# SANDŽAK AND SANDŽAKLIJE IN A STATE OF FLUX: NATION-BUILDING AND POLITICS OF IN/EXCLUSION BETWEEN SERBIA, MONTENEGRO, AND BOSNIA DURING THREE DECADES OF YUGOSLAVIA'S DISINTEGRATION[1]

*Daniel Heler – Markéta Slavková*

Abstract: ***This article deals with the contemporary history of Sandžak in the broader context of the politically, socially, and culturally formative processes that accompanied the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). The focus is the formation and negotiation of ethno-national identities amongst the local people of Muslim origin in relation to the recent regional political developments. The article discusses mainly the political negotiations of the "Sandžak Muslim" identity in the context of the three capitals of Belgrade, Podgorica, and Sarajevo. We suggest that the aforementioned social, political (state-building processes, regime and ideology metamorphoses), and also economic transformations in Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia had a significant impact on development of public identities amongst the people of Muslim origin who inhabit the historical region of Sandžak. These issues also open the question of the politics of social inclusion and exclusion, since*** **Sandžaklije** ***of Muslim origin were often excluded and some even persecuted in the relatively recent past by the dominant regime. This study is based on an interdisciplinary approach combining mainly historical and political analysis with the additional application of sociocultural anthropology.***

Keywords: ***Sandžak; Bosniaks; Muslims; national identity; national minorities; ethnicity; interethnic relations; social inclusion and exclusion; integration; state-building; break-up of Yugoslavia***

[1] This work was supported by the Charles University SVV grant No. 260460 and the Slovak Research and Development Agency under the contract No. APVV-14-0431.

The Sanjak of Novi Pazar or *Novopazarski Sandžak*[2] is, in the original Ottoman Turkish sense, the ensign, and, in the figurative sense, the Ottoman military-administrative unit. It represents a little known, yet remarkably interesting region because of its turbulent history and sociocultural and religious diversity. Besides, from the political and security point of view, it represents a somewhat "controversial" presence. By its geographical location between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Serbia, Sandžak constitutes an important region within the "Neo-Ottoman crescent" stretching from Velika Kladuša in Bosnia to Istanbul, which also connects Pomoravlje with the Adriatic (Džudžević, 2012: 15–17).[3]

Despite various attempts of ethnonational homogenisation in the past more than hundred years, Sandžak is still inhabited by diverse populations of South Slavs, namely, people of Muslim origin (i.e. mainly "Bosniaks" and "Muslims"),[4] "Orthodox Serbs", and "Montenegrins". This study attempts to discuss the political and social development of the changing relationships between the identity categories of "Muslims" and "Bosniaks" in particular historical periods.

"Bosniaks" and "Muslims" constitute the slight majority of the population in this cross-border and "ethnically" diverse region, making up roughly three-fifths of inhabitants in Serbian Sandžak and two-fifths in the Montenegrin (approximately a quarter of a million people in total) (*Popis stanovništva, domačinstva i stanova 2011 u Republici Srbiji*, 2012; *Stanovništvo prema nacionalnoj pripadnosti*, 1991).[5] The main goal of this study is to explore the

[2] Hereinafter we mostly use the shortened *emic* appellation "Sandžak", by which we mostly refer to Novopazarski Sandžak – our subject of study.

[3] From the overall area of approximately 8,409 km$^2$, the part of Sandžak that is situated in south-western Serbia (municipalities of Novi Pazar, Tutin, Sjenica, Nova Varoš, Prijepolje, Priboj) encompasses 4,504 km$^2$, and the Montenegrin part located in the north-east of the country (municipalities of Bijelo Polje, Pljevlja, Rožaje, Berane, Plav, Gusinje) has 3,905 km$^2$.

[4] Muslims (in Serbo-Croatian *Muslimani* with capital M or formerly *muslimani*) refers to both the religious affiliation, but also to a "national" and/or "ethnic" identity. Some people of Muslim origin identify as "Bosniaks". In present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina, other successor states of the socialist Yugoslavia, as well as internationally, the preferred term is "Bosniaks"; on the other hand, it bears evident connotations with the land of Bosnia. Sandžaklie (*Sandžaklije*) is a name commonly used for the diverse populations inhabiting the Sandžak region. Some of them declare to be "Bosniaks" and some "Muslims". Others have internalised other identities, such as "Montenegrin" or "Yugoslav".

[5] Based on the results of the last Yugoslav census from 1991, Slavic Muslims in Montenegro numbered 89,614, more than half of them living in rural types of settlements, while in the Serbian part of Sandžak, 174,176 people with a declared Muslim national identity residing mostly in urban settlements were counted. Yet, if we take a closer look at the region, we observe more considerable differences in the ethnic composition among various communities. In the Montenegrin part, people of Muslim Sandžak origin make up slightly more than 40% of the total population.


Fig. 1. Map of *Sandžak*. Source: https://www.wikiwand.com/sh/Sandžak

political development in Sandžak and the ethnonational genesis of *Sandžaklije* with a focus on the Bosniak and Muslim identity categories in the past three decades. This is put in the broader context of the disintegration of socialist Yugoslavia, while placing an emphasis on the politically, socially, and culturally formative processes triggered by this event.

We discuss the historical and political development of Sandžak in relation to identity formation amongst its inhabitants of Muslim origin during the past 30 years. We ask what relations have the *Sandžaklije* developed with the states, regimes, and dominant nations they have been living in/with? How have the changes of political and economic regimes in present-day Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina affected the formation of *Sandžaklije's* public identities? What role did the Balkan conflicts in the 1990s play in this process?

And last but not least, to what extent are these identities constructed by the elites, and thus how do the "ordinary people" experience and express themselves in everyday life?

## Theoretical and Methodological Approaches

Our suggestions and arguments are prevailingly based on the findings of Heler's Master's thesis (2014), which is written from the perspective of contemporary history and political science. The key approach was a critical analysis of historical and political narratives of the contemporary history of Sandžak and nation-building written by its elites. Apart from this, Heler has repetitively undertaken shorter study visits to the Serbian and Montenegrin parts of Sandžak between 2013–2018, conducting participant observation and informal conversations with the region's inhabitants. In 2018, these findings were revised and reinterpreted in cooperation with the sociocultural anthropologist Slavková. Additionally, the authors have carried out short-term ethnographic fieldwork during a week-long visit to Sandžak in February 2018 to validate and specify previous research findings. However, in this case, ethnography was used only as a supplementary method, and the vast majority of data was produced as part of a historical and political analysis. The short period of fieldwork consisted mainly of participant observation with informal interviews. During the fieldwork, the authors visited several localities in Sandžak, including: Priboj, Nova Varoš, Sjenica, and Novi Pazar (Serbia).[6]

From the anthropological perspective, which is grounded in a non-judgemental approach, we attempt to partly question the ethno-national-religious identity categorisations that are to a large extent the product of a political discourse, and at the same time emphasise the complexity and diversity of actual identifications of the social actors. This is also the reason why we chose to generally use quotation marks when referring to the ethno-national-religious ascribed identity labels. Bartulović (2007) calls for a more careful choice of terminology, and encourages exploring the production and workings of national identity, as well as other types of identities of the social actors. Similarly, Slavková (2017) refuses methodological nationalism as an entry point of the analysis in her dissertation concerning the post-war development in contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina.

[6] Relevant documents, artifacts were collected, and photo-documentation was made to record visual information concerning the studied phenomena.

This is further reflected in our choice of terminology when describing specific groups. Our ethnographic observations have suggested that despite some efforts of nation-building amongst the studied groups, we can hardly speak of a homogeneity. For this reason, we prefer to speak of the "people of Muslim origin inhabiting the Sandžak region" (or simply *Sandžaklije*). Not all of these individuals are religious, as they come from a specific religious tradition, and also, there are various expressions of identity on the everyday level; for example, local identity remains important in many parts of former Yugoslavia. Here, we focus mostly on the political, and in some cases, religious public identities, which are socially constructed by the ruling elites in a historical perspective.

Within the body of existing academic literature, the contemporary history, local politics, and "ethno-genesis" of *Sandžaklije* stays mostly outside the focus of foreign researchers, who tend to explore diverse places in the former Yugoslavia, but seem to be less interested in this historical cross-border region. Shorter studies on the studied issues were produced by e.g. Dimitrovova (2001), Šístek (2009), and Andrejevich (1997), and amongst monographs, the only exception is the book *The Sandžak: A History* written by Kenneth Morrison and Elizabeth Roberts (2013). The topic has recently been also intensively explored by scholars, intellectuals, and activists from the former Yugoslavia, such as Džudžević (2012), Crnovršanin and Sadiković (2001), Fijuljanin (2010), Kurpejović (2006), Imamović (2007), Kočar (2006), Andrijašević and Rastoder (2006), etc.

To summarise, in this article, we seek to explore identity in the context of the aforementioned anthropological discussions. And thus, we attempt to contribute to the fields of history, political science, and international relations, in which generally only declared ethnonational identity is taken into account, while other expressions of identity as well as the *emic* perspective of the social actors are absent or tend to be reduced.

## Sandžak – A Short Historical Overview

In the discussions led by *Sandžaklije* since the 1980s, we can find various definitions of Sandžak as a distinctive historical and sociocultural region, yet the delineations of its geographical borders vary. One of the common themes in the self-defining narratives is the expulsion of various groups of Slavic Muslims from the lands that became parts of Serbia and Montenegro prior to the Balkan Wars (1912–1913). These areas are also perceived as parts of

Sandžak in Muslim and Bosniak nation-building narratives. On the other hand, the Serbian national(ist) historical discourse defines the geographical space of Sandžak as overlapping with the Old Rascia (*Raška*)[7] – nowadays considered one of the most important sources of Serbian statehood. The remains of Ras are to be found in the close proximity of Novi Pazar. In Montenegro, the term "North" does not always refer to the Montenegrin part of Sandžak, but with a bit of exaggeration, to a large part of the country without the capital, the Nikšić region, and the coast.

Briefly addressing the historical development, since the Second Siege of Vienna, the Ottoman Empire was transforming from being an active actor in great power politics into not only the object of the imperialism of Russia, Austria, and the Western colonial powers, but also into the "victim" of irredentism by the as yet inferior and underprivileged groups of Ottoman subjects. The underprivileged subjects – the *Raja* (Rayah)[8] - called for the de-feudalisation and improvement of the poor socio-economic conditions (known as the "Turkish Yoke"). Subsequent nation-building processes developed around two faiths, Christianity and Islam, which gradually shaped Sandžak from the land of two faiths into the region of "two nations". With the Great Eastern Crisis and the subsequent appropriation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878 by the Austro-Hungarians, the Sandžak of Novi Pazar became the northern-most domain of the Ottoman Empire in Europe.

The people of Muslim origin inhabiting Sandžak were aware of its problematic position in-between the newly emerging Balkan nations. Since the *fin de siècle,* this realisation slowly transformed into purposive nation-building, which was initially led by solitary "nation revivalists" and was based on the common understanding of history and presence (collective injustice in particular, but also the remembrance of the "golden" Ottoman Age). Specific religious and sociocultural differences, which functioned as an identity marker dividing Muslims from Christians of both the Eastern and Western rite, also played an important role, and later, this gap was deepened even further by the social construction of separate languages derived from the common South Slavic language (Heler 2016).

[7] In the Middle Ages, a part of the Serbian Principality with its historical centre in Ras – *Arsa* in Latin.

[8] The expression *Raja* (in English "Rayah" or "Raya") from the Ottoman Turkish, or Arabic, respectively, is used mainly as a term for non-Muslim and/or underprivileged subjects/people/class in the Ottoman system of the Millets. In contemporary colloquial language, *raja* means simply "common people", "bunch of people", or in Bosnian slang, also a "cool person".

In the emerging Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the national question proved to be of imminent importance in relation to the statehood and regime stability. The area was inhabited by culturally diverse populations, and the heritage of the millet system imposed certain class connotations. There were numerous casualties during the Second World War and inconceivable atrocities were committed, which then significantly shaped the further development of social cohesion and the notion of "ethnic" identity among the region's inhabitants. In contrast to this, the strategy of the newly emerging Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was to organise these diverse populations under the motto of "brotherhood and unity". The accentuation of a united collective identity went hand in hand with Yugoslavia's shift towards initially the Soviet, and later the specific Yugoslav socialist self-management model (*samoupravni socijalizam*).

These political and more general social impulses had been, little by little, approaching the periphery of Sandžak, which helped spread the national-religious identity discourse of the local people of Muslim origin that eventually developed into political ideology during the violent break-up of Yugoslavia. With the disintegration of the SFRY, Sandžak happened to be a part of Milosević's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), divided between its two respective federal units, and since 2006, the region has been again divided by the frontier of independent Montenegro and Serbia (similarly to the situation one hundred years ago) (Heler, 2016).

## The Politics of Difference and Social Exclusion in the "Third Yugoslavia'

The "interethnic relations" in Sandžak started to be questioned by the late 1980s[9], despite of the nearly four decades of relatively good relations between diverse populations in the region. In the Serbian national(ist) discourse, the local "Muslims" have gradually begun to be often referred to as the ones "turned into Turks" (*poturice*) – an alien, who is suspicious and also a potential bearer of extremist religious ideas imported from the Middle East (Mandić, upcoming). Put differently, they have been increasingly defined as *the Other*. Within a similar logic, the political and religious representatives were perceived by some as "agents of Bosniak nationalism" spreading from Sarajevo; at the same time, the town of Novi Pazar was interpreted as the "Islamicised medieval

[9] In regional political centres such as Belgrade, Sarajevo, and Titograd/Podgorica, as well as in Sandžak.

Serbian metropolis of Ras" and Sandžak as a part of the "Green Transversal" that connects Bosnia and Herzegovina with Istanbul but separates Serbia from Montenegro (Kurpejović 1998).

It is evident that the political rights of Slavic Muslims in Serbia and Montenegro (at the time of the emerging Federal Republic of Yugoslavia/"Third Yugoslavia") were curtailed, and people of Muslim origin were understood as a problematic "ethnic minority" and discriminated (International Crisis Group 2005). As elsewhere in Yugoslavia, incidents that were as yet isolated occurred also in Sandžak, which led to the evocation of traumatic memories of the bloody events of the Second World War (Morrison and Roberts 2013: 130).

Mustafa Imamović (2007) denotes the period after the death of Josip Broz Tito as the time of the commencement of "Great Serbian hegemonism" that revoked most of the achievements of the SFRY, including the constitutional order established in 1974 (Imamović 2007: 568). Slobodan Milošević's accession to power and the so-called Anti-bureaucratic Revolution are commonly perceived in the "Bosniak discourse" as an attempt to pursue the plan to create the "Great Serbia".[10] In Imamović's (2007) and Fijuljanin's words (2010), "Serbian and Croatian fascists" coming to power in late 1980s wanted to divide and eliminate the "Bosniak nation". According to Kurpejović (1998), since 1987, Yugoslavia saw "more than a decade of crimes against humanity, genocide(s), ethnic cleansing, killing of civilians, raping and satanisation of Muslims with the goal of final destruction of the nation".

In order to "protect the national interests" of the people of Slavic Muslim origin in Sandžak, the Muslim National Council of Sandžak (*Muslimansko nacionalno vijeće Sandžaka* – MNVS) was established in May 1991 (Kočar 2006),[11] renamed two years later (in connection to the official name shift in Bosnia) as the Bosniak National Council of Sandžak (BNVS). During the Bosnian war, the MNVS/ BNVS made various efforts to internationalise the problem of Sandžak. Its first chairman and for some time the undisputed leading figure, Sulejman Ugljanin, participated in the peace conferences on former Yugoslavia held in Geneva and London (Fijuljanin 2010: 40).[12] Former

[10] As outlined in the SANU Memorandum in 1986, and also 140 years earlier by Ilija Garašanin in his "Nacertanije".

[11] In the words of local Bosniak activist Semiha Kočar, to "address the ethnic cleansing and terror that the regime of Slobodan Milošević carried over Bosniak people in Sandžak and elsewhere." (Kočar 2006: 34).

[12] Sulejman Ugljanin led talks *inter alia* with Cyrus Vance or David Owen.

BNVS members mostly considered this organisation a key player that served during the war as a "factor of peace and stability despite the provocations of Serbian repressive apparatus" (Džudžević 2011). The BNVS was also implicitly described as a defence platform of Sandžak Muslims in case the war spilled over the Bosnian borders. There were rumours about the secret formation of a local "Bosniak militia", however, most of the Sandžak Muslims who were willing to fight the Serbs and Croats left for the battlefields in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Andrejevich 1997; Crnovršanin and Sadiković 2005; Zulfikarpašić 1998).

Prior to this in the summer of 1990, in connection with the introduction of a multi-party system in Yugoslavia, the Muslim national(ist) Party of Democratic Action (SDA), led by Alija Izetbegović, established daughter parties in other republics of the disintegrating federation. These parties were based on the idea that the Slavic Muslims outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina had been considered by its leadership in Sarajevo to be members of a "single and indivisible" Muslim (later Bosniak) nation (Morrison 2008: 4). Alija Izetbegović himself visited Novi Pazar in July 1990, gathering thousands of his supporters in an SDA rally.

The establishment of SDA branches in Montenegro and Serbia increased tensions between the *Sandžaklije* and authorities in Belgrade and the former Titograd (present-day Podgorica). The Serbian and Montenegrin political leaders told people to fear the possible security threats that could arise from the political activities of SDA. These concerns were supported by the strong rhetoric of not only MNVS and SDA Chairman Sulejman Ugljanin, who openly began to argue in favour of a broad autonomy for Sandžak, and even opened up the question of "independence" (Morrison 2008: 4). However, political representatives of *Sandžaklije* still participated in parliaments and the other political bodies of Serbia, Montenegro, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Fijuljanin 2010; Crnovršanin and Sadiković 2005).

At the time, the influence of SDA, MNVS, as well as other Muslim national(ist) associations/organisations was not spread throughout the entire Sandžak region due to various internal and external reasons. Generally speaking, the centre of the nation-building Muslim and Bosniak movements can be found in the city of Novi Pazar, and its influence weakened in accordance with the "ethnic" composition. The ruling regime in Montenegro has been a much more (self)confident power holder than its counterparts in Belgrade, and thus it felt a lesser need to instrumentally create the ethno-religious divisions that played an important role in the process of maintaining good relations amongst the various countries' populations (Šístek 2009: 35).


Fig. 2. Graffiti on a building in Novi Pazar calling for the autonomy of *Sandžak*.
Photo: Markéta Slavková, 2018

At the same time, in early 1990s, Sandžak became a topic of negotiations between the political representations in Belgrade and Sarajevo about possible conciliatory solutions to the impending war. Discussions between the group around Alija Izetbegović (Adil Zulfikarpasić and Muhamed Filipović) and Radovan Karadžić, Nikola Koljević, Momčilo Krajišnik (under Slobodan Milošević), remain clouded in mystery, and cannot be accurately verified as they differ substantially (Filipović, 2008). Evidently, these talks did not stave off the coming war.

At the beginning of the Bosnian war, the MNVS and SDA in Sandžak announced a boycott of state institutions and political bodies at all levels, and using the example of Kosovo, called for passive resistance or a sort of "parallel autonomy" (Fijuljanin 2010, Dančák and Fiala 2000). This was affirmed later when the assembly of the MNVS adopted the "Memorandum on the Establishment of Special Status for Sandžak" in June 1993. The "Special Status" proclaimed the autonomy of Sandžak as a part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and demanded guarantees for the "peaceful development" of


Fig. 3. Promotional poster for the political party "United Serbia" on a hotel door in Priboj. Photo: Markéta Slavková, 2018

the region as the key condition of cooperation regarding the international recognition of FRY and lifting sanctions (Džudžević 2011).

Also, Sulejman Ugljanin, at that point in exile, who represented the nationalist wing of the local Muslim political representation, began to openly support the idea of joining Sandžak with Bosnia. Rasim Ljajić (once Ugljanin's deputy and his collaborator) adopted a more careful approach towards Belgrade, which led to tensions in the national movement and the party. Part of the people of Muslim origin, however, remained active within the ruling Socialist Party of Serbia/Montenegro or the Yugoslav Left (JUL) that to some extent followed the rhetoric of Tito's Yugoslavia (International Crisis Group 2005). Logically, from their point of view, the Socialists and JUL were certainly a more acceptable option than Šešelj's Serbian Radical Party (SRS), Drašković's Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), or other nationalist parties.

The "Memorandum on Special Status" was adopted based on the referendum organised by MNVS in 1991 as a response to similar referendums by the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia. Džudžević (2011) states that of the 264,000

"eligible voters", 185,000 participated, and nearly 99% of them voted in favour of the political and territorial autonomy of Sandžak with "the right to join any of the remaining republics of SFRY".[13] The results of the referendum are often called into question since the inhabitants of Montenegro of Muslim origin were likely to be less supportive of autonomist agenda due to the fact that this part of Sandžak has generally preserved better relations amongst its inhabitants, and the "Pazar hardliners" weren't always accepted there (Andrejevich 1997: 174–176).

For Serbian and Montenegrin authorities, the Serbian public, and last, but not least, the "Orthodox communities" in Sandžak, the referendum represented a clear sign of separatism, because they assumed that the autonomous Sandžak would not opt either for Montenegro or for Serbia. Following the referendum, the representatives of the SDA and MNVS declared the sovereignty of Sandžak as a Yugoslav republic, and demanded the deployment of UN forces for the protection of the population of Muslim origin (Lazić 2013: 940). Belgrade's governing elites reacted with the strategy of exclusion and suppression. Formal charges of subversion and distortion of the sovereignty of Yugoslavia in Serbia and Montenegro followed the arrests of four dozen members and trials with the SDA leaders in both of the republics, accompanied by "media-fuelled nationalist hysteria" (International Institute of Middle East and Balkan Studies a Policy Documentation Centre, 2005; Andrijašević and Rastoder 2006; Crnovršanin and Sadiković 2005). In reaction to this, the prosecuted chairman of SDA and BNVS Sulejman Ugljanin fled to exile, where he continued his political activities; he tried to make Sandžak visible in the "eyes" of the "international community", and continued to influence local politics (Crnovršanin and Sadiković 2005).

Since the spring of 1992, the city of Novi Pazar and other smaller settlements in Sandžak were threatened by the massive and ostentatious presence of the Yugoslav army (e.g. artillery posts on the tops of hills around Novi Pazar), reinforced units of militia (police), and inglorious Serbian paramilitary formations. *Sandžaklije* became the targets of threats by Serbian nationalists, including police terror and preventive repression,[14] as well as kidnappings, robberies, murders, and massive human rights violations (International Crisis Group, 2005; Crnovršanin and Sadiković 2005: 673, 685–686). As a result, tensions amongst Sandžak's inhabitants increased significantly, and the level of mutual

[13] Bosniak national discourse often uses the expression "re-unification with Bosnia and Herzegovina".

[14] E.g. "exploratory talks", "campaign of disarmament", and various sorts of other types of discrimination.

trust between the two main ethnonational groups started to diminish, which was further supported by armed conflicts in the broader region (Morrison and Roberts, 2013: 146). The aforementioned threats and violent events inevitably had an impact on everyday neighbourly relations.

The situation became particularly tense on the frontiers with Bosnia and Herzegovina. That, of course, raised concerns in Belgrade and Podgorica, where the governing elites did not wish the conflict to spread to their territory. Nevertheless, numerous violent incidents were recorded when the Serb paramilitary units threatened and terrorised people of Sandžak Muslim origin (possibly with the intention to spill the armed conflict over to Serbia and Montenegro). In the Serbian part of Sandžak, the ethnic cleansing began in the municipality of Priboj situated on the border with Bosnia, where parts of the Yugoslav army and the Serbian police were concentrated. Particularly shocking to the local inhabitants was the abduction and subsequent execution of altogether 35 SRY citizens of Muslim origin in Bosnia's Serb controlled territory, which happened in the Sjeverin and Štrpci massacres[15] (Fišer 2012: 53–54; Kočar 2006: 33).

In Montenegro, the most serious incident occurred in the border municipality of Pljevlja, where in the village of Bukovica, Bosnian Serb troops, with the participation of local security force members, massacred a number of *Sandžaklije* of Muslim origin and expelled the rest (Andrijašević and Rastoder 2006: Fijuljanin, 2010: 120–122; Morrison 2008: 5–6). Well-known is also the *Chetnik* paramilitaries takeover of the town of Pljevlja during the summer of 1992, where a massacre of local inhabitants of Muslim origin was averted only by an intervention of Montenegrin and Yugoslav political leadership (Morrison 2008: 5–6). These events are, in the "Bosniak" and "Muslim" discourses, understood as reminiscent of *Chetnik* massacres committed in the area during the Second World War.

Amongst others, Crnovršanin and Sadiković, as well as *Sandžaklijes'* public opinions, mostly deem these incidents as part of a plan to create a *cordon sanitaire* to detach them from Bosnia (Crnovršanin and Sadiković 2005: 679). As a reaction to these violent acts and the growing insecurity, Sandžak villages near the frontiers, inhabited by people of Muslim origin, were deserted during the Bosnian war (Ibid.). Within the Bosniak nation-building narrative, these

[15] The Sjeverin massacre on 22 October 1992. Sixteen Serbian citizens of Muslim origin were kidnapped from a bus nearby the border in Bosnia and subsequently tortured and murdered in Višegrad. During the Štrpci massacre, 19 civilians were abducted from a train and murdered on 27 February 1993 nearby Višegrad.

violent events are often interpreted as part of the "never ending cycle of genocide committed upon us" (Crnovršanin and Sadiković 2001).

The Yugoslav Army and police tolerated crimes committed mostly by the "Serbian volunteers" and Bosnian Serb forces, and thus clearly favoured the ethnonational logic over the protection of their own citizens. As a result, dozens of local people of Muslim origin were killed, many more fled their homes, and the "interethnic" relations further deteriorated throughout Sandžak (Kočar 2006: 33). According to various "Muslim" and "Bosniak" organisations, approximately 15,000 *Sandžaklije* were subjected to various forms of violence by Serbian, Montenegrin, and federal authorities and nationalists (Fijuljanin 2010: 40; Crnovršanin and Sadiković 2005: 686). Morrison (2008: 7) notes that Sandžak became a favourite "excursion destination" for Serbian fascist and nationalist politicians, such as Vuk Drašković or Vojislav Šešelj, accompanied by their "paramilitary boys". In the autumn of 1993, Serbian warlord and MP for Priština, Željko Ražnatović, visited Novi Pazar on the occasion of the football match between FC Novi Pazar and FC Priština, followed by violent clashes between the two clubs (divided on an ethnonational basis) (Ibid.).

The consequence of such a "policy of terror" was a mass exodus of the inhabitants of Muslim origin – the estimated number of refugees is about 60–80,000 (Morrison, 2008: 3). With regard to the massacres and number of refugees, the representatives of the "Muslim" and "Bosniak" leadership called for the deployment of international troops to protect *Sandžaklije*, which even further exacerbated the already poor relations with the governing regime (Ahrens 2007: 226). 11 July was later declared by the BNVS to be the "National Day of Remembrance of the Genocide of Bosniaks in Srebrenica", but also as a day to commemorate the victims of the massacres in Sjeverin, Bukovica, and Štrpci, as well as of older historic massacres of local "Bosniaks", which are understood within the nationalist discourse as the "Serbian Orthodox occupation" and the hundred-year-long "Golgotha" of the "Bosniak nation" (Fijuljanin 2010: 51).

In the context of the war rage of 1993, the Congress of Bosnian Muslim Intellectuals in Sarajevo was convened. The congress decided that the Muslims shall "return" to the traditional name/ethnonym *Bošnjaci* (Bosniaks), and members of the nation were defined based on religion (Islam in this case), Bosnian (*bosanski*) language,[16] common heritage, culture and traditions, and belonging

[16] Bosnian language was created and defined as a Ijekavian variant of the Shtokavian dialect written in the Latin alphabet with a hypertrophied presence of Orientalisms (Turkisms).

to the patria of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Džudžević 2011: 18).[17] The language of the inhabitants of the former Yugoslavia, in particular Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia, is, in principle, very similar, and marginal differences (usually in vocabulary) often originate from the respective religion and achieved status (Steinke 2014: 220).

The name change from "Muslim" to "Bosniak" is worth mentioning since it is not only a simple switch of ethnonyms, but it bares much more significance. The war in Yugoslavia led to the accentuation of the ethnonational aspect of identity, and changed the sense of belonging amongst the affected populations. Pilipenko argues that it was the "re-formation while maintaining the basic elements of its structure" (Pilipenko 2014: 64). Moreover, Šístek points out that, unlike in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in certain parts of Sandžak, these labels had not disappeared during the socialist period, which "could partially explain the more or less smooth adoption of the new ethnonym" in some parts of the region during the 1990s (Šístek 2014: 3).

Interestingly, from the bottom-up perspective, the dichotomy between "Bosniaks" and "Muslims" seems to be largely artificial, and related (at least in Montenegro) primarily to the nationalist elites vying for political support, and as it usually happens, also for material means. Despite the apparent politicisation of this dichotomy, the ethnonational identity of majority of the "Bosniaks" is still very much interchangeable with the "Muslim" identity, and vice versa. It is quite common to use the terms "Bosniak" and "Muslim" as synonyms in everyday conversation.

How fluid these categories are is also suggested by the fact that some people of Muslim origin perceive Serbian as their mother tongue (the most numerous answer in Montenegro in the latest census); other frequent answers are Montenegrin or Serbo-Croatian, however Bosnian also appears frequently (*Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova u Crnoj Gori* 2011). A large number of the population did not want to specify the name of their mother tongue (24,748), and a smaller number titled the language simply as "mother tongue" (3,318) (*Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova u Crnoj Gori* 2011). This situation can be compared to the brief conversations that took place about 140 km away in Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina at the beginning of 2018, when two locals, Mirza and Edin, coincidently expressed the same opinion concerning

[17] In the town of Tutin, a "Centre for Bosniak Study" was established as national institution in order to pursue the history, culture, language and literature of Bosniaks, and also issues the journal *Bošnjačka riječ*.

the "language matter" – they claimed that it would be the best to call all of the languages the former Yugoslavia as the "Balkan languages", both laughing as they said that.[18]

This furthermore shows that the notion of "ethnicity" and "nationality" is a social construction, as is the label of the language itself, and is used flexibly and instrumentally to communicate certain opinions. Despite of the diversity of appellations, we can speak of a linguistic unity of Southern Slavic populations (including the various groups of "Muslims" and "Bosniaks").

Nevertheless, on the political level, the Congress had almost an immediate impact on developments in Sandžak, which was understood by the Serbian and Montenegrin authorities and public opinion as if the "Bosniaks" were now the "fifth column of Alija Izetbegović" (Dimitrovova, 2001: 98). In a publication by the BNVS titled "The Bosniak Identity," Bosniaks are defined as an indigenous people/nation of the Balkans that differs from other nations by being denied the right to a national identity, the "hundred years of struggle" for national affirmation is seen as a "fight for physical self-preservation", and "*Chetnik* genocides" during both the Second World War and the 1992–1995 conflict are considered as the culmination of the long-lasting oppression (Džudžević 2012: 5).

With the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the emergence of an entity at the borders of Sandžak called *Republika Srpska* (technically, a result of ethnic cleansing),[19] the demands for including Sandžak in Bosnia and Herzegovina became "somewhat" unrealistic. Other *Sandžaklije* representatives focused on the recognition of their national rights and the preservation of sociopolitical and religious relations with Sarajevo without questioning the sovereignty of the FRY (Andrejevich 1997: 192). Thus, the question of autonomy or "irredentism" brought the first significant public split in the SDA and BNVS, when the faction of Sulejman Ugljanin was partially deposed by Ugljanin's deputy Rasim Ljajić, who tried to lead a constructive policy towards Belgrade and also take over the Bosniak national institutions in Sandžak (Ibid.).

Apart from Ljajić's faction, another rival to the power of Sulejman Ugljanin appeared – The Islamic Community of Sandžak (*Mešihat Islamske zajednice Sandžaka*), established as a counter organisation to the Islamic religious

[18] Fieldnotes Markéta Slavková, Sarajevo-Priboj, 6 February 2018.

[19] *Republika Srpska* is from the West and by the "Bosniaks" mainly seen as a product of ethnic cleansing. On the other hand, we argue that the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is also yet another product of these processes.

institutions in Belgrade. This religious organisation, founded in 1993 by the young, ambitious, well-educated, and capable Mufti of Novi Pazar, Muamer Zukorlić, (with the support of Ugljanin), quickly earned popularity throughout the region, where after the fall of the socialist regime, religion started to play a much more visible role in the public life. Zukorlić, who was appointed to his position with the help of religious chiefs from Sarajevo, initially also enjoyed the trust of BNVS and Ugljanin, but the first conflicts between him and the Sandžak Bosniak political establishment soon appeared (Morrison and Roberts 2013: 8–9). Meanwhile, the Podgorica-based Islamic Community of Montenegro (*Islamska zajednica u Crnoj Gori*) was established in 1994, and gained decisive support among local believers of diverse backgrounds, including the "Montenegrin Sandžak Muslims" that had been claimed also by Novi Pazar's Islamic community (Šístek 2009: 37–38). Last, but not least, the Islamic Community of Montenegro was fully supported by Montenegrin state authorities, which is also a significant factor.

Ever since the Dayton Accords, tensions in Kosovo began to increase while a part of the local Albanians abandoned the tactics of passive resistance and embarked on an armed resistance against the Serbian administration. Albeit temporarily, tensions in Sandžak heightened again. Many of Sandžaklije felt uncertain, and as they observed convoys of Kosovo Albanian refugees rushing through their towns and villages towards safety, they thought that it was only a matter of time when the repressions of the regime would again turn against them (*International Crisis Group* 2005). In Sandžak, the increased presence of security forces was apparent, sporadic violent incidents took place, and later, the region became a target of NATO air raids due to its strategic geographic position and military installations. The refugees from Kosovo were then joined by a significant number of *Sandžaklije,* especially from the Serbian part of the region, who sought a safe haven in Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond (Morrison and Roberts 2013: 171–173). In the context of the engagement of NATO in Kosovo and the subsequent period of Western ostracism of Belgrade, in 1999, the BNVS adopted the "Memorandum on the autonomy of Sandžak and special relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina" as the official platform for the "peaceful solution to the situation in Sandžak" (Džudžević 2011: 6–7; Fijuljanin, 2010: 126–127.). This shows that *Sandžaklije* responded not only to the direct political impulses from Belgrade, but also to the indirect threat of the Bosnian and Kosovo wars.

## Democratic Serbia: Towards the Politics of Integration?

The regime change in Belgrade in 2000 meant a certain shift in the political status of national minorities in the country. Under the new constitution, the law on the protection of minorities was introduced in 2002, and numerous international conventions were ratified (Fijuljanin, 2010: 325). Moreover, for the first time since Tito's Yugoslavia, Belgrade abandoned the hostile policies implemented by the previous regime, and made an effort to include local people of Muslim origin in the Serbian state. Mutual contacts between national Serbian and local Bosniak political leadership significantly intensified, and not only Prime Minister Đinđić was meeting with the *Sandžaklije* bigwigs regularly (*International Crisis Group* 2005). Rasim Ljajić became the federal minister for minorities and human rights *inter alia* leading negotiations with The Hague Tribunal (Fijuljanin 2010: 127). Since 2000, we can observe a certain reconciliation in Sandžak, however, the latent conflict is still present and is often manifested in the activities of nationalist and religious radicals from both sides (Morisson, 2008: 7). At first, the BNVS (still dominant amongst the "Bosniak") only cautiously supported the events of 2000, and so with it the opposition alliance DOS and Vojislav Koštunica, a candidate for president. But, according to their leaders, "Bosniaks" had significantly contributed to the fall of Slobodan Milošević, and thus towards the general democratisation (Fijuljanin 2010: 127).

After the fall of Milošević's regime (October 5, 2000), Ugljanin returned to the City Hall of Novi Pazar, which led to local political tensions (*International Crisis Group* 2005). As a result of the internal political cleavages, the local branch of the SDA disintegrated into more than ten different political parties, however, only two became important – Ugljanin's "The Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak" (*SDA Sandžaka*) and the "Social Democratic Party of Serbia" (*SDP Srbije*) led by Ljajić. The political tensions amongst the "Bosniaks" also somehow reflect the party-personal divisions of Serbian national politics – Sulejman Ugljanin, and thus, the SDA and BNVS (later BNV), as well as Ljajić's *SDP Srbije,* cooperated closely with Koštunica's "Democratic Party of Serbia" (DSS) or the "Democratic Party" (DS), led at that point by Boris Tadić, and lately, with the ruling "Serbian Progressive Party" (SNS) (*International Institute of Middle East and Balkan Studies a Policy Documentation Centre* 2005). Generally, the strategy of Bosniak political leadership seems somewhat opportunistic – when there are opportunities and resources in Belgrade's governmental structures, there is an interest


Fig. 4. Graffiti in Sjenica mentioning among other things the political parties SDA and SDP. Photo: Markéta Slavková, 2018

to cooperate, and in less favourable conditions, they turn to the nationalist confrontational politics aimed towards the centre.

Unlike in Montenegro, in the Serbian part of Sandžak that declares to be "Bosniaks", "Muslims" are fewer in numbers (*Ministarstvo za ljudska i manjinska prava Srbije i Crne Gore* 2004).[20] Compared to the year 1991, we can see a significant demographic decline of over 20,000 people of Muslim origin, which occurred most likely because of both physical and psychological threats during the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, but also because of economically motivated migration (except Novi Pazar) (*Ministarstvo za ljudska i manjinska prava Srbije i Crne Gore* 2004).[21] In the 2011 census run in independent Serbia, 145,278 Bosniaks and 22,301 Muslims were counted, together making up roughly 2.5%

[20] According to the Serbian census in 2002, there were 135,670 Bosniaks (for the first time recognised as a national category), and only 15,869 people who opted for the older category of Muslims.

[21] Specific is the case of ethnic cleansing in the Priboj, where there was a kind of *cordon sanitaire* created along the borders with BiH, where the original number of nearly 11,000 people of Muslim origin was reduced to almost 7,000 in the municipality.

of the total population of Serbia (*Popis stanovništva, domačinstva i stanova 2011 u Republici Srbiji* 2012).

With the newly introduced law on national minorities, the BNVS held on 6 September 2003 an electoral assembly in Novi Pazar, and in accordance with the new law, the council was renamed as the Bosniak National Council (*Bošnjačko nacionalno vijeće* – BNV). Sulejman Ugljanin was re-elected president. The BNV was supposed to defend the rights of "Bosniaks" both in the political and cultural sense. Based on international conventions, Belgrade had to finally begin to recognise Bosnian as a minority language, introducing it as one of the languages of the local administration and gradually, "after a hundred years", in education as well (Fijuljanin 2010: 29–20).

The Anti-Serbian wave of violence in Kosovo in the spring of 2004, and the consequent burning of mosques in Belgrade, Niš, etc. that came as a response from the Serbian nationalists showed that the previous wars were hard to forget. The situation was further worsened by the fact that most of the crimes have not been investigated at all. Some people of Muslim origin have made clear that without resolving the past, there is no democratic future. Even after 2000, they still point out that their civic and minority rights often exist only "on paper'; the practices of violence and power abuse by authorities, especially the Serbian security apparatus, continues up to the present day.

The return of the refugees from the 1990s, who formerly lived in the ethnically-cleansed border areas with Bosnia and Herzegovina, needs to be dealt with. In their point of view, the *Sandžaklije* continue to be politically, socially, and economically marginalised and ostracised (Kočar 2006: 34–37). On the other hand, violence is triggered due to the rivalry between the various political actors in Sandžak. The factions of Ugljanin and Ljajić fight hard for political and other capital, lucrative positions at the City Hall of Novi Pazar, and other municipalities and occasional violent clashes are part of local political struggle (Novosel 2007).

Ugljanin, as well as the majority of political and religious leaders from Novi Pazar, opposed the division of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, because the independence of Montenegro significantly reduced their authority and their chances of pursuing autonomy for Sandžak. Furthermore, mutual cultural, social, and economic contacts among the "Sandžak Bosniaks" from the both sides of the border were feared to be seriously hindered (Šístek and Dimitrovova 2002). However, the fact that the majority of the Montenegrin people of Muslim origin voted for the independence of Montenegro illustrates that "Pazar" had a limited influence in the Montenegrin part of Sandžak.

Elections to the BNV were accompanied by a fiery campaign in 2010. The increasingly influential mufti, Zukorlić, finally achieved a bare majority, but by the decision of Belgrade, the conditions for the establishment of the BNV were changed, and two thirds of votes instead of a simple majority was required. Since almost half of the seats in the BNV assembly were held by Ljalic and Ugljanin, the BNV inaugural session was blocked, as well as the functioning of the organisation (Lazić 2013: 944–945, 947). Soon after, Zukorlić announced that he did not intend to candidate in the new government-initiated elections to the BNV, and he formed an alternative National Council of Sandžak (*Narodno Vijeće Sandžaka – NVS*) instead (b92.net, 2011). Since then, the mufti has been actively participating in public life, introducing new educational projects, dealing with the "genocide of Bosniaks", publishing his own newspaper, and eventually establishing a political party, the "Bosniak Democratic Union" (BDZ), which was supposed to "defend the national interests of all Bosniaks in Sandžak", he also opened the questions of autonomy and the possibility of civil disobedience, and last, but not least, he harshly criticised Ugljanin's and Ljajić's factions for being loyal to Belgrade (Lazić 2013: 947; Mehonić 2012).

Religious and political tensions amongst the Bosniak leadership can be traced back (at least) to February 2007, when the Belgrade-based *Rijaset* and *Reis-ul-ulema* were established with the support of Sulejman Ugljanin, his loyal imams, and also the government of Prime Minister Koštunica. This symbolically meant a "declaration of war" to mufti Zukorlić as the religious authority in the Serbian part of Sandžak, and at the same time, a disassociation from The Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Islamska zajednica u BiH*) in Sarajevo. The Bosnian *Reis-ul-ulema* (at the time), Mustafa Cerić, issued a *fatwa,* based on which he condemned the new "Reis" in Belgrade, Adem Zilkić, and, thus, symbolically excommunicated him from whole Islamic community (*Islamska zajednica u Srbiji*, 2012).

On the other hand, it should be noted that Zukorlić did not succeed to fully control the Islamic Community in Serbian Sandžak because of the heterogeneity of the *ummah*. The internal tensions in the Islamic Community in Serbia (supported by Belgrade) opened up a niche for the emergence of the phenomenon of *Wahhabism,* whereby in recent years, incidents among the supporters of the "traditional" local form of Islam and of *Wahhabism* have multiplied. On one hand, some claim that mufti Zukorlić is known for "turning a blind eye" to the issue of condemning supporters of radical Islam (Trivić, 2011). On the other hand, there has been an assassination attempt on Zukorlić by the Wahhabis,

who were further accused of terrorism and anti-constitutional behaviour (Blic, 2007). Despite of the fact that Wahhabis in the Serbian political and media discourse are often made visible, they only control a small number of mosques in comparison to fractions of Ugljanin, Zukorlić's supporters, and the Belgrade-based *Reis-ul-Ulema* (Bajrović 2007).

Although Sandžak is primarily depicted in the Serbian political and media discourses as a "hotbed" of radical Islamism, according to well-informed estimations, there is "only" a few hundred of Wahhabis here, and those ready for armed struggle can be probably counted "only" in dozens (Mehonić 2012), which clearly shows that they do not constitute a serious security threat. Generally said, this phenomenon is very marginal in comparison to the local forms of Islam.

Various features pointing to the existence of the phenomena of radicalism and Wahhabism can be observed in the everyday social practices of these movements' followers. One can see more conservative or even radical Islamic movements in streets of Novi Pazar. At first sight they differ by specific fashion practices, e.g. fully covered women dressed in a *niqab* or a *burka,* and specific male clothing associated with long beards and ankle-length trousers. Generally, Wahhabis are perceived by the local population of Slavic Muslim origin with suspicion, and are often criticised. They are seen as "strange" people, who do not fit the local approaches to "being Muslim". They are mostly perceived as religiously, culturally, and even ethno-nationally different.

As Morrison suggests, animosities between the religious and political leaders in Serbian Sandžak, where "everyone knows everyone", contribute significantly to the further escalation of the conflict in the small polity (Morrison 2008: 13). Thus, rather than radical Islamism, conflicts amongst its political ruling class and the religious elites have more serious impacts on destabilising the region.

Amongst the other expressions of extremism that are highly condemned are the occasional attempts to rehabilitate the *Chetnik* movement and thus legitimise the persecution and crimes against the population of Muslim origin (Rahić 2015). The terror and atrocities committed are hard to forget and are often used instrumentally in terms of the construction of a collective identity centred around the feeling of being excluded and discriminated.[22] The question of the equal access to participation of inhabitants in state structures remains

[22] For example, the editorial of "Bošnjačka riječ" magazine wrote several years ago that despite of the recent improvements, the year 2012 commemorates "one hundred years of the occupation of Sandžak and assimilation of the Bosniaks".


Fig. 5. Variation on graffiti calling for the autonomy of *Sandžak* in Novi Pazar.
Photo: Markéta Slavková, 2018

to be answered. For example, people of Muslim origin are under-represented in the security forces and generally also in the public sector. In Novi Pazar, only about one third of the policemen are non-Serbs (Obradović 2011).

More than fifteen years after the change of the regime, people of Muslim origin and their leaders are generally not very satisfied with the policies of Belgrade, as they are not inclusive enough. The requests for more "self-governance" in Sandžak have not been heard, and there are serious economic problems, which are emphasised overall (Fijuljanin 2010: 329). In 2009, the BNV adopted the document entitled the "Declaration on the status of Sandžak Bosniaks in Serbia", where the local "Bosniaks" are again pronounced to be a part of the large "Bosniak nation", with Bosnia and Herzegovina being their *patria* (Džudžević 2011: 9–11). Apart from being granted minority rights, the declaration further demanded employment and the economic development of the region, e.g. introduction of "Bosnian" as the official language in education and media, or protection of Muslim cultural heritage (Ibid.). At the same time, the shift towards the "regionalisation and autonomisation" of Serbia

(and thus, of Sandžak) is seen as inevitable following the European Union "standards", which have recently become highlighted by Sandžak politicians (Ibid.). In the international context, minority rights and ideas of decentralisation and regionalisation continue to be frequently discussed in relation to the models of Basque Country or of South Tyrol (Džudžević 2010). Also, Catalonia's recent call for autonomy and the events of the beginning of 2018 were closely observed by public media in Sandžak, and were also discussed amongst the broader public with interest.[23] Nevertheless, only the future will show whether contemporary Serbia is going to continue to shape its policies with an emphasis on social inclusion.

## Conclusion: The Shifting Politics of In/Exclusion in Sandžak

In this article, we attempted to offer insight into the development of the politics of in/exclusion concerning people of Sandžak Muslim origin in relation to the state-building processes and ethnopolitics between Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the last three decades of Yugoslavia's Disintegration. We discussed how the contemporary ethnonational and religious identity categories were actively shaped throughout this period by the actual political, as well as religious actors, and overall, how they were influenced by particular regimes. This helps reveal the mechanism of the social construction of these categories, and also shows how they are instrumentally used to achieve (most commonly) a greater access to power. Last, but not least, we attempted to illuminate the dynamic negotiation of a position of *Sandžaklije* in Serbian public discourses, within which both attitudes of inclusion and exclusion resonate.

During the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, religious identities were suppressed in the public life, and the importance of "ethnicity" was weakened, as well, since the state supported the idea of "Brotherhood and Unity". Slavková (2015) notes that this period is remembered in a positive light by many inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which also explains the contemporary phenomenon of Yugo-nostalgia. This is not only the case of Bosnia, but the phenomenon is widespread throughout the entire former Yugoslavia. The inclusion-oriented politics of SFRY was also welcomed in Sandžak, and during that time, the region was relatively well-off, employment rates were high, and the relations amongst various populations inhabiting the area were good. Bojan

[23] Fieldnotes Markéta Slavková, Sandžak, February 2018.

Fig. 6. Flags of Serbia, *Sandžak,* and the European Union in front of the municipal building in Sjenica. Photo: Markéta Slavková, 2018

from Nova Varoš said that during the SFRY, when he was a child, people did not distinguish who was a "Serb" and who was "Muslim" between each other, but now even small children are aware of such distinctions. He found it both absurd and disturbing.[24]

This major shift in the perception of various citizens occurred in the Serbian-governed Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), which employed nationalist politics, and ultimately, an exclusionist approach. The accentuation of a nationalist discourse that speaks via the politics of difference eventually started to impact the everyday life of populations that had lived together in peace during the SFRY. The attitude towards people of Sandžak Muslim origin quickly deteriorated with the outbreak of the Bosnian war. Throughout most of the 1990s, *Sandžaklije* felt, and in several cases, were also existentially threatened by Milošević's regime. Following the same ethnonational logic, the Serbian regime perceived local "Muslims/Bosniaks" as an imminent threat to

[24] Fieldnotes Markéta Slavková, Nova Varoš, 8 February 2018.

the security and territorial integrity of FRY. Sandžak leadership reacted with a request for broader autonomy or even secession. This also suggests that exclusionist politics, and especially the persecution of *Sandžaklije* of Muslim origin, divided the populations according to the "logic" of ethno-national-religious categorisation. Nevertheless, it is the concrete acts of oppression and violence that make these socially constructed categories experientially real to social actors.

The aforementioned processes of nation-building suggest that the placid coexistence of diverse populations is closely linked to the politics of in/exclusion. To be brief, the more exclusionist and oppressive the politics, the bigger chance that a social conflict is going to arise. Attitudes towards local people of Muslim origin have been different in Serbia than in Montenegro. Although during Milošević's regime Serbia employed the politics of exclusion, the approach has shifted in recent years towards the idea of greater inclusion and tolerance. This is especially visible in Montenegro, where these ideas were to a great extent implemented by Đukanović as part of his successful campaign against Milošević.[25] Along with the politics of inclusion, one can observe the decline in the so-called "interethnic tensions".

The shift towards more pro-inclusion attitudes of the centres of power in Podgorica and Belgrade was generally welcomed by the Muslim leadership in Sandžak, which, albeit certain reservations, accepted the new authorities. The case of Montenegro can serve as a good example. In Montenegro, the politics emphasising the inclusion of people of Slavic Muslim origin supported the sustenance of relatively good relations amongst the various groups of inhabitants. In contrast to this, in the Serbian part of Sandžak, relations are still tense mainly due to conflicts within the Bosniak political and religious leadership. These and other governing elites often instrumentally use the ethnonationalist and religious discourse in order to gain influence over the political developments in the broader post-Yugoslav region, and ultimately to gain access to greater power. Overall, we suggest using the case of *Sandžaklije* from both Serbia and Montenegro as proof that social cohesion is significantly shaped by political discourse, which employs the rhetoric of either inclusion or exclusion.

[25] Later on, Đukanović strove for the country's independence.

**Markéta Slavková, Ph.D.** completed her doctoral studies at Charles University, Czech Republic. She specialises in the discipline of socio-cultural anthropology, with a focus on the topics of the anthropology of food, migration, trans-nationalism, nationalism, identity, and armed conflicts. In her doctoral studies, she profiled herself namely in the issue of the anthropology of food in former Yugoslavia. Afterwards, she worked from 2016 to 2018 as a researcher at Comenius University in Bratislava, where she also taught qualitative research methods in the social sciences. She also worked part-time as an external lecturer at her *alma mater*, Charles University. Currently, she is employed as a researcher at the Institute of Ethnology at the Czech Academy of Sciences.

**Daniel Heler** is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade. He holds a Master's degree in Balkan, Eurasian and Central European Studies from the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague. His professional interests include modern history, politics and anthropology, as well as international relations and security in broader Eastern Europe.

## References

Ahrens, Geert-Hinrich. 2007. *Diplomacy on the Edge: Containment of Ethnic Conflict and the Minorities Working Group of the Conferences on Yugoslavia*. Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

Andrejevich, Milan. 1997. "The Sandžak: A Perspective on Serb-Muslim Relations". Pp. 170–193 in Poulton and Taji-Farouki (eds.) *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State*. London: Hurst.

Andrijašević, Živko M. and Rastoder, Šerbo. 2006. *The History of Montenegro*. Podgorica: Diaspora center.

b92.net (2011) "Zukorlić o autonomii Sandžaka" <http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2011&mm=09&dd=15&nav_category=11&nav_id=542140 [accessed 28 May, 2018].

Bajrović, Amela. 2007. "Raid on Wahhabi Camp Raises Tensions in Sandžak", *Balkan Insight*, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/raid-on-wahhabi-camp-raises-tensions-in-sandzak [accessed 28 May, 2018].

Bartulović, Alenka. 2007. "Identity – a Fashion: Fad? Unravelling the Secrets of Popularity of Identity through the Appropriation of Bruce Lee in Bosnia-Herzegovina". Pp. 63–85 in Jezernik, Muršič, Bartulović (eds.) *Europe and its Other: Notes on the Balkans*. Ljubljana: Zupaniceva knjiznica.

Blic. 2007. "Vehabije spremale ubistvo muftije Zukorlića", <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/tema-dana/vehabije-spremale-ubistvo-muftije-zukorlica/eh5rzgn [accessed 28 May, 2018].

Crnovršanin, Harun and Sadiković, Nuro. 2005. *Kako se kalio Sandžak: Ilustrovana istorija Bosne, Sandžaka i Kosova*. Frankfurt am Main: Sandžačka riječ.

Crnovršanin, Harun and Sadiković, Nuro. 2001. *Sandžak- porobljena zemlja: Bosna, Sandžak i Kosovo kroz historiju*. Neu Isenburg: Bosanska riječ.
Dančák, Břetislav and Fiala, Petr. 2000. *Národnostní politika v postkomunistických zemích*. Brno: CDK.
Dimitrovova, Bohdana. 2001. "Bosniak or Muslim? Dilemma of one Nation with two Names", *Southeast European Politics*, 2 (2): 94–108.
Džudžević, Esad. 2012. *Bošnjački identitet*. Tutin: Centar za bošnjačke studije.
Džudžević, Esad. 2011. *Zaustavljen proces: Ostvarivanja prava sandžačkih Bošnjaka u Srbiji*. Novi Pazar: CBS.
Džudžević, Esad. 2010. *Sandžak: Multienička regija*. Tutin: CBS.
Fijuljanin, Muhedin. 2010. *Sandžački Bošnjaci*. Tutin: CBS.
Filipović, Muhamed. 2008. "Historijski sporazum", Nezavisne novine <http://www.nezavisne.com/index/kolumne/Historijski-sporazum/30644 [accessed 27 May, 2018].
Fišer, Jakob. 2012. "Socialnio, politički i kulturni identitet Sandžaka", *Almanah*.
Heler, Daniel. 2016. "Etno-nacionální emancipace sandžackých muslimů v pozdně osmanském a jugoslávském období", *Studia Territorialia*, pp. 13–43.
Heler, Daniel. 2014. "Bosňácká menšina v Srbsku a Černé Hoře v období desintegrace Jugoslávie: Genese národní identity", unpublished Master's Thesis, Charles University.
Imamović, Mustafa. 2007. *Historija Bošnjaka*, Novi Pazar, CBS.
International Crisis Group. 2005. "Serbia's Sandžak: Still forgotten", Report n. 162, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/balkans/serbia/serbias-sandzak-still-forgotten [accessed 27 May, 2018].
International Institute of Middle East and Balkan Studies a Policy Documentation Centre, "Sandžak: A region that is connecting or dividing Serbia and Montenegro", 2005 <http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00002257/01/Sandžak.pdf [accessed 30 August, 2016].
Islamska zajednica u Srbiji, "Fetva Reisu-l-uleme o djelovanju i radu Adema Zilkića", 2012, <https://mesihat.org/2012/11/13/fetva-reisu-l-uleme-o-djelovanju-i-radu-adema-zilkia/ [accessed 28 May, 2018].
Kočar, Semiha. 2006. "Presjek stanja ljudskih prava i sloboda u Sandžaku", *Bošnjačka riječ*, 2: 33–38.
Kurpejović, Avdul. 2006. *Slovenski Muslimani zapadnog Balkana*. Podgorica: Matica Muslimanska Crne Gore.
Kurpejović, Avdul. 1998. *Program nacionalne afirmacije muslimana u Crnoj Gori*. Podgorica: Matica Muslimanska Crne Gore.
Lazić, Sladjana. 2013. "Memory claims and memory constraints: (Re) negotiating statehood and identities in Serbia". *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, 41, 6: 936–952.
Mandić, Marija (upcoming) "The Serbian Proverb Poturica gori od Turčina – 'Turk-Convert is Worse than Turk': Stigmatizer and Figure of Speech".

Mehonić, Almir. 2012. "Paralerne institucije sandžačkih Bošnjaka", *Al Jazeera Balkans,* <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/paralelne-institucije-sandzackih-bosnjaka [accessed 28 May, 2018].

Ministarstvo za ljudska i manjinska prava Srbije i Crne Gore. 2004. *Etnički mozaik Srbije prema podacima popisa stanovništva 2002. godine*. <http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ObjavljenePublikacije/G2002/pdf/G20024061.pdf [accessed 28 May, 2018].

Morrison, Kenneth and Roberts, Elizabeth. 2013. *The Sandžak: A History.* London: Hurst.

"Nacionalna ili etnička pripadnost... Podaci po naseljima i opštinama". 2003. *Zavod za statistiku Crne Gore,* <http://www.monstat.org/cg/page.php?id=222&pageid=57 [accessed 27 May, 2018].

Novosel, Sladjana. 2007. "A Society Divided", *Balkan Insight* <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/a-society-divided [accessed 28 May, 2018]. BIRN, "Serbia's Sandžak Parties in Election Tussle", Balkan Insight, 2008 <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-s-Sandžak-parties-in-election-tussle [accessed 30 August, 2016].

Obradović, Pedja. 2011. "Serbia Makes Uneven Progress on Integrating Minorities", *Balkan Insight*, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-makes-uneven-progress-on-integrating-minoritie [accessed 30 August, 2016].

Pilipenko, Gleb. 2014. "Markery identichnosti slavjan-musul'man Sandzhaka". Pp. 63–96 in Plotnikova, Anna, Martynova, Maryna, Uzenjova, Elena (eds.), *Slavjane-musul'mane na Balkanah: jazyk, kul'tura, identichnost*. Moscow: ISL RAN.

"Popis stanovništva, domačinstva i stanova 2011 u Republici Srbiji". 2012. *Republički zavod za statistiku*. <http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ObjavljenePublikacije/Popis2011/Nacionalna%20pripadnost-Ethnicity.pdf [accessed 27 May, 2018].

Rahić, Esad. 2015. "Društvo historičara Sandžaka – Bošnjački narod nikada neće priznati ovu odluku", *Sandžak Haber* <http://Sandžakpress.net/drustvo-historicara-Sandžaka-bosnjacki-narod-nikada-nece-priznati-ovu-odluku [accessed 30 August, 2016].

Slavková, Markéta. 2017. *Cooking and Dining in Times of War and Peace: Changing Contexts and Modes of Food Production, Preparation and Consumption in Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Charles University.

Slavková, Markéta. 2015. "Srebrenica dvacet let po genocidě: Etnografie, lidská práva a každodenní život v podaytonské Bosně a Hercegovině". Pp. 105–116 in *IX. Ročník studentské konference o Balkáně*, Praha: RMV.

"Stanovništvo prema nacionalnoj pripadnosti". 1991. *Savezni zavod za statistiku*, <http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ObjavljenePublikacije/G1991/pdf/G19914020.pdf [accessed 30 August, 2016].

Steinke, Klaus. 2014. "Konflikt jazyka i identichnosti (na primere slavjanskih men'shinstv v Albanii, Bolgarii, Grecii, Pol'she i Rumynii)". Pp. 219–233 in Neshimenko, Galina (ed.), *Aktual'nye etnojazykovye i etnokul'turnye problemy sovremennosti*, 1, RAN.

Šístek, František. 2014. "Posudek oponenta k diplomní práci", Daniel Heler – *Bosňácká menšina v Srbsku a Černé Hoře v období desintegrace Jugoslávie: Genese národní identity,* unpublished review of Master's Thesis, Prague.

Šístek, František. 2009. "Muslimové v Černé Hoře: od konfliktní historie k relativně úspěšné integraci". Pp. 29–43 in Žegklitz (ed.). *Islám a jihovýchodní Evropa*. Praha: Občanský institut,.

Šístek, František and Dimitrovova, Bohdana. 2002. "Free Movement Between Serbia and Montenegro and its Political Exploitation", pp. 28–38 in Florian Bieber, *Negotiation and Capacity Building in Montenegro* (a workshop report) <http://www.ecmi.de/uploads/tx_lfpubdb/report_26.pdf [accessed 7 June 2018].

Trivić, Branka. 2011. "Ko štiti vehabije u Sandžaku", Radio Slobodna Evropa, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/ko_stiti_vehabije_u_sandzaku/24377308.html [accessed 28 May, 2018].

Zulfikarpašić, Adil. 1998. *The Bosniak*. London: Hurst.