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**THE BOSNIAK/MUSLIM IDENTITY IN THE SANDJAK:
PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES**

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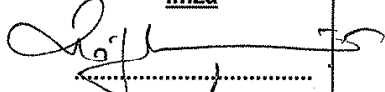
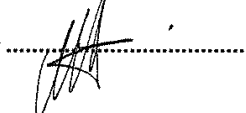
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this master's thesis titled as **“The Bosniak/Muslim Identity in the Sandjak: Prospects and Challenges”** has been written by myself in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resources in the reference list. I verify all these with my honor.

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ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Sancak'ta Boşnak-Müslüman Kimliği: Beklentiler ve Zorluklar

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Çoğunlukla Güney Slav Müslümanlarının yaşadığı Sancak bölgesi Osmanlı dönemindeki Bosna'nın birbirine bağlı bölümüydü. Balkan Savaşları'nın ardından bu bölge Sırbistan ve Karadağ arasında paylaştırıldıklarında Bosna, Sırbistan ve Karadağ'da dağılmış Müslüman/Boşnak toplumunun milli gelişimini değiştirmiştir.

Soğuk Savaşın sona ermesi ve Yugoslavya Katliamının neden olduğu olaylar girdabı Balkan halkının münasebetler tarihinin derinliklerinde kalan kimliklerin yeniden tanımlanmasını beraberinde getirmiştir. Sosyo-politik durumlar önemli derecede değişime uğradığı için Müslüman/Boşnak karakteri üzerinde jeopolitik değişimlerin etkisi söz konusudur. Çoklu etnik yapıdan oluşması ve sınır özelliklerinden ötürü Sancak Bölgesi çok sayıda gelişme için sıcak bir nokta olarak işlev görmeye devam etmiştir. Sancak durumu Boşnakların devlet, çoğunluk dini ya da ulusal toplumlar ve kendi kimliklerine dair ilişkilerinin sorunsallaşmasını içine alır. Bu ilişkiler diğer toplumlarla birlikte var olma ve çatışma halinde olma, kendi ülkeleri dâhilinde otoritelerin baskısı ya da hoşgörüsü ile oraya has vatanseverlik veya yabancılaşmadan önemli derecede etkilenmiştir.

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Sancak Blgesi, Gney Slav Mslmanları, Ulusal Kimlik, Toplumsal devlet, ok uluslu devlet

ABSTRACT
Master's Thesis
The Bosniak/Muslim Identity in Sandjak: Prospects and Challenges

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The Sandžak region populated mostly by South Slav Muslims was a constituent part of the Ottoman Bosnia. Following the Balkans Wars this region was partitioned between Serbia and Montenegro which changed the course of national developments of Muslim/Bosniak community dispersed in Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro. The maelstrom of events introduced by the end of the Cold War and Yugoslavian bloodshed brought to the fore redefinition of identities deeply embedded in history of relations of the Balkan peoples. Geopolitical transformations exerted substantial influence on the character of Muslim/Bosniak national identity given that their sociopolitical position has been drastically changed. The Sandžak region for its multiethnic composition and border character continued to serve as a hot point for many further developments. The Sandžak case involves questions of Bosniaks' relationship toward state, toward majority religious or national communities and toward their own identity. These relationships are deeply influenced by their co-existence and conflict with other communities, pressure or tolerance of the authorities and particular patriotism or alienation within their own countries.

This thesis will try to explain the character of the Bosniak identity by demonstrating that it is not homogenous across the Balkan states and that it is

reactive to the dominant political discourse of the countries they live in and the attitudes of the surrounding populations. Within this framework, this thesis will try to examine the main patterns and factors for development of more closed, homogenized and mildly radicalized environment of the Serbian part of Sandžak on one hand, and formation of the more integrative, civic and reactive stand of Bosniaks in Montenegro on the other hand. Consequently, the focus will be on the position of Bosniaks in Montenegro and their position, stand and contributions to the Montenegrin efforts to create a civic and multinational state.

Key Words: The Sandžak region, South Slav Muslims, national identity, civic state, multinational state

**THE BOSNIAK/MUSLIM IDENTITY IN SANCAK:
CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS**

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INTRODUCTION

The entire globe was benumbed and shaken up by the 1990s Yugoslavian bloodshed at the dawn of the new millennium. The disintegration of once a prosperous multicultural country that balanced between East and West was followed by ethnic and civil wars, in which neighbors and family members stood on the opposite warring sides. The horrifying images of events in the heart of the Balkans, previously a land of colorful influences and traits, sparked a proliferation of academic debates on nation and nationalism as well as the future of multiculturalism.

With the loss of the common country and the artificially built identity of Yugoslavs, each group that formed the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia re-started the search for its identity. With a similar language and history for most of the ethnic groups, religion became a strong factor in differentiating *Us* from *Them* and building of new, more narrowly defined, national identities for the former Yugoslav people. While the identity of the majority of the orthodox and catholic former Yugoslavs was clearly and almost automatically translated into national belonging to the Serb (Orthodox) and Croat nations (Catholics), the quest for identity of the South Slav Muslims was a more strenuous and complex process.

The national development of the Muslim/Bosniak national identity in the Balkans has been often regarded as to “belated” in contrast to the development of other ethnic and national identities. While the other ethno-religious communities in the Balkans have been developing their sense of national collectivity around religious core, the path of the South Slav Muslim identity shaping was permeated with allegiance to the Ottoman Empire’s ruling religion on one side, and with the state of belonging to Slavic or Slavinized populations living in the Balkans. The decline of the Ottoman Empire and sharp transformation of the geopolitical and cultural landscape in the Balkans incited the process of ethnic and national identification of South Slav Muslims.

Following the Balkan Wars, the Sandžak region, where most of the South Slav Muslims lived, was partitioned between Serbia and Montenegro, which changed the course of national developments of Muslim/Bosniak community dispersed in Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro. From a privileged community in the Ottoman Empire, to ‘Muslim traitors’ in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Muslims/Bosniaks finally became a constituent part of Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, during the existence of which the question of their national identity was subdued.

Using the examples from the two countries with the most significant Muslim populations (outside Bosnia and Hercegovina), Serbia and Montenegro, this thesis inspects the return of the South Slav Muslims to the previously existing Bosniak identity in the aftermath of the new Balkan wars and argues that **religious differences vis-à-vis the other Balkan nations are at the core of the new South Slav Muslim identity**. Moreover, it contends that the **character of the Bosniak national identity is not uniform across the young Balkan states**, but that it is, rather, **reactive** and **varies with regards to the strength of the displayed nationalism** of the surrounding nations and the **dominant political and national discourse within the countries they live in**.

The thesis shows that, despite the fact that Bosniaks in Serbia and Montenegro are largely concentrated in one region – Sandžak (northern part of Montenegro and southern part of Serbia), which, notwithstanding the political and administrative border that separates the area, has the same historical, ethnic, cultural and economic characteristics, the identity of the native Muslim population is different in its essence on the different sides of the border. While in Montenegro, it can be described as highly integrative with respect to the other ethnic/national/religious groups within the concept of civic identity, in Serbia, the Bosniak identity is rooted in the ethnic definitions and is based in the need for distinct differentiation from all other groups.

The approach used in analyzing the afore mentioned hypothesis is combination of context and limited discourse analysis. The most important limitation in this kind of

approach is the reliance on the articles and newspaper and radio-television sources, as well as the lack of direct interviews with the most prominent political leaders and intellectuals and also there was not enough available scholarly research on the Bosniak identity of the past decades and in particular after the strengthening of the pro-independent movement which led to the final dissolution of Yugoslavia.

In terms of structure, this thesis consists of four chapters, each dealing with a specific subject in order to outline the process of formation and consolidation of national identity of Bosniaks within the historical and sociopolitical framework. The first chapter aims at highlighting the theoretical concepts of nation and nationalism in order to set the stage for more comprehensive analysis of development of the Bosniak identity through historical and geopolitical processes and its current character in the new political settings, while the second chapter looks into ethno-genesis of Bosniaks and scrutinizes the patterns of their ethnic persistence. The third chapter turns to the position of the Sandžak Bosniaks in the wider concept of the evolution of the Bosniak identity. It investigates trajectories of formation of their collective identity conditioned by external and internal perceptions of their identity and historical and geopolitical and cultural constellations in the regions/states they populate. The fourth chapter deals with identity issues, position and challenges of Bosniaks in Sandžak. It will attempt to circumscribe the trajectories of the development of the identity of Sandžak Bosniaks using the case of Bosniaks from both sides of the new border. Later on it will focus more on the position of Bosniaks in Montenegro in the new circumstances conditioned by the consolidation of a new independent state and its cultural, sociopolitical and multinational identity. This chapter concentrates on the post-referendum political balances in Montenegro and factors that instigated change in Montenegrin socio-political landscape. It also outlines Bosniaks' stand and contribution to the efforts of Montenegro to create mechanisms of civic society in post-referendum Montenegro as the only progressive path for a small state with such particular national composition.

CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING BOSNIAN NATIONALISM: THEORETICAL ASPECT

The collapse of multinational federation of states of Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, wars, ethnic tensions and conflicts in the regions of the former socialist empire in the Middle and Eastern Europe, national movements and national conflicts in Western Europe, as well as continuous uncertainty over the process of European integration have restored the attention of scholars for the issue of ethnic/national identity and nationalism. The world in a grotesque way learnt that century of identities at its closure has opened a new range of quests for identities in the era of globalization. The concept of multiculturalism became a highly contested topic in academia and concerns raised around it brought back identity questions in many parts of the world. The question of identities in the Balkans resurfaced in a shocking way by transforming the borders similar to “white lines of the marble column” to bloody borders. The country which was a multicultural landscape of harmonized identities with ‘thin’ borders came to symbolize stage for bloody clashes of familiar identities.

Even though the studies of nation and nationalism reached the focus of the social theories, crucial impulse for the augmentation of discourse within the studies of nation and nationalism came from the political sphere mitigated by the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

In this chapter, taking into consideration main theoretical models of nation and nationalism it is aimed at focusing on the ethno-symbolist approach in order to examine the main patterns in the formation of Bosniak national identity within historical, cultural and sociopolitical framework shaped by perplexed history of identities in the Balkans

1.1 NATION IN CONTENDING VIEWS

“The ‘end of the era of nationalism’, so long prophesied is not remotely in sight. Indeed, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time.”

Benedict Anderson

(qtd. in Smith, 2003:131)

The concept of nation as one of the most complex social phenomena still provides a platform for research and debate on the continuously changing global socio-political environment. Having in mind that research on the phenomenon of nation catalyzed a range of contested stands among theoreticians, a generally accepted definition as well as a generally accepted research methods in the field of its research do not exist. The existing theoretical research approaches by and large differ both by their view of research question worth of asking and their offered answers to these. However, their focus is on finding the answers about the place of nation in the history of humankind and sociological determination of ‘nation’.

During the nineteenth and in the beginning of twentieth centuries the most fostered theoretical tradition, *primordialism*, explains nation as an ancient and natural reality which rise simultaneously and coherently with human beings. That would imply that where there is a human history, there are different nations. According to them primordialists, as family, nation is long-term and the most important social group in human history. According to the primordialists, ethnic groups are permanent and unchangeable and that belonging to a nation is designated by birth. This approach does not differentiate ethnic group from nation and historic and sociopolitical epochs (Smith, 2003:150). Within the framework of sociobiological variant of primordialism, Pierre van den Berghe presumes that ethnic groups and nations are “natural” groups which rise as the “extension” of the family and wider kinship groups selected in the process of genetic evolution. The common ancestry myths and historical experiences of a kinship van den

Berghe descends from biological ancestry (Smith, 2003:147-148). The third variant of primordialism established by Edward Shils and developed by Clifford Geertz, acknowledges various social bonds in modern societies but argue that ethnicity, that is primordial ties precede all other social connections (Smith, 2003:151). In Geertz's words, "for virtually every person, in every society, at almost all times, some attachments seem to flow more from a sense of natural – some would say spiritual – affinity than from social interaction" (qtd. in Schiffman, 1999:29). According to this view, every human being must belong to a certain ethnic group and ethnicity is relevant for the understanding of history and it overpowers other affiliations. However, historical ethnic communities form, develop and disintegrate through history or they are absorbed by neighboring or conquering ethnic groups. In general, the foregrounding place of this school of thought is taken by social and cultural phenomena of language, religion, territory, kinship and ethnicity (Smith, 2003:223).

According to *perennialism*, nations are believed to be, in Smith's words, "either as updated versions of immemorial ethnic communities, or as collective cultural identities" and trans-historical phenomena which could be traced in all historical epochs (Smith, 2003:159). A nation continuously emerges disregarding economic, political and cultural conditions in a society. Nations are social and political groups which are characterized by exceptional duration for which they are perceived as immemorial to their members (Smith, 2003:223). Scottish historian, Hugh Seton-Watson (1977), who distinguishes 'old nations' and 'new nations', argues that continuing existence of a nation explains the roots of present nations in a deep past (1977:6-13). Even though possible interruptions in historical duration of some nations can be traced, the feature that is stressed is the continuity of a nation (Smith, 2003:173-174). Moreover, the perennialist idea of a nation emphasizes that a nation as a social group of a specific quality, as a specific form of association of individuals and as a source of collective identity can be traced in the environment where people live. One of the most eminent advocates of perennialism, John Armstrong sees ethnic groups as pre-modern equivalents of nation but failed to explore their differences (Smith, 2003:185).

The critics of perennialist school of thought claim that by not considering the differences among historical epochs in their research, perennialism misses a relevant point since different historical epochs are characterized by specific types of collective cultural identities. In such view, the overall research of the nations should demonstrate the possible relations among these different collective cultural identities and their natures. For many scholars, however, the nations in historical sense are relatively modern “sociologically necessary” product of industrial societies as claimed by Ernest Gellner (Smith, 2003:30) or product of Benedict Anderson’s print capitalism (Smith, 2003:135). Consequently, modernization processes as industrialization, generic education, social dynamic, secularization, urbanization, democratization of political life caused the emergence of nationalism, and it as an ideology contributed to the invention of nations. This modernist stream emphasizes the primary role of intelligentsia and political elites and institutions for the rise and preservation of nations (Smith, 2003:24-40). Anderson, author of the concept of *Imagined Communities*, explains the rise of nations through “half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity” (qtd. in Smith, 2003:135). Moreover, modernists claim that political factor is the most responsible for the emergence of nation as a social phenomenon. They insist that for the existence of nation necessary factor is some sort of political autonomy. They believe that state is a prime force in preservation and protection of the nation and its culture and that independent state is an ultimate goal of every nation (Smith, 2003:95).

Objections to modernism view of nation mainly concern the underestimation of ethnicity and overemphasizing political over cultural factors in the forming of a nation. Ethnicity, language, religious affiliation, collective memories, myths of ethnic origin is out of modernist object of research. Moreover, linking questions of nationalism solely with the industrialization is criticized taking in consideration that some nationalistic movements appeared before the industrialization. Even though Gellner’s thesis concerning the functionality of nations in industrial society, argues Anthony D. Smith

(2003), is a powerful thesis because “industrial growth requires both widespread fluidity and patterned homogeneity, individual mobility combined with cultural standardization” and “that could be achieved by creating a uniform body of competent, substitutable citizens and this in turn requires a large-scale public mass education system funded and controlled by the state”, it does not explain the origins and development of nationalism. As an example he gives cases where there was no significant development or even beginnings of industrialization in the time of the emergence of nationalism (2003:35-36). Finally, classic modern theories have been criticized because they were not able to give an appropriate explanation of the rise and preservation of collective identities, as well as they have relied mostly on economic determinism neglecting emotional, affective nature of ethnicity.

1.2. ETHNOSYMBOLISM AND PRIMORDIAL BONDS

A British sociologist, Anthony D. Smith, in his ethno-symbolic approach attempts at creating a synthesis between modernist and perennialist research tradition. This theoretical paradigm points to myth, symbol and communication as the key elements for defining, explaining and understanding the rise of nations. The emergence of modern nations is ascribed to patterns of ethnic persistence, that is, complex combination of myths, symbols as means for interaction, collective memories more or less distanced of the real past of ethnic groups (Smith, 2003:185). By explicitly distinguishing *ethnies* from nation, Smith’s ethno-historic approach explores formation of *ethnies* and nations and seeks to find answers why some ethnic groups become nations, and the others fail to do so. Furthermore, this approach focuses on exploration patterns of ethnic formation and of the relevant factors that contributed to sense of ethnic identification and its continuing persistency over long periods (Smith, 1991:23-42).

He argues that ethnicity and history are of great importance for objective analysis of the concept of nation and nationalism. Smith furthermore explains,

The rediscovery of ethnic past furnishes vital memories, values, symbols and myths, without which nationalism would be powerless. But these myths, symbols, values and memories have popular resonance because they are founded on living traditions of the people (or segments there of) which serve both to unite and to differentiate them from their neighbors. This unity is in turn based on the powerful presumed kinship and residence ties to underpin the authenticity of the unique cultural values of the community. In this sense, the ethnic community resembles an extended family or rather a 'family of families', one which extends over time and space to include many generations and many districts in a specific territory. This sense of extended kinship, of 'kith and kin', attached to a particular 'homeland' underlines the national identities and unity in so many modern nations and endows their members with a vivid sense of kin relatedness and immemorial continuity.

(Smith, 2003:45-46)

Smith argues that the lack of scholars' attention to the phenomenon of ethnicity and imprecision related to it, commonly assimilated with the notions of nationality, culture or 'sub-national' phenomenon, blurs the possibility of understanding the complex emergence of national identity and nationalism (2003:44-45).

The most relevant difference between perennialist and ethno-symbolic view of the nation and nationalism is in insisting of ethno-symbolists on the difference between ethnic community (*ethnie* – French term) and nation and on the historical approach of ethno-symbolism. Even though ethno-symbolists accepted the sense for all innovations which were brought in the society by the modern streams, they reject the radical distinction, often made by modernists, between modern and pre-modern age. Moreover, they insist on “ethnic origin of the nations” and gradual development of *ethnies* into nations. Anthony Smith defines nation as human population which shares national name, myths and memories, mass public culture, bordered homeland, economy, and equal rights and duties defined by law (Smith 1991:43). In this definition, thus, is combined perennialist insisting on continuing existence of nation through the centuries, through persistence of *ethnies*, with modernist perspective of nation by taking into account the equal rights and duties for all members of a nation in a political community. Moreover, as Smith points, nations as modern phenomena are based on a unified economy and

require a compact territory and “a single ‘political culture’ and public, mass education and media system” (Smith, 1991:69).

Referring to John Armstrong’s analysis of medieval Middle Eastern and European civilizations and ethnic identities, Smith furthermore points out that “although pre-modern persistent group identities, whether labeled ‘ethnic’ or ‘national’, are distinguished from ‘nations’ after the late eighteenth century, ‘where consciousness of ethnic identity became a predominant force for constituting the independent political structures’” it is clear that ethnicity and nationhood “form a part of a continuum, and that what matters is not the form they take in different epochs, but the persisting group perceptions and sentiments themselves” (Smith, 2003:181).

The multidimensional concept of national identity and its external (territorial, economic and political) and internal functions (socialization of the members as ‘nationals’ and ‘citizens’, providing a social bond between individuals and classes, defining individual selves in the world) have brought to analytical focus civic and territorial dimensions of national identity on one side, and the ethnic and genealogical dimensions on the other side.

As the point of departure for the formation of nations Smith takes ethnicity as a basis for the social relationship of solidarity fostered between members of an ethnic group. In contrast to the perception of ethnicity as a primordial quality on one, and the perception of ethnicity as a tool for nationalist elite’s individual or collective interests on the other side, ethnic identity as seen by ethno-symbolists, comprises common ethno-history, i.e. myths and beliefs on common origin and ethnic distinctiveness as well as other cultural and social collectivities (Smith, 1991:15-20). Smith distinguishes ethnic categories as ethnically smaller or larger human populations with underdeveloped senses of collective identity and mutual solidarity even though they are considered as distinct historic or cultural groups by those who are not members of that group. *Ethnies* are communities whose members share “ethno-history”, i.e. myths and beliefs of common

ancestry and ethnic distinctiveness featured by “a collective proper name, shared historical memories, one or more differentiating elements of common culture, an association with a specific ‘homeland’ and a sense of solidarity with significant sectors of the population” (Smith, 1991:20-21). Significance of ethno-symbolic heritage of an *ethnie* is reflected in the multifaceted power of ‘attachments and associations’ to a specific territory or myths and/or historical places, events and periods of time all of which ensures that an *ethnie* “persist even when long divorced from its homeland” (Smith, 1991:23). Hence, *ethnies* are structures whose changes are very slow and which through long-term fostering of ethnic myths, symbols and various rituals, influences the everyday life and understanding of world of people belonging to that *ethnie*. Smith points out the continuity, shared memories and notion of collective destiny, not uniformity of elements over generations in a cultural identity. Collective identities in general are based on collective interpretations of common experiences. If those experiences, as Smith argues, are particularly striking or traumatic, for instance, in the case of war, then there is a tendency towards a strengthening of a collective ethnic identity. In that context, crucial role have played state-making, military mobilization and organized religion (Smith, 1991:24-27).

Hence, Smith attempts to demonstrate that the core for the formation of modern nations lies in ethnic ties and identities. His point of departure is distinction between two kinds of *ethnies* crucial to the process of formation of nations – ‘lateral’ and ‘vertical’ type. In the center of the ‘lateral’ type of *ethnie* are the upper strata (aristocrats, higher clergy, bureaucrats, military officials, etc.) which played important role in creating the sense of common ethnicity but it lacked social depth. On the other hand, ‘vertical’ *ethnie* was featured by diffused but unified social strata, especially when in threat from outside, with common ethnic culture and consequently socially more compact and intense (Smith, 1991:52-55). In close connection to these two types of *ethnies*, Smith singles out two types of routes in the formation of nations. The first one is *bureaucratic incorporation* which involved the role of lateral *ethnie* as the state’s ethnic core which had no attempt to incorporate lower strata of community into their ethnic culture

gradually created a territorialized and politicized 'national' culture preserved and imposed by the aristocracy and clergy and for incorporating other social strata (2003:193-194). Furthermore he emphasizes the role of the three revolutions in the formation of nations in the Western Europe – administrative, economic and cultural by which “the outlying regions and their *ethnies* and middle and lower classes were incorporated into the dominant lateral ethnic culture through the agency of the bureaucratic state. The creation of secular, mass nations was ultimately the outcome of a vigorous programme of political socialization through the public, mass education system” (1991:60-61). The second one, the route of *vernacular mobilization* involves transformation of 'vertical' *ethnie* into an ethnic nation by means of organized religion, religious sacred scriptures, rituals, clergy and cultivation of vernacular cultural identity by indigenous intelligentsia (Smith, 2003:194). In Smith's words, “the effect of vernacular mobilization by a returning intelligentsia was to create a new mode of 'national' communication and socialization in which ethnic values, myths and memories became the basis of a political nation and a politically mobilized community” (Smith, 1991:128).

Different schools of thoughts hold divergent views on nationalism and the relationship between nation and nationalism. One theoretic course take nation as a primordial or at least centuries-long phenomenon which consequently precedes nationalism, while according to the modernists, postmodernists and interactionists nation is considered to be product of politicization of ethnicity at the end of eighteenth and in the beginning of nineteenth century (Smith, 2003:28). Ethno-symbiolists believe that a small number of nations existed before nationalism, while majority of them emerge after nationalism, so there is no causal-resultant connection.

Arguing that nationalism is a product of industrialization, Ernest Gellner defined nationalism as “primarily a principle that holds that the political and national unit should be congruent” (Conversi, 2007, par.2). Stressing of the overall political side of nationalism and undermining the cultural side of its emergence and existence fails to

explain its complexity that it signifies. Commenting on Gellner's assumption that nationalism invents nations, Smith argues that nationalism, like nation, as well as culture, social organization and ideology are based and "dependent upon earlier motifs, visions and ideals" (1991:71). Smith defines nationalism as an ideological movement for acquiring and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity of a certain human population and where some members of that population think of that group as a real or potential nation (1991:73) He furthermore argues that nationalism is even more importantly form of society and culture which by "rediscovery, reconstruction and appropriation of the communal past" attempts at becoming "the basis of a vision of collective destiny" (Smith, 2003:90).

Having in mind that analyzing the formation of nations and emergence of nationalisms means dealing with complex set of processes over time, this chapter was aimed at borrowing a theoretical basis for examination of the Bosniak identity through perspectives of ethno-symbolist approach of Anthony Smith. By focusing on theoretical concepts of formation, character and persistence of ethnic communities presented in this chapter, the next chapters will attempt to find answers on how Bosniaks as an ethnic community were defined by themselves or by outsiders, what the most important features that distinguish them from their neighbors are and how they develop their national identity.

CHAPTER 2

BOSNIAKS: ETHNOGENESIS, HISTORY AND IDENTITY

Having in mind that specific texture of identities in the Balkans are significantly shaped by overall historical and socio-political courses, in this chapter it is aimed at examining the ethno-genesis and identity of Bosniaks in historical context while focusing on the role of religion in the process of national identification and homogenization of ethnic communities in the Balkans. It will concentrate first on Bosnia as territorial substrate for socio-political, cultural and ethnic formation of Bosniak identity and the role of Islam in its evolution. Further on, it will survey the socio-political structure in medieval and Ottoman Bosnia taking in consideration its religious heterodoxy, distinct institutionalization of its polity and social, ethnic and religious polarization in the wake of the Ottoman decline. This chapter will particularly focus on the phenomenon of “Bosnian patriotism”, a particular sense of citizenship developed among South Slav Muslims in contrast to their Christian neighbors that were spiritually turned to Serbia and Croatia. It will seek to analyze development of Bosniak identity through the turbulent course of national identification in the Balkans till the last Yugoslav drama.

2.1 THE BOSNIAK IDENTITY

Essentially, the starting point in the analysis of the formation of nations is the origin of a nation, that is, ethno-genesis and territory which it populates. Accordingly, the analysis of the national identification of the South Slav Muslims¹ in the Balkans should set out from the determination of their historic territory and conditions in which

¹ The terms South Slav Muslims (further Muslims) designate members of a nation of Slavic origin and language adherent to Islam from the territory of the former SFRY. The prefix “South Slav” is used in order to more precisely define a nation of Islamic affiliation, Slavic linguistic and cultural heritage, which does not exclude the possibility of their different ethnic origin, which is in the Balkan region rather complex issue since its territory was populated by other tribes in the wake of Slav migrations to Balkans.

their ethnic identity has been formed and their national-political development has been shaped.

Initial factor in the ethno-genesis of Slav Muslims/Bosniaks certainly are Slav ethnicity and language which is brought to the Balkan region by Slavic tribe. In the moment of their settlement in the Balkan region, Slavs found numerous native populations belonging to different tribes. It is worth of mentioning that almost all analyses point out the exceptional ethnic heterogeneity since Slavs did not exterminate all of the native populations in the Balkans, but rather they assimilated and adopted Slav way of living. Taking in consideration such diverse ethnic symbioses in the Balkans, it is quite difficult to draw reliable conclusions on the ethnic origin in the Balkans. Slav migration to the Balkans in the sixth and seventh centuries introduced and established specific linguistic identity which gradually replaced all other identities. Even though signs of ethnic heterogeneous history of the Balkans are evident today, there is no doubt that the Slav migration to the Balkan region is natural starting point for the history of Balkans, and in particular, of Bosnia, which is often regarded as microcosm of the Balkans.

Among tribes populating or invading the Balkan region before the settlement of Slavs were Skordisci, Daesitiates tribe, the Goths, Huns, Alans from Iran, Avars, etc. Even though the question of the ethnic origin in the Balkans is a rather complex question, according to many eminent historians, it is quite incontestable that Muslims living in the territory of the former SFRY are descendants of Slav or Slavinized population (Malcolm, 1995:4-11). This likewise applies to Muslims from Sandžak, since except local and natural differences, they do not differ in any more significant sense from the other Muslims from the ex SFRY territory with whom for centuries they have been not only ethnically, spiritually and culturally, but administratively, firmly and in continuity connected.

In the context of the remark of Ivo Banac, that the history of the Balkans is characterized not only by migrations of its peoples, but also of their states, Mustafa Imamović (1998) argues that through history Bosnia have not seen disintegration or moving of its territory, which was the case with Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and Slovenia whose geopolitical focus was moving through history. On the contrary, he argues, Bosnia has preserved its continuity (1998:22-25). Bosnia certainly is a country whose political and cultural historic course had been extremely different from any other country in Europe.

Byzantium assumed a pivotal role in the proselytizing of the Balkans by sending missionaries. Missionary teachings in the same spirit were spread to Bosnia where religious service was performed in the vernacular language and according to the Slav liturgy books. Feudalization of Byzantium influenced the feudalization of Slavs. With the decline of the Byzantine power, Slav unions, tribes and *župas* (districts) had becoming more independent and gradually had been developing into political entity under diverse domestic and vernacular rulers and dynasties. The fact that in the twelfth century Bosnia became a direct neighbor to the strong Hungarian-Croatian state which became the most resistant opponent to the independence of Bosnia had played a significant role (Imamović, 1998:27-30). The fact of importance is that when the rule of ban Kulin (1180-1204) began, Bosnia was generally described in diplomatic documents as a strong state: dukedom (ducatus), region (terra, districtus), *banovina*² (banatus, banate) and kingdom (regnum) (Imamović, 1998:31). Following the collapse of Byzantium and with new strong states entering the political scene, the position and situation of the all Balkan states were changed. This period in Bosnia saw the increase of power and independence of the Bosnian landowners and consolidation of the schismatic Church of Bosnia. With the support of Bosnian rulers, the Church of Bosnia and landowners fostered the independence of the Bosnian state which will secure them a crucial role in the ethno-genesis and evolution of the Bosnian state (Imamović, 1998:38-45).

² *Banovina* – regional unit ruled by ban

The statehood of Bosnia was fading away in the anticipation of the Ottoman conquest, but as Imamović argues, it kept preserving its geopolitical and cultural-political importance (1998:80). Following the conquest of Bosnia in 1463, Ottomans established the first military district – Sandžak (*sanjak* – English transliteration of the Turkish word *sancak*) of Bosnia which was in 1580 reorganized into the Province of Bosnia or *Eyalet of Bosnia*³ (later Pashaluk, Pashadom) and consisted of seven administrative-military districts – sanjaks (Imamović, 1998:107-111; Malcolm, 1995:49). Mustafa Imamović points that the territorial substrate for political and overall ethnic formation of Bosniak identity has been Bosnian Eyalet or Pashadom as a direct territorial and political extension of the Bosnian Kingdom. He further emphasizes that the region of present-day Sandžak had been politically, economically and culturally a constituent part of Bosnia since the rule of the king Tvrtko I Kotromanić until the 1878 occupation of Austro-Hungary. Consequently, the name *Bosnian Muslim* or *Bosniak* marks a member of the South Slavic people ethnically formed on the historic territory of Bosnia (1998:11).

The Sandžak of Novi Pazar or now just Sandžak is a distinct case as a geopolitical whole populated by Bosniaks (Imamović, 1998:11). During the Ottoman rule Bosnia as a border area (*serhat*) had particularly significant status and as such played first offensive and later defensive role in the Ottoman Empire. As addition to that, its variegated ethnic and religious composition, greater autonomy, lower taxes and high percent of Islamization differentiated Bosnia from other Ottoman provinces. The active participation of Muslim subjects in the eight-year-long Ottoman military service particularly for the causes of defense of Bosnia in the second part of the Ottoman rule strengthens their sense of belonging and of their special status in the Empire (Imamović, 1998:122-128). In the Ottoman Bosnia South Slav Muslims gradually developed a distinct community influenced by their sense of devotion to the Ottoman Empire,

³ Eyalet – territorial administrative unit or constituent province of the Ottoman Empire, later it was superseded to vilayet

adherence to socially and culturally diverse religion and adoption of a unique political ideology.

The Millet system is by many authors considered to be a significant factor in the establishing the basis for the later national revivals of the nineteenth century in the conquered Ottoman provinces. In contrast to the Western ideal of *cuius regio, eius religio*, the concept of the millet system encompassed the differentiation of communities along their religious affiliations rather than their ethnicity as well as their right to separate legal, spiritual and cultural organization. Basically, non-Muslims were organized in self-governing communities with their leaders having the function of their representatives in the Ottoman state, while Muslims were subjugated to the Shari'a Law. This type of social, economic and religious segregation gave way to the coalescence of national and religious elements which would later outgrow into national and political revivals. As the members of the empire's ruling religion, Muslims were often objects of the positive discrimination by the Ottoman authorities which formed a distinct complex relationship of the Bosniaks with the Ottoman Empire, which would influence their further national shaping (Friedman, 2000:166-167).

2.1.1 Religion as the Linchpin of the Bosniak Identity

Almost all *ethnies* in the Balkans could be determined on the basis of religion which has been melded into an important part of national identification and national homogenization. For identification of bases and frames of religious identity in the Balkans three characteristic periods are of great significance: the polytheism period, the schism in Christianity (1054) and encounter with Islam.

The medieval Bosniaks were in the academic literature frequently related to Bogumils, alleged followers of teachings of a certain heretic Bulgarian priest, Bogumil from the tenth century. However, the medieval Bosniaks have never identified themselves as Bogomils, but *krstjani*, *dobri Bošnjani* or *dobri ljudi* (Christians, good

Bosniaks, good people, *Christianus, boni homines*). This is related to the most distinct and puzzling trait of the Bosnian medieval history – The Church of Bosnia (*Crkva Bosanska; Ecclesia Bosnensis*). It appears that The Church of Bosnia seceded from Catholic Church in the thirteenth century and that with no competition continued to act in Bosnia until the arrival of Franciscans in the fourteenth century. Since then The Church of Bosnia for about a century competed with Roman Catholic Church until its priests were expelled or converted by force to Catholicism shortly before the Ottoman invasion (Malcolm, 1995:19-20).

Noel Malcolm (1995) explains that the basic problem concerning the historical data on the Church of Bosnia is that majority of those data do not come from Bosnia itself but rather from the papal correspondence, or papal documents of denunciation of the Bosnian “heresy” probably written by individuals who have never even been in Bosnia, as well as from the documents written by Franciscans in Italy (1995:41). The Church of Bosnia represents a current of the same movement which included Bogumilism in the South Eastern Balkans, dualistic heretic teachings in Northern Italy and Southern France. However, it arose from different movements who had fostered resistance towards war, rejected submissiveness to every feudal, secular and spiritual hierarchy. As Imamović describes it, „this anti-feudal Bogumil or Patarin movement in Bosnia gained a form of official church institution by renouncing its social program and obtaining dogmatic teachings” (1998:86).

The question that should stir up further analyses on Bosniak identity is whether the Bosnian version of Christianity had shaped the political concept of the medieval Bosniak identity and Bosnian state or Bosnia had just used the Bogomils theory as means for achieving of state independence and their own specific spirituality. Imamović justifiably pointed that dualistic teachings were present in all parts of the Balkan region through the whole Middle Age and such “Balkan-Slav Protestantism” had its own deep social-ethical roots but only in Bosnia had played political role. (Imamović, 1998:35) Period from the beginning of the thirteenth century in Bosnia was marked with the

consolidation of the Church of Bosnia and increase of power of the Bosnian landowners. Among the supporters of the teachings of the Church of Bosnia were not only common people, but landowners and clergy. Condition for the survival of the Church and landowners was an independent Bosnian state. They had a crucial role in ethnic development and shaping of Bosnia. Landowners and Church were bearers of territorial name of Bosnia and Bosnians, Bosniaks, Bosnans and custodian of their rights and their territorial particularity and whole (Imamović, 1998:41-45).

During the rule of Ban Stjepan II Kotromanić (1322-1353) territorial contours of modern Bosnia were permanently shaped with conquering the land of Hum (later Herzegovina). This permanently transformed Bosnian ethnic and political identity since it introduced a large Orthodox population which became the third religious component of Bosnia. With territorial expansion Bosnia had lost its former religious whole and in that circumstances the Church of Bosnia was subdued to a larger pressure from both West and East (Imamović, 1998:50-58). The Church of Bosnia was already weakened by active work of Franciscans and political circumstances of that time. Under the pressure and accusation of Pope and facing the upcoming Ottoman threat, King Tomaš officially began the persecutions of Bosnian *krstjani* in 1449-1450. In that socio-political context, Catholic and Orthodox Churches took up severe competition for taking former members of the Church of Bosnia under its wing. Forced conversions of two thousand of *krstjani* and escape of about forty of the most active members of the Church of Bosnia to Herzegovina had led to the final breakdown of the Church of Bosnia even before the arrival of the Ottomans (Malcolm, 1995:55).

2.1.1.1 Islam and the Bosniak Identity

The most distinct feature of modern Bosnian history is certainly the process of Islamization of the great part of its population. Islamization intensified in the sixteenth century continued during the seventeenth century till few decades before the occupation of Austro-Hungary when it did not have such dramatic course as during the first 150

years of the Ottoman rule. Thus, the process of Islamization was long and gradual. The aim of the Ottoman authorities was not to forcibly convert its subjects to Islam but to pursue a policy by which its subjects would be subjugated to the Ottoman power and laws. Non-Muslims were allowed religious freedom under the condition of paying taxes (*haraç*).

The Ottoman Empire, in contrast to the Western feudalism, relied on the patrimonial principle which assumed that all power flows directly from the sultan. In other words, it is a top-down structure where the sultan has the right to claim the ultimate authority over his subjects. In order to effectuate patrimonial policy, the Ottoman policy was directed to severe control of all of its subjects. Ottoman society was strictly divided in two different classes: *askeri* and *reaya*, where the first class represent the upper class with religious and executive power and the second the lower class of Muslim and non-Muslim subjects who paid taxes and had no part in government (Mardin, 1969:259). Muslims were also obligated to pay religious tax (*zekat*). Christians were generally released of the military service duty (Malcolm, 1995:58-59). On the other hand, conversion to Islam did not necessarily mean that one will be released of the status of *reaya* nor that will improve one's social or economic status. Imamović notes that until the second half of the eighteenth century the majority of peasants in Bosnia consisted of Muslim *reaya* (1998:146).

Having in mind that the Ottoman Empire had a highly stratified and organized military force and institutions, the process of Islamization was tightly connected with the system of so called “devşirme”, that is, “collecting”- taking children of the conquered peoples as tribute. Children from all parts of Europe were sent to Istanbul where they were converted to Islam and educated for regular Ottoman infantry regiment – janissaries (*yeniçeri*), sultan's personal services or for the services in different state institutions (Malcolm, 1995:45-46). Even though some authors argue that it cannot be considered as the main factor of the expansion of Islam in Bosnia, it is undoubtedly one of great influence. Imamović claims that since *devşirme* was not performed in regular

intervals or in fixed percent, but according to the need and since it was at its peak in the sixteenth century while in the seventeenth century it was coming to an end, it cannot be the main factor for the Islamization. Moreover in the beginning of the seventeenth century the janissaries unit was being complemented with Muslims, generally janissaries' sons (1998:163-166). Finally, among other relevant factors in the mass-Islamization in Bosnia certainly is privileged legal status of Muslims, exceptional development of cities populated by Muslims (Malcolm, 1995:61) and slaves who were liberated if converted to Islam (Fischer, 1978:159).

Being one of the earliest forms of the collective distinction, religion has had a paramount importance in the formation of the national identities of South Slavs. Specific coalescence of religious and national identity in the Balkan Peninsula has been shaped through complex courses of history. The heterogeneous and intermediate nature of Bosnia-Herzegovina, as a microcosm of the Balkans, has further paved the way for blending the religion and national identity. Mitja Velikonja (2003) argues that such "nationalization of religions" in the Balkans, and especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was influenced by the fact that religion has always been a symbol of collective representation, driving force in cultural development, particularly in educative and moral aspects, and origin of the historical, cultural and political mythology (2003:11-14).

Elaborating on this, Velikonja emphasizes the particular nature and structure of Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam which differently contributed to the development of national identity of Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks. In that context, having in mind that Orthodox Church is autocephalous (voluntary subordinated to political power) and based on nation-state principle, the sense of cultural, political and national unity was fostered by the Orthodox clergy, vernacular liturgy and congruity between the church, state and people. As such, "because of its strong assimilative ability and group orientation, the Serbian Orthodox Church not only preserved, but also strengthened and expanded the Serbian language, culture, customs, political traditions, and, of course, the Orthodox faith under Ottoman rule" (2003:16-17). In other words, Serbian Orthodox Church took

up the role of custodian of national identity. On the other hand, taking in consideration the universalistic and transnational character of Catholicism and Islam, the path of development of the national conscience of Catholics and Muslims was looser and intertwined with other cultural and substantial elements embedded in Catholicism and Islam (2003:17-19).

Even though there is no doubt that religion was an important source of agency of nation-formation, there is a persuasive point elaborated by Vjekoslav Perica (2002) in his work on religion and nationalism in Yugoslav states that the crucial difference among the Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks is not religion but the myth of national origin which is consecrated by religious institutions. In his words, the nation-state cannot exist without an adequate system of public patriotic worship, symbol, myth and ritual, that is, without history and myth of the origin of the community (2002:5). Basically, national-religious mythologies serve to connect past, present and future and have particularly practical functions and goals in society. The integrative, cognitive and communicative functions of mythology are essential in constructing the foundations for identification of members of community with their glorious past and their differentiation from others. Moreover, as a product of collective conscience, myths based in past serve to foretell the future and as such give new ideological framework of national identity (Velikonja, 2002:6-7). Thus, a sense of community was perpetuated with history, religion and tradition creating a strong linkage of past, present and future of the members of that community. For the self-determination of that community what is demanded, as Neuberger defines it, is a 'historical national self', whether real or mythical (1995:305).

However, in contrast to Orthodox and Catholic Church, Muslim community lacked organizational and institutional religious structure. Moreover, as Vjekoslav Perica points out, they did not foster the preservation of myths around medieval native rulers, saints, shrines, territory and ethnicity as Serbian and Catholic clergy did. With the appropriation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Catholic and Orthodox narrative, he argues,

“Muslims did not have myths of their own – they were aliens in their native land” (2003:74).

At this point it would be worth of mentioning that in the aftermaths of the wars of the 1990s the derogative connotation of the Balkans as troublesome and conflictual area with uncivilized population was the general position of most of the Western attitudes and stands revoking the old Bismarck’s statement that “when the Great War comes it will come out of ‘some damn fool thing in the Balkans’” (Buchanan, 2009:61-65). In general, violence was related to the Balkans not only as a social and political condition, but as something that is inherent in the nature of the people living in the Balkans. During the war in Bosnia the prevailed tendency in the western media was to describe the causes of the war as centuries-old ethnic and religious hatred and the historically conflictual area of the Balkans. However, as it was mentioned before, Bosnia was from various reasons a centuries-old stage for both clashes and encounters of different tribes, communities, *ethnies*, religions and nations, point of ethnic and religious divergence and co-existence.

2.1.2 The Socio-Political Structure and Evolution of the Bosniak Identity

In analyzing the significance of religion in the medieval Bosnia, Velikonja concludes that religion was not the dominating factor in political course of Bosnia but it was introduced by external forces and their territorial, political and military pretensions. “Despite the political and military turmoil, no widespread or lasting religious intolerance, conflict, or religious wars originated in its territory. The situation was, therefore, very different from that prevailing in other parts of Europe, where conflict and massacres were often motivated by religious differences” (2003:54). Religious heterodoxy and general tolerance as important factors in Bosnian history noted by Velikonja were by and large omitted in historic and political science literature and even replaced with enrooted stands about long-term ethnic and religious hatred in the Balkans. Exactly this factor of Bosnian religious history is closely linked to the

foundations of a Bosnian identity different from its neighbors since the specific sense of belonging was becoming more evident among the majority of very heterogeneous population in the medieval Bosnia. In that context, Velikonja points out that “the evolution of this singular Bosnian identity was encouraged by the region’s specific judiciary system, currency, alphabet and customs” (2003:54).

It appears that the Balkan Christians of that time underwent a certain sociological stagnation or even restoration of tribal culture having in mind the occurrence of cited organizational and institutional forms of Christian communities. On the other hand, the growth of the cities and expansion of trade in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries meant economic, cultural and social progress of Muslims. The expansion of Islam in Bosnia was closely connected with the urban development which encompassed many mosques, Muslim schools, taverns, market places, libraries, Turkish baths, bridges, water supply systems, etc. Thus, the high level of asymmetrical urban and rural development (Imamović, 1998:175-176; Malcolm, 1995:61) contributed to the polarization of Muslim and Christian community. Velikonja convincingly notes that “national renaissance and rebellion was instigated in the countryside, where the preservations of ancient myths, traditions, and ethnic and religious awareness were under care of country priests”. (2003:57).

With regard to its special border character, Bosnia underwent a distinct political and social institutionalization which further established effective source of local power. The military – administrative units called *kapudanlık* were established in the sixteenth century as a form of a smaller border fortification intended to guard borders. Their function was expanded in the eighteenth century when a larger part of the Bosnian territory was transformed into *kapudanlık*. The institution of *kapudanlık*, for its functional and effective organization, as well as for the role played by the local captain of the province, outgrow into a specific and important social – political structure which distinguished it from the other Ottoman provinces (Imamović, 1998:134-135; Vucinich, 1955:292; Malcolm, 1995:77-78). In the second half of the eighteenth century a new

form of the local authority called *ayan* (meaning *prominent person*) was introduced by the Ottoman authorities. After the abolishment of *kapudanlık*, the function of *ayans* was generally taken over by captains (Imamović, 1998:136-137; Malcolm, 1995:78:79).

Social, ethnic and religious polarization increased with the decline of the Ottoman Empire and wars that was burdening both the Empire and its subjects. In the final years of the seventeenth and in the eighteenth centuries wars between the Ottoman Empire and European powers led to a stronger dichotomization of struggle between Christian and Muslim worlds. This dichotomization was germane to the subsequent persecutions and forcible Christianizing of Muslim population from lost territories (Imamović, 1998:290). According to Velikonja, Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina were in majority in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. With loss of the Ottoman territories in Hungary, Croatia, Dalmatia, Slavonia and Lika in the end of the seventeenth century, as Velikonja notes, those regions saw the first examples of cleansing of Slav and non-Slav Muslim population. He adds that at the beginning of the nineteenth century Muslims comprised half of the Bosnian population, while that figure dropped to two-fifths by the middle of the century (2003:67).

On the international scale, the Ottoman Empire sought to preserve its previous power and control over its provinces but the new geopolitical division of interests in the Balkans introduced strong alliances of European powers against the Ottoman Empire. On the interior scale, it exerted pressure on already impoverished population in order to maintain control, needs and authority in all parts of the Empire. Economic, social and religious pressure on both Muslims and Christians led to political unrest and peasant revolts. The religious and ethnic dichotomization was further deepened as Slav Muslims were still perceived as the adherents to the Empire's ruling religion and in the context of the actualized religious dichotomization of Christianity versus Islam, the myth of the "traitors" of Christian faith was revived. Being the least developed but the most autonomous province in the Empire, relations between communities in Bosnia were

severely disrupted and violent (Velikonja, 2003:83-88; Malcolm, 1995:73-79, Imamović, 1998:305-312).

Velikonja notes that in the first half of the nineteenth century Slav Muslims began to develop ethnic distinction in the wake of increasing ethnic differentiation, animosity and harsh incidents among members of 'competing' religions. Furthermore, in his words, "nationalist agitation and attempts to entice the Muslim Slavs by both neighboring nations – Serbs and Croats – began in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Ottoman authorities also began distinguishing among the population according to ethnic affiliation. *Srb milleti* came to signify the Serbian people, *Boşnak kavmi*, *Boşnak taifesi* were applied to the Bosnian people, and so on." (2003:87). In the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries, political, social and economic circumstances and a certain form of Bosnian local autonomy have transformed domestic political and social structure. In that context, political importance of local leaders, *ayans*/captains and movements in the Bosniak social structure eventually resulted in unrest and peasant rebellions against brutal corruption and introduction of new taxes of central authorities (Imamović 1998:305-312).

Bosniaks resisted new reforms of the Ottoman administration which encompassed abolishment of janissaries unit, replacing the local administration of *ayans* of that time with new local administration and ceding some parts of Bosnian territory to Serbia. Bosnian janissaries and *ayans*/captains had developed a considerable political power and reputation and they had established a certain form of confederation in the Bosnian Pashadom. In 1831 the Bosnian aristocracy led by Captain Husein Gradašćević ("*Dragon of Bosnia*") demanded a special autonomous status for Bosnia-Herzegovina and that Bosnians should be appointed for the Grand Vizier in Bosnia, but they would accept the sultan's rule. Since their demands were rejected, Captain Husein and his supporters were found in direct confrontation to the Ottoman military. After temporary military successes, Gradašćević was defeated (Imamović, 1998:333-336; Malcolm, 1995:101-104, Velikonja, 2003:83-84). In 1850s the Ottoman administration appointed

energetic Omer-pasha Latas, originally Serb from the Vojna Krajina who converted to Islam to administrate Bosnia-Herzegovina and to implement the *Tanzimat* (reorganization of the Ottoman Empire) measures. Simultaneously, he fostered a cruel policy of expulsion and slaughter in order to eradicate increased political power of the Bosnian Muslims (Imamović, 1998:335-336; Malcolm, 1995:104-105; Velikonja, 2003:85-86).

2.1.2.1 Bosnian Patriotism

Disputes between Slav Muslims and the Ottomans and subsequent revolts and conflicts just gave impetus to further identity building of the Slav Muslim community. As adherents of the ruling religion, additionally segregated by the other Slav population by the *Millet* system and therefore in short contrast to the Christian Slavs, being at the religious, political and cultural crossroads, South Slav Muslims were developing their religious-cultural and political conscience. The inception of such conscience was germane to the Bosnian socio-economic and political structure gradually developed from the sixteenth century and to the sense of belonging to that distinct territory fostered among the Muslim community. Francine Friedman (2000) points out that the resistance of Bosnian Muslims “took an anti-Ottoman form, which meant that the Bosnian Muslims found themselves at times siding with the local non-Muslim inhabitants against the Porte. Thus, a “local patriotism”, not linked to religion but rather to geography, to their local base of power, and to the language they shared with other Bosnian inhabitants, grew in some parts of the Bosnian Muslim community” (2000:167).

At this point it is important to note that while the nationalization of Serbian and Croatian community of Bosnia was profoundly influenced by neighboring states of Serbia and Croatia, the Muslim community of Bosnia was developing, in Velikonja’s terms, a specific sense of “citizenship in Bosnia” (2003:88). As Velikonja argues, “Bosnia-Herzegovina had always maintained a certain level of autonomy and religious and cultural continuity with the bygone era under Ottoman rule. A sense of Bosnian

citizenship had also been preserved, although it differed in economic, political, religious and cultural terms” (2003:88).

The “Eastern Crisis” (1875-1878) placed Bosnia-Herzegovina in the center of the world politics. The destiny of Bosnia-Herzegovina was unfolded through the course of struggles for the division of the European powers’ geopolitical interests. Crucial actors in that course were Austro-Hungary and Russia. Backed with the Russian support, Serbia and Montenegro agreed on mutual division and annexing of Bosnia-Herzegovina and declared war on the Ottoman Empire in 1876 that ended with their defeat (Imamović 1998:345-350). The congress of the Great Powers held in Berlin in 1878 gave right Austro-Hungary to formally administrate Bosnia-Herzegovina. The treaty at the Berlin Congress secured the status of independent states and territorial expansion to Serbia and Montenegro (Velikonja, 2003:118).

It was also a turning point in the historic course of the Bosniak community having in mind that Montenegrin authority was broadened to areas where they had lived which irrevocably transformed them into a confessional minority without previous privileges and protection they as the subjects of the Ottoman Empire. According to the Montenegrin historian, Šerbo Rastoder (2010), the mass and almost complete expulsion of Muslims from Serbia unfolded till 1878 while particularly the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina accelerated the process of emigrations of Muslims from Bosnia. Rastoder proceeds further on elaborating these processes as cause of radical rift in the conscience between psychological vicinity with the Ottomans and ethnic, linguistic, even cultural relationship with the domicile Christian population (2010:11-13).

The reminiscent territorial and demographic transformations of Montenegro during last 130 years, which was at first a small entity with four *nahijas*, in literature referred as “Old Montenegro” (*Stara Crna Gora*), later as Montenegro and Hills (*Crna Gora i Brda*), Principality of Montenegro and later Kingdom of Montenegro had

undoubtedly a great impact on the development of Bosniak ethnos in that region and simultaneously had transformed the character of its own polity. This new and perplexed multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition of Montenegro brought to fore a long-term anti-Ottoman sentiment of Christians in Montenegro and consequently caused a state of latent repulsion between people living side-by-side.

Mitja Velikonja notices that “the antipathy between Muslims and Orthodox and between Muslim Slavs and Serbs was a product of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Serbian nationalism and as such was projected five or six centuries backward. The ruthless persecution of Muslims became a holy quest that also was advocated by militant Orthodox clergymen.” In the wave of nationalist liberation movements of South Slav Christians and its accompanying romanticist portraying of national-religious myths of death, heroism, betrayal and rebirth, Velikonja argues, Montenegrin political and spiritual ruler, the bishop-prince Petar Petrović II Njegoš (1813-1851) based his epical poem and later symbol of Montenegrin literary heritage “The Mountain Wreath” (*Gorski vijenac*) on the subject of “the massacre of Muslim converts in Montenegro on Christmas Day in 1709” which “became an ideological upgrade of the traditional myth and license for anti-Muslim pogroms” (2003:94-95).

Slobodan Drakulic (2009) argues that this event was “more likely a lengthy Muslim exodus from the areas beyond Ottoman control to safer ground. This purge is remembered as *istraga poturica*, the total eradication, leaving no trace (*trag*) of those who became ‘Turks’ by converting to Islam” (2009:242). With decline of the Ottoman Empire and its retreat from the Balkans severe crimes against Muslims increased which culminated in the period of the Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913. Velikonja reminds that once predominantly Muslim towns in Serbia and Montenegro were cleansed physically and spiritually by mass expulsions or force conversions of Muslims, destroying their property and spiritual heritage and objects. The cleansing was aggravated in the period of conquest of new territories after the 1878 Congress of Berlin and the Balkan Wars

(2003:97-98). These developments accelerated the process of mass emigration of Muslims from those regions.

Mustafa Memić (2003) records that first waves of mass emigration of Muslims from Montenegro started in 1687 from southern parts of present Montenegro, and later from the central parts of Old Montenegro. The second larger wave of emigration took place after the Berlin Congress and went on following the end of the Balkan wars. Mass emigrations continued in the period between two world wars but that time was formalized by the convention between the Yugoslav and Turkish governments in 1938. This process continued after the World War II in 1945-46, in 1970s and in 1990s. According to Memić, emigration (*muhadžirluk*) became deeply entrenched in the character of Bosniak national being (2003:247-248).

As Šistek and Dimitrovova emphasize, the number of Bosniaks was greatly reduced in „many of the traditional areas of their settlement (Podgorica)“ and some areas were left without any or with very few members of Bosniak population and therefore „re-populated by people of the Orthodox faith“ as in the case of Nikšić and Kolašin (Šistek and Dimitrovova, in Bieber, 2003:161). Drakulic argues that the patterns of prejudices of Christian Slavs towards Muslims in the Balkans contributed to the massive displacement of Muslim Slavs from their traditional settlement areas (2009:235-236). Furthermore he argues that the anti-Ottoman obsession of Christians during the Ottoman rule and particularly during the years of its decline as well as their perceptions of Muslim Slavs as ‘traitors’ made a background for the ostracizing of Muslim Slavs from the Balkans. In his words, “by the mid-nineteenth century a general sense prevailed that Muslims did not belong to the nascent Balkan nation-states but to Turkey and to Asia. (This sense has not dissipated to the present day, lingering on in the European rejection of Turks as ‘Asiatics’, and in characterizations of Balkan peoples as quasi-Orientals.)” (Drakulic, 2009:243).

The Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina was bitterly received among both Orthodox and Muslim population in Bosnia which led to their uniting in joint resistance efforts against the occupation. However, the Austro-Hungarian military soon occupied the Bosnian territory. Similar situation occurred in the territories that fell under Montenegrin rule where resentful Muslim population rejected to recognize decisions of the Treaty of Berlin (Imamović, 1988:350). In the 1879 negotiations on the joint administration of the territory of Bosnia Austro-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire agreed that Bosnia should be *de jure* province under Ottoman rule and *de facto* protectorate of Austria-Hungary. Velikonja emphasizes that Bosnia-Herzegovina as the first and only colony of the Austria-Hungary was basically a kind of *corpus separatum* (2003:118-121).

During the Austria-Hungarian rule the Ottoman administrative structure of Bosnia-Herzegovina was preserved. National and confessional policies of the new authorities were aimed at restraining the nationalistic irredentist aspirations influenced mostly by the nationalistic rhetoric and movements in Serbia and Croatia. In order to conciliate ethnic-religious animosity and to prevent nationalistic restiveness, Benjamin von Kallay who governed Bosnia since 1882 introduced a new national policy called “Bosnianism” with hope to encompass members of all three religious communities under one name. However, his project was doomed to disaster since the Catholic and Orthodox community in Bosnia was already deeply connected with their co-religious neighbors in Serbia and Croatia, and Muslims were the only community in Bosnia that felt like and referred to as Bosniaks (Imamović, 1998:373-376; Malcolm, 1995:123-124; Velikonja, 2003:133-134, Friedman, 2000:170).

During the first decades of the new administration Bosniaks were politically unorganized and without evident social-political oscillations. Bosniak efforts to get autonomy over religious issues and property in 1899 marked the first political activation of Muslim community in order to preserve their cultural and social identity in Bosnia. Imamović founds this movement particularly significant for the reason of the fact that

that period saw the first urban stratum of Bosniak intellectuals who would initiate cultural and social changes in the Bosniak community (Imamović, 1998:362). The increased political activity of Muslims and the evolution of Muslim party politics marked the strengthening of their ethnic differentiation from their Christian neighbors (Malcolm, 1995:123-124; Velikonja, 2003:138). That period saw establishment of Muslim political organization such as Muslim National Organization (*Muslimanska Narodna Organizacija* - MNO) in 1906, Croatian Muslim Progressive Party (*Muslimanska Napredna Stranka* - MNS) in 1910, later distanced itself from Croatian political program and was renamed into the Muslim Independent Party (*Muslimanska Samostalna Stranka* - MSS) which all, in various ways, pursued cultural, religious, educational and economic interests (Velikonja, 2003:135-136). Considerable Muslim political, social and economic mobility was simultaneously evident in the establishment of numerous socio-cultural organizations, financial institutions, clubs and literary journals such as the first Bosniak literary magazine "Behar" founded in 1900, its support cultural association "Gajret", sport association "El-Kamer", magazine "Musavat", Bosnian Club, considerable number of reading rooms, Islamic stock printing shop, newspaper "Ogledalo", the first Muslim collective farm (*Muslimanska zemljoradnička zadruga*), The First Muslim Credit Cooperative (*Prva muslimanska kreditna zadruga s.o.j.*), first central Bosnian-Muslim bank in 1911, etc. (Imamović, 1998:376-380, 386-417).

2.1.2.2. Bosniaks and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians

In the short-lived Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes founded in 1918 cruel crimes, persecutions and various attacks on Slav and non-Slav Muslims from Bosnia, Kosovo and Sandžak continued resulting in severe depopulation of Muslims (Imamović, 1998:489-492). In spite of indented political structure and divergent views among Bosniaks, need for the unification of Bosniak interests was rather discernible resulting in uniting the corpus of the local Bosniak political organizations and founding of Yugoslav Muslim Organization (*Jugoslovenska muslimanska organizacija* - JMO) which sought to

preserve the identity of Bosnia as an autonomous unit in the Yugoslav state (Friedman, 2000:171; Malcolm, 1995:133-134). In the Serb-dominated state, Bosniaks were subdued to harsh pressure of Serbian nationalists who openly came forth with ideas of “Srbianization” and “social de-Islamization”.

In contrast to Muslims in Bosnia who succeeded to maintain some sort of autonomy, Muslims living in Sandžak and in Montenegro were denied their right to identity and even physical existence (Velikonja, 2003:145; Friedman 2000:171-172). With the King Alexander’s declaration of dictatorship in 1929, the Yugoslav territory was partitioned into nine banates named after rivers which would symbolically erase historic or traditional elements linked to that territory. Bosnia-Herzegovina lost its territorial integrity guaranteed by the 1921 constitution by division into four banates. In that manner, Serbs came to form convincing majority in new banates at the expense of ethnic compactness of Croats and particularly Muslims who became minority in every banate (Imamović, 1998:505:507; Malcolm, 1995:137-138; Velikonja, 2003:145-147; Friedman, 2000:172). Subsequently, the autonomy of the Bosnian Islamic Community was abolished in 1930 creating a unique organization of Islamic religious community for the entire territory of Yugoslavia with the main seat in Belgrade named the Islamic Religious Community (*Islamska vjerska zajednica*). (Imamović, 1998:508) The 1939 subdivision of Bosnia under the veil of Croatian nationalistic policy-makers additionally aggravated the position of Muslims since much of the territory was partitioned between Croatia and Serbia (Velikonja, 2003:145-146).

Even though Muslim political leaders were divided by different political orientations and in some cases even pursued opportunistic politics, they recognized that their rights and the integrity of Bosnia were threatened by severe assimilationist politics. A wave of Bosniak protests and demands for Bosnian autonomy marked the need for unity of Bosniaks against Serbian and Croatian hegemonic concepts which resulted in the establishment of the Autonomy Movement (*Pokret za autonomiju*) by representatives of all Bosniak political, cultural and religious associations and

institutions (Imamović, 1998:519-521). Džafer Kulenović, as the successor of Mehmed Spaho, the leading Bosnian politician in Bosnia between the two world wars who also supported the idea of Bosnian autonomy, demanded creation of a special banate of Bosnia-Herzegovina which would include remained territories of Bosnia and the Sandžak of Novi Pazar (Malcolm, 1995:132-140). Sharp rejection of this idea by Serb and Croat politicians accelerated general political turmoil which was interrupted with the Second World War.

2.1.2.3. Muslims in the Second World War and the Socialist Yugoslavia

The Second World War has brought to light bewildering and even destructive nationalist imaginary which practices of marginalization and exclusion of Muslims transformed into practices of their forcible or manipulative 'inclusion'. In spite of relative inclination of Muslims toward Croatia than Serbia during the interwar period, creation of the fascist-lead Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska - NDH) in 1941 and its forcible annexation of BiH was perceived with suspicion in the Muslim community. Being placed in the middle of ambiguous continuum of the choice between Croatian and Serbian nationalist concepts and in the context of dominant narratives of the NDH leader, Ante Pavelić, about the grants of full civil rights, religious rights and the right to education for Muslim community, there were those Muslims who even joined fascist division (*Handžar* – the Dagger), or pursued pro-Croat orientation. However, rationality of prominent leaders and clergymen within the Muslim community rejecting the cruelty and destructive policies of the new regime effectively acted in all parts of Bosnia in order to protest and publicly condemn the violence committed in Orthodox Serbs, Jews, Roma, etc. (Malcolm, 1995:140-153).

During the war and in the post-war period the communists defined their principles of collectivization, common property, religion and state as separate entities. Steady migrations of Bosniaks, especially from Sandžak continued due to the fear of

war, the oppressions from Serbian nationalists (*Chetniks*⁴), but also due to the growing concerns over communism. For a certain number of Muslims the idea of collectivization, as well as the alienation from the religion was a sign of “silent oppression” of the new system. Yet, despite these negative trends, Tito’s Yugoslavia represented the first real motherland of the Bosniaks of Sandžak for several reasons. Firstly, the large number of Bosniaks joined the Partisan units and fought for the liberation from the fascists. By becoming a formal member of the Communist party one had the opportunity to gain respect and privileges in society. The previously marginalized group now had the opportunity to participate in the political, social, cultural and economic life of the new state. It was the first time that Bosniaks were actually included into the state politics.

During the first decades after the war, Muslims were still underrepresented in the Yugoslav administration by and large dominated by Serbs. Furthermore, the 1946 constitution declared the respect for religious freedoms and separation of church and state, however in practice Shari’a courts were abolished; by the 1950 law Muslim women were not allowed to wear veils; the same year the last Muslim religious school (*mekteb*) was closed and education of children in mosques was forbidden; in 1952 all *tekijas* were closed and all dervish orders abolished; Muslim cultural and educational associations were also abolished, and just one state-supported Islamic organization had permission to function; and the Muslim printing firm was closed and printing of Muslim books in Yugoslavia was forbidden by 1964 (Malcolm, 1995:157).

In 1960s the political ground was becoming more propitious for the Muslim national question. A number of Muslim communist elite was aware of the urgency of winning recognition for their national identity and for that reason with the leadership of Muhamed Filipović they demanded that the term “Muslim” with upper case (*Musliman* - in contrast to term *musliman* denoting religious affiliation) should denote the national

⁴ *Chetnik* (*Četnik*) – a member of Serbian nationalist guerrilla force that formed during World War II to resist the Axis invaders and Croatian collaborators but that primarily fought a civil war against the Yugoslav communist guerrillas, the Partisans. (Britannica Online Dictionary)

affiliation. Those demands invoked opposition in the Communist party ending with the excluding Filipović from the party. However, in 1968 the demand was accepted by the federal government which resulted in introducing the term “Muslim” as national designation in the 1971 census opening a new age for consolidation, oscillations and transformations of the national identity of South Slav Muslims (Malcolm, 1995:161; Friedman, 2000:173). Elements of the enhancement of Bosniak national consciousness apparent in the next censuses could be also linked to the new course of reforms, concerns with minority rights, designation of certain administrative regions as “autonomous”, the “recruitment of ‘national cadres’ from the minorities for the party and state administration” (Shoup, 1963:75). and consequential increase of their representation in the state apparatus (Friedman, 2000:174).

With Tito’s death vehement and instrumentalistic content of Serbian nationalist rhetoric curtailed the fact that even though based on the principle of “brotherhood and unity” Yugoslavia was dominated by Serbian intellectual and political elite and it was governed from Belgrade. This rhetoric embodied Serbian discontent which was based on the oppression of Serbs by Albanians in Kosovo, assimilation of Serbs in Croatia, or unceasing communist undermining of Serbian cultural and religious identity, self-sacrifice and efforts invested in the creation of SFRY.

Foregrounding the question of such national self-examination, religion’s social and political dimensions and religion as an important source of political legitimacy and agency once again comes to the fore. In the post-Tito Yugoslavia, the Serbian Orthodox Church in accordance to the Milošević’s agenda instrumentalized the 1980s Kosovo crisis by admonishing about the “Serbian historic sacrifice”, “disintegration of Serbdom” and reinforcing its role as the custodian of “Serbdom”. Economically depressed Yugoslavia was a fertile ground for the deployment of the mythical national past and its embodiment into Milosevic’s hegemonic political strategy. In a symbolic anticipation of the death of Yugoslavia and the re-birth of Serbian state and Serbian identity, Serbian Orthodox Church invoked and re-interpreted the religious-national rituals (Donia, *n.y.*).

In the wake of nationalist ferment, new nationalist parties bring to the light their programs of nationalist awaking, denouncement of communism and call for freedom and autonomy of religious communities. Prominent among them was the Party of Democratic Action (*Stranka demokratske akcije* - SDA) under the leadership of Alija Izetbegović founded in 1990 by the Bosniak political elite. However, contrary to the Serb nationalists in Bosnia or in Serbia, SDA still supported the idea of Yugoslavia with its sovereign nations, as civic, multinational and multireligious union and the integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Donia, *n.y*). In similar path, David Campbell (1998) argues that Alija Izetbegović, who was accused by Serbs to plead for a Muslim state, and the Bosnian government pursued the policy of multireligious and multinational state (1998:47-48).

Milošević's hegemonic agenda turned much of Yugoslavia into a battlefield. The dissolution of Yugoslavia hindered the possibility of preserving Bosnia-Herzegovina's multinational integrity. Under the pressure of long process of the nationalist bidding between Serbia and Croatia from the nineteenth century till 1990s, Bosnia-Herzegovina painstakingly fought to preserve its integrity for the sake of its three peoples. The price for division of those three nations fostered by the nationalist agenda of that time was high. The war in Bosnia was not a religious war, but religion was served as an excuse for the victimization of opponents in the war. The machinery which supported and by and large even produced means for victimization among Serbs, Croats and Muslim was mass media, persons of cultural and pop cultural mainstream, and many others social actors which manipulated historical memories and myths intertwined with religious symbolic. As Friedman and many other scholars observe, victimization of Muslims was at highest degree comparing to Serbs and Croats (2000:175-176). It is to suggest that in spite of the fact that Muslims were essentially secular, religion as well as the "betrayal syndrome" served the political nationalist agenda of that time.

With demise of the communist Yugoslavia and shattering of the principle of "brotherhood and unity", the new era of redefinitions of national identities came to the

fore. In the fateful year of 1991, which eventually sealed up the end of Tito's Yugoslavia, Montenegro – the smallest of its six federal units – was the only loyal federal unit which decided to stay in the common state with Serbia. Under its pro-Milosevic government, Montenegro militarily backed Serbia early in the civil war on the Dubrovnik frontline in Croatia (Hockenos and Winterhagen, 2007:42). The Montenegrin opposition to the war and nationalist regime that included Montenegrins, Albanians, Bosniaks and Croats gathered around social democrats or smaller national parties were frequently “harassed, intimidated and subjected to violence” (Morrison, 2009:110). As Morrison has noted, “the Montenegrin opposition consisted not only of those who defined themselves first and foremost as Montenegrins, but also of Montenegrin Muslims (who were concentrated in the Sandžak region) and Albanians (primarily in the area of Tuzi near Podgorica and Ulcinj on the southern Montenegrin coast). While the self-styled Montenegrins may have felt persecuted, Montenegro's Muslim minority became the target of increasing physical aggression during the early 1990s” (2009:114-115).

CHAPTER 3

THE CURRENT DEBATE ON THE MUSLIM/BOSNIAK NATIONHOOD

The issue of the national identification of the South Slav Muslims in the Balkans and particularly in Montenegro has to be addressed in particular political, social, cultural and historical concept. Taking in consideration that the national identity is exposed to various political, cultural and social constellations, through which a national identity is formed, changed and shaped, it should be analyzed as a complex multi-dimensional and non-static entity. Mustafa Imamović (1998) reminds that the paradox of the global history is that those nations who had given monumental works of material culture as an evidence and confirmation of their existence have gradually come to an end of their existence, while those nations who have shaped ideas and cultural-political aims survived and remained in the course of history. As he notes, a society or a nation without ideas have no history (1998:7).

With the Ottoman retreat from the Middle Europe and Balkans and with the entry of Austria-Hungary in Bosnia 1878, Bosniaks were confronted with a new historic experience and challenge. From that point on, the questions of national self-determination, their relationship with Islam and joining the European cultural and political environment became crucial for the formulation of the Bosniak identity. The ideological concept of the Bosniak renaissance was formulated with regard to the conscience of Slav origin and need for turning towards the West but with the preserved Islamic identity. Thus, the Slav origin and language, Bosniak patriotism and Islam became the prominent elements of Bosniak national self-determination. In this chapter it is aimed at unfolding the current debate on the true nature of Bosniak nationhood by analyzing trajectories of the evolution of Bosniak identity within the context of historic, cultural and sociopolitical internal and external factors. It is taken as a requirement to define the stand of the Sandžak's Bosniaks within the ongoing debate and to understand the challenges they may encounter within the newly independent Montenegro.

3.1 SEARCH FOR THE BOSNIAK IDENTITY

Elaborating on the Filandra's work on Bosniak politics in the twentieth century, Robert J. Donia (2000) asserts that the 1990s have been "the best of times and the worst of times for the Bosniaks". He explains this statement by emphasizing that "they endured immense suffering as a nation, but in that decade they also definitively reaffirmed their identity and asserted their political position in the Balkans" (2000:358).

The reaffirmation of the question of the Bosniak identity with the 1990s developments surfaced in the Sandžak region involving a complex interplay of intra- and inter-ethnic factors. Within unstable social and political context caused by the regional political transformations and border changes in 1990s with the collapse of Yugoslavia and independence of Montenegro in 2006 and Kosovo in 2008, the Sandžak region came to signify a new "potential flashpoint" in the Balkans ("To the Baths", 5.06.2008, Teodorović and Arnautović, 30.09.2010). The position of Sandžak's Muslims within this context and conditioned by further developments within the borders of Montenegro and Serbia could be demonstrated through two opposing trajectories markedly evident since the 1990s. The first trajectory is positive and integrative and the second is potentially negative and destabilizing. These two opposing trends concerning contemporary position of Sandžak's Bosniaks broadens an array of questions condensed in dichotomies such as: threat or opportunity, division or collaboration and integration or assimilation. However, each trajectory is complex and yet each also demands understanding and interpretation.

3.1.1. Trajectories of the Bosniak Identity within the Historical and Socio-Political Context

Formation of these trajectories could be analyzed within the wider historical and socio-political context of Bosniaks' relationships towards region/state they populate, towards their co-nationals in other region/states, towards members of other religious/national affiliations and towards their own national identity. Within this socio-political context the two above-mentioned trajectories could be traced. On one side, the positive trajectory epitomizes the trend of loyalty and patriotism of Bosniak community which has demonstrated that they are docile, loyal and keen on coexistence in secular and civic structures. The other trajectory, however, is traceable within the context of menace to their national or religious identity when they are keen on struggle and alienation.

In order to demonstrate these two paths of Bosniak identity, this work will look in the historical and ongoing process of intra- and inter-ethnic divisions and concords and will focus on socio-political developments in the Serbian and Montenegrin part of Sandžak.

In order to grasp the positive and integrative trajectory, the most reminiscent trait of the Bosniak identity in historical context would be the Bosnian patriotism mirrored in a particular sense of "belonging to" Bosnia. This relates to the old Bosnian political movements starting from demand of a special autonomous status for Bosnia-Herzegovina, led by Captain Husein Gradašćević in 1831 to the peasant revolts in the Ottoman Empire and during the Austria-Hungarian invasion. Along with the particular sense of "Bosnian citizenship" Muslims/Bosniaks managed to collaborate with Serbs and Croats in joint resistance efforts against the occupation.

This particular Bosnian patriotism could be set as a precedent to the contemporary context of Bosniak patriotism in Montenegro as an opposite path of ethno-

religious nationalism in Bosnia and Serbian part of Sandžak. Later on, despite the severe assimilationist politics in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (Later Kingdom of Yugoslavia) and Bosniaks' efforts to national and political organizing in order to preserve their identity and existence, Bosniak socio-political developments unfolded within the context of the same patriotism mirrored in the efforts to preservation of Bosnia as an autonomous unit in the Yugoslav state. Francine Friedman notes that "an aggressive Bosnian Muslim nationalist identification was not pursued, particularly since the Muslim elites determined that the best way to protect the Bosnian Muslim population was to support the central government, not to express strong nationalistic sentiments" (2000:172).

In the maelstrom of the belligerent domestic and international forces in Yugoslavia in the World War II, majority of Bosniaks joined partisan units and participated in the anti-fascist struggle together with Serbs, Montenegrins, Croats, Macedonians, Albanians and Slovenians. As it was mentioned before, a number of Bosniaks embraced the pro-Croatian orientation in the beginning of the war and even joined fascist units; a number of Muslims (Bosniaks and Albanians) organized independent regional militia units which fought both *chetniks* and partisans. However, a phenomenon that is often neglected in the academic literature and which is worth of noting is the role of the Muslim clergy and Bosniak intelligentsia in the bewildering circumstances during the World War II.

Both Malcolm and Velikonja remind that in 1941 Muslim clergy and Muslim/Bosniak intelligentsia condemned and stood up against annexation of Bosnia by the Croatian pro-fascist regime and against crimes committed on the religious and national basis (Velikonja, 2003:180-182). Malcolm emphasizes the active character of their opposition which he substantiates with the fact that the Muslim clergy and Muslim intellectuals collected data and published resolutions and protest notes regarding violent acts committed against Serbs, Jews and their other "fellow townsmen". He cites the

examples of such resolutions published in Sarajevo, Prijedor, Mostar, Banja Luka, Bijeljina and Tuzla (Malcolm, 1995:151).

Even though dominant narratives related to the position of Muslims in Tito's Yugoslavia as the golden age of their national evolution and affirmation could be described as just "one side of the coin", this period certainly brings to the fore the elements of the positive trajectory of Bosniak identity. In the post-war developments the position of Muslims in Yugoslavia was blurred with 'soft' assimilationist policies since it was generally expected for Muslims to eventually declare themselves as Serbs or as Croats. To set an example of that one should look in the formulations and results of the censuses in the post-war Yugoslavia. In the 1948 census Muslims had three options to declare as: Serbs of Islamic confession, Croats of Islamic confession and "nationally undecided". The last option was the choice of the majority.

The next 1953 census demonstrated similar course, although the "nationally undecided" was replaced with "Yugoslav, nationally undecided" (Malcolm 1995:158-159; Friedman, 2000:174). The Yugoslav option was largely accepted within the Muslim corpus having that it was perceived as the best solution for their status within the SFRY. As a new Non-Aligned Movement member, Yugoslavia had the interest to present itself as a tolerant multicultural and multi-ethnic state, and as a result of that, the status of Bosniaks has significantly improved. Accordingly, in 1968 the concept of the 'Muslim' nation was recognized within the Constitutional amendments (Friedman 2000:173). In the 1971 Census of Yugoslavia Muslims were defined as one of the Yugoslav nationalities and in that way they were equal with other nationalities of Yugoslavia. The loyalty of Bosniaks to the new state and its political system was discernible in the anticipation of the 1990s crisis in the Balkans where Bosniaks were the last to realize and accept the fall of their motherland.

In order to grasp the nature of trajectories of the Bosniak identity, two important factors should be born in mind. Primarily, the identity of Bosniaks in Bosnia, Serbia and

Montenegro is markedly perplexed primarily with the fact that they are autochthonous nation of those states and secondly, that their identity is primarily defined with the Muslim socio-cultural circle. The Bosniak national identity, consequently, could be interpreted in terms of cohesion of ethnic diversity and affiliation to Islam which created distinctive culture, tradition, form of social life and the sense of a communal spirit. This particular Islamic identity, as it was attempted at demonstrating earlier in the work, markedly contributed to the formation of the positive and negative trajectories of the Bosniak identity.

First of all, as it was analyzed before, historical and geopolitical factors have shaped a specific Balkan Islam that through the course of these transformations has acquired pluralistic, secularized and liberal dimensions. These specificities of Balkan Islam have further influenced development of different types of political and religious configurations within the Balkan Muslim communities. Consequently, such liberal and individualist relationship of Balkan Muslims with their religion contributed and shaped the predispositions for religious co-existence in the Balkans. In the interpretation of Franjo Štiblar (2007), European Muslims “see less of a clash of civilizations than non-Muslims, and are of the opinion that being a devout Muslim and ‘living in a modern society’ are compatible” (2007:130).

As in the case of other Balkan Muslim nationalisms, identity of Bosniaks has been hammered out by the challenges of the external factors.

The process of national “maturing” of Slav Muslims was profoundly perpetuated with Islam, but, as Velikonja has noticed, course of their political development lied on secular foundations (2003:135). However, in spite of their cultural, social and political awareness within the course of the nineteenth-century national renaissance, Muslim community, found between Serbian and Croatian nationalistic attempts to absorb it, was not sufficiently organized to develop a national identity. Francine Friedman argues that “nationalism has still not come to be identified with the religious component as it had in

the Serb/Orthodox or Croat/Catholic cases, but there was a visible although still rather embryonic communal identity that was mainly manifested when the Serbs or Croats were attempting to pressure the Bosnian Muslims into accepting Serb or Croat national identification” (2000:172). As it was noted earlier in the work, that period saw efforts of resistance of Muslim community in form of cultural and religious organizations, reading clubs, promotion and publishing of Muslim and Bosniak books, etc. Furthermore, apparent determinant of this path was increasing political and religious activity focused first of all on getting autonomy over religious rights and property which also led to the strengthening of the Muslim intellectual circles.

Regarding the significance of religious factor in national identification of Bosniaks, Bashkim Iseni (2009) argues that after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in order to preserve their collective identity in the overall attempts of their identity absorption by Serbs and Croats, Muslims tended to assert “their distinctiveness by rallying around the religious referent”. (2009:3) The secular dimension of the Muslim community of that period was evident in the context of their significant political organizing around the Yugoslav Muslim Organization (JMO) which, as Iseni further elaborates, “advocates the idea of ‘Yugoslavism’ with the aim to protect themselves under Serbian and Croatian assimilationist propaganda” (Iseni, 2009:4).

This trend was particularly accelerated in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes where the general Muslim insecurity was deepened by constant robberies, harassment, and mistreatment as well as by the disordered conditions within the state in general. According to Šerbo Rastoder (2010), within the context of these factors, in the period of consolidation of political circumstances in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the announcement of the first parliamentary election in the state, efforts of the political organizing of Muslims in the Sanžak region were recorded. As Rastoder further explains, these developments were becoming more apparent following the congress of Muslims in Skoplje (Macedonia) where the *Džemijet* Party was founded and following the efforts, according to the conclusions of the congress, to establish

associations and organizations which would work on political organizing of Muslims. Induced by those developments, Muslims in Novi Pazar in 1920 organized a public assembly and on that occasion established “The District Council of the Association for the Protection of Rights of Muslims in Yugoslavia” (*Okružni odbor za zaštitu prava muslimana u Jugoslaviji*). The announcement of the establishment of such organizations was received with sharp opposition of the regime and the press close to the government which soon accused similar organization and Muslim clergy for the “subversive work” (2010:379-387).

Examining the relationship between ideology and religion, Šaćir Filandra emphasizes the fact that religion as the most susceptible medium for manipulation has become a means for power struggle, instrument of politics and acts which are in no sense linked with the spirituality. He furthermore notes that during the last decades Bosniaks have exerted negative ideologization of religion in lower level than others despite the fact that Islam was always a component part of their identity. They were more focused on the categories of nation and then state of which they were deprived in the twentieth century (qtd. in Rastoder, M., 2006:35). Concerning Bosniak national and sociopolitical position, Filandra believes that compared to Serbs and Croats Bosniaks failed to develop national consciousness during the twentieth century and he ascribes that primarily to the lack of an urban middle class and national intelligentsia and secondly, to the pressures of Serb and Croat nationalists on Bosniaks to declare themselves as Serbs/Croats (qtd. in Donia, 2000:355-357).

After the political and juridical recognition of Muslims in the 1960s and in the context of more liberal political constellations, a period of renewed interest in ethnicity and political role of religion was becoming more apparent. Francine Friedman (1996) in her book “The Bosnian Muslims: Denial of a Nation” argues that particularly the recognition of Yugoslav Muslims as constituent nation of SFRY has stirred up Serb and Croat pressures “because neither group would accept the Bosnian Muslims as anything more than a religious entity – certainly not as a national identity” (1996:1). She

furthermore emphasizes that this period certainly was a turning point in the evolution of Bosniak identity and with regard to that she argues that:

“the protective coloring they (Muslims) had maintained throughout many years under many regimes of minority-religious status was stripped away and replaced with the legitimacy of political and juridical recognition as an equal nation within Yugoslavia. The result of this politically motivated decision was that the Bosnian Muslims began to act like an equal nation, because de facto and in practice the behavior of all the actors in Yugoslavia was predicated on the belief that the Bosnian Muslims constituted a nation. Regardless of whether it was Tito’s aim that this decision should be carried through quite as far as it was, the outcome was that the Bosnian Muslims became vulnerable to those who now considered them rivals for power and resources.”

(1996:235)

By the similar token, Noel Malcolm argues that the national recognition of Muslims in the late 1960s was of paramount importance for later developments within the Bosniak corpus and he also reminds of sharp opposition of a considerable number of communists to the Muslim recognition. Malcolm claims that driving force for the national recognition of Muslims was not an Islamist movement since its proponents were communists or other secularized Muslims whose aim was to develop even a more non-religious identity. Regarding the context of debates aroused around the publication of the “Islamic Declaration” by Alija Izetbegović in 1970 which was referred as to the “informal manifesto of renewed pan-Islamist current” (Bougarel, 1999:2) Malcolm and Lyon emphasize that Izetbegović was occupied with the global position of Islam and not with the problems of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Malcolm, 1995:161; Lyon, 2008:77).

Moreover, Malcolm distinguishes two opposite tendencies in Bosnia-Herzegovina within the 1970s developments: movement of secular “Muslim nationalism” and separate awakening of Islam (1995:161-163). Analyzing the role of Islam in Bosnia during the 1990s, Xavier Bougarel (1999) focuses on the ideological origins of the founding the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) in Bosnia led by Alija Izetbegović and reasons for which it took over the leadership of the Muslims in the 1990s. Bougarel brings to the light the elements of an Islamist awakening which started

in the 1970s and continued with the evolution of the SDA in Bosnia. However, he reminds that even though the SDA was mainly influenced by the „pan-Islamist current“, it does not „turn the SDA into an Islamist party“ since it „pronounced itself in favor of a parliamentary democracy along the Western pattern, and concentrated its activities among the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Sandjak“ (1999:2-3).

In 1990 this Islamist current failed to win the support of Muslim intelligentsia and therefore they mildly instrumentalized Islam in order to attract the support of the Muslim population. Bougarel furthermore argues that first internal conflict in the SDA around the definition of Muslim identity demonstrated „that this evocation of Islam was cultural rather than ideological in nature“(1999:3-4). Unable to bridge divisive stands on the national name, promoter of the „Bosniak“ denotation, a number of Muslim intellectuals led by Adil Zulfikarpašić broke with the Izetbegović's SDA which fostered the term „Muslim“ as national name. Zulfikarpašić established a new party, the Muslim Bosniak Organization (*Muslimanska Bošnjačka Organizacija* - MBO) which sought to lay a foundation to a more liberal and secular political organization (Malcolm, 1995:173). Adil Zulfikarpašić himself notes that in the beginnings of the SDA in 1990 press tended to circumscribe two currents in the SDA – one more liberal current and the other current led by religiously more oriented politicians.

He furthermore points out that he sought to turn the SDA into a more civic, liberal organization which would be open for everyone, which would not use religion in politics and especially which would not misuse religion in political purpose (qtd. in Đilas and Gaće, 1996:143-144). On the other hand, as Bougarel argues, the SDA gradually adopted the idea of the Bosniak national identity (1999:12) and was committed to united and multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina. Furthermore, in his interpretation, „the fact remains that within the Yugoslav space as in the Muslim community, the pan-Islamist current was not strong enough to impose its own conception of the political future of Bosnia-Herzegovina“ (1999:9).

3.2. CURRENT DEBATE ON BOSNIAKNESS

In the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) South Slav Muslims were identified by the same name as the name of their religious affiliation but with the upper-case *M*⁵. They are now Bosniaks, Muslims, Montenegrins/ Serbs/ Croats of Islamic confession in the newly restored countries after the collapse of SFRY in 1991. Are they one or more nations? Following the tragic course of events in the 1990s when parts of the majority of the constitutive nations of the former SFRY found themselves scattered in several independent states, this complex question was once again actualized. While members of other nations have by and large won their own independent states by force of arms or with the help of the international community, and Serbia and Montenegro their own Serbian entity in Bosnia-Herzegovina (*Republika Srpska*), South Slav Muslims remained in the former SFRY republics in some cases even erased from their constitutions.

Bosniaks of Sandžak in both Montenegro and Serbia during the whole twentieth century were loyal citizens of those states and have equally participated in the anti-fascist coalition in the Second World War (1941-1945). Montenegrin Bosniaks particularly have contributed to the preservation of the identity of Montenegrin state in the 1990s and restoration of Montenegrin independence in 2006. However, it could be still observed a certain doubtful attitude of some parts of population in Montenegro concerning the Muslims/Bosniaks' need for self-determination and spiritual, cultural and national unity with the parts of their nation in other former Yugoslav republics.

Rifat Rastoder⁶ (2011) argues that even a connection of Muslims from Montenegro and Bosniaks from Bosnia-Herzegovina is being questioned and, in some

⁵ In Serbo-croatian (Serbian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Bosnian) language the term marking a member of a religious affiliation is written with lower-case (ex. pravoslavan-Orthodox, musliman-Muslim, katolik-Catholic, etc.)

⁶ Rifat Rastoder is a vice-president of the Parliament of the Republic of Montenegro, Social Democrat, former journalist, author and minority rights advocate, Bosniak from Montenegro

political circles in Montenegro, the attempts to deny the autochthonism of Bosniaks of Montenegro are exceptionally evident. Moreover, in the same circles they are being stigmatized as fosterers of extreme nationalism, or more precise, pan-Bosnianism. The public declaration on the national name *Bosniak* adopted by Bosniak intellectual, political, cultural, social and civil society circles in Montenegro just stirred up the debate around the alleged meaning of the national self-determination of Muslims in Montenegro.

With the accusations of hostility toward Montenegro and other malign campaigns of some political and cultural circles, Bosniaks were essentially denied the right on self-determination and choice of their own name. Rastoder reminds that the civilizational and traditional right of every nation is to decide on its own name – to preserve, affirm and change it without concern that it would menace somebody else's basic rights and especially its own existence or autochthonism (Rastoder, 2011:7-8). Therefore, the solution to this imposed or real dilemma concerning the identity of South Slav Muslims of Sandžak as well as their own confusion or identity crisis should be primarily sought in the answer to the question: *Are the South Slav Muslims from the territory of the former SFRY a nation and have they been and have they remained a unique nation? Furthermore, are Bosniaks/Muslims living in geographies of the former Yugoslavia other than multiethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina, the kins whom the others coercively teared off?*

Interestingly, the position of the Slav Muslims in Serbia and Montenegro in the ongoing debate on Bosniakness invokes the prospect of their co-existence with the Orthodox peoples. In addition, their stand is significant to figure out the vitality of the support they may extend to the political forces which wish to see aggressive ethnic nationalism's giving place to a civic democracy which would be based on the will of citizens independent from their ethnic and religious identities. It is important also in terms of illustrating to what extent Muslims of Sandžak are concerned with keeping themselves aloof from a new and dangerous cycle of irredentism, and expressing their

full support to the Montenegrin civic state while peacefully discussing their own identity.

As for the ongoing debate on the characteristics of Bosniakness, three bleeding questions are required answers - the matter of name, language and Muslimhood. However, from the point of the Montenegrin Sandžak's Bosniaks, as will be discussed in the last chapter, defining the location of the Bosniaks in a Montenegrin civic state is as much significant priority as unfolding the distinguishing characteristics of the nation. Understandably, the current political setting have led them to adopt a low profile in conflagrant debate on Bosniak nationhood, to abstain from keeping it major political reference, and finally remained loyal to the idea of Montenegrin patriotism: and probably they will as long as the Slav Montenegrins remain loyal to the idea of civic state. As discussed below, in retrospect, the Bosniak identity had occasionally resurfaced and politicized as a reaction to the growing ethnocentricisms in Slav Muslims' around. It can be clearly seen among the Muslims in the part of Sandžak that remained within the boundaries of Serbia where Serbian ethnic nationalism continues to hold its sway in political life.

3.2.1. Bosnian or Bosniak? Questions of Name and Language

The essence of identity and name of every nation have been already determined by destiny and history. The problem is solely how to conciliate history with contemporaneous reality, needs and challenges. As many theorists have noticed before, multidimensional concept of national identity is not perceived through the same lenses in all parts of the world. In contrast to the cases of Western and Northern Europe, persuasive elements in the construction of national identity in eastern, central and southern Europe are linguistic, cultural and religious reality (Velikonja, 2003:12). In that context, the origin, language, religion, cultural heritage, state-legal and political framework of the formation, as well as the political conscience of South Slav Muslim/Bosniaks about their own national identity should be taken in consideration. In

that spirit, before analyzing the whole course of Bosniak conscience, the dilemma between ethnic and national-political name *Bosniak* and the name of language spoken by Bosniaks need to be solved.

3.2.1.1 The Name Issue

In the mid-fourteenth century and during the fifteenth century diverse population of Bosnia together with the Orthodox population of Hum (later Herzegovina) and Catholic population of its middle lands, came face to face with Islam and the Ottoman culture. The Balkans, surrounded by Spain, Italy, Venice, Austria, Hungary and Poland where the old spirit of Crusades had strongly survived before the Ottoman danger, was the most complex ethnic, linguistic and religious part of Europe (Imamović, 1998:9-22).

Taking in consideration that during the Ottoman rule Bosnia (Bosnian Eyalet or Pashadom) in different periods of time also included many of neighboring territories, for Muslims in Bosnia name which was used was Bosniaks (Boşnaklar, Boşnak taifesi, Bosnalı takımı, Bosnalı kavımı). The same term was used in the correspondence of the captain Husein Gradašćević with the Austro-Hungarian authorities and Miloš Obrenović⁷, as well as in the correspondence of Ali-pasha Rizvanbegović⁸ with Austro-Hungarian authorities in Dalmatia. Following the 1878 Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia the term Mohammedans (according to the German term *Muhammedaner*) was officially introduced for Bosniaks. In spite of the effort of the new authorities to implement the new name policy in the political and public life, it has not been accepted by the people.

In different national-political circumstances the term *Muslim* was becoming more frequent. The turning point in the cultural – political and national renaissance of the Bosniaks had occurred in the mid-80s of the nineteenth century with the outset of the

⁷ Miloš Obrenović – was Prince of Serbia (1815-1839; 1858-1860); leader of the Second Serbian Uprising

⁸ Ali-paša Rizvanbegović – the Ottoman captain of Stolac (1813-1833), vizier of Herzegovina (1833-1851)

struggle of Bosnian Muslims for the religious autonomy and the autonomy of the property of their religious community as well as with the launching of the daily magazine “Behar” as the first Bosniak magazine. Since then the term *Muslim* acquires considerably wider meaning than its primary designation as the member of Islam (Imamović, 1998:14).

The term *Muslim* as ethnic and national-political designation has been affirmed by the files of the 1941-1945 War of National Liberation, and, particularly, by the decisions of Antifascist National Liberation Council of Yugoslavia and territorial antifascist councils of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sandžak, Montenegro and Bay of Kotor. Since 1960's the term *Muslim* was agreed to designate the entire Slav Muslim population in Yugoslavia in the sense of nation, while the term *muslim* with a lower-case *m* (*musliman*) refers only to adherents to Islam (Dimitrovova, 2001:97).

The 1968 decision of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Bosnia-Herzegovina that Bosnian Muslims will be granted the status of nationality by the federal constitution was welcomed among the Muslim populations and it was evident in the subsequent census in 1971 (Perica, 2003:75). Mustafa Imamović believes that the use of a religious name instead of an ethnic/national one is a product of a complex political history of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and generally of South Slavic Muslims, which was likewise influenced by deliberate efforts of manipulation with their religious and national affiliation by diverse interest groups and politics acting from and out of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1998:16). Milovan Đilas (1995), a Montenegrin writer, former communist, close ally of Josip Broz Tito and later a dissident, points out that the designation of a name with a religious sound was absurdity and it was used deliberately in order to deny the nationality of Muslims. According to him, communists believed that the introduction of the name *Muslim* will gradually foster the assimilation of South Slav Muslims/Bosniaks with Serbs or Croats (1995:102-104). However, finally, at the Second Bosniak Assembly Meeting of political, cultural, scholarly and other representatives of

South Slav Muslims, held in September, in 1993 in Sarajevo the term *Bosniak* as national name was adopted by plebiscite (Imamović, 1998:17).

This step of Bosniak intellectuals in Bosnia was widely accepted and followed by Bosniaks living in other parts of neighboring countries, particularly Serbia, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. However, debate around the matter of the name was livelier among the Muslim/Bosniak elite in Montenegro. Even though the identity of Muslims/Bosniaks was not in question, a flaring debate unfolded around the religious term *Muslim* and the term that evokes connection with Bosnia, *Bosniak*. Smaller percentage of Muslim/Bosniak intellectuals from Montenegro complained that the term *Bosniak* was artificial and that it would menace place and status of Muslims in Montenegro as autochthonous people of Montenegro. On the other side, those who pleaded for the term *Bosniak* argued that that term had its historical and cultural background and that the term *Muslim* logically had only religious reference applicable to other nations living in Montenegro.

The name *Bosniak* was accepted by the convincing majority of Muslims/Bosniaks in Montenegro which was later confirmed in the 2003 and 2011 censuses. There is still certain number of Muslims in Montenegro who hold different view regarding the name but both “nominal” fractions agree that this debate is essentially a positive course in Montenegro since it signifies that Montenegro can respect the freedom of choice.

3.2.1.2 The Matter of Language

Linguistic processes in the Balkans, especially following the collapse of SFRY, involve complex issues of ethnicity, national identification, political developments and process of recovery in the former republics of SFRY. Robert D. Greenberg (2004) in his analysis of the linguistic processes in the Balkans emphasizes the role of language in national and political identification of the peoples in the Balkans noting that there is a

close link between national image, personal and group identity, and the spoken word (2004:3). He states that “while Croats are overwhelmingly Catholic, the Serbs and Montenegrins predominantly Orthodox Christians and the Bosniacs exclusively Muslim, large majorities of each ethnic group speak mutually intelligible dialects, blurring their religious and ancestry marking. In Naylor’s terminology, language in the Balkans has functioned as a “flag”, with each people has asserted its independence and sovereignty.” (Greenberg, 2004:8).

Among Bosniak intellectual circles in Bosnia and in other Yugoslav successor states the most discussed contemporary question was that of the name of the language spoken by Bosniaks. In that context, two rival terms were the subject of debate: both derived from the toponym Bosnia, the term *bosanski* (Bosnian) directly relates to the toponym Bosnia (“regional term”) while the term *bošnjački* (Bosniak) is related to the ethnicity – Bosniak (“ethnic name”) (Greenberg, 2004:141-142).

Regarding the language spoken by Bosniaks, Imamović argues that in the Middle Ages it was Slav or Illyrian language and later it outgrew as Bosnian. Bosnian language was first mentioned in a document of the city of Kotor in 1436 while in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it became a matter of common use. It was officially used after the 1878 Austro-Hungarian occupation disregarding the Serbian and Croatian efforts to put Bosnian language out of use and replace it with Serbo-Croatian. However, in 1907 Bosnian or *territorial language* (*Landessprache*) was to be officially replaced by Serbo-Croatian or Croatian-Serbian language by the Territorial Government of Bosnia-Herzegovina. By a separate decision from 20th of November, 1907 Bosnian language was in official use in autonomous provinces populated by Bosniaks. After 1918 in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes this practice of the official use of Bosnian language in some provinces was abolished (1998:15-16).

In the wake of national revivals in the late eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries within multiethnic empires, in this case Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian,

people of Eastern Europe embraced the notion of “Herderian linguistic nationalism” under which is assumed that language is crucial element in defining a nation (Greenberg, 2004:11-14). In 1850 the promoters of Yugoslav idea, more precisely a number of Croatian and Serbian intellectuals embarked on establishment of the joint language: Serbo-Croatian. Later, with the establishment of the first language institute in the Central South Slavic speech territory in Zagreb in 1867, Bishop Josip Strossmayer and Franjo Rački advocated the idea of a language which would mobilize and unite Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks and Montenegrins (Greenberg, 2004:20).

This integrational concept of political, cultural and religious unifications of all South Slavs introduced the idea of Yugoslavia. The Serbo-Croatian took root in subsequent decades in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and in the first Yugoslavia. Having in mind that Montenegrins and Bosniaks were omitted from the constitutional nations of Yugoslavia, and consequently from the 1850 Literary Agreement and the 1954 Novi Sad Agreement where the language unity model was established, the supremacy of Serbian and Croatian language policy was irrevocable and it continued as such during the Tito’s socialist regime which advocated “brotherhood and unity” in political, national, cultural and linguistic terms.

Greenberg argues that demise of Serbo-Croatian language began with the 1974 federal Constitution which introduced more linguistic autonomy of the republics recognizing the right of each Yugoslav constituent people to use its own language (“standard linguistic idioms”) at the republican and provincial levels (2004:38). Subsequently, the coalescence of language and ethnicity was becoming more apparent. With the escalation of ethnic conflicts in the 1990s each republic of the former SFRY sought to establish a separate socio-cultural identity which would, among others, comprise language identity. Serbo-Croatian officially ceased to exist with the collapse of the SFRY.

Greenberg, stating that the emergence of four standards from a single dialect area is unconventional tradition in the sociolinguistics (2004:160), does not proceed further on elaborating the process of linguistic identities of Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks and Montenegrins intertwined with history, culture and periodical struggle for political supremacy. Greenberg concludes that the birth of a new Bosniak identity coincided with the proclamation of the language in 1992 and that while “Croats and Serbs could claim that their languages emerged out of the Western and Eastern variants of Serbo-Croatian, the Bosniacs had no clearly defined antecedent language to build upon”. Moreover, he states that the Bosnian language erupted “suddenly and unexpectedly in the context of the 1992-5 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina” (2004:136).

In contrast to Greenberg, a considering number of scholars focuses particularly on the process of creation of a cultural and linguistic identity of South Slav Muslims in the Balkans that have roots in medieval and Ottoman Bosnia. The main subjects of such examination are special language features of the Islamicized populations of Bosnia-Herzegovina, unique *Alhamijado*⁹ literature and a special writing system *bosančica* developed by the Muslim Slavs in Bosnia, which for three centuries was also used by Franciscans, the rich oral tradition including oral poetry and ballades, linguistic and literary accomplishments dating from the 1600s and finally specificities of Bosnian speech included in the Vuk Karadžić’s reformation of the Serbian language.

Mitja Velikonja describes the process of the Bosniak cultural renaissance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in wide range of areas, from architecture, painting to education. He also emphasizes the specific Bosnian script *Bosančica* and the usage of the Bosnian language especially in the *Alhamiado* literature (2003:70-71). He furthermore notes that during the national revivals in the 1890s the Serbian and Croatian

⁹ Alhamiado (Aljamiado) literature represents literary works written in Bosnian language but with Arabic script; the name was borrowed from the similar non-Arabic works written with Arabic script in Muslim Spain. It consists of different types of poetry written in classical Arabic meters including religious poetry, poetry with social and moral topics, even erotic and love verses. Among the poets of this literary course were heads of dervish orders, soldiers and women. (Malcolm, 87-88)

patrimonial influences were directed to absorbing the Muslim community to which they resisted through the establishment of the reading clubs (*Kiraethana*), publication of textbooks in the Bosnian language, the encouragement of the use of Arabic script for the Bosnian language, etc. (2003:138).

In the same path, Noel Malcolm denies prevailed tendencies of some modern authors that the Ottoman rule in the Balkans was period of cultural degradation as it was portrayed by many Yugoslavian historians and authors and he describes such prejudices as a particular blindness to magnificent monuments of the Ottoman architecture and wide range of literary works written by Bosniaks under the Ottoman rule. As a testimony to that he cites that prior to destroying Sarajevo in 1992, in the Library of Gazi – Husrev there were 7500 manuscripts, in the Oriental Institute 5000, in the Historical Archive 1762 and in the National Library 478.42.

Similarly to Velikonja, by paying tribute to Alhamiado literature and *Bosančica*, Malcolm finds worth of mentioning one of the oldest vocabularies of the South Slav languages written by Muhamed Hevaji Uskufi. Furthermore, he legitimately singles out the important role of Bosniaks in creating and preserving the rich folk poetry in Bosnia: ballads, laments, epic poems and special genre of love songs cherished by both Muslims and Christians, so called *Sevdalinka* which represents a unique Oriental-Slav lyric poetry with dramatic and epic nuances (1995:87-89). In addition to that, among other specific forms and expressions of the Bosniak cultural identity there was a certain genre of the “*Karadžoz (Karagöz)*” - “theatre of shadows” typical in all provinces of the Ottoman Empire, which during the seventeenth century in Bosnia has adopted a particular Bosnian form (Imamović, 1998:206-209).

Even though there is no doubt that Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks and Montenegrins speak one standardized language, socio-political reality of the ex-Yu region opened space for the influence of extra-linguistic factors. Extra-linguistic factors can be of social, national, political, psychological, rural or urban background and may be reflected

in various spheres of linguistic acting. The influence of extra-linguistic factors is universal and today almost indispensable. Consequently, taking in consideration space, time and circumstances of formation, development and consolidation of the Bosniak identity, Bosnian language is assumed to be the language spoken by Bosniaks and which has long and evidenced history of the Muslim/Bosniak culture with evident oriental-Islamic elements. Having in mind the fact that language is part of the national identity, Muslims/Bosniaks were caught in serious dilemma around the name of their national language. The dilemma around the name *Bosniak language* which denotes national name of its speakers or *Bosnian language* which implies to Bosnia is very complex. However, the recognition of Bosnian language as the language of all Bosniaks is justified among many Bosniak circles due to its historical and practical confirmation, while the name *Bosniak language* periodically used to emerge among Bosniaks, but not as a concurrent to an older and more frequent name – Bosnian language (“Jezik bosanski i Bošnjaci”, in *Povelja o bosanskom jeziku*, 2002:22). Even though Bosnian language is now standardized as the language of all Bosniaks, discussions related to the language are still alive among the Bosniak intellectuals.

Essentially, it follows that Greenberg in his elaborated analysis excluded the understanding of trajectory of cultural and linguistic development of Muslim/Bosniak identity. As Anthony D. Smith argues,

culture, therefore, the meanings and representations of symbols, myths, memories and values, is not some inventory of traits, or a ‘stuff’ enclosed by the border; culture is both an inter-generational repository and heritage, or set of traditions, and an active shaping repertoire of meanings and images, embodied in values, myths and symbols that serve to unite a group of people with shared experiences and memories, and differentiate them from outsiders.

(Smith, 2003:186)

Debate surrounding the name of the language spoken in Bosnia started in the late 1990s continued to present day even though in 2002 Bosniak intellectual and linguistic circles have signed the Charter on the Bosnian Language. This document encompassed the legitimate right of Bosniaks to call their language Bosnian, just as Serbs call their

language Serbian and Croats Croatian (Greenberg, 2004:155). The debate on the language issue is actualized once again among the Bosniak intellectual circles in Montenegro. This part of the issue is to be elaborated in the following chapter which attempts to illustrate the socio-political identity problems of the Muslim minority in the independent Montenegrin state.

Such development of events in the Balkans can be easily understood in terms of Eric Hobsbawm's typology of nationalism according to which the first type is mass, civic and democratic political nationalism developed largely in Europe between 1830-1870 comprising that "only nations large enough in territory and population to support a large capitalist market economy were entitled to claim self-determination as sovereign, independent states"; and the second type of ethno-linguistic nationalism, "in which smaller groups asserted their right to separate from large empires to create their own states on the basis of ethnic and/or linguistic ties" which prevailed in Eastern Europe from 1870-1914 (Smith, 2003:117-122). According to Hobsbawm, the mass civic-democratic political nationalism was swiftly followed by ethno-linguistic nationalism due to a number of factors such as "the conflation of 'race', language and nationality, the rise of new classes and the resistance of old classes to modernity; and the unprecedented migrations of peoples in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – all this in the context of democratization of politics and the massive new powers of centralized states. This kind of ethnic nationalism, essentially a politics of fear, led to the creation of ethnically homogenous states and the exclusion and ultimately extermination of minorities." (Smith, 2003:122-123). Smith's critique of Hobsbawm's typology of nationalism assumes that such typology can hardly explain the emergence of other nationalisms and the course of development of nationalism in general. He also notes that many 'civic' and 'political' nationalisms have the features of the 'ethnic' and 'linguistic' nationalisms (2003:125-127).

3.2.2. Islamic Identity – Inextricable Link of Religion, Culture and Geopolitics

The presence of Muslims in the Balkans by and large was brought to the spotlight of global and western attention by the last Yugoslav drama and more recently in the context of the post-9/11 debates on radicalized Islam, terrorism and consequently in the context of general Islamophobia. As Maya Miskovic (2007) pointed out, “Islam and the presumed deep religiosity of the people have come to represent an essence of Muslims, regardless of their place of origin and cultural practices. Unfortunately, these simplistic images, dominated by homogenous, stereotypical epithets of Muslims have been constructed and perpetuated by the conservative political forces and often superficial sensationalistic media stories.” (2007:518) Tariq Ramadan (2002), exploring the Muslim identity in Europe, believes that the way Islam has often been presented in Europe had deep consequences on identity of Muslim communities in Europe. Muslims, perceived as a problem in secular societies, he argues, primarily attempted at finding solutions in adapting their religion and practice. In those terms, they were forced to accept, even automatically, a reactionary attitude and to feel themselves as challenged to justify their beliefs and practice (2002:27). As contrast to that Ramadan singles out the second phenomenon regarding the European Muslim communities which accepted the notion of Islam as problematic and which consequently suppressed the overt Islamic identity. The third course within the corpus of European Muslims is characterized by the new generations of young and educated Muslims who, by re-discovering their Muslim identity, foster “a positive confirmation of self-confidence among young Muslims” which is not shaped as an opposition to the West (Ramadan, 2002:147-149). Elaborating the complexity of Muslim identity and questions whether such identity is of cultural or religious nature, Ramadan demonstrates the capability of their coexistence with other religious communities and non-Muslim societies without isolation or assimilation. He points out that Islamic identity, even though it is faithful to its principles, is not a closed system and separated from development and dynamics of societies but it is characterized by a constant necessity to take part in its context, to question it or to comprehend it (2002:286).

Balkan Muslim communities are characterized by overt internal diversity due to intermingled concepts of religion and nation within the course of national identification in the Balkans. In that context, as it was the case with considering number of Balkan nations for whose national homogenization religion was the base, Islam played a crucial role in the nation-building in some cases, such as in the case of Bosniaks, while in others it remained within the framework of religious identity. The latter would be the case of Albanians where national differentiation was based more on distinct historical, cultural and linguistic heritage, than on religious identity. Therefore, the articulation between religious identity and national identity is not the same in the case of all Balkan Muslims.

However, common points of Balkan Muslims are that majority of them is autochthonous population, they are adherents of Sunni Islam, they were organized around Islamic institutions and they have their own Islamic institutions established in each state which they populate. Moreover, the identity of almost all Balkan Muslims was deeply affected with historical processes which led to major political conglomerations and transformations of the society in the Balkans occurred firstly with the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the nineteenth-century national awakening, communism and the 1980-1990s national ferment which is primarily articulated in transformation of their status of dominating community to minority political status, communist repression and secularization of religion and the latest period of nationalist renaissance and politicization of religion.

Moreover, as Bohdana Dimitrovova (2001) attempts at demonstrating using the statement of Michael King that “secularization of religious identity does not necessary negates its role in identity”, Islam had crucial impact in the process of national identification of Bosniaks (2001:104). As important factors that have contributed to the fact that Bosniaks have developed a sort of a secular national identity and simultaneously maintained cultural relationship with religion Bashkim Iseni (2009) singles out firstly, the character of *Hanafite madhhab* (school of law) of Sunni Islam which allowed using popular customs and individual reasons in some spheres of

religious practice. Secondly, plurality of Balkan Islam mirrored in proliferation of many Sufi orders with many of them teaching practices permeated with elements of other Islamic schools or religions (2009:7).

Harun Karčić (2010) reminds that proliferation of such Sufi circles whose teachings encompassed some Shi'a and even pre-Islamic practices enrooted in Bosniak tradition and made an impact on Bosnia's Islam concluding that its content "was not a monolith, but a mosaic of different elements, incorporated into the local pre-Islamic culture and way of life" (2010:522). H. T. Norris (1993) through examination of Muslim communities in Eastern Europe, cultural and political significance of Islam in Bosnia and syncretic practices of religions in the Balkan region, focuses on the impact of Sufi orders on the Balkan countries and consequently on its Muslim communities (Norris, 1993, *n.p.*). Elaborating the heterodox nature of Sufi orders in the Balkans Norris has particularly paid attention to their influence on particular coexistence of Islam and Christianity in this region (qtd. in Merdjanova, 2010:79-81).

The transformation to a minority status of Muslims also contributed to their distinct religious identity which was articulated in form of "its pragmatism and its capacity to adapt to the majority Christian or secular (communist) political context" (Iseni, 2009:7). Finally, by monopolizing the Muslim community within the centralized and state-controlled religious institution of Islamic Community (*Islamska zajednica*) and marginalizing the role of religion by abolishing its religious and cultural institutions and traditions enrooted in Muslim society, the communist regime had a great impact on further political, social and cultural developments of Bosniak community in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. The post-communist Balkans haunted by intermingled concepts of religion and nation brought to light a new dimension of relationship between Islam and politics articulated in diverse internal dynamics of Balkan Islam and in external perceptions of it as fundamentalist, rigid and un-European tradition.

The Yugoslav wars and the collapse of Yugoslavia have furthermore galvanized changes in respect to the character of Islamic identity of Bosniaks. Demonization of Bosniaks as Muslim fundamentalists, anti-Bosniak rhetoric that restored the image of the old-age enemies of Orthodoxy, re-employment of the thesis of “green corridor” as aspiration of Balkan Muslims to penetrate into Europe and finally the tragic outcome of national ferment have undoubtedly engendered Bosniaks’ perception of both their national and religious identity. Additionally, by providing financial and humanitarian aid as well as the aid in form of re-construction or construction of mosques, cultural centers, schools, etc. during and after the Bosnian war many Islamic countries and organizations have strengthened their sphere of influence in Bosnia and introduced a new forms of religious and cultural life rather alien to local Muslims.

Particularly, there is growing international and domestic concern over the rise of so called *Wahhabi* or *Salafi* Movement in Bosnia and Sandžak which foster a puritanical form of Islam, restoration of fundamentals of Islam and consequently criticizes the “innovations” of Islamic practices. However, in spite of considerable religious revival within the Muslim community, Wahhabi interpretation of Islam was not well perceived and was mostly rejected in the Muslim communities in Bosnia and Sandžak (“Fears of an outbreak of Muslim extremism in Bosnia are probably exaggerated”, *The Economist*, 12. 07.2007). In that context, Dr. Robert J. Donia argues that “even with the aid of powerful state sponsors, Wahhabis have failed to win more than a few thousands converts in Southeast Europe” and he concludes that “Wahhabis are socially ostracized and politically marginalized” in this region (*n.y.* para.22).

The animosity towards the Wahhabists was deepened by their rigid interpretations of Islam and its practices which sometimes even provoked more or less serious incidents between “traditional Muslims” and reformist Wahhabis in public spaces. Moreover, the question of Wahhabism in the Balkans has galvanized the overall security concern in both the region and international arena and, as Kenneth Morrison has noted, “the issue of Wahhabism has shifted from the margins to become a mainstream

political topic in Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia” (2008:2). Through examination of roots of Wahhabism and its proliferation in the Balkan region, Morrison also notes that even though the post-1990s Bosnia was a fertile ground for erosion of multi-cultural values and penetration of more radical Islamic ideology, the Muslim community in Bosnia firmly confronted to imposing of such religious perspective (2008:4-6).

Evident revival of religion and radicalization of a minor part of Muslim communities with the demise of Yugoslavia have certainly spurred intellectual and political debates in the region. Related to that, Christopher Deliso (2006) predicts that “the role of Islam in society is now more pervasive than at any time since before the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913” and that “it is certain that the role of religion (in Sandžak, Macedonia and Bosnia) is only going to increase in the years ahead” (Deliso, C., 21.6.2006). Furthermore, Deliso concludes,

In the big picture, the question is just about the expansion of Islam in general. As with any other group in the history of the world, the tendency toward schism and polarization in Balkan Islamic societies grows in direct proportion to the growth of the community. It is simply a question of scale. And, given demographic projections over the coming decades, the amount of potentially dangerous Balkan Islamists will only increase, even if their percentage relative to the larger community decreases (though the latter outcome is itself far from certain).

(Deliso, 21.6.2006)

On the other hand, many scholars continue to emphasize predominantly secular character of Balkan Muslims and tend to focus on the specificities and developments of the identity-building of the Balkan Muslims. In that context, Bashkim Iseni acknowledges the undoubted recent “Islamic renaissance” in the Balkans mirrored in publishing of Islamic literature, development of religious education, building mosques, improved relations with the Islamic countries and establishment of the political parties with the Islamic inclinations. However, he believes that Bosniaks “have a secular national identity and maintain cultural relationship with religion, despite most of them is Muslims” (2009:5).

Šaćir Filandra, political analyst and professor in the Faculty of Political Sciences in Sarajevo, points out that Wahhabism is accompanying phenomenon of Islam, communism and globalization. He argues that it failed to demonstrate an intellectual potential or a cultural attraction in this region so it should not be considered as a concurrent model to the traditional Bosniak practicing of Islam. According to Filandra, Wahhabism will remain a sub-cultural phenomenon and it should not be considered as a threat. Moreover, he emphasizes that it attracts media attention only within the corpus of non-Muslims which furthermore could be used as means for deepening prejudices towards Muslims. He acknowledges that Wahhabism is in the process of decline (qtd. in Rastoder, M., 2006:35).

An attempt to decipher formation of the trajectories of the Bosniak identity conditioned by external and internal perceptions of their identity and historical and geopolitical constellations in the regions/states they populate brings to the questions of name, language and affiliation to Islam as pillars for understanding the position of Sandžak's Bosniaks and to understand their challenges in the post-Yugoslav geographies.

It appears that, despite the attempts of organization around ethnic/religious referents, Muslims/Bosniaks demonstrate strong allegiance to their secular national identity which remains deeply perplexed with their autochthony, Slav language and origin, Balkan Islamic identity, multi-religious and multi-ethnic environment.

CHAPTER 4

MUSLIMS/BOSNIAKS OF SANDŽAK

In the context of previously discussed trajectories in the evolution of the Bosniak identity, historical and geopolitical constellation of internal and external factors conditioned the particular identity of Bosniaks in Sandžak as a part of wider corpus of Bosniak community. The identity of Bosniaks in Sandžak is permeated with elements of both ability for co-existence and need for national and religious homogenization when they are in threat. However, Bosniaks in Montenegro have demonstrated ability to supersede the clear-cut division of these trajectories and to embark on active democratic socio-political path in order to vocalize their grievances, demands and rights. On the other hand, the case of Bosniaks in the Serbian part of Sandžak was deeply conditioned by the sociopolitical developments in Serbia in the last two decades. The overt marginalization of this ethnically homogenized region, economic and cultural underdevelopment, serious measures of repression and discrimination during the 1990s, and continuing neglect by the state organs in Serbia, turned this, once friendly and agile environment into an isolated, homogenized and unsatisfied community. As it will be explored later in the chapter, these factors have turned the Serbian Sandžak into a fertile ground for radicalization of the questions of identity and alienated Bosniaks from Serbia.

In the light of aforementioned and by considering that the case of radicalization of the Serbian Sandžak was lately more elaborated in the domestic and foreign academia, this chapter will pay more attention to the developments in the Montenegrin part of Sandžak. Accordingly, it will try to circumscribe discussed trajectories and to point to the thesis that the Bosniak national identity is not uniform across the young Balkan states.

After a long history of co-existence and cleavages in a both “old and young” state, Bosniaks in Montenegro are faced with many opportunities and challenges. Their primary concern evolves around the questions: *How to preserve their Bosniak identity in*

Montenegro as part of the corpus of the Bosniak nation and how to, simultaneously, secure their place and status as part of the autochthonous population in Montenegro?

Moreover, this chapter aims at analyzing the place of Bosniaks in Montenegro and their internal and external challenges conditioned by the consolidation of a new independent state and its cultural, sociopolitical and multinational identity.

4.1.CREATING A CIVIC STATE AND SUPPORT OF THE MUSLIMS

From the Berlin Congress till the fall of the Berlin Wall Montenegro has passed through a series of social, geopolitical and national transitions. Cultural and sociopolitical identity of Montenegro, as it was the case with identities of other Balkan states, is deeply permeated with religion, national mythologization, particular perception of identities and clashes and concords of different cultures and interests. Complex history of cleavages, internal and external pressures, searching for identities and geopolitical transitions has deeply influenced the internal dynamics of Montenegrin politics in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The dichotomized world of Christians vs. Muslims, liberators vs. occupier, heroes and victims vs. traitors left trace in the process of further identity shaping and conscience of all three nations: Montenegrins, Serbs and Bosniaks. The construction of new political identities and re-affirmation of old identities following the collapse of the SFRY redeployed religious dividing lines perplexed with the idealizations of one's one religious and cultural heritage in contrast to *other's*. Marko Špadijer (2007), remarks that "in this century we have not collected particularly useful experiences in the field of democracy, human rights and business, but have collected enough frustrations, intolerance, illusions, misleadings and readiness to kill." Criticizing the pro-Serbian nationalistic regime in Montenegro during the 1990s and concerned about the future of Montenegro and politicization of national identities, Špadijer warns that "defiance to the

whole world, life in poverty, with atavisms, paranoias and twisted image of *us* and *others* is political and cultural autism” (Špadijer, 2007:165).

According to Misa Djurkovic (2007), Montenegrin society after referendum is deeply divided in terms of identity issues stemming from the complex perception of Montenegrin and Serbian identity and breakdown of the South Slav Muslim population in two: those who perceive themselves to be Bosniaks and those who identify themselves as Muslims. As such, Djurkovic claims, Montenegro could serve as a case study of Balkan identity issues (Djurkovic, 2007:1). Florian Bieber in his study on the problems of identity and statehood in Montenegro considers Montenegro a particular case in the Balkans basing his argument on its ability to avoid to conflict and to maintain its multinational structure (Bieber, 2003:7, 42) but, similar to Djurkovic, he singles out the problem of “ambiguity of Montenegrin identity” (Bieber, 2003:11) enrooted in wider image of its historical polity.

This dichotomization of the national issue in Montenegro has particularly been revived after the break with Serbia in 1997 when the internal political struggles and their effect on national identity brought to the fore the vulnerability of the Montenegrin identity. During the disintegration of Yugoslavia, instrumentalization of this dichotomized identity by the political elites was transposed to the population in Montenegro and revoked their long-standing split concerning the question of Montenegrin/Serbian identity. Tensions over this ‘dual identity’ became central in the anticipation of the independence referendum when the fissure was epitomized in the pro-Montenegrin/pro-independence and the pro-Serb/pro-unionist camp.

In order to understand the Bosniak identity in Montenegro, it is necessary to take into account and comprehend the particular identity issue between Montenegrins and Serbs in Montenegro given that the Bosniak identity could be conceived as the reaction to the majority issues and state policy.

4.1.1. Dual Identity of the Orthodox Montenegrins

According to many observers, effects of political struggles in Montenegro during the 1990s on popular perception of national identity were best seen in the results of the population censuses during the last two decades. Rather than to demonstrated changes in demographic trends in Montenegro, the population censuses in Montenegro since the fall of the communist regime reflect severe political changes intermingled with the nationalistic rhetoric. Accordingly, Milena Milosevic and George Mesthos, arguing that ethnic lines between Serbs and Montenegrins have been blurred and often politically conditioned, remind that majority of the Montenegrin population from the beginning of the twentieth century declared as Serbs. This changed in the first census after the WWII in 1948 when majority of population was declared as Montenegrin. Moreover, they argue that “at that time ethnic Croats, numbering only 1.7 per cent, were more numerous than Serbs. But from 1991 to 2003 the numbers of Serbs has risen consistently from 9.7 to 32 per cent” (Milosevic and Mesthos, 11.04.2011).

By the similar token, Florian Bieber comments on the politicization of the identity issues in Montenegro by pointing out the controversial manifestation of changes in the Montenegrin national/political perceptions best reflected in the population censuses since 1991 (Bieber, 12.07.2011).

On the account of the results of the two censuses conducted in 1991 and in 2003 which demonstrated large oscillations in the field of national affiliation, Miloš Bešić, methodologist from the Center for Democracy and Human Rights, argues that these oscillations were not to be explained by demography or migrations, but exclusively by political attitude and ambient of the conducted census. He points that “such change cannot be explained solely by political variables. Moreover, ethnic identification has become political identification, or to declare as a Serb vs. a Montenegrin or Montenegrin vs. Serb essentially implies to a political attitude toward the independence of the Montenegrin state” (Janković, 17.01.2011.).

Owing much to the politicization of the national and religious identities in the 1990s under the auspices of Serbian nationalists, Montenegrin political elite and vast majority of Montenegrin population, particularly the portion living in the northern Montenegro, supported Milosevic's destructive agenda. By detaching itself from Serbian belligerent nationalism, Montenegrin political elites directed its energy toward restoration of Montenegrin statehood. However, the question of statehood provoked even deeper fissure among the Montenegrin population what subsequently prolonged the contested nature of identity debate in the post-referendum politics.

Taking in consideration that Montenegro is still at the beginning of consolidation of its sociopolitical identity and that it is faced with multifaceted challenges in the democratization process, the question of the multinational relations in Montenegro is a highly complex issue. This complexity is linked to the continuing divides within the corpus of the Orthodox communities and slow process of institutionalization of the most relevant contents and characteristics of a multinational and multicultural society.

In the light of outlined context, the desire of Montenegro not to remain under the ruins of the collapsed Yugoslavia and desire to join the European Union forced Montenegrin political elites to concern about creating an inclusive civic identity, which was, as this thesis argues, the defining external factor in the identity formation of the Montenegrin Muslim population.

4.1.2. The Sandžak Region in Between

As it was previously outlined, Muslims/Bosniaks of Montenegro and Serbia mostly populate the Sandžak region that stretches along the territory of both Montenegro and Serbia and abuts Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Albania. Six municipalities are in Serbia (Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Tutin, Prijepolje, Nova Varos and Priboj) and five in the north of Montenegro (Pljevlja, Bijelo Polje, Berane, Rožaje and Plav). Even though the term *sandžak* (originally meaning *banner*, *flag*, but referred to the Ottoman

administrative unit) was out of the official use with the abolishment of its administrative function in 1912, it has not seized to exist in informal use to present day (International Crisis Group, 2005:1; Lyon, 2008:71-73).

The old center of Medieval Serbian state of Raška under Byzantine tutelage was in the region of Serbian Sandžak (International Crisis Group, 2005:5). During the Ottoman rule, the Sandžak region acquired a function of an administrative district within the Province of Bosnia and became an important Balkan strategic point. As the Serbian liberation aspirations from the Ottomans were growing so were the retaliatory attacks between the Serbs, Montenegrins and Bosniaks in Sandžak. After the Austrian-Hungarian occupation and later annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sandžak remained under the Ottoman civil administration (Imamović, 1998:354). During the Great Eastern Crisis (1875-1878) and wars in Serbia and Montenegro, by decisions of the 1878 Berlin Congress Montenegro and Serbia were given status of independent states with considerable territorial expansion which included important Bosniak urban centers (Imamović, 1997:349-350). Since the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) when the area was partitioned between Serbia and Montenegro, Bosniaks live from both sides of the Montenegrin and Serbian border (Šistek and Dimitrovova, in Bieber, 2003:160-161).

As Montenegrin historian, Mustafa Memić (2003), points out, by conquering the territories in 1878 and 1912 which belonged to firstly the Medieval Kingdom of Bosnia; the Sandžak of Bosnia, Sandžak of Herzegovina, partly to the Sandžak of Skadar, and later to the Eyalet of Bosnia, not only political but ethnic character of Montenegrin polity was changed by introducing large number of Muslims who mostly populated those areas. Those circumstances have directed further evolution of identities of *ethnies* living in Montenegro. According to him, Montenegrins, Bosniaks (as part of larger Bosniak corpus), Albanians and Croats living within contemporary borders of Montenegro have developed distinct ethnic identities with many common characteristics (2003:8).

By decisions of the 1878 Congress of Berlin, Montenegro has gained 83% of its contemporary territories which included towns Nikšić, Podgorica (the capital of Montenegro), Bar, Ulcinj, Kolašin, Spuž and Žabljak populated by 80% of Muslims (Bosniaks and Albanians). The second territorial expansion of Montenegro in the 1912 Balkan War include Pljevlja, Donji Kolašin, Bijelo Polje, Mojkovac, Bihor, Rožaje, Berane and the Plav-Gusinje region with 67% of Muslims (Bosniaks and Albanians) (Memić, 2003:28-29). The new Serbian-Montenegrin authorities demonstrated strong aversion towards the Muslim inhabitants and consistently treated them as enemies or 'domestic Turks.' During that period and subsequently during the post-Balkan Wars period, the Muslims of the region had been discriminated, slaughtered, forcibly baptized and their property was confiscated by Serbian and Montenegrin authorities. That factual situation forced enormous number of Bosniaks, Albanians and Turks to immigrate to Turkey. Following the Austro-Hungarian defeat in 1918 and in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes Muslims were subjected to severe process of impoverishment and depopulation - their feudal privileges were abolished, their property dispossessed and genocidal policies continued (Imamović, 1998:489).

Following the outbreak of the World War II the territory of Sandžak once again became the important issue in the aspirations for territory between both internal and external forces. Sandžak was occupied by Germans and Italians, but was also, as Morrison notes, "wracked with conflict" since partisans, chetniks and Muslim 'militia' operated in Sandžak (2009:116). However, Sandžak, for its multiethnic nature, was the main target of *chetniks* whose clearly defined objective was ethnically clean Yugoslavia and creation of a direct common border between Serbia and Montenegro by cleaning the Sandžak region of the Muslim population (Matović, 2005:60). The *chetniks* dominated during the period of 1941-1942, but the rise of anti-fascist movement of Yugoslavia gave a new hope to the Sandžak Bosniaks. Subsequently, in 1944-1945 Sandžak had its status of autonomous region restored on the territory liberated by the partisans. However, after the war, its short-lived autonomy was abolished and Sandžak was

divided between Serbia and Montenegro within the framework of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) (Strugar, 1970:48; Friedman, 2000:173).

The remaining two SFRY republics, Serbia and Montenegro, established the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in 1992, a country, which in academic circles was often referred to as the 'rump' Yugoslavia. Following the resolve of the ruling pro-Milosevic Democratic Party of Socialist of Montenegro (DPS) in two factions, the victory in the 1997 presidential elections by the anti-Milosevic DPS faction backed by Montenegrin opposition to the war and minorities was a turning point in contemporary Montenegro politics. From that point on, the Montenegrin government began increasingly to assert its prerogatives and oppose Milosevic on numerous issues (Van Meurs, in Bieber, 2003:63; Bieber, 2003:54). It distanced itself in particular from his nationalist legacy, war crimes and anti-minority policies. The FRY existed until 2002, when pursuant to the provisions of the EU-mediated Belgrade Agreement, it was substituted by the looser State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (OSCE/ODIHR, 2006:5). However, it was a country with an 'expiry date', as it posed the moratorium on the question of the status of Montenegro for three years. Following the outcome of the referendum of independence of 21 May 2006, Montenegro became an independent state (OSCE/ODIHR, 2006:21).

When the divorce came to the agenda question of the future position of the Sandžak Bosniaks sparked different reactions among Bosniaks living in that area.

Main concern of Sandžak Bosniaks in Serbia was that independence of Montenegro would split and thus weaken and isolate the historical and cultural region of Sandžak. Consequently, that split would endanger ties with their relatives and co-nationals and downgrade the general position of Bosniaks on each side of Sandžak. On the other hand, Bosniaks from Montenegrin part of Sandžak held different opinion regarding the overall future of their country. Despite the fact that Bosniaks in Montenegrin Sandžak were aware of the possibility that border might aggravate relations

with their counterparts in Serbia, they have demonstrated decisive stand regarding the destiny of Montenegro. While Bosniaks in Serbian part of Sandžak for the outlined reasons were more inclined to favoring preservation of the state union, Bosniaks in Montenegro believed that Montenegro and its nations would fare better without Serbia.

One of the main reasons for this decision of the Montenegrin Bosniaks can be found in Montenegro's departure from Milosevic's politics and building of its policies on the rhetoric of the European integration and multiculturalism. With this significant shift vis-à-vis the discourse of the Serbian leaders, the Montenegrin elites have gained trust of minority nations which recognized this change as an important ground for the improvement of their position, status and participation in Montenegrin sociopolitical and cultural ambient. Furthermore, not underestimating the fact of their autochthony in the Montenegrin land, Bosniaks believed that only independent Montenegro could open long-awaited space for their affirmation as part of the Bosniak national corpus and an autochthonous nation of Montenegro.

4.1.3. The End of the Union State of Serbia and Montenegro: Sandžak Cracks into Two

Indicators of trajectories of the Bosniak identity could be tracked within the context of the post-1990s socio-political constellations and the extent of its impact on the Sandžak region. As it was previously attempted to demonstrate, the most prominent factors of the Bosniak national shaping was their autochthony, Slav language and origin, Balkan Islamic identity, multi-religious and multi-ethnic environment and social and geopolitical transformations. Furthermore, their relationship toward state, members of other religious and national communities and their own identity was contingent on co-existence and conflict with other communities; pressure or tolerance of the authorities and particular patriotism or alienation within their own countries. Finally, the 1990s conflicts and political developments accompanied with nationalist and religious

politicization and consequent political regroupings in the former republics of SFRY have brought to focus the Sandžak question.

The Sandžak region in the post-1990s political settlement was affected severely and has witnessed crucial changes in the socio-political context and within the corpus of Bosniak community. The Sandžak region was officially considered as not effected by the war in Bosnia and Croatia, since there was no direct military conflict in its territory, yet according to many reports, it was subdued to a “silent” or “soft” ethnic cleansing (Kim, 15.10.1997; Lyon, 2008:79). According to the investigations and reports on war crimes and human rights abuses in the former Yugoslavia of the Humanitarian Law Center from Serbia, Serbian Sandžak’s Muslims have been exposed to severe police repression which included groundless arrests, mass physical attacks, beating, torture and demonstration of national and ethnic intolerance (Kandić, 1997:109-128).

The worst off Sandžak municipalities were those bordering with Bosnia which witnessed repression, intrusion of paramilitary units and physical attacks. The most serious crimes committed in the Sandžak region were the 1992 abduction of 15 Bosniak men and one Bosniak woman in Sjeverin traveling from Priboj to Rudo (towns in the Serbian part of Sandžak); the 1993 abduction of 18 Bosniaks (most of them from Montenegro) and one Croat at the Štrpci station (Serbia) from the train 671 of Belgrade-Bar railway line; depopulation, abduction, tortures, murders and torture of Muslims in Montenegrin village of Bukovica in the Pljevlja municipality (Montenegro), etc. (Morrison, 2008:3-5; Fond za humanitarno pravo, 2003; Mitrinović, 2003:77-112; YIHR, 2010:2-10).

The Serbian part of Sandžak has been considerably affected by the administrative and economic neglect of the Serbian authorities and it consequently saw a greater level of national and religious homogenization. In an overtly poor and neglected region contributing factor to such generally negative sociopolitical landscape undoubtedly are the internal rivalries of Bosniak political parties and rift in the Islamic community which

sharpened the overall relations within the Bosniak community in Serbia. Even though Montenegro has managed to avoid the direct conflict of the 1990s in its territory, it surely was affected by the new political and military developments across the post-Yugoslav space. Primarily, backing of Milošević's regime by the Montenegrin authorities of that time and acts of repression and discrimination has consequently alienated Montenegrin Bosniaks, Albanians and Croats.

4.1.4. The First Split among Muslims/Bosniaks of Sandžak: The Question of Separation

In 1990 the SDA of Bosnia founded a local branch of the party in the Serbian part of Sandžak led by Sulejman Ugljanin and Rasim Ljajić which became independent party after the Bosnian independence in 1992 (Lyon, 2008:78). It became the strongest political party at the Sandžak's political scene. However, in forthcoming years, two opposite streams emerged within the leadership of the Sandžak's SDA - one with a rather nationalist vision, promoted by Sulejman Ugljanin who also advocated the territorial autonomy of Sandžak, and the second one led by Rasim Ljajić, whose program for the Sandžak region included Bosniak inclusion and participation in the state politics. The SDA remained to be led by Sulejman Ugljanin, while Rasim Ljajić formed a new party under the name of *the SDA – Rasim Ljajić* (later Sandžak Democratic Party - SDP). From that point on politics in the Serbian part of Sandžak has been dominated by these two parties, which both emerged from the wartime nationalist movement.

On the other hand, Montenegro saw the formation of the first Bosniak party in Montenegro, Party of National Equality (*Partija nacionalne ravnopravnosti*) was founded in 1990 in Podgorica whose members later dispersed within the corpus of the Montenegrin anti-war parties such as the Liberal Union and Social Democrat Party. The same year in Montenegro was founded the SDA under the auspices of the Bosnian and Novi Pazar's SDA (Sadiković, 2006:32).

Following the persecution of the SDA activists by the Serbian authorities as their sharp response to the demands of Bosniaks for regional autonomy (Dimitrovova, 2001, p.99), similar processes were exerted by the Montenegrin authorities that started with the 1994 political trial of the SDA leadership accusing them for hostile cooperatives and preparation of terrorist acts (Lyon, 2008:79; Sadiković, 2006:32; Šistek and Dimitrovova, in Bieber, 2003:164). They “underwent repeated and brutal torture while in prison” where they have spent two years. They were released by the amnesty of the president Momir Bulatović in 1996 (Sadiković, 2006:32; Šistek and Dimitrovova, in Bieber, 2003:164; Morrison, 2009:119).

In a similar vein as Sadiković, Kenneth Morrison implies that with the collapse of Yugoslavia, nationalistic outburst and aggravation of status of Bosniaks in the FRY, “in the short term the new situation focused Muslim minds on their immediate security concerns; in the medium term it would also focus their minds on their identity” (2009:117). He further proceeds on explaining that Sandžak’s Muslims feeling insecure and threatened in the new political settings and under the increasing pressure of the pro-Milošević nationalistic authorities in both Montenegro and Serbia, were turning to Bosnia as their spiritual center.

More discernible homogenization of the socio-political issues within the Muslim community in the Serbian part of Sandžak led to their demand for regional autonomy in 1991 in form of the referendum which was deemed as illegitimate by the Serbian authorities (2009:117-118). However, as Morrison points out, “Muslims in Montenegrin Sandžak did not participate in or support the referendum to nearly the same extent as their compatriots across the border in Serbian Sandžak. This can be explained by a history of stable relations (at least in comparison with the Serbian Sandžak) between the Orthodox and Muslim communities in the Montenegrin municipalities” (2009:119).

Following the shift in the political climate in the region when Montenegro broke up with Milošević’s regime and Milošević’s overthrown in 2000 in Serbia, the position

of Sandžak's Bosniaks overall improved. After distancing from the Milošević's politics, Serbia moved to substantial liberalization, democratic changes and economic recovery. However, the Sandžak region remained in many ways the most neglected region in Serbia (Pfeifer&Šećeragić, 2009:12-18, "Kako je Sandžak postao dolina gladi", 12.10.2009). Comparing to other regions in Serbia, the level of unemployment in Sandžak was very high, Bosniaks still faced informal discrimination and restrictions, inclusion of Bosniaks in state institutions and police force is still unsatisfying (Minorities at Risk Project, 2006). As one of the most underdeveloped regions in Serbia, it faced numerous problems which lead to its marginalization and consequently, to becoming a politically unstable region.

Cultural, political and economic dissatisfaction of the Bosniak community in Serbia became a fertile ground for radicalization of the questions of identity and alienation from the state. Schism within the Islamic community and long-term rivalry between the two local parties of Sulejman Ugljanin and Rasim Ljajić re-ignited the tensions and conflict within the Sandžak and within the relationship of Bosniaks and their leaders and the Serbian authorities. Sonja Biserko (2010) implies that "the need for a stronger identity is only a logical response to years-long discrimination and "invisibility" and to police terror, abductions and executions during the war in Bosnia". In the absence of other institutions, the Islamic community became a key identity-matrix for the Bosniak community. Hence, it has been the target of various Belgrade – seated 'services' striving to destabilize its foundations" (2010:9, 11). Analyzing the position of Bosniaks in Serbia and the split in the Islamic community, experts on human and minority rights imply that the split in the Islamic community is used for the radicalization of ethnic and political conflicts in Sandžak, which was described as the very familiar scenario of the political elites in Serbia regarding the question of minorities ("Prevazilaženje podela i artikulisanje stvarnih interesa regiona", in Biserko, 2010:109).

Having in mind the contemporary state of relations between national and religious communities in Sandžak, the Serbian media frequently states that more than ten

years tensions and conflicts between Serbs and Bosniaks have ceased while the intra-Bosniak conflict continues and even sharpens. Anticipating the 2006 independence referendum in Montenegro the fractionalization within the Bosniak community was becoming more apparent since a certain number of Bosniaks in Serbia favored preserving joint state and maintaining the integrity of the region, while almost absolute majority of Bosniaks in Montenegro favored independence. Essentially, Bosniaks in the Serbian part of Sandžak were afraid of greater isolation and discrimination on ethnic and religious basis which would also include hindrance of their personal and professional ties with Bosniaks in Montenegro.

Their concerns were increasingly stirred up with sharp opposition campaign of part of Bosniak politicians in Serbia that concurred with the Serbian official “condemnation” of Montenegrin independence (“Ugljanin lobira Bošnjake za SCG”, 11.1. 2006, “Ugljanin uz Koštunicu za SCG”, 6. 4.2006). Ugljanin’s calls for a common autonomous region of Sandžak, stretching on both sides of the border did not resonate with the Montenegrin Bosniaks, which, through their political representatives and national organizations, sought to fortify their identity and political status within Montenegro. As in the case of other Montenegrin minorities (Croats and Albanians), Bosniaks determinately backed the pro-independence option and by that token demonstrated a great level of loyalty and devotion to Montenegro (Štiblar, 2007:113; Morrison, 209:210).

4.1.5. Sandžak Bosniaks of Montenegro Do Their Way

Florian Bieber (2003) points out that at the end of the 1990s there was an evident shift in the nationalist rhetoric in Montenegro which shifted its direction of active targeting of minorities to pro-independence parties (2003:42). Montenegro came to the focus of global attention after 1997/98 when it was clear that it managed to move away from nationalistic scepter of Belgrade and to set out building of its own future. Moreover, even though it has been given international incentives for such path,

Montenegro had to face with a series of obligations and challenges in order to re-build its name and create a democratic environment for all of its nations. Thus, the pace of restoration of its identity was a starting point in the process of democratization. The internal political re-groupings in the Montenegrin political scene which resulted in the split of the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) where Milo Đukanović-led faction of the DPS won the next election was a turning point in this process. Primarily, despite the fact that Milo Đukanović was an important political actor in once a united pro-Milošević party, the Montenegrin opposition politicians and activists recognized that it could be an important political moment for change.

Kenneth Morrison also observes that “for many in the Montenegrin opposition, a split within the DPS meant a recalibration of the Montenegrin political scene – and, more importantly, an opportunity” (2009:155). The political re-groupings have brought to light the issue of competing identities – of Serbs and Montenegrins which also led to a so called “a geographical split” (Morrison, 2009:158).

An array of identity issues as well as pro-Serb negative campaign was revived in the political scene considering the fact that the northern part of Montenegro is populated by pro-Serb oriented Orthodox population and by a large number of Bosniaks (and to a lesser degree by Albanians); and the central and coastal areas of Montenegro where the sense of Montenegrin identity was stronger. This “political battle” and negative campaign relied on nationalistic politicization targeted at Bosniaks, Albanians, Croats and pro-independence Montenegrins provided the Đukanović’s DPS with their stalwart support at the elections. Furthermore, even though some political and media actors still instrumentalized religion and national sentiments in their political campaign, it was clear that following developments in 1997/98 ubiquitous divisions in Montenegrin society were primarily inspired by a dissonance along political and not ethnic lines. This polarized sociopolitical course by and large continued in the forthcoming years culminating in the demand for independence.

Florian Bieber (2002) analyzing the political landscape in Montenegro, with the focus on instrumentalization of minorities in the wake of referendum, in 2002 noted that “the possible disintegration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serb-Montenegrin tensions since 1997 stand out in the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia by both the lack of violence and the secondary role ethnicity plays in the dispute” (2002:1). Yet, international community was still skeptical about the question of Montenegrin independence due to the concerns of the *domino effect* which might have on the “territories prone to separatist movements due to the large portion of minorities” including Eastern Slavonia, the Krajina (the Serb populated areas in Croatia), Sandžak, the Preševo-Valley (Richter, Halbach, 2009:224-225), Republika Srpska (the Serb populated area in Bosnia-Herzegovina) and on so called “frozen conflicts” in the former Soviet Union (Fawn, 2008:269-271).

Dušan Janjić from the Forum for Ethnic Relations explains loyalty of Bosniaks by the historical reasons of relatively good integration of Bosniaks in Montenegrin society as well as with the political fact that there is no center of Bosniak ethno-nationalism in Montenegro („Plebiscitarno za procrnogorsku opciju?“ 20.12.2005). Anticipating the referendum Bosniak intellectuals and political elite through numerous public panels, round tables and meetings have expressed their overwhelming support to the Montenegrin independence as the most important pre-condition for the creation of democratic ambient within which would secure legal and realistic equality of all of Montenegrin nations and citizens.

And it is the fact that Montenegro avoided the conflict during the Yugoslav drama, that despite the nationalistic and political turmoil managed to keep its multinational composition and the legitimate results of the referendum without violence placed Montenegro in the center of the global attention.

As Marko Špadijer (2007), Montenegrin publicist and secretary-general of *Matica Crnogorska*¹⁰, has noted, through generations in the territory of Montenegro was created a unity of people which with history, self conscience, culture and psychology, differ from other societies. Montenegro as a state and motherland of Montenegrins, Serbs, Muslims/Bosniaks, Albanians, and Croats is not only a multiethnic project nor political phrase but a living organism with long history of such functioning (2007:302).

4.2 THE POST-REFERENDUM POLITICAL BALANCES IN MONTENEGRO AND THE SANDŽAK BOSNIAKS' POLITICAL POSITION

Ability to avoid the conflict and to manage to preserve stability in the last political and military developments across the post-communist space led many academicians and political actors to imply to specific characteristics of Montenegro and its inter-ethnic relations (Hockenos, Winterhagen, 2007:39; Bieber, 2003:7).

National and religious heterogeneity of Montenegro conditioned the nature of the turbulent and perplexed history of relations of Montenegrin peoples. The fact that, comparing to the other countries from the region, particularly following the 1990s developments, Montenegro is at the least ethnically homogenous, and that it managed to maintain its multinational composition could lead to the factors that have determined a significant level of co-existence and respect between communities. Šišteć and Dimitrovova (2003) consider this perplexity of inter-communal relations as significant particularity of Montenegro. This argument could concur with the fact that there is a particular tradition of respect between communities, as Šišek and Dimitrovova notice, „based on shared patriarchal and moral values which persisted much longer in Montenegro than in other parts of the Balkans“ (Šišek and Dimitrovova, in Bieber, 2003:162). In addition to that, despite the history of ethno-religious animosities and

¹⁰ Organization for preservation and promotion of Montenegrin identity; literally translation of *Matica* = *Queen Bee* or *river current*

conflicts, minorities in Montenegro are very attached and loyal to Montenegro which they perceive as their homeland (Šišek and Dimitrovova, in Bieber, 2003:178).

4.2.1. Constitutional Rights of the Montenegrin Bosniaks

Montenegro's particularity is primarily linked to the fact that, technically, there is no national majority in Montenegro having in mind that the two largest communities in Montenegro are Montenegrins as 40.5 per cent and Serbs as 30.3 of total population according to the 2003 census (Morrison, 2009:191, p.192). The most recent census on national, religious and linguistic affiliation of the population in Montenegro held in April, 2011, was a cause for numerous speculations, political debates and even campaign blatant to those pre-election campaigns. According to the results, Montenegro's population counts 44.98% of Montenegrins, 28,73% of Serbs, 8.65 Bosniaks, 4.91% of Albanians, 3.31 of Muslims, 0.97% of Croats and the rest includes those who declared as Bosniaks/Muslims, Muslims/Bosniaks, Montenegrin/Muslims, Egyptians, etc. (MONSTAT¹¹, 2011:6,8). Considering the fact that Montenegro has no national majority that counts more than half of the total population, Montenegro is in a position (together with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Belgium), as Srdja Vukadinović (2006), Montenegrin sociologist, has noticed, to be one of the rare European states which are multinational and not multiethnic (2006:19-20).

Having in mind that constitutional consolidation is a basis and framework of every state and with regard to the very specific composition of Montenegrin society, the process of constitutional and legal consolidation of Montenegrin state was the question of pivotal relevance. Following the extensive discussions and work of Montenegrin political and intellectual elites with participation of non-governmental organizations and competent sociopolitical actors which fore grounded the fact that the constitutional

¹¹ MONSTAT – Zavod za statistiku Republike Crne Gore / Statistical Office of the Republic of Montenegro

concept of Montenegro should display a civic, multi-cultural and multi-national character, the new Constitution of Montenegro was adopted in 2007.

And indeed, the new constitution set foundations for the future consolidation of Montenegro as a civic, multinational and multicultural state. Members of nations and national minorities in Montenegro have found their place in the Constitution of Montenegro.

In the Preamble of the 2007 Montenegrin Constitution it is confirmed that: “as free and equal citizens, members of nations and national minorities who live in Montenegro: Montenegrins, Serbs, Bosniaks, Albanians, Muslims, Croats and others are loyal to democratic and civic state of Montenegro” (Ustav Crne Gore/The Constitution of Montenegro, 2007:10).

By this constitution Montenegro has inaugurated the concept of a civil state as an optimal solution for its democratic and multinational society. In that context, the Constitution of Montenegro in the Article 1 of the Basic Provisions states that “Montenegro is a civil, democratic, ecological and the state of social justice, based on the rule of law” (The Constitution of Montenegro, 2007:10). In the Article 8 on Prohibition of discrimination it is stated that: “Direct or indirect discrimination on any grounds shall be prohibited. Regulations and introduction of special measures aimed at creating the conditions for the exercise of national, gender and overall equality and protection of persons who are in an unequal position on any grounds shall not be considered discrimination” (The Constitution of Montenegro, 2007:12). It is, furthermore, stated in Article 13 of the Constitution that “the official language in Montenegro shall be Montenegrin” And that “Serbian, Bosniak, Albanian and Croatian shall also be in the official use” (The Constitution of Montenegro, 2007:14).

By the Law on Montenegrin National Symbols, adopted in 2004, thus before the independence, national coat-of-arms included royal and religious (Orthodox) symbols

which engendered many political debates in anticipation of referendum (“Montenegro picks national symbols”, 13. 07.2004). Bosniak politicians from Social Democrat Party and members of national parties were very vocal regarding this question claiming that since Montenegro is about to be founded as civic and multinational state, national symbols of Montenegro should represent all of its citizens. After long and lively debates, in the new Constitution was left place for agreement and possible changes of the Law on National Symbols since the Article 4 of the Constitution assures that “Coat-of-arms of Montenegro is two-headed eagle with lion on its chest” not mentioning royal crown nor religious symbols (Ustav Crne Gore/The Constitution of Montenegro, 2007:12).

In terms of constitutional rights and safeguards provided to “minority nations and other minority national communities” (Ustav Crne Gore/The Constitution of Montenegro, 2007:32) in Montenegro by the Article 79 the Constitution guarantees them:

“the right to exercise, protect, develop and publicly express national, ethnic, cultural and religious practices, the right to choose, use and publicly post national symbols and to celebrate national holidays, the right to use their own language and alphabet in private, public and official use; the right to education in their own language and alphabet in public institutions and the right to have included in the curricula the history and culture of the persons belonging to minority nations and other minority national communities; the right, in the areas with significant share in the total population, to have the local self-government authorities, state and court authorities carry out the proceedings in the language of minority nations and other minority national communities; the right to establish educational, cultural and religious associations, with material support of the state; the right to write and use their own name and surname also in their own language and alphabet in the official documents; the right, in the areas with significant share in total population, to have traditional local terms, names of streets and settlements, as well as topographic signs written in language of minority nations and other minority national communities; the right to authentic representation in the Parliament of Montenegro and in the assemblies of the local self-government units in which they represent a significant share in the population, according to the principle of affirmative action; the right to proportionate representation in public services, state authorities and local self-government bodies; the right to information in their own language; the right to establish and maintain contacts with the citizens and associations outside of Montenegro, with whom they have common national and ethnic background, cultural and historic heritage, as well as religious beliefs; the right to establish councils for the protection and improvement of special rights”.

(Ustav Crne Gore/The Constitution of Montenegro, 2007:32-33)

Although the process of constitutional and legal consolidation of Montenegro as well as the process of its democratization may be viewed through a multi-level prism, it is widely accepted that, in comparison to the constitutional concepts of other ex-Yu states, Montenegro is the only state from the post-Yugoslav space which is constitutionally defined as a civic state of all nations living in Montenegro. Particularly noteworthy here is to emphasize the constitutional definition of Montenegro as a civic state and the constitutional treatment of Bosniaks as constitutive nation in comparison to the position and treatment of Bosniaks in the Serbia. The Article 1 of the Serbian Constitution defines Serbia as a state of Serbian nation and of all citizens living in Serbia (Ustav Republike Srbije/The Constitution of Republic of Serbia, Article 1, 2006) which implies that Bosniaks in Serbia are treated as a minority. This might serve as a rather illustrative example of the difference between the treatment of Bosniaks in Montenegro where they are referred as to a constitutive nation and the treatment and position of Bosniaks in Serbia where they obtained a status of minority.

4.2.2 Identity Issues: Bosniaks' Stand to Their Identity

The identity issues continued to dominate the political scene of Montenegro after the 2006 referendum primarily in the corpus of Orthodox majority in Montenegro within which there are those who perceive themselves as Montenegrins and considering number of Montenegrins who identify themselves as Serbs (Bieber, 2003:11). Furthermore, the historical and geographical divide of Montenegro between south as historically parts of the 'Old Montenegro' and economically more developed and north as part of territories that were conquered in the beginning of the twentieth century, less developed and closer to Serbia, play significant role in the divisions in identity debate and, consequently, political scene (Bieber, 2003:39). Contributing factor to this complexity certainly is the considering number of Bosniak population living in the northern parts of Montenegro.

As has been mentioned before, the process of national reaffirmation of Bosniaks was formally set about with the Declaration of the Assembly of Bosniak political, scientific, cultural and other representatives in Sarajevo, in September, 23rd, 1993. In accordance with the conclusions made in that meeting, the term *Bosniak* denoting national identity of South Slav Muslims has entered the formal legal procedure in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This process of reaffirmation of the name *Bosniak* was consequently continued in Montenegro in a meeting held in March, 2003 where the declaration on the name *Bosniak* signed by the members of the Bosniak intellectual elite from Montenegro gathered around the two most reminiscent associations engaged in the status of Bosniaks in Montenegro - The Almanah Association (*Udruženje "Almanah"*) and The Forum of Muslims/Bosniaks of Montenegro (*Forum Muslimana/ Bošnjaka Crne Gore*). By this declaration Bosniaks from Montenegro confirmed that they were part of the Bosniak national corpus living in Bosnia-Herzegovina and other ex-Yugoslav republics.

Foregrounding the fact that Montenegro is multinational and multi-confessional state, declaration emphasizes belief that tradition, customary and cultural particularities deeply permeated and entrenched in the landscape of present Montenegro are of great significance; that preservation of national, cultural and spiritual identity is one of the basic human rights which have future only in democratic society; that the existence of national identity can be only confirmed through creative expression of those nations and democratic defense of their rights ("Deklaracija o imenu *Bošnjak* sa imenima potpisanih" 22.03.2003).

This meeting undoubtedly galvanized the process of national affirmation of Bosniaks in Montenegro which paved the way for their more active and stalwart role in Montenegrin political, social and cultural scene.

In a complex atmosphere of searching for identities in Montenegro, the emergence of the national identification process of the Muslims/Bosniaks in Montenegro

spurred a hurried debate in inter-communal and intra-communal dynamics of Montenegro. On one side, majority of Bosniaks/Muslims accepted the term *Bosniak* in a conviction that South Slav Muslims in Montenegro were part of national corpus of Bosniaks elsewhere in the region and that a religious term *Muslim* was unfitting for designation of a nation. The opponents of the name *Bosniak* sharply rejected the notion of such national articulation claiming that behind the project of artificial designation of their nation there were nationalistic aspirations and „organized propaganda of denial and assimilation (of all Muslims from the former Yugoslavia)“. They also have accused those who declare themselves as Bosniaks to have separatist or even Islamistic pretensions in Montenegro (Ramusović, 5.5.2003).

Results of the 2003 census demonstrated expected divisions of the Bosniak corpus by which 7.77 per cent declared as Bosniaks or Bosniak/Muslims, while 3.97 per cent kept the term *Muslim* (MONSTAT, 2003:2). Bosniak leaders, however, concerned about possible political manipulation remind that this division of the Bosniak/Muslim corpus does not imply the existence of „a new nation“, but it is the same nation that till the 2003 census was declaring as *Muslims* (Rastoder, 2010:475). This stand of both factions has been embodied in an agreement signed between the factions in 2007 in order to, despite their opposite opinions, recognize the fact that Bosniaks and Muslims are one nation and to prevent further fragmentation of a unique national corpus which would be against interests of both factions („Pokušaj pomirenja“, February, 2008:8). In a similar path, Esad Kočan, a Montenegrin journalist and member of Bosniak elite, attempts at clarifying the dilemma around the name by arguing that “people are mixing the terms national identity, *matična država* (kin state), citizenship. Bosnia is *matična država* of Bosniak nation and we are the same nation. Bosnia has emotional and psychological value for many Bosniaks in Montenegro. But the fear of the territorial pretension is absurd” (qtd. in Dimitrovova, 2001:102). Kočan also emphasizes the fact that Bosniaks’ homeland is Montenegro (Ramusović, 5.5.2003). However, despite overt divisions within Bosniak/Muslim corpus, many agree that it is certainly a positive trend

having in mind that they can openly present and discuss their national issues (Ramusović, 5.5.2003, Dimitrovova, 2001:94).

Šaćir Filandra argues that Bosniaks in Montenegro share general destiny of Bosniaks from the ex-Yugoslav space and in that way they should engage in solving their national questions. With regard to that, he is concerned about the evident fragmentation of Bosniaks in Montenegro and believes that internal political crisis within the Bosniak corpus is contingent to leadership ambitions incompetent actors and general national crisis which is partly a product of ignorance and partly a product of outside influences aimed at de-nationalization of Bosniaks. For that reason, he assures, within the Bosniak corpus in Montenegro arise national, political and leadership options. He reminds that all South Slav Muslims of the post-Yugoslav space are nominally Bosniaks with the exception of fractions among Bosniaks in Montenegro. Filandra concludes that there is no possibility for the creation of three nations different by their name, conception and culture out of one nation (qtd. in Rastoder, M., 2006:34).

Šišteć and Dimitrovova likewise point out that despite the fractionalization of the Muslim/Bosniak community in terms of the nominal conception of their nation, the construction of different national community is out of the question. In addition to that they imply that “most representatives of Bosniaks-Muslims have so far been using both terms at the same time (*Bošnjaci-Muslimani* or *Muslimani-Bošnjaci*) in order not to offend any of the factions. The problem of the name will probably be resolved by natural preferences in the long run rather than by arbitrary decisions such as the consensus of the intellectual elite or state intervention and codification” (Šišteć and Dimitrovova, in Bieber, 2003:168).

4.2.3. Relation with the Sandžak Bosniaks in Serbia

As it was attempted at demonstrating previously, Bosniaks in Montenegro experienced somewhat different sociopolitical developments comparing to their co-nationals in Serbia.

Focusing on perplexity of Montenegrin sociopolitical history and intra-national relations, prime contributor to such different sociopolitical direction of Bosniaks in Montenegro is their, as well as it is the case with other minority nations in Montenegro, specific attachment and loyalty to Montenegro. In that context, Miodrag Perović (2006), Montenegrin academic, political analyst and member of the Montenegrin intellectual elite who was very vocal against the 1990s nationalist regime in Montenegro, shortly before the independence referendum stated that during the 1990s, “loyalty of Montenegrin minorities to Montenegro was fascinating. In the time when Montenegro did not guarantee them even a physical survival, they were its most loyal citizens” (2006:12).

By the same token, Šerbo Rastoder emphasizes the particularity of Montenegrin minorities’ attachment to Montenegro. He points out that this particular attachment,

noticed long time ago, is distinctive only for Montenegro in relation to all other former Yugoslav republics, that was demonstrated in numerous sociological analyses and that is clearly testified by political and other equivalents, by which minority communities demonstrate significantly larger extent of loyalty to Montenegro, than the majority religious and national population does.

(Rastoder, 2006:29)

Elaborating on the affirmation of multiparty parliamentary democracy and Montenegrin intercultural society, Srđa Vukadinović (2006) likewise emphasizes the fact that Bosniaks as being autochthonous population in Montenegro their existence firmly link to Montenegro as their homeland (2006:20).

Moreover, many studies on Montenegrin society and interethnic relations in Montenegro during the last decades register a considerable presence of ethnic distances in contemporary Montenegrin society, however, to a lesser degree than in other countries in the region. These studies also demonstrate more substantial attachment of Bosniaks to Montenegro, democracy and Europe than in the case of other entities in Montenegro and identify lower degree of ethnic distance toward other communities. Also noteworthy is the fact that according to those studies, the Montenegrin Bosniaks have the most favorable attitude towards Montenegrins and the least favorable attitude toward the Montenegrin Serbs (CEDEM, 2007:17-18).

Secondly, majority of them supported civic parties – the DPS, the SDP and Liberal Party rather than national parties and this trend particularly increased from the late 1990s when the government pursued more active positive policy towards minorities. It was particularly evident in the context of the 1990s political homogenization of Bosniaks around the Izetbegović's SDA in Bosnia and in Serbian Sandžak. As it was previously analyzed, during the years of political turmoil, oppression and war, there was a tendency towards ethnic parties and it was personified in the local branch of the SDA. However, support for the SDA was lesser than in Serbia. Adil Zulfikarpašić, elaborating on the beginnings of the SDA in the 1990 and the emergence of its more radical current in Serbia, notes that in Rožaje (predominately Bosniak town in the northern part of Montenegro) during his meeting with a number of Bosniak intellectuals they expressed their wish to form a Bosniak party or to join the SDA. However, he argues, they implied that increasing radicalization of the party and moving towards religious orientation had kept Bosniak intellectuals in Montenegro from joining the SDA (Đilas and Gaće, 1996:147).

The actual national party of Bosniaks, The Bosniak Party (BS) of Montenegro was founded in 2006 by uniting of four smaller Bosniak parties: International Democratic Union (IDU), the SDA, Bosniak Democratic Union (BMS) and National Equality Party (SNR) ("Istorijat: od ideje do parlamenta" *n.d.*). The Bosniak Party

supported the reaffirmation of Montenegrin statehood and by its political activities contributed to the pre-referendum process. The Bosniak Party in the 2009 Parliamentary Election in Montenegro participated as coalition partner to the Democrat Socialist Party, the Social Democrat Party and the Croatian Civic Initiative in the European Coalition which won the absolute majority of votes (Janković and Jovičević, 28.03.2009).

The fact that Bosniaks in Montenegro have chosen a different political path than their co-nationals in Serbia is possibly best embodied in their opposite attitudes on the issue of Montenegrin independence. Or in Šišteć and Dimitrovova's interpretation, Bosniaks have supported "the restoration of Montenegro's independent statehood and have demonstrated this with their electoral preferences and the engagement of their elites in favor of this idea, as well as in public opinion polls" (Šišteć and Dimitrovova, in Bieber, 2003:166).

In the recent heated debate regarding the idea of autonomy of the Sandžak region presented by Grand Mufti Zukorlić from the Serbian part of Sandžak, Bosniaks political leaders and majority of Bosniak intellectuals in a clear-cut sense demonstrated that they oppose the idea of autonomy of Sandžak and consequently to any division of Montenegro (Novosel and Živanović, 16.08.2010). They ascertain strategic and socio-cultural significance of this region in terms of its historical duration, social-cultural landscape and geopolitical strategic importance that could personify bridge and not point of division between Montenegro and Serbia. In the Bosniak Party, whose program supports the idea of Sandžak as a transborder region with the aim of free course of people, trade and capital, it is confirmed that their perspective is regionalization of Montenegro in the context of the European regionalization trend. Consequently, as they argue, their support is aimed at statistical and not ethnic regionalization of Montenegro („Purišić: Bošnjačka stranka nije za dijeljenje Crne Gore“, 17.06.2011).

With increasing complaints of religious, ethnic and cultural discrimination by the Chief Mufti of the Islamic Community in Serbia, Muamer Zukorlić, his call for

internationalization of that question and regional autonomy of Sandžak, once again brought the question of Sandžak into the focus of public, media, academic and political attention („Mufti Wants Autonomy, Internalization“, 31.10.2010; Jovanovic, 07.09.2010). Šaćir Filandra argues that the call for autonomy of Sandžak is a hasty reaction of Bosniaks in Serbia, it is not a realistic call and it would not have the support of the international community. He points out that while there is no doubt about the anti-Bosniak sentiments of the Serbian authorities in the recent decades but the Bosniak socio-political factor fails to find an adequate solution to such situation and to vocalize its grievances with a justifiable strategy. Filandra furthermore adds that this act of Sandžak's Bosniaks would have no real and concrete results and that everyone should accept the fact that the process of political and territorial pregrouping of the former SFRY is over („Pucanj u prazno koji nema podrške EU“, 5.9.2010:3).

Regarding this initiative, Montenegrin historian and president of the Bosniak National Council of Montenegro, Šerbo Rastoder implies that it was more question of creating the problems than the question of an actual problem.

Primarily, he argues that initiative is opinion or political projection of one political group from Serbia; secondly, similar projections appear in every-day political life, but they do not attract even approximately similar political attention. Rastoder also implies on the fact that no politically or intellectually relevant Bosniaks from Montenegro has supported this option (qtd. in Koprivica, 1.10.2010). He also assures that this problem should be analyzed and viewed within the context of the internal politics of Serbia and in relation with the election of minority national councils in Serbia („Bez podrške Bošnjaka“, 15.08.2010).

Discussion over the idea of Sandžak's autonomy reached the attention of Montenegrin public and it was stalwartly reacted to as “belated story” and “attack on territorial integrity of Montenegro”. Bosniak political and intellectual elite affirmed that that idea had no strongpoint among the members of Bosniak community in Montenegro

and that Bosniaks have demonstrated their standpoint on Montenegro's status and territory (Canka, 16.08.2010; "Priča o Sandžaku neozbiljna i ružna", 17.08.2010; „Dokazali smo se na referendumu“, 15.08.2010; „Autonomija može skupo da nas košta“, 31.08.2010; „Nema iscrtavanja granica Sandžaka“, 26.08.2010).

The overt media attention to this issue has also stirred up nationalistic and anti-Muslim rhetoric in right-wing political parties which expressed concerns over "Great Bosniak Project", "Islamic radicalism" and "Kosovization of Serbia" ("Napadaju integritet Crne Gore", 15.08.2010; "Upozoravali smo na velikobošnjački projekat", 24.08.2010, "Zukorlić ne odustaje od autonomije", 25.08.2010, "Sandžaklije traže pomoć od Vašingtona", 12.09.2010:3, "Bošnjaci krenuli Tačijevim stopama", 13.09.2010:3, "Vehabije ozbiljna prijetnja", 13.09.2010:3, "Vehabije u službi mafije", 14. 09.2010:9, "Ranku ne brine rušenje ustavnog poretka", 22.09.2010:2).

Concerned with the large publicity given to the initiative for autonomy of Sandžak, Rifat Rastoder, deputy speaker of the Montenegrin Parliament, reminds that Bosniaks of the Sandžak region have unreservedly participated in the restoration of Montenegrin independence and that anyone who overlooks that is remarkably mistaken or is not wellintentioned. He emphasizes that Sandžak as a cultural region undoubtedly exists, hence everyone should know that Montenegro as an independent state also exists. However, he adds that, judging by the extensive media campaign and comments over the Sandžak autonomy, he is concerned about still present consciousness which only the mention of the term Sandžak understands as threat or separatism („Neko Bošnjake uporno testira", 5.9.2010).

In the new sociopolitical context following the break-up with Serbia, Bosniaks have been more active in sociopolitical and cultural processes and general level of their presence in Montenegrin institutions was considerably elevated. Furthermore, the Bosniak intellectual elite through multinational parties, national parties and academic circles was dedicated to the process of democratization of Montenegro but

simultaneously played the crucial role in the consolidation of the Bosniak identity in Montenegro. However, Bosniak elite felt the need for an institutional bastion that would support Bosniak interests, the process of national maturation and integration into Montenegrin society. For that reason they took the initiative of academic expression of their interests, concerns and attitudes.

4.2.4 The Role of Bosniaks in Building the Multinational State of Montenegro

Bosniaks in Montenegro, gathered around civic or national political parties, national councils, independent or NGO organizations, have been insisting on definition, consolidation and affirmation of Montenegro as a multicultural and multinational state in the path of the European integrations. In a belief that only a civic state can conciliate challenges and demands of a particular multinational Montenegro and aware that minorities would fare best in such Montenegro, in the post-referendum public space Bosniaks have been vocal in demonstrating that Montenegrin social plurality impose the need of creation of the normative and institutional solutions which would improve equality of all Montenegrin citizens.

Along with the previously highlighted historical attachment of Bosniaks to Montenegro, the most indicative developments illustrating the stand and contribution of the Bosniaks to the creation of a civic state in Montenegro are to be found in the pre- and post-referendum sociopolitical balances.

Commenting on the overwhelming Bosniak support to the independence of Montenegro, Šerbo Rastoder argues that the main factor for this particularity is to be found in the civic and democratic concept of the pro-independence camp. He believes that a mere logic of Bosniaks in Montenegro was to follow the path of at least declarative preconditions of democracy since they are aware of the fact that every turbulent situation or ethnic homogenization in the past severed their existence and position as a minority in Montenegro. Rastoder finds that such choice was of crucial

importance in the context of the fact that the Bosniaks, as a significant minority nation in Montenegro, demonstrated the ability to have assessments and requirements directed to democratization and creation of a multiethnic society in accordance to the European parameters. Moreover, pointing out that this choice was not solely choice between two concepts of state, but rather choice between two value systems, Rastoder finds very meaningful the Bosniaks' choice of a civic perspective of Montenegro. He furthermore notes that Montenegro can only be a civic state, since it is rather impossible to create a concept of the national state within the existing Montenegrin milieu. And that reality and particularity of Montenegro, he adds, illustrates the difference between the two opposing camps regarding the question of Montenegrin independence. On one hand, the pro-independence camp signifies a common fellowship of all of those who believe that a democratic, multiethnic and multi-confessional society would be an open space for all citizens. On the other hand, the pro-unionist camp represents a value criterion by which the national affiliation would determine position of a nation in relation to Montenegro (Brajović, 20.02.2005.).

Rafet Husović, the actual president of the Bosniak Party, emphasizes that Bosniaks have demonstrated their political maturity by managing to harmonize their relationship toward the state with their national interest. He furthermore reminds that their national interest is independent, democratic, multinational and multicultural Montenegro. He believes that indicators of such maturity are illustrated in the case of the Bosniak Party which managed to harmonize its political program of an authentic representative of the Bosniak political interests with the program of the ruling coalition in Montenegro. In that context, Husović outlines that Bosniaks, by an overwhelming support to Montenegrin independence have voted for their own state, not somebody else's; that Bosniaks see Montenegro in Europe and as a member of the NATO and that the equality of all citizens can be achieved only through participation in the government and state institutions ("Govor lidera Bošnjačke stranke na završnoj konvenciji Koalicije za Evropsku Crnu Goru", *n.d.*).

By emphasizing their strong allegiance to the European future of Montenegro, the Bosniak Party sought to point out the importance of European path for Montenegro and particularly for its minority nations. On the occasion of the EC's approval of the Progress Report on Montenegro and its recommendation to open accession negotiations with Montenegro, the Bosniak party underlined that beginning of the negotiations would be an extraordinary success for entire Montenegrin society since it will help our Montenegrin institutions to strengthen and to solve existing problems in judiciary, organized crime, corruption, equal regional development etc. ("Bošnjačka stranka čestita građanima pozitivno mišljenje Evropske komisije" *n.d.*).

The position of Bosniak leaders, intellectuals and politicians toward the civic character of Montenegro is being demonstrated through many daily-politics issues in the process of consolidation of the new state.

In the context of the recent call for autonomy of the Sandžak region by certain number of Bosniak leaders in the Serbian part of Sandžak, Mevludin Nuhodžić, Bosniak and official of the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists, firmly asserting the rejection of any idea concerning the changing of Montenegrin borders within the Bosniak corpus, reminded that Bosniaks opted for a civic and democratic Montenegro. Accordingly, he added, having in mind that Bosniaks/Muslims were defined as a nation that lives in a civic and democratic state by the Constitution of Montenegro, Bosniaks do not feel any need for other territorial organizations and positioning ("Crnogorski Bošnjaci: 'Ne' autonomiji Sandžaka", 14.08.2010).

Among illustrating example of that orientation is also the reaction of Ervin Spahić, Bosniak, the SDP official and advocate of the Bosniak rights in Montenegro, regarding the question of introduction of the religious education in the Montenegrin educational system. By estimating that division of children according to religious affiliation after the the 1990s wartime divisions would mitigate additional tensions,

Spahić claimed that the introduction of religious education into schools would jeopardize the civic Montenegro (Kajošević, 28.06.2011.).

On the occasion of the parliamentary discussion on the ratification of the Agreement on Protection of the right of Montenegrin minority in Croatia, by reminding that Montenegro is a civic state, Ervin Spahić opposed to the favorization of one nation. He emphasized that such formulation regards only protection of Montenegrins in Croatia and not other nations of Montenegro that look for the equal mechanism of protection from their state (Kajošević, 09.03.2011.).

The key conditions required by the EC recommendations such as strengthening of the rule of law independence, efficacy and transparency of the judiciary were incentive for Montenegrin government to put forward a set of amendments to the Constitution related to the judiciary reforms in June, 2011. Alongside of the government's preposition for constitutional changes, the Montenegrin opposition MPs proposed their set of amendments to the Constitution regarding the identity questions in Montenegro. On the list of their demands, among others, change of state symbols, that is, introduction of Serbian as the official language and three-color national flag which was the official flag of the Republic of Montenegro during its union with Serbia (Janković, 10.10.2011). Their preposition was revoked from the parliamentary procedure since it failed to receive two-thirds majority vote in the parliament ("Crnogorska opozicija povukla predlog za promenu Ustava", 11.10.2011.).

Insistence of the opposition parties in the Montenegrin Parliament that minority nations in Montenegro should be listed by name in the Montenegrin constitution with exception of Serbs also spurred negative reactions, not only of the minority, but of Montenegrin politicians and intellectuals. Even though the Constitution states that the bearer of sovereignty in Montenegro is a citizen and that Montenegro is a civil state, opposition parties and proponents of the amendments the Constitution of Montenegro emphasized that Serbs could not be minority and that, along with Montenegrins, Serbs in

Montenegro were indigenous. In that context, opposition MPs from the pro-Serb orientated party NOVA demanded for Serbs the same status as status of Montenegrins. The leader of NOVA party, Andrija Mandić on that occasion stated that Serbs did not want the status of “a guest in their own house” (“Srbi nijesu manjina”, 29.11.2011). This, not only that questions the autochthony of other national communities in Montenegro and once again places them to a position of mere “guests in their own house” but according to many, implies to mild aspirations for redefinition of Montenegro as a civil state to a national state since it indirectly challenges the pillars of Montenegrin constitutional foundations.

While accepting the five proposed amendments regarding the questions of judiciary reforms, the Bosniak Party officials vocally rejected the preposition of the opposition parties. Suljo Mustafić, the spokesman of the Bosniak party, declared that the change of national symbols and introduction of a national flag is unacceptable given that by the declared will in the referendum and later by the Constitution Montenegro was defined as a state of equal citizens and that the question of the national flag was on the national councils to decide. Furthermore, Mustafić stated that the Bosniak Party found unacceptable the preposition regarding the decidedly listing of the minority nations with the exception of the Serbian minority by reminding that by such action the concept of the two-majority constitutive nations would be inaugurated. This would immediately violate the pillars of the Montenegrin constitution and the civic concept of state and equality of its citizens („BS: Nema potrebe za narodnom zastavom u državi građana”, 11.10.2011.).

4.2.5. Bosniaks’ Sociopolitical and Cultural Demands

The restoration of Montenegrin statehood created long-awaited ambient which opens perspectives of wide array of social reforms. In that context, expectations of Montenegrin minority nations was that this new sociopolitical context would pave the way for the consolidation of a state of all of its citizens with equal and maximal

protection of individual and collective rights. With regard to that, Bosniaks in Montenegro vocalized the need for legal and political instruments for regulation of minority rights and their protection. They also addressed the need for finding out solutions for preservation of common heritage, culture and tradition in the new state (“Kakvu Crnu Goru želimo”, 7.04.2006:13).

Starting phase in the process of affirmation of Bosniak identity in Montenegro was aimed at raising awareness of the historical, cultural and political identity of Bosniaks among both Montenegrins and Bosniaks. Furthermore, they advocated questions of their position and role in Montenegro and the need for consolidation of an institutionalized multinational and multicultural society and democratic political system. In the context of reaffirmation and consolidation of identities in the Balkans, the 2003 declaration on the national name was a turning point in the process of socio-political dynamics of Bosniaks in Montenegro. Comparing their status during the 1990s, significant steps have been done since then. In addition to the Almanah Association and NGO Forum of Bosniaks/Muslims of Montenegro, the Bosniak National Council in Montenegro (BNC), Center for Bosniak Studies and Cultural Center of Bosniak/Muslims from Montenegro were formed.

The Almanah Association for research, protection and presentation of cultural-historical heritage of Bosniaks/Muslims of Montenegro was formed in 1993 by the academics of cultural, scientific and artistic branch from Montenegro. Even though its focus is on the Bosniak community in Montenegro, members of other national communities in Montenegro participate in the organization’s projects. This association started a journal “Almanah” which brought into play topics and researches from history, literature, language, culture, ethnology, demography, etc. Furthermore, it embarked on publication of academic editions which soon have been deemed as invaluable pieces of history, culture, ethnography, literature and general scientific works.

The Forum of Muslims/Bosniaks (FMB) of Montenegro was formed in 2002 as an NGO for articulation and affirmation of interests of Muslims/Bosniaks in Montenegro aimed at contributing to preservation of their national and cultural identity, as well as to better inter-communal understanding and dialogue. The focus of this organization's activities was primarily at the constitutional, legal and general consolidation and affirmation of multicultural and multinational Montenegro. The FMB participated in the process of preparation and passing the Law on minorities and minority rights in Montenegro; in the pro-independence campaign through organizing expert seminars aimed at discussing and presenting the right of Montenegro on reaffirmation of its statehood and in the process of preparation of the constitution of the new state, particularly in the field related to human and minority rights. It was considerably active in the sociopolitical process of consolidation of Montenegro as a multicultural society by organizing seminars and round tables that gathered members of relevant institutions and prominent members of all national communities in Montenegro.

Moreover, the FMB has been urging for determining the truth about the events with elements of crime in the former SFRY, particularly the case of imprisonment and torture of Croats in the camp in Morinj (near the Risan municipality at the Montenegrin coast), deportation and liquidation of Bosnian refugees, abduction and liquidation of passengers from the train in the Štrpci station near Priboj, ethnic cleansing, torture and persecutions of Bosniak civilians from the Bukovica region near Pljevlja, liquidation of Albanian refugees in Kaludjerski Laz near Rožaje and deaths, disappearance and sufferings of Montenegrin citizens in other ex-Yugoslav republics ("Ostvareni i dalji zajednički ciljevi", January 2011:15-16). Upon the FMB's initiative, in 2009 the Assembly of Podgorica Municipality adopted the Commemorative Monument Construction Program which included construction of commemoration monument to civilian victims of the 1990s wars.

The Commemoration Park in Podgorica, built in the site of old Muslim cemetery, was officially opened by the Prime Minister Igor Lukšić in 11th of July, 2011

on the 16th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre. Montenegro was the first state in the region to mark the European Day of Remembrance of the victims in the Srebrenica genocide by opening a commemoration monument (“U Podgorici spomen-park posvećen žrtvama rata na prostorima bivše Jugoslavije”, 7.7.2011; “Spomen-park žrtvama ratova od 1991,” 11.07.2011; “Bošnjaci u Crnoj Gori pozdravili otvaranje spomen-parka”, 11.07.2011.).

4.2.6. Bosniaks’ Political Stand toward the New Regime

Bosniaks increasingly show their concerns and dissatisfaction with regard to the process of Montenegrin consolidation after the referendum. In a perplexed quest for identities and consolidation of the same, Montenegrin political structures seek to consolidate Montenegrin identity and relegate ambiguous national sentiments that could hinder its consolidation. Bosniaks, as well as members of other national communities, imply that Montenegrins have been mildly embracing tendencies to mold Montenegrin identity at the expense of other autochthonous peoples. With regard to that, their critiques are directed primarily to the Montenegrin institutions which, according to them, in a blurring fashion attempt at emphasizing Montenegrin nation and one-sided context of symbols, tradition and history.

Despite the fact that since 1990s position of minorities in general was improved and that Bosniak, Albanian and Croat intellectuals along with Montenegrins have actively participated in democratization process, considerable degree of national discrimination in political and public life and the under-presence in Montenegrin institutions is still markedly evident.

Representatives of minority communities express their concerns about disproportional national structure in public institutions at the expense of minorities and remind it would only represent serious harm to Montenegro’s future. Regarding the recent report on national structure of employees in state institutions issued by the

Montenegrin government, political leaders of both civic and national parties discussing the issue at the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee addressed the seriousness of the problem.

Government's poll demonstrated that of around 14 000 employees in state and local organs, 10.985 declared as Montenegrin, 1.194 as Serbs, 389 as Albanians, 4.1 per cent as Bosniaks, 332 as Muslims, one employee declared as Roma and 124 as Croats (Tomović, 27.07.2011.).

Members of minorities face problems in admission to diplomatic services, judiciary, prosecutor's office, and particularly, to police and military academies (Raonić et al., 2010:22). For instance, on the occasion of admission to the Montenegrin Police Academy in 2008 where of 26 applicants of Bosniak/Muslim nationality only one passed the admission exam. Bosniak leaders expressed their concerns over elements of open discrimination in Montenegro. They demanded re-consideration of this issue, revoking of the admission exam's results and sanctioning of responsible ones for discriminatory behavior (Jovičević and Sadiković, 15.09.2008).

According to the Minority Rights Group International's world directory of minorities and indigenous peoples, Bosniaks in Montenegro are under-represented in public life at the national level and in state institutions, crucially the police. Levels of poverty and unemployment among Bosniaks is higher than average (MRG World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples: Bosniaks, *n.y.*).

In 2008 the Office of the Ombudsman for Human rights and Freedom conveyed research on participation of members of minorities in state institutions. According to the research and insufficient feed-back from the state organs, the Ombudsman came to the conclusion that national structure of a considerable number of state organs and organs of local authorities inadequate and that a number of state institution demonstrate a rather irresponsible relation to the issue of minority participation in state institutions (Raonić,

B., et al. 2010:33). The Ombudsman, furthermore, reminds that proportional participation of minorities in state organs, public services and local authorities' institutions in Montenegro of crucial importance for consolidation of Montenegro as a democratic state. He assures that minority rights are a sensitive thermometer of a society and it would be impossible for Montenegro to democratize and to integrate in European and Euro-Atlantic courses while maintaining old institutional solutions and conservative political conscience ("Norme bez pokrića", 2009:18-19).

According to the YIHR research on presence of national minorities in the state institutions of Montenegro that was conveyed from December, 2009 till May, 2010 leaders of national communities in Montenegro, that have expressed their stand on the status of national minorities in state, point out considerable improvement of inter-ethnic relations comparing to the 1990s period. Hence, majority of them believe that this improvement is still unsatisfying and that degree of the lack of confidence among communities is still very high. They also point out the lack of institutions that would engage in analysis of multiethnic relations, recognition and articulation of problems and realization of activities that would focus on the solution of those problems. Moreover, they pointed out that even though Montenegro was a small country, lack of knowledge about each others was a serious obstacle for better interethnic relations. They believe that mostly state institutions and mass media are to blame since they are in position to contribute to the acquirement of general knowledge and to the conditions needed for bringing together nations living in Montenegro. Finally, political leaders imply to the fact that good interethnic relations are more consequence of heritage and tradition, and less result of an organized, planned and attentive state policy (Raonić, B. et al., 2010:19-20).

Moreover, Bosniak elite was very vocal in addressing the need for Montenegro's political and public structures to come to terms with the truth of events with elements of crime committed during the 1990s (Rastoder, R., 2006:23).

Suljo Mustafić (2007) from the Bosniak Party argues that main obstacle in the path towards the European Union is, inter alia, the silence about its own past. He adds that the Montenegrin society needs an institutional model of facing with the past (Mustafić, 2007:5). Ranko Krivokapić, the speaker of the Parliament of Montenegro, on the occasion of the Fifth Regional Forum on Transitional Justice in 2009, pointed out that Montenegro has made a significant step from the 1990s tragedy to the awareness of its mistakes and obligations, which is embodied in the Resolution on Obligations of the Agreement on Stabilization and Association adopted in the Montenegrin Parliament in 2008. According to the Resolution, Montenegro has the obligation to form an investigation - documentation center that would be engaged in investigation of the 1991-2000 events with elements of crime. Krivokapić further anchored that the institutional engagement in investigation of those events would be of great importance. He reminded that all events are processed but still waiting for judgment (“Tranziciona pravda – uslov napretka“, 29.05.2009).

In the context of coming to terms with the past, Montenegrin administration in 2000 officially expressed regret for its part in the 1990s conflict (Mihajlović, 02.11.2010) and in contrast to Serbia it fully cooperated with the International Criminal Tribunal on Yugoslavia (Hockenos, Winterhagen, 2007:42).

Moreover, all above-mentioned events with elements of crime are legally processed. Parliament of Montenegro condemned the 1995 mass crime in Srebrenica and first in the region, in 2009 adopted the Declaration of the Resolution of European Parliament on Srebrenica proposed by Rifat Rastoder on behalf of the Social Democrat Party (“Osudili zločin u Srebrenici”, 10.07.2009; Janković, 10.07.2009).

Recently conducted Census on Population, Households and Dwellings in Montenegro 2011 once again actualized national and political divisions in Montenegro. As the first census on population and housing in the independent state of Montenegro, this census while providing demographical and sociological image of a society, is

deemed very relevant for realization of constitutional, human and minority rights. Considering the fact that Montenegro, similar to other states from the region, is still in the process of completion of national, cultural and by and large spiritual self-identification, the question of this census became focus of the Montenegrin public and political space. In the wake of “the census campaign”, leaders of all national communities in Montenegro as well as some religious leaders have addressed their compatriots on the subject of overall significance of their national declaration on this census (“Popis postao političko pitanje”, 30.3.2011.).

Commenting on the question of the politicization of the 2011 census in Montenegro, Srđa Vukadinović (2011) emphasizes that census needs to be considered as a cultural, demographic and a statistical question, but not as a political question. Hence, in Montenegro, he argues, since the 2003, the question of census is being highly politicized. To set an example of such practice, Vukadinović reminds that following the 2003 census one national and religious politics stream managed to increase presence of one national group (Serbs) in comparison to the previous census from 1991 for more than 21 per cent. Regarding the 2011 census, Vukadinović criticizes relevant authorities for high level of politicization of the census demonstrated with the adoption of the Law on Census since change of regulations regarding collection of data on the basis of national affiliation and questions of language only two months before the census implies to the irresponsibility of relevant organs. He also expresses his concerns about the fact that public space in Montenegro was a stage for renewed rhetoric of biases, stereotypes, and hate speech towards many differences that exist in Montenegro despite the fact that Montenegro is *de facto* one of two multinational states in Europe (Vukadinović, 2011:23-24).

Results of the census demonstrated that percentage of those who declared as Montenegrins increased for about 2 per cent, while percentage of those who declared as Serbs decreased for more than 3 per cent. Those who declared as Bosniaks make 8.65 per cent of total population, Muslims 3.31 per cent, Muslims-Bosniaks 0.15 per cent and

Bosniaks-Muslims 0.03 per cent (MONSTAT, 2011:8-9). In the field of religious affiliation, results of the census demonstrated two categories of those who affiliate to Islam: those who declared as members of “Islamic religion” (*islamska vjeroispovjest*) make 15.97 per cent of the population, while those who declared as members of “Muslim religion” (*muslimanska vjeroispovjest*) make 3.14 per cent (MONSTAT, 2011:15). Concerning the question of two categories of affiliation to Islam, the Islamic Community of Montenegro reacted by reminding that this illogical division of affiliation to Islam in two categories should be revoked since linguistic difference of these terms was not a personification of two different religions. Further in the reaction letter, the Islamic Community reminds that it would mean violation of their legitimate rights and that they believe it is the question of a statistical error which would be corrected (“Reagovanje Mešihata Islamske zajednice u Crnoj Gori povodom rezultata Popisa stanovništva 2011”, 15.07.2011).

However, this census and general statistics area in Montenegro was estimated as satisfactory and in visible progress by the EU officials (“Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2011-2012”, COM (2011) 666 final, EU, par.30).

Taking in consideration that Montenegro firmly declared its EU aspirations by placing European enlargement agenda as a pivotal goal of its foreign and state policy, Montenegrin statesmen and representatives of state institutions assure their persistency and efforts in the process of implementation of required reforms and fulfillment of the obligations in order to meet the criteria for EU membership. The European Commission’s approval of the Progress Report on Montenegro and its recommendation to open accession negotiations with Montenegro in October, 2011 marked a new progressive stage for Montenegro’s future (“Commissioner Füle Visits Montenegro”, 2011). However, despite the progress which was incentive for this EC’s step, many in the Montenegrin political and academic stage express their concerns about Montenegrin insufficient dedication to this process. Their general concern is linked to the fact that elementary required reforms and obligations are being taken in consideration only upon

the requirements from foreign officials or experts. Moreover, even though Montenegro's endeavors in meeting the requirements for membership of the EU were assessed as positive and constructive by the EU officials ("Conclusions on Montenegro: Extract from the Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2011-2012", COM (2011) 666 final, EU, par. 1), there are still many concerns about the slow and incomplete process of harmonization of constitution with Montenegrin legislative.

CONCLUSION

The history of South Slavs, and of the Balkans in general, is by and large the history of diverse migrations caused by economic needs or frequent wars by which through centuries the ethnic image and the structure of regions and countries has been changed. The macro-cosmos of the historic, political, economic, cultural and ethnic developments in this turbulent region is the old Bosnia, the homeland of the South Slav Muslims, whose identity has been shaped by many internal and external factors. From being a border country, with Drina River as its demarcation line between the Eastern and Western Roman Empires, Byzantium and Francia, Eastern and Western Christendom, Christian and Ottoman Europe, Serbia and Hungarian-Croatian state, Bosnia has been a place for clash and encounter of different political and religious interests and ideas.

The conquering of the Balkans by the Ottomans marked the beginning of the emergence of the new national community - the South Slav Muslims, whose identity was unique vis-à-vis the *ethnies* surrounding them. Accepting Islam as their religion redefined their previously shared Slav identity in term of culture, traditions, forms of social life and the sense of a communal spirit. Despite the fact that they were autochthonous nation of the lands they lived, the new religious identity turned them into the group of *Others*, later into the minority, and not a constituent people in the Balkans. The often privileged status they had during the Ottoman rule only reinforced this sentiment.

The South Slav Muslims, who assumed the identity of the Bosniaks in the later years, populated the Balkan geopolitical midland, where they territorially live in the region from the Vardar River and mountain chain of Šara and Prokletije in the southeast to the rivers Sava and Una in the northwest. In that area, the Bosniaks largely live together with Serbs, Croats, Montenegrins, Albanians and Macedonians, each influencing significantly the identity building of all the groups individually and the identity and the relations of the region as a whole. As argued in the second chapter, after

the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and its retreat from the Balkans, Muslims/Bosniaks concentrated in few more or less compact areas, regions or wider geopolitical wholes. As a result, the South Slav Muslims/Bosniaks today populate areas of Montenegro, the Sandžak region from both sides of Montenegrin-Serbian border and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

However, as elaborated in the Chapter 2, in spite of the ethnic, cultural and sociopolitical awareness within the course of the nineteenth-century national awakening, South Slav Muslims, found between Serbian and Croatian nationalistic pressures and assimilationist policies, lacked organizational capacity to define their national identity.

The creation of Yugoslavia in its different forms during the 20th century seemed to have resolved the question of the wavering Bosniak identity, as the common Yugoslav identity was being developed and postulated as dominant. This umbrella identity was highly supported and advocated for by the Bosniaks, as they perceived it as a way of protecting themselves from the assimilative policies employed by the state and the expectations that they would eventually declare themselves as Serbs or Croats.

By introducing the category of Muslims as constituent peoples of Yugoslavia, the SFRY constitution even provided the previously ethnically divided region with a new tolerant future. As a result, not before the political crisis in SFRY and Serbian belligerent nationalism became an open threat did the national homogenization of the Bosniaks/Muslims start developing in the Sandžak region. It was a reflexive response of a community under attack, which had to be resolved as, with the escalation of ethnic conflicts in the 1990s, each republic of the former Yugoslavia sought to establish a separate socio-cultural identity.

The Muslim question was the hardest and most ambiguous one, as this group did not have a clear homeland or a kin state to turn to. As it is argued in the thesis, the most prominent factors of the Bosniak national shaping was their autochthony, Slav language

and origin, Balkan Islamic identity, multi-religious and multi-ethnic environment and social and geopolitical transformations. Moreover, their relationship toward state, members of other religious and national communities and their own identity was contingent on co-existence and conflict with other communities; pressure or tolerance of the authorities and particular patriotism or alienation within their own countries.

In the 1990s, becoming minorities in the states where not only their political and cultural being, but also their actual physical existence, was put in question, the South Slav Muslims, in Montenegro and in particular in Serbia, alienated from their countries and turned to Bosnia as their spiritual center. This marked the beginning of the creation of a distinctly separate Bosniak identity. Twenty years after the process has started, it was justified to look within this thesis at the present day character of the Bosniak identity, its features, rooting and core set of beliefs.

As elaborated in the Chapters 3 and 4, this thesis found that the Bosniak identity is not homogenous across the Balkan countries and that it varies with respect to the dominant political discourse of the countries they form part of and the attitudes of the surrounding populations. The main focus of the thesis are the Muslims/Bosniaks in Montenegro and Serbia, who are largely concentrated in Sandžak, a region shared between the two countries and which, outside the political and administrative context, has the same historic, geographical, cultural and ethnic characteristics and composition. The cases of Montenegro and Serbia demonstrate that, depending on the treatment the South Slav Muslims/Bosniaks receive from the national and ethnic groups they coexist with, the Bosnian identity can develop into two opposing trajectories – integrationist and divisionary, which ultimately influences their role within the state and society.

On one side, the positive trajectory epitomizes the trend of loyalty and patriotism of Bosniak community which has demonstrated that they are docile, loyal and keen on coexistence in secular and civic structures. This has been the case in Montenegro, where the Bosniaks were even instrumental actors in the rebuilding of Montenegrin

independence and have since stayed committed to achieving as high level as possible of integration into the wider Montenegrin society within the concept of civic citizenship. On the other hand are the Bosniaks in the Serbian part of Sandžak, which since the 1990s took an opposite path of ethno-religious nationalism. Confronted with the negative or oppressive challenges of external factors, the Bosniaks of Serbia turned to their own religious or national axis to mitigate the sense of alienation and preserve their identity. The second trajectory, hence, circumscribes a tendency towards strengthening of a collective ethnic/national identity of the Bosniaks when they are perceived to be in threat from the outside or in other traumatic experiences.

Based on the contextual and discourse analyses, this thesis concludes that the main reason behind the differences in the trajectories taken by the Bosniaks in Sandžak was the differences in the national and ethnic policies of the governing elites in the two countries. While the first part of the 1990s saw a rather uniform approach to the (mal)treatment of Muslims and their position in both Montenegro and Serbia, the year 1997 marked the beginning of a gradual detachment of the Montenegrin authorities from the Milosevic's scepter, which signified a pivotal turning point in the further sociopolitical developments in the country and, in particular, in terms of the position and stand of the Bosniaks.

Being the least ethnically homogeneous country with an additional problem of a split identity between those that feel and identify themselves as Montenegrins as opposed to Serbs (elaborated in Chapter 4), the end of the 1990s for Montenegro marked a long-awaited recalibration of nationalist politics and its decision to direct its energy, strength and resources to building a multicultural and civic society. The multicultural Montenegro of equal nations and nationalities became the bases of the platform for independent Montenegro, a goal the political elites worked for the past decade. This was reflected in the Constitution of the independent Montenegro, which inaugurated the concept of a civil state as an optimal solution for its democratic and multinational society.

The Bosniaks are a constituent people in the youngest UN member state and their language, in addition to the Montenegrin as primary and along with Serbian, Albanian and Croatian is in the official use. Consequently, as the thesis shows, this type of political setting have led the Bosniaks to adopt a low profile in conflagrante debate on Bosniak nationhood, to abstain from keeping it major political reference, and finally remained loyal to the idea of Montenegrin patriotism: and it should be assumed that this will be the case as long as the Slav Montenegrins remain loyal to the idea of civic state.

On the opposite side of the border, the Serbian part of Sandžak has been considerably affected by the administrative and economic neglect of the Serbian authorities and it consequently saw a greater level of national and religious homogenization. The Yugoslav wars and the collapse of Yugoslavia have galvanized changes in respect to the perceived character of Islamic identity of Bosniaks by the majority population. The demonization of Bosniaks as Muslim fundamentalists, anti-Bosniak rhetoric that restored the image of the old-age enemies of Orthodoxy, re-employment of the thesis of “green corridor” as aspiration of Balkan Muslims to penetrate into Europe and finally the tragic outcome of national ferment have contributed to the increased tensions between Sandžak and the rest of Serbia’s population. Moreover, by defining Serbia as a state of Serbs and other citizens in the Serbian Constitution, Bosniaks in Serbia were given the status of “guests in their house” and sentiment of a “second-class” citizens. As a result, the party politics in the Serbian part of Sandžak witnessed radicalization of the discourse on the Bosniak identity and the concentration of the voters in ethnically based parties, while in Montenegro, the majority of the Bosniaks, in fact, support civic parties, additionally stressing the differences between the two parts of the same region.

Even though the Montenegrin Constitution meets the principles of civic and multinational state’s framework, the actual Montenegrin socio-political reality has yet to become the reality of a civic character. In the light of the assessment of the relevancy of the Bosniak support to Montenegrin independence, it is noteworthy to say that the more

active participation of Bosniaks in the political debate points to a more open democratic space which allows for a more meaningful competition and efforts in the course of democratization of Montenegro.

Having in mind the historical, cultural and political particularity of Montenegrin multinational composition, in the context of ongoing identity politics, Montenegro is in the challenging process of democratization and consolidation of a multinational and multicultural society. As the thesis attempts to demonstrate, faced with many challenges and obligations, Montenegro seeks to make steps of improvement in the path of construction of its identity as a civic, democratic and multinational state. In the society where the divisions in the form of polarized identity perceptions, identity politics and traditional and mythologized past still exist, the role of cultural and political elite is of outlasting importance for contemporary Montenegrin society.

Given that Montenegro is still at the beginning of its state and national building, questions of identities and multinational relations in Montenegro continue to be perplexed with the effects of the slow process of institutionalization of the most relevant contents and characteristics of a multinational and multicultural society. In order to ensure its future integration into the EU and its continuous democratization process, the Montenegrin political elite needs to be aware of the need to invest in maintaining its multicultural and multiethnic balance. The conclusions about the main drivers in the formation of a specific civic and integrative character of the Bosniak identity in Montenegro vis-à-vis the pro-secessionist and ethnically based characteristic of the Bosniak identity across the Sandžak border in Serbia offered by this thesis, could serve as the guiding principle in the determination of the new national policies that will affect all of the national groups in Montenegro. The findings could also be of use to the political elites in Serbia, as the unrests and unresolved ethnic, religious, economic and political issues in its southern Bosniak-populated part of the country could have wider and severe consequences for the entire Balkan region. The different evolution of the Bosnian identity in the Sandžak region split between the two countries demonstrates a

compelling argument that the policies of the states in multicultural societies, more than not, have a deep impact on the values fostered by their societies, and that unless carefully designed and balanced, these policies can jeopardize the unity and stability of the states themselves.

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