of open and tolerant attitudes and the eradication of prejudices, if Croatia wants to become a truly plural and democratic society.

#### References

- Aračić, P., G. Črpić, and K. Nikodem. 2003. *Postkomunistički horizonti*. Đakovo: Teologija u Đakovu.
- Banovac, B. and Ž. Boneta. 2006. "Etnička distanca i socijalna (de)integracija lokalnih zajednica." *Revija za sociologiju* 37, no. 1-2: 21-46.
- Bogardus, Emory S. 1925. "Measuring Social Distance." *Journal of Applied Sociology* 9: 299-308.
- Boneta, Željko. 2000. "Stabilizacija vjerničke strukture i/ili njihanje klatna: Religioznost u Istri—Prilog socio-religijskoj karti Hrvatske." *Revija za sociologiju*, no. 3-4 (2000): 133-151.
- Cifrić, Ivan. 2000. "Percepcija nekih odnosa crkve i države i uloga crkve i religije u društvu." *Sociologija sela*, no. 147-148: 227-269.
- Črpić, Gordan and Stjepan Kušar. 1998. "Neki aspekti religioznosti u Hrvatskoj." *Bogoslovska smotra* 68, no. 4: 513-563.
- Davie, Grace. 2000. *Religion in Modern Europe: a Memory Mutates*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Goja, Jadranka. 2000. "Neki aspekti religioznosti hrvatske mladeži 1986. i



1999. godine." *Politička misao*, no. 1 (2000): 148–159.
- Katunarić, Vjeran. 1991. "Dimenzije etničke distance u Hrvatskoj." In *Položaj naroda i međunacionalni odnosi u Hrvatskoj*, ed. Š. Bahtijarević and M. Lazić. Institut za društvena istraživanja: Zagreb.
- Malenica, Zoran. 2003. "Etničke i nacionalne predrasude u hrvatskom društvu danas." Online ( <http://www.stina.hr/download/broj17.doc>).
- Malešević, Siniša and Gordana Uzelac. 1997. "Ethnic distance, power and war: the case of Croatian students." *Nations and Nationalism* 3, no. 2: 291–298.
- Mandarić, Valentina. 2000. *Religiozni identitet zagrebačkih adolescenata: Studija 3*. Zagreb: Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar.
- Marinović Bobinac, Ankica. 2000. "Dimenzija religijskog znanja." *Sociologija sela* 38, no. 1–2: 81–94.
- Marinović Bobinac, Ankica and Dinka Marinović Jerolimov. 2006. "Religious Education in Croatia." In *Religion and Pluralism in Education: Comparative Approaches in the Western Balkans*, ed. Zorica Kuburić and Christian Moe, 39–71. Novi Sad: CEIR.
- Marinović Jerolimov, Dinka. 2000. "Religijske promjene u tranzicijskim uvjetima u Hrvatskoj: promjene u dimenzijama religijske identifikacije i prakse." *Sociologija sela*, no. 147–148: 43–80.
- — —. 2001. "Religious Changes in Croatia: Some empirical Data from 1972, 1982 and 1999 in the Zagreb Region." In *Religion and Social Change in Post-Communist Europe*, ed. Irena Borowik and Miklos Tomka, 163–180. Krakow: Zakład Wydawniczy "Nomos".
- — —. 2002. "Religiosity, Non-religiosity and some Values of the Youth." In *Youth and Transition in Croatia*, ed. Vlasta Ilišin and Furio Radin, 81–126. Zagreb: Institut za društvena istraživanja u Zagrebu i Državni zavod za zaštitu obitelji, materinstva i mladeži.
- — —. 2005. "Tradicionalna religioznost u Hrvatskoj 2004: između kolektivnog i individualnog." *Sociologija sela* 168, no. 2: 303–338.
- Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart. 2004. *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Previšić, Vlatko. 1996. "Sociodemografske karakteristike srednjoškolaca i socijalna distanca prema nacionalnim i religijskim skupinama." *Društvena istraživanja* 5, no. 5–6: 859–874.
- Sekulić, Duško, Željka Šporer, Randy Hodson, Garth Massey and Josip Županov. 2004. *Sukobi i tolerancija*. Zagreb: Naklada Jesenski i Turk, Hrvatsko sociološko društvo.
- Supek, Rudi. 1981. *Ispitivanje javnog mnijenja*. Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada

Liber.

- Šiber, Ivan. 1997. "War and the changes in social distance toward the ethnic minorities in Croatia." *Politička misao* 34, no. 5: 3-26.
- Vrcan, Srđan. 2001. *Ujera u vrtlozima tranzicije*. Split: Dalmatinska akcija.
- Zrinščak, Siniša, Gordan Črpić and Stjepan Kušar. 2000. "Vjerovanje i religioznost." *Bogoslovska smotra* 70, no. 2: 233-235.
- Zvonarević, Mladen. 1978. *Socijalna psihologija*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.





## Chapter Ten

### Religious Distance in Vojvodina

## 10 Religious Distance in Vojvodina

*Zorica Kuburić*

Social distance refers to gradations of desired distance in social contacts. On the individual and group level, everyone enjoys the importance that is accorded him by others, and also himself forms a continuum of desired proximity or distance in relation to others. Around the individual and the community to which he belongs, concentric circles form, symbolic orbits in which everyone has their place, from the significant others that are usually family members, to the entirely distant and undesirable. Hierarchy and distance are established based on experience (personal or familial, past or present), under the influence of the media, and so on (Kuburić, 2005a).

In the psychological sense, social distance represents a measure of the possible bonding and cooperation between individuals from different groups, and of the psychological closeness or distance of the individual towards some typical social or ethnic grouping (Krstić, 1996; Trebješanin, 2004). The degree to which a person is prepared to enter into close relations with a members of another social group, often a minority or a marginal group, varies from refusal to live in the same country, through readiness to work together, all the way to marriage (Rot, 1973; Pantić, 1998; 1992; 1986; 1988; 1991).

A study of social distance among the general population of Vojvodina, where numerous different religious communities have traditionally functioned well, shows that the public has a wholly mapped-out mental image of other religious communities and their place in the social structure. This image, which determines the desirability of the other in various social roles, often reflects the social roles they in fact occupy in reality. We began investigating the self-distancing of Vojvodina's citizens from the adherents of individual religious groups in 2002. The first study, on a sample of high school students, was organized by the Center for Empirical Studies of Religion (CEIR) in Novi Sad. The second, on the general population of Vojvodina citizens, was organized by the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Arts in Novi Sad (Joksimović and Kuburić, 2002; Kuburić, 2005a; 2006).

According to CEIR's research, the general population fears Islam and is angry at Jehovah's Witnesses, as rivaling religions and, in the case of Jehovah's Witnesses, as a marginalized group whose numbers are nevertheless constantly growing. Here, we will show hitherto unpublished parts of the study done at the Faculty of Arts.

The Bogardus scale of social distance (Bogardus, 1925) has long enabled us to test the distance between individual groups and the stratification of society. In this work, we have adapted the scale to the needs of exploring the distance between religious groups. Usually, one question asked is about choice of marital partner; however, since religious communities do not recommend marriage to people of other faiths, this question may be variously interpreted. We have retained the question, but have added a question about the desirability of the other as a neighbor, which is a more neutral field.

The study deals with adult citizens of Vojvodina (Kuburić, 2005a),

based on the original sample of 1,253 respondents and the repeated study in 2005 on a sample of 350 respondents. On the whole, the hierarchy of desirability of different confessions is tied to their number of adherents. The representative sample included 73% Orthodox respondents, 16% Catholics, 6% Atheists, 1% non-believers, 1% Lutherans, and less than 1% each of Evangelists, Greek Catholics, Adventists, Baptists, Nazarenes,<sup>179</sup> Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, and Jews.

*Table 12: Desirability of confession by social role, Vojvodina*

Role – Confession	M	SD
President of the country – Orthodox	4.28	.91
Spouse – Orthodox	4.16	.95
Teacher – Orthodox	3.81	.88
Neighbour – Orthodox	3.80	.86
Boss – Orthodox	3.79	.90
Business partner – Orthodox	3.78	.86
Neighbour – Catholic	3.35	.87
Business partner – Catholic	3.31	.89
Business partner – Muslim	3.31	1.00
Teacher – Catholic	3.25	.93
Neighbour – Atheist	3.19	.90
Boss – Muslim	3.19	1.04
Boss – Catholic	3.17	.94
Teacher – Atheist	3.13	.99
Business partner – Adventist	3.07	1.07
Neighbour – Protestant	3.05	.92
Neighbor – Muslim	3.01	.98
Teacher – Protestant	2.93	.97
Boss – Adventist	2.91	1.09
Neighbour – Jew	2.89	1.01
President of the country – Jehovah's Witness	1.74	.99
Spouse – Jehovah's Witness	1.61	.89

1. <sup>179</sup> The Nazarenes (Christian Nazarene Community) are a Protestant group, founded by Samuel Heinrich Froehlich (1803–1857), a Swiss Lutheran pastor who turned to Anabaptism. In the second half of the 19th century, they spread to Hungary and from there, in 1871, to Vojvodina, where they found adherents among craftsmen and the poor. They seek to live according to the model of the first Christian community (Cvitković, 1996: 254; cf. Bjelajac, 2002: 176–184).

N=1,253. Abbreviations: M - arithmetical mean, SD - standard deviation.

To test the degree of acceptance and rejection, we let respondents grade, on a five-point Likert scale, the desirability of relations, in various roles, with the adherents of nine religious communities that are present and well known in Vojvodina. We include Atheists among these religious communities: as the dominant worldview of the past fifty years, atheism has left its marks. "Protestants" includes Lutherans and Calvinists, whereas Adventists and Nazarenes are listed as separate options; "Jews" is used in the religious rather than the ethnic sense to mean "adherents of Judaism."

Calculating the arithmetical mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) for this sample of 1,253 respondents, we can learn what social roles are most important to the citizens of Vojvodina, and to what degree different confessions are welcome in those roles. For the six roles and nine confessions on offer, there are 54 different combinations. For the sake of illustration, we will show only those combinations that have the greatest and the lowest M, and the confessions that are desirable in those roles (Table 10.1).

Judging by these results, of the six roles offered, the most important to Vojvodinans - in terms of how much the religious affiliation of the person performing it matters - is the role of president of the country, followed by spouse, teacher, boss, neighbour, and finally business partner. The most accepted believers in these roles are, as a rule, the Orthodox, and the most rejected of the remaining eight religious communities offered are Jehovah's Witnesses.

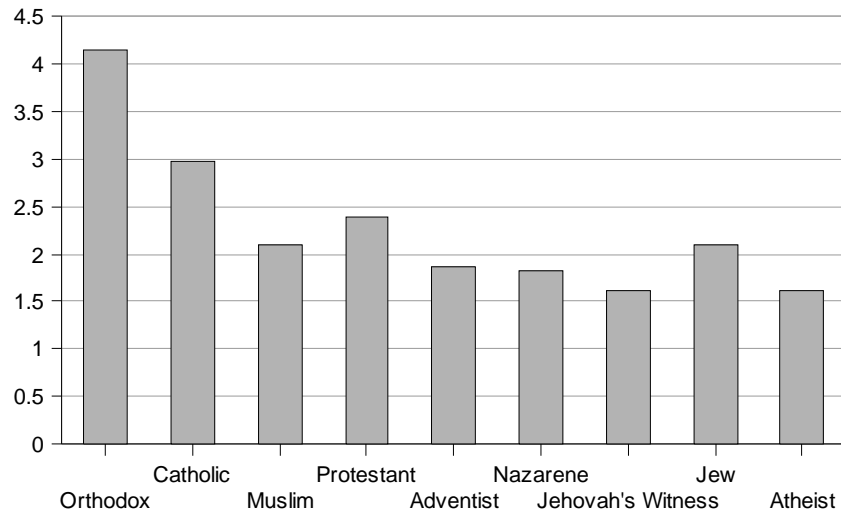
We can learn more about the place of the significant religious other by looking at the percentages of those to whom religious belonging in a given role is more or less important, from total rejection to total acceptance.

According to Table 10.2, if we join two and two categories (absolutely not and rather not, nothing against and gladly), only 2% reject an Orthodox president, 40% an Atheist, 50% a Catholic, almost 60% a Protestant, 64% a Jew, 68% a Muslim, 72% an Adventist, 73% a Nazarene and 76% a Jehovah's Witness.

When it comes to marriage, there is greater tolerance: There is greater readiness to accept the religious other in an intimate relationship than as president of the country. Only 3% of the respondents would not want a marriage with an Orthodox believer,



26% reject an Atheist spouse, 26% a Catholic, 34% a Protestant, 45% a Jew, 46% a Muslim, 61% an Adventist, 62% a Nazarene, and 73% a Jehovah's Witness.



*Figure 1: Desirability of adherents to different religious communities as spouse*

*Table 13: Would you want your country's president to be...*

	Ort	Cat	Ath	Pro	Mus	Jew	Adv	Naz	JW
Absolutely not	1%	31%	26%	40%	44%	44%	50%	51%	56%
Rather not	1%	18%	14%	19%	22%	20%	22%	22%	21%
Indifferent	21%	27%	30%	27%	23%	25%	21%	20%	17%
Yes, nothing against	23%	18%	18%	12%	9%	9%	6%	6%	5%
Yes, gladly	54%	6%	12%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%

*Table 14: Would you want your spouse to be...*

	Ort	Cat	Ath	Pro	Mus	Jew	Adv	Naz	JW
Absolutely not	1%	11%	15%	17%	22%	20%	28%	30%	38%
Rather not	2%	15%	11%	17%	24%	25%	33%	32%	35%
Indifferent	23%	30%	37%	40%	33%	39%	27%	27%	20%

Yes, nothing against	26%	32%	26%	21%	17%	13%	9%	9%	5%
Yes, gladly	48%	13%	10%	5%	5%	2%	3%	2%	2%

---



*Table 15: Would you want your teacher to be...*

	Ort	Cat	Ath	Pro	Mus	Jew	Adv	Naz	JW
Absolutely not	1%	6%	9%	12%	15%	19%	23%	24%	33%
Rather not	1%	6%	7%	10%	12%	13%	15%	16%	16%
Indifferent	43%	52%	52%	54%	50%	48%	44%	44%	38%
Yes, nothing against	27%	27%	24%	20%	19%	16%	14%	13%	11%
Yes, gladly	29%	9%	8%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	2%

*Table 16: Would you want your boss to be...*

	Ort	Cat	Ath	Pro	Mus	Jew	Adv	Naz	JW
Absolutely not	1%	8%	11%	13%	16%	20%	23%	24%	32%
Rather not	1%	6%	5%	9%	12%	10%	12%	13%	13%
Indifferent	43%	53%	55%	55%	50%	51%	47%	46%	41%
Yes, nothing against	27%	25%	22%	19%	18%	16%	14%	13%	11%
Yes, gladly	28%	8%	7%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%

*Table 17: Would you want your neighbor to be...*

	Ort	Cat	Ath	Pro	Mus	Jew	Adv	Naz	JW
Absolutely not	0%	7%	7%	9%	11%	14%	17%	18%	27%
Rather not	1%	3%	5%	7%	8%	9%	11%	11%	12%
Indifferent	46%	55%	58%	58%	54%	54%	52%	51%	45%
Yes, nothing against	26%	28%	23%	21%	21%	18%	16%	16%	13%
Yes, gladly	27%	10%	7%	5%	6%	6%	4%	4%	3%

*Table 18: Would you want your business partner to be...*

	Ort	Cat	Ath	Pro	Mus	Jew	Adv	Naz	JW
Absolutely not	1%	5%	8%	9%	12%	16%	19%	20%	27%
Rather not	1%	4%	5%	7%	8%	9%	10%	10%	11%
Indifferent	45%	54%	55%	56%	53%	53%	49%	50%	45%
Yes, nothing against	27%	28%	25%	2%	22%	18%	18%	16%	14%
Yes, gladly	26%	9%	7%	5%	6%	4%	4%	3%	3%

Notes on Tables 10.2-10.7: All columns sum to 100% before rounding.

Abbreviations: Ort = Orthodox, Cat = Catholic, Ath = Atheist, Pro = Protestant,

Mus = Muslim, Adv = Adventist, Naz = Nazarene, JW = Jehovah's Witness

We know from the socialist era, when believers could not work in education, that the post of teacher is very important in the socialization process. After the Second World War, all those who placed religion before a "scientific" worldview left the schools along with the religious instruction subject. Today, with the introduction of religious education in Serbia from 2001, religion provides spiritual guidance, but also makes for religious distance. The relationship towards other religious communities is formed in the education system, too, in the relationship between religion teacher and pupil.

The Orthodox are undesirable as teachers for only 2% of the respondents, Catholics for 12%, Atheists for 16%, Protestants for 22%, Muslims for 27%, Jews for 32%, Adventists for 38%, Nazarenes for 40%, and Jehovah's Witnesses for nearly 50% of the respondents. This seems to be the watershed role in the attitude to the religious other.

There is a more tolerant and relaxed attitude to the other in the role of boss, where Jehovah's Witnesses are rejected by 45% and accepted by 13% of respondents, and in the role of neighbor, where they are rejected by nearly 40% and accepted by 15%.

Jehovah's Witnesses are accepted even in the role of president, where the distance is greatest, by 6% of the population, and they are most accepted as business partners, by 17%.

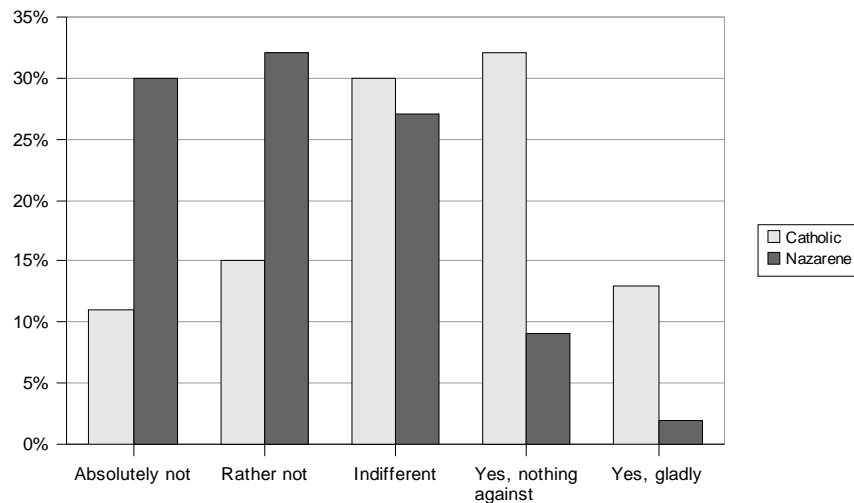
We will next (Figure 10.2) compare the stance towards Catholics and Nazarenes, as these are the paradigmatic religious others in Vojvodina,

*Figure 2: Would you want a Catholic/Nazarene as a spouse?*

respectively as the rival other and the marginal other. These relationships have formed over more than a century.

Where the choice of spouse is concerned, however, it is particularly important to stress that every religious community recommends marrying within the faith, and that these results may reflect (un)willingness to let love go before religious rules, rather than attitudes to religious others as such.

From the mass of data in this study, let me highlight yet another possible way of perceiving the religious other: in the role of neighbor. The figures shown in Table 10.4 point to a ranking order of desirable neighbors by confession among respondents from Vojvodina. The distance is not all that great, but there are nuances. The dominant Orthodox population, joined by other confessions that take more or less the same attitude to the religious other, is in a position of power to create an atmosphere of acceptance or rejection. Religious others that are welcomed in the role of neighbor are Catholics, Atheists, and Protestants; less welcome are Muslims, Jews, Adventists, Nazarenes and, least of all, Jehovah's Witnesses.



*Table 19: Desirability of confession in role of neighbor*

	N	M	SD
Orthodox	1251	3.7954	.8577
Catholic	1249	3.3523	.8693
Atheist	1249	3.1922	.9013
Protestant	1248	3.0529	.9239
Muslim	1249	3.0136	.9776
Jew	1248	2.8966	1.0067
Adventist	1247	2.7963	1.0402
Nazarene	1246	2.7657	1.0511
Jehovah's Witness	1247	2.5517	1.1184

Abbreviations: N = number of respondents;  
M = arithmetic mean; SD = standard deviation

One eyes a continuum from closeness to distance, in concentric circles, from the intimate relationship of two people who wish to spend life or eternity together, to the coexistence of different believers in the same state. Distanced and dispersed by degrees are the relatively small religious communities that do not fully belong to the society they live in and are not able to integrate with equal rights, whether due to their own wish to create for themselves an oasis of difference in life-style, or due to their rejection by others. They are removed from participation in political life, in various important social roles and in professional work, and from the prospects of marriage.

What place do believers give to themselves and to religious others?

The above results tell us about society as a whole: the representative sample is so formed as to represent the citizens of Vojvodina. However, within religious communities and between adherents to various confessions there are varying attitudes to self and other. By tabulating the questions about distance toward adherents of various religious communities in various roles (Tables 10.2 to 10.7) according to the confession of the interviewee (54 tables), joining the two acceptance categories and the two rejection categories into one each, we can compare the intensity of acceptance and rejection both of co-religionists



and religious others. The number of those who are indifferent also varies.

How many Orthodox, Catholics, or Atheists accept or reject other Orthodox, Catholics, or Atheists, respectively? Among those who declared themselves of Orthodox confession (N=896), less than 1% (0.7%) would not wish to marry someone of their own Orthodox faith, 85% would wish to, and 14% are indifferent. Among Catholics (N=192), 3% would not wish to marry another Catholic, 67% would, and 30% were indifferent about religious adherence. It is interesting to look at what Atheists (N=74) say: 4% would not marry an Atheist, a 65% majority would, and 31% were indifferent.

The non-believers in our sample most often expressed the view that they do not care who belongs to what faith, even where marriage is concerned (63%). No matter what confession was involved, the number of indifferent respondents was the same. However, there was no non-believer who said (s)he would absolutely not marry an Orthodox, but there were some 31% who would not wish to marry a Muslim, Adventist, or Nazarene, while 50% rejected a Jehovah's Witness.

Another interesting question is how many Orthodox would marry a Catholic, and how many Catholics would marry an Orthodox. The answer is that 30% of the Orthodox and 49% of the Catholic believers at least declare themselves willing to marry a member of the other faith. I assume that when a larger number of Catholics than Orthodox are ready for a religiously mixed marriage, this points to the position of the majority and dominant population, rather than to religious exclusivity among the Orthodox.

Comparing the members of traditional churches in their attitude to Jehovah's Witnesses, we note that on average only 4% of them are prepared to marry a Witness. Isolating the Protestants (Lutheran Reformation Church, Slovak Evangelical Church), 10% are open to Jehovah's Witnesses. There is also a significant difference with non-believers, as 12% of them are prepared to accept a marriage with a Jehovah's Witness. Atheists accept Jehovah's Witnesses as spouses to the same degree as Orthodox believers do (4%).

Another interesting point is the difference between Orthodox and Catholics in their attitude to Atheists. An Atheist is rejected as president by 27% of the Orthodox believers, as against 44% of the Catholics. Regarding the marriage question, 31% of the Orthodox are ready to marry an Atheist, as against 26% of the Catholics. That

Orthodox believers were more open to Atheists is also known from history, but here it is confirmed that this was part of private life, and not just of political developments.

The Nazarenes in Vojvodina are an example of Protestantism that is not nationally concentrated (Kuburić, 1999; Bjelajac, 2002). The attitude to Nazarenes has its own tradition of more than a century. I will show the distance towards them from Orthodox, Catholics, Protestants, and Atheists, as a response to the question, "Would you want a Nazarene as a neighbor?"

*Table 20: Would you want a Nazarene as a neighbor?*

	Orthodox	Catholics	Atheists	Protestants
Absolutely not	20%	7%	20%	0%
Rather not	13%	7%	7%	13%
Indifferent	49%	61%	54%	48%
Yes, nothing against	14%	22%	16%	29%
Yes, gladly	4%	3%	3%	10%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

It is clear from Table 10.9 that Nazarenes are most accepted by Protestants (Calvinists and Lutherans), for almost 40% of them would have a Nazarene as a neighbor and none of them rejected it absolutely. The Catholics in Vojvodina have less distance toward Nazarenes than do Orthodox and Atheists.

If we draw conclusions about the population based on the sample in the study, half the population of Vojvodina is indifferent to the religious affiliation of their neighbors, whether Nazarenes or something else. 30% of Vojvodina's citizens said "rather not" or "absolutely not" to having Nazarenes as neighbors. Finally, 20% of them would gladly have a Nazarene as a neighbor, or at least would have nothing against it.

If we also ask about the national affiliation of those who would accept Nazarene neighbors, since in Serbia national and religious identity are fairly closely related, then 26% of Magyars, 22% of Montenegrins, 21% of Croats, 20% of Yugoslavs and 18% of Serbs are

ready to accept Nazarenes as neighbors. On the other hand, they are rejected by 37% of the Montenegrins, 33% of the Serbs, 32% of the Croats, 22% of Yugoslavs, and 12% of the Magyars living in Vojvodina.

I will also mention the attitudes to Muslims, again according to the national affiliation of those taking a stance on them as neighbors. In Vojvodina, Muslims are accepted as neighbors by 38% of the Croats, 30% of the Magyars, 25% of the Serbs, 25% of the Montenegrins, and 25% of the Yugoslavs; they are rejected by 34% of the Montenegrins, 23% of the Serbs, 11% of the Yugoslavs, 9% of the Croats and 6% of the Magyars. The rest are indifferent. (Other nationalities in Vojvodina have not been included because of the low number of respondents in the sample.)

One question that remains unresolved by this study is whether it is the relationship between a majority religious community and minority ones that creates the distance between them, or whether it is a matter of a type of religiosity with a more or less exclusivist attitude that always distances itself from others, regardless of the context. The answer might be found by a comparative study. My assumption is that the Orthodox distance themselves less from other believers in countries where they form minorities. The message of the dominant religion is the message of monopoly over the space in which it wishes to feel at home.

I close with another question mark: Do these results reflect the views of the religious other that are preached by the believers of various religious communities and by their priests, religious leaders, teachers, preachers, nuns, and religious instructors, as surveyed in Chapter 8? In particular, may they reflect the way religious leaders, priests, and professors at theological faculties seek to guard their believers from religious enticement, proselytism and conversion?

#### References

- Bjelajac, Branko. 2002. "Protestantism in Serbia." *Religion, State and Society* 30, no. 2: 169-218.
- — —. 2005. "Napadi na manjinske verske zajednice tokom 2002. i 2003. godine u Srbiji." *Religija i tolerancija*, no. 3: 170-179.
- Bogardus, E. 1925a. "Social Distance and Its Origins." *Journal of Applied Sociology* 9: 216-226.
- — —. 1925b. "Measuring Social Distance." *Journal of Applied Sociology* 9:

- 299–308.
- — —. 1972. "Social Distance Scale." In *Social Psychology: Experimentation, Theory, Research*, ed. William S. Sahakian, 95–100. Intext Educational Publishers.
- Cvitković, I. 1996. *Sociologija religije*. Sarajevo: Univerzitetska knjiga.
- Joksimović, S. and Z. Kuburić 2002. "Verska tolerancija i distanca." In *Religija, veronauka, tolerancija*, ed. Z. Kuburić. Novi Sad: Centar za empirijska istraživanja religije.
- Krstić, Dragan. 1996. *Psihološki rečnik*. 3rd rev. ed. Beograd. Savremena administracija.
- Kuburić, Z. 1999. *Vera i sloboda, Verske zajednice u Jugoslaviji*. Niš: JUNIR.
- — —. 2005a. "Verska tolerancija i socijalna distanca u Vojvodini." In *Religija u multikulturnom društvu*, Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet i Beograd: Sociološko društvo Srbije.
- — —. 2005b. "Religious and National Identity in Process of Globalization of Serbia." In *Religion and Globalization*, ed. Danijela Gavrilović, 55–64. Niš: JUNIR.
- — —. 2006. "Verske zajednice u Srbiji i verska distanca." *Religija i tolerancija*, no. 5: 53–70.
- Pantić, D. 1967. *Etnička distanca u SFRJ*. (Izveštaji i studije; 2). Beograd: Institut društvenih nauka.
- — —. 1981. *Vrednosne orijentacije mladih u Srbiji*. Beograd: Izdavački centar SSO Srbije.
- — —. 1982. "Društvena udaljenost." In: *Sociološki leksikon*. Beograd: "Savremena administracija."
- — —. 1986. "Odnos mladih prema (inter)nacionalnom: Zatvorenost-otvorenost prema svetu." In *Omladina 1986: Sondaža javnog mnjenja*, ed. S. Mihailović et al. Beograd: Istraživačko-izdavački centar SSO Srbije & Centar za politikološka istraživanja i javno mnjenje IDN.
- — —. 1988. *Klasična i svetovna religioznost*. Beograd: Institut društvenih nauka.
- — —. 1991. "Nacionalna distanca građana Jugoslavije." In *Jugoslavija na kriznoj prekretnici*, ed. Lj. Bačević et al. Beograd: Institut društvenih nauka.
- Rot, Nikola and Nenad Havelka. 1973. *Nacionalna vezanost i vrednosti kod srednjoškolske omladine*. Beograd: Institut za psihologiju i Institut društvenih nauka.
- Trebješanin, Žarko. 2004. *Rečnik psihologije*, 3rd rev. ed. Beograd: Stubovi

kulture.









## Contributors

Ahmet Alibasic, M.A., is a lecturer at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, University of Sarajevo, and the director of the Center for Advanced Studies in Sarajevo.

Zorica Kuburic is full-time professor of Sociology of Religion and Method of Education in Sociology and Philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, Serbia. She is president of the Center for Empirical Researches of religion (CEIR), and founder and chief editor of the journal *Religija i tolerancija* (2002–2008). Her publications include *Religija, porodica i mladi* (2nd ed., 2008); *Vera i sloboda: Verske zajednice u Jugoslaviji* (2002); and *Porodica i psihičko zdravlje dece* (3rd ed., 2001).

Ankica Marinović, Ph.D., is Senior Scientific Associate at the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb. She is principal investigator of the project *Smaller Religious Communities as Actors of Religious Changes in Croatian Society*. Her main interests in the field are new religiosity (NRMs) and the dimension of religious experience, relations between state and religious communities, and religious education. She teaches undergraduate courses on comparative religion and sociology of religion at the University of Zagreb and University of Split. Her publications include *Religious Communities in Croatia* (2008, with D. Marinović Jerolimov), *Children and the Media* (2001, with V. Ilišin and F. Radin), and numerous articles.

Dinka Marinović Jerolimov is a senior scientific associate at the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, Croatia. Among her recent publications, she is co-editor of the book *Religion and Patterns of Social transformation* (2004), and co-author of the book *Vjerske zajednice u Hrvatskoj* (2008).

Christian Moe is a freelance writer and translator in Slovenia. At the time of this project, he was a research assistant at the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages in Oslo, Norway, and coordinator of the Kotor Network. He has co-edited *Religion and Pluralism in Education* (2006, with Z. Kuburic) and *New Directions in Islamic Thought: Exploring Reform and Tradition* (2008, with K. Vogt

and L. Larsen).

Zlatiborka Popov-Momčinović is a lecturer at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of East Sarajevo. Her research is in the fields of Sociology of Politics and Sociology of Religion. Her recent publications include *Religijska tolerancija u Bosni i Hercegovini* (2007, with D. Krneta).

Aid Smajić is a lecturer at the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo, University of Sarajevo, a project manager at the Center for Advanced Studies (CAS) in Sarajevo, and PhD candidate at the Department of Psychology at University of Sarajevo. His current research interests mainly lie in the sociology and psychology of religion and ethno-religious relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Zilka Spahić-Šiljak is coordinator of the Religious Studies graduate program at the Center for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies, University of Sarajevo. Her recent publications include *Žene, religija i politika* (2007) and (as co-author) *Ravnopravnost spolova i sudska praksa u BiH* (2007) and *Studija o nasilju u porodici u BiH* (2006)

Milan Vukomanović is a professor of sociology of religion and world religions at the Department of Sociology, University of Belgrade, Serbia. He has also been a visiting professor or guest lecturer at the University of Pittsburgh, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, and the University of Sarajevo. His recent books include *Homo viator: religija i novo doba* (2008), *Svet Jominog jevandjelja* (2007) and the textbook *Religija* (2004).

## Alphabetical Index

*Note:* Č and ć follow c, š follows s, ž follows ž. For instance, Žbanić appears after Zwingli.

- Abraham 105  
*acemi oqlan* 54, 67  
Adorers of the Blood of Christ 183  
Adventists 10, 76, 84, 97, 110, 114,  
174, 176, 188, 192, 202, 204, 207,  
208, 211–213, 220–222, 224–227  
agnostics 75, 76, 92, 204, 205  
*Ahdnama* 50–52  
Ahmadis 115, 116  
*akincis* 63  
al-Ghazali 112  
Albania 28, 33, 48, 49  
Albanians 9, 12, 21, 28, 29, 33, 34, 37,  
61, 131, 133, 135, 138–141  
Ali Pasha Rizvanbegović 64  
Anabaptists 220  
Andrić, Ivo 23  
Anglicans 84, 102, 103, 174  
*antemurale* myth 46, 133  
anti-Semitism 87, 104, 137, 144, 171,  
181  
apostolic succession 83  
Arnauts 34  
*askeri* 32  
Atenagora (patriarch) 84  
atheists 11–13, 80, 81, 91, 92, 102, 108–  
110, 114, 115, 117–119, 131, 141–  
143, 171, 175, 178, 183, 190, 215,  
220–222, 224–229  
Athos (Holy Mount) 128, 172  
Augustine 134  
Austria-Hungary 29, 44, 143  
authoritarianism 126, 145, 194  
Avakum (St.) 133  
Bačka 137  
Baha'is 115, 116  
Bajram 112  
Balkan 10, 13, 17, 19–24, 28–30, 32,  
34–37, 39, 44, 46, 48, 49, 53, 59–61,  
64, 66, 69, 105, 113, 125, 126, 129,  
130, 132, 133, 136, 138, 143–145,  
181, 194, 195  
Balkan Wars 23, 24, 28, 29, 34, 66, 69,  
143  
Balkanism 195  
Banja Luka 42, 65, 155  
Baptists 76, 84, 174, 176, 188–190, 202,  
204, 207, 208, 211–213, 220  
Bayazit (sultan) 47  
Bečković, Matija 131  
Belgrade 12, 20, 66, 150, 151, 170, 173,  
178, 179, 183, 186–188, 191–193  
Benedict XVI (pope) 178, 183  
Bey's Mosque 62, 87  
Bhagavad Gita 85  
Bible 12, 77, 86, 89, 91, 104, 108, 117,  
174, 176, 189, 192  
Bigović, Radovan 170, 173, 177, 178  
Bogardus scale 13, 206, 220  
Bosnia and Herzegovina 9–12, 20, 22,  
27, 33, 39–45, 48, 49, 52, 56, 66, 68,  
69, 97–101, 106, 114, 115, 118, 119,  
126, 127, 130, 131, 140, 143, 147,  
149–151, 156, 158, 160, 163, 202,  
214, 215

Bosniaks 9, 23, 44–46, 52, 55–57, 60–62, 131, 138, 140, 160  
 Bosnian Church 49, 50  
 brainwashing 90  
 Branch Davidians 90  
 Buddhists 79, 80, 84–86, 89, 102, 106, 107, 207, 208, 211–213  
 Bulgaria 19, 25, 31, 169, 172  
 Bulgarians 19  
 Byzantium 20, 22, 25, 83, 135  
 Calvinists 84, 174, 221, 229  
 cantons 41, 97, 99, 100  
 Catholics 9–13, 34, 49–52, 57, 59–61, 64, 68, 75–80, 82–86, 88–90, 92, 93, 97–99, 101–107, 110, 111, 113, 115, 117, 118, 129, 131, 132, 134–137, 143–145, 150, 151, 160, 162, 168, 172–174, 176, 179, 183–187, 189, 193, 201–205, 207–215, 220–222, 224–229  
 CDRSEE 18  
 CEIR 220  
 Cerularius, Michael (patriarch) 103  
 Cetinje 31  
 Children of God 102, 108  
 Christian Cultural Center 177  
 Christians 10, 12, 13, 21–23, 25–28, 31–34, 36, 37, 44, 47–55, 57–59, 61, 62, 64, 67, 69, 78–84, 86–93, 102–113, 115–117, 128, 129, 132–141, 143–145, 154, 155, 172, 174, 176–179, 182–187, 189–193, 196  
 communion 77, 83, 111, 135, 138, 184, 205  
 communists 12, 18, 34, 76, 81, 91, 92, 97, 127, 129, 130, 138, 139, 142–144, 146, 171, 172, 175, 178, 190, 201, 203, 214  
 Conference of Bishops 78  
 Confucians 84–86, 89, 102, 106  
 Congress of Berlin 143  
 Constantinople 66, 135  
 Council of Europe 41, 42, 100  
 Croatia 9–11, 13, 22, 45, 59, 60, 75–79, 84, 88, 91, 93, 94, 105, 130, 131, 133, 136, 138, 144, 151, 169, 201–207, 209, 210, 213–215  
 Croats 9, 22, 23, 28, 37, 40, 44, 52, 53, 56, 57, 61, 69, 105, 106, 117, 131, 134, 136, 137, 144, 214, 229  
 Crusades, the 92, 135  
 crypto-Christians 139  
 cults 10, 13, 77, 88, 93, 168  
 Čavić, Dragan 130  
*čifluk* 55, 58  
 Ćosić, Dobrica 29  
 Dalmatia 59, 60, 210, 213, 214  
 Darwin, Charles 143  
 Dayton 68, 97, 127, 140  
 de-secularisation 205  
*Despotovina* 20, 25, 46  
*devşirme* 23, 24, 32, 49–51, 53, 54, 67, 69, 106  
*dhimmis* 26, 33, 37  
 dialogue 78, 80, 82, 84, 86–88, 93, 94, 98, 102, 106, 107, 109, 111, 131, 137, 144, 145, 148, 156, 174, 175, 177–179, 183, 187, 188, 192, 195, 215  
 Dimitrijević, Vladimir 169  
*Dominus Iesus* 83  
 Dubrovnik 30  
 Dušan (tsar) 25  
 ecumenism 78, 82, 84, 88, 89, 93, 103, 111, 172–174, 178, 187–189, 193  
 England 103  
 Enlightenment, the 92, 145  
 Esphigmenou 172  
 ethnicity 9, 10, 13, 18, 21, 23, 27, 28, 33, 34, 37, 56, 59, 60, 62, 64, 65, 69, 97–99, 129, 132, 134, 138, 144, 181, 194, 202, 203, 206, 215, 219, 221  
 EU 66, 119, 127, 139  
 Eugene of Savoy 60, 64, 66  
 Evangelicals 76, 174, 190, 202, 204, 228  
 exclusivism 83, 172, 192  
 family roles 158, 159  
 Federation of B&H 40, 99  
*ferman* 22  
*fitra* 108

France 13, 179  
 Franciscans 52, 62, 65, 69, 70  
 Froehlich, Samuel Heinrich 220  
 Gandhi, Mahatma 85  
 gender 149, 150, 158, 160, 207, 212  
 genocide 60, 61, 114, 136, 139, 143, 144  
 Georg-Eckert Institute 44  
*Glas Koncila* 126, 129  
 Globalization 88, 132, 145  
 Goethe Institute 100  
 Gračanica (monastery) 140  
 Great Schism, the 82, 83, 103, 110, 111, 143  
 Greek Catholics 102, 103, 136, 173, 187, 220  
 Greek Orthodox Church 136  
 Greeks 19  
 Grigorije (bishop) 140  
*haŕiz(a)* 156, 157, 161, 162  
*hajduks* 27, 55, 61  
 Hanafis 115  
 Hanbalis 115  
 Hare Krishna 102, 202, 207–209, 211–213, 215  
*hatma* 85, 157  
 Hell 117  
 Henry VIII (king) 103  
 heresy 92, 172  
 Hindus 79–81, 84–86, 89, 102, 106, 107  
 Hočevan, Stanislav (archbishop) 183  
 Holocaust 104, 112, 138  
 Holy See 174, 187  
 Holy Synod 131  
 homosexuals 179  
 human rights 92, 118, 162, 175, 179, 182  
 humanism 92, 134, 178  
 Hungary 29, 44, 59, 60  
 Husein-Kapetan Gradašević 51, 55, 58, 61  
 identity 12, 23, 34, 37, 42, 80, 88, 100, 101, 127–129, 132–134, 142–144, 146, 149, 167, 171, 173, 177, 180, 182, 192–195, 229  
 illustrations 19, 30, 31, 35, 36, 40, 64–66, 85, 117, 150–153, 155, 157, 158, 160, 162–164, 172  
 imams 30, 162  
 impalement 61, 68, 69  
 individualism 134, 135, 174, 178  
 Institute for Social Research 202, 206  
 ‘Isa 116, 117  
 Islamic Community 76, 88, 116, 150, 151, 157, 162, 163, 176, 193, 204  
 Islamization 23, 28, 32–34, 39, 40, 48–50, 106, 136  
*istraĝa poturica* 60  
 Istria 210, 213  
 Janissaries 23, 24, 32, 53, 54, 56, 67  
 Jasenovac 136, 138  
 Jašar Pasha 48  
 Jehovah’s Witnesses 10, 76, 102, 108, 114, 174, 176, 180, 186, 189, 190, 192, 193, 202, 204, 207–209, 211–213, 220, 222, 225, 226, 228  
 Jesus Christ 76, 83, 87–90, 104, 105, 107, 108, 111, 112, 114, 116, 117, 131, 133, 160, 161, 174, 183, 185, 187–190, 192, 204  
 Jews 11, 12, 37, 50–52, 63, 66, 76, 79, 80, 86, 87, 89, 90, 97, 102–105, 110, 112, 115, 116, 118, 137, 138, 145, 171, 176, 192, 193, 202, 203, 207–209, 211–213, 220–226  
*jiŕya* 26, 32  
 John Paul II (pope) 88, 91, 136, 137  
 Jusufspahić, Hamdija (mufti) 193  
*kafirs* 117  
 Karadžić, Vuk 31, 62  
*Katolički tjednik* 150–154, 156, 158–162, 164  
*kharaj* 32, 48, 50, 58, 64  
*komšiluk* 52  
 Kopilović, Andrija 174, 183, 186  
 Kosovo (and Metohija) 10, 20, 24, 25, 28, 29, 33, 34, 40, 44, 46–48, 113, 114, 127, 129–131, 133, 135, 136, 138–141, 154, 163, 169  
 Kosovo ethic 113, 129, 139  
 Kosovo, Battle of 25, 40, 44, 46, 47  
 Kotor Network 9

Krbavsko Polje 22  
*kufr* 115, 118  
 Kuharić, Franjo (cardinal) 130  
 Le Bon, Gustave 144  
 Lika and Banovina 210, 213, 214  
 Luther, Martin 84, 103  
 Lutherans 102, 103, 136, 169, 174, 220, 221, 228, 229  
 Macedonia 10, 28, 33, 34, 131  
 Macedonians 19, 142  
*madhhabs* 115  
*madrāsas* 30  
 Marica, Battle of 20  
 marriage 67, 179, 181, 189, 206–209, 219, 220, 222, 227, 228  
 Mehmed II Fatih (sultan) 20, 54, 64, 66, 67  
*mekteb* 157  
 migrations 20, 24, 28, 31, 33, 44, 51, 58–61, 116, 194  
 Milin, Lazar 170, 172  
*millet*s 26, 27, 33, 37, 51  
 Milošević, Slobodan 22, 35, 130, 146  
 Miz, Roman 173–175  
 Mladić, Ratko 113  
 monasteries 172  
 Montenegrins 31, 45, 171, 229  
 Montenegro 44, 59, 60, 68, 171, 178  
 Mormons 102, 108, 174, 190, 202, 207–213, 215  
 Mostar 28, 40, 42, 64–66  
 motherhood 150, 154, 156, 158, 160, 164  
 Murad I (sultan) 25, 47  
 Muslims 9–12, 17, 19–21, 23, 24, 27, 28, 31–35, 37, 39, 40, 44, 45, 48–62, 65–70, 76, 79, 80, 86–89, 97–99, 101–106, 110, 112, 113, 115–119, 131, 132, 135, 136, 138–142, 145, 150, 151, 153, 157, 158, 160, 162, 163, 172, 176, 178, 181, 185, 186, 193, 195, 196, 202–204, 208, 209, 212–215, 220–222, 224–227, 229  
 Nazarenes 169, 191, 192, 220, 221, 222, 224–229  
 Nazis 86, 92, 181  
 NDH (Independent State of Croatia) 136, 138  
 Negus, the (king) 116  
 neighbors 22, 23, 43, 45, 48, 50, 52, 57, 59, 88, 93, 105, 109, 113, 119, 183, 220, 221, 224–226, 228, 229  
*nekrst* 139  
 Neretva 141  
 New Age 89, 102, 108  
 new religious movements 10, 11, 79, 80, 88–91, 93, 102, 107, 109, 110, 118, 170, 174, 182, 203, 215  
 Niš 188, 190  
 Njegoš, Petar 66, 170, 171  
 non-religious people 13, 75, 76, 79, 91, 92, 102, 109, 114, 119, 203–205, 207–214  
*Nostra Aetate* 86–88, 105  
 Novi Pazar 61  
 Novi Sad 173, 183, 185, 187, 188, 193, 220  
*novoverci* 170, 188, 189, 195  
 NRMs 10, 107, 108, 114, 119, 213, 214  
 nuns and religious sisters 154, 155, 160, 162, 163, 230  
 Obilić, Miloš 62  
 Obradović, Dositej 145  
 OHR 41, 42  
 Omer Pasha Latas 55, 65  
 Order of the Solar Temple 90  
 Orientalists 25, 147  
 Orthodox 9, 10, 12, 13, 26, 27, 30, 33, 34, 45, 49–52, 58–61, 66, 76, 79, 83, 84, 93, 97–99, 101–103, 106, 109–111, 113–115, 117, 118, 125–130, 134–137, 139, 141, 143–146, 150, 151, 156, 160, 168–170, 172, 173, 176, 177, 179, 181–183, 186–193, 195, 202–204, 207–209, 211–215, 220–222, 224–229  
 Orthodox Church 26, 27, 49, 50, 66, 76, 79, 83, 84, 102, 103, 110, 111, 113, 125–127, 130, 136, 137, 139, 144, 146, 151, 156, 168–170, 172, 176, 177, 179, 183, 189–192, 204, 209

OSCE 41, 44, 100, 101  
 Ottoman empire 10, 19–27, 29, 30, 32, 36, 37, 52, 105, 113, 141, 181  
 Ottomans 10, 11, 17, 19–33, 35–37, 39–41, 44–70, 105, 106, 113, 141, 171, 181, 182  
 Patriarchates 27, 33, 50–53, 84, 126, 150, 151  
 patriarchy 12, 27, 33, 147–149, 160, 175  
 Paul VI (pope) 84  
 Pavle (patriarch) 126, 130  
 Peć Patriarchate 27, 50–53  
 Pentecostals 76, 110, 114, 174, 176, 189–191, 204, 207–209, 211–213, 215, 220  
 People's Temple 90  
 Petritsch, Wolfgang 66  
 pope, the 84, 88, 91, 106, 136, 137, 160, 161, 178, 179, 183, 187  
 Popović, Justin 170  
 Porte, the (Ottoman government) 56, 57  
*poturica* 57, 60  
*Pravoslavlje* 12, 125, 126, 128–145, 150–154, 156, 158, 161, 163, 164  
*Preporod* 150–154, 156–162, 164  
 primary schools 40, 78, 80, 97, 98, 100–102, 104, 109, 115, 118, 203, 210, 213, 215  
 Priština 31  
 proselytism 133, 136, 168, 174, 184, 186, 209, 230  
 Protestants 10, 13, 76, 79, 82–84, 102, 103, 110, 111, 131, 134, 135, 145, 169, 171, 172, 174, 176, 185, 188–190, 192, 203, 204, 221, 222, 224–226, 228, 229  
*qadi* 30  
 Qadianis 115, 116  
 Qur'an 49, 66, 87, 105, 116–118, 156, 161, 162  
 Ramadan 112  
 rationalism 92, 134  
 Ratzinger, Joseph 178  
*raya* 22, 23, 27, 32, 55, 57, 58, 64  
 reciprocity 194, 196  
 Reformation, the 82, 84, 173, 177, 192, 228  
 reincarnation 81, 85, 107, 205  
 religiosity 75–77, 85, 109, 133, 135, 137, 145, 176, 192, 203–205, 209–211, 213, 229  
 religious distance 13, 181, 201, 202, 206, 207, 210–213, 215, 219, 225  
 religious education 11, 75, 77–81, 92, 97–102, 104, 109, 110, 113, 115, 118, 119, 157, 168, 178, 183, 203, 205, 215, 225  
 remnant theology 192  
 Republika Srpska 40, 41, 99, 126, 127, 130  
 Roman Catholic Church 50, 60, 76, 77, 79, 80, 83, 86, 88, 89, 93, 103, 105–107, 110, 111, 135, 150, 151, 160, 174, 176, 179, 183–186, 189, 201, 204, 205, 209, 214  
 Sabbath 192  
 sacraments 77, 83, 90  
 Said, Edward 148  
 Sandžak 33  
 Sarajevo 40, 41, 51, 62, 65–67, 87, 100, 140, 151, 157  
 satanists 110, 114, 187, 188, 190, 192  
 Sava (St.) 53, 128, 141  
 schisms 11, 82, 83, 110, 143, 169  
 Scientologists 180, 207–213, 215  
 secondary schools 19, 20, 22, 30, 34–36, 43, 78, 79, 81, 93, 202, 214, 215  
 sects 10, 11, 77, 83, 88, 89, 91, 93, 102, 107, 108, 110, 114–116, 168, 174, 179, 187, 188, 190–193, 195, 203, 209, 213–215  
 Sephardic Jews 65, 86  
 Serbdom 191  
 Serbia 9, 11–13, 17–23, 28–30, 33–36, 44, 46, 47, 59–61, 63, 68, 114, 126, 127, 130, 137, 139, 141–143, 167–171, 175–177, 180, 183, 184, 186, 188, 190, 194, 195, 225, 229  
 Serbian kingdom 36, 45  
 Serbian Orthodox Church 26, 27, 68,

79, 83, 84, 113, 125–132, 135, 136,  
138–146, 151, 168, 170, 172, 173,  
176, 177, 179, 183, 184, 189–191

Serbophobia 143

Serbs 9, 12, 19–21, 23–26, 28–31, 33–  
35, 44, 45, 48–50, 52, 53, 56–58, 60–  
63, 66, 68, 69, 99, 113, 117, 127,  
128, 134, 136–145, 181, 202, 214,  
229

Shafi'is 115

*Shari'a* 22, 32, 53

Shi'is 115

*Shqiptar* 28

Sinan Pasha 141

*sipahis* 56, 57, 65

Sister Ines 183–186

Skenderbey 22

Slavonia 59, 60

Slovenia 10

social distance 10, 13, 168, 181, 202,  
203, 206–210, 212–215, 219, 220

socialists 23, 34, 92, 93, 130, 171, 225

South Slavs 9, 22, 23, 34, 35, 46, 53, 60

Srebrenica 114

Srijem 60, 106

Stepinac, Alojzije (archbishop) 92

stereotypes 11, 18, 25, 27, 32, 37, 69,  
70, 90, 93, 144, 149, 155, 157

Subotica 137, 173, 183, 186, 188

Sufis 115, 161

Suleyman the Magnificent (sultan)  
25, 26

sultans 24–26, 30, 44, 46–48, 50–58,  
63–67, 70

Sunnis 115

Šijaković, Bogoljub 170, 178–182, 195

*“Šiptar”* 28, 33, 37

Štrosmajer, Josip Juraj 144

synagogues 65

Taoists 81, 84–86

textbooks 10, 11, 17–25, 29–31, 34–37,  
39–46, 48, 50, 53–55, 57–64, 67–70,  
75, 78–80, 82, 92, 93, 97, 98, 100–  
110, 113–119, 168, 183, 203, 214,  
215

textbook revision 41, 42, 45, 99, 100,  
114

*timar* 22, 25, 56

Tito 130

tolerance 18, 19, 33, 37, 43, 50, 52, 53,  
63, 93, 94, 107, 109, 131, 141, 144,  
145, 171, 178, 179, 186, 187, 189,  
191, 202, 203, 210, 213, 222

tolerance, antagonistic 18

Torah 86, 116

transition 201, 214

Trinity, the 90

Tudjman, Franjo 130

Turkey 17, 26, 33, 37, 46, 52, 55, 133,  
139

Turks 10–12, 19–21, 27, 28, 30, 31, 36,  
39, 46–48, 52, 53, 57, 60–62, 64, 67,  
105, 106, 113, 114, 119, 129, 131,  
133, 135, 138–141, 171, 182

Tvrтко (king) 47, 66

UNESCO 41, 42, 140

Uniates 133

*Unitatis redintegratio* 82

Upanishads 85

uprisings 22, 26, 27, 30, 44, 45, 52, 55,  
56, 60–62, 68, 113, 114

*Ustaša* 28, 37, 136, 143

Vatican II 77, 82, 87, 93, 104, 106, 107

Velimirović, Nikolaj (bishop) 128,  
129, 170, 171

Venetians 44, 59, 67

victimization 133, 144

Vidovdan 47

Vienna War, Great 54, 60

Vlahs 59, 60

Vojvodina 12, 13, 44, 59, 137, 167–169,  
196, 219, 220, 221, 222, 225–229

Vrhbosna, Archdiocese of 151

Wahhabis 115, 116

WCC (World Council of Churches)  
111

West, the 12, 25, 128, 134, 135, 145,  
174, 178, 195

Western Balkans 10, 13, 60, 125

women 12, 30, 33, 63–65, 139, 148–  
164, 171, 183, 189, 212, 213

World Wars 23, 28, 112, 114, 139, 143,



181, 225  
Yannaras, Christos 135  
yoga 85, 107, 202  
Yugoslavia 9, 10, 23, 34, 97, 126, 129-  
131, 151, 173  
Zagreb 137, 202, 203, 206, 210, 213  
Zealots 172, 173  
Zemun 170, 177, 190, 191  
Zwingli, Ulrich 84  
Žbanić, Jasmila 157  
Žitomislići monastery 65, 141