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O BOŠNJACIMA, ISLAMU I SOCIJALIZMU

ABOUT BOSNIACS, ISLAM AND SOCIALISM

Abstract

The legacy of Yugoslav socialism is still viable in the successor states and the nations of that former common state as a form of identity. The relationship between communist doctrine and religion, specifically Islam, is of particular interest to researchers. This paper was written under the impression of two recent books recognizing the relationship between Islam, Bosniaks and socialism. The author critically questions the place and role of Islam and the institution of the Islamic Community in the contemporary national and political development of Bosniaks, with an emphasis on recent social events.

Key words: *Islam, Bosniaks, Socialism, Islamic Community, Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

ABOUT BOSNIAKS, ISLAM AND SOCIALISM

Modernity and Bosnian Muslims

The political legacy of Yugoslav socialism still has a reflexive effect on contemporary social issues, especially in regard to the identity and ideology of nations and countries that emerged from the disintegration of the union of the socialist Yugoslav state. Open questions from that period are often subjected to contemporary narrative instrumentalizations and manipulations. Objective scholarly research of that historical period is of the utmost scientific and social importance. This is especially true of the relationship of socialist society and its doctrine to religion and its institutions, especially the relationship between socialism and Bosnian Muslims/Bosniaks which is extremely relevant for us in Bosnia and Herzegovina today. Two publications on this issue came to light recently, namely the book by Amir Duranović *Islamska zajednica u jugoslavenskom socijalizmu/The Islamic Community in Yugoslav Socialism*¹ and the book of Xavier Bougarel *Islam and Nationhood in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Surviving Empires*². Both books heavily influenced the contents of this paper.

Any word on the status and functioning of the institution of the Islamic Community in the conditions of Yugoslav socialist society needs to illustrate the deeper, founding and determining ideological, social and political processes that determined the spirit of the time of all social stakeholders and religious communities. The processes of modernization affected Western European countries at the beginning of the nineteenth century, while in Bosnia and Herzegovina their more visible reflections were present only at the beginning of the twentieth century. On the wave of economic, social, political and cultural modernization, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the surrounding areas of the

¹ Amir Duranović, *Islamska zajednica u jugoslavenskom socijalizmu*, Udruženje za modernu historiju, Sarajevo, 2021.

² Xavier Bougarel, *Nadživjeti carstva: islam, nacionalni identitet i politička lojalnost u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Udruženje za modernu historiju, Sarajevo, 2020.

Bosniak presence had experienced a radical transformation of forms, conditions and ways of life. Adopting patterns and standards of new westernizing social and civilizational forms of life was particularly challenging for Bosniaks given their earlier centuries-long immersion in the Ottoman social system and the fact of their Islamic religiosity, two factors that made them either largely outsiders in relation to the new age or the relics of the past versus the coming currents in the eyes of neighbours and outside observers. While political modernization yielded political pluralism and parliamentarism, economic modernization brought industrialization and capitalism³. The processes of social modernization brought the transformation and secularization of the education process, especially its intensification, volume and qualitative progression, which in the case of Bosniaks, more than in other Bosnian peoples, meant a radical disassociation with the previous education system. At the same time, the processes of cultural modernization brought with them the principles of secularism, the legacy of Western secularism and republicanism, which was a novelty for the Muslim community of that time and which had little in common with traditional Islamic principles.



ILLUSTRATION - Transformation of the Bosnian/Ottoman hats (*fes*) into the French hat (*bert hat*) - a new westernizing social and civilizational form.
ILUSTRACIJA - Transformacija bosansko/osmanske kape (*fesa*) u francusku kapu (*bertku*) - nova vesternizirajuća socijalna i civilizacijska forma.

³ On the relationship between modernization and identity among Central European peoples, see more in Rade Kalanj, *Dimenzije modernizacije i mjesto identiteta*, „Socijalna ekologija“, Zagreb, Vol. 16 (2007), No. 2-3, p. 113-156.

These processes of modernization, common to all ethnic and religious groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, were later further ideologized and complicated within the idea and practice of Yugoslav socialism. In this region, the socialist doctrine had ambitiously appeared on the historical stage. Let me immediately point out that, in summary, it had achieved grandiose results. Its ambition in the sphere of social consciousness, of which religion is a part, was reflected in its doctrinal weakening, humiliation or even hostility towards three important social categories: state, religion and nation. According to this ideological blueprint, the state should have died out, which began with the introduction of the system of socialist self-government in the mid-1950s. This had a positive effect on the autonomy and self-regulation of the Islamic Community since the principle of self-government in decision-making allowed integrity and freedom of action to the direct stakeholders. Croatian political scientist Dejan Jović in his book *Jugoslavija: država koja je odumrla/Yugoslavia: The State that Died*⁴ saw one of the main causes of the later disintegration of socialist Yugoslavia in this process of de-statization/deetatization. The category of nationality did not fare any better in the socialist doctrine. When Duranović speaks extensively and analytically based on primary sources about the role of the Islamic Community in the process of recognizing the Bosniak as a Muslim nation,



ILLUSTRATION ~ The impact of the modernization process on the space for rest and entertainment within the new doctrines.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Utjecaj procesa modernizacije na prostor za odmor i zabavu u ukviru nove doktrine.

⁴ See Dejan Jović, *Jugoslavija : država koja je odumrla : uspon, kriza i pad Kardeljeve Jugoslavije : (1974-1990)*, Prometej, Zagreb, 2003.p. 103.-157.

the author as a historian does not engage in a deeper analysis of the relationship between socialism and the issue of the nationality, since this is not the focus of his research. He only assumes Brubaker's position that socialism was not against the nation as such but against nationalism as its aggressive character. When it comes to religion, and this is directly related to our topic, Yugoslav socialism within the official doctrinal position on religion as a backward and retrograde form of social consciousness that should die or disappear with the development of socialism, or rather be replaced by class consciousness, varied modalities of negative attitudes towards it during its existence: from the extremely rigid atheistic system from the first years to its tolerance in the so-called underdeveloped rural areas and the elderly population under the auspices of the opinion that this legacy will be overcome in time by the development of a new reality. It is precisely this approach towards the categories of the state (the ethno-national state), religions and nations that eventually "backfired" on Yugoslav socialism. Namely, in the time of post-socialist existence, the democratization and liberalization of societies and states created by the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the contemporary fetishization and absolutization of these categories has become one of the obstacles to the development of the freedoms and rights of citizens.

Islamic community and socialism

In organizational terms, during the "golden years" of socialism, the Islamic Community twice adopted a new constitution, the first time in 1959 and the second time ten years later in 1969. In both instances, external factors were crucial for the adoption of that highest act of the Islamic Community. This shows the determining conditionality of this institution within the socio-political environment, which we did not find in other large religious communities then in Yugoslavia. Regarding the reasons for the adoption of the constitution in 1959, Duranović explicitly states that "... analysis of most of the factors that influenced the adoption of the new constitution in July 1959 shows that one of the decisive factors was the adoption of the Law on Nationalization of Leased Buildings and Construction Land, which was enacted in 1958. With this legal decision, the endowments of the Islamic Community were deprived of their property, which essentially meant that there ceased to exist reasons and any conditions for the work of the bodies of the endowment administration⁵". By depriving the waqf, the Islamic Community was not only materially damaged, but by losing the conditions for economic independence, its overall institutional independence was undermined in such a way that by impoverishment it was delivered upon the mercy or disfavour of the state. The state, of course, through financial mechanisms of assistance to the Community could, and as a rule did so, channel all other flows in that institution. The

⁵ Amir Duranović, *Islamska zajednica u jugoslavenskom socijalizmu*, Udruženje za modernu historiju, Sarajevo, 2021, p. 44.

extent to which the Community's financial dependence on the state has affected its work is not the subject of our analysis. A systematic analysis of the abolition of the waqf on the status of the Community will certainly show this once and for all. When considering organizational issues, Duranović cites the inherited duality in the management of the Islamic Community in the socialist period. Namely, from the Statute for the Autonomous Administration of Islamic Religious and Waqf-Mearif Affairs from 1909, the organizational structure of the Islamic Community is based on the duality of religious and waqf-Mearif affairs from the Jamaat assemblies and Jamaat Majlis. The duality of affairs was accompanied by the dual origin of the staff who managed these affairs, "so the entire history of the Islamic Community was marked by the active participation of ulama and lay staff in the management of the Community, and very often a struggle for supremacy"⁶. We could freely add that in a certain way this struggle is present to this day, in an implicit and intra-institutional way. This duality and rivalry in community governance manifests itself in different ways at different times, whereby it often takes the form of whether the Community should be "Imam" or "Iman" all the way to the issue of the relationship or influence of the lay staff of political parties, or politics as such on the character and work of the Islamic Community. Any future research on the relationship between politics and the Islamic Community will not be able to bypass this question. It surfaced much later in the context of political pluralism in the 1990s, when some Islamic intellectuals, advocates of opening the Islamic Community to society, advocated its democratization with sharp comments following the results of the 1990 Community elections. The prevailing opinion of this circle was that the Islamic Community had missed the opportunity to use the democratization of society to tear down the artificial walls that had for decades separated the Bosniak people from their ulama, intellectuals, authorities, writers, poets, philosophers - their intelligentsia.

According to them, instead of the dominant imams, the economists, lawyers, doctors, lawyers, professors, engineers, i.e. persons of civic occupations should be elected to the bodies of the IC. The election of such persons would mean the transformation and opening of the IC. This was not prevented by either the party or the state, but by the imams themselves, although it has been stipulated for years that it was prevented by the communists. Both the State and the Supreme Assembly, as the highest governing bodies of the Community, were elected at that time. Over 70% of the elected members were imams and few of them with a university degree. Furthermore, there was a growing resentment towards the imams because the possibilities of freedom and democracy in the elections were not practiced by all members of Islam, but only by them - the imams. They proposed and chose themselves. In that way, they united and took over all power in the Community, both the legislative (Parliament) and the executive (Meshihat), as well as all the administration. That is why the extremely serious question was presented: was it an Islamic or an imam community?

The Islamic Community received a new constitution in October 1969. In the organizational sense with the new Constitution, two novelties were taking place in this institution. It changed its name so that the former

⁶ Amir Duranović, *Islamska zajednica u jugoslavenskom socijalizmu*, Udruženje za modernu historiju, Sarajevo, 2021, p. 36.



ILLUSTRATION – Vakufnama of Muslihudin Čekreklija, represents the oldest vakufnama from Sarajevo whose original has been preserved (Sarajevo, August 1526).

The photo was taken from the Gazi Husrev-beg Library in Sarajevo.

ILLUSTRACIJA – Vakufnama Muslihudina Čekreklije, predstavlja najstariju vakufnamu iz Sarajeva čiji original je sačuvan (Sarajevo, avgusta 1526. godine).

Fotografija je preuzeta iz Fototeke Gazi Husrev-begove biblioteke u Sarajevu.

name "Islamic Religious Community" became the "Islamic Community". Another novelty was the introduction of the institution of the Mufti. This Constitution was followed by major political, social and cultural facts that make the second half of the 1960s and early 1970s a time of extremely significant Bosniak and Bosnian national revival. In those years, the self-awareness of the Bosniak identity was manifestly expressed through scientific and scholarly works, works of art and literary achievements of the new Bosniak cultural elite, from Hazim Šabanović, Muhamed Filipović, Abdulah Šarčević, Esad Ćimić, Kasim Prohić, Avdo Sućeska, Muhamed Hadžijahić, Atif Purivatra, writers Mehmedalija Mak Dizdar, Meša Selimović, Skender Kulenović, Derviš Sušić to artists Mersad Berber, Safet Zec, Halil Tıkveša, Dževad Hozo, to name just a few of these cultural representatives⁷. The achievements of the secular intelligentsia followed the achievements of the Bosniak ulama. First of all, there was Husein Đozo, "who played the status of a leading figure in directing Islamic thought within the then existing framework and efforts of the Islamic Community to build a "new path" and direction of the Islamic Community", and whose personality and actions Duranović in this book outlines across the best and the most interesting pages. This was followed by the research of Kasim Dobrača, as a representative of the older ulama generation and the source of opposition to the leadership of the Islamic Community, through the publication of translations of the *Holy Qur'an* by Muhamed Pandžo and Džemaludin

⁷ For more on the Second Bosniak-Muslim National-Cultural Revival, see more Šaćir Filandra, *Bošnjačka politika u XX stoljeću*, "Sejtarija", Sarajevo, 1988. p. 229-325

Čaušević, launching "Preporod" as an informational newsletter. In the political sense, the Yugoslav political self-government system was increasingly developing implicit support to the processes of liberalization and democratization of society. In the constitutional sense, the federal state union was further federalized. Bearing in mind the processes of the "Croatian Spring" and "Serbian liberals" and the departure of Ranković, these positive processes, at least when it comes to Bosniaks, culminate in their recognition of the status of a people by the Communist Party.

After 1945, the Islamic Community was constitutionally and ideologically separated from the state, but the state was not separated from it. The state, through "its people" in the Community - a term for individuals who, in cooperation with parts of the political system, were well quoted by the authorities - directed behind-the-scenes all important, especially personnel flows in that institution. In just a few decades, the Islamic community had gone from a direct connection of its leaders with state institutions, when representatives of security bodies sat in the bodies of the competent commission for relations with religious communities, through a certain independence and development of its own activities to considerable autonomy from politics.



ILLUSTRATION / ILUSTRACIJA - Leading figures at the top of the Islamic community - reisu-l-ulema / Vodeće ličnosti u vrhu Islamske zajednice - reisu-l-ulema: Mehmed Teufik ef. Azabagić, hfz. Sulejman ef. Šarac, Mehmed Džemaludin ef. Čaušević, hfz. Ibrahim ef. Maglajlić, Fehim ef. Spaho, Salih Safvet ef. Bašić (vd), Ibrahim ef. Fejić, Sulejman ef. Kemura, Naim ef. Hadžiabdić, hfz. Husein ef. Mujić, Jakub ef. Selimoski, prof. dr Mustafa ef. Cerić...

In the time that Duranović is researching, there had been an evolution in the relationship between the Islamic Community and the state. However, one fact must not be overlooked, namely that "the leadership of the Islamic Community was elected by the will of state institutions" loyal personnel. Therefore, the basic preoccupation of the state was actually the maintenance of such an order"⁸.

During the socialist period, the Islamic community had a number of special features in relation to other Yugoslav religious communities and churches. It was the only religious community territorially organized according to the republican principle. Its four meshihats were divided by republican borders. Other large religious communities, primarily the Catholic and Serbian Orthodox Churches, did not pay attention to the inter-republican borders, but followed autonomously elected and inherited organizational structures.



ILLUSTRATION – „Preporod“ № 1000, as an information bulletin of the Islamic Community.

ILUSTRACIJA – „Preporod“ № 1000, kao informativno glasilo Islamske zajednice.

⁸ Amir Duranović, *Islamska zajednica u jugoslavenskom socijalizmu*, Udruženje za modernu historiju, Sarajevo, 2021, p. 57.

The Islamic community was also more dependent on the political system than other religious communities in other aspects. The unenviable social and political status of the Bosniak people as a nationally unrecognized people in the first seven decades of the 20th century had a negative effect on the Islamic Community as its religious institution. This was especially evident during the period of the socialist system. At the founding congress of the Communist Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1950 in Sarajevo, the Communists of Bosnia and Herzegovina clearly took the position that the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina still "... mark themselves by religious affiliation ..." and had yet to make a choice of nationality⁹.

As the communist expectation of the national assimilation of Bosnian Muslims was not fulfilled and the position of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Yugoslav federation was strengthened due to the needs of further development of the country's political system, so the Bosnian Muslims in that cause-and-effect series in 1968 were recognized as a nationality. Duranović dedicates the better parts of this book to the topic of the relationship between the Islamic Community and the national recognition of Bosniaks called "Muslims". There was ambivalence in the Community itself towards the name "Muslim" for the Bosniak people. Still, the leadership of the Islamic Community strongly welcomed and supported this political decision through its official gazettes. Although not officially participating in the process, "the organizational structure of the Islamic Community and the Ilmia Association ... appear to be an excellent mediator for political decisions from the highest political forums to the religious population"¹⁰. Husein Đozo once again was prominent and "tried ... to keep the religious population included in the basic determinants of the debates at the time" on the national issue of Bosnian Muslims through a series of texts in Islamic media.¹¹

Even with this formal political recognition, the Bosniaks were the only Yugoslav nation without special national institutions in the field of culture. The only special Bosnian Muslim national institution was their religious community. Vjekoslav Perica, a contemporary Croatian historian and political scientist, in his book *Balkan Idols* stipulates that when in 1969 it changed its from "Islamic Religious Community" to "Islamic Community", it was "... striving to become a de facto Muslim national institution that will compensate for the lack of what the national academies of sciences and arts and cultural institutions as there were in Serbia and Croatia"¹². This was not only because the terms in the names "Islamic" and "religious" were tautological, as Dragan Novaković claims in his work *Školstvo Islamske zajednice/Education of the Islamic Community*¹³. The change of name, and here we go deeper than Vjekoslav Perica's interpretation, was not an autonomous act or an expression of some autonomous intention of the Islamic Community to fill the empty national space, as he

⁹ Welcome speech by Moša Pijada, *Osnivački kongres Komunističke partije Bosne i Hercegovine*, Sarajevo, 1950. p. 13.

¹⁰ Amir Duranović, *Islamska zajednica u jugoslavenskom socijalizmu*, Udruženje za modernu historiju, Sarajevo, 2021, p. 219.

¹¹ On the place and role of Husein Đozo in the currents of Islamic thought among Bosniaks, see more in Enes Karić, *Prilozi za povijest islamskog mišljenja u Bosni i Hercegovini XX stoljeća*, Knjiga I, El-Kalem, Sarajevo, 2004.

¹² Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkanski idoli (1)*, Biblioteka XX vek, Beograd, 2006, p. 192.

¹³ Dragan Novaković, *Školstvo Islamske zajednice*, Junir Sven, Niš, 2004. p. 54.

believes. This was rather motivated by the directives and intentions of the ruling political system. In those years, nothing happened without the approval of the Party, especially if it was related to Muslims and Bosnia and Herzegovina. And such was the status of the IC that it would not do, nor could it do, anything without the approval of the authorities.

The change of the name of the institution and the expansion of the scope of its activities to the field of national culture took place, therefore, only a year after the recognition of the status of the nationality as Muslims in 1968. There are many indications that in the minds of the planners of the political system who had decreed the change in the name of this institution the Islamic Community should have been considered as a "kind of" substitute national institution of the Muslim people. There was no talk about the establishment of true national cultural institutions, which existed as cultural headquarters in other nations. The omission of the term "religious" from the name of the Islamic institution meant the expansion of the content of its term to non-religious content. This, according to Bougarel, becomes for the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina a true replacement for the national institution.



The photo was taken from the Gazi Husrev-beg Library in Sarajevo.

ILLUSTRATION ~ Reisu-l-ulema Sulejman-ef. Kemura speaks at the grand opening of the mosque in Žiljeb near Višegrad on October 16, 1959.
ILUSTRACIJA ~ Reisu-l-ulema Sulejman-ef. Kemura govori na svečanom otvaranju džamije u Žiljebu kod Višegrada 16. oktobra 1959. godine.

Despite secularism, atheism and official Marxist ideology, with the apparent benevolence of the state, mosques were renovated and built in great numbers during the socialist period. While in 1955 there were 817, in 1970 we already have 1,437 mosques. This was by no means a satisfaction of the religious and especially not of the national needs of the Muslims. According to Vjekoslav Perica, in the period of the stable socialist era,

the Islamic Community was most patriotic among the main religious organizations in Yugoslavia and especially stood out as an instrument of the official policy of brotherhood and unity. Despite excellent cooperation with the political scene, the Islamic Community was still without any significant independence. The election of the reisul-ulema (Grand Mufti) continued to be conditioned by the state, using perfidious methods known to every politician. When General Salem Ćerić advocated the establishment of the "Matica Muslimana" (Muslim Motherland) as a national cultural institution in those years, probably by analogy with the previously existing Matica Srpska and Matica Hrvatska, he was met with disapproval and condemnation of the ruling political system¹⁴.

Even after 1968, the Communists doubted the character of the national status of Muslims. The attitude of the Bosnian communist leadership towards Muslims as a people with a special political, cultural and ethnic identity was difficult, especially while advocating for their position among the leaders of other republics. It can be said with certainty that part of the communist Yugoslav elite never accepted this fact. However, in the wake of its new profiling towards the social system, the Islamic community is allowed to launch the newsletter *Preporod/Renaissance* (1970) as a special publishing activity, which was never limited to purely religious topics. With the launch of the *Preporod* and the broad social and humanitarian activities of the Ilmiya Association, founded in 1950, new winds began to blow in the political space that was given; given and strictly controlled by religious communities. Although the Islamic Community as an institution, as well as most of its religious officials, accepted official state policy, which was not always the case with the Serbian Orthodox Church and especially the Roman Catholic Church, "the Ilmiya Association had to mediate towards its membership and in terms of building loyalty to the socialist political and social order"¹⁵. The Ilmiya Association did that too, since, colloquially speaking, these were such times. But the majority of the content of their activities was focused on the status issues of imams, issues of their social security, issues of creating new and educating existing staff and overall material issues of the Islamic Community. In that sense, the 1960s were fruitful for the Community.

The government ultimately began to give up on their attempts to completely behead the leadership of the Islamic Community in the late 1950s because it realized that the religious life of Muslims was still in place, but this time outside the leadership and control of the Islamic Community. This was not suitable for the authorities. Now, in a new, active attitude towards the Islamic religion, the state is suddenly behaving in such a way that it even wanted to determine certain religious content with its measures. A drastic example of this influence is the state's interference in the way the *mevlud* is performed. The supreme Islamic elders had to give instructions to the Federal Commission for Relations with Religious Communities for the celebration of the mevlud, and the Committee for Internal Policy of the Federal Executive Council even spoke about it. The *Mevlud* as a traditional religious act in itself was not disputable. What was disputable were the mass

¹⁴ See Salem Ćerić, *Neki problemi zaštite budućnosti naroda koji ne žive u svojoj nacionalnoj državi ili predstojeća nacionalna politika u SRBiH*. Opširnije u Šaćir Filandra, *Bošnjačka politika u XX stoljeću*, "Sejtarija", Sarajevo, 1988. p. 316-325.

¹⁵ Amir Duranović, *Islamska zajednica u jugoslavenskom socijalizmu*, Udruženje za modernu historiju, Sarajevo, 2021, p. 201.

gatherings of the *mevlud* that could be perceived as such, and often were, as Duranović points out, "a potentially dangerous action for the established socio-political order"¹⁶.

What was the influence of the Islamic Community during socialism on the lives and behaviour of Bosniaks is an inevitable question today. Throughout this political system, the Islamic Community did not enjoy the status of the ultimate national refuge, a gathering place for Bosniak interests and a refuge for those dissatisfied with the socialist system, in the same way as, say, the Catholic Church did among Croats. The Islamic community was weak but also fearful of being an ideological opponent of the atheist communist system or of publicly defending the violated national Muslim rights. During the socialist period, Bosniaks were largely atheized and ideologized, because they themselves quite often, without direct political pressure, reduced religion to the usual category within the older population or the unenlightened rural population. Driven by socialist ideology, broad sections of the Muslim population by neglecting religion and accepting socialist atheism and modernism, seemed to seek to escape the weights of tradition and the total backwardness of civilization inherited from the past. Advocated and favoured atheism in certain strata of the people is also accepted as an instrument of socialization. Atheism, in the opinion of these circles, made Muslims equal to other nations. Being similar, not differing in anything, especially in ethnocultural and religious characteristics, was also part of the ideology of the new socialist man. On this ruling trend of brotherhood and unity, Islam as a difference was easily left aside.



ILLUSTRATION ~ The majority of the content of the activities of the Ilmiya Association was focused on the status issues of the Imam.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Glavnina sadržaja aktivnosti Udruženja ilmije bila je usmjerena na statusna pitanja imama.

¹⁶ Amir Duranović, *Islamska zajednica u jugoslavenskom socijalizmu*, Udruženje za modernu historiju, Sarajevo, 2021, p. 89.

At the same time, the IC was closed to lay people who were not pro-regime and therefore could not be, nor was it, a classical and broad national institution. It relied mainly on imams who had it turned into a class association with a strictly limited scope of work and influence. It was integrated into society in this manner. In such circumstances, it was no wonder that religious life in many areas was almost reduced to merely caring for the burial of the dead.

Despite this rather gloomy picture of the religious life of Muslims during socialist Yugoslavia, Islam continued to survive in the broad masses of the population, despite numerous obstacles. Islam was also symbolically present at high levels of society. In the 1960s, it was strongly personified by the dubious reisu-ulema Sulejman-ef. Kemura.



ILLUSTRATION ~ Reisu-l-ulema Sulejman-ef. Kemura, Grand Mufti of Yugoslavia.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Reisu-l-ulema Sulejman-ef. Kemura.

The photo was taken from the Gazi Husrev-beg Library in Sarajevo.

Analysts at the time noted that he treated everyone in an authoritarian manner, demanded that he be greeted everywhere by mayors with special programs, behaved extremely arrogantly and explained his dissatisfaction with his personal demands by the deterioration of relations with the IRC. Reisu-ulema Kemura could have behaved like this because according to many indications he was a man close to the ruling regime. His role as the director of Gazi Husrev-beg's madrasa is infamous, when he showed his students to the police during the arrest of the Young Muslims. The whole matter concerning and with his election was politically driven and the protocol of taking over the function of reisu-ulema was carefully planned and conducted by the state protocol itself. During his reisu-ulema mandate (1957-1975), on the other hand, many mosques were built or renovated, and his contribution to that physical part of building the Islamic Community cannot be denied. The opening of mosques was usually accompanied by large public gatherings that the government could not control. It wanted to do so, especially in ethnically mixed areas. Often such occasions were the only true national events of real ceremony. If the reisu-ulema came, he was usually greeted with flags, horses and flowers. The Party was jealous of such activities, but in no way could it perceive the Islamic Community as competitive, - since it ruled over absolutely everything, including it - and especially this alleged competition could not be a reason to recognize the nationality of Muslims / Bosniaks, as stated by Duranović. The culmination of Kemura's numerous and rich activities aimed at strengthening the staff of the Community was the establishment of the Islamic Faculty of Theology.

Islam and politics among Bosniaks

Xavier Bougarel, a contemporary French researcher, wrote a praiseworthy book about the relationship between Islam, politics, Bosniaks and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This does not mean that I agree with everything in that book. I extend my personal gratitude to him for it because I am sure that none of the foreign researchers on Bosnian topics will receive any recognition from our state institutions. Bougarel may not be the most important foreign researcher of contemporary Bosnian history, but he is certainly the most intriguing, the most informed, the most persistent and the most dedicated to its topics, specifically the issue of the relationship between politics and Islam among Bosniaks.

The relationship between Islam and politics is the most important peripheral Bosniak identity issue, and in no case was it the most important Bosniak national issue today or ever before, as it is pretentiously posed in this book. Bougarel has been dealing with this issue successfully and for a long time, he knows our languages, has access to primary sources, has established a network of academic friends and associates in the country, conducts field and archival research and is scientifically qualified for this topic which, after all, is evidenced by a number of his studies in recent decades.

How did Bougarel approach the issue of the relationship between Islam and politics in the national identity and national development of Bosniaks in this book? Quite reductionist and quite common in methodological terms, and from the perspective of scientific and political views on Bosnia and Bosniaks who are historically established in the Yugoslav and Serbo-Croatian key, in which Bosnia never did well. In this sense, this book does not provide anything particularly new in scientific terms, although it provides a comprehensive view of Bosniak national political development extremely useful for the foreign public. However, there are not enough new primary sources, even if the book abounds in interesting interpretations and lucid insights. The author does specifically investigate a social relationship, in this case Islam and politics, in its relation to the totality of national political identity, but it is always risky to extrapolate that one segment / aspect to the whole of identity development. And Bougarel does just that. One gets the impression, after reading the book, that a century and a half of Bosniak national development is reduced only to the question of the relationship between Islam and politics. This is not the case. True, the author notices variations in that relationship very well. From the absence of national consciousness and the prevalence of Islam in the collective identity during the first half of the twentieth century, through the separation of Islam and national development during the socialist recognition of the Muslim / Bosniak nation to the return of Islam as pan-Islamist nationalism after the fall of socialism.

The question of the relationship between Islam and modernism did exist for Bosniaks, and is still important today, while the relationship between Islam and politics has never been decisive for their political and social

development. Here, the issue of free self-determination of the people and their homeland / state has always been in the focus of the people and their elites. The issue of the relationship between Islam and politics is completely overcome today, especially in the last decade, which the author of the book admits when he talks about the marginalization of the pan-Islamist current within the largest Bosniak political party after Izetbegović's death. Today it is the Bosniak political elite, because this is a book about the people from the perspective of elites, preoccupied with other issues, primarily the issue of non/construction and dysfunction of the state, constitutional and political system reforms, defence against attacks by neighbours and their followers in the diminution of statehood, divisions of the country, economic development and missing Euro-Atlantic integration. And the common people, whom this elite does not ask for anything, but rules in its name and for its own good, do not know that the topic of Islam and politics even exists. It has never touched them, although they allowed themselves to become the objects of manipulations and instrumentalizations connected with the relation between Islam and politics. More important is the question, which is not in the interest of the author of this book, how and why the relationship between Islam and politics for Bosniaks became so characteristic, what are the political and social conditions of their development, why an old national community that inherits the kingdom from the medieval period has such difficult conditions for growing from a non-sovereign religious community into a political community, why is its national development late, etc.

In thematizing the relationship between Islam and politics among Bosniaks, Bougarel overemphasized the importance of the Young Muslim Movement and the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) for contemporary Bosniak political and national development. To make matters even more interesting, Bougarel refers to the political activities of Young Muslims as "pan-Islamism" and not "Islamism", aware, as he says, that pan-Islamism came down from the world stage in the late 1930s. He believes that Young Muslims "dreamed of a great Muslim state that would connect Bosnian Muslims with the rest of the ummah." According to that, they are, simply and clearly, pan-Islamists". Despite knowing that pan-Islamism is an anachronistic category, he finds a continuous existence of pan-Islamist thinking and action among Bosniaks until Izetbegović left the historical stage, even claiming that the political affirmation of Bosniaks in the 1990s was the work of pan-Islamists. The truth is quite different. Bosnian Muslim pan-Islamists characterized in this way have never existed in modern Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such political projects have never been present in any part of the Bosniak elites in modern times. There are no pan-Islamic manifestos, literature, proclamations, projects, actions, congresses, and all this etiquette is the fruit of an authorial interpretive concept, to which, of course, the author is entitled. Why this term is now being extracted from the past is only clear to Bougarel.

I had the opportunity to know a number of members of the former Young Muslims movement who welcomed the end of communism in later life. I had befriended some, I wrote something about them and I read the few texts that they had written in their youth and in a specific historical context. Young Muslims were a moral and not a political movement. Their activity was focused on the moral renewal of the people, not on the political building of the state, especially not some world Muslim state in atheistic communism. Just

like similar groups in all communist societies, they were proscribed because they did not easily reconcile with that outright atheism. They did not have any political ideologies. It is all a matter of subsequent and external interpretations, which, it is true, after the collapse of communism, the Young Muslims themselves did not hate.

Appropriate for the notion of "pan-Islamism" for the newly formed relationship between Islam and politics in the 1990s is the notion of "Islamism", which Bougarel again considers inappropriate for Bosniaks. Since the breakup of Yugoslavia surprised the Bosniaks, whereby they did not have a developed state-building consciousness or national ideology and the attack on them and their state prevented their democratic profiling. In the absence of ideological identity tools, the political elite resorted to Islam as an instrument of national homogenization. This aspect of Bougarel's analyses is very well established in the second part of the book. The return of religion to the historical stage, as he himself points out in his concluding remarks, served Bosniaks, as well as many Eastern European peoples, to reconfigure and legitimize new elites and not to authorize the Islamization of a society that was already deeply secular. The newly formed Bosniak post-communist political elite during the war and immediately after it used Islam extensively to legitimize its position. Not spiritually, but rather in status and materially.



Bougarel's overemphasis on the connection between Islam and politics among Bosniaks goes so far as to speak of an "SDA state." That is, the author extremely subjectively reduces the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its institutions, which preserved the democratic character, party plurality, multinational nature and legality of the state in the war against the Bosnian state in the 1990s, to the rule of one party. Even the biggest SDA supporters never centred or hypostasized their own party in this way. The fact that this party was the backbone of the organization of state institutions and the country's defence never excluded other political entities, even entities of other Bosnian peoples, who participated in all public activities and who have since fought politically to emphasize their active position in the defence of the country and the building of its institutions, and against the efforts of the same SDA to overemphasize its merits. The acquisition of state independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, its military and political defence, was the result of a broad national and civic struggle of numerous and different ethnic, social and political forces, and not one conspiratorial

pan-Islamic group. The great results of this struggle were for many and remain unexpected, and to reduce them to the effect of one party of one people, however strong and numerous it may have been in those years, is not true to historical reality.

Conclusion

Despite the doctrinally negative attitude towards religion, the Islamic Community of Bosniaks during the period of the socialist social order (1945-1990) of Bosnia and Herzegovina had a continuous institutional development and exercised its function regardless of all systemic obstacles. The future communists doubted the national status of Muslims / Bosniaks for a long time. During that period, the Islamic Community also appeared as the only special national Bosniak institution, which centred its positive role in democratizing the country during the post-socialist period. In the ideological and social transition of the 1990s, it played an important stabilizing and democratizing role in the multi-confessional society of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It played a significant mobilizing and legitimizing role in the Bosniak national movement, while it played an extremely positive role in the maturing of Bosnia and Herzegovina's state independence.



ILLUSTRATION ~ Reducing the state independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the effect of one party of one nation, no matter how strong and numerous it was in those years, is not adequate to historical reality.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Sticanje državne nezavisnosti Bosne i Hercegovine svoditi na učinak jedne stranke jednog naroda, ma kako ona bila tih godina jaka i brojna, nije povijesnoj zbiljnosti adekvatno.

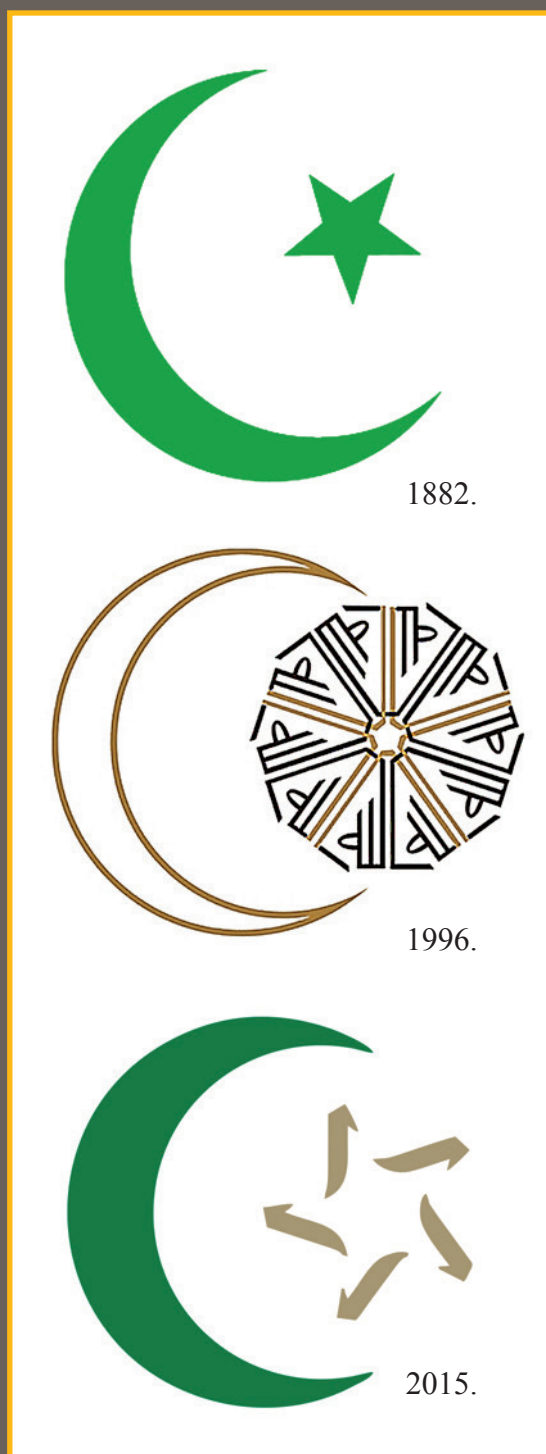
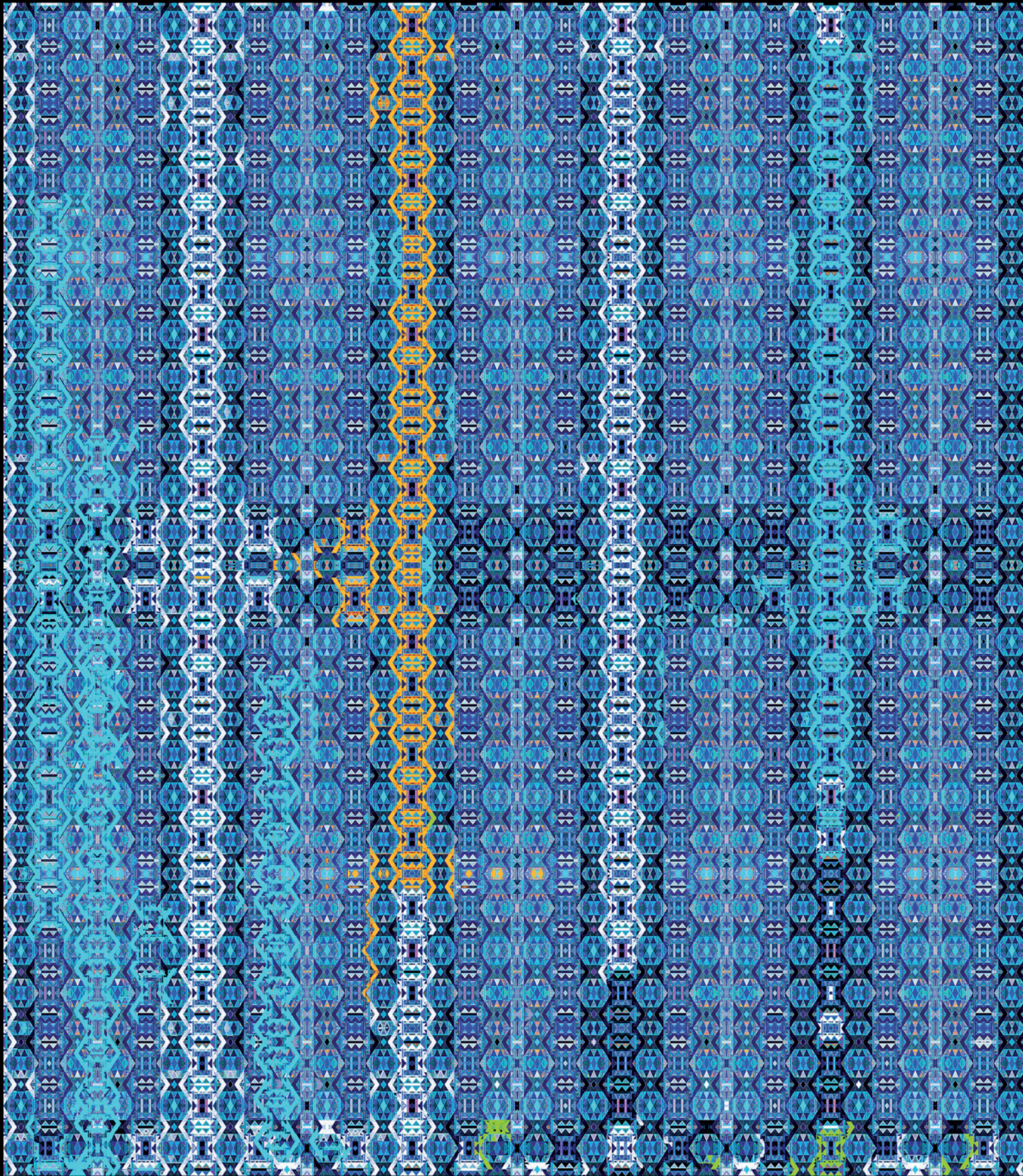
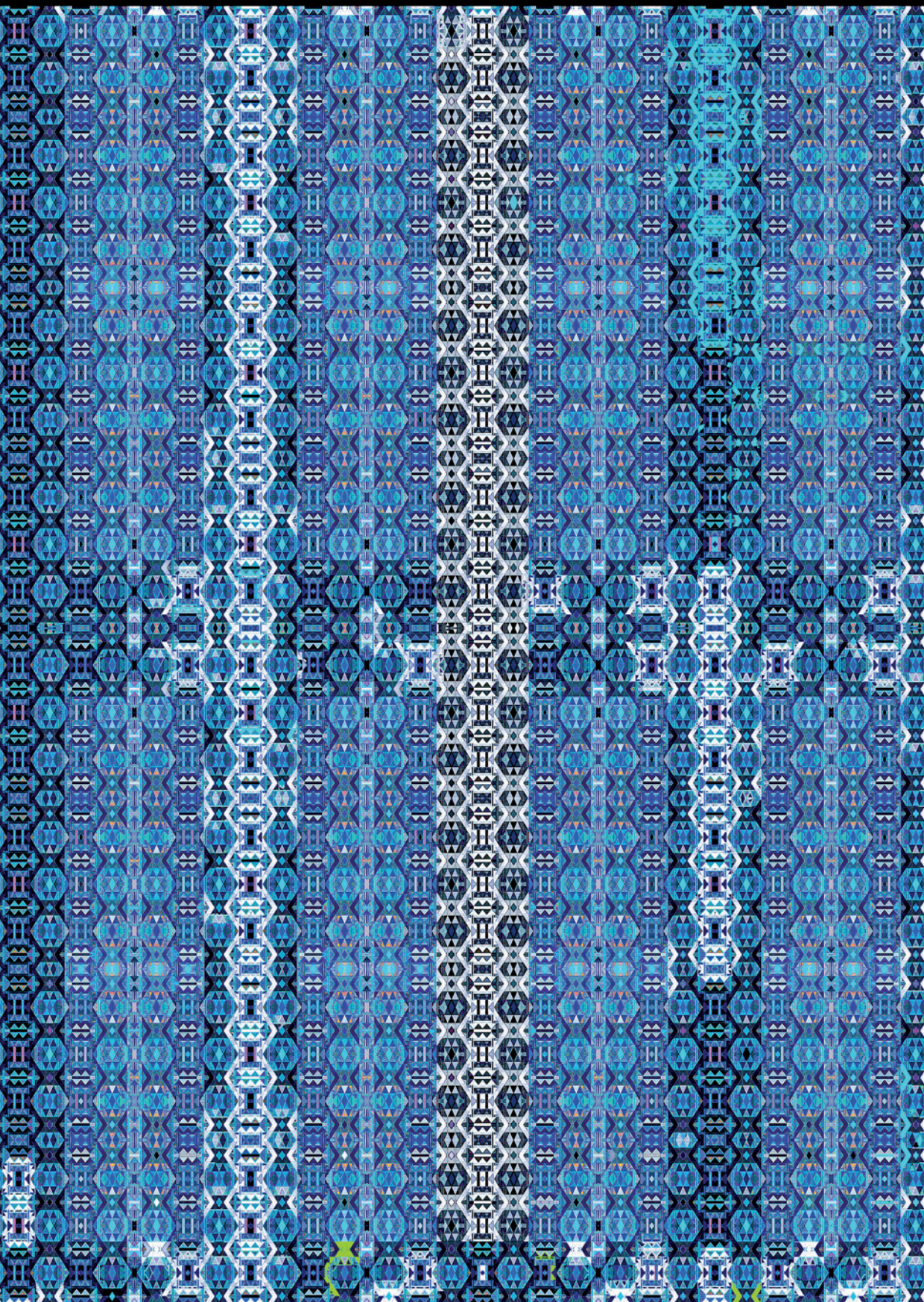


ILLUSTRATION ~ Graphic development of the sign of the Islamic community through different social periods.
ILUSTRACIJA ~ Grafički razvoj znaka Islamske zajednice kroz različite društvene periode.





MEHMED A. AKŠAMIJA,
Ornament VIIb, 2000.

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Ornament VIIb, 2000.

