"European Islam" and Islamic Education in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Abstract: Islamic basic religious instruction (*mektebs*) and Islamic secondary schools (*medresas*) have flourished in socialist Yugoslavia since the 1960s, and a Faculty of Islamic Theology was opened in Sarajevo in 1977. Following the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, religious education classes, placed under the responsibility of the main religious communities, have been introduced in 1994 into Bosnian primary and secondary schools. Since then, their confessional (separate) character has been a target of criticism. The international community and part of Bosnian civil society insist on replacing religious education by an inter-confessional subject called "Culture of Religions." At the same time, the Bosnian Islamic Community (*Islamska zajednica* – IZ) has opened several *medresas* and two Islamic Pedagogical Faculties. *Medresas* underwent an important transformation from vocational schools to general secondary schools with an Islamic moral milieu and lifestyle, while Islamic faculties are institutions training religious personnel and contributing to the (re-)definition of Islam in Bosnia and, possibly, in Europe.

In many European countries, Christian religious education classes form a part of national primary and/or secondary school curricula. However, when the question of Islamic religious education classes at state-run schools is raised, so is often an eyebrow of many European politicians and intellectuals. So far, the problem has predominantly concerned the Muslim immigrant minorities of western Europe. But in recent years, several European countries with significant autochthonous Muslim populations joined the European integration process with an eye toward becoming member states of the European Union, as Bulgaria already did in 2007. The southeast European countries have in one way or another incorporated Islamic schools and religious education classes into their

*Štěpán Macháček, Oriental Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague

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general education systems. If this incorporation is successful, then this experience could be helpful for EU institutions in solving the problem of religious education of the west European Muslim minorities and in setting a possible common framework for Islamic education in the EU. I have chosen Bosnia-Herzegovina (hereafter Bosna) for a thorough examination of the place of Islamic schools and religious education classes in its education system, because discussions and practical steps have occurred there for several decades and Islam is more present there in the public space than in any other country of the region. But some brief comparisons and references to other Balkan countries will also be done when useful.

The European integration processes concern also the education field. The endeavour of the EU institutions in this area is aimed among others at the unification of the manifold system of academic grades and examinations of the European countries. The Bologna Declaration which has launched this process was signed in 1999 by the ministers of education of twenty-nine European countries (both EU members and non-members), and was later joined by other countries so that in 2007, forty-six states participate. In regard to Islamic education in the Balkan states, it is important to note that millions of Muslims of Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia will be affected in the future by the “Bologna process.” All these countries have signed the Bologna Declaration, as did two other predominantly Muslim states: Azerbaijan and Turkey.

In Bosnia, the international community frequently interferes in the political decisions of local authorities. Since the Bosnian education system still bears many signs of the ethnic division of the country, the primary efforts of the international community, represented mainly by the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina, aim at re-establishing a unified system for all pupils and students of the country. This reform should among others eliminate one of the factors supporting the ethnic and religious division of the Bosnian society. In 2000, a major project, the “Shared Modernization Strategy for Primary and General Secondary Education in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” started. This project is aimed at supporting the reform of primary, secondary and higher education in Bosnia and the inclusion of the European dimension in the education system. The project’s White Paper states that the education system must be based "on a common European heritage of political, cultural, and moral values which are reflected in human rights, rule of law, pluralistic democracy, tolerance and solidarity.”1 The Bosnian Muslims should not have a problem with this

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1 BiH Educational Authorities/EC-TAER Programme, Shared Modernization Strategy
definition since reisu-l-ulema Mustafa Cerić, the highest Islamic authority of Bosnia, claims in his "Declaration of European Muslims" (Deklaracija evropskih muslimana) the respect of European Muslims for all these basic European values.2

Islamic Education in Bosnia under the Communist Regime

Unlike in other Balkan post-communist states, notably Albania and Bulgaria, the development of Islamic education in Yugoslavia in the communist and the post-communist periods can be regarded to a certain degree as a continual process rather than a radical break. This fact offers an opportunity to look briefly at the situation in socialist Yugoslavia. Religious education of all kinds was reduced substantially in all the Balkan states where the power was seized by the communists. The initial strategy of the communist regimes was to preserve only a couple of religious schools and to transform them into vocational institutes training religious personnel and thus serving primarily the needs of the Christian churches or Islamic religious institutions. General education was to be carried out exclusively by a centralized system of state-run secular schools, with a curriculum based on atheistic communist ideology. Medresas (Islamic secondary schools) thus became nearly obsolete seminaries with very little material support and decreasing social status that made it very unattractive for anyone to attend but the children of ulema (religious scholars) or deeply religious families.3

2 This declaration, published in 2005, was basically meant as a condemnation of terrorist attacks committed in the name of Islam, as a definition (from a religious point of view) of the status of Muslims in contemporary Europe and as a recognition of the basic European values by European Muslims. The text is available (also in English version) at <http://www.rijaset.ba>.

3 In the period before World War II, there were dozens of Islamic schools in Yugoslavia and other Balkan states. While their reputation and quality of education was constantly deteriorating in the first half of the 20th century, they were still considered general educational institutions based on Islamic traditions and principles. Several works on Muslim schools in Bosnia before World War I are available in Serbo-Croat, such as Hajrudin Ćurić, Školske prilike muslimana u Bosni i Hercegovini 1800-1878 [Schooling Conditions of the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1800-1878], Beograd: SANU, 1965; IDEM, Muslimansko školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini do 1918 [Muslim School System in Bosnia-Herzegovina until 1918], Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1983. For other regions of Yugoslavia, see for example Jašar Redžepagić, Razvoj proszete i školstva albanske narodnosti na teritoriju današnje Jugoslavije do 1918 [Development of the Education and the School System of Albanians in the Regions of Contemporary Yugoslavia until 1918], Priština: Zajednica naučnih ustanova Kosova i Metohiji, 1968; Mustafa Memić, Velika medresa i njene učenici
Originally, the religious policy of communist Yugoslavia was very similar to that of Albania and Bulgaria. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, for example, mektebs (basic religious classes given in mosques, equivalent to Catholic catechism) were temporarily closed down and children were prevented from obtaining any religious instruction. However, in 1953, the new law regulating the status of the religious communities in Yugoslavia allowed them to organize religious classes in their own premises and outside the working hours of the compulsory state-run schools. Moreover, while Islamic education was completely banned in Albania and Bulgaria in the 1960s, Yugoslavia experienced at the same time a relative political and social liberalization, and Islamic education went through a sort of renaissance. The Yugoslav Islamic Community (Islamska zajednica, IZ) started to work hard on the systematic improvement of religious instruction. The IZ has always regarded the mektebs as a guarantee for the survival of Islam in the region. Now, under more relaxed circumstances, it strove to get as many Muslim children as possible to attend mektebs. In 1978, three levels of religious courses were introduced for children between the ages of seven and ten years. The IZ published textbooks and the frequency of classes was set at two or three times a week throughout the school year. The improvement of religious instruction given in the mektebs started to worry the state that they could become competitors to state-run schools in the formation of the Muslim youth. Therefore, in the 1980s, communist authorities again occasionally attempted to obstruct or threaten those attending these Islamic religious classes. But the regime was already getting weak at that time and, according to some figures, attendance at mektebs was surprisingly high, at least in the last two decades of communist Yugoslavia.

Religious vocational schools training religious personnel (medresas in the case of the IZ) were also allowed in communist Yugoslavia according to the law...
of 1953 on religious communities. Among the dozens of Islamic schools existing in pre-war Yugoslavia, however, only the historic Gazi Husrev-beg medresa in Sarajevo was still active by the end of the 1940s. This traditional Islamic institution continued to function during the whole communist period. With the expropriation of vakuf properties (Islamic endowments, often in the form of commercial real estate), the financial situation of the IZ and thus the existence of the Sarajevo medresa became very precarious. Traditional Islamic sources such as the zakât (alms collected by the believers) or the kurban (meat and sheepskins collected on the day of kurban bajram—ar.ː al-ʾid al-kabîr) and other voluntary contributions from believers became the only income. In some cases, the state funded construction works, but the IZ was responsible for maintaining and running the medresa. In the 1940s and 1950s, the school was being purposely neglected. Its teachers were paid half the salary of their colleagues in state-run general schools, and the best medresa teachers left for better jobs as a result. The decreasing quality of lessons in turn led to a drop off in interest in studies at this school. In 1949, its girls’ section was closed down. Until 1965, the number of students that graduated from the Sarajevo medresa was usually not higher than fifteen per year. Surprisingly enough, in 1951 another medresa was opened for Albanian-speaking Muslims in Prishtina (Kosovo). From 1951 until 1962, however, the Alauddin medresa in Prishtina was in fact a higher primary school for children between eleven and fourteen years of age, and those who wanted to continue in Islamic studies at the secondary level had to enrol at the Sarajevo medresa anyway.

In 1961/62, substantial reforms took place. On the one hand, both Sarajevo and Prishtina medresas became five-year secondary schools, and their curricula were unified and basically aligned with the curriculum of the state-run general secondary schools. On the other hand, their vocational character was confirmed: the proportion of religious subjects increased and Arabic became the only foreign language taught. At that time, the director of the Sarajevo medresa described the purpose of the school in the following terms:

*The reason for the decrease in the proportion of non-religious subjects in favour of religious and oriental ones is that the medresa is a specialized religious school whose task is to produce professionally trained religious personnel.*

After 1961, improved material conditions enabled the medresa students to prac-
tice their religious duties and Islamic behaviour and lifestyle became an important part of the medresa program.

The above cited words of the medresa director point at the central question of the role of Yugoslav medresas, an issue lively debated until today. The state authorities and part of the IZ leadership (by definition loyal to the former at that time) insisted on the vocational character of the medresas and tried to prevent its graduates from enrolling at faculties (with the later exception of the Faculty of Islamic Theology in Sarajevo, see below). On the other hand, medresa students and their parents, as well as some IZ personnel, preferred the medresas to be general secondary schools with Islamic subjects and lifestyle, whose graduates would have the possibility to enrol at the university, to achieve degrees in different specializations and to become involved in general social and professional life.9 There were several periods in which medresa graduates were either allowed to join the university (especially in the 1970s and certain periods of 1980s) or not (in the 1960s and in other periods of the 1980s).10 Those who succeeded in doing further studies enrolled mostly in faculties of law, arts, philology or political sciences and some of them became later professors in the Faculty of Islamic Theology in Sarajevo, or well-known politicians in post-communist Bosnia such as Prime Ministers Haris Silajdžić or Edhem Bičakčić.

An important factor in the formation of contemporary Balkan Islam (and thus, possibly, of a "European Islam") is the fact that, from the beginning of the 1960s, groups of Muslim students from Yugoslavia were leaving for Muslim countries to enrol at Islamic universities there. In addition to the internal political liberalization, Yugoslavia’s affiliation with the Non-aligned Movement also played a role in this evolution. Since there was no Islamic faculty in Yugoslavia and secondary-level knowledge achievable at the medresas was no more regarded as sufficient for holding an office in the leading bodies of the Yugoslav IZ, the only option was to complete faculty-level studies abroad. Al-Azhar University in Egypt was the first destination for these students; it was later joined by universities in Libya, Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.11 After having com-

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9 Student strikes at the Sarajevo and Prishtina medresas in 1972 partially stemmed from this tension. Discussion on these strikes can be followed in the Islamic periodicals of those days, for instance in «Gazi Husrev-begova medresa uskoro počinje sa radom» [The Gazi Husrev-beg Medresa Will Soon Resume its Activities], in: Preporod, (1 March 1972) 36, p. 3; «Informacija o štrajku učenika Gazi Husrevbegove medrese u Sarajevu» [Information about the Strike of the Students of the Gazi Husrev-beg Medresa in Sarajevo], in: Glasnik, 35 (March-April 1972) 3–4, pp. 198–201, p. 200.

10 See for example a critical essay on this problem: Nusret ČANČAR, »Zastoj u obrazovnim institucijama Islamske zajednice« [The Stagnation at Educational Institutions of the Islamic Community], in: Preporod, (15 October 1989) 460, p. 3.

11 The first group of students left in 1961. Five students, all of them from Bosnia, en-
pleted a faculty specialization that generally took five years, students came back to Yugoslavia with their degrees and brought new impulses into the lethargic IZ that had remained for nearly twenty years without such contact with the core Muslim world. While at the beginning of this process in the 1960s and 1970s the studies abroad were organized by the IZ, later on, and notably in the 1980s, there were many students leaving for Muslim countries on their own, without the knowledge of the IZ.\footnote{ČANČAR, »Zastoj u obrazovnim institucijama« (above fn. 10).}

However, the sending of Yugoslav Muslim students to foreign faculties was not regarded by IZ leaders as the best solution. In the early 1970s, certain tensions developed between the new generation of ulama coming back from their studies in Arab and other Muslim countries and the old generation of religious leaders that had been appointed in the 1950s under the strict supervision of the communist authorities. The former accused the latter of servility towards the communist regime. These tensions were aggravated by a concern in the IZ that students abroad were adopting a more radical interpretation of Islam deemed not suitable for Bosnian Muslims in socialist Yugoslavia. This worry led to the establishment of an Islamic faculty at home. In 1977, the Faculty of Islamic Theology (Islamski teološki fakultet – ITF) was founded in Sarajevo, with the material support of both local believers and foreign Islamic organizations.\footnote{NOVAKOVIĆ, Školstvo Islamske zajednice (above fn. 4), p. 101. In the first half of the 1980s, the Yugoslav IZ also received support from foreign Islamic organizations and Muslim countries for the construction of the Alauddin medresa’s new building in Prishtina and of the Isa-beg medresa in Skopje.}

The following year, the girls’ section of the Sarajevo medresa was reopened after thirty years of inactivity. The material situation of Islamic schools was also improving, the main source of funding being the IZ itself. Its main income continued to consist of the traditional Islamic sources mentioned above, such as alms. State authorities contributed sometimes by funding construction or restoration works, but such government aid was neither sufficient nor regular. Finally, foreign Islamic organizations were also providing some financial support. In 1984, the third Yugoslav Islamic secondary school was opened on the outskirts of the Macedonian capital Skopje. All three Yugoslav medresas followed a unified curriculum. In 1991, when Yugoslavia started to disintegrate, there were in total 820 students attending the country’s Islamic schools (the three medresas and the Faculty of Islamic Theology in Sarajevo).\footnote{KARČIĆ, »Islamska obnova« (above fn. 6), p. 130.}
Thus, by the end of the communist regime in Yugoslavia, the Islamic instruction at *mektebs* was widespread. Three specialized Islamic secondary schools (*medresas*) were working and the Faculty of Islamic Theology in Sarajevo was providing a higher religious education. The state-run general education system, however, remained strictly secular and based on the atheistic communist ideology. No religious education classes were included since religion was defined as a strictly private affair. All religious instruction activities remained out of this system and were considered as parallel (and in some cases even rival) structures serving the needs of religious communities, even though the debate on the role of Yugoslav *medresas* was ongoing throughout the communist period, as indicated above.

The Return of Religious Education into the National School Curricula

While the Yugoslav communist regime was being dismantled and the first steps towards democracy were undertaken in 1989/90, the question of the role of religion in society came to the fore. Following the situation in many west European countries, the religious communities and some political circles of disintegrating Yugoslavia demanded the reintroduction of religious education into state-run schools, after some forty years of absence. In the school year 1991/92 already, Catholic religious education classes became part of the curriculum of the primary and secondary schools in Croatia.\(^1\) Thousands of Bosniak pre-war residents and war refugees in Croatia were also affected by this measure and Islamic religious education classes were organized for them.\(^2\) Such an attempt was obviously more difficult and highly sensitive in the case of Bosnia, where the three main religious groups correspond to the constitutive nations of this republic. However, since the first democratic elections in 1990, even in Bosnia the religious communities sought the reintroduction of religious education into state-run schools. In both Croatia and Bosnia, intellectual discussions preceded political decisions. Two basic opinions emerged: some supported the introduction of an inter-confessional subject called "Culture of Religions" (*kultura religija*), treating the main world religions from a historic and cultural perspective,

\(^{15}\) The subject, called *vjeronauk* or *vjeronauka* in (Serbo-)Croatian, received an "optional-compulsory" (*izborno-obavezujući*) status, which means that once a student has chosen this subject, it becomes compulsory for him or her to complete. Muhamed HUKOVIĆ, »O uvodjenju vjeronauke u osnovne i srednje škole« [On the Introduction of Religious Education into Secondary Schools], in: *Preporod*, (1 September 1991) 505, p. 10.

\(^{16}\) Islamic religious education classes were given once a week, as it was also the case with Catholic religious education. Sulejman MAŠOVIĆ, *Islamska gledišta* [Islamic Viewpoints], Zagreb: Mešihat Islamske zajednice u Hrvatskoj, 1997, pp. 195, 229.
while others (predominantly in the religious circles) advocated separate classes for each religious group (and thus some kind of catechism). The former expressed among others the fear of seeing one ideology (Marxism) replaced by another one (compulsory religious education) at national schools. This dissen-

sion has lasted until today.

Despite all these discussions, in which some prominent Bosnian ulama such as Mustafa Cerić and Enes Karić supported the idea of teaching Culture of Reli-
gions, confessional (separate) religious education classes turned into reality. Initially scheduled to begin the same year as in Croatia, and delayed due to the outbreak of the war in 1992, religious education entered Bosnian classrooms with the education law voted in 1994 by the Parliament of the newly created (Bosniak-Croat) Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Both the IZ and the Catholic Church wished to be in charge of the teaching of this subject and the law satisfied them. Each religious community thus prepared its own textbooks and teachers. The Bosnian IZ established training schools for Islamic religious education teachers (called Islamic Pedagogical Academies, see below) to assemble teaching staff. Initially, the Law on education was valid for all the Federation and stated that religious education was optional. With the implementation of the Constitution annexed to the Dayton peace agreements in 1996, however, education fell under the responsibility of the entity and canton authorities. Thus, in the Federation, the status of religious education differs today from canton to canton and is either compulsory (but the child can be exempted on the

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17 At that time, both Cerić and Karić opposed the idea of introducing confessional (separate) religious education into state-run schools and maintained that it should be taught in mosques (mekiće) and churches. See for example Mustafa Cerić, »Pravo na život u školi« [The Right to Life at School], in: Preporod, (1 October 1990) 482, p. 3; Enes Karić, »Dvosjekli mač vjeronauke u školi« [The Double-Edged Sword of Religious Education at School], in: Muslimanski glas, (28 June 1991) 10, p. 15.

18 In the Republika Srpska, (Christian Orthodox) religious education had been introduced in 1992 into primary school curricula as a compulsory subject.

19 According to a study on religious education in Bosnia, the Islamic and Christian Orthodox textbooks are of a strictly confessional nature, while the Catholic textbooks provide a more objective knowledge of the other religions. Zlatiborka Popov/Anne Mette Oftstad, »Religious Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina«, in: Zorica Kubić/Christian Moe (eds.), Religion and Pluralism in Education: Comparative Approaches in the Western Balkans, Novi Sad: CEIR, 2006, pp. 73–106. The study is available at the website of the Kotor-Network on Religion in Plural Societies <http://kotor-network.info/>.

20 It is interesting to note that this law introducing confessional religious education was signed by then Minister of Education Enes Karić, who earlier and also later opposed the idea and advocated instead the introduction of a comparative history of religions.
request of its parents) or "optional-compulsory" (once chosen by the child, the subject becomes compulsory for the whole school year). In two out of ten cantons of the Federation (Sarajevo and Goražde), a course on the history of religions has been introduced into the secondary school curriculum instead of religious education.

The 2004 Law on religious communities states that everybody has the right to a religious education, both at state-run schools and in religious premises, and that teachers are appointed by their respective religious authorities. In practice, however, only the dominant religion is taught in most parts of the Republika Srpska and in most cantons of the Federation. In cantons where Muslim Bosniaks form a majority and Catholic Croats a minority, Islamic religious education classes are given but Catholic ones are not (and vice versa). It does not mean that Catholics are supposed to attend Islamic religious education classes: they just do not have the possibility to have their own religious education classes. Thus the above mentioned right is not fulfilled and there is discrimination against a minority of Catholic children.

In any event, the high percentage of children attending Islamic religious education classes must be very satisfying for the IZ. According to certain surveys, children generally and sincerely like the subject which they regard as relaxed in comparison to the others and as offering higher chance to get good marks (which improve their average assessment). In 2004, religious education was also (re-)introduced into the curriculum of the primary and secondary schools of Serbia. This directly affects the Bosniaks of Sandžak, a region with a slight prevalence of Bosniak population and now divided between Serbia and Montenegro. So today, Bosniaks living in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sandžak and in the diaspora in Croatia (all of them falling under the religious authority of the

21 POPOV/OSTAD, »Religious Education« (above fn. 19).
22 In the school year 2003/04, attendance of Islamic religious education classes by Bosniak children was 97% at primary schools and 78% at secondary schools (the cantons of Sarajevo and Goražde were not surveyed since religious education is not present at secondary schools there). See »Izvještaj o radu riješeta Islamske zajednice u Bosni i Hercegovini za 1423/24 h.g. – 2003 g.« [Report on the Activities of the Rijaset of the Islamic Community for the Year 1423/24 hj. – 2003 A.D.], in: Glasnik, 66 (May-June 2004) 5–6, pp. 495–655, pp. 514–515.
Bosnian IZ based in Sarajevo receive religious education classes, defined and taught by IZ personnel.

Since 1994, the discussion has continued on the nature of religious education. Part of Bosnian public opinion as well as some international agencies – including the UN High Representative and EU Special Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina – regard this subject as a factor dividing children on a religious and thus on a national basis in the specific case of Bosnia, and call for bringing it back into the premises of the religious communities and for introducing instead some general history of religions. The international community has indeed put certain pressure on Bosnian authorities to replace religious education with a history of religions and for this has been criticized by religious communities. In 2000, the OSCE Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina introduced the course “Culture of Religions” into some Bosnian schools as a pilot project. However, this project met with strong resistance in some schools and from the part of the religious authorities and has not been fully implemented. In 2002, the OSCE took the responsibility of coordinating the reform of the Bosnian education system, whose aim is to ensure that all children receive “a quality education, in integrated multicultural schools, that is free from political, religious, cultural and other bias and discrimination.” In compliance with the new law on primary and secondary education voted in 2003, a governmental agency was formed in early 2007 to supervise the reform’s implementation. This step caused hostile reactions from the IZ, as well as from the Orthodox and Catholic churches.

24 Following the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the former Yugoslav IZ was officially dismantled in 1994. Since then, the IZ of Bosnia-Herzegovina has been both practically and officially responsible for Bosnian (formerly Serbo-Croatian) speaking Muslims, i.e. those living in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Sandžak and those living in the diaspora in Croatia, in Slovenia and in western countries. However, the Bosniaks living in Montenegro fall under the IZ of Montenegro, with unclear competences over the Montenegrin part of the Sandžak. In 2007, the tensions between the mufti of Novi Pazar (Serbian part of the Sandžak), Muamer Zukorlić, and the independent mufti of Belgrade, Hamdija Jusufspahić, have led the former to broaden its authority over Serbia (with the exception of Kosovo) and to create an IZ of Serbia whose “spiritual centre” remains in Sarajevo.


which fear a reduction, or even abolition, of the religious education classes and their replacement by classes on the history of religions. Mustafa Cerić, appointed as Bosnian reisu-l-ulema in 1993, denounced such a perspective in a khutba (Friday prayer sermon) in February 2007, in spite of his stance on this issue in the early 1990s.27

The content of Islamic religious education classes and mektebs overlaps to certain degree. When, in the early 1990s, Enes Karić advocated the introduction of ‘Culture of Religions’ into national schools instead of religious education, he argued that religious communities should keep and develop their own religious classes in churches and mosques (or mektebs) on a facultative basis. In this way, the distinction between the two subjects or the two educational institutions would be clear.28 Nowadays, the tendency is to make the religious education classes more theoretical, based on the principles of Islamic teaching, history and culture. Mektebs, in turn, should become places for more practical religious training. Even in the present situation, the Bosnian IZ continues to regard mektebs as an important means of reinforcing Islamic awareness (and thus, indirectly, Bosniak national consciousness) among young Bosniaks. There has been no decrease in mekteb attendance after the introduction of religious education into national schools, as many had predicted. On the contrary, according to the IZ, religious education at school encouraged many parents to have their children attend mektebs too.

There are today eight levels of mekteb religious courses, corresponding to the duration of primary school, and classes at mektebs are given on weekdays, in many cases on a daily basis. The IZ’s Department for Education (Vjersko-prosvjetna služba) very carefully monitors the attendance at mektebs of Bosniak children, and annual recommendations are issued in order to increase the number of children who attend. According to IZ statistics, the number of mektebs has risen since 1990 along with the attendance figures.29 However, the increase in


28 Karić, »Dvosjekli mač vjeronauke« (above fn. 17).

29 In the school year 1997/98, there were 1,129 mektebs in Bosnia with 70,000 children attending the classes. »Izvještaj o radu Rijaseta Islamske zajednice u BiH za 1418/19. – 1998. g.« [Report on the Activities of Rijaset of the Islamic Community in Bosnia-Herzegovina for the Year 1418/19 hj. – 1998 A.D.], in: Glasnik, 61 (May–June 1999) 5–6, pp. 555–649, pp. 583–584. In 2003, there were 1,566 mektebs with more than 90,000 children. Attendance at mektebs ranged from 45% Bosniak children in the Mostar muftiluk (mufti district) to 77% in the Bihać muftiluk. »Izvještaj o radu riješeta Islamske zajednice u Bosni i Hercegovini za 1423/24 h.g. – 2003 g.« [Report on the Activities of the Rijaset of the Islamic Community for the Year 1423/24 hj. – 2003 A.D.], in: Glasnik, 66 (May–June 2004) 5–6, pp. 495–655, p. 515.
numbers is probably not so striking if compared, for example, to the situation in the 1970s. The systematic work on upgrading this traditional means of diffusion of basic Islamic knowledge and awareness reflects a serious concern of the IZ. After a drop in interest in attending mektebs in 2002, some steps were undertaken by the IZ to motivate imams and muallims (teachers at mektebs) to attract more children. At the same time, a new curriculum and a brand new set of textbooks were introduced as well as an exact plan on how a mekteb should look and what it should contain (books, maps, computers, etc). The Centre for Islamic Architecture (Centar za islamsku arhitekturu), which falls under the jurisdiction of the IZ, has prepared a design that is supposed to be applied to all mektebs in the future. Some IZ authorities have realized that in order to keep parents interested in having their children attend the mekteb, some transformations will be necessary. The idea is to rid the mekteb of its exclusively educative function and to transform it into a quasi children’s club or leisure centre, where children could for example get help with their homework.

The Opening of New Medresas in the Balkans since 1990

While at the end of the 1980s there were only three Islamic secondary schools in the Balkans, all of them being located in former Yugoslavia, today, there are more than twenty in Albania, Bulgaria, and former Yugoslav countries. There are also plans to open further medresas in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia.

Some projects were born in the former socialist Yugoslavia, but matured only after the full political liberalization of the country. Such is the case with the medresa in Novi Pazar, which opened in 1990. The initiative for establishing an Islamic secondary school in the main town of the Sandžak came from the local ulema. Two main reasons accounted for the founding of this medresa. At the

30 According to official IZ figures, in 1972 there were 1,007 mektebs in Bosnia with some 80,000 children attending the classes. However, the same source admits that local religious authorities tend to overestimate the number of children attending the mektebs and that their real number is maybe about half of the official figure. »Izvještaj Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva Islamske zajednice u SFRJ u Sarajevu o radu u vremenu od 28. decembra 1971. godine do 24. decembra 1972. godine« [Report of the Supreme Islamic Executive Board of the Islamic Community in the SFRY on its Activities for the Period from 28 December 1971 to 24 December 1972], in: Glasnik, 36 (March–April 1973) 3–4, pp. 152–174, pp. 163–165.


32 According to the administrative structure of the former Yugoslav IZ, Novi Pazar depended on the mešihat (regional headquarters) of Pristina. This is the reason
nearby medresa of Pristina, lessons were taught in Albanian only, a language that the Serbo-Croat-speaking Muslims of Sandžak did not understand. Sarajevo, on the other hand, had a poor road connection with Sandžak, and even today it takes more than five hours to get from Novi Pazar to Sarajevo by bus. The curriculum and status of the Gazi Isa-beg medresa in Novi Pazar was the same as that of the other Yugoslav medresas at that time. In the early 1990s, (at the time still Yugoslavia) IZ planned to open several new medresas and to integrate them into the general education system, so that their graduates could enrol at any faculty.33

Following the outbreak of the war in Bosnia in 1992, several new medresas were indeed established by the IZ. In some cases, pre-war medresas were re-activated, although the form and content of education differed. In 1992, a medresa was opened in Zagreb within the building of the Islamic Centre in order to provide education to children of Bosniak refugees who were fleeing to Croatia in large numbers. In the same year, the Osman-efendi Redžović medresa was established in the vicinity of Visoko, a town in central Bosnia that served as a logistical centre of the Bosnian army during the siege of Sarajevo. In 1993 the Behram-beg medresa in Tuzla (northeastern Bosnia) and the Džemaludin-efendi Čaušević medresa in Cazin (Cazinska Krajina) were founded. The Elçi Ibrahim-paša medresa started functioning in Travnik (central Bosnia) in 1994 and, finally, the Karadoz-beg medresa was opened in Mostar (Herzegovina) in 1995. Thus, since 1995, the Bosnian IZ has extended its control to eight Islamic secondary schools, including the Gazi Husrev-beg medresa in Sarajevo and the medresas in Zagreb and Novi Pazar.

The opening of these medresas during the war of 1992/95 was not always part of a well-conceived strategy from the rijaset (supreme executive body) of the Bosnian IZ, and even today critical voices within the IZ express dissatisfaction with the multiplication of medresas in Bosnia. The process was facilitated by the chaotic war situation. The initiative to establish these schools came most often from local ulema and džemats (local community of believers, similar to a parish) while the rijaset simply approved the requests of the local believers to establish religious schools. One of the main reasons to establish or restore these regional medresas was the siege of Sarajevo, which lasted for most of the war. Students of the Gazi Husrev-beg medresa could not go back to the capital, so it was decided that they should continue their studies by opening other schools. But

why the new medresa at Novi Pazar was created as a branch of the Pristina medresa. It became independent in 1994, after the disintegration of the Yugoslav IZ (see fn. 24).

Mustafa SPAHIĆ, »Otvaranje novih medresas« [The Opening of New Medresas], in: Muslimanski glas, (14 June 1991) 8, p. 15.
there was also a growing interest among Bosniaks to send their children to medresas because they regarded them as their national schools, which played an important role in the preservation and strengthening of national and religious consciousness. This network of medresas, together with the Faculty of Islamic Theology – renamed Faculty of Islamic Studies (Fakultet islamskih nauka – FIN) in the 1990s – was completed by the founding of Islamic Pedagogical Academies (Islamske pedagoške akademije – IPA) in charge of the training of religious education teachers (see below). The total number of students attending the eight medresas managed by the Bosnian IZ was 1,741 in the academic year 2003/04.34 Compared to the similar system of imam-hatip schools in Turkey, the attendance of Bosnian medresas per capita is roughly half that of per capita attendance in Turkey.35 Medresa education underwent a rapid expansion in other parts of the former Yugoslavia and in other Balkan countries with a sizeable Muslim population as well. Several branches of the Prishtina medresa were established in Kosovo and initially ten medresas opened in Albania. Three schools of this sort are also run in Bulgaria.36

**Funding and Legal Status of Bosnian Medresas**

All newly established Islamic schools in Bosnia started their activity under very poor material conditions. The Behram-beg medresa in Tuzla, for example, first rented classrooms in the basement of one of the Tuzla primary schools. The Karadosz-beg medresa in Mostar initially occupied rooms belonging to a mosque in a suburban area of the city.37 However, the situation has changed substan-

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34 Interview with Muharem Omerdić, director of the IZ’s Department for Religious Education, Sarajevo, 10 March 2005.

35 This is only a very approximate comparison given the fact that I have not taken into consideration the age structure, and other relevant demographic characteristics of the two countries. Currently, there are some 1,600 medresa students in Bosnia (Zagreb and Novi Pazar medresas are not included) for about 2 million Bosniak inhabitants, while there were some 85,000 students at imam-hatip schools in Turkey in the school year 2003/04, for about 60 million Muslim inhabitants (data found in Ruşen ÇAKIR/Irfan Bozan/Balkan TALU, İmam Hatip High Schools: Legends and Realities, Istanbul: TESEV, 2004, p. 10, available at <http://www.tesev.org.tr/eng/events/n_ihl_summary.doc>).


37 It was the mosque complex Daru-i-ilm vakuf, established on the northern outskirts of Mostar by the Egyptian physician Mahmud Tantawi, who lives in western Europe. On the initial difficulties of the Mostar medresa, see also Sejfo KAJMOVić, »Medresa Mehmed-bega Karadoza u Mostaru, od osnutka do zabrane rada 1570–1918« [The Mehmed-beg Karadoz Medresa in Mostar, from its Establishment to the
tially since then. Nowadays, these medresas are often better equipped than average state-run schools. This development was enabled by the solidarity of local people on the one hand, and by financial aid from abroad, i.e. from various foreign Islamic foundations, on the other hand.

The funding of Bosnian medresas has come from several sources. Foreign Islamic organizations have supported Islamic schools by means of complete or partial funding of new constructions. The restored building of the Mostar medresa and its new boarding house, the completely new edifice of the Islamic Pedagogical Academy in Bihać, and the restoration of the beautiful neo-Moorish style building of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo are all good examples. In some other cases, this aid was only partial, and a large portion of the funds needed for developing the medresas was collected from local people and entrepreneurs. This solidarity of Bosniaks with "their" institution of medresa helped, for example, to complete the construction of the building of the Cazin medresa, inaugurated in 2004. A similar campaign called "300 vakifs" (vakif being the one who donates for religious purposes) was organized for the construction of a new boarding house for the Visoko medresa. These investments enabled all Bosnian medresas to achieve the goal of becoming compulsory boarding schools. Today, they possess adequate modern classrooms, laboratories, and canteens. These material improvements allowed medresas to increase the number of students enrolled. The best example is probably the Tuzla medresa that gradually moved from hired classrooms to a vast complex acquired from a former forest ranger school. After its restoration and expansion, the medresa enrolled four new classes (two for boys and two for girls) with about one hundred incoming students each year.

The operating costs of Bosnian medresas, however, are not covered by foreign Islamic foundations at all, although it has been sometimes the case in the

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38 Ban on its Activities 1570-1918], in: Glasnik, 58 (July-August 1996) 7–8, pp. 465–469.
39 The medresa in Mostar and the IPA in Bihać received financial aid from the High Saudi Committee for Bosnia-Herzegovina. The FIN building was restored in 1997 with the help of a Qatar-based foundation (see also fn. 62).
38 Financial contributions were received from the Islamic Development Bank from Jeddah and, to a lesser extent, from the Una-Sana Canton. But, in a moment when there was an acute lack of funds for completing the works, 550 vakifs (donators) responded to a donation call and collected more than 500,000 Euros in two months. Hamdija NEMOVIĆ, »Krajišnici učestvovali u izgradnji medrese jer su imali povjerenja« [People from the Krajina Contributed to the Construction of the Medresa because They Had Confidence], in: Preporod, (15 April 2005) 802, p. 21.
40 The development of this medresa was also enabled by both foreign Islamic foundations and local donors, mostly private entrepreneurs. Interview with Vahid Fazlović, director of the Behram-beg medresa, Tuzla, 14 December 2004.
Religious secondary schools in Bosnia, including all medresas, enjoy a special status lying somewhere between private and state-run schools. As we will see, Bosnian medresas today cover the complete curriculum of state-run general secondary schools, funded by cantonal budgets. That is why the medresas claim financial support from the same source. In Bosnia, this means that cantons cover, on average, 33% of medresas’ operating costs, an amount generally estimated to correspond to teachers’ salaries. The remaining expenses are covered by the IZ (28%), by the monthly student fees meant to help with the running of the boarding house and school canteen (24%), and by other sources of income (15%).

Traditional forms of funding for Islamic schools still occupy a significant place in the budget of the medresas. The most important is the so-called “kurban campaign,” organized every year at kurban bajram (ar.: al-’îd al-kabîr) by all Bosnian medresas. It is organized for people who do not want or cannot, mostly for lack of space, slaughter the kurban (the sacrifice sheep or cow) at home. They give the money needed for the purchase of an animal to the medresa that in turn buy and slaughter the animal in the ritual Islamic way. One third of the meat from the slaughtered animal is given back to the donor while the rest is kept for the needs of the school canteen. The Bosnian medresas are all equipped with huge freezers for storing the kurban meat for the entire year. Thus the traditional Islamic requirement to distribute two thirds of the sacrificed animal to those who need it is met while substantial help is given to the students of Islamic schools. This event has elicited strong favourable reaction from Bosniaks and the amount of meat collected at kurban bajram is more than sufficient to cover the needs of school canteens. Other types of donations are also practiced, for example, through contribution of part of the harvest. The wide support that

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41 For example, in the school year 1995/96, the Mostar medresa was partially funded by the Saudi High Committee for Bosnia-Herzegovina. KAJMÔVIC, »Medresa Mehmmed-bega Karadoza« (above fn. 37), p. 469.
42 The student fee at Bosnian medresas is 120 Konvertibilna Marks (60 Euros) monthly. Those who cannot afford it are exempted from paying.
44 The tradition of the kurban campaign was established at the Gazi Husrevbeg medresa in 1961. The campaign has gradually gained considerable acceptance and support among Bosniaks. Since 1980s, it has been sufficient to provide the canteen of the Sarajevo medresa with meat for the whole year. TRALIĆ et al. (eds.), Gazi Husrevbegova medresa (above fn. 7), p. 81.
45 According to Muslim tradition, a family that slaughters its kurban should keep one third of meat from the slaughtered animal for its own needs while the rest of the meat should be distributed to the poor and to neighbours. This practice, as well as the kurban itself, is widespread in Bosnia.
medresas enjoy among local people in Bosnia is something unique when compared to other countries in the region.

However, the Bosnian IZ authorities and the directors of the Bosnian medresas do not regard this structure of funding as reliable and sustainable forever. Some form of self-financing is being considered as a solution for the future. This, in turn, depends largely on the adoption of a law denationalizing former vakuf and church properties and returning them to religious communities. Until now, there has not been sufficient political will to make this step or to move in this direction and Bosnian religious communities still await this law with considerable impatience. In the meantime, some medresas started to establish their own profitable activities, albeit at a modest level. The Tuzla medresa has built several small shops on its grounds and rented them out. The Visoko medresa plans to develop and sell its own agricultural and handicraft products, with the participation of students.

Imam Training or General Islamic Education?

In the 1990s, there were plenty of vacant jobs in the Bosnian IZ with new mosques being gradually established and mekteb classes spreading throughout the country. A large area of opportunity arose for those educated in Islamic sciences when religious education was introduced in 1994. Since 1997, a number of generations of graduates have completed their studies at the new medresas and they have started to accede to vacant IZ positions. As early as 2000, however, it became obvious that the IZ would not have enough jobs for the increasing number of medresa graduates and that a much smaller number would be sufficient for the renewal of IZ personnel in the future. However, IZ leaders have been keen to stress that every graduate from a Bosnian medresa interested in a job in the IZ will be granted a position. Still, the opinion that the Bosnian IZ does not need such a high number of Islamic schools and graduates is gaining momentum. On the other hand, Bosnian medresas are striving to increase their capacities. The interest in studying at these Islamic schools has not fallen among

46 The Gazi Husrev-beg medresa in Sarajevo represents an exception, since it is partly funded by the income of the historic Gazi Husrev-beg vakuf, which has been returned to the IZ by the Sarajevo municipality.
47 For instance, on the occasion of final exams at Bosnian medresas, the director of IZ Department for Education Muharem Omerdić stated that there were 200 vacant jobs for imams and 300 for Religious Education teachers, in addition to the option to enrol for Islamic Pedagogical Academies (160 places) and the Faculty of Islamic Studies (80 places). Scholarships for Bosnian students were also being negotiated with Islamic faculties abroad. Salih SMALJLOVIĆ, »Posao ili studije obezbijedeni« [Employment or Studies Provided], in: Preporod, (15 July 2001) 711–712, p. 14.
young Bosniaks and only every second applicant can be accepted because of the limited capacities at these schools.

Within the leadership of the IZ, this situation led to an intense discussion on the purpose and future of Bosnian Islamic schools. Two main visions, reflecting the polarized views similar to the ones that emerged in the early 1960s, can be traced in the flow of the discussion. In the first one, Islamic schools should retain their roles of serving as vocational schools training prospective IZ personnel. Accordingly, the number of medresas should be reduced and their role should become similar to that during the communist period. Advocates of the other vision see the role of Islamic education in a wider perspective and consider that medresas in Bosnia, whose students represent about 1.5% of all Bosniak secondary school students in the Federation, should become spiritual centres of Islam in the Balkans. Accordingly, Islamic education at medresas should not be an aim but rather a means of acquiring general qualifications. Religious subjects, compulsory boarding system and Islamic behaviour and lifestyle should all contribute to the affirmation of Islamic awareness in the Bosniak population and thus to the preservation of Islam in the Balkans. In the Bosnian IZ, the latter view dominates and medresas are becoming modern secondary schools that are not exclusively limited to those interested in religious studies. Medresas now cover the complete curriculum of state-run secondary schools and religious subjects are taught in addition. In most cases, it is the conservative moral milieu of these Islamic schools that awakes the interest of students and parents of prospective students rather than the specific religious subjects that are taught there.

Here again, it is interesting to compare the situation of the Bosnian medresas to that of the imam-hatip schools in Turkey. These Turkish schools are similar to medresas in Bosnia: four-year secondary schools with complete national curriculum and additional religious subjects. However, a fierce debate has been present in Turkish society since at least 1997, when the new education law put certain restrictions on the possibility for imam-hatip school graduates to enrol at faculties other than the faculties of Islamic theology. This debate reflects the

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48 Statistics for the school year 2000/01 show that the six medresas in Bosnia represented 3.75% of the 160 secondary schools located in the regions inhabited by the Bosniak population. The 1,281 medresa students made up 1.5% of the 85,509 Bosniak secondary school students. FAZLOVIĆ, »Rad i uloga medresa danas« (above fn. 43), pp. 100–101.

49 Vahid Fazlović, the director of the Tuzla medresa, states for example that "our families no longer represent an educational factor today and education and morality find themselves in a deep crisis, especially among young people. Therefore, it is very important to correctly recognize the need for bringing up and educating an increasing number of our children in the medresas." Ibid., p. 101.
existence of two self-perceptions of the Turkish society: the sometimes almost fanatic secularist one and the other that favours a moderate public role of religion in Turkey. While the former suggests that the imam-hatip schools should serve solely for the formation of prospective imams and that their number should drop accordingly, the latter promotes these schools as general secondary schools with religious subjects and a more conservative style, whose graduates should have the same possibility to enrol at the university as other secondary school graduates. The secularists fear (or at least pretend to fear) that too strong an influence of imam-hatip schools will produce generations of Islamic (or even Islamist) oriented young people, who, once allowed to enrol at the university, could gradually occupy jobs in the state apparatus and thus undermine the Turkish secularist system. Although this exalted secularism is typical for Turkey and differs from the Bosnian situation, the case of imam-hatip schools helps to put the debate on the future of Bosnian medresas into a broader context.\footnote{On imam-hatip schools in Turkey, see ÇAKIR/BOZAN/TALU, Imam Hatip High Schools (above fn. 35); Henry J. RUTZ, »The Rise and Demise of Imam-Hatip Schools: Discourses of Islamic Belonging and Denial in the Construction of Turkish Civic Culture«, in: Political and Legal Anthropology Review, 22 (November 1999) 2, pp. 93–103; Soon-Yong PAK, »Articulating the Boundary between Secularism and Islamism: The Imam-Hatip Schools in Turkey«, in: Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 35 (September 2004) 3, pp. 324–344.}

In Bosnia, the tendency to bring the medresas in line with the general education system was confirmed by the reform of 2004. This reform occurred within the framework of a more general overhaul of the educational system in Bosnia and was aimed at harmonizing as much as possible the programme of the medresas with that of the state-run general secondary schools. As a result, the proportion of religious subjects fell from 50\% to about 30\%.\footnote{An excessive amount of material in religious subjects used to be frequently criticized for burdening students with useless subject matter to memorize. In a discussion on the program of medresas published in 2002, Almedina Čelebić states for example that "the programs [of the medresas] are burdened with scholasticism [...] and our children are overburdened with lessons learnt by means of mechanic memorizing, of which nothing will remain at the end." »Radna grupa: plan i program medresa« [Working Group: Curriculum and Programme of the Medresas], in: Novi Muallim, 3 (5 January 2002) 8, pp. 117–122, p. 121.} After that reduction, the number of weekly school days dropped from six to five. Medresas are now conceived as general secondary schools and their graduates no longer obtain the diploma called "imam-hatip-muallim," which was actually a vocational title and allowed medresa graduates to do the job of imam. At the same time, the IZ has decided that secondary education was no more sufficient for performing religious services. Since then, the position of imam requires higher education at
one of the Islamic faculties in Bosnia or abroad. The increased educational and qualification standard for imams is now one of the priorities of the Bosnian IZ. It is reflected in statistics published from time to time in the IZ official bulletin and in some Islamic magazines.

Bosnian medresas are thus now fully integrated into the general education system along with the religious schools of other religious communities. Medresa graduates can freely enrol at any Bosnian faculty and, according to the statistics, many do so. Today, it is a minority of medresa graduates who continue in some form of advanced Islamic studies. The situation is similar in other parts of the Balkans, notably in Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia. The Islamic Communities of these countries often view developments in Bosnia as a source of inspiration and they strive to raise their local medresas to a status similar to that enjoyed in Bosnia.

Teaching Staff and Curriculum at Bosnian Medresas

The growing interest in Islamic education throughout the 1990s reveals the crucial role medresas play in the affirmation of Islamic awareness among a relatively wide segment of the Bosniak youth. It is therefore interesting to examine more closely the background of those teaching at these schools as well as the content of the pedagogical material used by them. The reality is far from the image of bearded Arabs indoctrinating poor Bosniak children with the most rigorist and extremist interpretations of Islam. First, there is no foreigner and there has never been any among the teaching staff of Bosnian medresas. From time to time, temporary lectors of Arabic language originating from an Arab country visit some Bosnian medresas, but even this scenario is very rare. The situation is different in some Albanian medresas, where a few nationals from Arab countries teach Arabic and Qur’anic studies on a regular basis.

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52 In a personal interview on 1 February 2005, the director of the Travnik medresa, Muharem Dautović, explained to me that nowadays, when many people with faculty-level education attend khutbas at Bosnian mosques, it is not possible for an imam to have secondary education only. According to Dautović, even his vocabulary would be insufficient to address more educated believers.

53 According to Ismet Veladžić, “75% of the imams working in džemats have still only secondary education. They start working with džemats immediately after having completed medresa and, what is even worse, these are the weakest students who do that.” »Radna grupa: plan i program medresa« (above fn. 51), p. 122.

54 For example, most Tuzla medresa graduates enrol at university faculties. The most preferred faculties are Islamic Studies, Arts, and Law. Interview with Vahid Fazlović, director of the Behram-beg medresa, Tuzla, 14 December 2004.

55 For more details, see MACHÁČEK, »Islamic Education« (above fn. 36).

56 Interview with Saimir Rysheku, director of the Department for Education of the
The qualifications required for the teaching staff at Bosnian medresas vary. General (non-religious) subjects are taught by teachers who are graduates from different Yugoslav or Bosnian faculties and have no specific religious qualification. About half of the teachers of religious subjects have graduated at the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FIN) and have never studied abroad.57 Most of those who studied in Muslim countries have completed faculty-level degrees at the al-Azhar University in Egypt, at the Medina Islamic University or at the University of Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, or in Jordan, Syria, and Libya. Approximately half of them studied Arabic philology, and the other half Islamic studies. Again, the situation differs in Kosovo and in Macedonia, due to the fact that the local Islamic faculties in Prishtina and Skopje are of recent origin and that the FIN in Sarajevo was not attractive for these mostly Albanian-speaking Muslims. Thus, in those countries, most medresa teachers of religious subjects obtained their degrees abroad. In Albania, where there is still no school devoted to higher Islamic education, young people have been sent to study in Muslim countries from the beginning of the 1990s. The first graduates came back in the late 1990s and have gradually replaced foreign teachers and the older generation of poorly qualified local instructors.

Of course, it is difficult to determine how much the stay of these young teachers in Muslim countries affects their own religious beliefs and their work with students. Those with whom I spoke were very open and sincere. I tried to learn how they were influenced by long stays in, for example, Saudi Arabia, and I was told more than once that most Bosnian and Albanian students are happy to come back after completing their studies there. Some of the students in Saudi Arabia were influenced by Saudi Wahhabism or other rigorist currents of Islam and remained so for some time after their return. But most Balkan students who have studied abroad are aware of the cultural differences existing between the Arab world and the Balkans and remain faithful to, let us say, a "Balkan moderate Islam." There are some circles of teachers and ulama around some medresas and other Islamic schools who belong to more rigorist currents of Islam, but they are still far from being "Wahhabis," although they are sometimes labelled as such.

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In any event, it is difficult to imagine teachers spreading radical interpretations of Islam through the official medresa curriculum. In fact, the teaching of religious subjects is very traditional and old-fashioned in Bosnia, and this conservative approach has been criticized many times. All the Balkan medresas (except for those in Bulgaria) use the same blueprint for religious education: the curriculum developed by the Gazi Husrev-beg medresa in Sarajevo and applied later on to the other Yugoslav medresas in Pristina and in Skopje. This curriculum has remained almost the same since the communist period. Finally, after medresas were established in Albania in the early 1990s, the curriculum and the textbooks in Albanian from the Pristina medresa were readily applied. Classical Islamic disciplines are taught: Qur'an, 'aql (dogma), tafsîr (interpretation of the Qur'an), hadîth (sayings and deeds of the Prophet), fiqh (jurisprudence), akhlâq (ethic), imâma (preparation for the work of imam) and Islamic history.

Arabic, English, Turkish and Latin were taught until the recent reform of Bosnian medresas in 2004, along with the complete curriculum of state-run general secondary schools. The amount of material was burdensome for students. After the reform, the number of lessons has been reduced (see above).

For general subjects, the textbooks are those used in other secondary schools. For religious subjects, the Bosnian and Kosovo Islamic Communities published textbooks that are used at all medresas. In Macedonia, textbooks from Kosovo (in Albanian) are used. In Albania, textbooks were taken from Kosovo before the Albanian Islamic Community started creating its own textbooks in cooperation with Turkey. In Bosnia, some of the textbooks are reprinted versions of very old works and there are not many apparent traces of modern Islamic themes or authors. When I asked about modern Islamic authors and ulema, I was told that in general they are not explained and treated, except for a few small notes about such authors as Sayyid Qutb and Yusuf al-Qaradawi. In general, the curriculum and textbooks of Bosnian medresas are very traditional and pay little attention to contemporary Islamic currents and thoughts. It is obviously believed that students at the secondary school level should learn the basic material that has been embraced since classical times by medresas and that at this level it is not useful to instruct students in contemporary Islamic thought. It is thus very improbable that teachers at Balkan medresas can use their curriculum for the diffusion of an extremist or rigorist interpretation of Islam. But given the boarding character and the activities of medresas, it is also true that the teachers exert a more informal influence on their students. And with the educational background and

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58 In the school year 1994/95, the curriculum of the Gazi Husrev-beg medresa in Sarajevo and of other Bosnian medresas contained twenty-eight subjects, eight of them being religious ones and four of them being foreign languages. TRALIĆ et al. (eds.), Gazi Husrevbegova medresa (above fn. 7), p. 89.
ideological leaning of some of the teachers in mind, it is possible to admit that even in medresas, the future character of Balkan Islam can be defined or re-defined. However, the main places where various Islamic currents crystallize and compete in Bosnia are rather the Islamic faculties, as will be shown below.

Profile and Life of Medresa Students

It is not easy to draw the typical social profile of the contemporary medresa student. During the communist period, most of the Gazi Husrev-beg medresa students were of rural origin, although some of them came from ulama or religious families of urban background.59 This situation has changed since 1990, and the Sarajevo medresa has for example experienced an important shift in the socio-economic background of its students: today, about half of them are of urban origin. A similar shift has occurred in the recent years at the Prishtina medresa. Among the new medresas opened since 1990, there are some where a large majority of students comes from rural milieu, as it is the case for the medresas of Tuzla and Travnik in Bosnia or the medresa of Tirana in Albania. But in other cases, such as the Cazin medresa in Bosnia, the Skopje medresa in Macedonia or the Shkodra and Kavaja medresas in Albania, urban students are in the majority. While in Bosnia and Kosovo the strong urban representation at some medresas can be attributed to the intensified process of urbanization in the 1990s, in Albania the presence of traditional urban families in cities such as Shkodra or Kavaja plays a role.

What really makes medresas attractive for young people and for their parents today is their good reputation, especially regarding their conservative moral atmosphere. I was repeatedly told by those teaching at these schools or defending their existence that medresas are able to protect children against "the evils of society: drugs, alcohol, and prostitution."60 Another reason for the high demand for medresas is their good standing regarding the quality of education, school equipment, and student activities. Thus, in Bosnia and Kosovo, for example, only 50% of those interested in medresa studies can be accepted. In Alba-

59 Novaković cites some interesting statistics on the professions of the fathers of the girls graduating from the Gazi Husrev-beg medresa in 1985: out of thirty-one, seventeen were workers (which can also include "peasant-workers," cultivating land but working besides in a public factory, and thus does not indicate urban dwelling), six were peasants, three were imams and the rest were of other professions. NOVAKOVIĆ, Školство Islamske zajednice (above fn. 4), p. 72. A similar survey was done with the first generation graduating from the Skopje medresa in 1988: out of forty-seven fathers of medresa graduates, twenty-seven were workers, nine were peasants, six were imams and the rest were from other professions. Ibid., p. 98.

60 As I learned later, by "prostitution" pre-marital sex is often meant.
nia, this figure is even lower (around 25%). This also means that, thanks to this selectivity, the quality of medresa students is relatively good.

The students spend most of the day at school. In the morning, they attend common classes. In the afternoon, students revise their lessons and take part in student activities. Not much time is left open, and students normally have not more than two to three hours daily to have fun or to go out. Most medresas have a compulsory boarding system, and students must be back in the dormitories by early evening. Outside the classes, students are under the permanent supervision of an educator. They must also observe religious duties. Most medresas have their own mesdžid (prayer hall) and students do their prayers there. On Friday, a student from a higher year is chosen to give a khutba as a part of the practice. Saturdays and Sundays are now generally free and students usually return home to their families. In most medresas, girls have to wear the hijâb (headscarf). Classes and boarding houses for girls and boys are separated and, where possible, the boys’ and girls’ sections of a given medresa are located in separate edifices.

As mentioned, most medresa graduates continue with their studies at different faculties, the favourite ones being arts and law. Only a small percentage of graduates enrols at Islamic faculties. If they do so, they enrol either at faculties in Muslim countries (this applies to all graduates from Albania, most from Macedonia and Kosovo, and about half from Bosnia) or at local Islamic faculties and academies. This brief profile of medresa students shows that the main reason for the relatively high demand for studies at these schools does not lie in the longing of the students or their parents to acquire classical Islamic knowledge or to become an imam. What is decisive is the conservative moral milieu which many parents (especially those with daughters) highly appreciate. The rising quality of most of the medresas and the possibility to enrol at any faculty certainly add to the attractiveness of these schools.

61 The official numbers of Bosnian students at foreign Islamic faculties in 2001 were:
Saudi Arabia: 107 (88 in Medina, 15 in Riyadh, 4 in Medina for MA degree); Syria: 60 (Damascus); Egypt: 38 (Cairo, two of them for MA degree); Jordan: 34 (Amman and Al-Zarqa); Iran: 28 (Tehran 20, Qom 3, Mashhad 5), Turkey: 11; Pakistan: 8; Libya: 2; Kuwait: 1; Lebanon: 1. There were also some Bosnian students at foreign secondary schools: in Turkey at Bozyazi-Içel (21 boys) and in Egypt at the Fuad al-Khamis Institute (24 girls). Tables »Studenti u inozemstvu« [Students Abroad] and »Druge sredne vjerske škole« [Other Religious Secondary Schools], in: Novi Muallim, 3 (5 January 2002) 8, pp. 93–94. These numbers cannot be taken as definitive because many students leave on their own without knowledge of the IZ, as its representatives admit with very little enthusiasm.
A European al-Azhar in Sarajevo?

As already stated, the (increasingly unwanted) necessity of sending people abroad for Islamic faculty-level education led the Yugoslav IZ to establish such a faculty at home. The founding of the Faculty of Islamic Theology / Faculty of Islamic Studies (FIN) contributed to the fact that a substantial number of medresa teachers, imams, and other religious personnel of the Bosnian IZ no longer needed to acquire a higher Islamic education abroad. After modest beginnings, when lessons were given in the classrooms of the Sarajevo medresa, the FIN moved after the war to the former Higher Shari’a School building, close to the old Ottoman centre of Sarajevo, and gradually achieved high repute among Muslims from all over the former Yugoslavia.\(^6\) The FIN professors acquired their doctorates from both western and Muslim countries, and are representatives of an “intellectual Islam” (see below). The overall atmosphere and the style of lectures at FIN are as much close to oriental or religion studies as to theology. The faculty also organizes Islam and Islamic history classes for non-students, non-Muslims and foreigners. Studies at FIN take four years and today there are some 200 students in total plus approximately the same number of extramural students. In 1995, education studies were introduced as a second specialization in addition to theology. Graduates from any Bosnian secondary school may apply for education studies, whereas only medresa graduates can apply for theology studies.\(^6\)

In addition to the FIN in Sarajevo, and in the context of the introduction of Religious Education into Bosnian schools in 1994, the IZ has opened vocational schools aimed at training Islamic religious education teachers for primary and secondary schools. Called Islamic Pedagogical Academy (Islamska pedagoška akademija – IPA), these post-secondary schools were not initially faculty-level institutions. The first IPA was established in 1993, during the war, in Zenica. Besides the introduction of religious education into Bosnian schools, there were probably other motives for setting up the academies. Geographical antagonisms rein-

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\(^6\) The beautiful building of the FIN was constructed in 1886 on a vakuf site by the Austro-Hungarian authorities. It was built in a distinctive neo-Moorish style and served as a school for government-paid Shari’a judges until the end of World War II. During the communist period, it was the site of the Museum of the city of Sarajevo.

\(^6\) There are currently three other similar faculty-level Islamic institutions in other parts of the Balkans: The Faculty of Islamic Studies in Prishtina (Kosovo) since 1992; The Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Kondovo, close to Skopje (Republic of Macedonia) since 1997; and the Institute of Higher Islamic Studies in Sofia (Bulgaria) since 1991. Their standing and prestige, however, does not match those in Bosnia. So far, there have been no higher Islamic schools or faculties established in Albania.
forced by ideological ones certainly played a role and are partly still present. Moreover, the territorial fragmentation of wartime Bosnia and the siege of Sarajevo encouraged local ulama to establish a sort of their "own" Islamic faculty. In 1995, shortly after the signing of the Dayton Agreement, another IPA was established in Bihać (northwestern Bosnia). In both cases, regional muftis (Halil Mehtić in Zenica and Hasan Makić in Bihać) played a key role. The Sandžak branch of the IZ, under the leadership of the mufti Muammer Zukorlić, established in 2001 in Novi Pazar its own Islamic Pedagogical Academy, later renamed Faculty of Islamic Studies.

Both IPAs in Bihać and Zenica are nominally controlled by the rijaset, which is also the founder. However, probably partly due to persistent differences between the IPA personnel and the IZ leadership, the former took care to secure their institutionalization outside the sole framework of the IZ. They chose to upgrade their status to that of a faculty and to join the local universities (in 1997 in Bihać and in 2004 in Zenica), so that the responsibility for them is now divided between the IZ and the universities. In this way, the funding of the IPAs is also better solved, because cantonal budgets cover a part of their current expenses. Finally, an additional reason for this process is the ongoing integration of the education systems at the European level. The IPAs, as well as the FIN in Sarajevo, try to remain within the larger academic world and to keep pace with other educational institutions so as not to lose their attractiveness for prospective students. The personnel of these Islamic higher schools proudly talks about their successes in the adjustment to the Bologna Process requirements. As a result, from the academic year 2004/05 on both IPAs transformed their curricula from a four- to six-semester cycle with further plans to extend it to an eight-semester programme. The IPAs obtained recently the status of faculty and changed their name to Islamic Pedagogical Faculty (Islamski pedagoški fakultet – IPF). Both IPFs are also trying to widen their activities by introducing additional specializations beside that of religious education. The Zenica IPF has launched a social pedagogy branch, but its plan to introduce an imam-hatib

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64 On the ideological dimension of this antagonism in the early 1990s, see Xavier Bougarel, «L’islam bosniaque, entre identité culturelle et idéologie politique», in: Bougarel/Clayer (eds.), Le Nouvel Islam balkanique (above fn. 56), pp. 79–133, pp. 89, 119 and 127.

65 There was also for a certain period of time a specialization in Islamic religious education at the (general) Faculty of Education of the Mostar University. However, I was not able to find out whether it is still working or not. See <http://www.unmo.ba/ba/fakulteti/nf.asp>.

vocational line and a pre-school education branch were rejected by the rijaset.\footnote{An informative section on the development of the Zenica IPA/IPF can be found on its official web site at <http://www.ipf.unze.ba/index.php?id=6>.} There are now efforts by the Zenica IPF to introduce courses in the culture of religion and comparative religious sciences, which indicates the readiness of the IPF to train future teachers of these subjects once they are introduced into primary and secondary schools (possibly instead of religious education).\footnote{See Godišnji izvještaj za 2005. godinu (above fn. 66), p. 267, point 3.} After having completed this process, there will be three collaborating, but relatively independent Islamic faculties in Bosnia.

All Bosnian Islamic schools and faculties are willingly joining the European integration processes which require certain reforms so as not to be left outside the general education system. Behind the development of new specializations and the integration efforts, one can perceive the fear of unemployment for an ever growing number of graduates. One day the demand for religious education teachers will be saturated, all the more so if the plans for reduction (or even abolition) of religious education classes are realized. Thus the Islamic faculties are trying to do as much as possible to retain their raison d’être. In this regard, some are promoting Bosnia or more specifically Sarajevo as a future centre for the training of European imams. As a part of the idea to institutionalize Islam in Europe (and to use the Bosnian experience for this purpose), there are some plans to transform the FIN in Sarajevo into an International Islamic University, where prospective European ulama would (have to?) be trained so as to become qualified to hold that post. There is not much more than occasional talk about it, but some European officials seem to be interested in these ideas.\footnote{See for example Enes KARIĆ, dean of the FIN, interviewed by Šefko HODŽIĆ, »Mjesec sa mnogo blagodeti« [A Month Full of Blessings], in: Oslobodenje (Sarajevo), 21 October 2006, available at <http://www.oslobodenje.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=49291&Itemid=52>.}

**Bosnian Islamic Faculties and the Definition of a "European Islam"**

I believe that one thing is very important concerning these Bosnian faculties: they represent the places where the future mainstream of Bosnian or Balkan Islam, and thus possibly also a "European Islam," is being defined. As already mentioned, there is some discordance between the IZ leadership in Sarajevo and some groups of ulama in other regions of Bosnia. Also, generally, there is a difference between the people teaching at the FIN and those gathered around the IPFs. Xavier Bougarel used in the late 1990s the terms "pan-Islamists," represented then by the reisu-l-ulema Mustafa Cerić, and "Salafists," grouped around
the then mufti of Zenica Halil Mehtić. These terms are useful rather for a political analysis of what was going on in the IZ and its high-ranking personnel and must be understood in the specific Bosnian context of that time. The three definitions of Bosnian Islam put forward by the same author (individual faith, cultural identity and political ideology) are in turn focused on the socio-cultural dimension. I believe that it remains to do a thorough and systematic research (through the analysis of writings and speeches of different ulama, for example) in order to define the existing Islamic currents in Bosnia from a theological and ideological point of view. I am not going to do it in this paper, but I regard it as a great challenge. I will only outline here certain features of the two ideological currents which, in my opinion, form the mainstream of contemporary Bosnian Islam.

One of the most noticeable differences is the academic background of the professors at the different Islamic faculties. Perhaps surprisingly, this background is not closely connected with age or generational differences. FIN professors have generally obtained their university education either from Yugoslav faculties (faculties of law, philology and arts are mostly the case, in addition to the FIN itself) or from (primarily western) universities abroad. Only a few have studied in Muslim countries like Malaysia, Egypt or Saudi Arabia. Moreover, their academic background is usually oriented toward philosophy rather than theology. This profile gives to the FIN a European and intellectual orientation, and its programme is characteristic of a moderate, modern and intellectual Islam. It is probably the form of Islam that some European intellectuals and officials would like to see as a "Euro-Islam," a term vaguely defined but used on many occasions.

On the other hand, the IPFs in Bihać and Zenica were both established in

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70 See BOUGAREL, «L’islam bosniaque» (above fn. 64).
72 Useful biographical data are available at the official sites of the FIN <http://www.fin.ba>, the IPF Zenica <http://www.ipf.unze.ba> and the IPF Bihać <http://www.ipf.unbi.ba>.
73 For instance, Enes Karić, the dean of the FIN from 2003 to 2007, completed his studies at the Faculty of Arts in Sarajevo and the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, and the FIN professors Rešid Hafizović and Adnan Silajdžić both studied at the Catholic Faculty of Theology (Katolički bogošlovnii fakultet) in Zagreb before they pursued their studies at western universities.
74 Enes Karić, in particular, is regarded as a genuine Bosnian Islamic intellectual; his approach to Islam in Bosnia is more intellectual and probably less pragmatic than that of the actual reisu-l-ulma Mustafa Cerić. Karić rejects the strong connection existing in Bosnia between Islam and politics. He is often thought of as a possible candidate for the post of reisu-l-ulma (see also fn. 84).
the 1990s and are led today by *ulema* formed almost exclusively at Islamic faculties in Saudi Arabia. Also, the most prominent lecturers at these schools have a similar academic background, with a few who received their training in Jordan or Tunisia. I refuse to consider Saudi training as an irrefutable proof of being a representative of a rigorist interpretation of Islam. However, if one considers the books and articles published by these *ulema* (for example in the *Novi Horizonti* magazine\(^\text{76}\)), the difference between them and those lecturing at the FIN becomes evident. Some of the IPF professors have worked for foreign Islamic organizations\(^\text{77}\) and the support from these sources is still significant (see above). Also, the plans of lectures for IPF students contain a list of recommended literature including Salafist authors such as Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Abu-l-Ala Mawdudi, or Abd al-Halim Mahmoud.

One event that has clearly revealed the ideological differences between the two main currents was the publication of the Bosnian translation of a book written by an Arab author criticising the Wahhabi movement.\(^\text{78}\) The book, completed by the translators with a few chapters on “Wahhabism” in Bosnia, including a list of the “famous activists being active in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” triggered a very fierce discussion. While Rešid Hafizović, a FIN professor\(^\text{79}\) and a well-known critic of “Wahhabi-Salafi” influences in Bosnia, praised the book as a good contribution to the general knowledge of this “tragic phenomenon,” Muharem Štulanović, the dean of the Bihać IPF (who was mentioned in the book as one of the “Wahhabi activists”), fiercely attacked the book and its translators in *Preporod*.\(^\text{81}\) Surprisingly, in this official semi-monthly newspaper of the

\(^{75}\) These *ulema* studied mostly at different faculties of the Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Both present deans of IPFs, Muharem Štulanović in Bihać and Zuhdija Adilović in Zenica, spent many years pursuing several academic degrees there, as did other lecturers of IPFs.

\(^{76}\) *Novi Horizonti* is an Islamic monthly magazine published in Zenica by the association *Selam*. It is closely linked with the teaching staff of the IPFs and of the Travnik medresa.

\(^{77}\) For instance, Šukrija Ramić, former dean of the Zenica IPF, led the humanitarian organization *Et-Takavi* in Zenica, and Izet Terzić, professor at the Bihać IPF, worked for the Saudi humanitarian organization IGASA.

\(^{78}\) Hasan Ali Sekkaf/Jasmin Merdan/Adnan Mešanović, *Vehabizam/Selefizam. Ideološka pozadina i historijski korijeni* [Wahhabism/Salafism. Ideological Background and Historical Roots], Sarajevo: Srebrno pero, 2005. The book lacks distance and objectivity and includes very personal attacks (especially the parts written by the Bosnian editors) but its importance lies in the discussion that followed its publication.

\(^{79}\) See above fn. 73.

\(^{80}\) »Iz recenzije prof. Rešida Hafizovića« [From Prof. Rešid Hafizović’s Review], in: Ali Sekkaf/Merdan/Mešanović, *Vehabizam/Selefizam* (above fn. 78), pp. 8–9, p. 8.

\(^{81}\) Muharem Štulanović, »Može li krepana kokoš na šiijskosufijsku listu vehabizma«
Bosnian IZ, both supportive and critical reviews of this book were published. Štulanović’s attacks against the "Shi’a-Sufi" inclinations of the author and the translators of the book are in itself revealing, for one elucidating his own position in the debate.

One of the main theological arguments opposing the two currents centers on the issue of madhhab (school of Islamic law and thought). While most IZ officials and FIN professors maintain that the Hanafi madhhab is the only valid for Bosnian Muslims (such provision is included in the Constitution and in other regulations of the IZ), those close to the IPFs such as Štulanović argue that one should be free to choose any of the Sunni madhhab or rather that the differences between madhhab do not matter. At the political level, however, both currents agree with the necessity of integrating Bosnia into the European Union (an approach reflected in the institutional reforms at all three Islamic faculties) and neither of them aspires to interfere directly in party politics.

I suggest to call provisionally these two mainstream currents "Bosnian intellectual Islam" and "universal moderate neo-Salafist Islam." There are of course other Islamic currents in Bosnia, but they are either marginal in official institutions (radical neo-Salafists, Sufis, etc.) or are gradually losing their ideological strength like the "pan-Islamist current" which exerted a strong hold on the IZ during the war, but has become increasingly divided and marginalized since the late 1990s. Both "Islamic intellectuals" and "neo-Salafists" proposed their own candidates for reisu-l-ulema elections in 2005, but Mustafa Ceric managed to be re-elected despite his own conflicts with some representatives of the former "pan-Islamist current." Finally, considering the fact that the IPFs basically train the prospective religious education teachers at state-run primary and secondary schools and that the FIN basically train the future IZ personnel and medresa teachers (the students enrolling at IPFs and FIN are those really interested in Islamic topics and sciences, unlike most of the medresa students), the role of these faculties in the definition of Islam for coming Bosnian generations is substantial. If the project of an International Islamic University in Sarajevo becomes

[Can a Dead Poultry be Put on the Shi’a-Sufi List of Wahhabism?], in: Preporod, (15 March 2006) 824, p. 32.

In a previous issue of Preporod, another author regarded the translation and publication of Sekkaf’s book as "a brave step." Meho Šljivo, »Raskrinkavanje vėhābiskie ideologij« [The Unmasking of Wahhabi Ideology], in: Preporod, (1 March 2006) 823, p. 32.

On the history of the "pan-Islamist current" and its role in the 1990s, see BOUGAREL, »L’islam bosniaque« (above fn. 64), pp. 80–90.

The two candidates were Enes Karić, dean of the FIN (see fn. 73 and 74), and Hasan Makić, mufti of Bihać and former dean of the Bihać IPA.
a reality, then this intra-Bosnian struggle about the definition of Islam could easily influence similar ongoing debates across Europe.

So far I have dealt exclusively with official and formal Islamic education, supervised and directed by the official Bosnian Islamic Community. There are also some informal religious courses beyond the control of the IZ. These courses are often run by neo-Salafist youth groups or organizations, in some cases obviously less moderate than the mentioned neo-Salafist current linked to the IPFs. The religious lectures and courses are often complemented by other practical activities and instructions, such as free or very cheap computer, English language or sewing courses, thus attracting people to "join the club."\textsuperscript{85} In many cases, they are run by young people who studied in Muslim countries on their own, outside the framework of the IZ. These activities are probably sponsored by some foreign Islamic organizations, but this is hardly provable and systematically denied by the representatives of these groups. It is also difficult to estimate the impact of these courses on Bosnian Muslims, but they are probably the place where radical neo-Salafists gain believers for their ideology. Thus, while the main struggle around the definition of Bosnian Islam happens at the formal level, another influential actor at the informal level is also present and must be taken into account.

Conclusion

Islamic schools play an important role in Bosnia. While Islamic faculties are institutions training and employing Bosnian ulama and Islamic intellectuals, medresas underwent important transformations and became modern general secondary schools with an Islamic moral atmosphere and lifestyle (as opposed to vocational schools). At the same time, religious education in state-run schools remains a sensitive question, not because of the content of Islamic religious education itself but because of the intricate political situation of this country. Therefore, while European authorities are tempted to see in Bosnian Islam with its high level of institutionalization an interesting model for the organization of Islam in Europe, they interfere in Bosnian politics with the aim of creating a unified and viable state, which can also imply some attempts at minimizing the place of religious education in the system. And, among Bosniaks themselves, the struggle between those advocating the present form of confessional (sepa-

\textsuperscript{85} In the early 2000s, the most famous organization of this kind, the Active Islamic Youth (Aktivna islamska omladina), has opened a dozen of so-called Youth Cultural Centres (Omladinski kulturni centri) offering religion, English language and PC courses. Other informal Islamic religion courses exist in Bosnia, such as the one called Dar-ul-Kur’an in Mostar. See <http://www.darulkuran.org>.
rate) religious education classes and those promoting the teaching of an inter-confessional subject called "Culture of Religions" continues.

Given the position of Bosnia as the country with the liveliest intellectual life of autochthonous European Muslims, the efforts of Bosnian reisu-l-ulema Mustafa Cerić in turning Bosnia and its capital Sarajevo into the centre of an institutionalized "European Islam" are only logical. The contemporary ideological transformations of Bosnian Islam are therefore of a high importance for the future of Islam in Europe, and following the evolution of Islam in this country will help us to predict the future institutional forms and intellectual contents of a "European Islam," if it one day becomes a reality. Two main ideological currents can be traced within contemporary Bosnian Islam. The "Bosnian intellectual Islam," very much acceptable for European authorities, is represented by the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FIN) in Sarajevo. The other current, which I call "universal moderate neo-Salafist Islam," has been gaining ground since the 1970s and now dominates the Islamic Pedagogical Faculties (IPFs) of Zenica and Bihać, along with some medresas. This current is more rigorist than the Bosnian intellectual current but, at the political level, its representatives generally welcome the European integration processes. It is ideologically closer to the contemporary Islamic mainstream in the global Muslim world and actually reinserts Bosnian Islam into global Islamic thinking.

Moderate neo-Salafism is getting stronger all over the world, including in western Europe. A likely scenario is that it will soon dominate the Bosnian Islamic Community as well, although not necessarily with the support of a majority of the Bosniak population. Therefore, if there is any serious project of building up European Islamic institutions, this moderate neo-Salafist current has to be taken into account, all the more so if one expects that both west European Muslims and Balkan Muslims regard such institutions as legitimate and representative ones. However it may be, the enlargement of the European Union to southeast European countries with their millions of autochthonous Muslims will change how European officials, intellectuals and the public at large understand the reality of Islam. More and more, Islam will cease to be perceived as an alien religious and cultural phenomenon in Europe.

Acronyms

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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
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<td>FIN</td>
<td>Fakultet islamskih nauka – Faculty of Islamic Studies</td>
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<td>IPA</td>
<td>Islamska pedagoška akademija – Islamic Pedagogical Academy</td>
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<td>IPF</td>
<td>Islamski pedagoški fakultet – Islamic Pedagogical Faculty</td>
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IZ  
*Islamka zajednica – [Yugoslav] Islamic Community*

OSCE  
Organization for Security and Co-operation

UN  
United Nations