

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

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Abstract

This paper analyses five major Bosnian daily newspapers over a period spanning from August 1st, 2018 until August 2019, 31 and attempts to discern the main patterns in the discourse over Muslims and Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The results of this research show three major discursive patterns when covering Muslims and Islam in the country: Bosnian Muslims as political obstructionists; Bosnia and Herzegovina as a haven for Muslim extremists and finally Muslim migrants as a threat to the country and to Europe.

Key words: Islam, Bosniaks, Bosnia, Muslims, Muslim in media, discourse analysis

Introduction

The media is a major source of information for the average person. It has undeniable power to shape not only the public's opinion but its system of values, beliefs, identities and social relations. Moreover, the media has strong influence on viewers due to its ability to organize and present information through framing: the organization of information into stories specifically tailored for the audience to comprehend. The discourse that it creates is one of the main sources of people's

knowledge. According to the renowned French philosopher Michel Foucault, those who produce a discourse have the power to produce a “regime of truth” and to enforce its validity and factual status.¹

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

Despite Muslim voices becoming increasingly vocal in the West and awareness of Islamophobia growing, the climate of fear over Muslims and Islam as a religion has persisted and expanded, alongside the rise of right-wing populist leaders in major democracies such as the United States and European Union. While some media are blatantly Islamophobic, others are more subtle and their framing of Islam and Muslims implicit and ambivalent. *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Press* offers a meticulous study of one example of the discourse on Islam and Muslims in Europe.⁴ There have also been numerous reports and studies on other major European countries with sizeable Muslim populations, such as Germany, France and Austria.⁵

Even as Muslims in Western Europe have received significant academic and media attention, the Balkan Muslims remain understudied. Home to Muslims since the late 14th century, the region was more recently an arena in which Serb and Croat nationalists applied genocidal and irredentist policies to their Muslim

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

2 “UK media’s portrayal of Muslims ‘misleading and negative’: study”, *Al Jazeera English*, July 9, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/07/uk-media-portrayal-muslims-misleading-negative-study-190708104550539.html>, accessed 14 September 2019.

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

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

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

neighbours and their territory. The 1992-1995 and 1998-1999 wars against the Bosniak Muslims and Kosovar Albanians led to Western media giving these persecuted populations unprecedented attention. Once the wars had ended, a lull ensued in journalistic interest in the region that lasted until the beginning of the Syrian war, when a disproportionate amount of media attention was again devoted to the relatively small number of Balkan Muslim volunteers fighting alongside different armed factions in Syria and Iraq.

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

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

A note on the perception of Balkan Muslims

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

Analysing public discourse on Islam and Muslims requires a slightly different approach in the Balkans than in the West. This is because of the region's indigenous Muslim populations (Bosniaks, Albanians and Pomaks), which began to convert to Islam with the gradual Ottoman conquest of the peninsula, from the late 14th century onwards. They played an important and integral part in the Ottoman Empire, contributing to the running of its complex administration and military machinery. Insofar as these conversions to Islam began with the Ottoman conquest, however, the local populations that became Muslim came to be associated with the religion of the occupying Ottoman forces - the "Turks" as they were more commonly known.⁶ Being labelled a "Turk" has a derogatory

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

connotation in Slavic languages, even compared to the use of the same word in English. A sinister prevalent association (in the popular imagination of the Balkan Christians) is of Slavic-Muslims not just as “Turks” but as “race traitors” who converted to Islam and abandoned Christ for personal gain and elevated social status.⁷ These perceptions of Slavic Muslims as “traitors” were a central theme in the creation of nation states and the development of nationalism.⁸

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

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

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

The myth of the Battle of Kosovo today serves as the basis of Serb anti-Muslim nationalism and is often translated into anti-Bosniak and anti-Albanian sentiment that views these two groups as physical remnants of the Ottoman Empire.

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

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

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

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

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

Design and method

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

Media outlets and journalists are the primary definers of what is *important* and what is *correct* in the coverage of news.¹² Hence, media outlets establish the

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

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

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

initial interpretation and frame for viewing a given topic or event. As Kimberly A. Powell notes, certain aspects of the reporter-perceived reality may become more salient than others and when these more salient elements become dominant, a frame is then created which impacts other journalists, who frame the same story identically, making it the dominant lens through which to view a given story.¹³ The audience and wider public adopt the hegemonic frame and identify and render moral judgement on repeated or similar future events through this established frame. When the audiences applying the framework have little or no real social contact with the target group, in this case Muslims, then the role of the media as sole provider of information and interpreter of events becomes crucial. Pervasive exposure to the same words, phrases and terms causes viewers unwittingly to adopt the opinions they in the media.

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

The media's substantively linguistic and discursive nature means careful analysis of its deployment of linguistic tools is required in examining the representation of events. The present paper applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to the representation of Islam and Muslims in Bosnian media. Norman Fairclough discusses the term CDA in his book *Language and Power*.¹⁴ He introduces concepts central to CDA, including "discourse, power, ideology, social practice and common sense". Discourse analysis plays a key role in showing how social phenomena are discursively constituted by demonstrating how things come to be as they are. According to Fairclough, discourse analysis follows a three-dimensional model: (i) textual; (ii) inter-textual; and (iii) contextual. The first focuses on the linguistic features and aspects of the text and examines the elements that are being placed in the discourse and how subjects are distinguished from each other, mostly in the form of binary opposition. The second analyses how authors of texts relate to already existing discourses to create *their* texts, while the third puts text into context and examines links between language and social practice.¹⁵ While the CDA approach can deploy a range of different techniques, the focus generally lies on the analysis of words and their textual context, including some

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

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

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

not explicitly related to Muslims but often raised and discussed alongside any reference to Islam and Muslims. The analysis begins by presenting continuous topic categories that are then further exemplified using short quotes or headlines from articles within each category.

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

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

In analysing political culture, we study newspaper articles and the discourse they create to understand how the arguments they contain legitimize or delegiti-

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

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

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

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

mize a particular political behaviour. The newspapers selected here are among the most influential newspapers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The rationale behind choosing mainstream newspapers instead of yellow press is that the former are expected to be generally more nuanced and balanced in their reporting on Islam and Muslims than the latter. This research aims to find out whether more subtle patterns of reporting do actually exist in Bosnia's mainstream newspapers.

The study focuses on the period spanning August 1, 2018, to August 31, 2019. During the period, a total of 1,975 issues were produced by the above-mentioned five newspapers. As this represented an overwhelming amount of information, three filters were applied. First, we selected all newspaper articles featuring the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian words for "Islam," "Muslim," "Bosniak," "Bosnian Muslims" or "migrant" and "refugee," terms used by journalists to refer to Muslim refugees arriving in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to avoid direct use of the religious label. All the articles containing these keywords were then reviewed again and those relating to Bosnia and Herzegovina were singled out. This was done to exclude the many articles covering news from the Middle East, United States, Europe, Africa and Asia. In the third phase of the study, 30 articles were selected randomly from each newspaper for the one-year time span and their content was analysed. This selection represented an average of 2.5 articles per month for the period. Cumulatively, 150 articles from the newspapers, including editorials, interviews, features, and news reports, were analysed.

Analysis and discussion

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

I. The narrative of Bosniak Muslims as political troublemakers and Bosnia as an unstable country

Selected headlines from Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers		
<i>Večernji list</i>	<i>Dnevni list</i>	<i>Glas Srpske</i>
“Vital national interest – Bosniaks play card 13 times, Croats only twice.” ²⁰	“Croatian People’s Assembly: Bosnia entering new turmoil as key political posts all held by Bosniaks.” ²¹	“Bosniaks aim for Serb posts in Council of Ministers.” ²²
“Bosniaks want to take everything away from Croats: their church, their history and their right to life in Bosnia.” ²³	“Karamatić: Bosnia’s end is nearing; Bosniaks will be begging for a statelet.” ²⁴	“Scandalous: Bosniaks want Harvard University to fire Professor Israel.” ²⁵
“The political will is there, but Bosniaks are blocking the formation of a government.” ²⁶	“Croatian People’s Assembly: Political Sarajevo is nervous and hysterical.” ²⁷	“NATO understands what military neutrality means, but Bosniaks do not.” ²⁸

- 20 “Nacionalni interes - Bošnjaci ‘povlačili’ 13, a Hrvati samo dva puta“, *Večernji list*, July 14, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/nacionalni-interes-bosnjaci-povlacili-13-a-hrvati-samo-dva-puta-1325932>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 21 “HNS: BiH Ulazi U Novu Krizi Jer Sve Ključne Pozicije Drže Bošnjaci“, *Dnevni list*, August 1, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/hns-bih-ulazi-u-novu-krizi-jer-sve-kljucne-pozicije-drze-bosnjaci>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 22 Ž.D. “Bošnjaci naciljali srpska mjesta u Savjetu ministara“, *Glas Srpske*, March 20, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Bosnjaci-naciljali-srpska-mjesta-u-Savjetu-ministara/280887, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 23 Ivo Šimunović, “Bošnjaci žele uzeti sve od Hrvata: crkvu, povijest i pravo na život u Bosni“ *Večernji list*, June 12, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/bosnjaci-zele-uzeti-sve-od-hrvata-crkvu-povijest-i-pravo-na-zivot-u-bosni-1325641>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 24 “KARAMATIĆ: Bošnjaci Pričom o NATO-U Sprječavaju Dogovor U BiH“, *Dnevni list*, August 27, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/karamatic-bosnjaci-pricom-o-nato-u-sprjecavaju-dogovor-u-bih>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 25 Darko Momić, “Skandalozan zahtjev: Bošnjaci traže da se Harvard odrekne Izraela“, *Glas Srpske*, April 16, 2019. http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/SKAN-DALOZAN-ZAHTJEV-Bosnjaci-traze-da-se-Harvard-odrekne-Izraela/282508.
- 26 “Postoji spremnost za formiranje vlasti, ali Bošnjaci opstruiraju“, *Večernji list*, May 11, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/nepostivanje-izvorne-volje-naroda-govori-da-netko-zeli-majoricaciju-u-bih-1318647>
- 27 “HNS: Političko Sarajevo u nervozi i hysteriji“, *Dnevni list*, July 31, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/hns-politicko-sarajevo-u-nervozi-i-hysteriji>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 28 V.K., “NATO razumije politiku neutralnosti, ali Bošnjaci ne“, *Glas Srpske*, June 11, 2019. http://www.glassrpske.com/cir/novosti/vijesti_dana/NATO-razumije-politiku-neutralnosti-ali-Bosnjaci-ne/286085, accessed 14 September 2019.

“Croats put talk of their own entity on ice, Bosniaks should stop trying to dominate.” ²⁹	“Coalition partners at ‘war’.” ³⁰	“Bosniaks once again celebrate Turkish occupation.” ³¹
“The West has the most influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina but doesn’t know what to do with it.” ³²	“He returned from Austria to sow chaos among Croats and Bosniaks.” ³³	“Orić’s friend calls for Bosniaks to take up arms.” ³⁴
“Bosniaks want to elect Serb representatives in the Hercegovina-Neretva canton.” ³⁵	“Krajišnik: Muslims committed atrocities against themselves.” ³⁶	“Cvijanović: Political Sarajevo is blocking everything in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the Serb Republic is functional.” ³⁷
“Why it is dangerous and harmful for Bosniaks to elect the Croat member of the Presidency for the third time.” ³⁸	“Banning the Pride parade would be shameful and proof that Sarajevo does not want European values.” ³⁹	“Dramatic warnings from the few remaining Serbs: The Federation will soon be home only to Bosniaks and Croats.” ⁴⁰

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

30 “‘Zaratile’ koalicioni partneri”, *Dnevni list*, July 29, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/zaratile-koalicioni-partneri/>.

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

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

33 “Vratio se iz Austrije da izazove mržnju među Hrvatima i Bošnjacima”, *Dnevni list*, August 9, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/vratio-se-iz-austrije-da-izazove-mrznju-medu-hrvatima-i-bosnjacima/>.

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

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

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

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

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

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

40 Željka Domazet, “Dramatično upozorenje malobrojnih Srba: U FBiH će ostati samo Bošnjaci i Hrvati”, *Glas Srpske*, May 15, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_

"Display of pathological hatred; Sarajevo is trying to silence Zagreb in advocating for Croat equality in Bosnia." ⁴¹	"Karamatić: Bosniaks are using all the NATO talk to prevent the formation of government." ⁴²	"Bosniaks are celebrating a non-existent holiday." ⁴³
"Dodik: Bosniaks have a long-term plan to destroy the Serb Republic, step-by-step." ⁴⁴	"Dodik: Bosniaks are risking the very existence of the country." ⁴⁵	"Why are all armaments factories in the hands of Bosniaks?" ⁴⁶
"Bosniaks will not give in on a third entity, and Croats will never accept a unitary Bosnia and Herzegovina." ⁴⁷	"Croatian Democratic Party and Croatian National Assembly: Party of Democratic Action refuses to respect the choice of Bosnian voters." ⁴⁸	"Dodik: Bosniaks are seriously usurping Croat and Serbs rights." ⁴⁹

By far, the most dominant theme regarding Muslims and Islam in the newspapers analysed was the notion of Bosniak Muslims as political troublemakers and uncompromising political obstructionists, while the country is depicted as politically unstable. Such depictions accord with the dominant narratives of Bosnian

dana/Dramaticno-upozorenje-malobrojnih-Srba-U-FBiH-ce-ostati-samo-Bosnjaci-i-Hrvati/284240.

- 41 Zoran Krešić, "Pokazala se patološka mržnja, Sarajevo pokušava ušutkati Zagreb u lobiranju za jednakopravnost Hrvata", *Večernji list*, July 31, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/pokazala-se-patoloska-mrznja-sarajevo-pokusava-usutkati-zagreb-u-lobiranju-za-jednakopravnost-hrvata-1335729>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 42 "KARAMATIĆ: Bošnjaci Pričom O NATO-U Sprječavaju Dogovor U BiH", *Dnevni list*, August 27, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/karamatic-bosnjaci-pricom-o-nato-u-sprjecavaju-dogovor-u-bih>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 43 D. Momić, Ž. Domazet, "Bošnjaci slave nepostojeći praznik", *Glas Srpske*, November 26, 2018. https://www.glassrpske.com/cir/novosti/vijesti_dana/bosnjaci-slave-nepostojeci-praznik/274007, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 44 "Dodik: Bošnjaci imaju dugoročan plan korak po korak devastirati RS", *Večernji list*, January 29, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/dodik-bosnjaci-imaju-dugorocan-plan-korak-po-korak-devastirati-rs-1297525>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 45 "Dodik: Bošnjaci riskiraju da BiH ne postoji!", *Dnevni list*, June 25, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/dodik-bosnjaci-riskiraju-da-bih-ne-postoji>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 46 "Zašto su fabrike oružja u BiH u rukama Bošnjaka", *Glas Srpske*, February 11, 2019. http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Zasto-su-fabrike-oruzja-u-BiH-u-rukama-Bosnjaka/278634, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 47 "Kao što Bošnjaci odbijaju treći entitet, Hrvati nikad neće prihvatiti unitarnu BiH", *Večernji List*, August 4, 2018. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/kao-sto-bosnjaci-odbijaju-treci-entitet-hrvati-nikad-nece-prihvatiti-unitarnu-bih-1262140>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 48 "HDZ I HNS: SDA Izbjegava Poštivanje Izborne Volje Naroda U BiH", *Dnevni list*, July 21, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/hdz-i-hns-sda-izbjegava-postivanje-izborne-volje-naroda-u-bih>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 49 "Dodik: Bošnjaci teško uzurpiraju prava Srba i Hrvata", *Glas Srpske*, August 27, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/dodik-bosnjaci-tesko-uzurpiraju-prava-srba-i-hrvata/291411, accessed 14 September 2019.

Croat and Bosnian Serb nationalist politicians and their respective political parties. Similarly, Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb journalists seem to be attempting to divert all blame towards the Bosniak Muslims, as, if not the sole, then the major political problem and obstacle to the functioning of the state. This is manifested most saliently through the self-versus-other schema or the combination of positive self-representation and negative other-representation. The rhetorical strategy of discursive exclusion is articulated primarily by delineating Bosniak Muslims as the out-group.

A dominant narrative in articles such as “The political will is there, but the Bosniaks are blocking the formation of a government,”⁵⁰ “Karamatić: Bosniaks are using all the NATO talk to prevent formation of a government,”⁵¹ “Croatian Democratic Party and Croatian National Assembly: Party of Democratic Action refuses to respect the choice of Bosnian voters,”⁵² “Croatian National Assembly: Bosnia and Herzegovina is entering a new political crisis as all key political posts held by Bosniaks”⁵³ and “Dodik: Bosniaks are seriously usurping the rights of Croats and Serbs”⁵⁴ is that of Bosniak Muslims obstructing the proper functioning of the state. There is widespread use of the noun “Bosniaks” (*Bošnjaci*) as though Bosniak Muslims were a homogeneous group (despite being extremely fragmented politically and socially) with a common agenda to dominate Bosnian Croats and Serbs in the country’s decision-making bodies. Such pigeonholing of Bosniak Muslims as a single entity establishes the sense of intergroup differentiation required by Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serb nationalists to establish the distinctiveness principle and their own sense of identity. Bosniak Muslim politicians are depicted as bearing the brunt of responsibility for the country’s political crisis. Radical moves and harsh rhetoric coming from Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb politicians are shown as provoked by and in response to moves emanating from the Bosniak Muslim side. They hardly acknowledge, let alone highlight, mistakes made by politicians from

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

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

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

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

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

their own ethno-national groups. Moreover, any attempt by Bosniak Muslim politicians to act jointly, despite often being politically on opposing ends, is interpreted by Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media as politically threatening and ultimately leading the country into further political crisis.

The second rhetorical strategy employed by Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers is negativization, whereby Bosniak Muslims are discussed in terms of negative social representations and presented as being in direct opposition to the in-group (here the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs). The negativization of Bosniak Muslims is made manifest through the contrast of the alleged “normality” of Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs and the *abnormality* of Bosniak Muslims. Examples may be seen in articles like “The display of pathological hatred: Sarajevo is trying to silence Zagreb in advocating for Croat equality in Bosnia,”⁵⁵ “NATO understands what military neutrality means, but Bosniaks do not,”⁵⁶ “Bosniaks are celebrating a non-existent holiday,”⁵⁷ “Banning the Pride parade would be shameful and proof that Sarajevo does not want European values”⁵⁸ and “Bosniaks once again celebrate Turkish occupation”⁵⁹ (which accuses Bosniak Muslim of celebrating the Ottoman conquest of their native country). Their behaviour is presented as irrational and deviating from existing values, norms and principles. All political actions taken by Bosniak Muslim politicians and Bosniaks generally are considered from the Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb point of view. Those two groups are depicted as *normal* and Eurocentric and are positively socially represented, while the third group is the outlier. There is over-emphasis on the Bosniak Muslims’ ethnicity and their cultural (i.e. Islamic) difference is depicted as being more complex than any of the other problems facing the country, such as high-unemployment, low-wages and rampant corruption. The Bosnian Croats in particular are depicted as the nation carrying and epitomizing *European* values, the same values Bosniak Muslims are depicted as lacking.

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

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

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

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

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

Then there is repeated use of the term *political Sarajevo*, which might at first sound benign to the average non-Bosnian reader. This is seen in such articles as “Cvijanović: political Sarajevo is blocking everything in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the Serb Republic is functioning”⁶⁰ and “Croatian People’s Assembly: political Sarajevo is nervous and hysterical.”⁶¹ It is worth noting that Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media often use “political Sarajevo” as a euphemism for Bosniak Muslim politicians due to the capital city’s predominantly Muslim character and the significant concentration of Bosniak Muslim ethno-national political parties and organizations there. The conflict-based understanding of Bosniak Muslims presented in these articles is reinforced by continuous reference to their alleged unwillingness to cooperate. Another reason Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb journalists use the term *political Sarajevo* instead of ethno-religious markers is perhaps political correctness and to avoid being labelled racist or Islamophobic.

Bosniak Muslims are also depicted as being immoral in the sense of not law-abiding and not respectful of the rights of other citizens. They are portrayed as cunning and shrewd political opportunists who will stop at nothing to achieve their political goals. The tone of these articles creates a sense of distrust towards Bosniak Muslims, a feeling that they do not and will not respect the rights of other ethnic groups in the country. Example of such depiction are “Bosniaks want to take away everything from Croats: their church, their history and their right to life in Bosnia,”⁶² “Vital national interest – Bosniaks played the card 13 times, Croats only twice,”⁶³ “Croats put talk of their own entity on ice, Bosniaks should stop trying to dominate,”⁶⁴ “Bosniaks want to elect Serb representatives in Herzegovina-Neretva canton”⁶⁵ and “Dodik: Bosniaks have a long term plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

to destroy the Serb Republic, step-by-step.”⁶⁶ In the same articles, Bosniak Muslims are also depicted as wanting to dominate Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs politically and marginalize or exclude them from decision-making institutions. In a number of interviews, journalists accentuated this point and quoted statements referring to the alleged desire of Bosniak Muslims to dominate others. Thus, Davor Marijan, a historian at the Croatian Institute for History, told *Večernji list* in an interview “What the Bosniaks envisioned was nominally a liberal [citizenship-based] state, but one that would allow them to dominate the entire country.”⁶⁷ He added “...Bosniaks have in mind an essentially centralized unitary state, which is to say a nation state of their own that would be presented ostensibly as ‘civic’ but in which *they* would be the dominant group.”⁶⁸ Along the same lines, the subheading of an interview given by Bosnian Serb member of the tripartite Presidency Milorad Dodik to the Croatian daily *Večernji list* read “Bosniaks have a long-lasting desire to dominate first Croats, and then Serbs and the Serb Republic.”⁶⁹ It is noteworthy here that Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers openly oppose any restructuring of the country on liberal lines based on citizenship and one-person-one-vote, preferring the current system that gives Croats a disproportionately high voice in decision- and law-making government bodies. A major reason they are against a fully democratic majoritarian system is their alleged fear of Muslim domination.

In other words, one can see a clear narrative of an alleged Bosniak Muslim will to dominate the two Christian ethno-religious groups being constructed in these interviews. Similarly, Fra Luka Marković, a Franciscan theologian, has said in an interview with *Večernji list* that “Everyone is playing games. Serbs are playing their game, Bosniaks talk about a liberal state, but what they have in mind in the long run is a Bosniak state.”⁷⁰ He added “... Serbs have their own entity, while Bosniaks are using all the means available to turn the Federation into theirs.”⁷¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

Apart from these interviews, we also find the Bosniak Muslims' alleged desire to lord it over their Catholic and Orthodox compatriots emphasised in a number of articles, e.g. "Dramatic warnings from the few remaining Serbs: the Federation will soon be home only to Bosniaks and Croats,"⁷² "Bosniaks after Serb posts in Council of Ministers,"⁷³ "Why it is dangerous and harmful for Bosniaks to elect the Croat member of the Presidency for the third time"⁷⁴ and "Bosniaks will not give in on a third entity, just as Croats will never accept a unitary Bosnia and Herzegovina."⁷⁵ The type of domination discussed here is both real, in terms of numbers, and symbolic. It is interesting that both Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat newspapers accuse Bosniak Muslims of the same supposed intention and that the categorization of "us" and "them" as "in-group" and "out-group" respectively was very evident in both the Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media. Bosniak Croat and Bosnian Serb politicians are constantly represented as seeking compromise and making political concessions for the sake of the country's higher objectives, but the same does not hold for Bosniak Muslims. Journalists from the ethnic media regularly highlight the positive aspects of "their" Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb politicians, while playing down any positive aspects of Bosniak Muslim politicians and stressing their negative aspects.

Finally, Bosniak Muslims are represented as responsible for their own victimhood and the current state of affairs in the country, losing the support even of their Western backers. This may be seen in "Karamatić: The end of Bosnia and Herzegovina is nearing, Bosniaks will be begging for a statelet,"⁷⁶ "Dodik: Bosniaks are putting at stake the very existence of the country,"⁷⁷ "The West has the most influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina but doesn't know what to do with it"⁷⁸ and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Krajišnik: Muslims committed atrocities against themselves.” Bosnia and Herzegovina is depicted as a country dominated by Bosniak Muslims, ill-functioning, on the verge of political collapse, and increasingly abandoned by its former allies.

II. The notion of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a hotbed of Muslim extremism

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

<i>Večernji list</i>	<i>Dnevni list</i>	<i>Glas Srpske</i>
“These are the individuals who have surrendered in Syria; they will be deported to Bosnia and Herzegovina.” ⁷⁹	“16.9% of Mostar citizens say they support ISIL.” ⁸⁰	“Bosniak officials praise terrorism.” ⁸¹
“They came to Bosnia after fighting in Afghanistan. They waged jihad around the world.” ⁸²	“Bosnian woman from ISIL sentenced to 6.5 years in US jail.” ⁸³	“The ever-growing list of terrorists from Bosnia and Herzegovina.” ⁸⁴

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Croatia faces a huge security challenge: Who are the jihadis that are returning to Bosnia and Herzegovina?” ⁸⁵	“Ibro Ćufurović indicted for joining ISIL.” ⁸⁶	“Bosnia once again at the centre of world attention because of terrorism.” ⁸⁷
“These are the leaders of Balkan jihadis.” ⁸⁸	“A poke in the eye of the West: Bosniak religious and political elite pays tribute to the leader of Muslim brotherhood.” ⁸⁹	“A high-risk country.” ⁹⁰
“Hundreds of ISIL fighters are returning to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croatia’s Security and Intelligence Agency is stepping up security checks.” ⁹¹	“War-time mujahedeen fighters spread fear throughout Bosnia.” ⁹²	“Republika Srpska warns of terrorism threat and migrant crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” ⁹³

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

“Without additional security measures, Bosnia at higher risk of facing terrorism from returning ISIL fighters.” ⁹⁴	“ISIL terrorist: Edvin Babić, known as Osman from Sarajevo, surrenders.” ⁹⁵	“Terrorism a constant threat.” ⁹⁶
“Former ISIL fighters soon returning to Bosnia and Herzegovina.” ⁹⁷	“ISIL member from Bosnia and Herzegovina sentenced in Berlin.” ⁹⁸	“Bosnian terrorist flees Syria to Libya?” ⁹⁹
“Deported from Slovenia because of radicalism. They returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina.” ¹⁰⁰	“Intelligence agencies preparing new operation: Women and children of Bosnian ISIL fighters to be deported to Bosnia?” ¹⁰¹	“Jihadi Delić under special surveillance.” ¹⁰²
“It is a fact: Islamists in Bosnia and Herzegovina are a threat.” ¹⁰³	“Children of dead Bosnian terrorist resettled in Australia.” ¹⁰⁴	“10,000 Bosnian mujahedeen ready for jihad.” ¹⁰⁵

- 94 Zoran Krešić, “Bez mjera veći rizik od terorizma u BiH i na Balkanu povratkom ratnika iz ISIL-a”, *Večernji list*, May 20, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/bez-mjera-veci-rizik-od-terorizma-u-bih-i-na-balkanu-povratkom-ratnika-iz-isil-a-1320360>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 95 “TERORIST ISIL-a: Predao se Edvin Babić zvani Osman iz Sarajeva”, *Dnevni list*, March 5, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/terorist-isil-a-predao-se-edvin-babic-zvani-osman-iz-sarajeva>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 96 “Terorizam stalna prijetnja”, *Glas Srpska*, January 21, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/terorizam-stalna-prijetnja/277284.
- 97 Zoran Krešić, “Bivši pripadnici ISIL-a uskoro stižu u BiH.” *Večernji list*, May 15, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/bivsi-pripadnici-isil-a-uskoro-stizu-u-bih-1319294>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 98 “Pristaša ISIL-a iz BiH osuđen u Berlinu”, *Dnevni list*, February 27, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/pristasa-isil-a-iz-bih-osuden-u-berlinu>, accessed February 27, 2019.
- 99 “Terorista iz BiH iz Sirije pobjegao u Libiju?” *Glas Srpske*, March 3, 2019. http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Terrorista-iz-BiH-iz-Sirije-pobjegao-u-Libiju/279916, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 100 “Protjerani iz Slovenije zbog radikalizma. Vratili se u BiH”, *Večernji list*, March 24, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/protjerani-iz-slovenije-zbog-radikalizma-vratili-se-u-bih-1308744>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 101 “OBAVJEŠTAJNE SLUŽBE PRIPREMAJU AKCIJU: Organizira se povratak žena i djece bosanskih ISIL-ovaca?” *Dnevni list*, February 19, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/obavjestajne-službe-pripremaju-akciju-organizira-se-povratak-zena-i-djece-bosanskih-isil-ovaca>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 102 V.Z., “Džihadlija Delić pod posebnom prismotrom”, *Glas Srpske*, January 17, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Dzihadlija-Delic-pod-posebnom-prismotrom/277062, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 103 Davor Ivanković, “Ne treba izmišljati, islamisti iz BiH jesu prijetnja.” *Večernji list*, March 15, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.hr/premium/ne-treba-izmišljati-islamisti-iz-bih-jesu-prijetnja-1306848>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 104 “Australija preuzima djecu poginulog bosanskog teroriste”, *Dnevni list*, June 26, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/australija-preuzima-djecu-poginulog-bosanskog-teroriste>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 105 Veljko Zeljković, “Za džihad u BiH spremno 10.000 mudžahidina” *Glas Srpske*, January 16, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Za-dzihad-u-BiH-spremono-10000-mudzahidina/277007, accessed 14 September 2019.

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

First, the most common association made between Bosniak Muslims and terrorism in these media is of them being an extension of existing global terrorist networks, specifically ISIL and, to a lesser extent, Al Qaida. Many articles from the period in question focus on Bosnian ISIL fighters from Syria and Iraq and the threat they do or may pose to the country and region. In articles such as “These are the individuals who have surrendered in Syria, who will be deported to Bosnia and Herzegovina,”¹⁰⁶ “Croatia faces a huge security challenge: Who are the jihadis returning to Bosnia and Herzegovina,”¹⁰⁷ “Intelligence agencies preparing new operation: Women and children of Bosnian ISIL fighters to be deported to Bosnia”¹⁰⁸ and “They came to Bosnia after fighting in Afghanistan, then waged jihad around the world”¹⁰⁹ a direct link is posited between the Bosniak Muslims and global radical Muslim groups. These newspapers systematically chose international events that fit their negative interpretations of Islam and stereotypes of Muslims, while the structures of their articles attempt to show a spill-over effect of Middle Eastern conflicts onto the Balkans. In “Croatia faces a huge security challenge: Who are the jihadis returning to Bosnia and Herzegovina?”, the journalist also claims that “Unlike member states of the European Union, Bosnia and Herzegovina has agreed to take back any citizens who fought on the side of the

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

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

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

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

terrorist Islamic state group...”¹¹⁰ Speaking of returning Bosnian ISIL fighters, the author adds “They are returning with a bloodthirsty ideology, ready to die in the name of Allah, for the very same reasons they went to fight in Syria and Iraq. Security agencies must pay close attention to the many sympathizers that ISIL has in Bosnia, who finance the organization and share its ideology. They are far more dangerous, as they are in hiding and waiting.”¹¹¹

In other words, Bosniak Muslims are depicted as the medium through which radicalism is transmitted from the Middle East to Europe. One sees the same in an article entitled “A poke in the eye of the West: Bosniak religious and political elite pays tribute to the leader of Muslim brotherhood”,¹¹² which accused the entire Bosniak Muslim political elite of being sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood Islamist movement. The authors of these texts deploy radicalism as a frame for understanding Middle Eastern conflicts, while subtly utilising Islam, the religion of Bosniak Muslims, as a threat-marker posed to the rest of the country and region. As a means of emphasizing their alleged connections to Middle Eastern terrorist groups, Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers often juxtapose photographs of masked non-Bosnian fighters from the Syrian and Iraqi warzones with articles on the increased risk of terrorist activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There is also the management of *vagueness* and *clarity* in the discourse on radicalism. Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat media remain rather vague about Croat and Serb fighters who have travelled to fight in the Ukraine with pro-Russian separatists or the role played by Orthodox Christianity. On the other hand, their *clarity* in reporting on the relatively small number of Bosniak Muslim volunteers to have travelled to join extremist groups in Middle Eastern countries has acted as a catalyst in constructing Bosniak Muslims as an alleged security threat. In articles such as “These are the leaders of Balkan jihadis,”¹¹³ “Children of dead Bosnian terrorist resettled in Australia,”¹¹⁴ “ISIL terrorist: Edvin Babić,

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

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

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

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

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

known as Osman from Sarajevo, surrenders”¹¹⁵ and “Ibro Ćufurović indicted for joining ISIL”¹¹⁶ the accent is on the ethno-national affiliation of the ISIL fighters, whether explicitly or implicitly. Such identity markers point to a link between Bosniaks, Islam and terrorism and only act to strengthen the ideological dimension of the intended discourse. The war in Syria and Iraq and the atrocities committed by ISIL serve to amplify Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media’s culturally framed discourses and integrate them with the framing of national security debates. The juxtaposition of Bosniak Muslim radicals domestically and Muslim extremist groups internationally only serves to strengthen the construction of an overreaching “Islamic threat” linked to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such association of Bosniak Muslims with violent extremists around the world creates a sense of insecurity and distrust among the other two ethno-national groups, with potential repercussions for the general social representation of Bosniak Muslims in the country and region.

Finally, the alleged arming of Bosniak Muslims is used to denote possible transitions from rhetoric towards violent conflict in the country and consequently as posing a threat to the region. This was the theme in articles like “Orić’s friend calls for Bosniaks to arm themselves”¹¹⁷ and “Why are all armaments factories in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the hands of Bosniaks?”¹¹⁸ The notion being put forward is that not only are Bosniak Muslims ready to arm themselves but, in case of another war, they will have plenty of weapons at their disposal. Similarly, in articles such as “10,000 Bosnian mujahedeen ready for jihad,” “A high-risk country,” “These are the leaders of Balkan jihadis,” “Bosnia once again at the centre of world attention because of terrorism,” and “16.9% of Mostar citizens say they support ISIL,” Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media deploy the number game as an ideological tool to strengthen their argument that Bosniak Muslims pose a security threat, without however backing up their figures with reliable sources. The reference to “mujahedeen” fighters, a now non-existent war-time military unit, is a clear attempt to link alleged Bosniak Muslim extremists today to the 1992-1995 war for independence and, however retroactively, present the Bos-

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

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

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

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

nian Croat and Bosnian Serb war against Bosniak Muslims as a “war on terror.” Moreover, all this talk of radical Bosniak Muslim fighters being ready and waiting to wage war frames them in a *sleeping cell* narrative and casts suspicion on them (and on anyone displaying similar physical features) as a potential security threat. Such a suspicious tone towards Bosniak Muslims intertwines with the Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat public’s opinion of the recent war and heightens fears of Bosniaks as the dominant ethno-national population. It also casts doubt on them as a “suspect community” and a symbolic threat to the two other ethnonational groups - Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs.

III. Muslim migrants as a threat to Christian Europe

The third major theme associated with the terms “Muslim” and “Islam” is the issue of migrants and the notion of a Christian Europe. Even though the term “Christianity” was initially not envisioned as part of this research, in the ensuing analyses it became evident how many depictions of refugees and migrants deployed the backdrop of a purportedly “Christian” Europe. In most discussion centring on the foundations of Europe as a continent and how Europeans perceive themselves and their values, it has been a commonplace to refer to Europe’s “Christian” character and its Christian roots, subtly or overtly. In this category, the following articles were analysed:

<i>Večernji list</i>	<i>Dnevni list</i>	<i>Glas Srpske</i>
“The number of Catholics in Bosnia and Herzegovina is decreasing; they do not enjoy the same rights as other citizens” ¹¹⁹	“The Hagia Sofia of Jajce: Islamic Community claims that the church is their mosque, but Franciscans call for a joint cultural centre” ¹²⁰	“Styrian guard defending country’s borders against Muslims.” ¹²¹

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

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

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

“They gave refuge to migrants in Ljubuški, but migrants destroyed their homes and threw out crucifixes.” ¹²²	“A new migrant route across Bosnia and Herzegovina in the making.”	“The Battle of Kosovo is a battle for a Christian Europe.” ¹²³
“Which countries are migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina coming from?” ¹²⁴	“Dodik: The solution is: division of Bosnia and Herzegovina.” ¹²⁵	“Statue to John Hunyadi unveiled.” ¹²⁶
“Migrants may cause collapse of Europe’s economy; in Bosnia and Herzegovina they may even create conflict.” ¹²⁷	“The Balkans are becoming a buffer zone for migrants.” ¹²⁸	“Notre Dame Cathedral bells rang in honour of Serbian army in 1389.” ¹²⁹
“Does Europe have a Christian identity or is it just a myth?” ¹³⁰	“Will migrants stay permanently in Bosnia and Herzegovina?” ¹³¹	“Migrants becoming a serious problem in Banja Luka.” ¹³²

- 122 “Dovodili migrante u kuće kod Ljubuškog, a oni uništili sve što se uništiti moglo i pobacali križeve“, Večernji list, August 20, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/dovodili-migrante-u-kuce-kod-ljubuskog-a-oni-unistili-sve-sto-se-unistiti-moglo-i-pobacali-krizeve-1339731>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 123 “Fotije: Kosovska bitka je borba za čitavu hrišćansku Evropu“, Glas Srpske, June 27, 2019. <http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/drustvo/vijesti/Fotije-Kosovska-bitka-je-borba-za-citavu-hriscansku-Evropu/287251>
- 124 “Iz kojih i kakvih zemalja dolazi najviše migranata u BiH“, Večernji list, August 12, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/iz-kojih-i-kakvih-zemalja-dolazi-najvise-migranata-u-bih-1337793>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 125 “Dodik: Rješenje da se BiH podijeli“, *Dnevni list*, August 6, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/dodik-rjesenje-da-se-bih-podijeli/>.
- 126 “Otkriven spomenik Janku Sibirjaninu“, Glas Srpske, July 22, 2019. <https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/srbija/otkriven-spomenik-janku-sibirjaninu/288979>.
- 127 Željko Andrijačić, “Migranti mogu urušiti gospodarstvo Europe, a u BiH može doći do sukoba“, Večernji list, July 4, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.ba/vijesti/migranti-mogu-urusiti-gospodarstvo-europe-a-u-bih-moze-doci-do-sukoba-1329981>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 128 “Balkan postaje tampon zona za migrante“, *Dnevni list*, July 15, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/balkan-postaje-tampon-zona-za-migrante>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 129 “Notr Dam zvonio u čast srpske vojske“, Glas Srpske, April 15, 2019. <http://www.glassrpske.com/lat/plus/istorija/Notr-Dam-zvonio-u-cast-srpske-vojske-1389/282493>.
- 130 Ivan Markešić, “Postoji li kršćanski identitet zapadne Europe ili je on mit?“, Večernji list, april 23, 2019. <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/postoji-li-krscanski-identitet-zapadne-europe-ili-je-on-mit-1314819>.
- 131 “HOĆE LI MIGRANTI TRAJNO OSTATI U BiH?“, *Dnevni list*, August 27, 2019. <https://www.dnevni-list.ba/hoce-li-migranti-trajno-ostati-u-bih>, accessed 14 September 2019.
- 132 Veljko Zeljković, “Migranti u Banjaluci postali ozbiljan problem“, Glas Srpske, February 6, 2019. https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/Migranti-u-Banjaluci-postali-ozbiljan-problem/278295.

“Migrants creating chaos in Bihac” ¹³³	Worst yet to come: migrant route expanding along Hercegovina Neretva Canton, West Hercegovina Canton and Herzeg-Bosnia Canton. ¹³⁴	Lukač: Migrants will not be allowed to stay in the Serb Republic. ¹³⁵
Violent migrants creating fear in Hercegovina.” ¹³⁶	“The crisis is escalating, but the state has no solution to it.” ¹³⁷	“We have become only remaining bulwark against migrants entering the EU.” ¹³⁸
“Serbs against migrant centre in Medeno Polje.” ¹³⁹	“The number of migrants in West Hercegovina Canton increasing, security stepped up.” ¹⁴⁰	“They lie to migrants in Sarajevo about receiving a warm welcome in Banjaluka.” ¹⁴¹

The discourse on migrants and refugee flows in Bosnia and Herzegovina often depicts them in the context of security threat, as coming from unsafe Muslim majority countries with major security concerns and so as having the potential to escalate the country’s existing economic woes. In an article published in *Večernji list*, “Which countries are migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina coming from,”¹⁴² the emphasis is on their ethnicity and that they come from Muslim-majority

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

countries. The article also lists recent suicide- and terrorist-attacks in those countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh), clearly framing them as unstable and Muslim and so prone to terrorism, and implying that their citizens (migrants passing through Bosnia) are potential carriers of such instability and insecurity. Significantly, the culturalist approach adopted sometimes, if not always, by these newspapers tends to focus on the migrants' culture and religion of origin rather than the broader political, economic and social contexts that have led them to flee their countries in the first place. In other articles, such as "Migrants creating chaos in Bihać"¹⁴³ and "Migrants may produce collapse of Europe's economy, in Bosnia and Herzegovina they may even create conflict,"¹⁴⁴ the accent is on migrants as an economic and security threat to Bosnia's native population. Their allegedly violent nature is accentuated and there is an interesting attempt to show them as having anti-Christian sentiments. A case in point is an article entitled "They gave refuge to migrants in Ljubuški, but the migrants destroyed their homes and threw out the crucifixes,"¹⁴⁵ where migrants are depicted as ungrateful and violent – going so far as to throw out the crucifixes from the houses of Croat-Catholics who were kind enough to host them.

Then there is the narrative of migrants and refugees as presenting an active cultural threat. The threat is conceptualised on perceived cultural differences between native Bosnians as the in-group and Muslim migrants as the out-group. Bosniak Muslims are often portrayed as being the most welcoming towards migrants and refugees. Without stating it directly, the articles allude to their shared religious affiliation with Middle Eastern and Asian migrants. On the opposite end, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats are depicted as vigilant and wary of the presence of Muslim migrants in the country. This is evident in articles like "The number of migrants in the West Hercegovina Canton is increasing, security stepped up,"¹⁴⁶ "Serbs against a migrant centre in Medeno Polje"¹⁴⁷ and in the afore-mentioned article "They gave refuge to migrants in Ljubuški, but migrants

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

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

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

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

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

destroyed their homes and threw out the crucifixes.”¹⁴⁸ It was also apparent in “Violent migrants sowing fear in Hercegovina,”¹⁴⁹ which painted migrants from Algeria, Syria and Libya as causing trouble, robbing businesses and terrifying the local population in the town of Čapljina, which is inhabited predominantly by Bosnian Croats. The references in these articles to *Hercegovina*, *West Hercegovina Canton*, and the towns of Čapljina and *Ljubuški* are no accident. Anyone acquainted with Bosnian ethnic demographics knows that West Hercegovina Canton is nearly 98% inhabited by Bosnian Croats/Catholics and that Ljubuški is that Canton’s biggest town. Likewise, in the article “Migrants will not be allowed to stay in the Serb Republic”¹⁵⁰ and “Migrants becoming a serious problem in Banja Luka,”¹⁵¹ there is a stress on Middle Eastern and Asian migrants not being welcome in the Republika Srpska, the almost homogeneously Orthodox-Christian and semi-autonomous half of the country. Observing this from within a broader perspective, the influx of refugees is inextricably linked not only to crossing state and cantonal borders, but to crossing cultural and religious borders. A confined territory in Bosnia and Hercegovina, whether the Bosnian Croat towns of Ljubuški and Čapljina or the Republika Srpska, becomes a cultural-spatial container marked by a precise distinction between a Christian culture and intruding Muslim migrants. All three articles subtly put forward the notion that Orthodox Christian Serbs and Catholic Croats are very much opposed to the influx of (Muslim) migrants. Non-state borders, such as those of the Croat majority canton or the Serb majority entity, gain a cultural and religious connotation. This use of political and geographical allegory may not at first be so clear to the outside observer as to the local audience, but references to West Hercegovina Canton are at the same time clearly references to a Catholic majority territory that has for years been ruled by the right-wing Croat Democratic Party (HDZ).

The underlying narrative of Europe as having Christian foundations is an integral part of depicting Europe as a Christian continent and Bosnian Serbs and Croats as Christian *insiders* and Muslim as *outsiders*. In some articles, this narrative is unconcealed and obvious. For example, the article “Statue to John

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

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

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

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

Hunyadi unveiled¹⁵² presents the Hungarian military and political figure as a hero who defended Serbia and Christian Europe from the marauding Ottoman Turks. It is worth noting that John Hunyadi is considered a hero not only by Hungarians and Romanians, but also by Serbs. In an article titled “*Styrian guard defend country’s borders against Muslims*,”¹⁵³ the accent is on a self-organized paramilitary unit defending Europe’s borders against allegedly intruding Muslim migrants. An interesting article trying to establish a link between Serbs and European Christianity was published on the day Notre Dame Cathedral was in flames. The article entitled “*Notre Dame Cathedral bells rang in honour of Serbian army in 1389*”¹⁵⁴ was published in *Glas Srpske* and related a somewhat tenuous story of how the bells of the famed Parisian cathedral rang in 1389 during the Battle of Kosovo, which Serbian mythology celebrates as epitomising the struggle against the Ottoman Turks. In fact, the article defines the Battle of Kosovo as a “major Serbian-led Christian victory” over invading Muslim forces.

A similar narrative is also clearly being painted in an interview published by *Večernji list* with Vinko Puljić, Bosnian Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church and current Archbishop of Vrhbosna, who stated, “Europe must once again rediscover its roots, its Christian identity, only that way will it not fear Islamic radicalism.”¹⁵⁵ Speaking of his native Bosnia and Herzegovina, he added, “Large investments from the Arab world are preparing the way for the construction of mosques” and that “unfortunately, Europe does not know what it means to live side by side with Islamic radicalism.”¹⁵⁶

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

Something like this is also present in an interview by Konstanin Dobrilović of Austria’s Christian-Freedom Platform. Of Serb origin, in an interview with *Glas Srpske*, he stated that “A strong European far right is important for the Republika Srpska”¹⁵⁷ and that “The basis of our program is for Europe to remain

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

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

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

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

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

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

firmly founded on Christian tradition and culture, especially in times when we are witnessing an ever more aggressive Islamic intrusion into Europe.”¹⁵⁸ An article published in *Glas Srpske* and entitled “The Battle of Kosovo is a battle for a Christian Europe”¹⁵⁹ subtly presented Bosnian Serbs along similar lines, in light of the Kosovo political issue, as defending Christian Europe against Muslim Albanians. In other words, Serbs were presented, or rather they tried to present themselves, as being the bulwark of Christianity in a wider battle against Muslims (here personified in the form of Albanian Muslims).

The *Glas Srpske* newspaper, citing the General Secretary of the Republika Srpska, Siniša Karan, similarly presents the Serb Republic as the only remaining bulwark against migrants coming from Pakistan, Syria, Iran and Iraq.¹⁶⁰ It is worth noting that the term “Christianity” in the articles cited above seems to be used more often to refer to a vague set of values and cultural concepts than in any religious sense. The anti-migrant and anti-Muslim narratives that now dominate Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers seem to have been imported from Western European far-right discourses, in which Islam is framed in the context of a cultural war between the Christian West and the Muslim world. Despite both being highly fragmented in reality, Muslim and Christian Europeans are both thus depicted as monolithic communities united in possession of their respective unitary cultures, ideologies and values.

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

<i>Oslobodjenje</i>	<i>Dnevni Avaz</i>
“Wives of former ISIL fighters are not shooting targets.” ¹⁶¹	“Croatian intelligence agency: We deny allegations of arming Salafis, we demand explanations from Bosnia’s intelligence.” ¹⁶²

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

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

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

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

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

“Are Muslims in Bosnia a problem?” ¹⁶³	“Why Bosniaks do not want to look like Bakir Izetbegović.” ¹⁶⁴
“Islamophobia: lessons from the Srebrenica genocide.” ¹⁶⁵	“Are we ready for the return of jihadis and the remnants of ISIL?” ¹⁶⁶
“Fra Ivo Marković: Christians did not understand what Islam and Muslims are. Shocked, they answered with attacks and war.” ¹⁶⁷	“Who is trying to create a <i>green left</i> and why?” ¹⁶⁸
“Migrants fearing upcoming winter. Volunteers exhausted.” ¹⁶⁹	“SBB: Dodik intentionally insulting the victims of genocide and Bosniaks as a nation.” ¹⁷⁰
“What Kolinda denied saying.” ¹⁷¹	“Muslims are the major victims of terrorism.” ¹⁷²

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

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

165 Dunja Mijatović, “Islamofobija: pouke iz srebreničkog genocida”, *Oslobodjenje*, July 10, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/dosjei/kolumne/islamofobija-pouke-iz-srebrenickog-genocida-472013>.

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

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

168 E. Maslo, “Ko i zbog čega pravi ‘zelenu ljevicu?’”, *Dnevni avaz*, August 28, 2018. <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/bih/512355/tragom-izjave-nermina-niksica-ko-i-zbog-cega-pravi-zelenu-ljevicu>, accessed 18 December 2019.

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

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

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

172 S. Numanović, “Muslimani i dalje najbrojnije žrtve terorističkih napada”, *Dnevni avaz*, August 16, 2018. <https://avaz.ba/globus/svijet/406131/muslimani-i-dalje-najbrojnije-zrtve-teroristic-kih-napada>.

“Close to one hundred Bosnian citizens waiting to be returned to Bosnia from Syrian camps. A chance for a new life?” ¹⁷³	“Salafis from Dubnice disenchanted: they are painting targets on our backs.” ¹⁷⁴
“Nermin Ogršević: Bosniaks are currently the most oppressed nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” ¹⁷⁵	“A new wave of migrants is coming to Bosnia and Herzegovina.” ¹⁷⁶
“Migrants have brought certain benefits to Krajina: people see them coming, but not leaving.” ¹⁷⁷	“The Dutch sent people to their deaths, now they are poking fun at them.” ¹⁷⁸
“Tuđman: There will not be any Muslim areas, except as a small part of the Croatian state.” ¹⁷⁹	“25,000 new migrants coming to Bosnia and Herzegovina.” ¹⁸⁰

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

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

In the two newspapers being analysed, the dominant topics were mostly inter-Bosniak political debates, the war-related past, and the socio-political position of Bosniak Muslims in the country. Compared to the Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers analysed previous, which tended to present Muslims and Islam as monolithic and homogeneous, the Bosniak-owned newspapers were rather more nuanced and objective in their coverage of Islam and Muslims in Bosnia. In articles such as “On the Muslim question in Europe,”¹⁸¹ “Fra Ivo Marković: Christians did not understand what Islam was and who Muslims were. Shocked, they answered with attacks and war,”¹⁸² “Are Muslims in Bosnia a problem”¹⁸³ published in *Oslobođenje* and “A battle for the national identity and recognition of Bosniaks and their rights”¹⁸⁴ published in *Dnevni Avaz*, the authors tried to do the exact opposite of what Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media were doing— namely, to present Bosniak Muslims and generally Muslims in Europe not as a threat but as the victims of increased anti-Muslim sentiment and rising right-wing populism. They also tried to portray Islam and Bosniak Muslims as having been an integral part of the European continent for centuries.

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

It is noteworthy that in both these newspapers, in spite of the political bickering between Bosniak Muslim politicians and their relations with other political parties being a dominant theme, quite a number of articles do seem to have been written to

181 Fikret Karčić, “O muslimanskom pitanju u Evropi“, *Oslobođenje*, August 22, 2019. <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/dosjei/kolumne/o-muslimanskom-pitanju-u-evropi-483670>.

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

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

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

defend against accusations emanating from Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb politicians and media outlets. For example, in the articles “What Kolinda denied saying”¹⁸⁵, “Salafis from Dubnice disenchanted: they are painting targets on our backs”¹⁸⁶ and “Croatian intelligence agency: We deny allegations of arming Salafis, we demand explanations from Bosnia’s intelligence,”¹⁸⁷ there is a clear response to accusations from the Bosnian Croat media (and media from neighbouring Croatia) over the alleged presence of a radical Muslim threat in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Bosniak-owned newspapers seem, in fact, to have stood in defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a country against unfounded allegations from Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers. Bosnian Muslims and Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina are presented as moderate and pro-European, while Muslim radicals are depicted as isolated cases and unrepresentative of the Bosniak Muslim population. *Dnevni avaz*’s line was variable, at times accusing Bakir Izetbegović and the Party of Democratic Action of being sympathetic to radical interpretations of Islam, while at others clearly defending the country against the self-same accusations from other ethno-national circles. The reason for this was the owner of *Dnevni avaz*’s political orientation and his political party’s being at loggerheads with Bakir Izetbegović and the Party of Democratic Action.

There was also significant coverage of issues related to returning ISIL fighters. Articles in *Oslobođenje* such as “Wives of former ISIL fighters are not shooting targets”¹⁸⁸ accented the need to re-socialize the wives and children of former ISIL fighters. The need for a fair and transparent trial for Bosnian ISIL fighters was also stressed. This was in stark contrast with Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb media, which presented entire families as security threats. This was not, however, the case with *Dnevni Avaz*, which showed clear political tendencies in its reporting on terrorism and foreign fighters. This is because that newspaper’s owner, Fahrudin Radončić, was a former state-level Minister of Security and had introduced a bill to punish Bosnian citizens fighting with armed foreign paramilitary groups. This move is often lauded by the journalists of *Dnevni Avaz*, while at the same time harshly criticising many of the later political moves and measures by their archenemy, the Party of Democratic Action (SDA).

There was a significant number of texts about the 1992-1995 genocide of Bosniak Muslims and its repercussions today, either in the form of discrimination

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

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

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

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

against Bosniak Muslims in the *Republika Srpska* or Islamophobic statements coming from Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat politicians. For example, “Dodik intentionally insulting the victims of genocide and Bosniaks as a nation” and “The Dutch sent people to their deaths, now they are poking fun at them” touch on the plight of Bosniak Muslims living in a post-genocidal society – particularly Srebrenica – and the everyday challenges they face. Unlike Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb newspapers, which frame Bosniak Muslims as responsible for the war, the Bosniak-owned newspapers depict them as the actual victims and the Bosnian Croats and Serbs as perpetrators.¹⁸⁹

When it comes to migrants and refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Dnevni Avaz* has been significantly more sensationalist and negative in its reporting, with such headlines as “25,000 new migrants coming to Bosnia and Herzegovina,”¹⁹⁰ “Apocalyptic scenes from Velečeva near Ključ: this is where the women and children are living.”¹⁹¹ and “A new wave of migrants coming to Bosnia and Herzegovina.”¹⁹² It often used references to natural disasters and terms such as “flood” and “wave” in speaking of migrants and refugees, depicting them as uncontrollable forces that pose a potential threat to the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the other hand, *Oslobodjenje* had sympathetic articles about migrants and refugees that did not present them as a security threat to the country. This is clearly seen in the articles cited above, namely “Migrants fearing upcoming winter. Volunteers exhausted” and “Migrants have brought benefits to Krajina: people see them coming, but not leaving.” In the first of these articles, the inhumane living conditions of migrants, the cold weather, and the lack of food and medicine are described. As are the extraordinary efforts of Bosnian volunteers to help migrants without much state support. In the second article, the stress is on the economic benefits and mini economic boom the town of Bihać experienced due to the migrants – in the form of renting rooms to the better-off among them, who can afford to pay rent, and small businesses making a good profit selling foodstuffs to migrants, volunteers, and workers in international non-governmental organizations.

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

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

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

This is in line with what Van Dijks earlier identified as the four basic strategies used to legitimize the self and delegitimize the other: (i) emphasizing positive things about “us”; (ii) emphasizing negative things about “them”; (iii) deemphasizing negative things about us; (iv) de-emphasizing positive things about “them.”¹⁹³ Aside from these continuous narratives, there are a number of episodically salient topic categories that are related to Islam and Muslims – such as articles related to Islamic dress and religious practices, the reconstruction of mosques and Islamic monuments destroyed during the war, and war crimes committed during the war against Bosniak Muslims.

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

Potruga za unutrašnjim neprijateljem: analiza diskursa predstavljanja islama i muslimana u bosanskohercegovačkim medijima

Sažetak

Ovaj rad analizira pet dominantnih bosanskohercegovačkih dnevnih novina u periodu od 01. 08. 2018. do 31. 08. 2019. Godine, s ciljem otkrivanja glavnih medijskih diskursa koji se vode po pitanju muslimana i islama u Bosni i Hercegovini. Analiza je pokazala da postoje tri negativna pristupa u predstavljanju muslimana i islama u Bosni i Hercegovini, i to: bosanski muslimani kao politički opstrukcionista, Bosna i Hercegovina kao utočište za muslimanske ekstremiste, te muslimanski migranti kao prijetnja BiH i Evropi.

Ključne riječi: islam, Bošnjaci, Bosna i Hercegovina, muslimani u medijima, analiza diskursa

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