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The Genealogy of the Construction and Stigmatization of the Other: The Case of Orthodox Serbs and South Slavic Muslims

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Abstract

The process of constructing an individual or a group as the Other, and their subsequent stigmatization, is simply not possible if there are no stigmatizers. During the entire history of humankind, the society played a decisive role in the construction of those "traits that are believed to be normal and natural", that is socially acceptable, because "not all undesirable traits are questionable, but rather only those that are contrary to our stereotypes about what a certain type should be like". With such an approach, the society creates not only socially acceptable patterns, but also those that are unacceptable. In other words, the society thus defines what are the traits that make a person "besmirched, ritually tarnished, that is, a person that should be avoided". Concurrently with the stated process, the society develops an ideology, which serves to indicate to the rest of the population that undesirable traits of "besmirched" persons are inferior, and to point out that they are potentially dangerous. It is of crucial importance to successfully elaborate such an ideology because it serves to provide "rationalisation of its hostile attitude", which is the final step in the process of stigmatization of the Other. It is precisely on this basis that, from the very beginning, Orthodox Christians have perceived South Slav Muslims in a very negative way, as "besmirched, ritually tarnished" people due to the fact that they decided to adopt Islam as their religion, whereby they committed a deadly sin by renouncing the faith of their forefathers and opted for the faith of the "invaders" from the Ottoman Empire. In this paper, we will try to identify the point in time when the South Slav Muslims were actually defined as the archetypical Other. After that, the aim of this paper will be to provide a detailed analysis of the genealogy of the development of an ideology which served to rationalise its hostile attitude, which eventually, on a number of occasions in recent history, resulted in genocide and ethnic cleansing perpetrated against the South Slav Muslims.

Key words: Stigmatization, Muslim, Other, Islam, Serbia

Introduction

At the beginning of the 1960s, the American sociologist Erving Goffmann published a book "Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity" which probably represents the most complex analysis of 'stigma' and 'stigmatization' phenomena from a sociological point of view. In his work, Goffmann provides the definition of the term 'stigma' and its diachronic uses and interpretations. The term dates back to Ancient Greece, where it referred to "bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier".ⁱ The purpose of those bodily signs was to let the rest of the community know that "the bearer was... a blemished person, ritually polluted, to be avoided, especially in public places."ⁱⁱ During the Christian era, the term gained additional connotations, something that is still present in everyday communication. In modern times, the term 'stigma' begins to be applied in its original meaning, but, as Goffmann points out, "it is applied more to *disgrace itself* than to the bodily evidence of it."ⁱⁱⁱ Likewise, it is important to point out the relevance that society nowadays plays in the construction of features which are considered common and natural, i.e., socially acceptable, because, "not all undesirable attributes are at issue, but only those which are incongruous with our stereotype of what a given type of individual should be."^{iv} Not only does a society construct stigmas, but it also plays a significant role in the construction of ideologies which are applied to justify the inferiority of undesirable characteristics and the degree of danger potentially implied by them, that is to, to justify the actions through which "we exercise varieties of discrimination".^v

Goffmann's research focuses on those who have suffered from stigmatization rather than on those who have the power to impose it. Parts of Goffmann's book in which he analyzes the stigmatized as part of the problem are of great importance to a better understanding of the inferior position that Muslims in Serbia have found themselves in over a very long period of time. Self-victimization, self-isolation, "glorification of one's suffering", a defensive attitude resulting from the acceptance of victimization, and the phenomenon of "stigma professionalization" are among the key features which make the stigmatized part of the problem. This is what Goffmann says about "stigma professionalization":

"in making a profession of their stigma, native leaders are obliged to have dealings with representatives of both categories, and so find themselves breaking out of the close circle of their own kind. Instead on leaning on their crutch, they go to play golf with it, ceasing, in terms of social participation to be representative of the people they represent".^{vi}

In the case of Muslims in Serbia and their representatives, the "professionalization" of stigma has been one of the most prominent issues since the introduction of the communist regime to the present day. Aside from professionalizing the stigma, some Muslim representatives in crisis situations have behaved in accordance with all the other above mentioned misuses of stigma. They have very often resorted to self-victimization, self-induced isolation and taken a defensive stand in contacts with the majority population. Goffmann describes three types of stigma in his research. The first one relates to bodily deformities. The second is understood as weakness of character, presenting itself as poor will, dominant or unnatural passion, doubtful or rigid beliefs, dishonesty, etc. The third type of stigma refers to tribal, national and religious labeling, which transfers itself transgenerationally and equally affects all members of a given family or community. In the continuation of this paper, religious and indirect national stigmatization will be analyzed.

The process of stigmatization of Muslims in Serbia

Stigmatized individuals and groups do not exist unless there are those who stigmatize them. In the case of the Muslims of Serbia, it is, therefore, important to identify those who have the power to stigmatize, and afterwards to understand the history of the stigmatization process. Aside from certain historical speculations that there had been individual encounters of the inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula with Islam prior to the Ottoman invasion, it can be stated with the utmost certainty that Islam spread throughout the region during the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Due to the fact that Islam was introduced to these lands by an "occupying force", it gained negative connotations very early on. In the case of Serbia, the Battle of Kosovo played a crucial role in the formation of negative, stigmatized ideology against Islam. The Turks, among the common folk identified with the Islamic religion, were raised to the level of an archetypal enemy, the ultimate Other. In the nationalist literature from the early 19th century, identified as the time of the birth of the Serbian nation, the Turks were described as the 'murderers of Christ and of the Serbian nation'. These metaphorical labels actually referred to the assassination of the Emperor Lazar at the Battle of Kosovo who over the centuries had gained 'Christ-like character' and become the symbol of Serbianhood.^{vii} Michael Sells, professor of Islamic studies from the University of Chicago, adds that the character of Vuk Branković was also very important in the stigmatization of Slavic Muslims. In literature - because of his alleged betrayal during the Battle of Kosovo - Branković was depicted as a traitor of his people, and as an "inner Turk", thus becoming "a symbol of an ancient curse of all the Slavic Muslims".^{viii} Beside the above mentioned, the Battle of Kosovo had a dominant role as an inspiration for many other themes and motives used in Serbian epic literature for stigmatization of the Turks and the Slavic Muslims, defined as those who oppose the (Serbian) Orthodox entity. A great example of such an inspiration is the *Mountain Wreath (Gorski vijenac)*, where pathological hatred against the Muslims is often explicitly presented in the verses of famous Montenegrin poet and priest Petar Petrović Njegoš. Apart from the Kosovo myth and epic literature, it was during the 19th century, and the birth of the Serbian nation, that a significant group of Serb intellectuals appeared who, from varying academic perspectives, worked on reviving the Serb national identity. The most important of these intellectuals was certainly Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, a major reformer of the Serbian language. Through "his view of Serbdom as combined notions of primordial ethnicity with Herderian linguistic consciousness"^{ix} Karadžić built a cornerstone for development of the Serbian expansionist national ideology which would, in the times to come, serve as the basis for a number of assimilatory tendencies and different Islamophobic representations, all justified by the exclusive right of the Serbian people, as the only "true" nation on the territories of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo and Montenegro. After Karadžić, Serbian intellectuals, such as Jovan Cvijić, and especially Ilija Garašanin and Vaso Čubrilović further enhanced the stigmatization of Muslims. Regardless of the fact that these scientists did not foment overt and direct stigmatization of Muslims, they contributed to it by constantly negating the identity of Bosnian and Herzegovian Muslims as an independent ethnic entity and labeling them as Serbs of "Mohammedan faith". In addition to the negation of the ethnic characteristics of Bosnian Muslims, Vaso Čubrilović, in his work "The Expulsion of Albanians," affirmed the idea that ethnic cleansing of Kosovo Albanians who inhabited the territory of Kosovo was necessary. Those academic positions automatically legitimized the expansionist ideas of already ubiquitous Serbian nationalism. Their ideas that the territories of BiH and Kosovo were granted exclusively to Serbia were later adopted and developed in even more extreme and radical direction by lawyer and ideologist of the Chetnik movement Stevan Moljević and

Dragoljub Draža Mihailović the leader of the Yugoslav Homeland Army at the dawn of the World War II. The aforementioned 19th century views of Serbian intellectuals served in later periods, during the 20th century, as a legitimization and "rationalization" for crimes committed against the Muslim population during and after the Balkan Wars, as well as the Second World War when the Chetnik movement committed widespread ethnic cleaning on the territory of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Aside from intellectuals with Serbian nationalist tendencies, signs of Serbian-oriented lines of thought also penetrated among Serbian left oriented intellectuals before World War II, such as Dimitrije Tucović and Svetozar Marković, as well as influential representatives of the Communist Party, Sima Marković and Veselin Masleša, who based their study of religion on the Marxist philosophy which viewed it as one of the obstacles for the implementation of communist ideology.^x The attitudes of Marxist-oriented thinkers from before World War II will be of great importance as they will greatly affect the future policies of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia which spearheaded the non-recognition of Bosnian Muslims as a nationality after the war ended. Additionally, immediately after the war the communist government initiated a bloody settling of accounts with Islamic intellectuals and members of the ulama due to the ideological hostility of communism toward religion, the government also kept the institutional capacities of the Islamic community down, instead promoting the communist regime.

During the period of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), Serbian nationalism and its expansionist intentions and antagonism toward the Slavic Muslims and the Albanians were to a certain extent deterred, but not eliminated altogether. Despite work to promote brotherhood and unity not all nationalist texts were eliminated. The best example of this is the already mentioned *Mountain Wreath* which, despite its content - immeasurable aversion to Muslims and South Slavic converts - was still in use as reading in primary schools throughout Yugoslavia. In addition, the communist regime was particularly devoted to eliminating certain Muslim cultural and religious practices under the pretext that they were "backward" and "rural," while also exerting systematic pressure against the use of certain terms that were used by Muslims in everyday speech.^{xi}

Also, after World War II, a whole spectrum of stigmatizing terms was used by the Communist Party to designate the basic practices of the Islamic faith, such as "construction of religious objects, dietary practices, choice of marital partners, or religious education for the youth..." as something undesirable.^{xii} Immediately after the completion of World War II, those South Slavic Muslims who were inspired by their faith and tradition were labeled as 'young Muslims', associating them with the anti-communist movement of the same name created in Bosnia at the dawn of Second World War. During the 1960s and 1970s, Muslim intellectuals who carried on the idea to recognize their national specificities as South Slavic Muslims, were identified as 'Muslim nationalists', which, at the time when nationalism was judged as the worst enemy of Yugoslav unity, left an ineradicable mark. During the Homeini's revolution in Iran in 1979, and four years before a group of Muslim intellectuals was arrested and tried in a notorious court process in Sarajevo in 1983, terms 'Islamic fundamentalists' and 'Pan-Islamism' came into fashion. Both terms would be used very efficiently over the years in order to create a 'scarecrow' for merciless intimidation of Yugoslav public opinion and also as the basis for what Muhamed Filipović called in the late 1980s "an ideological and political criminalization of the problems of Islam and the Muslims in the society."^{xiii}

On the other hand, during the later period of SFRY the circle of intellectuals who gathered around the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SASA), Writers' Union of Serbia (WUS) and the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) became the beacons of Serbian nationalism.^{xiv} During the 1980s and the early 1990s, SASA, WUS and SOC affirmed the ideology of stigmatization, as defined by Goffmann. This ideology was designed upon the basis of Serbian nationalist mythological interpretations and beliefs which emphasized negative features of the Slavic Muslims and the Albanians, along with a heightened degree of danger they 'represented' for the Serbian people. As Goffmann defined in his work "justification and rationalization of negative beliefs and attitudes" is the key instrument in the process of "normalization of hatred" toward the stigmatized.^{xv} Slavic Muslims and the Albanians were described as morally weak, as renegades and "race traitors" of their ancestral religion and defilers of the cross, as well as a constant threat due to their Turkish heritage'. They were essentialized as an alien element which once, a long time ago during the Battle of Kosovo murdered Emperor Lazar and thus Serbianhood, and because of that "Serbs can never live with Muslims and...the Serbian nation will not be resurrected until the Christ killers and race traitors are exterminated".^{xvi} Again, as in the case of 19th century intellectuals, the groundwork for "revenge" which during the 80s was developed, with "taunts and literary constructions of hate,"^{xvii} in intellectual circles within the SASA, WUS and SOC resulted in a war of aggression by the Republic of Serbia against the independent and internationally recognized state of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the first half of the 90s. The aggression towards

Bosnia and Herzegovina resulted in over 30,000 civilian deaths many of whom were women and children. Some of the results of this aggression can be seen in the ruling of the International Court which concluded that a planned elimination of Bosniak Muslims occurred on the territory of Srebrenica, the first verdict of genocide since World War II. Furthermore, the Court found that ethnic cleansing was committed in areas of Prijedor, while Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was under complete blockade and subject to systematic shelling and sniper fire for three years, the longest period in modern times that a capital has been under siege. Finally, numerous cases of ethnic cleansing were also conducted against the Albanian population in Kosovo.

Antagonism of the 'wise' and professionalization of stigma

In his work, Goffmann stresses the importance of those who manage to approach the stigmatized in different ways, and he calls them the 'wise', "persons who are normal, but whose special situation has made them intimately privy to the secret life of the stigmatized individual and sympathetic with it, and who find themselves accorded a measure of acceptance, a measure of courtesy membership in the clan".^{xviii} In the case of Muslims in Serbia, it appears that a opposing effect was produced by the 'wise' as it seems that most of those interested in learning about Muslim beliefs and traditions, their customs and their way of life, in fact did everything in their power to further promote their stigmatization and inadequate representation. The role of Serbian Oriental Studies experts and intellectuals who dedicated themselves to Islamic study and the study of the South Slavic Muslims has been very important from the 1980s onwards. A generation of Muslim intellectuals came of age in BiH at that time, whose academic work argued for an alternative view of Islam and South Slavic Muslims, completely different from the mainstream position widely accepted in Communist Yugoslavia. Their most ardent opponent has been Darko Tanasković, who has in all his public debates managed to very successfully combine his academic background in Arabic studies with his strong Eurocentric attitude toward the Orient, supported by growing Serbian nationalism under the auspices of the Communist Party, which was still in power at that time. Right before the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, his Ph.D. student and later a colleague, Mirosljub Jevtić would join forces with Tanasković. Aside from these two university professors, Aleksandar Popović, educated in France, was also considered an expert in Islamic studies. Despite his broad academic background, Aleksandar Popović also put his name and expertise in the service of Serbian nationalist ideas.^{xix} A number of articles and interviews with Tanasković and Jevtić were published in the late 80s and early 90s, with bombastic titles which, in retrospect, can be clearly understood as a prelude to the bloodshed during the 1990s. Herein, we'll cite but a few of the more 'clamorous titles' to illustrate the spread of a distorted image of Islam in this region: "Džihad i Jugoslavija?" (Jihad and Yugoslavia?), "Islam i Kosovo: radikali protiv Jugoslavije" (Islam and Kosovo: Radicals against Serbia), "Savremeni džihad kao rat" (Modern Jihad as a War), "Islam bez maske" (Islam: the mask is off), "Islamizacija na redu je Srbija" (Serbia: the next in line for Islamization), "Rada li se islamska republika u starom Rasu: nukleus države polumeseca" (Are we witnessing the birth of an Islamic state in Ancient Ras: the nucleus of the crescent moon state), "Alah priziva Sandžak" (Alah calls upon Sandzak), "Druga islamizacija Balkana?" (The second Islamization of the Balkans?), "Turci brane Sarajevo" (The Turks defend Sarajevo), etc. However, aside from publishing articles with titles which served as war propaganda, it is equally important that both authors were engaged in stigmatizing the elementary life and survival conditions of the Muslims within Serbian society. For instance, when discussing the request by Yugoslav Muslims to be allowed to have separate caldrons during military service, Darko Tanasković deliberates in a text "Između Kurana i kazana" (Between the Kur'an and the caldron):

"let's try to imagine a mortar crew consisted of a young Slovene, who sees the Yugoslav National Army as an alienated instrument of the great state's pressure, a Muslim (Muslim, Macedonian, Roma or Turk), hungry and resentful as he has no special caldron, a pro-secession Albanian (also a Muslim, i.e., also hungry) and, finally, a Serb who watches with a wary eye the above three. It's better not even to think about it. However, we must think about it and think responsibly, as such a time will come and soon."

In the same text, Tanasković does not stop there, but goes a step further and daims:

"to argue for separate caldrons, or, say, a proper dress code for Muslim girl schools... are but initial and trial demands/symptoms of a political, radical, fundamentalist project of Islamic revival through reenactment of ancient, medieval roles and patterns".^{xx}

Unlike Tanasković, Miroljub Jevtić did not write about young 'hungry' soldiers or 'properly' dressed female students in his text, but he sounds almost as a necrophiliac when he abuses the deceased in order to make his case for the prohibition of allocating Muslims the requested construction sites for mosques and cemeteries:

"Once they conquer the land for the dead, they will move one to acquiring the land for the living. Then, they will ask for a mosque to be erected, with full legitimacy, and, after that, they will demand additional land to populate the Muslims around the mosque. And then, soon enough, the non-Muslims will leave, first voluntarily and then under pressure... The plan is to inhabit these lands with Muslims, and to increase their birth rate which would eventually give them numerical supremacy."^{xxi}

However, to ensure that this "dark" future for Serbs does not come to fruition Jevtić has a ready solution:

"If you want to destroy a Turk, you must destroy his every part. If you do not do this, you risk that he moves about like a whole Turk, that is the whole of Bosnia, and becomes dangerous like the whole of Bosnia. Acting strategically, the designers—that is the leaders of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia—did not know this, and the leaders of the Republika Srpska, having followed advice from Belgrade, made a strategic mistake that is difficult to correct. The only remedy would be to completely destroy each "part of the Turk's body".^{xxii}

Besides the concept of "antagonism of wise" Goffman also points to an extremely important phenomenon which he names- the professionalization of stigma. Goffman's concept of stigma professionalization, which was eloquently and metaphorically described stigma as a 'crutch', which becomes a 'golf stick' for those representatives of the stigmatized group upon their political and financial integration, is an excellent illustration of the situation among the Muslims in Serbia. Since the communist era, the officials of the Islamic community were more interested in adjusting the communal activities to their personal needs than to those of their fellowmen. Alija Izetbegović, Islamic thinker and the first democratically elected president of BiH, observed in an interview about the ulama:

"...they lived off Islam, it's the religious leaders' profession. Throughout history they have always been close to those in power, and it sometimes has had disastrous consequences, since a mullah needs to control the authorities, rather than be controlled by it. They, have, however, always been as close as two peas in a pod".^{xxiii}

Aside from their connections with the authorities, the major problem of the Islamic community has been an authoritarian control of their leaders above the institutional organisms within the Community, which marginalizes the common people, stripping them of all possibility to make decisions or take charge.^{xxiv} The most illustrative example of this is the Bajrakli Mosque of Belgrade, which has been led by the Jusufpahić family for over 48 years, despite the catastrophic results of their rule and the permanent collaboration during the 90s with the most radical Serbian nationalist circles. Today, despite the attitudes of the majority of Muslim believers in Serbia, it is appalling to read the public views of the mufti Muhamed Jusufpahić who boasts about his friendship with Tomislav Nikolić, or Vojislav Šešelj, or about his close ties with the late Slobodan Milošević, the politicians who symbolize the darkest nationalist political orientation in Serbia during the 1990s when genocide and ethnic cleansing against the Muslims in BiH and Kosovo occurred.^{xxv} When we add, to the above-mentioned, the affirmations of Muhamed Jusufpahić in the media regarding his ethnic affiliation, insisting that he is a *Srbijanac* who uses the Cyrillic alphabet and loves Russia it serves as confirmation of another Goffman's thesis about the stigmatized trying to get on the good side of the stigmatizing in order to demonstrate to the majority that the reasons for their stigmatization have been eliminated and that the members of the stigmatized community can and should be accepted into society, liberated from their 'flaws' which shamed them in the past.^{xxvi}

Unlike the Jusufpahić family, the Islamic Community in Serbia and its former chief representative Muamer Zukorlić have been actively debating the Bosniak question. The mufti Zukorlić resorts to strong nationalist rhetoric equating the religious and the national identities of the Bosniaks. Because of this, his justified criticism towards the Serbian authorities is always combined with strong potentiating of a communal identity. This attitude often ends up in what we have previously identified in Goffman's terms as self-victimization and 'glorification of one's suffering' which, by rule, leads to self-isolation, ghettoization and a permanent 'defensive attitude' as a consequence of the victims' acceptance of their role as the stigmatized. The same aforementioned matrices, used by Muslim spiritual leaders, are used by Bosniak and Albanian political representatives. They use either strong, aggressive, national

policies which inevitably lead to ghettoization (and in times of crisis to conflict) or exaggerated flirtation with the authorities which leads to the declining care of, or even ignoring of, the needs of their minority groups.

We mention the phenomenon of "stigma professionalization" in this text due to Goffman's correct assertion that this is always one of the key aspects in the process of stigmatization and that as such represents an insurmountable obstacle for the stigmatized to effectively fight for their rights. Of course, "ordinary" Muslims bear a great responsibility for the fact that for decades the representatives of Serbian Muslims have successfully abused the positions entrusted to them. Therefore, Muslims must find the strength to change the corrupt representatives and to take control over their own destiny. If this does not happen soon, we can be rightly concerned that with the passage of time they will be completely assimilated into the majority population, or that they will be completely ghettoized and marginalized.

Instead of the conclusion: Democratic changes in Serbia and the current situation of Muslims

The above short genealogy of Muslims stigmatization represents some of the most blatant examples of the treatment that Muslims have suffered in Serbia. Unfortunately, the situation for Muslims has not significantly changed with the fall of Slobodan Milošević's populist regime. The main reason for this is that while the organized opposition to the Milosevic regime was made up of political parties that clearly fought for democratic change and were undoubtedly critical of Milosevic's policies they were also highly nationalized. The leader of the Serbian Renewal Movement, the largest opposition party in the nineties, was Vuk Draskovic, who during the eighties was one of the first to work extensively on the renewal of Serbian national feelings and the idea of the rehabilitation of the Chetnik movement and its leader, Dragoljub Draza Mihailovic. In addition to his political views, Draskovic is also known for writing the novel "Knife" (*Nož*) published in 1982, which to this day is one of the greatest examples of a literary work which promotes strong anti-Islamic sentiment.

Apart from the Serbian Renewal Movement, the second largest and most important opposition party was the Democratic Party. This party resumed its activities in 1989, claiming continuity with the pre-World War II Democratic Party, whose long-time president was Ljubomir Davidovic. The Democratic Party was considered a party of the liberal-democratic orientation. However, despite this declared party orientation some of the founders of the renewed Democratic Party were actually extremist Serbian nationally oriented intellectuals. The most extreme examples are certainly Kosta Čavoški and Gojko Djogo. Today, Čavoški is a member of Radovan Karadžić's defense team at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague and president of the political advisory committee for the ultra-national Dveri movement. Similarly, Gojko Djogo, during the wars of the nineties, was in constant contact with Radovan Karadzic, leader of the Bosnian Serbs. In this context it is important to recall that in October 1991 - just two years after taking part in the "re-founding" of the Democratic Party - Djogo in a telephone conversation with Radovan Karadzic who had expressed his concern that air strikes on Sarajevo could result in the deaths of 300,000 Muslims said: "They should all be killed. All of them",^{xxvii} However, the Democratic Party also had significantly more moderate views amongst its leadership, people who were not considered extremist Serb nationalists like the late Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic and longtime president of the Democratic Party Dragoljub Micanovic. However, during the nineties the two of them also, due to political pragmatism, often yielded to the overall climate of Serbian nationalism. Even Zoran Djindjic, who has become a symbol of an anti-national Serbia, in several interviews during the nineties, denied the national identity of the Bosniak Muslims. Therefore, today we can rightly conclude that Ljubomir Tadic, a prominent "national oriented" academic, and also one of the reformers of the Democratic Party, was correct when he said:

"all the opposition parties in Serbia, except the Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative (UJDI), agree that the Serbian people should all live in one state", he added that "we can never give up the fundamental objective (...) the 200 years struggle of the Serbian people for liberation and unification to be erased by saying - we renounce Greater Serbia, no, this cannot happen."^{xxviii}

It is important to remember that the current Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic and Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic were once the most important representatives of the ultra-nationalist Serbian Radical Party of Vojislav Seselj.

Mr. Seselj, who, not simply through his political rhetoric, but through his activism in the nineties, revived the already mentioned political program of Stevan Moljević and the notorious Chetnik movement.^{xxix} With the aforementioned political actors and parties, all of whom are deeply national in character, very little can be expected to fundamentally change when it comes to the national policies of Serbia and relations between Serbs and the Muslim Other. As a result of this reality, in 2006 a new Serbian Constitution was adopted, which, in an even more exclusive manner than the former constitution, defines Serbia as a state "of the Serbian people and all other citizens".^{xxx} In addition, no Serbian government since the fall of Milosević has demonstrated the political will to distance itself from the criminal policy of his regime in the nineties; a regime whose policies resulted in genocide in Srebrenica as well as ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity in BiH and Kosovo. Moreover, not only have successive Serbian governments since the fall of Milosević not distanced themselves from the recent past, but they have actively embarked on the rehabilitation of the Chetnik movement responsible for incalculable crimes against Muslims during World War II. The 2015 official rehabilitation of Dragoljub Draža Mihailović is clear evidence that state policy systematically and steadfastly holds a Serbian national expansionist policy and exclusivism. As concrete deeds are always preceded by ideological preparation through literary works, education and indoctrination by national intellectual elites, the moment we see that Dragoljub Draža Mihailović and the Chetnik movement are now presented to future schoolchildren in history books as a "legitimate" option, unblemished by any criminal misdeeds, we can conclude that the extreme Serbian nationalist ideology has truly remained the dominant political force even after the democratic changes of 2000. When looking at the genealogy of the Serbian state from its inception to the present, the aim of Serbian political and intellectual elites was never to create a civil and inclusive state. Rather the opposite is true. The goal was to create a state that constantly sought to assimilate, undo and expel all who were different thus creating as ethnically pure a state as possible. Thus, as we have shown, in Serbia, both the (extreme) right-wing national elite as well as liberal-democratic parties had the same idea of creating a state that would include all Serbs (the idea of a Greater Serbia), while at the same time the survival of the Muslim populations' cultural and religious identity was threatened by (far) left-oriented forces due to their uncompromising antagonism toward religion. Any country based on such ideas and aspirations and political actors has little space for anyone different, especially not for anyone who is, from the very beginning, designated the archetypal Other.

ⁱ Erving Goffman, *Stigma: zabeleške o ophođenju sa narušenim identitetom* (Novi Sad: Mediteran, 2009), 13.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 13.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 15.

^{iv} *Ibid.*, 17.

^v *Ibid.*, 38.

^{vi} *Ibid.*, 16.

^{vii} Michael Sells, "Vjera, historija i genocid u Bosni i Hercegovini" in *Muslimani Balkana istočno pitanje u XX vijeku*, ed. Fikret Karčić (Tuzla: Behram-begova medresa, 2001), 151.

^{viii} *Ibid.*, 151.

^{ix} Cathie Carmichael, *Ethnic Cleansing in the Balkans: Nationalism and the destruction of tradition* (London: Routledge, 2002), 23.

^x Pedro Ramet, "Primordial ethnicity or modern nationalism: The case of Yugoslavia's Muslims," *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, 13:2 (1985), 171.

^{xi} Cathie Carmichael, *Ethnic Cleansing in the Balkans: Nationalism and the destruction of tradition* (London: Routledge, 2002), 25-26.

^{xii} Šaćir Filandra, *Bošnjaci nakon socijalizma o bošnjačkom identitetu u postjugoslavenskom dobu* (Sarajevo, Zagreb: BKZ Preporod, Synopsis, 2012), 65.

^{xiii} Muhamed Filipović, "O genezi, dimenzijama, sadržaju i implikacijama optužbi za islamski fundamentalizam u našoj idgnoj i političkoj praksi" in *Islamski fundamentalizam - šta je to?* ed. Nusret Čančar and Enes Karić (Sarajevo: Mešihat islamske zajednice u Bosni i Hercegovini, 1990), 57.

^{xiv} Among the intellectuals, the nationalist policies were argued by: Dobrica Ćosić, Matija Bećković, Gojko Đogo, Radovan Samardžić and Antonije Isaković, among others, while within the Serbian Orthodox Church during the 1980s nationalist claims were primarily associated with: Atanasije Jevtić, Amfilohije Radović and Irinej Bulović.

^{xv} In context of "normalization of hatred" Michael Sells takes as an example a famous Yugoslav nobel laureate Ivo Andrić who in Sells words "had played a decisive role in adapting the ideology of Petar Petrović Njegoš to the twentieth-century context. According to Andrić, Njegoš's view that Muslim converts were traitors and cowards was not only the view of Njegoš but the view of "the people".

^{xvi} Michael A. Sells, "Christ Killer, Kremlin, Contagion" in *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy*, ed. Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 364.

^{xvii} Cathie Carmichael, *Ethnic Cleansing in the Balkans: Nationalism and the destruction of tradition* (London: Routledge, 2002), 22.

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- ^{xviii} Erving Gofman, *Stigma: zabeležke o ophođenju sa narušenim identitetom* (Novi Sad: Mediterran, 2009), 28.
- ^{xix} For politically engaged attitudes by Aleksandar Popovic regarding the Muslims at the beginning of the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, see: *Posrednici i metafore: jugoslovenski muslimani (1945-1989)* (Beograd: AkvianjuS, 1990). Reviewer of this book was prof. dr Darko Tanasković.
- ^{xx} Darko Tanasković, *U dijalogu s islamom* (Gornji Milanovac: Dečije novine, 1992), 64-65.
- ^{xxi} Miro Ijub Jevtić. "Šta se krije iza groblja: Islam jurišana Srbiju," *Ilustrovana politika*, Decembar 18, 1990, 25.
- ^{xxii} Michael A. Sells „Christ Killer, Kremlin, Contagion“ in *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy*, ed. Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 365.
- ^{xxiii} Sead Truhlj, *Mladi muslimani*, (Zagreb: Globus, 1992), 68.
- ^{xxiv} This is completely contradictory to Islamic faith and the principles of *Shura* (the term which designates consultations with the members of the community about important decisions). Strict hierarchy also stands in direct opposition to Islamic counter-hierarchical principles.
- ^{xxv} " Muftija Jusufspahić: Ja pričam srpskim jezikom i jesam srpski patriota," Kurir, accessed May 17, 2014, <http://www.kurir.info/s/muftija-jusufspahic-ja-pricam-srpskim-jezikom-i-jesam-srpski-patriota-clanak-1360027>.
- ^{xxvi} Gofman, Erving, *Stigma: zabeležke o ophođenju sa narušenim identitetom* (Novi Sad: Mediterran, 2009), 21.
- ^{xxvii} You can listen recording of telephone conversation of Gojko Djogo and Radovan Karadzic in the documentary movie „*Krvavi ples pošeheri*“. Telephone conversation starts at 6:20. Movie is available on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWdueojar50>
- ^{xxviii} Oljvera Milosavljević, U tradiciji nacionalizma ili stereotipi srpskih intelektualaca XX veka o „nama“ i „drugima“ (Beograd: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2002), 65-66.
- ^{xxix} Cathie Carmichael, *Ethnic Cleansing in the Balkans: Nationalism and the destruction of tradition* (London: Routledge, 2002), 32.
- ^{xxx} Ilija Vujačić, "Deset godina nove manjinske politike u Srbiji," *Politička misao* 49:2 (2012), 159. Also in this paper prof. Vujačić more broadly discuss the failure of implementing the inclusive multicultural politics after democratic changes in Serbia.

Biography of the author

Ivan Ejub Kostić is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade. He holds a Master's degree in Islamic studies and Bachelor's degree in Arabic Studies from the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Serbia. During the 2011/2013 academic years he lectured at the Faculty for Media and Communications, Singidunum University, where he was engaged on the following subjects: "Culture and History of the Middle East" and "Orientalism and Occidentalism". He is one of the founders of the Balkan Center for the Middle East, becoming its Directing Manager in 2013. He co-authored the book "Persecuted Islam," published in September, 2013. Also he is in editorial board of the "Journal of Religious Sciences Kom" and regular contributor for the "Yearbook of Muslims in Europe" which has been published every year since 2009 by Brill, Leiden. He has written numerous articles on the relationship between Islam, politics and contemporary social theories, and is a frequent contributor to leading media outlets in the country and region on issues related to the Middle East and Islam.