Contesting Female, Feminist and Muslim Identities

Post-Socialist Contexts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo

Edited by
Zilka Spahić-Šiljak

Foreword by

MARGOT BADRAN

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I hope this book will pave the way for similar research in this region.

Editor
Zilka Spahić-Šiljak

Foreword

Margot Badran

Contesting Female, Feminist and Muslim Identities - Post-Socialist Contexts of BiH and Kosovo is a truly magisterial study. This rich volume offers a comprehensive and complex analysis of gender ideas and practices and the feminisms that confront them within Islamic and secular contexts, adroitly entwining the historical, philosophical, and political.

Wide-ranging and incisive theoretical discussion in combination with nuanced oral histories of Muslim women in BiH and Kosovo, including both observant and non-observant women of two generations, mark this work as unique and invaluable. In this study, examining feminisms in post-socialist BiH and Kosovo, identity, positioning, and women's experience are central themes. The narratives of women's perceptions, understandings, everyday experiences, encounters, avoidances, and activisms comprise the complicated and troubled picture of feminisms in contemporary BiH and Kosovo.

Participants' accounts of their experiences and notions of being women, or "woman," attest to the centrality, indeed the bedrock, of personal identities grounded in national, ethnic, and religious affiliations, which are variously prioritized and always gendered. To question or to suggest shifts in the gendered component of national, ethnic, or religious identities is to question these identities themselves, and to risk the allegation of religious and cultural treason with the threat of anathematization and isolation as the women's narratives demonstrate.

This study takes care to focus on a diversity of women, marked, as just noted, by age, place, and way of being Muslim, enabling readers to see differences and similarities in approaches to feminism, Islam, "the religious," and "the secular." Particularly intriguing are the commonalities concerning certain gender issues of these diversely positioned women. The oral history

methodology so sensitively applied opens up to readers the considerable nuance and complexity both within and among the personal accounts. This is clearly a great strength of this study, and as an historian, one notes that it will constitute a precious document for posterity, providing a narrative of this moment in time in the history of BiH and Kosovo.

It is striking to a scholar who has worked on feminisms in Muslim-majority counties, and more particularly, the Middle East, how similarly fraught "feminism" has been within these societies and in the contexts of BiH and Kosovo. Difficulties proceed with the common assertion, indeed, allegation, that "feminism is foreign—a political and cultural intrusion coming from the West." But what is "the West"? BiH and Kosovo are in the West, yet even within these societies the pejorative declaration surfaces that feminism is an alien phenomenon coming "from the West," implying another West. It is in the *post-socialist context* in BiH and Kosovo that this assertion finds circulation because during socialism feminism was absent from the scene. In *postcolonial Muslim contexts* in Africa and Asia, feminism was delegitimized as a form of western colonial cultural invasion. What better way of demonizing and discrediting feminism than branding it a foreign enemy insidiously working from within?

The women's oral accounts reveal conundrums that "the West" and questions of positioning conjure up. BiH and Kosovo are clearly part of the geographical West, and constitute western cultures. They are also at the nexus of the geographical East and West. And, with the long and significant presence in BiH and Kosovo of Islam, historically associated with the East, questions of "West" and "East" intrude with fascinating ambiguities and ambivalences. The reader of the women's oral histories, and perhaps particularly the outsider, detects a certain pride on the part of Bosnians and Kosovars in being western Muslims or Muslims of the West—even "the West"—despite the pejorative connotations. This appears as another layer of identity, and one that is writ large. Where does this leave Islam so heavily associated, as it is, with the "the East"?

A unique feature of this study focusing on feminisms among Muslims in BiH and Kosovo, and of critical value, is the inclusion of historical and contemporary accounts of feminisms in three pivotal Muslim-majority countries of the East: Egypt, Turkey, and Iran. The feminisms, both secular and Islamic, found in these countries, and in Muslim societies elsewhere in the East, reveal the range of possibilities of being feminist and Muslim, attesting to the diversity of feminisms. Examining feminisms in these locations reveals the shifting meanings of "the secular" and "the religious" in the construction of feminisms and indeed, of "the secular" and "the religious" per se. The pioneering nation-based feminisms that Muslims, along with Christians, in Egypt created early

last century (at the same time that explicit feminisms in Western Europe and the United States were being shaped) included a weave of Islamic-modernist, secular-nationalist, and humanitarian discourses. Such feminisms were called secular feminisms, with secular connoting "national" and religious inclusivity. "The religious" and "the secular" were completing rather than competing.

In the West, under communism and socialism, Islam in varying ways was evacuated from the public arena as were feminisms. However, under socialism in Muslim- majority societies, taking Egypt as example, religion as such was not removed from the public arena but, instead, religious institutions and practices were sedulously regulated by the state. It was political Islam, or Islamism, that was interdicted. The "return to the veil" in the form of the hijab (head cover) that occurred with the rise of Islamism in Egypt was cast as proper religious practice and—although when it first emerged, the hijab signaled allegiance to the new movement of political Islam—it was not prohibited. Before long, wearing the hijab became part of a broader religious-cultural change and was freighted as signaling "true Islam." Contemporary Muslim women's narratives recounted in BiH and Kosovo tell the story of ideas and practices of veiling that arose simply with the return of religion in the public domain.

The example of Egypt shows that women's *secular* feminisms in this county, and elsewhere in the Middle East, are another way of referring to *national* feminisms, as well as indicating space for religion. Women's identities as Egyptians, as Muslims, and as feminists intersected and were mutually re-enforcing. While the pioneering feminists in the early and middle decades of the 20th century proudly asserted their feminist identity, by the 1980s, with the attack on feminism by the spreading Islamist forces, the newer generation of de facto feminists expediently avoided publically declaring a feminist identity. This study shows that the approaches by Bosnian and Kosovar women in publically claiming or concealing feminism are also situational, although these women do not face the forces of homegrown political Islam but rather the force of resurrected religious culture. The participants from BiH and Kosovo state, either explicitly or inferentially that masking feminism occurs in their everyday lives because its public assertion could attract unwanted criticism and marginalization. Their narratives, however, also hint that women may champion ideas of gender equality more obliquely. Contextualization is grounded as much in time as in place and thus, for the moment, women inclined to achieve gender change finely tune the decibel level of their feminist inclinations.

In post-socialist BiH and Kosovo, after 1989, *religion* surfaced more fully and freely in the pubic arena. In Egypt, in the 1970s, post-socialism, *feminism* reappeared after its suppression by the state along with all other independent

ideologies. In socialist BiH and Kosovo, feminism was associated with capitalism and the West. In socialist Egypt, feminism, which had been well rooted since the 1920s, was an unwanted independent ideology or competing distraction. When it was allowed to reappear, during Egypt's turn toward open-door capitalism and a new alignment with the West, chiefly the US, feminism came under attack by the rising forces of political Islam, reviving patriarchal atavism. Islamists condemned feminism first as un-religious and soon as anti-religious.

In BiH and Kosovo, feminism is thwarted, or at least deeply challenged, not by political Islam but by ethno-religious, and cultural identity politics along with the resurrection of a patriarchal Islam. Complicating matters for Muslims in post-socialist countries like BiH and Kosovo, was a period of three decades of muted religion. The recovery of Islam or Muslim public identity in BiH and Kosovo was bound up with ethnic and nationalist identities infused by a socially, economically, and politically anachronistic patriarchy. For those reclaiming Islam as religion, culture, and pattern of everyday behaviors—and for many, including this study's the younger participants, encountering Islam for the first time in this way—to question, let alone eschew, patriarchal conventions was seen as an attack on the Islamic religion itself. By contrast, in Muslim societies in the Middle East that had not experienced religious rupture, women could oppose patriarchal readings of their religion and culture. Moreover, in many parts of the East, Egypt being an important example, there had been decades of an unbroken tradition of feminism, and while publically occluded during socialism, it was alive at home behind the scenes and visible abroad in international forums.

In the 1990s, as citizens in the states of BiH and Kosovo, formed by the dissolution of Yugoslavia, were experiencing the renewal of a public expression of religion, retrieving rituals and practices from the past, that decade saw the birth of Islamic feminism in different parts of the globe, East and West. Appearing as a discourse of gender equality and social justice grounded in re-readings of the Qur'an and other religious texts, Islamic feminism transcended binaries of secular and religious, public and private, male and female, East and West. Islamic feminism, as a discourse, is not tied to identity or a single place of origin. It was, and continued to be, shaped by diverse individuals and groups in national locations and in transnational cyberspace. Islamic feminism challenges the intrusion of patriarchy into Islam, with its pretentions of constituting Islam itself. Islamic feminism replaces a patriarchal construction of Islam with an egalitarian understanding of Islam. Such disruption undercuts patriarchy masked as religion and, thus, presumably imposed as divine fiat. It challenges inherited patriarchal power embedded in structures and systems within national, tribal, and ethnic contexts. Opponents of Islamic feminism attack proponents of an egalitarian understanding and practice of Islam as deviants who undermine

"sacred" institutions, especially the "sacrosanct" family and national and ethic units. The oral histories of BiH and Kosovo women suggest the perils and prices that departures from norms can entail and indicate how moves toward gender equality and social justice are short-circuited by impositions of paramount identity loyalties.

It is by way of these reflections in a comparative perspective that I have wished to pay homage to the stunning contribution that *Feminisms in Post-Socialist Muslim Contexts of BiH and Kosovo* makes to the literature on feminisms in Muslim and religiously mixed contexts in societies East and West, and to Muslim-majority societies undergoing the massive political, economic, social, and cultural transformation that BiH and Kosovo are presently experiencing. I believe that by sharing our different local experiences we can gain enhanced insights into how gender transformations within an egalitarian model of religion and culture can be achieved and sustained in our diverse societies, and how Islam, re-considered, contributes to part of this process. This book helps us immeasureably in this task.

(**Margot Badran** is an historian who has written for over four decades on feminisms in Muslim societies in the Middle East and the broader Islamic world. Her most recent book is *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences.* She is presently writing a book on women and gender, and the secular and the religious, in the Egyptian revolution.)
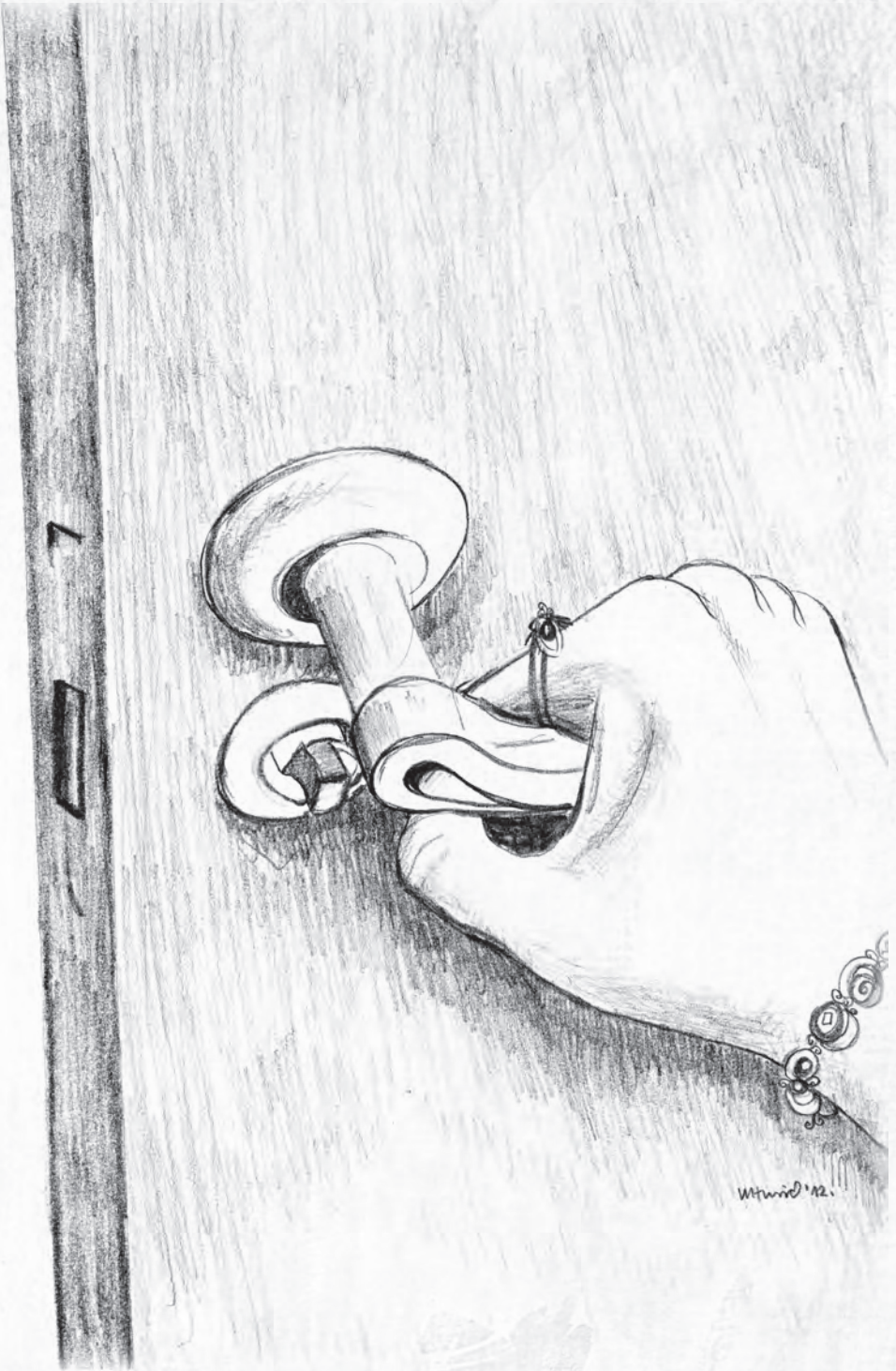
Introduction

Zilka Spahić-Šiljak

A significant portion of the literature on women, their positions in family and society, and their identities has been designed to answer the questions: What does it mean to be a woman in different socio-political and cultural contexts? And how do gender, politics, religion, race, class and other aspects of their identities intertwine? Much research has been dedicated to women in the Muslim countries of the Middle East, Maghreb, and Indonesia and Malaysia; much of it also has explored the experiences of immigrant Muslim communities in Europe and the U.S. However, the experiences of indigenous Muslim women in the Balkans have very rarely been the subject of research, except in the context of the war that lasted from 1992 to 1995. Until now, there have been very few studies dealing with gender, identity, religion and politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) (Bringa 1995, Cockburn 1998 and 2000, Helms 2003, Spahić-Šiljak 2010) so this book is a significant contribution to the field.

Methodology and Methods

In our research we examined the correlation and intersection of three key identities: female, feminist and religious. This book is the first comparative analysis of women in the post-socialist contexts of BiH and Kosovo as well as an attempt to, at least partially, shed light on the intersection of these three identities.

In this study we employ intersectionality in order to approach, and then address, the issue of differences and different conceptions of female, feminist and

religious identities among women in BiH and Kosovo. Intersectionality enables us not only to show "the multiple positioning" of these women - positioning that "constitutes everyday life and power relations central to it" (Davis 2008, 70)— but also to understand the effects of gender, religion, ethnicity, and stage in the life cycle on their identities and experiences. By exploring different constituents that construct/shape women's multiple identities (feminist, female and religious) in two societies, we approach and recognize differences among these women as differences in kind, not degree, and differences across "social axes of power" (Yuval-Davis 2002, 198). We also aim to illustrate points of similarity and difference between Kosovo and BiH social, economic and political processes, and to delineate the differences between these processes and their influences on the construction of women's identities, particularly in reference to two specific eras—of socialism and post-socialism. In this study we try to show that the process of transition between two differing social, economic and political systems that both societies have experienced continues to produce a fertile field for re-traditionalization of gender roles (Yuval-Davis and Floya 1989, Walby 1997, Spahić-Šiljak 2010), both creating and maintaining identity politics. However, by employing the feminist postmodern and postcolonial theoretical perspectives, we show that there are certain shifts from such fixed static conceptualizations of identity towards dynamic and fluid identity construction.

As a strategic tool to avoid the additive, "triple oppression" approach (Yuval-Davis 2006), intersectionality allows us to render visible the social and material consequences of female, feminist and religious identities construction in two societies, but through methodologies attuned to the post-structuralist discipline of deconstructing monolithic categories and grand narratives of universalism and of exposing the paradoxical workings of power. In other words, intersectionality provides us with a chance to bring together the different theoretical approaches we employ in this study, providing us with a bridge that embodies a commitment to the situatedness of all knowledge. (Haraway 1991)

In trying to avoid re-inscription of the model of fragmentation and multiplication, which relies on the process of addition of different constituents of fixed categories, our aim in this study is to analyze differential ways in which woman, feminism and religion—but no less, ethnicity and stage in the life cycle (as different categories, or what Yuval-Davis called "social divisions")— interrelate and construct each other, and most important for this study, how they relate to women's political and subjective constructions of their identities.

Apart from that, the construction and understanding of those identities are analyzed through the opposing dynamics of religion and modernity, as are attempts to overcome the imposed binary oppositions (secular/religious,

public/private, modern/traditional, socialist/ethno-national) in these countries. Herzog and Braude noted that "both women and religion were excluded from the modern vision of the 'West'… and either marginalized or altogether excluded from the general understanding of modernity. (2009, 8-9) Women who participated in the focus groups and life story interviews also emphasized the difficulties hijabi women face on daily basis because they show their religion in public and, as Göle pointed out, challenge modernity by their very presence. (2011, 142) Muslim women exist in the remains of the post-socialist societies of BiH and Kosovo, without social and economic security, with a transition that does not show signs of ending, and still strong ethno-national and ethno-religious ideologies that are particularly strong in BiH (and keep it shackled in a tripartite democracy); this book shows how, in such circumstances, those Muslim women define and reconcile their identities, political attitudes and engagement in the public sphere.

Qualitative Research Methods: Focus Groups and Life Stories

In order to explore differential understandings of feminism both as a concept and political movement and a praxis among women in BiH and Kosovo, and the interconnectedness of complex social relations in the post-socialist secular contexts of those societies, we employed two qualitative research methods that we believed would adequately intertwine with the chosen theoretical framework: life stories and focus groups.

We decided to use qualitative methods for several reasons: the lack of research in BiH and Kosovo on the intersection of female, feminist and religious identities; the tacit acceptance of the monolithic and static identities imposed first by communist ideology and then, after 1989, ethno-national and ethno-religious ideology; and the obstacles encountered when attempting to use exclusively quantitative methods of research to obtain data on the intersection of different identities in the complex socio-political and cultural contexts of BiH and Kosovo (quantitative research conducted so far shows that the respondents mainly give socially desirable answers). So, to research these topics, we felt it was important to use qualitative methods that—through the interaction and probing of focus groups and the comprehensive outpouring of long life story interviews—afford greater opportunity to obtain the information necessary to understand the dynamics and strategies women use to interpret their lives, and to elicit attitudes about multiple identities arising in post-war and post-socialist BiH and Kosovo.

We first conducted the focus groups, whose advantage is to allow observation of group dynamics and interaction (Taylor and Bogdan 1998).

However, for most women both in BiH and Kosovo this was the first time to participate in focus groups and therefore, there was little group interaction and dynamics. Lack of sufficiently articulated interaction aside, the participants listed to each other and that influenced the creation of the context and atmosphere that provided a space in which they formulated their opinions and responses to the questions raised. Since focus groups permit a more egalitarian and less exploitative dynamic than many other research methods, we were able to explore and analyze multiple positionings of women from both countries, particularly in terms of their subjective construction of identities (feminist, female, Muslim). Focus groups were organized in both countries and at several locations in each. They separately included women in two significantly different age groups (under and over 35) and two different Muslim groups (observant and non-observant). During the focus groups we elicited from the panelists their views on who we should interview for the life story phase of our research— the panelists considered notable public figures and advocates for women's rights who could give us further insights into topics discussed in the focus groups.

The life stories we next gathered helped give us an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of women's lives that are necessarily shaped by the traumatic events of the war and post-war transition. According to Van Manen, the life story approach attempts to get at the understandings and significance that people give to the stories that they tell of their lives (1996, 2002). This method enabled us not only to learn what women in Kosovo and BiH lived through, but also how they understand their lives in light of those experiences. Through these life stories we also gained insights about the different social structures and dynamics and different social values and norms of the societies in which these women live. Through this understanding we were able to learn about their sense of identity/identities and perceptions of "the other," as well as about their understanding of their societies as they are now, about their experiences during the 1992-95 war in the former Yugoslavia, their societies prior to the war, their differential understandings of time (pre-war and post-war events, which is a phenomenon, per se), the transitional process and, finally, the effects that all of these have had on their individual development.

While the women were telling their life stories, researches refrained from asking questions or imposing any kind of theoretical and conceptual frameworks during the main narrative, because doing so would only have hindered the process by which participants chose among a vast number of events, thoughts, wishes and interactions to tailor their stories. (Rosenthal 1993) Only if a woman had not provided enough information, additional questions were asked to get better understanding of some parts of her narrative and to connect the narrative with the research goals—examination of feminist and religious identities within the context of the clash between religion and modernity.

Thus, the final analysis reflected in this book was informed by in-depth information from focus groups and life stories, which made complementary contributions to our topics and provided us with tools to explore female, feminist and religious identities of women from Kosovo and BiH and the intersection of these three identities for these women. At the same time, the feminist methodological, post-colonial and post-modern theoretical framework allowed to explore differences between women from these two countries and differences that occur among women in terms of social divisions, which, again, vary depending on different historical circumstances.

Organization of the book

The book is divided into two parts: the theoretical and empirical. Although the book focuses on the lives of Muslim women in BiH and Kosovo, we considered it very important to provide a wider theoretical framework along with the fieldwork results. This made gathering and analysis of the data from the focus groups and life story interviews easier, and it help let this book serve as extensive introductory reading, especially for those who have not before encountered these topics to any great extent.

Women in BiH and Kosovo emphasized that literature in the Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian (BSC) and Albanian languages dealing with these topics does not exist, especially literature on feminism and Islam, and they said they wished they could read more about these issues in their native language. Close to nothing has been written on the joint topic of Islam and feminism, so information about the feminist movements and ideas in Muslim countries is unavailable. Since not very much has been written about women in the socialist and post-socialist context in BiH and Kosovo either, we decided to dedicate the first part of the book to a historical overview of women's human's rights, the rise of feminism and women's activism in countries, and to portray the socio-political context of BiH and Kosovo. The second part of the book contains the results of the focus groups and life story interviews.

Chapter 1 (Women and Politics) gives a brief historical overview of women's human rights development. As the chapter's authors, Lamija Kosović and Zilka Spahić-Šiljak, explain, most countries now have laws that secure gender equality, yet in practice women are still excluded from public life and positions of power. In order to understand why binary oppositions (private/public, nature/culture) are imposed and why women cannot get equal access to resources and decision-making positions, it is important to explore the reasons women are excluded and invisible. As Andrew Reynolds noted, women remain just a "blip on the male political landscape" (1999, 547). Furthermore,

younger women in BiH and Kosovo do not think about civic and political rights as something that was won, something that women throughout history fought for fiercely, but instead take those rights for granted. They are not motivated to make their own contribution to the advancement of women's rights, in spite of its being an ongoing process that demands continuous investment.

All this adds to the chapter's importance because not only does it portray the development of feminist ideas through three waves of feminism, it also reveals the detrimental consequences that deeply rooted and established patriarchal systems have for the position of women in family and society. These systems never quite disappear; they are simply transformed with time. As Anne Phillips, the leading figure in feminist political theory, concludes, women have still not obtained full citizenship, largely due to the concepts of gender neutrality and gender blindness of many women in BiH and Kosovo, thus confirming the domination of the male norm (2011).

In Chapter 2 (Feminisms and Islam), Zilka Spahić-Šiljak summarizes the development of feminist ideas in Muslim countries and the ongoing debate on the compatibility of Islam and feminism. In the last three decades, disputes about feminism and the position of women in Muslim societies have been intensified. Based on the role of religion in resolving these disputes, feminisms in Islam can be categorized as Islamic, Muslim, secular and atheist feminism (Jan Hjarpe 1995). Or, more simply, according to Margot Badran, they fall into two categories: Islamic and Muslim feminism. Badran emphasized that these types are neither fixed nor universal, and that every society has its own subdivisions.

This chapter serves to underscore the fact that feminist ideas do not develop independently from socio-political processes, but are instead closely connected to other factors in the process of secularization and de-secularization of Muslim societies during the 20th and 21st century. The separation of state and religion as well as the introduction of secular laws in many Muslim countries made emancipation of women possible and gave them greater access to education and employment. However, as can be seen in the examples of Egypt, Iran and Turkey, for the most part only women from the upper social strata had the opportunity to obtain an education, work and even engage in politics while most women in rural areas and those belonging to the lower classes remained marginalized. The issue of the position of women is also examined as part of the wider question of nation-state building, westernization and modernization of society. (Kandiyoti 1987, 317-338)

The Chapter 3 (The Contexts of BiH and Kosovo) portrays the socio-political and economic development of those countries and gives a brief overview on women, education, employment, family, and feminism and activism and the

position of Islam under socialism and post-socialism. In the first part Gorana Mlinarević provides information about the constitutional positions of BiH and Kosovo and the recognition of Muslims in BiH and Albanians in Kosovo as nations. Both countries were underdeveloped in comparison to the rest of Yugoslav Republic and as some authors underlines that the illiteracy rate was high (21% in Kosovo and around 15% in BiH, Botev 1996, 463) as well as high unemployment rate (20.6% in BiH and 38.4% in Kosovo, Woodward 1995, 384). The collapse of Yugoslavia in 1990 was accompanied by the war atrocities and destruction in both countries, and both became independent states albeit under strong international patronage.

Jasmina Čaušević, Ardiana Gashi, and Dženita Hrelja Hasečić, discuss in the second part of the chapter the emancipation of women and their inclusion in the public sphere, which was as Molyneux concludes, "an integral part of a wider strategy of socio-economic change" (1985, 52) in the socialist period. The examples of education, employment and activism in this chapter show how the Communist Party controlled not only political and economic life but also women's activism because, as Molyneux stated, feminist ideas and women's liberation movements were considered "a diversion from the more 'important' tasks of class struggle and from the pressing need to develop the country's economy." (1985, 51) As parts of the former Yugoslavia, BiH and Kosovo shared similar socio-political positioning of women in respect to the legal framework and socialist ideology, but in practice there were differences that affected the different narratives from Kosovo and BiH women about the socialist period.

The post-socialist period has developed differently in BiH and Kosovo. After 1989, ethno-national elites came to power supported by ethno-religious elites. Both reduced women to the role of being the signifier of nation (Eisenstein 1996) and religion—mother, ethic paradigm, etc.—which significantly excluded them from public life. Determined re-traditionalization set women back decades, meaning they had fight again for rights they had already obtained. However, as authors point out, the development of civil sectors with strong women's organizations supported mostly by the international organizations were driving force in advancement of gender politics with fairly good legal framework and gender-state mechanisms structure, but poor application of guaranteed rights in practice.

In the last part of the chapter, Sead Fetahagić gives a brief examination of Islam under socialism. Although Yugoslavia abolished Shari'a law and courts, and the society spent over half a century secularized in accord with socialist ideology and vision of modern society, religious communities continued to function, howbeit   under pressure from the Communist Party that was now stronger, now weaker. The author shows how the question of Muslims as a

religious and ethnic/national group was resolved in specific periods of socialist rule and how the ethnic/national identity of Bosniacs/Muslims changed after 1989.

The resurrection of the term "Bosniac" caused fierce debates at the time, even among Muslims. This was reflected in the ethnic/national identification of the focus group and life story participants. In Kosovo, the question of national identity was seen differently because the common denominator for ethnic Albanians in Kosovo was the Albanian language. Although the revival of Islam occurred in Kosovo too, the strong sense of national Kosovar/Albanian identity did not allow religion to dominate identity formation there, so most Kosovar women put their ethnic/national identity above their religious one.

Chapter 4 (Being a Woman) presents analysis of the focus groups. The chapter is divided into four parts in which Spahić-Šiljak and Kosović analyze the intersection of female, feminist and religious identities, which permeate the process of de-secularization of these societies and the return of religion to the public realm. It is interesting to examine the relationship dynamics of these three identities as well as the strategies that Muslim women in BiH and Kosovo employ to reconcile these identities in secular societies and break free of the imposed binary positions and fixed meanings of these identities. The authors depict the tensions, misunderstandings, exclusion, stereotypes and rejection in the relationship between the religious and secular, tradition and modernism.

The hijab, a visible symbol of religion, emerged in the research dialogues as a major bone of contention between women in these two countries—who, as noted, can be divided into two groups: non-observant secularized Muslims who do not practice religious rituals, and the observant Muslims, further subdivided into those who do or do not accept the hijab as an important part of religious identity and those who are passionate on the subject, insisting on display of their religious identity in public.

This chapter also examines the women's attitudes towards feminist identity in general and Muslim feminist identity in particular. Although women's activism has been very strong for the last two decades, women do not want to be known as feminists, but simply as "promoters of women's rights." The concessions women try to make with a "moderate" expression of feminist attitudes are just strategies in a patriarchal society that does not allow women to step forward and do anything other than what that society expects of them. Those who do try to do something face consequences, so the question is how ready they are to accept the risk of being outcast by a society that considers them "disobedient." Although we tried, during the research, to overcome the binary Cartesian categorization, instead understanding identities as fluid and ever-

changing, the respondents continually emphasized the imposed fixed meanings of their identities, which is one of the ways ethno-national and ethno-religious ideologies establish control over societies, particularly in the case of BiH.

Chapter 5 (Becoming a Feminist?) analyzes the life stories conducted with prominent public figures who are known as women's rights advocates and supporters. Zilka Spahić-Šiljak offers a part of the social history of both countries that is never heard in official historical narratives. The key topics in the interviews were family education and Muslim identity and activism. The interviewees revealed the ways in which they challenge existing social norms regulating gender relations and how they consistently negotiate with the patriarchal system of values, striving to survive but also "become" feminist. Their starting point is the "care-oriented feminism," "difference feminism" and "liberal feminism" that are occasionally lost under the pressure of having to make pragmatic decisions in order to maintain their current positions. Although most show the ethics of care and justice in their feminist efforts, it is sometimes insufficiently accompanied by compassion for those who are different. Women in general display a great deal of compassion; but sometimes they do not articulate it loudly and clearly enough in public for fear of losing their credibility.

In addition to describing women's survival strategies in patriarchal societies, the chapter also examines the logical fallacies that crop up from time to time, with women on one hand clearly stating their determination to improve their position as women, while, on the other, accepting certain traditional norms that keep women subjugated and in the private sphere. These life stories show the paradox of post-socialist societies in which women without economic security, fenced in by ethno-national divisions and politics, strive to survive and make changes. This chapter extensively elaborates on the clash between private and public life that the interviewees still experience because they believe that they can reconcile and maintain these two aspects of their lives on their own.

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1. Women and Politics

Lamija Kosović and Zilka Spahić-Šiljak

Introduction

In today's society, one can hardly imagine a time when women were largely excluded by law—let alone custom and practice—from formal political rights and responsibilities. Yet it was only two centuries ago when women even began to participate as full-fledged citizens in political life. The nineteenth century was the one to witness a revolutionary turbulence that began to bring important changes in the social arena, particularly the emergence of women as a collective force in politics. If, because of their exclusion, women were at all ignorant about politics prior to the late 18th century French Revolution,[1] they certainly cherished a passion for politics. However, although of vital importance, that passion—along with the discovery than women can play a political role in the public arena—was not enough to bring about political emancipation. The political struggle of women that started unfolding with the Revolution is still going on because so many forces impede that struggle: the centuries-old tradition in Western intellectual thought that views woman as inferior to man; the interrelations of past scientific, philosophical, and theological conceptions of women's "nature"; and the perpetuation of those attitudes through the processes of re-traditionalization that have continued well into our century—all these have not been easy to erase. Despite the fact that numerous international human rights standards that promote gender equality have been brought into the world's political agenda, and that women's participation in politics has increased in the past

two centuries, gender inequality in the political process remains a significant problem. It is not only that women continue to be underrepresented at the decision-making level; in certain countries they have not yet even obtained the right to vote. As our foremother suffragists understood, that right confers more than just an opportunity to cast a ballot; it is a ticket to public life and into the arena where ideas are propagated and decisions are made that directly affect our lives. To deny voting rights to women is to deny their access to the instruments of democracy. By the turn of the 21st century, women in almost every country in the world had obtained the legal right to participate in politics, but their relative practical invisibility in the political sphere across the globe (with few exceptions) suggests that once-overt discrimination has changed into a veiled one. The rather alarming observation of Andrew Reynolds that women remain just a "blip on the male political landscape" (1999 547), implies that women have far to go before making recognizable inroads into the political arena.

In order to explore the continuing under-representation (or downright absence) of women in the contemporary political sphere, we need to shed some light on the impact that the interrelations of the philosophical, cultural and political legacy of modern civilization exert in the production of unequal gender relations. Through the lens of feminist political, philosophical and cultural theories, we shall focus on the ways in which Western thought and reason shaped the position of women in family and society.

Starting with Aristotle's concept of woman as misbegotten man—which has been fundamental to the Western worldview—and the influence of his gender politics on Judaism, Christianity and Islam in defining female and male nature, and the rights, duties and gender roles derived from that nature, this chapter will give a brief historical account of philosophical and religious concepts of women's nature in order to illustrate their pervasive effect on the production of cultural, political and economic practices. Since the scientific, religious, and philosophical views of women's nature were employed to limit her to private life, while the exclusion of women from the public realm of government was justified as the inevitable result of biology, it is important to briefly delineate the interrelating processes that created those views if we are to understand the significance of women's struggle in breaking the conceptual and corporeal locks that for so long kept them inside the master's house. The French Revolution and the birth of feminism in the 19th century can be viewed as starting points from which women initiated transformation of consciousness about their fundamental rights and freedoms.

We shall also explore the continuing struggle of women to break with the cultural norms that often inhibit their participation in politics. Cultural norms, as "standard(s) of rightness and often righteousness wherein all others are

judged in relation to it," (Pharr 1988) are central to men's institutional power. In turn, those norms and men's institutional power, together with economic power, reinforce and maintain gender inequalities and oppressions, as well as those of class and race. Considering that traditional patriarchal cultural norms associate women with parental roles and men with paid labor, the political realm is not seen as appropriate for women since it interferes with their parental responsibilities. The second and third waves of feminism brought into question patriarchal cultural norms and values, making visible their connections with Western thought. Both waves contributed greatly to women's awareness that the personal is political, thus starting to bridge the enforced gap for women between private and public life. So in this chapter, we examine, however briefly, feminists' thoughts and actions in all three waves of feminism to underline that the changing of societal norms and values is a slow process since changes are necessarily tied to broader shifts wrought by the processes of economic and social modernization. We also place emphasis on the fact that fostering a change in social values can be further effected through education.

1.1 Conceptions of Woman's Nature: Beyond Reason

Centuries of theories and practices have defined and delimited what it is to be female. Posited as inferior to man, subject to man by *power*, *culture* and *norm*, and differentiated from man not in kind but in degree, woman was defined in terms of lack: she was less perfect, less divine, less rational, less moral and finally less capable of being appointed to decision-making positions. The very idea of women even *advising* men outside the home seemed so bizarre that the role needed a special name: "Egeria" (the nymph who counseled the second Roman king) was used to mean "female advisor." Influenced by Christianity, Western ethical and legal theories take the soul and/or mind as the reference point in distinguishing humans from other animals. Since the concept of woman was that she was less evolved than man, the consequent belief was that the higher faculties of mind and/or soul could not be developed in woman as they were in man. In other words, she was not capable of reason as man was; she was governed solely by her passions and emotions. As a result, in the division of emotional and intellectual labor, women have been keepers of the personal, the emotional, while the rational and the impersonal provinces of science, philosophy, and politics have been reserved for men.

Christian portrayal of woman as less perfect than man[2] had strong influence on Western scientific theories and on scientists, who often assumed women's inferiority without posing it as a hypothesis open to investigation. Thus, systematic deprecation of the female creative force has been evident in

religious cosmogonies, in scientific theories of reproduction and concepts of women's nature, and in philosophical discourses and attitudes. Nancy Tuana nicely illustrated such theoretical denigration of female conceptual and ethical creativity when she wrote, "Theorists interpreted women's inferior moral and rational capacities as precluding her ability to govern herself or society wisely; the conclusion was that a woman must always be under a man's control" (Tuana 1993, xi). And so she was—subject to control by her father, husband, son and other male relatives, and for the most part limited to her role as a wife and mother, keeper of the personal. While man was granted status in society by birth and wealth, and was recognized as having certain legal and civic duties, woman was little more than an extension of man.

Aristotle was the first to provide a systematic "scientific" explanation of women's imperfection. In his view, woman was, as noted, misbegotten man. And unlike man, the most perfect form, woman was a flawed form of human. She was not only physically weaker but did not possess the same faculties of deliberation. While Aristotle—as noted by Tuana—did distinguish women from slaves, he presented the relationship of husband and wife as that of the "ruler and the ruled," and stated that men and women express their virtues differently, writing, for instance, that "the courage of a man is shown in commanding, of a woman in obeying." Woman's expression of moral and intellectual virtues in terms of subordination forms the basis of man/woman relationships, including, of course, marriage.

These views of Aristotle were influenced by religious thought, and they, in turn, influenced Western monotheistic religious discourse. Aquinas's theology is an example of the reinforcement of woman's subordination to man as conceived by Aristotle (Tuana 1993, 21). Of course, Aristotle's teachings had much wider influence than just on religious and scientific discourse; but it is important to note that despite later revisions and modifications (and disproof) of many of Aristotle's theories (especially about science), his position on woman's inferiority remained uncontroverted for a long time, and continued to shape the treatment of women in societies where they were entirely subject to the authority of men. Aristotle also influenced the liberal philosophers in Europe like Rousseau, Hobbes and Locke, whose egalitarian social politics did not include equality of men and women in the social contract.

Another factor in the subjugation of women—specifically in the medieval period—are the teachings of Judaism, Christianity and Islam that derived from heavily patriarchal interpretations of the Bible and the Qur'an. The Biblical story of Creation says that God created Adam first and then created Eve from Adam's rib, which most theologians saw as a sign of women's inferiority: the

fact that the woman was created second—and not as an individual being but rather as a part of man—was seen as a significant sign of God's imposition of a natural order in which men came first (Kwam E. Kristen et al. 1999). This was consolidated by the stories of the Original Sin, in which Eve yielded to the temptation of the snake, who was actually the devil in disguise, and persuaded Adam to partake of the Forbidden Fruit, which led to their exile from Paradise. This solidified the view of the nature of women as gullible, vain, weak and prone to envy and sin, and women were considered the instrument of Satan's attempts to influence mankind. Tertullian, a famous Christian thinker accused women of "destroying… God's image in man," and being "a devil's gateway," meaning that through alluring appearance women tempt men to sin (Kwam E. Kristen et al. 1999, 131). Thus, all the blame was laid on women, who were supposed to redeem Eve's sin by exhibiting virtues like modesty and obedience to their husbands as indicated in the Bible:

> Women…should learn by being quiet and paying attention. They should be silent and not be allowed to teach or to tell men what to do. After all, Adam was created before Eve and the man Adam wasn't the one who was fooled. It was the woman Eve who was completely fooled and sinned. But women will be saved by having children, if they stay faithful, loving, holy, and modest (Timothy, 2, 11-15).

Augustine, another influential Christian thinker thought that Adam sinned through Eve, but that did not mean that she was not able to receive the same divine perception as man, "But perhaps that woman had not yet received the gift of the knowledge of God, but under the direction and tutelage of her husband she was to acquire it gradually." (Kwam E. Kristen et al. 1999, 154)

Similar interpretations of the creation story can be found in Islam, although in the Qur'anic stories of genesis, creation from Adam's rib is not mentioned and both Adam and Eve sinned, then received God's mercy and forgiveness. However, commentators of the Qur'an, like Al-Tabari (839-923), relying on the Messenger's ahadiths on creation from the rib and Judeo-Christian traditions (*israiliyats*)[3], blamed the woman for the sin because "it was only through the woman's weakness and guilt that Satan could bring about Adam's downfall" (Freyer-Strowaser 1994, 29). Another prominent commentator, Al-Razi (1149-1209), providing a proof for male authority over woman and her exclusion from public dominion, referred to repentance and punishment: Adam repented and Eve just followed his repentance, so his punishment was perpetual hard work and maintenance of his family, her punishment obedience to her husband. (Freyer-Strowaser 1994, 33). Narrations of these stories through the centuries resulted in blaming Eve for the sin and expulsion from paradise (*jannah*) with all the consequences flowing from it (Spahić-Šiljak 2010, 108).

As these accounts illustrate, the position of women during the early and medieval period in Europe was that of inferiority, while independence or the involvement of women in any aspect of public life was unthinkable. Apparently, the religious, philosophical and scientific accounts provided explanations for women's imperfection and lack, and consequently offered justification for exclusion from public life and unprivileged position in private life. Since education was reserved for men as the sole possessors of the faculty of the reason, women were once again deprived of any possibility of altering their consciousness and freeing their creative forces to change such a prison-like and confining position. One of the central contentions of feminists in the 19th century was that the inequalities in the evident abilities of woman and man resulted from differences in the socialization and education of the sexes. (Mary Wollstonecraft 1995)

1.2 Enlightenment for (Wo) Men

The Age of Reason or the Enlightenment brought a new set of ideas on the nature of humans and new definitions of reality and emphasis on the changing needs of political societies that had started developing. Belief in the natural rights of man and in the prevalence of reason in the nature of man (except for the belief of Hobbes), were two of the major ideas running through political thought at the time. But one particular idea of the Enlightenment that would later become the basis of all democratic Western governments was that of the *social contract*. It implies agreement between members of society and the authority/government, agreements by which people form states and maintain social order. This brought about the idea of basic civil rights, which people gain by subjecting themselves to civil law or to political authority whose purpose is to protect human equality and freedom. Since most philosophers at the time based their ideas on classical Hellenistic thought, they continued to maintain the existing social order. Thus, not surprisingly, these ideas excluded women, who remained perceived as inferior to men, and were not included in the idea of citizenship at all.

Philosophical conceptions of morality in the 18th and 19th century were directly influenced by the Cartesian view of rationality. Many philosophers, including Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), posited reason as the sole and/or primary source of moral action. In their theories, woman again is excluded from the moral realm, as she has no rational abilities and thus is incapable of comprehending moral imperatives that require a sense of justice based on duty. Rousseau credited woman with the ability to act on the basis of taste, but not to ground her actions in duty or justice. Like

the medieval theologians, both Kant and Rousseau identified women with the realm of the senses and man with the realm of reason. Rousseau, who advocated freedom and equality for all men, and a government that would protect these rights, assigned women roles that were entirely different. In his famous work *Emile*, which essentially presented Rousseau's idea of proper education, he portrayed women as dependent on men and lacking men's capacity for theoretical thinking. Women's education was to prepare them for their roles as submissive wives, which he implied was their natural calling. Rousseau's view that a woman should "cultivate the agreeable talents to please her husband," was shared by a majority of his contemporaries, who believed that the primary duty of a woman was to please her husband, a concept that had existed before, but gained prominence in the 18th century. Thus, education of women, as it was philosophically believed, and also "scientifically" explained, would never change their inferior position (Rousseau 1911). Darwin, for example, insisted that men are intellectually superior, and denied every possibility that education can minimize this difference between sexes (Tuana 1993). Subjects like science or philosophy were considered beyond the intellectual capacities of women and also useless to them since they served no purpose to aid them in their task of pleasing their husbands. Such beliefs unsurprisingly maintained the exclusion of women from the public sphere. They were considered "capricious," "childlike," "jealous," and, ironically, "artificial." These attributes kept them away from politics and any other domain that involve reason and reasoning. This strict division between the public and private was considered natural even by women, who often urged upon their daughters submission and development of skills in pleasing and entertaining men and ridiculed any women who deviated from this pattern of behavior by attempting to obtain education beyond that which society was willing to offer them. Some philosophers—like Locke and Hobbes—accepted women as equal actors in society; however, these philosophers' work did not show much concern for the *rights* of women.

Nonetheless, Enlightenment philosophy supplied the feminist cause with substantial tools for productive struggle: the ideas of reason and progress, of natural rights, individual fulfillment, and the axiom of equal rights. In the following sections we shall see how these ideas influenced women in their struggle for women's political and human rights, from Olympe de Gouges, Mary Wollstonecraft, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and others.

1.3 Women Voices in Post-Revolution Period in Europe

The 19th century and the French Revolution have been marked as crucial historical moments for women because Western civilization, as many feminists argue, finally discovered that women could participate as active agents in public life. Such discovery was politically revolutionary, though it did not immediately effect women's entrance into the political arena. Even so, this was a century when women began to question their position in relation to men and began to demand more rights. The Revolution accorded them a civic personality previously denied and consequently gave them a historical consciousness. Yet even the flourishing idea of human beings created equal with certain unalienable rights did not really include women, which shifted their revolutionary struggle to a new front. In this period of initial liberal feminism—marked by demands for education, equal human rights and especially demands for political and suffrage rights—women finally started questioning the centuries-old arguments used to chain them to the private sphere of life.

Women were greatly involved in the French Revolution (1789-1799), as evidenced by the founding of a female Republican club that asked to be involved in the formation of the government. Since changing societal norms and values is a slow process, it was not surprising that they were excluded from this process. Joan Scott cites the fact that the Jacobins, who were creating the new structure of the society, "invoked nature as origin of liberty and of sexual difference" (1999, 31). While the male sex was associated with the goals of the revolution, women were still associated with their assigned traits. Despite being accorded a slightly different status, society still remained firmly patriarchal. Olympe de Gouges, one of the female revolutionaries, believed that the tyranny of men over women was the main source of all forms of inequalities and that the Revolution failed to strike at the very principle of despotism that formed the foundation of all bastilles. As Sledziewski notes, "Only the political vigilance of women could prevent men from appropriating the Revolution. It was up to women to reveal the liberating significance of the event" (1993, 44). Indeed, de Gouges's revolutionary engagement with the first document to proclaim universal rights for all men— the "Declaration of The Rights of Man and Citizen" published in 1791—showed such political alertness. To argue that women were "equal to men," and therefore entitled to the same education, employment and political opportunities, de Gouges wrote the "Declaration of The Rights of Woman and Citizen". In this document, she encouraged the involvement of women in the public sphere; but she never achieved her purpose of creating equal opportunities for them. De Gouges was arrested for speaking out against Maximilian Robespierre's regime, and was executed shortly thereafter (Fraisse and Perrot 1993, 47). Nevertheless,

as a woman who wanted to reform society through continual appeals for reason, and without violence, de Gouges was a true woman of the Enlightenment.

In the wake of the French Revolution, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote her famous *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), one of the earliest manifestations of liberal first-wave feminism. With this writing, the revolutionary political tone of de Gouges shifted towards the cultural dimension of women's struggle against oppression and for rights—the ethical approach. Rather than making its principal objective women's equal participation in the political process, the aim of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* was to win recognition of their civic responsibilities. The most important contribution of Wollstonecraft was her opening of new horizons of feminine rationality: a feminine form of judgment, but without deprecating women's nature as rational and sexual subjects. The ideas of Wollstonecraft, along with those of de Gouges and Condorcet, who was mainly interested in the juridical status of women, spread across many countries, uniting women in their struggle and demand for rights, particularly the right to vote. As the idea of people electing their own governments became prominent, the right to vote was becoming universal.

1.4 Fighting for the Right to Vote: the Suffragist Movement

Voting rights had long been denied to women primarily because, as noted, of prevailing notions of their "nature," their lack of rational capacity and ability to participate in public life as political subjects—these deficiencies often used to justify other oppressions that conspired to deny women access to the instruments of democracy. Challenging traditional notions about the nature of human beings and responsibilities assigned to each gender was difficult. Among the first obstacles that suffragists had to face was the question of woman's "proper place," that is, the deeply-rooted conviction that woman belongs exclusively in the private sphere. The suffragists' almost unimaginably difficult task was to demolish traditional concepts of women's nature, their passivity and limited creative forces, by finding ways to make men (and most women, themselves) understand how the constraints historically imposed upon women had engendered those concepts. They needed to persuade those who took all traditional values for granted and never questioned them to reconsider their beliefs and customs, which had always seemed self-evident. So the women of what would later be called first-wave feminism faced great challenges indeed, but persevered for many years (along with men) in the suffrage movement.

For men, at least a first step toward universal suffrage was first granted in the 18th century in Great Britain, and expanded in 1884. In the United States, as part of Reconstruction, in the aftermath of the Civil War, the Fifteenth

Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1870 granted the right to vote to all men regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. Suffrage for women, though, came markedly later. In both the United States and Great Britain, the feminist movement first had to address the legal constraints under which women lived, so the main focus of first-wave feminism was on de jure (i.e., legal, officially mandated) inequalities.

The fight for women's in the United States lasted 70 years, and at first was conflated with the fight for the abolition of slavery. Women joined with male abolitionists, but were seeking freedom for both the black *and* female populations of the U.S. The first women's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, and this is considered the birth of the movement for women's rights[4]. Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote the "Declaration of Sentiments," the document that represented the "grand basis for attaining the civil, social, political, and religious rights of women" (Foner 1992, 49).[5] In the "Declaration of Sentiments," women invoke the terms of the U. S. Constitution to assert their right to replace a government that loses its legitimacy when it denies its citizens their basic rights. In this case, they argued, half the population was denied basic rights, and thus it was a tyranny of men over women. They cited the unalienable rights guaranteed by the Constitution, including freedom and pursuit of happiness, and claimed that, since God made men and women equal, they should have equal rights, and that women should also be included in the protections granted by the laws of their nation. The "Declaration of Sentiments" also demanded better education and encouragement for women to speak publicly and involve themselves in public life.

In 1869, Elizabeth Stanton and Susan B. Anthony founded the National Woman Suffrage Association, which fought for the adoption of an amendment that would grant suffrage to women nationwide. Meanwhile, Lucy Stone and her husband, Henry Blackwell, founded the American Woman Suffrage Association, which strove to establish suffrage on the state level. In 1890, these two organizations merged into the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), presided over, jointly, by Elizabeth Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Stone. At the same time, the state of Wyoming became the first state to grant suffrage to women (Paxton and Hughes 2007, 34-52). In the decades to follow, several other states followed, including Utah and New York.

From 1900 onward, a new generation of NAWSA officers, Alice Paul in particular, continued leading this movement, soon to include thousands of women. Members often protested outside of the White House, and were arrested. In prison they organized hunger strikes to further their cause (Paxton and Hughes 2007, 34-52). They began organizing large suffrage parades, such

as the one in New York City in 1910. They protested against President Wilson's policies on this issue, and pursued continuous appeals to Congress. Finally, in 1920, the 19th amendment was ratified, and all American women were given the right to vote.

In Great Britain, the first attempt to secure suffrage for women was led by John Stuart Mill, when he presented to Parliament the demand of British women for the right vote and suggested that it be included in the second Reform act. This attempt failed. The following years were marked by similar unsuccessful attempts to secure suffrage for women. In 1903, the Women's Social and Political Union decided on more active forms of protests: acts of civil disobedience. Women chained themselves to railings or smashed windows; prisons were soon full of women arrested for these acts. Finally, in 1918, the British government granted the right to vote to all women above 30 years of age. It took another decade to abolish this age restriction.

But the United States and Great Britain were not the first countries that granted suffrage to women. The first was New Zealand, which had seen perhaps the quickest rise in numbers of university-educated, socially active women of any country in the world. These intellectually emancipated women soon set out to gain political rights as well. Mary Müller wrote the first women's suffrage pamphlet in 1869, and the independent women who were fighting for the right to vote unified in organizations that operated nationwide, issuing pamphlets and other publications, holding conferences and sending petitions to the New Zealand Parliament. In 1893, the Parliament was sent a petition demanding suffrage; 30,000 women over the age of 21 had signed it. Women were allowed to vote that same year. Australia and the Scandinavian countries followed suit in the early 1900s.

In the first half of the 20th century, the majority of the European countries granted suffrage to women, meaning *de jure* equal political rights for women and men. This successful fight for women's political rights was soon followed by the formation of international women's organizations, most prominently the Commission on the Status of Women, which was established as a branch of the UN. Efforts were made to establish rights for women worldwide. The first of these efforts was the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," (1948) which set a guideline for the protection of basic human rights with the rationale that "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." Although this document aimed to eradicate gender discrimination, it did not achieve the desired outcome. Only after the UN created six other conventions concerning women was eradication of gender discrimination

recognized as a vital issue. In 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted "The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" (CEDAW), which was ratified by over 185 countries. This convention consists of a preamble and 30 acts that address issues concerning women and gender discrimination around the world. The preamble addresses the failure of the instruments for enforcing basic human rights in general to extend these rights to women, noting: "extensive discrimination against women continues to exist." The countries that ratified these—and the remaining—conventions are not only legally obliged to enforce them, but also have to submit reports on their progress every four years, a requirement seen as a political tool to exert pressure on a country to improve the status of women in all segments of life.

1.5 Politics Revisited: Power, Other and Difference/s

The first wave of feminism had a colossal effect on the movement for women's right to vote. However, equally important for feminism and women's awareness of their human and political rights today were the continuing second and third waves of feminism. "Second-wave" feminism refers mostly to the period of the women's liberation movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, although it extends through the late 1980s. The focus of second-wave feminism was on *de facto* inequalities, those supported by custom and practice, even when not enforced by law. Second-wave feminists saw *de jure* and *de facto* inequalities as inextricably linked issues that had to be addressed together in order to initiate affirmative changes for women in social, cultural and political life. These feminists were inspired by the ideas of writers such as Simon de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan, whose major publications *The Second Sex* (de Beauvoir 1949) and *The Feminist Mystique* (Friedan 1963) encouraged women to understand aspects of their personal lives as deeply politicized and reflective of a sexist structure of power. A significant work by Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (1969), had no less power. The emphasis of second-wave feminism was on the education of both women and men to effect a rise in feminist consciousness.

In her famous acknowledgement that "One is not born a woman, but becomes one," de Beauvoir challenged Freud's psychoanalytical account, as well as his insistence that sex is a biological issue and that, as a consequence, the fate of a woman is biologically (pre)determined. De Beauvoir thought that the eternal dominant male view of the female as an unfinished (imperfect) subject placed her in the category of the Other, and considered that (us/them) a basic category of human thought. But unlike other Others—e.g., black people, Jews or proletarians—woman cannot step out of her binary determination, because,

for her, although the Other, she is still within a whole whose two halves need each other.

Women are a dispersed group, living among men and having "no own past or religion". Despite equality in number (or superior numbers), women are politically a minority, and, lacking power, they can hardly resist the system built on male dominance. As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari rightly observed in their book, *A Thousand Plateaus*, the difference between majority and minority has nothing to do with numbers; in fact the minorities are most often larger in number. Instead, the difference lies in power. De Beauvoir did not tackle the issue of power difference per se, but did establish this key perception of women as the Other, which also comes under the rubric of "power" since this Other is disadvantaged in any social struggle due to her inability to solidarize with all women and due to her dependence on men. As de Beauvoir wrote, "Bourgeois women solidarize with bourgeois men and not with proletarian women; white women solidarize with white men and not with black women". (2011, 205)

The seed sown by de Beauvoir needed some time to take root and sprout. In the meantime, the book that was generally accepted as a manifesto and the beginning of the second wave of feminism was *The Feminine Mystique* by the American author Betty Friedan, published in 1963. Friedan prepared the way for discovering and researching the character of female "inner" life, her every-day life. The place of woman within the family was taken for granted and strictly structured within predefined male and female roles. Woman is a mother, keeper of the household; she is defined by her emotional nature as opposed to the rational male nature. Friedan analyzed women's every-day life and duties, the distribution of domestic chores and work in the public sphere, her manner of entertainment, intimate preoccupations, sexual pleasure (and lack thereof), and mutual relations with men. This analysis generated the well known observation that it does matter who cleans the toilet in the household and who changes the light bulbs: one means to kneel down into the family dung, whereas changing a light bulb means rising up and "letting there be light" (Kesić 2006). Friedan inspired many of the liberal feminists, who along with the socialist/Marxist feminists of the period worked to access and influence the institutions of society. The focus of their criticism was on the dual workload for women working outside as well as inside the home, the demand of equal pay for equal work, and a breakdown of the gender division of the educational system and labor market.

Another classic work that came out at the height of the women's liberation movement was *Sexual Politics* (1969) by an American writer and artist Kate Millett. Insisting on women's right to their own bodies and a sexuality of their own—disconnected from the obligations of marriage and motherhood—this

book had a huge impact on the development of feminist thought. Millett made the crucial distinction between "sex" as a biological category and "gender" as a social construct, set up by tradition, culture and relations within society. With this, Millett set the foundations for the development of radical feminism, the assertion that relationships between the sexes are primarily a political question and that in order to raise feministic awareness, it is necessary to question the paternalistically arranged social system.

The difference between liberal/socialist/Marxist feminists and radical feminists lay in their views on the wisdom of integration with, or separation from, patriarchal institutions. Liberal feminists insisted on women's accessing the institutions and influencing them in order to bring about changes in equality, changes in society, while radical feminists were critical of the institutions and skeptical of the benefits wrought by inclusion of more women in what they considered profit-driven, patriarchal institutions. This conflict over integration versus separation indicated a basic shift from having equality as a goal to taking a different approach. At the beginning of the 1980s, Nancy Hartsock (1983) wrote "The Feminist Standpoint," the article considered precursor of the coming "difference" second-wave feminism, which promoted the theory of standpoint and divergences among women. Difference feminism grew into identity politics, marked by growing criticism from people of color, working-class and lesbian feminists. Among significant writings that tackled the issue of identity politics were bell hooks's *Ain't I A Woman?* (1981), and *Women, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (1989) by Vietnamese feminist and filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha. In the context of the complex relations of a postcolonial— but still imperial and capitalist—world, these two writers questioned the issue of privileged standpoint (White, middle class, and heterosexual feminists) and argued for differentiated identity politics. In the European context, identity politics attained a different dimension, and is known as *l'ecriture feminine* (feminine writing), whose prominent writers were Luce Irigaray, Helen Cixous and Julia Kristeva. These writers pled for deconstructive feminine writings, and pursued the idea of the revolutionary potential of women's bodies as the productive sites of multiple desires, a plenitude of *jouissance*, and, consequently, another, semiotic logic. Irigaray was especially important as the expositor of the dilemmas of difference feminism and identity politics. Second-wave feminism was apparently not one but many, and was marked by intense academic research.

At the end of 20th century, feminists of the third wave of feminism started to challenge the notions of universal womanhood, essentialist notions of advocated politics of difference, discursive power and gender as a social construct. They proposed a different sort of politics, one that articulates ways in which groups of women confront complex intersections of gender, sexuality,

race, class, and age-related concerns. Following post-structuralist philosophical thought, feminists of the third wave put emphasis on "micro-politics," which allow women to define feminism in a way that fits their specific identities and locations. Third-wave feminists are defined not by common theoretical and political standpoints, but by their use of performance, mimicry and subversion as rhetorical strategies, following mostly the insights of the American gender theorist Judith Butler. Central to Butler's perspective is the understanding of gender as a discursive practice that is both a hegemonic social matrix and a "performative gesture" with the power to disturb the chain of social repetition and open up new realities. Another significant writing that contributed to third-wave feminism is Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* and the figure of "cyborg." This text challenged identity politics and offered a unique account of affinity rather than identity by appropriating technology and blurring distinctions between human and non-human Others, which makes affinity diverge from "the natural matrix of unity". (Haraway 1991, 157)

Third-wave feminism is closely related to the effects of globalization and the complex redistribution of power that challenge feminist theory and politics. It also mirrors the diversification of women's interests and perspectives and the breakdown of master stories of oppression and liberation. There are certainly a lot of challenges facing third-wave feminism. According to the post-socialist scholar Nancy Fraser (1997, 11-41), to avoid the drawbacks of identity politics, it is necessary to introduce a concept of justice that simultaneously recognizes and counters the claims of difference. Fraser's argument focuses on reframing universalism in order to promote a new combination of, on one hand, local (singular and situated) social claims, and, on the other, the will and ability to expose universalism to a global democracy. She thus has delivered an alternative to the old universalism, which sanctioned the particularism inherent in identity politics, claiming that in the new democracy everyone must acknowledge the particularity of a position. Anne Phillips, a feminist political theorist, maintains that women are still written out from the story of full citizenship. It has become clear, Phillips argues, that the failure to incorporate women as full citizens is not just a part of the private/public split, of the labor market and family structure (changes have already taken place in these structures as women entered the public sphere and are no longer confined to the private sphere), but is also linked to a discourse of abstraction, impartiality and neutrality that confirms the masculine subject as the norm. In addition, she argues that preoccupation with getting more women into politics—given existing conditions of the economic and social sphere—is troubling, particularly in the context of a wide-scale retreat from the redistributive politics that has been characteristic of all politics in the last decades (Phillips 2011). Feminists notably held out against this trend

by persistently addressing the problems of poverty, low pay and inequality in the distribution of resources, purposefully holding onto materialism that recognized the importance of economic and social conditions. This position is becoming less evident, which at least provokes concern in light of increasing neo-liberalism, major restructuring of the post-war countries and apparently universal consensus on the "naivety" of egalitarianism. With all the risks that attend feminist politics in recent years—especially the intersection and similarity between different forms of oppression (ethic, religious, gender, etc.)—we must not lose sight of the specificities of each of the oppressions. With third-wave feminism, we learned that Western thought, for all its grand narratives, indeed could be challenged. We also learned that theorizing is valuable, but that too much of it—overly abstract theoretical accounts of postmodernism and post-structuralism—can risk losing what was fought for. Now we have to be alert to changes in conditions, and attentive to the course of our own processes if we are to pursue the politics of diversity and multiplicity from an ethical perspective informed by respect and responsibility.

Conclusion

As we have outlined in this chapter, philosophical, religious and scientific theories of women's nature have been used to legitimatize oppressive ideologies (e.g., patriarchy), and to reinforce and perpetuate the inferior position of women for centuries. Religion and philosophy, often mirroring scientific theories (and vice versa), identified objectivity and independence, mind and reason as male traits, subjectivity and dependence, feeling and sentimentality as female. This division between men and women, between the intellectual and emotional, positioned women as protectors of the personal and men as protectors of the state and public, including their social roles as the rational gender, their dominance in the field of natural sciences, religion, philosophy and world politics. These positionings led to claims that gender influences our conceptions of society and that our cultural and scientific knowledge, as gained through various ideological apparatuses, is in many ways speculative. First- and second-wave feminism challenged the patriarchal state and men's cultural hegemony. In doing so, feminists exposed much of the underlying myth about motherhood, woman's passivity, and her hierarchical inferiority. Women entered the public sphere, politicized the private, and fought for their fundamental rights and freedoms. Third-wave feminists have continued the struggle for recognition of difference, and created new discourses about multiplicity; but in their efforts to find a way out of the maze of dualism, they have often fallen into the trap of embracing some of the same attitudes against which they struggled. This is not

surprising since times of accelerating change are brutal, and the struggle for achieving gender equality relies on interconnections of socio-economic as well as political and cultural factors.

Notes

[1] The French Revolution, as Elizabeth Sledziewski noted in *The French Revolution as the Turning Point*, was the historical moment when Western Civilization discovered that woman could play a civic role. Sledziewski also notes that neither the European Enlightenment nor the American Revolution had politicized the "woman question" as did the French Revolution—making it a political rather than just moral issue.

[2] In a hierarchy of salvation, which influenced the writings of many religious fathers, woman had to become like a man in order to achieve salvation. See Buckley: *Female Fault and Fulfillment in Gnosticism* and Tuana: Not in God's Image in *The Less Noble Sex*.

[3] Israiliyats are narrations from Judeo-Christian tradition used by Muslim authorities when there were no other sources related to a certain topic or issues, highlighting that God knows best what is true.

[4] It is important to note that "birth" in this context is only a stage in the process of growth, which, in this case, had begun a half century before the Seneca Falls convention.

[5] See: The North Star, July 28, 1848, as quoted in Frederick Douglass *Women's Rights*, Philip S. Foner, ed. New York: Da Capo Press, 1992, pp. 49-51; originally published in 1976.

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2. Feminisms and Islam

Zilka Spahić-Šiljak

Introduction

We aim to briefly present the mainstream of feminist ideas, as developed in secular and religious branches of feminism that are, as Margot Badran emphasized, not always convergent, but have often worked together, with similar aspirations for gender equality. (Badran 2009, 3) However, the socio-political and cultural contexts of some Muslim countries determined the level of cooperation between secular and religiously rooted feminism, yielding contrasting positions that sometimes developed into outright hostility between the groups advocating women's rights.

This chapter will provide brief definitions and classifications of feminism in Muslim societies, and will refer to veiling, education and the participation of women in public life as important issues in the emancipation and liberation of Muslim women. It will also introduce the key feminist activists and ideas in Egypt, Iran and Turkey—three prominent paradigms of feminism and the emancipation of women.

We selected these three countries for several reasons: during the previous centuries, BiH and Kosovo were culturally and politically more connected with them than with other Muslim countries; most of the local Ulama received their education at the university centers of Egypt, Iran and Turkey; the majority of literature on Islam that was translated came from these countries; the Arab,

Turkish and Persian languages constitute part of cultural heritage of both BiH and Kosovo; and the development of feminist ideas and movements in the three countries selected bears certain similarities to the development of feminisms in the countries of the former Yugoslavia. Finally, what happened with women's movements in these three countries can help eliminate the prejudice and ignorance often present when Islam and feminism intersect. Through focus groups and the life stories of Muslim women in BiH and Kosovo it became evident that little is known about the nexus of Islam and feminism, that little or no literature in the Bosnian language in BiH or Albanian language in Kosovo tackles the issues—another motive for our examining the genesis of feminism in Egypt, Iran and Turkey, from which we can extrapolate the mainstream developments of feminist thought and ideas in the Muslim world.

2.1 Definitions and Classifications

Feminism is not a single monolithic and static concept. There are many concepts of feminism that depend on the place, culture and language in which they arise and flourish. Karen Offen, in her article "Defining Feminism" (1988, 119-157), explained that the term "feminism" was coined after the French Revolution nearly a century later by a woman writer and journalist to signify the awareness that women were deprived of the rights the revolution declared and signal the effort to gain these rights demanding the equality that was promised and proclaimed by the revolutionists. Later, women in America and other Western countries developed various types of feminisms in accordance with their socio-political and cultural backgrounds. (Maynard 1994) However, feminism is not exclusively Western; it belongs to all societies where women struggle against subordination and oppression, and it primarily concerns itself with the political, economic and social equality of the sexes, as well as the balancing of power and liberation of the individual. More broadly, feminism also refers to all movements and campaigns for gender sensitization of the sexes and elimination of gender-based discriminatory practices and violence against women. As Sa'diyya Shaikh summarized:

> It includes a critical awareness of the structural marginalization of women in society and engaging in activities directed at transforming gender power relations in order to strive for a society that facilitates human wholeness for all, based on principles of gender justice, human equality, and freedom from structures of oppression. (2003, 148)

Muslim women undertook very similar things in their own political, social and cultural contexts, but the debate on feminism and Islam was very

often ideologically driven, caught between the polemics of Islam and the West, and Islam's reaction to colonialism, modernity, secularization, globalization, and the economic and cultural hegemony of Western Christian civilization. Azza Karam outlined the dilemmas and anxieties that surrounded the idea of feminism:

> The term 'feminism'…in postcolonial Arab Muslim societies is tainted, impure and heavily impregnated with stereotypes. Some of these stereotypes are that feminism basically stands for enmity between men and women, as well as a call for immorality in the form of sexual promiscuity for women…some religious personalities…have associated feminism with colonialist strategies to undermine the indigenous social and religious culture. (Karam 1998, 5-6)

Today, many Muslims pay increasing attention to the mystique of feminism, with all the stereotypes, and not to debates over terminology which, as Margot Badran notices, "conveniently distract(s) attention from the project itself." (Badran 2009, 326). When this happens, discussion and dialogue about that "project" is thwarted, making many deepening ambiguity and bipolarity around this notion and project. This is one of the reasons some female Muslim scholars today talk about "re-reading of the Qur'an" or "interpretation of the Qur'an from a woman's perspective" (Amina Wadud 1999) and or unreading the patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'an (Asma Barlas 2002), or pedagogical reading of the Qur'an, (Nimat Hafez Barazangi 2004).

The term "feminism" (*nisa'iyya*) was first used in Egypt at the beginning of 20th century—with that country's own social, political, and cultural features and peculiarities. In the mid 1990s, in the run-up to the 1994 UN International Conference on Population and Development, the term "naswiyya" was introduced in women's activist circles in Egypt to make a clear disctinction between *feminism* and *women's* activism as the term "nisa'iyya" in use since the 1920s ambiguously connoted both women's and feminist. (Badran 2009, 308) The term feminism was used in Turkey from the early decades of the 20th century and in Iran from the 1960s. Badran and cooke (1990) identified three critical periods of feminisms in the Muslim world: first, the invisible feminist period from 1860 to 1920 (literature and poetry by middle- and upper-class women); next, from 1920 to 1960, the period of social activism of women, who raised their voices for women's rights; and the third period, from 1970 on, which saw the revival of feminist expression in Muslim countries. (Badran and cooke 1990, 2004) Swedish scholar, Jan Hjarpe, offered a rather typology of feminisms in the Muslim countries: *Atheist, Secular, Muslim* and *Islamic* feminism. These These are keyed to approaches to religion and how they promote or discourage the notion of women's rights.

Atheist (or antireligious) feminism is based on the belief that religion in any shape or form denies women their rights and that, in order to achieve progress, women must dispense with any influence religion has on their lives. (Hjarpe 1995, 27). This category includes the Marxist feminist movements that rose in countries like Egypt, Iran and Turkey.

Secular feminism, on the other hand rests on the idea that the relationship between feminism and Islam depends on the way a particular society approaches Islam, whether with a liberal or patriarchal interpretation. Secular feminists do not believe religion itself should be attacked or entirely restricted to secular ideas that govern the society or entirely subjected to those concepts. (Hjarpe 1995, 27) The Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU), for instance, clearly declared that they aimed at emancipation of all women and used both secular and religious arguments to advance women's causes. Margot Badran drew attention to the EFU as leading national secular movement that included both Muslim and Christian women. (Badran 1995, 95) Some secular feminists, such as Moghissi (1999, 126) reject the compatibility of mainstream interpretations of Islam, with its gender hierarchy, and feminism's struggle for gender equality. Azza Karam argued that secular feminists and Islamist feminists "are to be blunt, political enemies" without interest in "endless discussion on the position and status of women in religion and challenges from religious conservatives to their (re)interpretations of religious texts…" (1997, 24) Moghissi joined her in considering political Islam as incompatible with pluralism and freedom of choice. (Moghissi 1999, 140)

Hjarpe posits that *Muslim feminism* connotes a movement that seeks to re-examine the teachings of Islam, and examine the Qur'an and the hadith in a new light unencumbered by the previous patriarchal teachings and interpretations (Hjarpe 1995, 28). It stems from the idea that God is righteous and that it would be impossible for Him to legitimize gender inequality, especially considering the parts of the Qur'an that speak of the equal creation of the first man and woman with the same intellectual and spiritual potential. Muslim feminists advocate re-reading of the Qur'an from a woman's perspective with a fresh and ongoing exegesis, particularly when dealing with those verses that seemingly justify the subordination of a woman to a man. These feminists advocate a holistic approach (Wadud 2006, Barlas 2004)—taking into account, when interpreting these verses, the social structure, culture and tradition in the time of the Revelation and keeping in mind the subtleties of the Arabic language. Only this approach, they feel, can enable women to achieve emancipation in a Muslim society. However, apart from the re-evaluated religious sources, Muslim feminists also use other sources that do not stem from the Islamic tradition— for example, anthropological and other scientific studies.

Islamic feminism Hajrpe claims is mainly found within national or Islamist movements through which women attempt to achieve emancipation. (1995, 28) It was a "new consciousness, a new way of thinking" in Iran that forwarded feminist aspirations and demands, and employed religious vocabulary to explain those demands. (Mir Hosseini 2004) Nesta Ramazani emphasized that the presence of women at Friday prayers, in wars, at funerals and in the political life of Iran would lead to their emancipation. Thus, while many of the feminists in Iran were suppressed by the regime, some of them sought emancipation within a religious paradigm offering another way of interpreting Islam within the context of the prevailing ideological framework of the society. (Ramazani 1993, 3) Islamic feminists of Iran were involved in the revolution that brought the current regime to power, which resulted in greater numbers of those women in the Majlis, the Iranian Parliament; however, their engagement and influence was limited to support of the regime's political goals. (Darvispour 1993, 3)

Margot Badran, drawing on the Egyptian experience distinguishes two types of feminisms: secular and Islamic feminisms: which emerged in different historical contexts and with the appearance of Islamic feminism in the 1990s they existed side by side:

> Emergent secular feminism insisted upon the implementation of gender equality in the public sphere while acquiescing in the notion of complementarity in the private sphere….Islamic feminists on the other hand have through their own *ijtihad* made compelling arguments that the patriarchal model of the family does not conform to the Qur'anic principles of human equality and gender justice. (2009, 3-4)

For Badran Islamic feminism is not of necessity tied to an identity—religious affiliation-but to a discursive position—non-Muslims can use Islamic feminism and even claim to be Islamic feminists.

Such distinctions are area-specific and vary from country to country, thus neither of the aforementioned categorizations can always be strictly employed in discussing feminist discourses in the Muslim world. As Moghissi pointed out, there is no cross-cultural definition of feminism that all find acceptable: "This, however, does not alter the fact that the basis of women's oppression everywhere is patriarchal structure and relations." (Moghissi 1994, 17)

Islamic feminists use arguments rooted in *ijtihad* to demand a simultaneous emancipation of women both in their families and in their societies, and also demand equality within the religious community and rituals, an area that secular feminists do not address. miriam cooke who, unlike Badran, links Islamic feminism with religious identity, speaks of it as 'contingent, contextually determined strategic self-positioning. (cooke 2001, 59) While it is hard to

reconcile these duties, it is not impossible. It is important to underline the role of Islamic feminism in transcending the binary of religious and secular feminist perspectives, as Badran and Afsaneh Najmabadi both emphasized. (Badran 2009, 304, 318, 328-29, Najmabadi 2002, 1135-1171) In a similar vein, Ziba Mir Hosseini aptly speaks of Islamic feminism as "stretching the limits" in ways that simultaneously question, traditional male interpretations of texts and Western feminist preconceived notions of Islam and Muslim women. (2004, 3-5)

In sum, feminism of various orientations in the Muslim world stands as a voice against injustice, discrimination and oppression of women and, indeed, of all marginalized and underprivileged groups of people. Feminists speak out for gender equality and social justice using Islamic and secular discourses and methodologies in strengthening their demands for women's human rights. As Margot Badran points out, "Islamic feminism, which derives its understanding and mandate from the Qur'an, seeks rights and justice for women, and for men, in the totality of their existence." (Badran 2009, 242) The heart of Islamic feminism is the Qur'an, with its ethical principles of equality and justice that have been undermined by patriarchal culture and customs.

Classical Islamic thought in the formative period of Islam was designed in accordance with the prevailing patriarchal norms. And despite the fact that many women were prominent religious authorities and teachers, official legal and theological interpretations were made by male scholars. The key issues discussed by feminist scholars and activists in demanding re-interpretation of the Qur'an were education, equal rights in marriage and divorce, polygamy, veiling, and economic and political rights. miriam cooke, in her analysis of Muslim women's endeavors to speak up for themselves, concluded that they do not reject religion, but through constructive critique of some aspects of Islamic hermeneutics seek equal rights for women in a just community. (cooke 2001, 62)

Methods of obtaining justice and equality differ, but they all require re-examination of Qu'ranic text and context, the language, and the entire composition of the text, with an emphasis on the ethical and gender-equality principles promulgated in the Qur'an. (Riffat Hassan 1996, Aziza al-Hibri, Amina Wadud 2006, Asma Barlas 2004, Ali Ashgar Engineer 2001) Muslim women begin with the assumption that the possibility for equality already exists in the Qur'an. The problem, as they see it, is misinterpretation or misunderstanding of the sacred text. For these Muslim women, the first goal of a feminist movement is to understand and re-evaluate the sacred text, and for women to be involved in this process despite the historic exclusivity of men's role in Qu'ranic interpretation. (Fernea 1998, 416)

Today, many organizations recruit Muslim women to fight discrimination and authoritarian regimes' subjugation of women by stressing that the Qur'anic text, as the key source of authority, needs to be re-interpreted in the new socio-political and cultural circumstances. One of the most prominent such groups is *Musawah,* with its broad forum of women all around the world fighting for justice in the Muslim family. The Malaysian group, Sisters in Islam, plays a central role in this movement like other feminists elsewhere. Women Living Under Muslim Law (WLUML), another international organization, was established in 1984 as a response to the denial of women's rights in Muslims countries. The scholars and activists whomWLUML attracts help women who live under Muslim laws end their isolation and fight for dignity, freedom, equality, peace and respect.

2.2 Emancipation and (Un)Veiling

One of the most controversial questions about emancipation of women was veiling and hijab (head covering), accompanied by gender segregation and the division of gender roles and duties. In Egypt, Turkey, Iran and other Muslim countries, veiling and hijab appeared to be the most telling issue for emancipation and liberation both of women and society. (Ahmad 1992, Mir Hosseini 1999, Moghissi 1996, Afshar 1998, Badran 2005, 2009, cooke 2001, Mernissi 1991, Göle 1996, Göle 2011, Mahmood 2005, Wadud 2006)

Emancipation projects in Iran and Turkey—and to a certain extent in Egypt—had two major shifts in the 20th century: first in the first half of the 20th century in the 1920s and '30s, when unveiling became a symbol of modernity and liberation of the state from colonial and imperial power; and second from the '70s and '80s when re-veiling became a symbol of liberation and emancipation of women in the context of the re-establishment of Islamic rules and norms. Farzanch Milani, in her book, *Veils and Words: The Emerging voices of Iranian Women Writers*, described the intersection of gender with national and religious identities in Iran: "Forcefully unveiled, they personify modernization of the nation. Compulsorily veiled, they embody the reinstitution of the Islamic order." (1992, 4) Woman and her body were—and still are—the main battlefield for secular and religious state projects, with limitations imposed on women to keep them under male and state authority and control. In the late 19th century, Egyptian judge, Ahmad Amin, wrote the well-known book, *The Liberation of Woman* (*Tahrir Al-Mar'a*), in which he presented ideas that were radical at that time and became an iconic harbinger of feminism in Arabic world and in parts of the wider Islamic world. Amin argued for the abolition of the veil (face covering), a lessening of patriarchal control of women in the family and the promotion of companionate marriage, and for education, albeit limited,

for women. Amin was criticized by some scholars for promotion of women's emancipation since that abetted the colonizers: he was supporting Western colonial narratives that held veiling to be a sign that women were inferior and being oppressed. (Ahmad 1992, 153) His championing "the modern bourgeois family with its ideal of conjugal live and scientific child rearing" was also criticized. (Abu-Lughod 1998, 256)

His work provoked plenty of controversy and criticism, especially by Muslim religious scholars. He was a prominent judge and on the other hand a modernist who advocated for reforms of practices claimed to be religious injunctions such as removing the face veil and diminishing the domestic seclusion of women using Islamic argumentation for which he was criticized in his day. His ideas on the liberation of women would not have provoked such intense reactions had he not upheld the Western position on the backwardness of Islam and Muslim cultures, which needed to be completely transformed and changed in favor of Western "civilized" liberation. With respect to Turkey, Nilufer Göle, for example, spoke in favor of the civilizing mission of the Kemalist policies that enabled "social visibility" of women. (Göle 1996, 71) However, she criticized Kemalist state feminism for its limitations and superficiality and its close connections to the national agenda of the Turkish Republic. Although women had obtained civil and political rights, their social visibility was hampered by the pressure to maintain the honor and dignity of woman and avoid upsetting the social order. (Göle 1996, 79) Women had to legitimize their positions in public life and politics by "veiling their sexuality," which means that although they abandoned traditional clothing, their femininity and individuality were suppressed by higher goals of the Turkish Republic, namely public morals and the moral order. (Göle 1996, 79)

Similarly, in Iran, Reza Shah introduced a law in 1929 that forced all Iranians to wear Western clothing, and in 1936 prohibited the chador and imposed a dress code for all women. (Moghissi 1994, 39) A vast majority of well-educated upper- and middle-class women welcomed the ban on the chador and veiling as a step forward in ending exclusion and oppression. However, many other women perceived unveiling as an assault on their morality and the traditional gender politics of segregation that eliminated their contact with strangers; the dissidents stayed in their homes, refusing to obey the Shah's clothing edict (Eliz Sanasarian 1982, 63-65, Moghissi 1994, 39) State-mandated unveiling ended in 1979, when a many of Iranian women accepted the veil and chador as a sign of emancipation and inclusion into a new state system with Islamic rules and norms in force.

Today, debates over hijab and veiling are still at the core of discussion about emancipation, women's rights and gender equality, and the challenges religion

(e.g., public wearing of hijab) makes to modernity. Interpretations and opinions range from orthodox conservative to quite liberal positions. The consensus of classical Islamic scholarship in the formative period was that veiling was obligatory, but opinions differed on whether he hijab by itself constituted veiling or whether it had to include a face cover. The Hanafi Law School did not consider the face veil obligatory, and this is the consensus among Muslims today (Keller 1991, 512, 899). Various Fatwa councils and scholars are even now discussing the meaning, form and level of this obligation for women. For example, Fatwa al-Amin of the Islamic Community in BiH holds that hijab is obligatory (*fard*) for a Muslim woman, and that not wearing it constitutes a sin, though not a big one, and requires repentance (*tawba*).[1] The contemporary literature of orthodox Islamic scholars on Islamic dress-code in BiH offers patriarchal interpretations referring mostly to modesty, a man's right to impose the hijab on his wife and daughter, reflections on woman's body and the disastrous consequences should they be exposed to men who are not *mahram* (family members so close that they are prohibited from marriage). (Zajimović 2006, 107-138)

A similar opinion was issued in 1990 by Sheikh Tantawi, grand mufti of Egypt, who took the position that hijab is obligatory. Challenging this position, another Egyptian scholar, Ashmawi, a specialist in Shari'a law, declared:

> The real meaning of the veil (hijab) lies in thwarting the self from straying toward lust or illicit sexual desires, and keeping away from sinful behavior, without having to conjoin this (understanding) with particular forms of clothing and attire. As for modesty (*ihtisham*) and lack of exhibitionism (*'adam al-tabarruj*) in clothing and outward appearance (*mazhar*), this is something that is imperative, and any wise person would agree with it and any decent person would abide by it. (quoted in Mahmood 2005, 160).

The whole debate is about the interpretation and understanding of *haya'* or *istisham* (modesty) and *'awra* (indecent exposure—e.g., of woman's body and voice). An Algerian Imam in France, Soheib Bencheikh, maintained that hijab is not obligatory for women, because in the Qur'an modesty and chastity is prescribed both for men and women, while hijab is a Bedouin custom that enabled differentiation between Muslim women and female slaves in the first community of Medina, the slave women not being covered. According to Bencheikh, today's equivalent of a hijab is education. (Helie-Lukas 2008, 51) Furthermore, in a debate about the concept of *'awra*, Abdulaziz Sachedina criticizes Muslim jurists who justify gender segregation based on *'awra*, and who advocate a society in which "a woman is legally silenced, morally separated, and religiously veiled." (*Woman Half-the-Man? Crisis of Male Epistemology in Islamic Jurisprudence*)

Some Muslim feminists, like the Moroccan sociologist, Fatima Mernissi, described the hijab as a limitation and a restriction on the individual's free will, within both the state and family. She compared two sorts of veils that protect the authority of a man who is the leader of both a Muslim state and a family:

> …two veils that that give substance to the two thresholds of political Islam in its cosmic architecture: the hijab (veil) of women and that of the caliph…(T)he hijab of the caliph…hides the unmentionable: the will of the people, the will of *amma*, the mass, which is just dangerous as that of women. (Mernissi 1993, 178)

Amina Wadud, a prominent Muslim scholar who until recently refrained from assuming a feminist identity, does not perceive hijab as a religious obligation, but as "public declaration of identity with Islamic ideology," and for her, "the *hijab* of coercion and hijab of choice *look the same*. The *hijab* of oppression and *hijab* of liberation look the same." (Wadud 2006, 219) She personally has been wearing hijab for thirty years—although she does not believe it is a divine order to do so—It was her choice; but as she explained, the "symbolism given to it within and without" was not compromised just because wearing it was a matter of choice, not coercion (Wadud 2006, 223). Proper discussion about that symbolism necessitates voices of Muslim women who wear the hijab, and they are the only ones "who can make a difference" (Šeta 2011, 2) Göle also confirms the importance of being "engaged in the criticism and reconstruction of the discourse of modernity, of the modern social imagination. (2011, 134)

Some Islamist women defend hijab and veiling as the best vehicle for their social and political engagement, protecting them from harassment and objectification. (Afshar 1998, 15, Mir Hosseini 1999, 7) Saba Mahmood noted in her research of the piety movement in Egypt that many authors who argue that the veil is a symbol of resistance to westernization and exploitation of woman's body in the media failed to emphasize the virtue of modesty and piety that was the decisive argument for many women in deciding to adopt the veil. (Mahmood 2005, 16) Veiling is still at the subject of discussion between secularists and Islamists of various persuasions, and includes different conceptualizations of behavior and virtue: "for the pietists, bodily behavior is at the core of proper realization of the norm, and for their opponents, it is a contingent and unnecessary element in modesty's enactment." (Mahmood 2005, 24) Similar arguments appeared in the research on hijab conducted in BiH in which women referred to hijab as divinely ordered, part of their faith and their own choice:

> I wear the hijab out of love and respect of dear God,… and because it gives me the feeling of dignity, pride, security and protection.

I wear the hijab because I consider it to be a part of my faith and, among other things, fulfillment of God's guidelines which I chose to follow as the principles of my life. (Šeta 2011, 105)

It is evident that women who accepted hijab believe it is God's order to do so; but despite dominant male Muslim scholarship on hijab, which comes to a different conclusion, they understand it as a sign of piety, freedom and security. For them, hijab is something between them and God, something that gives them strength and self-confidence, and also publicly proclaims their identity. But, as miriam cooke noted, "Even when women make their own decisions concerning the veil, their decisions may be used by others to serve other goals." (cooke 2001, 132) It has happened frequently: in state-building, during which women were mandatorily veiled as part of national political goals; in Islamist movements that sought to integrate women's groups and empower their struggle for a religiously based state; and in secular states that banned veiling in deference to the tenants of Western democratic regimes.

2.3 Feminist Voice and Women's Activism

Focusing on the three selected examples of Egypt, Iran and Turkey, this section will explore the endeavors of Muslim women to become socially visible and recognized, and examine the effects of nation-building policies on emancipation and modernization, effects that were contested in the 1970s and '80s with the re-institution of Islamic norms and values in those societies.

2.3.1 Feminist Voice and Women's Activism in Egypt

The period including the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries was fruitful in terms of feminist ideas and expansion of the intellectual work of women who began re-thinking gender relations through poetry, biographical dictionaries and essays, and who started publishing their works in newspapers and journals and reaching wider audiences. As women gained more education and opportunities they began questioning the patriarchal ideas that had been obstructing them for centuries—in particular, to what extent those ideas were justified by religion. Spurred by the newly developing ideas of modern Islamists, such as Shaikh Muhammad 'Abduh, who advocated *ijtihad*, direct and independent examination of religious sources as a path to being both Muslim and part of the modern world, women started to look at the text of the Qur'an and hadith with a more critical eye, questioning the pre-conceived notions that denied them their rights. These new ideas soon spread through salon discussions and various publications. The debate about gender equality was initiated by

women in their poetry and biographical dictionaries that profiled women prominent in public by name, which was not then a conventionally accepted practice. (Badran 1995, 14) These talkers and writers did not couch their ideas in feminism, but Badran used it as analytical tool in explaining the ideas, agendas and actions of these women. (Badran 1995, 20) More direct demands for the liberation of women were initiated by male reformists like Abduh, Tahtawi, Rida, and Khan, who advocated equal access to education, reform of family law and unveiling as prerequisites for the emancipation and liberation of Muslim women. The reformists' demands for education and elimination of polygamy were not innovative or revolutionary, as Leila Ahmad pointed out (Ahmad 1992, 144), but simply a call for full transformation of a culture and a society. During the 1900s these ideas blossomed as more and more opportunities became available for women to express their opinions. Four women could be considered to have made groundbreaking advances in the struggle for women's rights in the first half of the century: Hifni Nasif, Musa Al-Nabawiyya, Huda Sha'rawi and Zaynab Ghazali.

Hifni Nasif, author of numerous texts, spearheaded feminist activism, revolutionized the feminist movement when, in 1911, she sent women's demand to the Egyptian National Congress to request opportunities for women in the areas of education, work and congregational worship. (Badran 1995, 20, Ahmad 1992, 170) In 1907 Nabawiyya Musa was the first woman in Egypt to obtain a secondary school diploma, and she remained the only one to do so for the following two decades, since, at that time, the colonial state did not allow women to sit for examinations or obtain degrees in secondary education. After working as a teacher and administrator for years, she founded her own two schools for girls, the Primary School for Girls (*al-Tarqiyya al Fatah*) in Alexandria and Secondary School for Girls (*Banat al-Ahsraf*) in Cairo. She also started a periodical called *Majallat at-Fata* (The Magazine of the Young Woman). In 1942 she was imprisoned for speaking against the government and her magazine ceased publication a year later. She died in 1951. (Badran 1995, 38-46 and 2009, 67-70, Ahmad 1992, 171-172) Huda Sha'rawi, member of an upper-class family, was a daughter of Muhammad Sultan Pasha. In 1923, when she was 43, her husband died and she founded the Egyptian Feminist Union (*Al-Ittihad al-Nisa'i al-Misri*). Since the newly established government neglected women's rights, the EFU made that a priority, but achieved no progress in securing political rights for women and protected constitutionally guaranteed rights that would insure their equal participation as citizens. The EFU was not exclusively Muslim, but a national secular feminist union for Muslims and Christian women:

> The movement was secular in that it was not communally based or articulated exclusively within a religious discourse. Egyptian secular feminism situated itself within the parameters of religion, appropriating the discourse of Islamic modernism

in a general way to legitimize its overall agenda and most specifically its campaign to reform the religiously based Muslim personal status code. (Badran 1995, 95)

Thus, the first feminist union was focused on the rights of all women and did not want religion to be a stumbling block between Muslim and Christian women who both experienced similar forms of discrimination and exclusion. Badran categorizes the EFU feminism as a radical liberal feminism because they demanded equal civil and political rights for women, reform of the personal status law and elimination of gender segregation by the symbolic gesture of unveiling in public. (Badran 2009, 124). However, an EFU secular woman was different from a Turkish secular woman who "attained her freedom by virtue of foreign laws (alluding on the 1926 Turkish Civil Code)," (Badran 2000, 23) while secular feminists in Egypt worked within Islam and Shari'a, and "shied away from a secularism which severed all links with religion." (Badran 2000, 23)

Despite its efforts to reach out to poor women with training and services, including setting up health and educational facilities in Minya (where Sha'rawi's father came from) the EFU was more focused on rights benefitting upper and middle class women failing, like most men's initatives, to provide answers to growing poverty, economic instability and insecurity. The EFU found it difficult, and to disseminate populist feminist ideas among the broader illiterate population.

Another prominent female leader, Zaynab al-Ghazali, established the Muslim Woman's Society (MWS) (*Jama'at al-Sayyaidat al-Muslimat*) in 1936 to spread ideas of women's rights among the more religiously defined women who constituted the majority of the population. She cooperated with the Muslim Brotherhood but kept her independence until the late 1940s when leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood were imprisoned under Nasser when she changed the name of her association to the Muslim Sisters' Society and began to work more closed with the Brotherhooad and became one of their coordinators during this period.

She become a prominent preacher (*da'iya*), a model for other female preachers. (Mahmood 2005, 67-68). Al-Ghazali and the MWS claimed that Muslim women did not need Western form of feminism to get their rights—which she accused the EFU of perpetrating-- because women's rights guaranteed within Islam, and the problem was in the interpretation of these rights. Al-Ghazali ignored the fact that the EFU also claimed women's rights were ordained by Islam while the EFU at the same time made secular, that is, constitutional and humanitarian arguments for women's right. The rise of MWS "feminist" (they eschewed the term) activism signaled the first major split among the feminist ranks.

The MWS considered the secular as a dangerous foreign influence and based their work strictly in Shari'a, which, they believed, should regulate society, and they argued for women's rights within religious tradition. The MWS stressed the role of women as mothers in the sphere of their households while the EFU fought to secure women a more prominent place in public life. As mentioned MWS rejected the label of feminism as being "Western," (Badran 2009, 149), and rejected any association withse goal is the destruction of their family and by extension of their society." (cooke 2001, 87)

In the 1940s a wave of young women influenced by socialist and communist ideologies founded several leftist feminist organizations and incorporated feminist efforts into the broader framework of equality among all classes. The state, however, was not tolerant of either leftist or conservative nationalist movements, persecuting leftist feminists as well as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Society of Muslim Sisters. After the revolution of 1952, Arab socialism became the official state ideology with no toleration of competing discourses or groups. The state granted women political rights in 1956 and that same year forced the EFU to shut down and with it an independent feminist movement as part of its drive to eliminate any other independent political movements. (Badran 2009, 33-35) The 1960s and 1970s saw an increase in women's education, even a considerable number of female university graduates, and a large number of women entering the workforce.

Nadje al-Ali's research in late 1990 shows that Nasser's regime had an ambiguous attitude toward women's rights. It provided free universal education through university and guaranteed all university graduated a job while extending employment opportunities throughout the population. However, the Nasserite socialist state did not ameliorate the Personal Status Law of the 1920s and 1930s. (Al-Ali 2000, 72) At the beginning of 1970 Sadat's regime promoted the *Infitah* (open door) policy ushering in a new period of liberal capitalism. In 1979 the Personal Status Law, underpressure from the president's wife,was amended and changed in favor of women, granting them more rights in marriage, divorce, and custody. (Al-Ali 2000, 74) But the religious conservatives struck up an opposition, arguing against reforms as anti-Islamic and in 1985 the law was amended eliminating some of the gains in the 1979 law. But under the pressure of women's organizations some benefits were from the 1979 Law were restored. (Badran 2009, 42-44 and Al-Ali 2000, 75). When Mubarak came to power he was caught between Islamist demands for more regressive policies and laws towards women on the one hand and Egyptian women's demands for equality and justice, and UN human rights norms and values on the other hand.

Islamist women became outspoken advocates of women's rights and played an active role in public life, promoting their ideas among women in general; but they mostly rejected feminist identity. (Badran 1994, 213) From the 1960s until recently, women got access to al-Azhar, one of the world's oldest universities, but remained invisible and ignored as preachers (*da'iyat*) by the state and their male counterparts. (Mahmood 2005, 71) They have, however, now been accepted for training as preachers by non-profit religious organizations such as *Jam'iyya al-Shar'iyya, Ansar al-Sunna* and *Da'wat al-Haq*. As Saba Mahmood found in her research on the mosque movement in Egypt, there was a difference in the sources of authority and models of sociability in 1940 between the secular EFU movement and the religiously based MFS movement, a difference that has only grown deeper in today's Egypt:

> If anything, this disparity between styles of conduct has grown even wider in Egypt today, and is manifested in the sharp lines drawn between those who conduct themselves in an "Islamic manner" and those who ground their sociability in what may be glossed as "Western-liberal" lifestyles. Women's mosque groups and Islamic non-profit organizations…believe that formation of virtuous society is critically dependent upon the regulations of everyday conduct in keeping with Islamic principles and values…this not only includes performing religious obligations in a prescribed manner, but also includes regulating how one conducts oneself in public, how one maintains one's family and kinship relations, the kind of entertainment one consumes, and the terms on which public debate proceeds. (Mahmood 2005, 73)

The code of conduct in public life, of which hijab is the most visible and accepted, is very important for pietist movements; most religious women accept it as a divine order, not merely a social construct.

After the uprising in 2011, women in Egypt continue to struggle for their rights and social justice, asking for equal participation in politics and public life. Their representation in Parliament was decreased and made more difficult by the Election law. The Woman's quota was canceled and there are no other measures to ensure their seats in Parliament.[2] One of the explanations came from the Military:

> Our society calls for equality between men and women. Therefore, we cannot allocate a quota for women alone…The existence of such a quota might also provide Parliament membership for feminist elements that are not suitable for the task. Hence, the military council is seeking to achieve a Parliament that represents the people's actual will. (Othman, Dalia)

Hiding behind gender equality rhetoric, the new government clearly denounces women's demands for rights and equality as not suitable for the Egyptian society.

2.3.2 Feminist Voices and Women's Activism in Iran

Feminist ideas and movements in the 19th century are reflected in the writings and activism of women such as Bibi Khanum, who was courageous enough to challenge a pamphlet on women's code of conduct and punishment, criticizing the author for hypocrisy because women were denied fundamental rights: "We women after all have been confined to the kitchen and being kept in harems." (Moghissi 1994, 28) Another two women also stood up against social and institutional exclusion of women. Sadiqeh Dowlatabadi, a progressive leader of women's liberation in Iran, worked on education of girls, and in 1917 established a school for them in Isfahan and published a woman's magazine, *Zaban-e Zanan* (Women's Voice). (Sullivan 1998, 229 quoted in Remaking Women) In more recent times, is Afaq Parsa a feminist leader who advocated for women's rights. She published the magazine *Jahan-e Zanan* (Women's World). After the Revolution in 1979, the tomb of Dowlatabadi and her family was destroyed and Afaq's daughter was executed by the government. (Moghissi 1994, 28)

Women's organizations in the 20th century were under control of the Shah's state, and they were supportive of his regime, expecting to get more freedom and equal rights. But when the state began to suppress their rights and control everything, women reacted, and many of the organizations were closed, their members imprisoned. (Moghissi 1994, 40) The Shah's regime was intolerant, inconsistent, and authoritarian: "While implementing these repressive measures, the government continued its pro-women's rights propaganda for external consumption." (Moghissi 1994, 40) In 1934 the government allowed the Women's Center (*Kanoon-e Banavan*) to be established, but under their strong control and supervision. The goal of the Center was to advance the position of women in society by improving their education, preparing them to better fulfill their duties in marriage and family. In that way the government, as Haideh Moghissi pointed out, disparaged women and their efforts toward genuine emancipation and liberation. (Moghissi 1994, 42) *Kanoon-e Banavan* pursued its activities after the abdication of the Shah, re-emphasizing traditional stands on women's rights. Literacy, sewing and how to treat your husband were the main items on the group's agenda, and the group published a newsletter entitled *Zaban-e Zanan* (Women's Voice) expressing their views. (Sanasarian 1982, 72)

One of the crucial efforts in modernization and westernization of the state was to abolish the veil in 1936. Religious authorities and some women protested, but the opposition was suppressed in blood and executions. (Moghissi 1994, 39) Social and political development in Iran from 1950 to 1970 faced economic crises and instability, so in 1963 the new Shah launched the White Revolution

to reform the social and economic sector with women's rights as a part of the agenda. Nevertheless, the state remained authoritarian, with coercion and intimidation of citizens "as primary instruments of political control" (Moghissi 1994, 43) Reformation of the Civil Code in 1967 and 1975 brought some changes for women, granting them more rights in marriage, divorce and custody disputes, but polygamy and *mut'a* marriage were only restricted, not eradicated. (Moghissi 1994, 45)

Although the right to education was granted to them in 1920, the majority of women remained uneducated due to economic hardship, the common practice of forcing women into early marriages, and the promotion of traditional gender roles in schools. The period of industrialization (after 1950) saw many women newly involved in the workforce, but because of the declining economy they did not become independent. Pahlavi continued his father's policy, which aimed to control the development of women's movements and the work of women's associations, establishing the Women's Organization of Iran (WOI) under his auspices and control. While co-opting women in this state-controlled organization, he wanted to appear as a proponent of modernization who cared about emancipation of women in his country. (Bamdad 1977, 112) This policy had a limited effect on certain privileged groups of women and men, and only a small number of urban, upper- and middle-class women benefited from these reforms while the vast majority of women remained poor and excluded, which prompted many women to join the Revolution in 1979 in hopes of becoming visible, recognized and included. The Islamic feminist movement in Iran was born out of the nationalist Islamist movement during that Revolution. The Islamic feminists were critical of the Western form of feminism "for being one of the many instruments of colonialism" (Afshar 1996, 200), arguing that in the struggle to gain equality of sexes women lost "recognition, respect and honor that women had once obtained in matrimony." (Afshar 1996, 200) The counter-agenda of Islamic feminists in Iran was a platform for gender politics based on the Qur'an and hadith, which they argued provided emancipation of women. However, as Afshar and other Iranian scholars claim, they preferred complementary gender politics rather than equality, and:

> They argue that unlike capitalism and much feminist discourse, Islam recognizes the importance of women's life cycle, they have been given different roles and responsibilities at different times of their lives and at each and every stage they are honored and respected for that which they do. (Afshar 1996, 200)

Veiling became a symbol of Islamization, liberation and inclusion in public life of the Islamic Republic. In contrast to the Shah's politics of unveiling in the 1930s as a precondition for emancipation, Islamic feminists accepted the

veil as a powerful symbol of their emancipation that enabled them to play a more significant role in society. However, there were different approaches to veil and gender politics by the Islamic Republic and Islamic reformist women, who contested the state ideology on gender relations, including the imposition of veiling. Women rallied to the Women's Society of the Islamic Revolution and started publishing the biweekly newspaper, Hajer's Message (*Pajam-e Hajer*) with the aim of contesting the "idealized" women promoted by the Islamic State and of offering "the middle way" in the interpretation of the role of women in family and society. (Nakanishi 1998, 86) The hijab was an important question of identity. Although Hajer's Message criticized the government-propagated images of the ideal women, personified by Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, because she was presented as the model mother and wife as well as a fighter against infidels, not as a socially engaged woman, hijab was promoted by the newspaper as a reification of Muslim woman's identity. (Nakanishi 1998, 87) Women at the newspaper did not accept the idea of gender equality or feminism, but focused on family and marriage issues contributing to reform of the laws that affected women the most. (Nakanishi 1998, 97)

Another pro-feminist voice in post-revolutionary Iran was the magazine, Kiyan Zanan, launched by the most outspoken advocates of the Islamic Republic such as Abdul Karim Sorush. It was an alternative voice to the state-sponsored feminism. They promoted a form of feminism that takes Islam as a source and advocates re-reading of the old texts within a new contextual framework while state sponsored feminism, supported by Ayatollah Motahhari, used Western scholarship to advocate better treatment of women. (Mir Hosseini 1996, 315-316)

Islamic/Muslim feminists, however, denied male superiority over women and the "natural" division of gender roles and tasks, insisting that women were endowed with the same capacities as men. They questioned religious conservatism being embedded in state policy, effectively keeping women in Iran subordinate in politics as well as in society at large. The government rarely appointed women to high decision-making positions. Despite their participation in the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) and politics, as Zahra Rahnavard noted, women could not attain higher decision-making positions:

> Women have been and continue to be present, at time in larger numbers than men, in our public demonstrations for the revolution and its support. But when it comes to public appointments, they are pushed aside… Women like myself have continuously campaigned for better conditions. We have made our demands in the press and in the public domain. But no one has taken any notice and our voices not heard. (Afshar 1998, 204)

Women who were elected to the Parliament demanded changes to the legislation that forbid women to work as judges. One of the female parliamentarians, Nafiseh Faizbakhsh, was critical of the double moral standards of the government. On one hand, the government enforced rules to maintain women's modesty; yet on the other hand, over 80% of applicants in custody court were women, and they had to present their cases to *male* judges, with all the often lurid details and episodes of custody hearings that would surely make those women feel immodest when forced to discuss them with a male stranger—even if he was a judge. (Afshar 1998, 211) One famous peace activist, Shirin Ebadi, a Noble Laureate, was dismissed from her position as judge and President of the City Court in Teheran and demoted to ordinary clerk in the Court administration (later a law expert) despite her experience and recognized authority. (Hick Stiehm 2006, 184) The Revolution had distinctly contradictory legacies:

> In comparison to the pre-revolutionary period Iranian women have substantially increased levels of education, economic power, political awareness and participation, and overall presence in the public space. Legally, however, their subservience to male dominance within the family has increased. (Moghadam Fatemah 2011, 43)

Their public position also seems increasingly compromised. Women's representation in Iran's national parliament decreased from 5.8% in 1996 to 2.8% in 2008. One of the parliamentarians, Fatemah, Haghighatjoo, blames other women parliamentarians who are not sympathetic toward the woman's movement, supporting even polygamy. (Semira Nikou) As in many other countries, women's solidarity and mutual support appears to be crucial for advancement of their positions in family and society.

2.3.3 Feminist Voices and Women's Activism in Turkey

Different socio-political and cultural factors affected the emergence of the woman's movement in Turkey. The first significant changes occurred during the reform processes of the Tanzimat period (1839-1876), when the Ottoman Empire influenced by the West, started to modernize social, political and economic life and adopted modernization as policy. Changes in Ottoman society from the end of 19th century to early 20th century—impelled by global political and economic changes—significantly affected the role of woman and the family. One of the key issues included in Tanzimat reforms was women's access to education. In 1858 the first Secondary School for Girls was established and soon after that the Ministry of Education founded the first Teacher's Training College for girls. However, education was directed mostly towards family life, aiming to produce educated mothers and wives:

> Men who have to work hard to earn their living can only be comforted by women who have more knowledge about the world, and their religion; obey men's orders and avoid what they forbid, keep their chastity and modesty. (Ergin 1939, 382)

Besides state intervention, there were other initiatives for the promotion of women in public life. Similarly to Egyptian reformists, Turkish modernists launched magazines for women such as the Newspaper Peculiar to Ladies (*Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete)*, published by male intellectuals from 1895-1908. Women writers such as Fatma Aliye, Nigar Hanım and others presented their works in these magazines. (Göle 1996, 381) Another magazine, Woman's World (*Kadınlar Dünyası,)*, published between 1913 and 1921, attracted female intellectuals who were determined to exclude male writers as long as women's rights were not fully recognized by law. (Göle 1996, 382)

Ottoman women organized themselves in various philanthropic and cultural organizations in order to help those in need, to educate and empower women, and support the national awakening of women from various ethnic groups. Nilufer Göle emphasized that gender equality issues were a part of the discussion about the (non)universality of Western civilization and traditional culture of the Ottoman society. (Göle 1996, 31-31) Despite the secularization of certain aspects of Ottoman life, family and marriage were under control of the traditional religious system, relegating women to private life. In discussing reforms, Göle examined the tension between westernizers and traditionalists, saying that the authority of the father was not threatened by science and technology, but by "physical lust"—as one of the traditionalists explained in protesting against modernization: "if what you assume that civilization is seeing women in the streets almost naked or dancing at gatherings, these are all against our morality." (Göle 1996, 34)

After the establishment of Kemalist Turkey, the "ideal woman" reflected in many other nation-building situations was glorified and celebrated (Yuval and Anthias 1989, 64); "women became bearers of Westernization and carriers of secularism and actresses gave testimony to the dramatic shift of the civilization." (Göle 1996, 14) To further fuller citizenship for women and their visibility, mobility and participation in public life, the Kemalist state enforced several measures: unveiling (1924), coeducation for boys and girls (1924), abolition of Shari'a (1926), and granting women suffrage and other political rights (1934). (Göle 1996, 14)

The "women question" was at the core of political debate and the struggle in feminist discourse about westernization and modernization of society. (Kandiyoti 1987, 317-338) The family was central to the national ideal, and the emancipation of women was considered a part of that family-nation. However,

women were taught that they served their nation best by being hardworking, companions, mothers and dignified members of the society. (Göle 1996, 55-56)

The building of modern Turkey transformed traditional patriarchy into modern patriarchy, since women still face challenges and discrimination, only now these restraints bear the labels of secularization and modernization. Deniz Kandiyoti confirmed that state-sponsored feminism and empowerment of women through education and workforce access did not bring full liberation to women at large. (1987, 317-337) Only upper- and middle-class women enjoyed their rights while the vast majority were still governed by traditional patriarchal norms—gender segregation and control over woman's mobility (*mahrem*) and her body (e.g, a dress code). The middle-class women who were educated and successful in professions made compromises with Kemalism, and did not question the discriminatory clauses of the Civil Law (man is the head of family; woman is deprived of her rights of inheritance; woman may not work without her husband's permission; a woman who commits adultery is subject to more severe punishments, etc.) nor the patriarchal relationships deeply rooted in daily life. (Mine Ege, "Feminism in Turkey")

For all practical purposes, as protagonists in the debate over the future of the Republic—including the future position of women—new republican man had the same power as before in family and public life. Ayse Saktanber argued that in the Kemalist republic, men "constituted the primary public model for both men and women." (Saktanber 2002, 125)

The emancipation of women under the Kemalist state shifted slowly to individual feminist identity with the emergence of the robust feminist movement in 1975. Sirin Tekeli, one of the most prominent activists in Turkey, shed light on the progressive women's organizations that stood against state control of gender politics in 1980 when many leftist organization had to leave Turkey (Tekeli, "The Turkish Women's Movement," 120). One branch of feminists attached their work to Marxist ideology, taking woman's integrity and morality as the core of their interest. Woman's sexuality was again suppressed with a new ideal of womanhood promoted by leftist feminists. (Göle 1996, 82, Tekeli 1995, 13) It seems that a woman and her body were under control by men, the state, or some other extraneous group, and that the power balance between the sexes always affected women and their role in family and society.

In the late 1970s and beginning of 1980s the Islamist movement in Turkey used veiling and women's bodies as the rallying point for visibility, identity and power. With the politicization of Islam, "the prevailing image of a fatalist, passive, docile and obedient traditional Muslim woman was replaced by that of an

active, demanding and even militant Muslim woman who is no longer confined to her home." (Göle 1996, 84) Some Islamist intellectuals like Ali Bulac firmly criticized the exploitation of women in capitalist societies, depicting feminism as a movement hostile to men and highly tolerant of homosexual relations, calling feminism the "noble rebel" (Göle 1996, 122). Muslim women intellectuals like Gülnay and Tuncer responded to Bulac's claims of the deterioration of feminist movement. They did not accept the imposition of Islamist ideology, but required freedom for women to develop their individual and collective identities. (Göle 1996, 124)

Thus, all types of societies—Ottoman, Kemalist, Marxist, and Islamist—take a woman and her sexuality as the battleground issue in gaining recognition, relevance and power. The question of woman's body and sexuality, as Göle explains, is the key topic in challenging modernity, and the veil is definitely is one of the most debatable phenomenoa of religion in the public sphere. (Göle 2011, 147-8)

Women's organizations in 1980 challenged the paternalistic Turkish state, asking reform of the 1926 Civil Law that subordinated married woman to her husband, who, as head of the family, was authorized to control her activities and associations. With the reform of the Civil Law in 2001, and amendment of the Penal Code in 2004, with prohibition of "honor killing," and other sanctions, the state moved toward pluralistic and democratic development. Legal age for marriage was raised to 18 years for both sexes, the power of men as head of the family was abolished, and children outside of wedlock were given equal legal and inheritance rights. ("Turkish Women Rejoice" Herizons) But, as Tekeli noted, changing the law is just a first step in changing the mindset of people and bringing equality of genders. (Tekeli 121-122)

Women in Turkey today comprise 14% of the Parliament (Meclis), the highest number since 1935, when they obtained suffrage. A decade-long advance started in 2002, with 4.4% of the deputies being women; to 2007, with 9.1 percent elected; to the latest elections in 2011 when 78 women (14%) sat in the Meclis. (Cagaptay 2011) Although it is a positive development, women still need to work on better representation in public life and politics.

Conclusion

Discussion of feminisms and Islam will remain one of the very controversial issues with diverse reactions from Muslims and non-Muslims. There is no single definition or classification of feminism in Islam, but various forms of activities

towards emancipation of Muslim women that can be identified as Islamic, Muslim, or secular feminisms. Emancipation projects in Muslim countries differ in their arguments, but all strive to provide advancement of women's rights in the private and public realm and social justice. Hijab appeared to be one of the important questions in "(un)civilizing" the nation in Turkey and Iran and to a certain extent in Egypt, but more importantly gender equality in family and society, freedom of expression and freedom of movement for women.

Secular and religious feminists employed different arguments for accepting or rejecting hijab as either emancipation or subjugation symbol. The cases of Iran and Turkey— with state-controlled feminisms—and of Egypt demonstrated that modernization projects did not bring emancipation to all women, but mostly to upper- and middle-class women, who got access to education, the workforce and politics. In 1980, women's groups and organizations both of religious and secular provenance launched a broader front for women's rights in their countries to secure fundamental human rights to all women. These processes in the last century, driven by secular or religious arguments of emancipation, provided women with the opportunity to become active in public life, with or without the veil.

Notes

[1] Pitanja i odgovori (Questions and Answers) http://www.rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content &view=article&id=8213:obaveznost-pokrivanja-ene&catid=135:renska-pravaabortus&Itemid=139

[2] EGYPT: *Concerns Over Women's Representation in Egypt Parliament*, (October 01.2011) http:// www.makeeverywomancount.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15 99:egypt-concerns-over-womens-representation-in-egypt-parliament&catid=38:political-participation&Itemid=64

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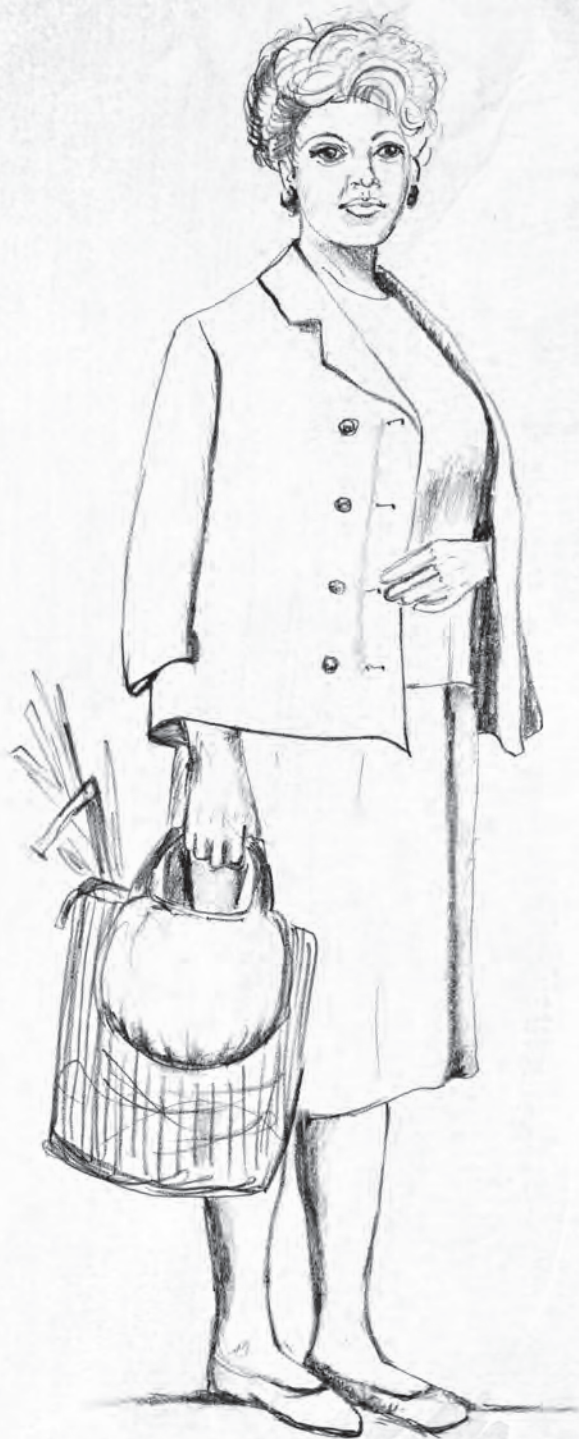
3. The Contexts of BiH and Kosovo

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To better comprehend the positioning of female, feminist and religious identities of the Muslim women in BiH and Kosovo who participated in our focus groups and life stories, one must understand the relevant contexts of these two countries. The first section of this chapter deals with the socio-political situation in socialist Yugoslavia and the events following the collapse of the regime and fragmentation of the country, BiH and Kosovo becoming separate countries. The second section gives a brief overview of the position of women in education, employment, family life, activism and feminism in BiH and Kosovo. And the third section addresses the position of Islam in the socialist and post-socialist periods in BiH and Kosovo.

3.1 Socio-Political Conditions in BiH and Kosovo

Gorana Mlinarević

Although state-building in BiH and Kosovo has taken different shapes, the resulting two countries have numerous characteristics in common. The political parties in power in both countries proclaim their strong commitment to the EU integration processes. In recent years both have gained considerable international attention because of the atrocities visited on them, both countries having been greatly affected by the ethno-nationalist policies of ethnic cleansing. Both countries are still under the auspices of internationally led peace-keeping. The prosecution of war crimes committed during the 1990s war in both countries falls under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Moreover, the social, political and economic conditions in both countries were largely influenced by their recent history. And, finally, Islam is a significant presence in both countries.

3.1.1 Constitutional and Political Position of BiH and Kosovo in the Yugoslav Federation

The 1946 Yugoslav Constitution defined the state as a centralized federation consisting of six republics, with the federal government having more authority than the republics. One of the republics was BiH. Another, Serbia, had two subunits: an autonomous province, Vojvodina, and an autonomous region, Kosovo, which at that time was called "Kosovo and Metohija."[1]

The succeeding 1963 Constitution moved towards decentralization of Yugoslavia and introduction of workers' self-management in all spheres and levels of the social order. (Biserko 2006, 10) It elevated the status of Kosovo and Metohija to that of an autonomous province, but left to Serbian authorities regulation of the new province's rights, duties and basic organization.

The period between 1963 and 1974, when the last Yugoslav Constitution was adopted, saw further steps taken towards decentralization. Constitutional amendments adopted between 1967 and 1971 provided, among other things, for broadening the economic rights of the republics, renaming Kosovo and Metohija just "Kosovo" (Biserko 2006, 87), stripping Serbia of the right to alter its borders—including those of its autonomous provinces without the consent of the people of the province (Artisien 1984, 268), and defining Kosovo and the other province, Vojvodina, as "constituent elements of the federation," almost equalizing them with the republics. (Biserko 2006, 93) Finally, the 1974 Constitution finished the processes of reform of the federation and decentralization and awarded the right to the autonomous provinces to adopt their own constitutions.

3.1.2 Political System of Socialist Yugoslavia and the "National Question" in BiH and Kosovo

Socialist Yugoslavia was a one-party system, with the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) having exclusive decision-making power. To address its problem of legitimacy, the system relied on the prestige of the stories told about the Partisan struggle against the occupation during WWII through which the common history of the National Liberation Struggle was constructed, and it relied on three pillars of policy—self-management, non-alignment, and brotherhood and unity. (Ramet 1999, 91) However, Yugoslavia's political system was full of contradictions. While it was a one-party system, "the federalization of the party sometimes allowed behaviors which seemed to hint at an eight-party system." (Ramet 1999, 90) This was evident in the debates about the issues related to the "national question," often articulated through the republics' branches of the LCY, and debates over decentralization versus centralization. Generally speaking, the republics were organized so that each would represent a dominant ethno-culturally defined nation (narod), excepting multicultural BiH and Croatia. The Yugoslav federal principle actually meant affording the major ethnic group a large measure of self-governance within "its" republic. Other ethnic groups were accorded the status of minority nationalities (narodnost).

According to Jović, the provisions of the Yugoslav Constitutions during 1960s and 1970s were "primarily motivated by the ideological beliefs that weaker nations deserve protection against potential exploiters." (Jović 2004, 287) The potential hegemonic power of Serbia and, to a lesser extent, Croatia, as the two largest "nations" was to be "controlled and scaled down, while the real political power of other, smaller 'nations' (BiH Muslims, Montenegrins, Macedonians and Slovenes) and 'nationalities' (Albanians, Italians, Hungarians) was to be protected and increased in real terms." (Jović 2004, 286) The South-Slav "nations", namely Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Muslims, Serbs and Slovenes were seen as the ethnic groups who had the right to exercise their own nationhood in terms of political sovereignty and other legal aspects of statehood (independence, right to secession), while "nationalities" (such as Albanians, Hungarians, etc.) did not have such rights. (Mrdjen 2002, 82)

With respect to BiH, its "constitutive nations" (Croats, Muslims and Serbs) did not have the right to their own statehood since BiH was defined as a multi-ethnic republic of three "nations" whose distinguishing feature of ethnic identity was not language but religion. (Marko 2000, 95-96) Furthermore, recognizing Muslims as one of Yugoslavia's "nations" in 1968 was seen as a way to remove the pressure on them to declare themselves either as Serbs or Croats, and by doing so to eliminate the pretensions of Croatian and Serbian power centers. (Biserko

2006, 12) Furthermore, many interpreted the position of Muslims and of BiH within Yugoslavia as being "a kind of stabilizing buffer in intensifying the ethnic and national debate taking place within the wider context of discussions about federalization." (Marko 2000, 99) This—together with the fact that almost all major battles in the National Liberation Struggle were fought on its territory—contributed to BiH's having a specific symbolic position in the promotion of brotherhood and unity as a policy.

Unlike BiH, Kosovo was viewed as a destabilizing factor. As already mentioned, Kosovo's constitutional status changed over time, the constitutional changes depended on the ideologies and/or tactics of those in power within the LCY. The demonstrations that occurred in 1968 and 1981 throughout Kosovo, although rooted in economics, included the demonstrators' demands for the elevation of Kosovo to the status of republic. In addition, the Kosovo Albanians wanted to be recognized as a "nation." They also wanted recognition of their proper name. "Shqiptare," Albanian own term for Albanian ethnic identity, had been in official use since 1945. (Guzina 2005, 30) However, this term had acquired an openly pejorative flavor, implying cultural and racial inferiority, so "the Albanian leadership requested that the term 'Albanians' be used instead." (Guzina 2005, 30) "Albanians" was consequently accepted and included in the 1974 constitutional adjustments. (Guzina 2005, 30)

The move towards liberalization of repressive policies against the Albanian population in Kosovo was marked by the removal of Aleksandar Ranković in 1966 (Artisien and Howells 1981, 423). In the late 1960s, and throughout the 1970s, many of the demands during the 1968 demonstrations in Kosovo were met and numerous social changes were introduced. In addition to replacement of the name "Kosovo and Metohija" by "Kosovo," and elevation of Kosovo's constitutional status, Albanian was made an official language of the province along with Serbo-Croatian, Albanians were put in positions of authority in the administration and the police force (Reineck 1993, 102), and the University in Pristina was opened, allowing education in Albanian and expression of Albanian identity (Stewart 2006, 21). Even though these interventions "encouraged the Albanians to re-assert their national rights and [kept] grievances temporarily at bay," by the mid 1970s—due to the increasing economic crisis that affected Yugoslavia and resulted in deepening inequality between the prosperous north and poorer south of the country—the "economic exploitation" argument about Kosovo's ailing economy was revived. (Artisien and Howells 1981, 423) This culminated in the 1981 massive demonstrations by the Albanian population in Kosovo that was "followed by a period of purges and repressed hostilities." (Reineck 1993, 103) After the Milošević faction in the leadership of Serbia's League of Communists purged their moderate opponents in September 1987

(Banac 1990, 156), the new 1989 amendments to the Constitution of Serbia reduced Kosovo's (and Vojvodina's) autonomy by giving Belgrade jurisdiction over the courts and police in these provinces. (Reineck 1993, 103) This—along with skyrocketing inflation and unemployment—led to the recrudescence of ethnic hostility between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo. (Reineck 1993, 103)

3.1.3 Socio-economic status of BiH and Kosovo within the Yugoslav Federation

BiH and Kosovo had in common socio-economic underdevelopment relative to the rest of Yugoslavia—although they did participate to some extent in the considerable improvement in living standard that took place throughout the country from the end of WWII until the break up of Yugoslavia. Schooling, health and other public services attained an enviable level, and investments in infrastructure were also substantial. Despite vicissitudes in observance of the policy, the measure of self-management allowed in Yugoslavia provided workers with some mechanisms for decision-making in the factories. And thanks to the policy of non-alignment, Yugoslavia gained a respectable international position that resulted in well-paid international work for its companies and significant financial development loans. Unlike many in East and Central European socialist countries, Yugoslav citizens enjoyed freedom of movement and could travel both to Western and Eastern countries.

On the other hand, a huge regional inequality continuously deepened. The differences in literacy and unemployment were stunning. According to the 1981 census, less than 1% of those over 15 years old in Slovenia were illiterate while in Kosovo the illiteracy rate was 21% and around 15% in BiH. (Botev 1996, 463) In 1990, unemployment in Slovenia stood at 4.8% while in BiH it reached 20.6% and in Kosovo 38.4%. (Woodward 1995, 384) To reduce those inequalities, the federal government's national development program tried to provide subsidies for the less developed regions, largely financed by the more developed republics, primarily Slovenia and Croatia. (Kraft 1992, 12) Unfortunately, the program was not successful, and only exacerbated animosities among the republics. (Kraft 1992, 12)

According to Anđelić, economic unity in BiH was preserved thanks to the "personality and role of Tito" and the leadership in Sarajevo that applied a policy that "followed the example of the other republics and made the economy more self-sufficient but, at the same time, played on the political unity of the federation, which Tito especially liked as an example." (Anđelić 2005, 27) The leadership imposed firm control over society but "their Titoism also gained

them internal credibility, as did economic development and the improvement of the standard of living." (Anđelić 2005, 27)

The policies of nationalization, industrialization and urbanization of the agrarian society that was BiH in the wake of WWII soon ameliorated the poverty rate. "Instead of poverty and a lack of perspectives in the villages, new generations were presented with work in the town. This enabled the fast industrialization of the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina, or at least its major urban centers." (Anđelić 2005, 28) However, from the end of 1960 urbanization and industrialization were no longer enough to fuel economic development. BiH's industry at that time was based on mining, metallurgy and other basic manufacturing, and BiH became an important resource for the SFRY economy. Still, BiH remained underdeveloped: more sophisticated industries were located elsewhere.

Nevertheless, in the 1970s, the new political elite started using the political importance of BiH to further the policy of brotherhood and unity, and using BiH's well-established inter-ethnic relations to foster a policy of economic equality with the rest of Yugoslavia. Because the elite were too young to base their legitimacy on participation in the National Liberation Struggle, they had to build credibility on economic success (Anđelić 2005, 30), which was created by establishing large companies that "functioned as monopolies in the semi-planned economy" and were run by general managers who were members of the Central Committee of LCY and were obliged to obey every decision made by the Party. (Anđelić 2005, 30) These conglomerates were ordered to establish a factory in every community in BiH, driving down local unemployment. (Anđelić 2005, 30) So, during the 1970s, the BiH's economy bloomed and its people enjoyed a better quality of life.

Kosovo's economy was different. It spurred disunity rather than unity. Kosovo was the poorest and least developed region in Yugoslavia. Like BiH, Kosovo was predominantly agrarian after the WWII. However, unlike BiH, the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society in Kosovo represented another element of economic predicament because it "entailed sweeping administrative changes and lent more impetus to existing economic antagonisms." (Artisien and Howells 1981, 422) As the result, "the pre-war static social structure based on strong loyalties to the extended family and on co-operative self-sufficiency [became] eroded by the emergence of the mobile worker-peasant with dual allegiances to town and country." (Artisien and Howells 1981, 422) Kosovo's labor market was divided into a new, fairly productive urban and modern industrial sector and the traditional private agricultural sector, the disparity in their income creating another source of tension. Furthermore, after the 1970s,

the number of university graduates in Kosovo outstripped the available—and suitable—jobs. The majority of the jobs available were in administrative service, a limited job market, and the only other options were migration to another Yugoslav republic (a limited option for the Albanian population) and temporary employment abroad (but that was mainly for unskilled workers). (Artisien and Howells 1981, 422)

Only for some 10-15 years, from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, did the federal Yugoslav government make convincing efforts towards the economic and social development of Kosovo. This period saw an increase in employment, improvement in the literacy rate and living standards. (Stewart 2006, 21) In other periods, Kosovo was largely excluded from development plans mainly due to the hegemonistic policies of Belgrade. (Stewart 2006, 21)

3.1.4 Socio-Political Conditions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo after the Break-Up of Yugoslavia

For both BiH and Kosovo, the 1990s were years of great turmoil marked by war atrocities and destruction. After the break-up of socialist Yugoslavia, both were recognized as independent states albeit under strong international patronage. However, their processes in attaining independence were different.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The loss of credibility of the communist political elites in BiH that was marked by numerous corruption scandals and the increasing economic crisis resulted in the formation and strengthening of opposition political parties mostly organized along ethno-religious lines. These parties won the elections in November 1990 and formed a power-sharing coalition government that, from the onset, was roiled by continuous disagreements based on ethno-nationalist rhetoric.

Deterioration of relations among the three major ethno-nationalist parties in BiH paralleled the dissolution of the Yugoslav Federation. The winning parties started to confront each other violently over "the political fate of the republic," which in the end resulted in "the collapse of the consociation mechanisms that had been meant to ensure the institutional cohesiveness of Bosnia." (Bougarel 2008, 4) Nevertheless, on March 1, 1992, a referendum on independence was held, although it was boycotted in many municipalities where the Bosnian Serb ethno-nationalist party (SDS) held power. Already in March 1992, BiH received international recognition as an independent state.

The war in BiH—which effectively started in April 1992 with the shelling and the siege of Sarajevo and lasted until the end of 1995—was marked by sheer

brutality, ethnic cleansing, indiscriminate shelling of the civilian population, mass rapes and displacement of at least half the pre-war population of BiH. It was recognized as the most brutal and deadliest war in Europe since WWII. Indeed, the fact that the atrocities were occurring in Europe was one of the reasons it attracted large international attention.

Actually, from its beginning, the war in BiH was internationalized in the sense that the suffering of the people of BiH was broadcast live and globally and because numerous international organizations joined in the resolution of the conflict. As a result of that international involvement, the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) was concluded in December 1995. It set terms for peace and established the new Constitution of BiH. While the DPA brought peace, it also confirmed the ethnicization of BiH society and its ethno-politics. While the previous communist regime used the ethnic diversity of BiH to promote unity, the current ethno-nationalist elites continuously work to promote disunity. Although the armed conflict stopped in 1995, the political and rhetoric conflict has continued between the ethno-nationalist elites in power from the three major groups, now legally termed "constituent peoples," i.e., Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs.

At the moment, we can say that BiH is an example of an extremely weak state dominated by particularistic ethno-policies unable to reach important decisions for the common good. BiH society is currently divided along ethnic and class lines. It is dependant both on international funds and decisions made by international bodies, effectively de-legitimizing elected BiH politicians, meaning that they are not held accountable for their deeds. The conglomerates, which were key to the economic success of the previous regime, have been totally ruined, either destroyed in the war or later looted by the warlords-politicians-tycoons prior to and during privatization. Production in BiH dropped to one-third of its pre-war figures. (Jansen 2006, 188) Although the government's neoliberal policies require cuts in public spending, these cuts have not included reduction of unnecessary public administration. But they have reduced welfare services, resulting in significant deterioration of public health as well as other social support systems in BiH. Given that the unemployment rate has been extremely high since the end of the war—with around half the labor force unemployed—and since there has not been any sign of economic recovery any time soon—it is not surprising that either nostalgia for the previous regime (in which people at least could count on social benefits) or desire to leave the country prevails in BiH. Currently, the only safe or profitable jobs are located in the administration, international organizations, public companies (such as telecommunications or utilities), banks and donor-funded NGOs driven by the international community.

Kosovo

The economic crisis that hit Yugoslavia towards the end of 1970s and the rise of ethnic nationalism in Serbia soon compromised the stability in Kosovo that had resulted from the federal government's attempt to redress the historically perpetuated exclusion of this province. Funds for Kosovo development had never greatly ameliorated economic performance, which had started declining again towards the late 1970s. According to Stewart, "federal funds for Kosovo increasingly funded only the lifestyles of the Serbian elite." (2006, 22) Political deterioration of Kosovo and its increased marginalization by Belgrade coincided with Tito's death in 1980. (Montanaro 2009, 3) The 1981, protests by the Kosovar Albanians in Pristina for better living standards and increased job opportunities, were characterized as "counter-revolutionary" by the Serbian government.

The late 1980s were marked by Milošević's rise to power, for which he used Kosovo as the "launchpad". (Bideleux and Jeffries 2007, 241) In April 1987, in Kosovo Polje, Milošević manipulated Kosovar Serb's mounting anger, caused by "their perceived harassment and mistreatment at the hands of the province's Kosovar majority." (Bideleux and Jeffries 2007, 241) Until the beginning of the wars in Croatia and BiH, Milošević used Kosovo—especially concentrating on the Kosovo Myth[2] and its celebration of defeat and victimization, but with a Serbian spiritual victory—to mobilize the Serb population and prepare them for war. To confirm that he was defending the Serb national idea in Kosovo, Milošević stripped Kosovo of its autonomy.

With the constitutional amendments to the Serbian Constitution in 1989, Milošević "forcibly deprived Kosovar Albanians of self-government and turned Kosova into a Serbian semi-colony." (Krasniqi 2007, 1) As Corrin noted, "the removal of Kosova's autonomy in 1989 added to ethnic violence against Kosovars, with Kosovar Albanians largely excluded from participation in government, civic institutions and public enterprises." (2001, 80) The systematic elimination of Albanians from their jobs (including the dismissals of Albanian professionals, such as doctors and nurses, engineers, actors. etc.) caused chaos in civil life and thrust many families into poverty. (Reineck 1993, 102)

Still, 1989 is also significant for Kosovo Albanians as the year in which the Democratic League (LDK) was formed, headed by Ibrahim Rugova. (Reineck 1993, 102) Rugova and his LDK throughout the 1990s became identified with the non-violent struggle against Serbian rule in Kosovo. (Krasniqi 2007, 9) Their "parallel government" advocated peaceful resistance to the Belgrade regime, and was sustained by a widespread informal economy and significant diaspora remittances. (Ballentine and Nitzschke 2003, 9)

In the mid 1990s, though, demands for independence became more militant as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was organized and gained momentum because of, among other things, "the signing of the Dayton Accord in 1995, which rewarded those who forcibly had redrawn the ethnic and political map of neighboring Bosnia-Herzegovina, encouraged Kosovo Albanian militancy and increased popular support for the KLA." (Ballentine and Nitzschke 2003, 9) At the same time, Serbian state terror increased to include "massive shelling of Kosovar Albanian villages with heavy artillery and the destruction and theft of property." (Corrin 2001, 80) In 1997, the KLA launched a guerilla campaign, the Yugoslav Army and Serb paramilitary forces retaliated with violent mass expulsions. (Sletzinger and Gelazis 2005, 37)

NATO forces intervened in March 1999, launching a bombing campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in order to stop the Kosovo expulsions. The war ended after Milošević "agreed to an international military presence in Kosovo, led by NATO, and a political framework headed by the UN." (Sletzinger and Gelazis 2005, 37) Following NATO's military campaign, Kosovo was placed under the protectorate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

In 2005, after more than six years of UNMIK administration, the UN finally decided to resolve the status of Kosovo. To work toward that, the UN Security Council appointed Martti Ahtisaari special envoy. However, the status negotiations that lasted from 2005 until 2007 did not produce a solution acceptable to both sides. Following the collapse of the negotiations, in the early 2008 the Kosovo government "took the initiative to adopt successively the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, falling back on help of the EU and international allies." (Bauerova 2008, 4)

Given all this, the socio-economic situation of Kosovo is complex. It still depends on external sources of income such as international community donors, with individuals relying on remittances from family members working abroad. (Sklias and Roukanas 2007, 272) Even so, Kosovo's GDP has been marginally increasing and the Human Development Index (HDI) improved between 2007 and 2010. (UNDP 2010, 29) And the period from 2007 to 2010 saw "a significant increase in the number of high schools and university education facilities, public and private, leading to a significant increase of enrolment rates in secondary and tertiary education, adult literacy rate and mean years of schooling." (UNDP 2010, 30) Yet Kosovo's HDI remains the lowest in the region, with over 45% of Kosovars living below the poverty line. (UNDP 2010, 29) Similarly, the health indicators are amongst the worst in the region. (UNDP 2010, 29) As in the case of BiH, education, development and democracy are based on the Western terms. (Krasniqi 2007, 2)

3.2 Women's Liberation

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This section of the chapter gives an insight into the most important issues relevant to the position of women in the four areas of education, labor and employment, family life, and activism and feminism during the socialist and post-socialist periods in BiH and Kosovo.

3.2.1 Women's Liberation under Socialism

3.2.1.1 Education

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The end of WWII saw women gaining legal, political and economic rights as part of the communist ideology of equality. The new government made education a priority aimed at eradicating widespread illiteracy. In 1946-1947, alone, about 400.000 women in BiH learned to read and write (Oroz 2003, 89), mostly through the work of the Anti-Fascist Front of Women (AFW), and as the first step in the effort to train teachers.

Equal access to education for women was a necessary part of expanding the labor force to rebuild and industrialize the country. As part of this new approach to education to change BiH "from a backward agrarian country into an industrialized developed one" (Dizdar and Bakaršić 1996, 25), institutions of higher learning were established, opening their doors to both men and women, giving women an opportunity to be trained for "male professions" such as engineering, medicine and architecture. Education was free both at the primary and secondary level and in state-funded colleges. Primary education was mandatory and schools were opened even in the most isolated villages. Yet, despite the fact that by the late 1960s women were receiving almost one-fourth of the master's degrees and 17% of the doctorates (Ramet 1999 quoted in Hunt 2004, 4), 17% of the women remained illiterate, mainly due to the huge gap between rural and urban women. (Denich 1977 quoted in Hunt 2004, 4)

Although the 1974 Constitution stipulated gender equality, and women's contributions to socialist progress and development were publicly praised, patriarchal norms still prevailed on many levels. (Helms 2003, 51) Specifically, the communists failed to use the educational system "to reshape people's thinking about gender differences." (Ramet 1999, 96) Although the educational system did not actively promote feminist thinking and organizing, the 1980s

feminist movement in Yugoslavia was started by educated women, mostly social science academics and journalists, as "academic feminism." (Helms 2003, 58)

Kosovo

Most dynamic positive sociological changes in Kosovo came during the 1960s and 1970s, and precise data on education in this period exists. The lack of similar data in latter censuses (1991 and 2001) makes it impossible to follow the development of education in Kosovo during the 1980s and 1990s. To obtain a more comprehensive insight, level of education should be examined by gender, area (urban or rural), ethnicity, and gender within the two latter categories.

Over the twenty years of comprehensive social development (1961-1981), the level of education tripled. The percent of the population who completed high school increased 4.4 times (from 3.9% to 17.3%), and those with two-year postsecondary education or a university degree increased 5.5 times (from 0.6% to 3.3%). Unsurprisingly, the highest level of education was attained by the male urban population, the lowest by the female rural population. Ethnically—with gender breakdown also available—the Montenegrin, Serbian and Turkish populations of Kosovo were better educated than the Albanian, Muslim, and Croatian people, with Roma population the least educated.[3]

Although economic development and the increasing numbers of urban and young people had an impact on the level of education, girls/women were less educated than boys/men, and the multiply marginalized girls/women in completely closed, traditional communities and in especially poor communities often remained completely uneducated. What is characteristic of all severely traditional communities is the fact that a boy will always have all advantages over a girl, and the consequences of this are visible today.[4]

3.2.1.2 Labor policy

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Probably the most striking feature of women's emancipation in the socialist period was their massive share of paid jobs. It was an economic imperative for post-war Yugoslavia to engage as many men and women as possible in productive work. Women were seen as part of the working class and were expected to do the same job as men, to get the same training and wages, and to fully take part in public and political activism. There were no formal or legal obstacles to women's success. As Jalušić put it, "The belief that any individual social and political success should only be the result of one's own individual merits and personal best was very effective for the forming of women's survival and promotional strategies." (2002, 106) Woman as a worker and "self-manager" was a popular

phrase defining "the woman's political role primarily at the workplace as part of the economic and political democracy and then as an activist in the social-political work in the community." (Bakšić-Muftić 2002, 8)

After becoming qualified, women could hope to secure a good job and pursue a career. Ramet noted that parallel to the steady increase of women enrolling in universities was the rate of growth in the work force that averaged 6% annually for women compared with 3.8% annually for men. (Ramet 1996, 96) Although women's employment was ideologically and politically encouraged in the former Yugoslavia, both vertical and horizontal gender segregation in the labor market persisted. The "glass ceiling" was very much present: the highly privileged positions of political and managerial authority remained reserved for men. Despite the new possibilities to pursue a career of their choice, women were still largely concentrated in jobs that were either traditionally female or lower-paid. In 1980, women in BiH were largely employed in healthcare and social services, catering and tourism and education (Nedović 2005, 117) and in 1970, they accounted for fewer than 1% of managers. (Cockburn 1998, 158).

Another factor that contributed hugely to the increase of female employment was the fact that the former Yugoslavia was effectively a welfare state "providing ample childcare and parental leave arrangements." (van der Lippe and van Dijk 2002, 230) Public daycare institutions were provided for children; but house chores were still largely the duty of women, who thus worked the famous "double shift" since the household division of labor generally followed traditional gender roles. This single fact showed the influence of the strong patriarchal tradition and culture on women's role and position, which the socialist regime, despite its promises, left unchallenged.

Kosovo

Legal and traditional barriers have prevented most women in Kosovo from developing economically and socially through work in industry, culture, politics, and all other areas of society. Societal norms have limited the women to the household, where they bear most of the responsibility for raising children and making a home. Women have had to depend on husbands and other male members of their extended families in all ways—which used to be the usual family arrangement, particularly in rural areas (Predojević 2002, 130) Even the rare employed women in urban areas had to respect their traditional role and the rules of the private sphere of life. By the end of the 1970s, unemployment in Kosovo was the highest in Yugoslavia. "National tensions are rising. Many Serbs find it difficult to bear that Albanians, as the majority population, have an advantage in employment; on the other hand, and despite this fact, there

are more and more Albanians, now also with postsecondary and university degrees, waiting for employment at employment bureaus, having no job or perspective." (Vušković and Trifunović 2007, 317) In the overall social dissatisfaction in Kosovo, women were multiply victimized—victims of the non-functional economic and social system, having no jobs even though they had gotten an education, having no personal professional satisfaction, limited to the private sphere—and, therefore, all emancipatory practices brought about by the strengthening of the few working women were destroyed by the rush of re-traditionalization.

3.2.1.3 Family policies

Bosnia and Herzegovina

In the late 1960s and 1970s (particularly through the 1974 Constitution) the Yugoslav state introduced a series of interventions providing for healthcare, maternity protection, and childcare. Among these were liberal policies regarding divorce, family planning and abortion. This marked changes in the social position of women and improvement of their private and family life. In addition, their newly gained financial independence through employment resulted in an increased decision-making role in the family. It could be argued that women's work outside the home was culturally acceptable as long as it did not disrupt the traditional division of labor in the home. Or, as Blagojević put it, "The communist-style modernization was mostly reduced to modernization in the public sphere, while the private sphere depended heavily on the exploitation of women's resources through unpaid domestic labor, which was supported by patriarchal values." (2006, 64)

Although significantly reduced by urbanization and modernization by the early 1970, the phenomenon of the extended family—in addition to a person's spouse and children, his or her parents, perhaps grandparents, and sometimes adult siblings and their families, all living under one roof—was still very much present in rural areas throughout the socialist era, with its characteristic family loyalty and a general feeling of responsibility toward kin. Such families operated on the basis of strict gender division and patriarchy. Despite this, older female members often exercised supreme authority over family matters, which seems contradictory, but came about thanks to their role of mothers/grandmothers of sons. (Simić 1999, 14)

The end of the 1980s was a time of economic crisis with a growing army of the unemployed and semi-employed (Dević 1997, 52), giving rise to more voices demanding that women return to the home and engage in handicraft and homemaking. (Licht and Drakulić 2002, 118) With the rise of nationalism, women again became identified as biologically responsible for the continuation

of the respective nation/ethnic group, resulting in some initiatives to reduce the rights of family planning and abortion that they had enjoyed for almost three decades. Among other things, these demands, translated into concrete regressive legislative initiatives, made many women aware that they needed to stand up for their rights.

Kosovo

Because a number of the ethnic groups in Kosovo during the period of socialism generally had very low levels of education, one can see the position of women in families in light of patriarchal customs that had not been affected even by the educational gains in that period or by its enlightened gender legislation. Kosovo's specific social development, which differed from that of other Yugoslav nations, also had an impact on family life. The common characteristic of women within the family in this area was their submersion in a strict patriarchal social order, with existing differences between rural and urban settings. Extended families with many members, joint production and consumption, and joint housing were even more common than in BiH. (Predojević 2002, 144) Everything that happened within the family was personal for each family member, and in the prevailing strict hierarchy, women—particularly younger ones—ranked at the very bottom, having not even the symbolic power noted, above, in BiH. Since no special laws protected women from violence, state and local institutions did not get involved in the "personal matters" of the family or in any way gainsay the folk customs of Kosovo. There is not much information available for a precise overview of the family life of women in the socialist period. However, research about this period conducted later will show that physical, economic, sexual, verbal, and other types of violence experienced by women were a daily occurrence, but because domestic violence was not part of the public discourse, the general perception was that it did not exist.

3.2.1.4 Activism

Bosnia and Herzegovina

After WWII, the AFW emerged as a truly significant political organization in BiH, dealing with women's issues, including political participation of women and campaigning for outlawing the veil practice. Women set up schools, health counseling centers and similar useful facilities, significantly improving literacy among Yugoslav women. This was an almost unique example of a women-only organization that made a significant contribution to women's emancipation. Despite the fact that this organization remained firmly within the ideological ambit of the Communist Party, and did not try to push the "Women's Question" as a separate political question, it was abolished in 1953 on grounds that the

goal of gender equality could be better promoted by party agencies that were not gender-specific. (Ramet 1999, 93)

Throughout the socialist period, women were expected to take part in social-political activism; Dević terms this the "modernist stage" of socialist Yugoslavia (1997, 45), when women's activists went along with the dominant socialist ideology on the priority of public issues over private, traditional ones, did not question male domination or seek to improve women's position either in the private or public domain. Feminism was very much proscribed as "bourgeois" and therefore "reactionary," imported from the imperialist West. However, in the late 1970s, with the rise of political pluralism and resurgent nationalism throughout Yugoslavia, various initiatives in the form of women's lobbies, women's parliaments and independent women's associations started to emerge, in what Dević termed the "reactive stage." (1997, 45) This new stage in the development of women's movement went beyond the academic workshops of "Woman and Society."[5] (Licht and Drakulić 2002, 120) Women from Sarajevo participated in feminist conferences held in Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana, and published academic writings, but a feminist movement did not develop in Sarajevo as it did in those cities. (Helms 2003, 57) Later, with the approaching 1990s war and calls for ethnic homogenization, a number of women's grassroots initiatives started, some of them with a clear feminist, anti-nationalist, anti-war and anti-military platform, identified as the stage of "new activism," the third and the last stage of socialist women's activism in Yugoslavia. (Dević 1997, 46) A number of these mostly feminist initiatives remained active, stable and organized throughout the war years. (Licht and Drakulić 2002, 122)

Kosovo

After WWII, Kosovo remained a mainly agrarian society with a majority of the population living in rural areas. (SOK 2003) The Communist Party gave the AFW the mission of organizing all women to form a party. The major campaign dealing with "backward women" was organized in 1947 and resulted in 25 to 30 thousand Kosovar women removing the ferexhe (veil). Because it was felt that this was a precondition for participating in modern social and political life, a law was passed on March 25, 1951 outlawing the veil. A second campaign addressed the high illiteracy rate (more than 75% of Kosovar Albanians over age ten were illiterate). The campaign included literacy classes during 1945-1946 resulting in 90 thousand learning to read and write. Recruitment of women for the Partisans during WWII and Tito's inclusion of gender equality policies in the post-war Party platform opened the door for changes to traditional gender roles. The AFW failed to involve Kosovar Muslim women, whom the Party called the "most backward women." The participation of Kosovar Albanian women in public groups and decision-making positions remained very small,

and any progress lasted for too short a time. But, generally in Kosovo, in 1968 more women than ever before broke social norms and insisted on joining their fathers, brothers and friends in demonstrating for human rights and political freedom. This activity was new for Kosovo women since it had always been men who demonstrated while women stayed home. (Kosova Gender Studies Centre 2008)

The single most important event during this period was the opening of the University of Pristina (1970). Many women activists consider the opening of the University as the main factor in women's future organizing and their participation in public institutions. Another factor was participation in organizations such as the Union of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia through which relationships were built among different ethnicities. Some women found the years from 1968 to 1989 among the most difficult for their public activism because they had to convince their fathers, brothers and friends that they were capable of contributing to the national interest. (Kosova Gender Studies Centre 2008)

An indicator of progress in terms of participation of women in activism (without embarking on an analysis of the type of ideological activism) is the fact that in 1981 almost half of the participants in the student demonstrations were women. The demonstrations, caused by a huge social crisis in 1981, "started as an expression of students' protests against inadequate conditions in the dormitories, only to be later marked by the famous slogan Kosovo–Republika." (Vušković and Trifunović 2007, 317)

3.2.2 Women's Liberation in Post-socialism

3.2.2.1 Education

Bosnia and Herzegovina

As in other areas, the 1992-95 war and the political and socio-economic transformations that followed affected the education of women in BiH. The educational patterns for women and men prevalent in the socialist period continued—that is, female enrollment in primary and secondary education has remained high, and although the dropout rates for boys and girls do not significantly differ today, the reasons for dropping out prove to be gender-based. (CEDAW Report 2010, 42) Even if more women than men graduate from institutions of higher education, their number significantly drops when it comes to employment. Despite having formal equal access to all levels of education, many women face numerous informal obstacles to their professional development. (Torren 1993, 446)

Clearly, there are persistent differences among urban, suburban and rural settings, demonstrating the prevalence of traditional values in the latter two, with stronger influences of patriarchal culture. These influences are reflected in the length of women's education, their choice of profession, opportunities for their professional development and their trust in their own abilities. (Bakšić-Muftić et al. 2002, 47)

Some of the reasons can be found by analyzing newly written school texts, revealing them to be instruments of the "hidden curriculum" of the school, sending girls and boys messages of being unequal. (Paseka 2004, 54) A content analysis of school texts used in BiH during the 2003-2004 school year (Paseka 2004, 84) found that women and girls appeared less frequently than men and boys in both texts and pictures (men 217 times and women 27 times in two textbooks) and both women and men were generally depicted in gender-stereotyped ways (only ten women were mentioned as having some kind of profession as compared with 83 men in 32 different professions). Gender bias might not be explicitly taught, but the clear "message" of textbooks like that reduces the girls' ideas of who they are and what they can become—and similarly indoctrinates the boys—posing a serious obstacle to gender equality in education.

Reform of the universities in BiH, known as "the Bologna Process," with its aim to introduce European educational standards and ensure mobility, attractiveness and employability of graduates did not include documents obliging EU universities to introduce gender perspective into their educational programs. This has partly been remedied by the establishment of an institution for interdisciplinary gender studies at the postgraduate level, with the goal of institutionalizing and increasing the production of (female) knowledge, ensuring an interdisciplinary gender perspective, and training new generations of local gender experts able to tackle a range of gender equality issues, giving hope that education can be different, accessible and more inclusive, more democratic, and a real instrument for the empowerment of women.

Kosovo

In Kosovo, boys are more likely to attend school or university than girls. The gender gap widens as education advances. At age 5–14, boys enjoy an advantage over girls, but the difference is not wide. But at age 15–19, almost 17% more boys than girls are in school, and in the 25–29 age group the male advantage is even wider. Every twelfth male in Kosovo has had a college or university education, but only every sixteenth female has. According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) of 2009, around 41% of men and 65% of women have had less than secondary schooling.

Differences in the dropout rates between boys and girls, and the rates among students from ethnic minorities and the disabled, all are become larger.[6] Again, in such a non-functional education system, girls suffer doubly, with less access and higher dropout. Statistical data confirm their generally low access. Furthermore, the illiteracy rate is much higher among women (10%) than men (2%), mostly in rural areas.[7] Illiteracy is also affected by age, residence and gender. It has almost disappeared among young boys. At older ages, the illiteracy of women is clearly an important and cultural issue. In the age group 55–64, 24% of women are illiterate, compared with 4% of men.

Progress is expected, though, because the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, which went into effect on June 15, 2008, underlines gender equality in all areas of social life as the "fundamental value for the democratic development of society."[8] The Constitution stipulates that international policies are directly applicable in Kosovo to guarantee human rights, one of the statements of policy being the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which particularly tackles equal education of girls and women.

3.2.2.2 Labor policies

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Not only has BiH experienced in only a few years a journey from peace to war and back to peace (Cockburn 2001, 26), those years also brought a double transformation, from socialism to democracy, from a state-led economy to a neo-liberal free market. All these transitions are ongoing, with different effects on women and men. The degree of disadvantage to which women descended in the war and post-war was immense. A survey conducted in 1998 showed that at least 62% of women were unemployed in Republika Srpska (part of BiH) and 71% in the Federation part (Cockburn 2000, 25) Women were first to lose jobs during privatization or put on part-time or on "waiting lists." Without the old laws that would have protected them and secured them unemployment or other social benefits, they found themselves very often virtually unemployable and desperate.

Female-headed households also emerged after the war, destined to live in poverty since land and other assets were owned and controlled by men, and single unemployed women could not obtain loans—for which they needed collateral—to better their position. Many sought jobs in the undeclared private economy, mostly in the service sector, working long hours for low wages, unprotected by law and deprived of the rights they had once enjoyed. (Cockburn 2000, 26)

Women's economic status has slightly improved thanks to the slow recovery of the country's economy, new labor and social policies meant to improve workers' status and to provide for war veterans, civilian victims of the war and laid-off workers, and thanks to general employment strategies; but in 2008, only 37,1% of the employed were women. Gender equality and non-discrimination requirements brought women job opportunities in theory and legally, but not in reality. (Bakšić-Muftić 2002, 94) Affirmative measures aiming at improving women's employability and making visible their unpaid work are still lacking, as are thorough gender audits of the policies and regulations adopted in this field.

Kosovo

Implementation of legally prescribed equal employment opportunities for women and men simply do not exist in Kosovo. Women are still absent from the main sectors and they barely occupy 30% of all positions. Despite the contribution of women in agricultural production, they rarely own anything of commercial value, further impacting the possibility of obtaining loans from banks. In Kosovo, there are about 40,000 active enterprises (SOK 2009) and only 6%-10% are run by women, generally in financial services, education, health, social services, trade and sales,[9] as well as micro-businesses with fewer than five employees.

Only 17% of agricultural businesses are managed by women. Low ownership of property (only 8% of women legally own property, and according to the Household Budget Survey of years 2008 and 2009 (SOK 2001a) very few houses are the property of a woman or are jointly held by men and women) and lack of policies favoring women's entrepreneurship has lead to low number of women managing small, medium and big businesses. The property inheritance is ensured by the Law on Inheritance no. 2004/26 based on which all physical persons have equal rights in inheritance regardless their age, without discrimination.

Article 12.1 of the Law on Gender Equality includes an obligation to ensure equal opportunities and rights for women and men in the public and private sectors as well as in legislative and executive bodies that deal with employment. In Kosovo, women earn less than men, largely because women are rarely employed in decision-making positions. Unemployment of women between 15 and 64 years old is 60% whereas for men it is 33%. (Prime Minister's Office 2008)

Although measures have been taken toward bringing more women to the table, there is still a huge discrepancy. Their representation is nowhere near proportional. Men in leading positions outnumber women 10 to 1; the

percentage of women employed in central and local government is 35.64 %, and out of 893 management posts only 80 are occupied by women.[10]

A recent study conducted by Kosovar Gender Studies (2011) found that around 41% of the 1,050 women surveyed think that, although the right of inheritance may be regulated by law, in reality it is regulated in Kosovo by traditions and custom. Most of women did not know about the success rate of the judiciary in reviewing cases involving women's inheritance of property. NGO Norma has organized 250 workshops, mainly for girls and women in rural areas, to raise awareness about their rights under the law in Kosovo. (UNFPA 2007) This is important since having the house title in their name is often suggested as a solution to gender discrimination, protecting women against dispossession in case of abandonment, separation or divorce; and increasing women's bargaining power in household decision making.

3.2.2.3 Family policy

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The most influential concept in the process of building post-communist states was that of the patriarchal nation-state ideology, which brought re-traditionalization of women's identities and social roles. (Papić 2002, 128) After the war, religious authorities were re-introduced into the power structure, and, along with the reigning ethnic-nationalist and ethnic-cultural forces, defined (or re-defined) "family" in BiH as the union of man and woman for the purpose of having children and manifesting its distinct tradition, culture, customs and values, with a sharp gender division of labor and roles. Any other family model was disapproved.

Nonetheless, within the family, women in BiH enjoy moderate protection under the law, sharing parental authority with men over the children born in or out of wedlock, having equal rights in adoption custody cases. (OECD 2010, 66) This is partly due to the success in preserving the liberal provisions inherited from the socialist period, but also a result of new efforts of both local and international women's rights organization and international requirements for bringing gender relations into the mainstream of international standards. After enactment of the BiH Gender Equality Law in 2003 and the establishment of a variety of institutional gender mechanisms, followed by many important legislative and policy initiatives (with gender action plans), particularly those tackling widespread domestic and other gender-based violence, with the ultimate goal of changing the culture that silently approves of such male domination and control over women. Still, those changes are most difficult to accomplish, and both private and public domains remain far from the ideal of equality.

Kosovo

In addition to economic discrimination, women in Kosovo are subject to family violence. (Kosovar Center for Gender Studies 2007) Traditional Kosovo perceptions about women in a society dominated by men have contributed to the level of domestic violence being high while the number of reported cases is low. (Kosovo Women's Network 2009)

In 2008, the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) surveyed 1,256 women and men about domestic violence and found that women in Kosovo still think it is shameful—to themselves!—to be beaten by their husbands, which likely indicates that domestic violence is under-reported, an inference further supported by other of the survey's findings that suggest an attitude almost of resignation about such violence. Nearly 40% of the survey's respondents agreed that "Violence is a normal part of any relationship, and society in general accepts that violence happens sometimes." Almost 20% agreed that "Sometimes it is OK for a husband to hit his wife," and more than one-third believed, "It is natural that physical violence happens sometimes when a couple argues." In fact, about 43% of all respondents had experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives—46% women and 40% men (presumably inflicted by other men in the household since about 91% of the perpetrators were men, mostly husbands, and only 9% women, though other family members perpetrated violence as well). Those most likely to have experienced domestic violence are women, especially those living in rural areas, the poor, unemployed, those receiving social assistance and those with less than a secondary school education. The victims said that they are more likely to seek help from family members or friends than from institutions. More than 10% flatly stated that a regulation against domestic violence does not exist in Kosovo and 35% did not know whether or not such regulation existed.

In 2009, the KWN studied the response of justice institutions to domestic violence. A number of issues compromised protection against it: delays in issuing protection orders; limited types of protection measures; insufficient follow up of implementation of protection orders; and low penalties when protection orders are violated—abusers very rarely being imprisoned when they ignore protection orders and repeat their acts. Prosecution of domestic violence is entirely inadequate. Courts often failed to pursue cases even when the violence resulted in wounds; and when they did convict, they handed down very light sentences. And if the parties seemed to reconcile, there was no penalty even for the worst violence. Another problem was cases left simply uncompleted.

As for the individuals within institutions that should be supporting victims of domestic violence, most proved to lack knowledge of the laws against

it, which obviously has an impact on the quality of legal representation offered to victims. The institutions also were under-funded and short of professional personnel. An NGO shelter offered important support to victims, but because they lacked sources of funding, could not help with the victims' re-integration, getting on with their lives. The KWN 2009 study indicated that due to tradition, social punishment, financial dependence on the perpetrator of violence and fear of losing childcare, victims were often unwilling to seek justice: one-third of them said that they would not turn to the legal system again. Victims of domestic violence can refer to the Municipal Centers for Social Welfare which will direct them to a shelter.

3.2.2.4 Activism

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The early activism in BiH after the 1990s war effectively grew out of the peace movement started by feminist organizing there and in other former Yugoslav republics. Today, women's organizations are almost entirely identified as non-governmental or civil society organizations that can be defined as "organizations led by women for women." (Simmons 2007, 172) Women's organizations in BiH— such as Medica Zenica and Women to Women Sarajevo—emerged in response to various needs arising out of the war and in relation to it such as relief, education and reconciliation (Mulalić 2011, 23), and they expanded their activities into numerous other fields because women were excluded from political decision-making and formal peace-making efforts. Such women's organizations were urged to become activist and were funded by the international community, which was reluctant to deal with the nationalist governments. These new organizations ascribed to women essentialist female characteristics, such as being nurtures, caregivers, communicators and negotiators. (Simmons 2007, 174) Some of these organizations set clear feminist or gender-specific goals and programs to introduce structural changes to the status and position of women; others were established to raise funds for various, often short-term, goals; still others demanded partnership with the government to engage in policy discussions in various traditionally "male areas" such as finance, defense, justice and elections.

Undoubtedly, these organizations have empowered and benefited numerous women through their effort to promote economic self-reliance by, for example, organizing special training and work programs, selling books, drawings, sweaters and accessories produced by refugee women. (Dević 1997, 55) Women working for these organizations have also drawn their sense of self from employment and have acquired skills useful beyond the organizations.

However, as a number of authors have argued (Simmons 2007, 175, Bagić 2002, 32), it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of these organizations since they can be perceived as too dependent on donor funding—hence lacking the ability to make long-range plans or observe set standards—or inconsistent in the way they assess their own effectiveness, or even reluctant to supply data for fear that the figures will demonstrate that they have not succeeded in reaching their announced goals. Furthermore, pressured by the project-oriented demands of foreign donors and need to bolster decreasing resources, women's feminist organizations face a risk of turning into bureaucratic hierarchical organizations whose corporate competitive culture conflicts with their feminist philosophy and origins. (Simmons 2007, 177) Becoming professionals in the civil society organizations, some women have adopted elitist attitudes and have become detached from the realities faced by other women in their country. (Lang 2000)

Despite some progress in that regard, the state institutions that constitute the male power structure still do not consider the women's organizations as serious partners to be consulted and respected in legislation and policy formulation, so the risk remains that women's efforts will stay confined within the civil society framework and that the feminization of the civil sector will operate against women's increased participation in the country's power structures.

Kosovo

Activists/feminists in Kosovo need much greater courage, belief in their values, and decisiveness to risk their security than do their counterparts anywhere in the West. Albanian Kosovar activists find themselves in a delicate situation because they must struggle with national/gender binaries (Mertus 1999, 172) and the norms of quite traditional and patriarchal society.

The first NGO led by women was established in 1990, and by 1998 there were around ten such organizations composed of and led by women. In the 1990s, the women's movements were growing, and by the end of the decade women were coordinating their efforts throughout Kosovo and outside Kosovo on a daily basis. Besides organizing demonstrations, women activists at that time were engaged also in providing shelter for internally displaced people, providing healthcare and education, supporting distribution of food supplies, lobbying foreign governments to intervene in Kosovo, and documenting human rights abuses.

In 1990, one of the first NGOs was founded in Kosovo. Igballe and Safete Rugova established an organization to educate illiterate and semi-illiterate women and men in Kosovo. Kosovo witnessed massacres, murders, rapes and destruction of entire villages in 1998 and 1999. During this period, women's

groups immediately organized to help displaced people with food, support, medical care, shelter, living necessities and education. The Albanian Women's League founded the Centre for Recovery of Mother and Child where they sheltered women and traumatized children orphaned by war. Women Artists and Veterans of Education went to Montenegro, cooperating with local women's organizations to organize shelter for Kosovar Refugees. During 1999, women activists continued to work throughout the region, and after the war they re-established their offices and continued their contribution in distribution of humanitarian aid. After the war, women became organized through establishment of networks of organizations that lobbied for different important issues. Because of the dire circumstances, the main activity of women activists until the war ended was fighting for national causes rather than strictly women-related issues, but their many activities and good works both during and after the war, including working for peace, resulted in a dramatic "mushrooming" of women's NGOs.

The creation of the Coalition of Women for Peace was a significant moment for women's activism in Kosovo. This peace coalition gathers women activists from Serbia and Kosovo, actively cooperates with organizations in the region and launches various initiatives for more participation of women in political decision-making. Another important NGO is the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in Southeast Europe. Established in 2006, it gathers together women politicians and activists from Albania, BiH, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia—all of whom are committed to the goals of strengthening human security, promoting women's rights and participation in decision-making process, and breaking the barriers of ethnocentric policies.

3.3 Islam in Socialism and Post-Socialism

Sead S. Fetahagić

To address the position of Islam in Yugoslavia during, then after, the rule of socialism, we shall follow the periodization structure proposed by Paul Mojzes (1997) of general trends and the evolving relationship between the religious communities and the Yugoslav state. Contrary to some opinions that under the Marxist-Communist rule in Yugoslavia religion was thoroughly suppressed, relations between the state and religious communities were complex, differing from one period to another. After a description of the general characteristics of that relationship in each period, the specifics of the position of Islam and of the Islamic community (IC) will be detailed, and, where appropriate, so will differences between the relevant situation in BiH and Islam in Kosovo.

3.3.1 Restriction of Religious Liberty (1945-53)

The overarching characteristic of the relations between the state and religious communities during this period was that "religious communities and clergy were severely punished for any infringements of the law…while infringements of the rights of believers and the religious communities were either ignored or lightly penalized." (Alexander 1979, 224)

After the liberation of Yugoslavia at the end of WWII in 1945 the Communist Party, led by Tito, took full power and set out to build the state on the Stalinist Soviet model of collectivization and nationalization of private agricultural land. To that end, the Yugoslav authorities adopted the Law on Agrarian Reform. (Alexander 1979) Although religious communities were not specifically targeted, they found themselves among the most affected by this policy. Pursuant to the law, about 85% of their total holdings was expropriated. (Alexander 1979) The Yugoslav Constitution of 1946 instituted a "democratic centralist" federal form of government and state-run socialist economy, and mandated separation of church (i.e. religious communities) and state. To illustrate this, civil marriage was now legal throughout all of Yugoslavia, whereas, before, it had existed only in the Vojvodina region; everywhere else legal marriages could be performed only under the auspices of the recognized religions. Indeed, after the new Constitution, civil marriages were mandatory: a couple who wanted a church wedding first had to go through a civil ceremony. (Alexander 1979)

Between 1946 and 1950 special laws abolished Islamic Shari'a courts, banned women's specifically Islamic apparel (veiling) and closed down Islamic elementary schools. (Malcolm 2002) In 1952 the IC, itself, joined in the suppression, with the connivance of the state, by shutting down all the Sufi tekkes (dervish lodges) in BiH—Sufism considered unorthodox and an embarrassment. At the same time, the heterodox and syncretistic "mystic orders" in Kosovo were persecuted and discriminated against. (Duijzings 2000) Since the tekkes in Kosovo were seen as strongholds of Albanian nationalism (by virtue of their traditional practice of gathering ethnic Albanians from different religious backgrounds), state authorities used religion to undermine the Albanian ethnic cause by allowing the established IC to "mainstream" Islam in Kosovo. (Krasniqi 2010)

The state, of course, continued suppression on its own. Many religious printing-presses and cultural-humanitarian organizations were either suppressed or nationalized by the state without compensation under the laws that required nationalization and expropriation of private enterprises. (Malcolm 2002, Alexander 1979) In this period of rapid modernization, industrialization and

secularization, the government used harsh measures to suppress any opposition or criticism, both of which they deemed threatening to the system. Religious authorities were seen as especially dangerous because they could provide an alternative ideology that might endanger the fragile, post-revolutionary socialist political and economic system.

To neutralize this threat the regime occasionally held show trials of selected religious leaders. Although this harassment mainly targeted the two major Christian churches (Roman Catholic and Serbian Orthodox), particular Islamic individuals also suffered acts of state persecution, the most well-known instance being the arrest of several hundred members of the Young Muslims association during 1948-50 (Perica 2002, Malcolm 2002), when their activities sparked modest interest among anti-Communist Bosnian Muslims at the end of WWII. The Young Muslims (Mladi muslimani) were an expression of the desire to stake out a political future for Bosnian Muslims as a distinct ethnic group; they could be roughly compared to 19th century nationalist movements like Mazzini's "Young Italy" or the Serbian Omladina, although "the group's primary interest was the regeneration of Islam" (Stokes 2009, 87), not nationalism.

3.3.2 Relaxation of Restrictions (1953-65)

The Basic Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities was enacted in 1953. Following the constitutional principle of church-state separation, it stipulated, among other things, that faith was a private matter, that new religious communities could be founded, that there was to be equality between religions, that religious publications were a right, that religious instruction was banished from public schools and left to parochial institutions, that religious institutions were free to open seminaries for clerics, and that members of the clergy might organize themselves into clerical associations. (Alexander 1979) This law was amended in 1965 to harmonize with the new 1963 Constitution, which allowed religious communities to possess real property. Although this right was limited by federal law, it represented an important constitutional guarantee.

General treatment of Islam gradually improved in the late 1950s and early 1960s for a specific reason—Tito's foreign policy of non-alignment, which included rapprochement with many Islamic Third World countries. Prominent members of the IC soon appeared in delegations of Yugoslav politicians on visits to Islamic countries. This also opened the door to a diplomatic career for many Yugoslav politicians or civil servants bearing Muslim names, even though most were non-religious or even atheist Communists. (Malcolm 2002)

3.3.3 Significant Liberalization (1965-71)

This period represents a golden age in Yugoslav relations between the church (i.e. religious communities) and the state thanks primarily to the Communist leaders' decision to promote a democratic image of Yugoslavia to both Western liberal democracies and Third World non-aligned countries. (Mojzes 1997)

On one side, the Yugoslav government gradually accepted religion as a part of the socialist system and society, substantially reducing repression against the believers. According to Mojzes (1997) this period of liberalization was characterized by the proliferation of religious publications, opening of new theological schools, and freedom of clerics to travel abroad. On the other side, major religious communities became involved in politicization of their activity.

Specifically with Islam, this politicization was furthered by the government's policy of allowing Slav Muslims (most of whom lived in BiH) to identify themselves in terms of a separate ethnic/national group as a counterweight to the aspirations of Croatian and Serbian political and cultural elites to "croatize" or "serbianize" these Muslims. Since the emerging "Muslim nationality" (narodnost) did not have comparable secular cultural institutions (like Serbian or Croatian Matica for instance), existing Islamic institutions undertook that role, so in certain political-cultural respects, "Islam started functioning as a civil religion." (Mojzes 1997, 219)

The theory that Slav Muslims represent a separate entity stemmed from the Yugoslav Communist Party platform as early as 1937 (Hadžijahić 1974), but the official position of the Party in the 1940s was that the Slav Muslim population would gradually identify either as Serb or Croat, and thus merge with them into a Yugoslav national identity. This promotion of the spirit of "Yugoslavism" was evident in the 1953 census: in BiH, alone, almost 892,000 "were allowed to register as Yugoslav, nationally undeclared." (Malcolm 2002, 198) However, a swift change of political direction occurred during the 1960s, when identification of Muslims as an ethnic/national group prevailed. This probably occurred due to a combination of two factors: a decision to drop the policy of integral "Yugoslavism" and instead strengthen the constitutional position of the republics through decentralization; and the rise of political and intellectual Communist elite among Bosnian Muslims. (Malcolm 2002) Finally, the Central Committee of the Bosnian League of Communists, at a session held in May 1968, decided that Slav Muslims (not only those living in BiH but across all of Yugoslavia) should be considered a distinct ethnic/national group (narod). (Malcolm 2002)

A fascinating orthographic distinction was made in the Serbo-Croat language to promote the new concept. After the 1945 liberation it was

customary to utilize the words "member of the Islamic religious community" when referring to a religious believer, while the word "Muslim" more often referred to a member of the ethnic/national group that routinely included many who were non-religious or even atheists. (Hadžijahić 1974) Indeed, while the Yugoslav Kingdom existed, constitutions of the IC contained the word musliman, referring to religious believers, while the IC constitutions adopted in socialist Yugoslavia in 1947, 1959 and 1969, instead of using any variation of "Muslim"—which was conspicuously absent—now referred to "members of the Islamic religious community." (Salkić 2001) So spelling now required writing the word musliman with a lowercase "m" when referring to religious believers, and writing it Musliman with an initial capital to designate a member of an ethnic/national group. Of course, both words would simply translate into English as "Muslim," thus compounding confusion in the international context.

Contrary to how it might sound to those unfamiliar with Yugoslav political developments, recognition of Muslims as a "nationality" had almost nothing to do with Islam as a religion. It was a purely secular, even to some extent a nationalist move by the Communists, inspired by desire, first, to remedy the hitherto under-representation of Muslims in the BiH Party and state structures, and second to improve the overall position of BiH as a republic, it having been in the previous period economically and socially the most under-developed of all Yugoslav republics (apart from Kosovo province). As a result, the number of declared "Muslims" in Yugoslavia increased from 842,247 "Muslims as ethnicity" (1961 Census) to 1,482,000 "Muslims as nationality" (1971 Census). (Perica 2002)

Sociological research conducted in this period by Esad Ćimić (1970)[11] showed that the Islamic religion retained influence mostly in rural, economically under-developed settlements while it was declining in the cities. Islam represented, for the population living in poor conditions, more an expression of a passive, fatalistic following of family tradition than an active spiritual relation between man and deity.

3.3.4 Selective Restrictions Re-imposed (1971-82)

In this period, although not reverting to the level of post-revolutionary repression, the regime did re-impose selective restrictions aimed at de-politicization of religion because they saw religious communities as opposing the social system mandated by constitutional provisions. (Mojzes 1997) The last Yugoslav Constitution of 1974 further decentralized and confederated the country. The Federal Law on Legal Status of Religious Communities, lacking a constitutional base, was revoked, and during the mid 1970s each republic adopted its own law regulating this matter.

Most of the Islamic high schools that existed prior to 1945 were closed down in the socialist period, leaving only two active: in Sarajevo (established in the 16th century) and Pristina (established in 1952). In addition, the Islamic Theological Faculty was established in Sarajevo in 1977. All these Islamic educational institutions were open to both men and women. In this period an internal dispute occurred between the Sarajevo Islamic establishment and the dervish orders located in Kosovo[12]. Doctrinal disputes between the Sunni-Hanefi teachings of the Slav-speaking Sarajevo-based IC and certain Shia-Bektashi tendencies among many Albanian-speaking Kosovo tekkes (Duijzings 2000) were perhaps also one of the reasons (along with the aforementioned politicization of IC) for the schism that occurred in 1977 when some of the Kosovo tekkes, belonging to twelve recognized orders (tariqat), registered as an independent "Association of Islamic Dervish Orders of Alijje." (Duijzings 2000)

3.3.5 On the Threshold of Full Freedom (1982-89)

The events following the death of Yugoslav leader Tito in 1980, such as demonstrations by students in Kosovo in 1981, constituted early serious signs of decay of Communist ideology and the state authority in Yugoslavia. This was also a period when the religious communities re-gained substantial freedom, but were accused again of manipulating religious sentiments for nationalist purposes, as was evident in the 1981 events surrounding the apparition at Međugorje. (Perica 2002) Certainly, in this period the religious communities did little to avoid conflict with the state. On the contrary, they used the increasing popularity of religion among the youth, the artists and various political dissidents to promote stronger social activism, frequently not being too selective in the means used to achieve their end.

In the early 1980s the IC had about 3.8 million nominal members (or 16% of Yugoslav population), which included not only many of those who identified themselves as Muslims in the ethnic/national sense but also a number of ethnic Albanians, Turks, Macedonians, Roma, Montenegrins, Croats, Serbs and Pomaks. (Ramet 2005) By 1986 there were more than 3000 mosques in Yugoslavia (Ramet 2005, Perica 2002); from 1945 to 1985, just in BiH, 400 new mosques were erected and 380 reconstructed. (Ramet 2005)[13]

Despite these favorable figures, public statements of Islamic leaders as well as of the Islamic press were much more passive and defensive compared with those of both major Christian churches. Following the political decentralization since the 1960s and the strengthening of the position of the republics, the religious communities had to deal with the authorities located in their respective republic rather than with the federal government. For Islam this meant having

to cope with political structures in the territories where Islamic presence was substantial—Sarajevo as the capital of the Socialist Republic of BiH and Pristina as capital of the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo, whose Communist elites were more dogmatic and rigid than those in Ljubljana, Zagreb or Belgrade. (Ramet 2005)

Islam in Kosovo, it must be said, had generally a quite different political and social influence than in BiH. Historically, in Albania and Kosovo, Islam was imposed in a more forceful manner—and much later than in BiH—with a majority of the rural population converted to Islam only superficially, retaining many of their pre-Islamic indigenous tenets. This contributed to the phenomena of syncretism, heterodoxy and crypto-Christianity or crypto-Islam in Kosovo. (Duijzings 2000) This meant that the autonomy-seeking political movements of Kosovar Albanians, such as those in 1981, had almost no religious elements (Babuna 2003) but more overtly ethno-linguistic and nationalist ones. On the other hand, Islam among the Kosovar Albanians was more diverse and less centralized due to the existence of many Sufi tekkes that were target of the state attempts to centralize Yugoslav Islam through the official IC based in Sarajevo, efforts that many Kosovar Albanian Muslims saw as troublingly Slavocentric. (Blumi 2005)

3.3.6 The Great Transformation and Post-Socialism (1989 and beyond)

The final phase, which Paul Mojzes called "the great transformation" (1997, 223-224), started around 1989 when religion broke into the public and political sphere not merely as one of the many actors in civil society but as a particularly desirable force that often felt the urge to defend ethno-nationalist politics.

The early 1989 protest by imams against the newly elected Grand Mufti Mujić, who was seen as a pawn of the Communist regime, demanded full autonomy of the Ilmija imam's association. (Perica 2002) The following year, the IC adopted a new constitution that proclaimed stricter application of Islamic law[14] and demanded independence from government interference. In 1991 the first democratically elected Grand Mufti, Selimoski, took office. By the summer of 1990 political parties that openly flirted with religious symbols were formed in BiH. The Party of Democratic Action (SDA) did not hide its pro-Islamic character although "Islam" was meant more in an ethno-cultural than in a purely religious sense, as explained by its leader Alija Izetbegović in a "Književna revija" interview in October 1990. The same year the first public broadcast of the activities of a Muslim holiday, "Eid-al-Fidr," was aired on TV, and the traditional Muslim pilgrimage to Ajvatovica was restored and publicly made. (Perica 2002)

In the fall of 1990 the first multi-party elections took place in BiH, with SDA and two other ethno-nationalist parties (SDS and HDZ) winning. However, tensions between the religious-Islamic and secular-pluralistic elements in the SDA were to remain a constant problem in defining their political identity[15].

In the period 1990-93 a coalition of several Muslim intellectuals and prominent SDA members held a series of discussions on the national identity of Muslims. Decision was finally reached during the "First Assembly of the Bosniaks," held in September 1993, now in an internationally recognized but war-torn and ethnically divided state; the term "Muslim" (Musliman) as an ethnic/national identification was replaced with "Bosniak"[16] (Bošnjak). (Redžić 2000) This assembly also discussed the possibility of military defense and of building a Bosnian Muslim national strategy following the Owen-Stoltenberg peace plan that envisaged re-constituting BiH as a confederated union of three ethnically divided republics. One of the main issues discussed was whether to accept this plan or not. According to Rusmir Mahmutćehajić (1994), the fact that some of the speakers advocated acceptance of the plan[17] signaled the strengthening of separatist ethno-nationalist politics among the Bosniak leadership.

The assembly's linguistic decision proved again to be paradigmatic, having serious consequences. A merely secular term, "Muslim," was now replaced with another secular term, "Bosniak," to denote an ethnic/national group. But since the parallel process of the "great transformation" of religion was under way, the Islamic content replaced the secular one, thus making "Bosniak" and "adherent of Islam" (musliman) equivalent terms, as Grand Mufti Cerić once stressed in a 2001 press statement. (Mujkić 2010) This situation blurred even further the already thin line between the religious and ethnic/national identity of Bosnian Muslims, impelling the IC representatives to publicly advocate Bosniak ethnic nationalism under the umbrella of Islam.

In 1992 Kosovo acquired the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Pristina, following the transformation of the previous IC of Serbia into the IC of Kosovo (Krasniqi 2010), and in BiH during this period many old Islamic schools were restored and some new Islamic educational institutions (pedagogic colleges, etc.) were established. Again, these institutions were open to both male and female students. During the armed conflict between the Kosovo Liberation Army and the Serbian forces in 1998-99, religion was not an important factor in Kosovo (Babuna 2003, Krasniqi 2010), although the resurgence of "popular Islam" associated with Sufi tekkes did play a certain role in strengthening the sense of Albanian ethnic identity against the Orthodox Serbs. (Krasniqi 2010) Unlike the situation in BiH, all the major political parties in Kosovo had secular agendas. This may be attributed to the influence of "occidentalist" pro-European

Kosovar intellectuals, including President Rugova, who politicized the Roman Catholic Albanian minority in Kosovo and undermined, the Islamic component of Albanian identity in order to politically promote the sense of sharing the European identity (Babuna 2003, Krasniqi 2010).

Following the first multi-party elections, religious instruction was introduced in several public schools in Sarajevo during the 1991-92 school year, and in 1994 the authorities in the Federation of BiH (one of two BiH entities) decided to include such instruction in the curriculum of all public primary and secondary schools. (Alibašić 2009) This practice was sanctioned by the 2004 adoption of the new Law on Religious Freedom and Legal Status of Churches and Religious Communities in BiH, guaranteeing the right to provide religious instruction both in private and public schools (Article 4.1.) However, this prompted long-lasting debates about the purpose and quality of this kind of education and the ways to implement it in public schools, with a high degree of politicization of this matter by religious communities, the government and civil society.

In the post-socialism period, the IC—as well as the other two major religious communities in the Western Balkans, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church—proved not very enthusiastic for the work of broadening universally recognized human rights because their strong link with ethnic nationalism impelled them to advocate only the exclusive, particularistic interests of their own ethno-political elites.

To conclude—adopting the opinion of Paul Mojzes (1997, 225)—the half-century-long strife between socialism and religion was not "a conflict between those who espouse pluralism and democracy against those who espouse totalitarianism. Rather it was a conflict of several visions of reality each of which claimed to be the only correct one." Major religious communities, including the Islamic one, failed to acknowledge basic principles of liberal democracy and personal freedoms and reasserted, instead, ethno-religious identity and politics.

Notes

[1] The debate about the name of Kosovo was part of the struggle for identity/recognition. Kosovo and Metohija was the Serbian name, while Kosovo Albanians insisted on calling it Kosovo (Kosova in Albanian).

[2] According to Bieber, "The Kosovo myth itself is a complex construct comprising ideas, images, interpretations and purposes centered on a single event – the battle on June 28 1389 between the Christian armies under the leadership of the Serbian Knez Lazar Hrebeljanović and the Ottoman armies led by Sultan Murad [...] The myth interprets the outcome of the battle as a conclusive victory for the Ottoman forces but historical research suggests that it in fact ended much more ambiguously

with stalemate [...] However, it is crucial to the myth that it involves celebrating a defeat: the Ottoman army was the winner on the battlefield but, at the same time, the Serbian/Christian side emerged as the ultimate spiritual victor." (2002, 96)

[3] These and similar data in this section rely on the study of Asslan Pushka, *Quantifying The Educational Attainment of the Kosovo Population*, available on the website of South East European Educational Cooperation Network: http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/quant_lev_ed-kos-srb-t01.pdf (Feb 16, 2012).

[4] 2009 surveys showed that every fourth woman (25%) of around 60 years of age was completely illiterate, while 4% men of this age were illiterate.

[5] A Zagreb-based and University-affiliated social-democratic feminist group formed in 1979 by sociologists such as Rada Iveković (Ramet 1999, 4). This feminist and civil society initiative inspired further women's initiatives in socialist Yugoslavia from the 1980s on. The significance of this group lay in the fact that feminist studies became sponsored by official academic institutions. (Dević 1997, 51)

[6] Data from: http://www.usaid.gov/kosovo/ser/program_youth.html (Feb 16, 2012).

[7] Data from: www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/kosovo/.../resource_en_172504.pdf (Feb 16, 2012).

[8] Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 7.2

[9] Data from www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/kosovo/.../resource_en_172504.pdf (Feb 16, 2012).

[10] Data from Kosovar Center for Gender Studies, 2007.

[11] This research was conducted in the Herzegovina region. It also showed that inter-relation between political passivity and high religiosity and vice versa was much stronger among the people of Muslim background than in other confessional groups. (Ćimić 1970, 206-207, 259)

[12] After being abolished in 1952 in BiH, the dervish sufi orders continued their semi-clandestine activity in Kosovo. Dervish orders were re-established in 1974, and by 1986 they reportedly had 50,000 adherents grouped into 70 tekkes, of which 53 were located in Kosovo. (Ramet 2005, 150-151, Duijzings 200, 114)

[13] The IC organization consisted of four regional offices: in Sarajevo, Pristina, Skopje and Titograd/Podgorica. The Sarajevo Regional Office covered the Muslim religious community in the republics of BiH, Slovenia and Croatia, while the Pristina Regional Office was responsible for the entire territory of Serbia, including the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. The office of the Grand Mufti (*Reis-ul-Ulema*) was in Sarajevo. Each of the four regions had its own imam's associations, called *Ilmija*, which were legally integrated within the non-Communist umbrella political organization, "Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia," and this status helped legitimize their public presence and entitled the members to receive social benefits (e.g., pensions and health insurance). (Ramet 2005, 147) The Sarajevo-based Islamic bi-weekly "Preporod" increased its circulation from 30,000 in the early '80s to over 70,000 by the end of the decade. (Perica 2002, 79)

[14] The central and regional administrative offices of the IC were now called *Rijaset* and *Mešihat* respectively.

[15] SDA leader Izetbegović once said that in order to preserve the unified (secular-pluralist) state of BiH his party, under the circumstances of the Yugoslav break-up, had to be sectarian (i. e., Muslim) rather than trying to represent the broader BiH citizenry. (Malcolm 2002, 219)

[16] for a correct explanation of this word in English see for example the online Freedictionary. Accessed December 13, 2011. http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Bosniak

[17] including Alija Izetbegović who presented nine reasons to accept and four reasons to reject the Peace Plan. See a brief account of the Assembly session in Bosnian at the Web page of the Council of the Congress of Bosniak Intellectuals, Accessed December 13, 2011. http://www.vkbi.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=56&Itemid=69

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4. Being a Woman

Zilka Spahić-Šiljak and Lamija Kosović

Introduction

In this chapter we will analyze the results of focus groups conducted in BiH and Kosovo with women who work for—or are otherwise involved with—women's NGOs. Through the focus groups we wanted to find out how women in BiH and Kosovo define the idea of "woman," what being a woman means in two post-socialist societies. We also wanted to find out how feminism and feminist identity are perceived and whether women accept this identity to the extent of publicly declaring themselves feminists. Under socialism in both BiH and Kosovo, feminism was considered a Western import, and feminist movements were insignificant compared with those in Serbia or Croatia. However, after 1990—thanks to the involvement of international organizations and growth of local women's NGOs—the cause of gender equality and feminism was reaffirmed. Women's NGOs have been working for over two decades to promote women's rights and strengthen their position in public life and politics, so it was interesting to see how women either directly or indirectly involved with NGOs define feminism and to what extent it informs their political viewpoint.

We also explored the women's understanding about Muslim identity and the compatibility of Islam and feminism. The notion of identity is very complex, especially in BiH where three ethno-national and ethno-religious groups have been established by the Constitution. Women and their bodies have been used as symbols of ethnicity/nation, so every step forward in the process of furthering women's position was systemically controlled and subordinated to the state's

"higher" goals—first of the Communist Party, and later of the ethno-national ideologies, currently in power.

Identities are not rigid and separate; they are to a great extent interconnected and fluid. Thus, in this research we sought to avoid binary Cartesian categorization and instead treat identities as shifting and ever-changing. Although most Muslim women declared themselves believers, their understanding of religion and the extent to which they practice religious rituals differ due to factors including family tradition, education, societal norms and personal interest in religion. Most women in BiH and Kosovo are secularized believers who see religion as a private matter and its more public symbols, especially the hijab, as intrusions into the secular sphere. However, to at least partially distinguish women who observed religious rituals and those who did not, we used two sociological categories of religious identity: observant and non-observant women. These categories do not entirely encompass the differences that exist between Muslim women, but they can help us follow the dynamics of the women's differing attitudes towards religious and feminist identities. We also divided the focus groups by age: women 18-35 (un-born or still in school during the socialist period) and women over 35 (who have children and can talk about gender relations from the socialist and post-socialist perspective). A more detailed explanation of these categories can be found in section 4.3 of this chapter, Muslim and Feminist Identities.

4.1 Identity of a Woman

The question "What is a woman?" has been haunting feminist theories for many years, and producing variety of possible answers always open for further discussion and debate. In her groundbreaking book, *The Second Sex* (1949), Simone de Beauvoir provided two insights to this question. First was that the body is a *situation* (the concept that undercut sex/gender division) and the second that one is not born a woman, but rather becomes one. Ever since, feminist theorists have worked persistently and eagerly to liberate "the" from "woman," and to make the very concept of woman fluid, flexible, thus liberated from the binary straitjacket and open to social and historical change. Being a woman, as Babić-Avdispahić warns, "may not be understood as monolithic, ahistorical being, as if a woman were not a place of multiple experiences, defined by overlapping variables such as class, race, ethnicity, religion…" (2005, 209) Although, this task has not been easy, it is an important one for understanding our own bodies and understanding "woman" without imprisoning her back into essentialism and "natural matrix of unity." (Haraway 1991, 157) As Toril Moi (2004) noted, the question of "What is a woman?" has no one answer but

many, and it is precisely from the notion of multiplicity within a woman that we approach women in this study and their perspectives on what it means to be a woman.

We began the focus groups with women in BiH and Kosovo, starting with the premise that there *are* many answers to the question of what it means to be a woman and that this particular identity cannot be discussed without weaving it into the wider fabric of human existence. The participants began their stories by situating their understanding of what it means to be a woman within the context of their cultures. In other words, their stories on female identities unfolded first through the prism of the traditional patriarchal cultural norms that associate women with parental roles and men with paid labor. Following, women from both countries linked the very idea of "woman" with being a mother and teacher, a linkage to which we shall soon return. Through their stories, the participants also illustrated that there are similarities revealing rather strong presence of patriarchal norms in both societies, but there are also apparent cultural and socio-economic differences between these two countries. Other parameters that pointed to similarities and differences in women's understanding of what it means to be a woman are: the different stage in the life cycle, education, whether they are observant or non-observant women, and whether they are from urban or rural places. In our analysis we deal with women's overall understanding of what it means to be a woman tackling these parameters to greater or lesser extent.

4.1.1 Guardian of the Private Sphere

Most women in the focus groups emphasized the gender-dichotomized roles of women and men in BiH and Kosovo societies. Throughout the discussions, women implicated that to talk about "woman" in these two societies is also to talk about the family structure and marriage, accenting the duties women have within these family arrangements. Woman is always defined in relation to family and a man, being a part of someone, somebody rather than an individual of her own. Although younger women live single and economically independent, traditional divisions of gender roles, and their definitions in BiH and Kosovo, still resonate in their minds and they still define themselves in relation to family or a man. Evidently, the separation between private and public remains strongly in place and the traditional philosophical and religious conceptions of women's nature continue to produce cultural values and norms in these societies (see Chapter 1.2).

Being a woman in BiH and Kosovo means being a guardian of the private sphere. The role of woman within the family, as Betty Friedan wrote in 1963, is

taken for granted and is quite strictly structured within predefined categories of male and female roles.

Mother

The woman is a mother, overseeing the household; she is defined by her emotional nature as opposed to the rational male nature. As a non-observant Kosovar woman over 35 said, "Woman is the pillar of the house," and as an observant woman, under 35, from BiH, put it, "Woman was created to be a mother… She serves the husband, who protects her." As keeper of the emotional, woman is associated with parental roles and responsibilities that, within the patriarchal society, often preclude taking part in public life, including the political sphere— which, by implication, is not appropriate for women, who are "overburdened in any case." Of course, women in both societies have entered public life, and are pursuing careers. But, exceptions aside, the traditional conceptions of women's nature are vividly present and continue to shape the values and norms of these two societies. Woman's "main role," as an observant woman under 35 from Kosovo said, "is in the house," and within the private realm, where a woman is seen as a wise silent shadow, a teacher who exercises "dominance" without disturbing the norm or challenging male authority and position. "In today's society, particularly in BiH, to be a woman means to be the one that speaks less. It also means to fight for goals that matter to us." (observant, under 35, BiH)

An interesting phenomenon that occurred during the discussion on being a woman was that women, apparently greatly influenced by the patriarchal interpretations of religious texts, strongly believe that they enjoy even more rights than men. They repeated lessons on gender relations learnt in family, religious education in mosques and, after 1990, in public schools:

> Being a woman is the greatest gift I have been blessed with by God. I feel that the Qur'an reflects the attitude that a woman is a saint. God gave rights, many more than exist in the law, to women. I am proud that I am woman, and I am glad that He instructed me in His path, Islam. (observant, under 35, Kosovo)

The younger generation accepted religion as a "final product," but through their education, which is apparently shaped by a predominant masculine interpretation of Islam, women (particularly in Kosovo) made no contribution to building their faith and establishing its relations with socio-political and cultural life.

Most observant women, however, emphasize a man's responsibility to respect women, linking it to his faith to God. It is mandated by the religious interpretation of the status of a mother in Islam, who deserves the greatest respect (*hadith*) and attains power in the family by providing male heirs. That

type of gender dynamics is not peculiar to Muslim societies, but exists in all other patriarchal societies with strongly gender-dichotomized roles. Balkan families produce and nurture the same informally powerful image of motherhood that keeps control over sons and others in the household and community. (Radulović quoted in Blagojević 2005, 169-186) But, as will be demonstrated in further analysis, in many instances, this respect—of woman as private educator - means keeping social and cultural boundaries that make woman the Other in relation to man.

> A man who doesn't respect women doesn't know God. A state can be lead by a man but it is a woman who created that man. When successful men are asked "how did you achieve that?" and acknowledge that their skills and successes flow from their mother's training, they demonstrate the support and appreciation that women deserve. (observant, over 35, Kosovo)

Being the Other, it seems, suggests being the Other within a whole whose two halves need each other (Chapter 1, Politics Revisited: Power, Other and Difference/s). However, this Other is defined solely through the classical patriarchal conceptions of women's nature—beautiful, soft, sensitive—confined to the private realm.

Many women from Kosovo and BiH are aware of men still being the authority, having the power in the public sphere. For some this is a problem, but for others, particularly observant women over 35, it is the natural state of affairs mandated by religion: "I believe Islam defines a man's place as authority and leader of the house." (observant, over 35, BiH)

They are mostly not able to explain this feeling, but refer to certain interpretative legacies that proclaim "authority of a man over woman" due to his role as maintainer and sustainer of the family. (Spahić-Šiljak 2010, 116-119) Even though they are aware of the unequal distribution of housework and lack of recognition for the work that they perform at home, they still seem to leave intact the question of the "natural matrix of unity" (Haraway, Chapter 1). As a non-observant women under 35 said about the work implicit in motherhood : "… I enjoy doing it. Even if you are raised to be an intellectual, you should definitely do your obligations, because we are women." Thus, being a woman means first to carry out your obligations in the private sphere. As our foremothers of the second wave of feminism insisted, the conceptions of women's nature as the keepers of the emotional serve men's institutional power since such conceptions justify the exclusion of women from the public sphere, which is defined solely in terms of reason.

Observant women under 35 in BiH appeared to be more progressive, emphasizing harmonization of family life and social engagement and the

importance of having both. They also seemed more interested in new interpretations of the Qur'an on gender issues, wanting to see more women in that process that would bring new perspectives to hierarchical male interpretations. However, although aware of some women and feminist scholars worldwide and in BiH, and although supportive, they personally do not find themselves ready and intellectually equipped to become one of the female exegetes, and are instead waiting for some other women to open the door to gender-inclusive interpretations. One of the reasons is that the male authority is still more compelling and enjoys more credibility than the female, especially if it demands changes and reconsideration of existing norms and rules.

Educator of Family

Many of the participants from both countries brought up education as one of the fundamental issues for emancipation of women. "Education" acquired diverse connotations depending on whether considered in the public or private realms. For some women education is related mainly to women's private responsibility: "A female is a beautiful creature, a very sensitive one, and she has a dominant role in the family—to educate children" (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo). An observant woman over 35 from Sarajevo broadened that private duty: "woman, as a mother, is educating everyone—children, husbands and neighbors." Both younger and older generations of women from both countries seem to share this understanding that women's primary role is to educate their children. An observant woman under 35 from Kosovo said that: "women represent half of the society, and educate the other half." This view, while praised by many women, keeps the spheres of public and private firmly separated, and can often be used to justify women's enclosure within the private realm. If being a woman means being the private educator, it also implies perpetuation of acquired patriarchal norms and values; so this form of education has little to do with enhancing women's position in either society. Even so, it gives her power within family, and if she is wise and a diplomat she can learn how to negotiate her position within the family, as some women indicated during the focus groups. Still, such understanding of being a woman puts her in the position of the Other to men:

> I am honored to be a woman because I am a mother, a sister, a wife and an educator within the home, a soft and beautiful creature. (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo)

The idea of education, though, as noted, varied among women. Observant women, both over and under 35 from both countries may be inclined to perceive women's main responsibility and her educational role (with-)in the private realm, but non-observant women both under and over 35 in BiH, and young non-observant women from Kosovo, take the concept of education into the public realm, emphasizing the importance for women to educate themselves.

Accepting the education underpinned by patriarchal norms and values reinforces its funding, skewed toward male education, and maintains the status quo, which is further detrimental to women already deprived of equality. Perpetuating a status quo that instructs women to be obedient perpetuates political inequality of sexes. In addition, "femininity by design" creates additional problems because many women refuse to pursue collective action with women who hold different political views.

4.1.2 "Dancing" to Two Beats

Women in BiH and Kosovo are not the only ones who attempt to keep a balance between private and public sphere of life and to "dance" equally well to two beats. But, younger generations raise a dilemma about dual workload and burden they keep carrying to prove that they are able to be equally successful mothers, wives, workers, and participants in public life. Some women in focus groups from BiH, both younger and older generations, stressed the importance of education for women in the public realm, but they also acknowledged woman's anterior family-education responsibility.

> A woman who goes beyond the home to become educated and progressive, and who also has faith, can in turn educate her family, her children, and her grandchildren, thus leaving her positive mark on society (observant, over 35, BiH).

The following statements illustrate the concern of observant women under 35 about their position today because of the expectations for them to be successful both in family and career, but without redistribution of household work and realignment of family roles. Due to such expectations, women tend to re-think the worth of being in the public sphere within a patriarchal realm. They underline something that is the focus of this entire research: woman on the crossroad of cultural/religious tradition and modernity, of the secular and religious, of socialist and post-socialist ideologies, of family and public engagement.

> Well, we are at a crossroad of cultures. In eastern cultures, women are mostly mothers and wives, and this has been imposed upon the women of BiH. To be "complete" a woman needs to fulfill this expectation and also to be successful in her career. Her motherhood is not appreciated or socially acknowledged. If a woman dedicates herself to her career, it is assumed that she is neglecting her family, and if her life's work is within the home, it is said that this woman did not achieve anything. For women, additional rights simply mean added obligations, often so many that it is physically impossible to fulfill them. When women take on added obligations, they need support that would liberate them from some of the existing expectations. (observant, under 35, BiH)

Observant women under 35 acknowledge the priority of women's obligations within the home, but still do not want to give up public engagement and activism. Some women still believe they can successfully reconcile motherhood and career and manage to balance the two. However, younger women find it difficult and demanding to link more rights with more responsibilities:

> I believe motherhood and work can be harmonized. I think that women, while justifiably fighting for their rights to be more appreciated and independent, took on extra obligations and jobs without being relieved of any existing ones, and I think that they did a lot of it so well. Recognition of their achievements gets lost, and women end up so burdened. I think balance is possible, but in a way, things were easier when women had fewer rights because they may have been less burdened. (observant, under 35, BiH)

Entering the public sphere and being successful in it again ties in with the education women impart in the private sphere. Through the prism of religious and moral values, many observant women, particularly from BiH, reveal their understanding of the interconnectedness of private and public. They attempt to reconcile requests of modernity with their religious and cultural tradition:

> I always say that a woman is the perfect divine being. I am always told I idealize women, but I do not think my view of women is idealized. I think my view is simply the truth. The first and foremost roles for women are as mothers, sisters and wives whose priorities are attending to the needs of their family…starting with parents, husbands and children, and being a role model for them all. Within that context, the priority of every woman should be religious and secular education. Equal success in her career is essential. I try to simultaneously be a modern woman and a Muslim, a Muslim in Europe. I want to be European, while holding on to the framework of Islamic and moral values...and be socially active. (observant, under 35, BiH)

4.1.3 Being a Human Being

While the women in both countries showed, by their comments, that they live in a highly patriarchal society, there is a tendency among some younger and non-observant women over 35 from urban areas, particularly in BiH, to avoid discussion of gender inequality through the "gender neutrality" phenomenon. They stress the importance of being perceived solely as human beings capable of performing anything they want without limitations. However, this positioning does not resonate the feminist positioning in the response to the question about what feminism is. Some focus group participants attempted to find a solution in gender neutral positioning, escaping all encumbrances and limitations that a woman's identity is assigned in a patriarchal society. However, as Anne Phillips reminded us (see: Chapter 1), gender neutrality confirms the masculine subject as the norm.

> I believe that people need to develop themselves as distinctive human beings and not solely members of one or the other gender. I want to be viewed as a person, and argue this desire, which seems to be a source of constant conflict. (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo)

> I do not care about the differences between men and women, which I believe are irrelevant. I look at people as individuals whose merit depends upon their intellect, their upbringing, their circle of friends, et cetera. If evaluated as an individual rather than as a member of the female gender, there are no barriers to my being seen as superior in the areas where I really am. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

The second and third waves of feminism, as outlined in Chapter 1, brought into question patriarchal cultural norms and values, making visible their connection with dominant Western thought. However, all three waves were unfolding in developed Western societies, where the processes of economic and social modernization made it possible for women to access education that would enrich them in their struggle for equality; and these processes in the West have certainly taken a different path than those that Eastern European countries have had to face. As one non-observant woman under 35 from Kosovo observed, "There is a difference between us and younger women in the West. Our mothers were housewives, and their grandmothers were doctors that grew up with books."

Women also talked about the difficulty of being accepted as equal human beings and not simply categorized and dismissed as "women"—with all the preconceptions of what that means that traditional societies have imposed on them. If both women and men underwent the same "gender- blinded" and "silenced" socializations in their families, it is quite difficult to change that pattern in the public domain and recognize a woman as an equal human being, another person, and only then as a woman. Sometimes women take it as a useful strategy to overcome barriers in the public domain, but sometimes they simply want to be a *person*, appreciated for her intellect and personal achievements:

> My desire to be understood as an individual and not just as a woman has resulted in so much frustration and in assumptions by others that I am weak. Defending equality for women often meant my strength went unnoticed. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

As de Beauvoir acknowledged, the question of what a woman is immediately brings up "questions of the relationship between the particular and the general." (Moi 2005, 9) Women are human beings, their bodies human and female; but they cannot be reduced to "general humanity" or to their femininity. Moi noted that "women have interests, capacities and ambitions that reach far beyond the sexual differences, however one defines these." (2005, 8)

Making changes in societal norms and values is a long process, and, as we wrote in Chapter 1, they are impelled by wider shifts shaped by these very processes of economic and social transformation. But interestingly enough, the gender neutrality strategy is more a product of discourses related to the late second wave and the third wave of feminism; discourses unfolding within the context of globally increasing neo-liberalism. This is not surprising since Kosovo and BiH could not avoid the post-war reconstruction projects of Western feminists and their NGOs employed by institutions such as the World Bank, USAID and similar multilateral and bilateral aid groups aimed at helping women in former socialist countries survive the process of economic transformation. These aid projects brought with them discourses and practices that promoted the idea that gender transcends any other difference between women and men (class, age, ethnicity, etc.) and this worked towards uniting women in a sisterhood. In insisting upon the specific needs of women—but within the status quo of the new political agenda—Western feminists were applying cultural feminist ideologies in the post-socialist context, which often resulted, as implied by many of the women quoted in the section on feminism, in refusal of what Kristen Ghodsee terms "femininity by design," derived from David Stark's (1992) "capitalism by design," which contemplated the processes through which Western experts advised local post-socialist governments on how to create the institutions of democracy and capitalism. The transition of Central and Southeast European countries, including BiH and Kosovo, from one form of communist/socialist system to some kind of capitalist/liberal system, and the economic and post-war transitions, have all led to the recrudescence of disadvantages for women. (Chapter 3) The gender neutrality then results, first, from inherited ideologies (communism that taught women not to distinguish their needs from men's, but to struggle together in their class interest) and, second, from reactions to the imported ideologies of Western cultural feminism that construct them as victims (i.e. losers) in the economic transformation process (see Ghodsee).

4.1.4 Being a Woman in Socialism and Post-socialism

In discussing being a woman, some women in BiH, mostly those over 35 who have had more experience living in socialist times, emphasized that as women are active and hard-working, they need to be aware of their strengths and capacities—the qualities they could use to eliminate discrimination. These same BiH women also acknowledged to what extent they have been neglected in the post-socialist, post-war transitional period with its concomitant re-traditionalization of gender roles and lost social and economic security:

> Under socialism, woman was at the same time both burdened, but better protected. We enjoyed greater stability and more benefits such as maternity leave. (observant, over 35, BiH)

> In my opinion, before the war, women had more confidence and the system rewarded us for demonstrating certain qualities. Now, after the war, the various geopolitical boundaries and disparate policies imposed upon us have shattered that confidence. (observant, over 35, BiH)

While the women from BiH, raised under socialism, acknowledged the previous regime as being generally less discriminatory to women, women from Kosovo were less inclined to bring the socialist regime into their discussions. The reason for that is unclear, but obviously women in BiH enjoyed more rights during socialism than women in Kosovo, the most neglected and economically undeveloped part of what was Yugoslavia. (Chapter 3) As noted in Chapter 3, under socialism women participated in the labor force, but were also expected to entirely fulfill their roles as mothers and to perform much of the housework. Focus group participants remarked that in socialism women were guaranteed certain rights that provided them with protection and security; today, some observed, this security can no longer be taken for granted. The women-friendly laws enacted in socialist times and the constitutional regulations that at least formally gave women and men equal rights in all areas of state, political, economic, social and cultural life, and prohibited any form of discrimination, all seem to have been vitiated in the post-socialist reality of BiH and Kosovo. Under socialism, gender inequality was indeed evident, as the participants often noted, but in comparison with today's democracy, inequality has increased. The older generations of women from BiH remember a "better life," more rights and an easier life. A woman from BiH said about the socialist time: "I like it better than this democracy." The social institutions in state socialism were organized in a way that enabled women to pursue careers, and maternity leave and employment protection were much more generous than today. But, after 1989, the changes that followed socialism's fall had incredible implications, particularly for women. The new wave of old patriarchal attitudes supported by ethno-national and ethno-religious ideologies (Mujkić 2008, Mojzes 1994) emerged and accompanied the democratization process affecting women's status in society in a way that forced them back into the private realm of family and household duties.

Women admit that today in post-socialist BiH and Kosovo gender equality is better framed legally, but implementation of laws and gender action plans (Chapter 3) is poor. Civil and political rights are now more emphasized than social and economic rights, but as some women commented: "there is no purpose talking of civil rights and democracy when we have lost social security and benefits we had in previous state." (observant, over 35, BiH) Or "we had more security before (in socialism)." (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo) These

statements disclose the importance of interconnectedness and indivisibility of human rights.

Urban/Rural Settings

Women, particularly in Kosovo, indicated that social environment and culture has had a significant impact on the formation of gender identity and gender politics both in socialism and today. Small communities and villages are very homogeneous, with limited access to education, work and other public engagements. In these communities, although as a relic of the socialist period, women are legally and institutionally recognized as equal to men, in practice they are subjugated to various cultural, customary and religious norms. (Spahić-Šiljak 2010, 158-160) The few researches conducted that compared rural women with urban women in socialist times confirm that in rural areas woman were more under-privileged, had lower social positions, relegated to performing less valuable tasks, with greater obedience to their husbands exacted, and stronger compliance with assigned social gender roles. (Stojaković 1989, 50) Women from rural areas in Kosovo talked about the dominant male authority—of fathers and/or husbands—that prevent many women from getting an education and becoming self-sustained:

> Being a woman in Kosovo is very different from being a woman elsewhere, and it is more difficult here, beginning with the father's authority which gives way to domination by other males. Though there is progress in women's rights in Kosovo, a woman is still obligated to do most tasks. (non-observant, under 35, Kosovo)

The situation in BiH is similar. Women from there also stressed the differences between urban and rural areas and the overwhelming patriarchy that systematically excludes women from positions of power, though with more sophisticated arguments. No matter what a woman's intellectual capacity and achievements, she is first and foremost viewed through the lenses of the sexist culture that exploits her body to undermine her authority as a person. The society operates with double moral standards (Spahić-Šiljak 2010, 254) that allow a man what is not allowed for a woman. Interestingly, sexual harassment is still not socially condemned in BiH and Kosovo although the law defines and forbids it. (Gender Equality Laws in BiH and Kosovo, Chapter 3) Many women and men do not perceive certain behaviors or statements as sexual harassment; and if they do; they tolerate them to keep a job or a position.

> In the Balkans, from the moment women step out onto the street, they are viewed as sexual objects. Our society is sexist and I have personally encountered disrespectful attitudes and behaviors towards women. Women tolerate it for the most part, particularly economically dependent ones. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

One of the reasons women could not easily articulate woman's identity was "gender-blinded" and "silenced" socialization in their primary families. They have not been taught anything outside traditional gender-role divisions on the assumption that silent acceptance and transmission of these traditional behaviors from generation to generation will adequately equip women for life.

> In a small conservative society with surroundings in which people do not discuss issues such as woman's identity and women's rights, traditional gender roles are taken for granted. This silence is transmitted from grandparents and other family members, seeming natural. So no one explicitly says, "I am a woman, I need that," and expecting that our needs will not be met becomes part of us. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

In conclusion, we can say that focus group participants both in BiH and Kosovo underlined a number of issues that are relevant to them personally and to the society they live in, in the attempt to answer the question of what it means to be a woman and how are women's identities positioned.

Most of them associated woman's identity with the private sphere – in which a woman cares and educates. Non-observant women of both age groups kept emphasizing the importance of education for women in both private and public domains, as means for their empowerment.

Another important issue that was underlined particularly by younger women is the attempt to survive and "dance" equally well to two beats – private and public. After years of socialist and post-socialist emancipation, younger women rightfully ask the question: how come that we are more burdened and have more duties and is it worth it? Most of them still think that they can do it and they are trying to reconcile their public and private duties.

A number of women find the "exit" or the "survival" strategy in the gender neutral positioning and avoiding all stereotypes and limitations assigned to the identity of women in patriarchal societies. They do not want to be recognized as women, but as persons, human beings. However, as feminist theorists stress, neutral positioning again works against women because men remain the norm.

Differences between Kosovo and BiH in specific historical situations also need to be taken into account, as it is these that influence women's positioning and contribute to the subjective constructions of female identities. Women in BiH often referred to the socialist times as the period that left a mark on their subject formations, while in the stories of women from Kosovo, socialist times are rarely brought up as a marker in and of the subjects' formations.

Finally, women over 35 from BiH noted the difference of woman's position in socialist and post-socialist times, and the significance of social

and economic rights as opposed to civil and political rights that are heavily promoted nowadays through laws and gender action plans both in BiH and Kosovo, but very poorly implemented. In this discussion, participants pointed out that there are huge differences between women in rural and urban areas, as smaller "closed" communities make it difficult for women to fight the structural, patriarchal norms and the rule of fathers, which is particularly prominent in Kosovo.

4.2 Feminist Identities

Identity politics, as much as essentialism, has become a catchword of cultural studies and social theory, and denunciation of it has become "the litmus test of academic responsibility and political acceptability" (Alcoff 2006, 7). Linda Alcoff wrote that identity politics is often blamed for political ills and mistakes in theory, from overly homogenized conceptions of groups to radical separatism to the demise of the left (2006, 15). Indeed, identity politics - as well as the concept of essentialism - received widespread feminist critique in the early 80s. But it has also been recognized as the foundation for political movements that have been organized against severe political, economic and cultural disempowerment of minority groups and communities.

In this study we approach different identities or constituents of women's being and becoming, their positioning/s and through the exploration of these constituents in two specific historical situations, we want to articulate the need for a "decolonized" version of humanism by which it becomes possible to conceptualize justice across cultural differences. We want to underline that differences are differences in kind, and not degree, and through illuminating different identities or constituents of a woman, we emphasize the importance of turning away from the fixed, static conceptualizations of identity towards identities as shifting and ever-changing. In avoiding re-inscription of the model of fragmentation and multiplication – one that in many postmodern theoretical accounts still relies on the binary Cartesian scheme, we aim to analyze differential ways in which gender, religion and class, among other social divisions, relate to subjective constructions of women's identities. Also, as Alcoff noted:

> (T)he acknowledgement of the important differences in social identity does not lead inexorably to political relativism or fragmentation, but, quite the reverse, it is the *refusal* to acknowledge the importance of difference in our identities that has led to distrust, miscommunication and thus disunity" (2006, 6).

In response to the Gilligan-MacKinnon exchange (1984), defined by Sheyla Benhabib as the paradigm clash between "difference" and "equality"

feminism (1994, par 3), Ellen C. DuBois wrote: "there are by this time many feminisms" (1994, par 4). Following contemporary feminist philosophical and political thought, in this section we begin with DuBois's insight that there are many feminisms, and it is from this point of view that we approach our analysis of feminist identities of women from Kosovo and BiH. Through the lenses of *multiple* feminisms (with their multiple and shifting identities) and *differences* in feminisms we examine the responses that women from Kosovo and BiH offered when asked about their views of feminisms. But we also remain faithful to the passionate politics and lectures we received from our feminist foremothers—one being especially relevant to this study: challenging and redefining cultural definitions of womanhood, femininity and today's feminism as well.

As briefly implied in the section Being a Woman, the very concept of feminism in the context of post-socialist societies of Kosovo and BiH is often fraught with negative connotations and suggests radical feminism. This is mostly due to the immense proliferation of Western feminist discourses and practices that disputed the established socialist ideologies and helped people understand that they were oppressed. However, the socialist ideology and class-consciousness that united women and men in opposition to the totalitarian regime—even though, ironically, it had fostered those ideologies and that consciousness—still linger in women's memories, making them distrust what they mistakenly conceive feminism to be since it seems to them freighted with all the Western capitalist ideological and attitudinal baggage that their years under socialism taught them to distrust, rendering "feminism" foreign and something they don't understand. (Chapters 1.2 and 3.1) As a non-observant woman over 35 from BiH put it, "people are afraid of what they do not know." This is perhaps why it is not surprising that a lot of women who were interviewed seemed to have a rather vague understanding, or even misunderstandings of what feminism is. "Is it about someone more or less feminized?" asked, also a non-observant woman under 35 from BiH, while another woman over 35 from BiH said that feminism means that "I do not hate men, but it is all about women only." In both societies—as reflected by a majority of the responses from those women interviewed—the general view of feminism is informed by stereotypical epithets (butch, masculine, women who dress like men), further making them reluctant to recognize themselves as feminist even though a lot of their responses show that they accept Western philosophical and religious conceptions of women's nature (Chapter 1), and that they acknowledge and applaud the achievements of Western feminists in gender equality (i.e. the struggle for equal civil and political rights, etc.) (Chapter 1).

> If it were not for feminists, women wouldn't be working in factories today. (observant, under 35, BiH)

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> Feminism freed women and made life easier for them. Those feminists were real heroes… they had to reverse an entire society and show the world women were not that fragile… we are fragile but they were saying "yes, we are fragile but we don't give up." (observant, under 35, BiH)

> That word "feminism" is foreign to us. We don't understand it, but we understand fighting for women's rights, we all have to fight. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

Such statements mark these women as *de facto*—if unacknowledged, perhaps unconscious—feminists. But the statements also suggest that women from both countries—also perhaps unconsciously—share the Marxists' ideas about liberation of women. Seen from the classical Marxist feminist perspective, the above quotations are *really* identifying classism rather than sexism as the fundamental cause of women's oppression—despite the apparent diction of gender issues.

Struggle and oppression are indeed concepts of particular significance for women whether or not they are born and raised in a socialist society. However, we see that for the women born and raised under socialism in BiH, the very connotations of the concepts "struggle" and "oppression" can only be understood within the conceptual framework built by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. As for women from Kosovo, there were not enough references to the previous regime in their interviews to know if they also understood those concepts in the same Marxist framework as did the women from BiH. As we tried to illustrate in Chapter 3.1, women and men were seen as allies in the socialist revolutions; along with men, they fought against "oppression," including the oppression of women. Feminism, on another hand, was seen as promoting the bourgeoisie and the values of the ruling, capitalist class. As a woman over 35 from BiH remarked above, "the word 'feminism'" simply does not fit into her understanding of the liberation of women and struggle for women's rights. The case is slightly different for the two younger women quoted above (both from BiH), who employ "feminism" as a concept, and understand it through the prism of Marxist analysis (social feminism). This understanding is illuminated by Juliet Mitchell's remark, "We should ask the feminist questions, but try to come up with Marxist answers" (1971, 99). In any case, this still seems to be a version of the Marxist model that needs redefining in the sense that Jagger proposed, which is using "a feminist version of the Marxist model to provide feminist answers to feminist questions" (1983, 124). Apparently, what continues to obfuscate women's feminist identities is fixation on things like women's "fragile" nature, additionally reinforced by the ethno-nationalist and religious discourses after the war—all of which support and perpetuate patriarchal norms and values, and the very notion of gender roles.

In the previous section we saw that motherhood is praised and women are positioned as guardians of the private and the family. The re-traditionalization of gender roles, which started with the beginning of the war and was continually reinforced by ethno-national political rhetoric, along with stereotypical understanding of feminism—all of this has created an atmosphere in which identification of a woman as a feminist means being excluded and marginalized in the patriarchal mainstream. This warns women to refrain from such identification, so women are more often than not reluctant to publicly proclaim their feminist values. Feminists are understood and labeled as "dangerous," "man-haters," and, thus, non-desirable, limiting their opportunities for social engagements and marriage. And to be unmarried means being excluded from the reproductive domain of house and family, which, certainly in our ethno-nationalist societies, also implies being an intruder, and usually subjected to constant snubs, offensive remarks and judgmental opinions that sooner or later become detrimental to a sense of self-worth.

> When (and if) a woman calls herself a feminist, then men, most of the time, call her a "frigid bitch". When I am among women, most of them agree with my stands, opinions. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

> A feminist is a woman who clearly states when something is not right. When you are outspoken and say publicly what you mean, they will call you a feminist. And feminism is a basic fight for individual women's rights. But, today our society is looking at this in a very negative way. Feminism is seen as incompatible with Islam, even anti-Islamic. The term does not connote what it was supposed to connote originally. (observant, under 35, BiH)

Observant Muslim women under 35 accept feminist ideas of gender equality and justice, but do not accept it in public, due to controversial readings and meanings of feminism in BiH society. Feminism is not only rejected as incompatible with Islam, but also as anti-Islamic. The recent attack on Gender Studies graduates at the University of Sarajevo by the magazine Saff (2011), demonstrates how some radical groups use and misuse gender and feminism to fight against gay people and the new anti-discrimination rules on sexual orientation. They called new graduates "masters in gay science" (magistri pederizma), fomenting anti-feminist and anti-gender equality propaganda among Muslims.

One of the indicia of power in both societies is the freedom (and confidence) to speak out, publicly, on public matters, a power traditionally reserved for men. So any woman's voice in the public sphere can threaten male dominance. The concepts of feminism and feminist are precisely associated with such a threat to disturb the power structure. Women also recognize that there is no "*the*"

feminism but feminisms, and that the connotations of the concept are shifting and multiple, and thus cannot be applied univocally across different places, different times and for people of different backgrounds, different experiences and values.

Most of the women interviewed in Kosovo pointed to the lack of feminist discourses in the media and in society. Although they said that there are not many feminists in Kosovo, the majority declared their own feminist identity, though again with a certain reluctance to avow all its particulars. An observant Muslim woman under 35 from Kosovo said, "I feel feminist as long as I do not violate the rights of other people. I am not feminist when it comes to abortion, because you then fight against yourself." There are limits she has to respect and boundaries she would not cross – such as abortion. Furthermore, this implies not indulging in sexual freedoms that are promoted in Western societies. As another observant woman under 35 from Kosovo says, "I have seen that in foreign countries, being feminist means doing whatever you want."

Another difference between women in BiH and in Kosovo is their readiness to formally declare themselves as feminists. Women in Kosovo are more ready to claim feminists identity—despite those "limits" or "boundaries" —while women in BiH are rather hesitant to accept such labeling, but seem to approach feminist issues more from the "non-natural" matrix of unity, that is from the social Marxist perspective. In other words, the influence of socialism and socialist ideologies for women in BiH seems to have more impact on what they say about feminism than they do for women in Kosovo. Despite ambiguously defined views on feminism, women from both countries emphasize difficulties that women face when "coming out" as feminists. This woman prefers to declare herself simply as a woman, because being a feminist for her is being a woman:

> I think that most women today are feminists. But why would I say that I was a feminist? I am not; I am just aware of myself and I have my own opinion on things. I do not have to be labeled as a feminist. Simply, I am a woman and I am aware of that in every way. I claim to be a woman in every field. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

> I am talking now about the mindset of the Balkan man – although I think it is the same around the world. I think the way male designers imposed clothing sizes on us (and the way we let them do so) just shows us the enormity of situation. The mindset is the same regardless of nationality or career. Women are obliged to fit the men's vision, and the fact is, we have let that happen…I have not had the opportunity to declare myself a feminist publicly but I would not refrain from it. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

What this last woman referred to typifies the ways in which norms and values get perpetuated in patriarchal societies. As Betty Friedan rightly noted in 1963: "The expectations of feminine fulfillment that are fed to women by magazines, television, movies, and books that popularize psychological half-truths, and by parents, teachers, and counselors who accept the feminine mystique, operate as a kind of youth serum, keeping most women in the state of sexual larvae, preventing them from achieving the maturity of which they are capable" (77). Another non–observant woman under 35 from BiH said: "From an early age we are dressing up, and putting make-up on instead of making men focus on *their* looks and insecurities." The women interviewed were often aware of such expectations, triggered by such values and norms, imposed through social codes, but were wary about "labeling" that awareness. Even when they do declare themselves feminists, they seldom do so in public, and they note that the feminism they prefer to be associated with is "moderate." One of the reasons they avoid such labeling is to reduce resistance from men and women whose knowledge of feminism comes to them with the baggage of mainstream connotations and stereotypes, and who thus would reject women who publicly declared themselves feminists. An observant Muslim woman under 35 who is part of Nahla, a prominent Muslim NGO in BiH, put it this way:

> I do not like us to be labeled like that, because women will again be the ones to lose. If people start calling us a place of feminism or anything similar, husbands and boyfriends will not like it and will not let the women close to them come. We are kidding now, but there are people who think like that, people in more radically traditional circles. And women from these circles are not coming to Nahla—and they are the ones who are injured by this.

Another observant woman under 35 from BiH said, "And such women [feminists] are anti-family," which again underscores both the traditional patriarchal perspectives and rhetoric on the "natural" ordering of family, sex and reproduction and the vital need to revisit the entire concept of family as a political rather than pre-political and non-political institution. Although a Muslim man is considered as maintainer and protector of family, a Muslim woman is the one responsible for raising children and keeping the family together, so any activity or idea that can shake and change that order is considered anti-family. Fear of feminism continues to be reinforced by the justification of preserving the traditional family values. (Spahić-Šiljak 2010)

The women interviewed often implied that "moderate" feminism is acceptable, while anything smacking of radical feminism—that which radically disturbs societal norms and family values—is a priori impossible and unviable. One woman said, "When feminism started it was very necessary; women then

were asking for the right to vote. Now they are exaggerating their demands, and this becomes heavy for women." Apparently, the influx of capitalist, imperialist, male-dominant and racist ideas and values (capitalism by design along with feminism by design) in both countries brought along that heaviness—women's burden—which seems to weigh on many different issues. The systems of domination that are inextricably intertwined contribute to the production of "burden" and the sense of "keeping the balance." As Jagger suggests, "abolishing of one of these systems of domination requires the end of all of them." (1983, 124) Despite recognition that redistribution of work has to take place, the women interviewed still prefer to search for a moderate version of feminism and insist on gender neutrality that, in both patriarchal societies, only reinforces masculine dominance as the norm.

Feminist identities, like female identities, are various and there is certainly no *right* definition of what it means to be a feminist or a woman. Focus groups and discussions with women from BiH and Kosovo suggest that there is a need not to perpetuate identity politics, which often results in dangerous outcomes for those seeking recognition and affirmative acceptance of differences. Instead we must find strategic means that can, as second-wave feminists taught us, (again) point to the "personal"—sexism in personal relationships, the tragedy of sexual violence or abuse, the division of housework within families, or the poverty that women disproportionately experience—as an important factor in creating a politics of engagement. Although non-governmental organizations, women's organizations and, in particular, gender mainstreaming mechanisms are valuable for their role in promoting feminism and protecting women's rights, a lot remains to be done to make clear that the personal *is* political. One BiH woman, active in the NGO sector and, perhaps, more engaged with feminist issues than the other women interviewed, thinks that feminism factors into only a small number of women's NGOs, and that it is not easy for ordinary women to get information about it. She said:

> Feminism exists on a small scale and mostly depends on which circles you move in. It seems to me there is little about it in the media so an average citizen cannot be aware of it. I can fight as an individual against discrimination but I think most women cannot. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

Participants from Kosovo have similar opinions. "A woman," says a non-observant woman over 35 from Kosovo, "doesn't fight for this herself; when she gets married and has children she expects everything from man." Being a feminist is quite demanding, it seems, as it entails activism as well as permanent struggle to plan and keep ideas of equality alive. But it is mostly the assumptions underlying the traditional view of the family (non-political and pre-political) that keep most women disengaged from the feminist-related activities.

Feminisms, feminism and its differences, along with differences within feminism and differences in feminist identities – all of these are there, and there are many of them. As Teresa de Lauretis argued, whatever differences exist in feminism they are never just differences within feminism, but are also "an effect of the political and intellectual engagement that feminism has necessarily, with the world 'outside,' so to speak, the social reality 'external' to feminism" (1987). Also, feminisms are not simply differences between women, but also differences within women; they are produced as the effects of differences in each woman's subjectivity. One can argue that what the women from Kosovo and BiH said, when interviewed, to a certain extent illustrates that their views on feminism, their understanding and integration or non-integration of feminist values within their own lives are connected to what Adrienne Rich calls "politics of location" (2000). The notion of politics of location is perhaps most adequately described as one of the epistemological foundations of feminist theory and gender knowledge (Braidotti 2004), and it refers to articulation and interrogation of one's personal and socio-structural location. In focus group interviews, women from BiH and Kosovo grounded their feminist and feminine identities in personal and embodied encounters, while the interrogation process—that very questioning of one's socio-structural location, as implied in and by the politics of location, exists in their stories only to a certain degree. Most Kosovo and BiH families, these women said, are based on unequal division of labor, while the traditional approaches to the family within their social contexts obscure those inequalities.

Such traditional patriarchal views and values, along with the issues of inequality and other issues brought up in the analysis above signal a need to begin with various and serious societal and educational reforms, which again depend on the economic and political approaches and developments in both countries. Regardless of their search for gender-neutral positioning, which more often than not results in confirming masculine dominance as the norm, it seems that some of the women still, if unconsciously, point out an important task through their stories. If being a woman is to be deprived of equality, then being a feminist—and this is the door behind which the task hides—is to take responsibility to redress this wrong and redefine the meaning of being a woman.

4.3 Muslim and Feminist Identities

Zilka Spahić-Šiljak

The intersection of Muslim and feminist identities in BiH and Kosovo is part of a larger discussion of the ethno-national and ethno-religious revival and divisions in the post-war period, the interface of Islam and modernity, and, finally, the role of religion in secular society. This chapter displays the dilemmas Muslim women in BiH and Kosovo encounter about their ethnic/national and religious identities and feminist identities in the public realm. The focus groups in both countries shed light on the diverse trajectories and "the multiple positioning" of women, especially that which "constitutes everyday life and power relations central to it." (Davis 2008, 70) Interaction and interplay between religion, ethnicity and gender as important parts of the BiH and Kosovo identity mosaic affect "the multiple positioning" of women in these societies.

One of the first challenges was understanding and defining Muslim identities in BiH and Kosovo. The socio-political and historical dynamic in regard to religion is different in these two countries. (Chapter 3.3) First, we will briefly examine some scholarly ideas about Islam in BiH. The BiH paradigm of European Islam, which includes great diversity of belief and practices that peacefully co-exist, is best seen in two views: of Islam as "an individual faith" (Fikret Karčić), and of Islam as "a common culture, and civilization" (Enes Karić). These categorizations most accurately reflect Islam in BiH today. Islam as a "common culture" is an umbrella whose shadow embraces different perceptions, understandings and practices of Islam in BiH:

> It is very important that Bosnian Muslims have for long accepted the principle of Islam being practiced and expressed within a secular society and a secular state. In today's European context, this principle helps Bosnian Muslims since it assures them an expression of Islam without any ideological diktat and without any political and ideological fiat on what the "true Islam" is. Islam in Bosnia is the common treasure of all Bosniacs, this precious treasure from which they have drawn for centuries their multiple religious, cultural, artistic, literary, urban, architectural inspirations. According to this conception... Islam cannot become anybody's property or monopoly, nor can it become the object of pragmatic adaptations to the political imperatives of the day. (Karić quoted in Bougarel 1997)

Compared with BiH Muslims, who have not demonstrated significant tendencies towards nationalism, Kosovars can be considered a "common nation" because they are more united around their national identity than around religion. (Chapter 3.3) Ger Duijzings mentioned the continuous efforts of the 19th century Albanian national movement "to neutralize the legacy of religious

cleavages for the politics of Albanian national identity," homogenizing Albanians around common language. (Duijzings 2000, 159) He noted the changes that took place with the demise of communism and the revival of religious divisions in the late 1980s, reflected in the debate among Albanian intellectuals about the role of religion in national identification and its place in public life. (Duijzings 2000, 164)

Most women in BiH and in Kosovo readily retain a Muslim identity, but their understanding of it varies significantly with their level of ritual observance and professed faith in God. Also varied are the self-assigned designations: just "Muslim" or "Bosniak Muslim" or "Bosnian Muslim" in BiH, "Kosovar (or Albanian) Muslim" in Kosovo. (Chapter 3.3)

The focus groups were designed to elicit the views both of women who practice religion and women who are atheists or agnostics. However, it would appear from what we heard that most women in the region declare themselves Muslim believers, even if non-observant. Also, it turned out that the meaning of religious identity differs from woman to woman and that we can differentiate between those who understand Muslim identity in cultural, ethnic, or religious context, but that these categories are not fixed or final and that they are closely intertwined. Most women, who describe themselves as non-observant of ritual, nonetheless feel as fully a part of Islam as those who are observant. They see themselves as continuing the tradition of accommodating both diversity of practice within Islam and cultural diversity within their nation:

> I had a religious education and am a believer, having been raised in the spirit of the religion. The core of my personal identity, though I am not pietistic, and the bulk of what I know about cultural and religious identities, is Islam. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

> When I've been asked about my identity I say I am Muslim and believe in God, but I don't think of myself as applying any element of Islam to my daily life. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

> I believe in God, but do not know anything about religious practice and I consider myself a Muslim. (non-observant, under 35, Kosovo)

Although there are differences in the extent to which ethnic/national identity is embraced in BiH and Kosovo, the attitudes of women towards religion in these two countries are very similar. The above statements reveal the complexity of Muslim identity in post-socialist BiH and Kosovo. This makes establishing a typology of believers a challenge. Researches uncovered the huge discrepancy between religious identification and level of observance in BiH and Kosovo. Around 90 per cent of the population declare a religious identity and 25-

35 per cent is either regularly or periodically observant. (Abazović 2009, Spahić-Šiljak 2010, Kuburić 2011) For this analysis we employed two main sociological types of Muslims: observant and non-observant believers. The observant type (Ćimić 1996, 95-96) corresponds to the conscientious believer (Ćimić 1996, 95-96) who practices all religious duties, participates in faith-community life and integrates religious teachings in raising and educating her children. The non-observant type (Cvitković 2004, 178) corresponds to the ordinary believer (Ćimić 1996, 95-96) who does not know the dogma and teachings of religion very well, perceives religion mostly as an important part of her family tradition (like mawlid, tawheed, slava, confirmation, etc.), and occasionally attends religious services. There are subdivisions within these two types of believers, but to be consistent with the divisions of our focus groups (women who observe and do not observe the practices of religion) we will keep this basic typology. Most women, however, could be more accurately described as occupying a place somewhere between observant and non-observant Muslims, and since religion is an intimate personal matter, it is hard to draw the line and make strict divisions.

Both, observant and non-observant Muslim women hold humanistic values of "decency" as a part of their faith and worldview. Kolind (2008, 135) argues that these humanistic behaviors (being a good person, helping those in need, and not doing harm to anybody), viewed by many as the core of their religious identity, are a prerequisite for a true believer.

> I am proud to be a Muslim and feel that a Muslim woman believes in God, respects other people and diverse cultures. She is honest and does not do anything to harm another human being. (observant woman over 35, BiH)

> I am a Muslim woman who believes in God. I do not do bad things. When I sense fear or the need for protection, I turn to God and ask for refuge through prayer. (non-observant, under 35, Kosovo)

These humanistic behaviors are considered universal values in all religious and non-religious traditions, but not all women in the focus groups accepted them as sufficient elements of their Muslim identity. Most of the women said that they are believers, but they distinguish between the *true believer* (pravi vjernik) and *believer* (vjernik)—as some other researchers also found during field work in BiH. (Funk Deckard 2011, 138)

A deeper analysis of these categories can be seen in the debate on Muslim identity between observant and non-observant women in BiH and Kosovo. Some observant women criticized what they saw as the arid traditionalism of many non-observant Muslims. It is common for non-observant Muslims to

legitimize their religious identity through family tradition, ancestors who used to be prominent religious intellectuals or upper class Muslims of aristocratic origin, such as *begovi* (from "bey," an aristocratic title in Ottoman times), or close relatives who were dedicated believers and who performed *hajj* (pilgrimage) or were famous Sufi shaykhs. These "second-hand credentials" of religious identity annoy some of the *observant*:

> And I really hate when people start saying, Well, you know my grandfather, father was a hajji, an imam, et cetera. They have created a vision of Islam they use to resolve conflict within themselves. It allows them to rely on the religious reputations of their ancestors without committing to more than celebrating holidays and making cakes while attacking those of us who work to form our own broader practice. (observant, under 35, BiH)

Tensions between non-observant and observant Muslims were intensified after 1989, when religion re-emerged in the public realm, contesting and opposing the secular state. Scholars draw attention to the "oppositional construction of religion and the secular" and lack of "mutually interacting transformation" (Cady and Hurd 2010, 5) that in the Balkans are even more complex and challenging. Religion was used as a political tool to create pressure for the homogenization of ethno-national groups in BiH, and, today, "the coalescence of ethnic and religious identification returned with such a vengeance that it is mandatory to use the single word 'ethnoreligious.'" (Mojzes 1994). Religization of politics and politization of religion (Vrcan 1999) nurtured an unhealthy and unproductive relationship between religion and politics, fostering criticisms, uneasiness and misunderstandings by both non-observant and observant Muslims in the secular BiH state.

Non-observant Muslims are criticized for neglecting religious duties, for absence of sensitivity to religion in the public domain, and for creating the strong polarization of non-observant and observant Muslims (secular and religious). Observant Muslims who re-discovered Islam after 1990 are perceived as new-born (novopečeni), or born-again (novokomponovani) or "Muslims of '92". (Funk Deckard 2011, 138). Both non-observant Muslims and those observant Muslims who have always been traditional believers—observing the five pillars of Islam—are very wary of the newcomers because many former communists and atheists used religion to gain an advantage during and after the war. Although, of course, many newcomers were genuinely searching for the Divine and seeking spirituality, and discovered or rediscovered Islam as the most suitable answer.

The key contested issues are the *public* manifestations of religion: the hijab; religious education in public schools; and public religious observance, such as

juma prayer on Friday. It is the old dilemma that always crops up in negotiating the role of religion in a secular state without compromising secular principles. If "secularism is taken to be a sign of modernity, the opening democracy, the triumph of reason and science over superstition, sentiment and unquestioned belief" (Scott 2007, 95), how can one understand and accept re-affirmation of religion in the public domain and reconcile it with democratization processes in BiH and Kosovo?

Women in the focus groups brought up this issue while discussing the appropriate forms of religion in public life. Non-observant Muslim women perceive religion as a private matter. Saba Mahmood described this phenomenon as a "secularized conception of religiosity" with "understanding that a religion's phenomenal forms – its liturgies, rituals, and scriptures – are inessential to the universal truth it symbolizes." (Mahmood 2009, 208). Most Muslim women in BiH and Kosovo live as secularized Muslims, keeping religion as a part of their family tradition but not observing *fard* (obligatory duties). Most observant women, however, want recognition of their religiosity in the public domain. In that way—as Göle explained the position of second-generation immigrant Muslim women who embraced the veil and hijab in Europe:

> …the veiled girls do not resemble the women of the first generation of immigrants. Contrary to the later, as feminine actors and Islamists, they situate themselves in a double logic, enjoy a double capital…at once religious and also secular and scientific. (2011, 136)

Religious education appeared to be an important question for some young women who had not been raised with that education. Many families did not teach their children religion during the socialist period, and today those "children" are emotionally and culturally attached to some rituals, but do not practice them. They were raised in the humanistic spirit: to be "decent" people, but in a non-religious sense. (Kolind 2008, 135)

> Religion emerges from family culture. I was not raised in that culture, knowing Dua [prayer] and specific religious practices, but my parents educated me not to do wrong to others, and to help people. They taught that life is like a boomerang, you do something today and tomorrow it will return to you. (non-observant, under 35, Kosovo)

For some women in Kosovo, although religion was not part of their primary socialization, it became an attractive subject for study and exploration. In late 1990, during the war in Kosovo, some young women found or re-established their faith in God, criticizing their parents for being ignorant, over-secularized, with anti-religious sentiments—all, with some justice. Many citizens in BiH and

Kosovo became secularized during the socialist period, and the highly educated population urban areas largely excluded religious observance and teachings family life. So generations were raised without religion or religious education, knowing only holidays and some commemorative practices.

> I was born in a Muslim family like all of you. Until eighth grade I hadn't read anything about religion. When I started reading about this subject, my parents prohibited it, fearing that I might turn to another path. Though this prohibition has been terrible, I plan to read more about religion. I am a Muslim who believes in God, even though I don't dress accordingly or pray. There were incidents I witnessed during the war that convinced me of God's power. (non-observant, under 35, Kosovo)

Current anti-religious attitudes derive either from ignorance or fear of being associated with Islamist groups whose image does not fit European or Western ideas of "civilized" society. There is also anxiety about "conversion" to Islam of younger non-observant Muslims who "discovered" Islam through various missionary works (*da'wa*) of Salafi or Wahabi Muslims. Parents did not want their children to become backward and isolated members of society, or, worse, to be associated with terrorism. Young people who embraced Salafi or Wahabi forms of Islam explain that they discovered a "real" Islam, "right path" or "authentic" Islam. They used to be Muslims culturally, non-observant Muslims who kept certain rituals and holidays, but without knowledge and deeper reflection on their faith. Once they met Muslims who were distinctly more active practitioners of their faith than the existing religious establishment of the Islamic Community—and who offered simple answers about life and the hereafter—they became captivated by the new dynamic of religious practice and decided to completely transform their old life-style.

The new life-style sometimes required breaking all relationships with those not on the "right" path, including parents and friends who plainly did not comply with the strong rules that the new life-style required to be obeyed. Some Bosnian scholars—like Enes Karić (1998), Rešid Hafizović (2010), and Esad Duraković, deploring the Wahabi and Selefi influence in BiH, sharply oppose that formalism, with its rigid interpretations of Islam, reducing it to a set of rules that need to be blindly followed and obeyed. The practices of Salafi and Wahabi Muslims coincide with new religious movements, and are characterized by intensive socialization, strong group interaction, a simple black-and-white view of religious or every-day life questions, and by offering instant solutions to complex religious questions. Altogether, they attract young people who were not raised in a religious family and had no prior experience with religion.

Discussion of the appropriate form of practicing Islam took place in the focus groups. The majority of non-observant Muslim women in BiH and

Kosovo declared their religious identity, but drew a clear distinction between the Arabic and Persian forms of Islam imported during the war to BiH and Kosovo. Women in BiH emphasized anxiety about radicalization of Islam that is not part of the Bosnian tradition, which is mostly described as liberal, open, flexible, inclusive, and as a "common culture" (Karić quoted in Bougarel 1997).

> We are Muslims but we are not extreme, in contrast to the Wahabis, who are new Muslims I am afraid of, and who I feel do not belong to our environment. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

Although the discussion about Muslim identity started with emphasis on humanistic values and common culture for all Muslims, some non-observant and observant women later mentioned that a Muslim ought to meet basic criteria of Islam, such as obeying the five pillars: believing in God and that Muhammad is His messenger (shahadah); offering five daily prayers (salah); fasting during Ramadan (sawm); paying taxes (zakah); and making a pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj). These basics of Islam are sometimes referred to fard). Some observant women added wearing hijab as an obligation if a Muslim woman was to be a "true" believer. However, many of the non-observant and of the observant women who do not wear hijab do not consider doing so essential to their faith in God.

> I describe a Muslim woman as a woman that wears a hijab, prays, doesn't drink alcohol, fasts during Ramadan and does many other things. I haven't read much but I know that these are the basic teaching of Islam. [Yet] we all drink alcohol, we don't pray, and still consider ourselves Muslim. (non-observant, under 35, Kosovo)

> Many Muslims today do not pray and [do] drink alcohol, but still declare religious identity. They stop drinking during Ramadan time, but for Bayram (Eid) many start drinking again. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

This was strong self-criticism, but showed awareness among non-observant Muslim women of the foundations of Islam. The results of Tone Bringa's study of BiH Muslims in the late 1980s described them as quite secularized, most men drinking alcohol and not praying and fasting, or only doing so occasionally, but still considering themselves Muslims. (1995, 174-176) In our research, Muslim women from urban areas confirmed that some of them also drink alcohol and still declare a religious identity. It is the BiH and Kosovar way of being Muslim, not only today and during the socialist period, but even in Ottoman times because 'ulama made concessions to some cultural practices as long as Muslims observed other religious duties. The only difference today is that women do the same things as men, which was unconceivable before, and even today is not socially acceptable. They know, as the woman from Kosovo

admitted, that drinking alcohol is prohibited, but they find a way to reconcile it with their faith in God. This accommodation of markedly less than strict observance with a Muslim identity shows how complex identity formation is, and despite definitions, rules and social pressure, Muslims find their way to "multiple positioning" (Davis 2008, 70) in their practice of Islam and their way of defining and defending it. These women use their own strategies to position themselves (cooke 2001, 59) as Muslims and moderate feminists in the secular contexts of BiH and Kosovo.

Observant Muslim women go further, explaining the inner satisfaction of being believers that helps them overcome various challenges in their lives—such as illness and loss of loved ones and family members—and live fulfilling and purposeful lives. For them, observing religion provides inner peace and happiness and helps them pass more easily through life. "The fact that we do everything for God's pleasure makes the difficulties of practicing Islam easier in the context of a complex society such as Kosovo." (observant, under 35, Kosovo)

Similar attitudes were shared by observant women from BiH claiming that Muslim women who do not wear hijab "envy" them because observance reflects a moral and fulfilling decent life, their faith helping them live and radiate patience, calmness, and understanding. The pietistic life continues to strengthen their faith and upgrade moral virtues desirable for believers. In turn, performance of *fard* helps them further shape their behavior in accordance with pietistic life. They believe that religion is a powerful psychological and spiritual tool that helps them become better people and find inner peace and strength. Their perspective epitomizes the meaning of religion in peoples' lives and excludes non-religious worldviews and even the possibility that some can find peace and strength outside religion.

> Today people are nervous, very nervous…Many do not understand the calm that can replace this nervousness, a calm that allows for clear thinking. It is easier to be in the company of people who are calm. A Muslim woman can find security in the knowledge that she is part of a bigger plan, reveled to her by her religion. Those without religion do not have this particular pillar of strength. (observant woman under 35, BiH)

As noted, most younger non-observant Muslim women in BiH described religion as a private matter, and Islam as a flexible and inclusive religion that enables different individuals to live together without constraints. However, their understanding is framed within their desire for internalization of religion, avoiding any outward form of Muslim identity, hijab being the most controversial. (This will be discussed more fully in section 4.4 of this chapter.) Inclusivity and flexibility mean the possibility of believing without pressure to show religiosity and to confront the social context in which they live.

> I believe Islam is a broad faith without the limitations some people have tried to impose. I feel that as a Muslim, whether I am a believer or not, is a personal issue, and that practices like the headscarf are not necessarily measures of belief. Though nothing in the extreme is good, there are no limitations on me or other Muslims. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

Praying in one's mother tongue was also mentioned as important in connecting and re-connecting with God, a support for many women who want to keep their faith alive without regular prayer in Arabic. Many women have not had an opportunity to learn Arabic—or even prayers in Arabic—but the war strengthened their faith and apperception of the numinous. Instead of studying the traditional way of observing Islam, they kept their religiosity private, developing their own way of communicating with the Divine. It is less demanding and gives them more flexibility in everyday life.

> I am Muslim who believes in God, even though I do not dress accordingly or pray the traditional prayers. Incidents during the war showed me that God has power and that God saved me with a miracle. Though I always believed, since the war, my belief has intensified, and I pray all the time, using my own words from my mother tongue. (non-observant, under 35, Kosovo)

Another marker of Muslim identity is going to mosque for prayer, although this is less popular among younger women. Many of BiH women experienced transformation of their faith during and after the war in BiH so that religion is now present in public life, intimately important to the majority of citizens. And while many became observant Muslims who attend ritual services in mosques, others internalized their faith to personal relations with God. Indeed, it is interesting to note the increasing internalization of religion, especially among younger generations of women. Non-observant women in BiH and Kosovo could be classified as "believers without belonging," (those who do not belong to religious communities) (Davie 1994) while most observant women could be classified as believers *with* belonging, although some observant Muslims fulfill all religious duties, but do not belong formally to any faith community. They either do not want to be burdened with the obligation that being a congregant imposes on members, or they prefer to stay away from the ethno-national and ethno-religious politics. In BiH, ethno-religious political division of people into three constituent "peoples" limited their citizenship within the frame of the "ethnopolis" (Mujkić 2008) and within gender politics framed by ethno-nationalistic rhetoric (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989), so many became reluctant to be associated with politicized religion.

> I try to avoid mosques now because I believe visiting them is not crucial to my faith. I have changed, and I do not know if it is for better or worse, because our society has

> made me feel differently towards religion. I do not know to what extent going to the mosque for example builds my relationship towards religion. I have a circle of friends, a part of which are Muslim women who underwent a similar transformation. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

> Everything is so politicized, even religion, and I do not want to go to mosque and hear about politics. (observant, over 35, BiH)

Other observant women shared these feelings: they are not comfortable in mosques, where they must sit behind the men, keep silent and not take active part in prayers and ritual—as a younger woman from BiH explained.

Muslim women from Kosovo did not raise that issue; some just mentioned that they prefer praying at home, not publicly displaying their religiosity. Recent debate about fences for women in the yard of the Bey mosque in Sarajevo, the main mosque in BiH[1] and one of the oldest, provoked public furor about the role of a woman in mosque. Some women commented that they liked being "protected" by the fence, able to pray in peace and not be disturbed by curious tourists, while other women saw the fences as an attack on their freedom in mosque and new limitations on the space for them in mosque that might result in full exclusion of women from public prayers. (Fejzić 2011) Most Muslim women, however, do not question gender segregation in the mosque, explaining that it befits the form of ritual and prayer, which requires prostration and specific body positions during prayer that make them uncomfortable in front of men.

Muslim identity is closely related to ethnic identity and the two very often overlap. The situation for BiH Muslims is even more complicated because their ethnic identity was defined through religion. (Chapter 3.3) The focus groups surfaced a significant difference in how BiH and Kosovar Muslim women identify themselves. BiH women think about their religious identity and only then their Bosniak (or Bosnian) identity, but Kosovo women considered national identity (Albanian and Kosovar) as more important than religious identity. National identity is crucial for Kosovars (Chapter 3.3), and even religious leaders there see Islam through the lens of Albanian national identity.

> I have experience with some people here that practice Islam, but who are more Albanian than Muslim… This is like the imam who taught me… his opinions sometimes sounded more Albanian than Islamic. (observant, under 35, Kosovo)

This contributes to the hypothesis that Kosovo Muslims are not a homogeneous community. But some observant Muslim women from Kosovo take a more diplomatic tack with the question of identity: "It depends how I've been asked. If asked for nation I say Albanian, if asked for religion I say I am Muslim." (observant, under 35, Kosovo)

As noted, most women in BiH emphasized religious and cultural identities over ethnic/national identities; but observant Muslim women—despite their deploring the politization of Islam—seem more comfortable using a combined Bosniac Muslim identity than do non-observant women. And, although observant women are more inclined towards religious than ethnic/national identity, they sometimes use their Muslim identity as their ethnic identification—a heritage from the period when Muslims were only allowed to declare their ethnic identity as Muslims with capital 'M'. (Chapter 3.3)

> One of my first identities since childhood was Muslim and I think I recognized it before my identity as a woman. I grew up during socialism when religion was not very popular. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

Non-observant women—particularly those who were engaged in promotion of women's human rights and resisted the ethno-national and ethno-religious "othering" politics—prioritized the "identity of a woman" (Mlinarević et al. 2011) over other identities that were mentioned earlier in the discussion on being a woman. "I am a woman first and then a Muslim, a Bosnian, or any other identity important to me." (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

Identity politics in BiH and Kosovo reflect complexity and intersectionality between the ethnic, religious, regional, woman's and other identities that put women in a position to decide the dynamics, hierarchies and importance of these identities. In their attempt to position themselves towards ethnic, religious and civic identity, women always face challenges to reconcile all these identities and not be reduced to only one of them. That positioning is quite demanding and challenging in the divided ethno-national and ethno-religious BiH society, as well as in the ethnically homogenized Kosovo society, with disputes on religious identity in the public domain.

4.4 Hijabi and Non-hijabi Feminists

Muslim women in the focus groups discussed the connections between Islam and feminisms, but the biggest portion of the discussion referred to the hijab issue, which is understood as a part of a Muslim woman's identity or a precondition for being a good and pious Muslim or Islamic feminist.

Interestingly, most women in BiH and Kosovo verbally declared an Islamic/Muslim feminist identity, but there is a difference between observant and non-observant women in defining the scope and content of that identity. A minority of non-observant and observant women denied the compatibility of feminism and Islam. Non-observant women argued that religion should be

a private matter and women should have freedom of choice and movement, which, they maintained, most observant women do not have since they are controlled by their fathers, brothers and husbands. On the other hand, some observant women repeated the idea that Islam is a complete system of life with fundamental rights for women so they do not need any kind of feminism to achieve their rights. Both groups, however, failed to take into account that many of the observant women are well-educated, as was confirmed during the sessions, are successful business women and scholars who have more freedom than some of the non-observant and those observant women who are less educated and less privileged, and that they are outspoken advocates for women's human rights. They also ignored the fact the Muslim women do need women's human rights, because rights guaranteed in the Qur'an have been denied them, the text misinterpreted by male-elite scholarship to imprison women in traditional gender roles "justified" in the name of God (Abou El-Fadl 2001).

Hijabi women accept feminism with reservations. They criticize the exploitation of woman's body in media that present women as a beautiful doll, mostly concerned with her appearance, who can be successful only in certain branches of show business. Such portrayals keep women in an "immature state" and outside of "serious" business such as politics and power—as Betty Friedan explained in tracing the development of expectations of feminine fulfillment through media, school and primary socialization. (1963, 77) This societal attitude does not allow women to make systemic advancement in public life and become equal partners to men.

> In my world as a devoted Muslim I consider myself feminist and ready to fight for our rights as women. Those who consider things like fashion choices to be feminism, misunderstand what it means to be a feminist. I feel that in Kosovo, many women who consider themselves feminists on the basis of certain media portrayals are really not feminists at all. (observant, under 35, Kosovo)

Another important question discussed by observant women in BiH and Kosovo was how far they could go with their feminist identities. Although most understand feminism as a struggle for women's rights and advancement of women in both the private and public realms, they were not ready to go beyond certain moral and religious boundaries, such as accepting abortion or religious leadership for women. Interestingly, these women jumped to the most controversial issues right away without first considering other important questions such as participation of women in the community and taking some other leadership positions. Although there are no legal or theological obstacles to women becoming muftis, exegetes, presidents of religious communities, preachers, etc., the panelists did not address those questions, avoiding them

altogether and bringing up, instead, the extreme points of dissent between the mainstream and feminist positions.

> There are limits to everything, so the question is, how far can we go with feminism—to being imams? (observant, over 35, BiH)

> I am a feminist who does not support abortion. Is this counter to the simplicity of consistency? If so, does this mean I cannot be a feminist? (observant, under 35, Kosovo)

> I believe that there are no female imams because men and women have different outlooks. In the abstract, I am not against female imams, but in the reality of practice I am comfortable with their absence. (observant, under 35, BiH)

Highly educated observant and non-observant women under 35 in BiH tend to be more open towards Islamic or Muslim feminist identity, although they do not know much about it and do not want to declare that identity publicly. Most said that they had heard of feminism, but have not had an opportunity to read or to study about it. But they specifically disassociated themselves from radical forms of feminisms considered undesirable in the society: "We do not need feminism—not that radical movement of course—but a moderate one, just to tell women their rights." (observant, under 35, BiH)

Muslim women in Kosovo also accepted connections between Islam and feminism, but they immediately explained that they do not want to "disturb" men: "I am feminist, but not excessively so." (non-observant, under 35, Kosovo) They did not explicitly define "disturbance," but throughout the sessions it became clear that it refers to non-interference in male-dominated spheres of life, both religious and political, and to not demanding positions and roles that are traditionally not assigned to women. This is similar to the attitudes of women and men in BiH surfaced by other research (Spahić-Šiljak 2010, 235-297), reflecting strict divisions of genders, assigned roles, and preservation of a hierarchical gender structure as the norm. Indeed, when the majority of women in BiH and Kosovo spoke about gender and feminism, it was in the context of prevailing stereotypes and understanding of those subjects.

In the last decade, under the auspices and support of UN and European gender- equality organizations, the concept of gender equality was introduced in BiH and Kosovo. A legal framework and gender-state mechanisms were established (the Law on Gender Equality in BiH 2003, and Law on Gender Equality in Kosovo 2004). Nevertheless, women who clearly stand for gender equality and do not declare feminist identity are derided and given pejorative names such as "genderuša." In Bosnian, that denotes a woman who promotes gender equality, a job that is neither valued nor recognized as relevant or

important. The tone used to call somebody "genderuša" is teasing and amused, decreasing the significance of her work and making her struggle irrelevant compared with "serious" issues.Women's human rights advocates have always been silenced and suppressed—by socialist political agendas in the past and ethno-nationalist political goals today (Chapter 3). Feminism is not only rejected as incompatible with Islam, but also as anti-Islamic. The recent attack on Gender Studies graduates at the University of Sarajevo by the magazine Saff, demonstrates how some Islamist groups use and misuse gender and feminism to fight against gay people and the new anti-discrimination rules on sexual orientation. All this makes standing up for women's human rights a less worthy and "dangerous" job, and many women and men are reluctant to accept that role in public.[2]

Gender equality is formally accepted by state institutions in BiH and Kosovo, but the mindset of ordinary citizens does not find it natural and applicable to their own lives. It is perceived as something imported from the West and imposed by the state, not an authentic local initiative. Promotion of gender equality shakes the existing traditional gender architecture, with its binary positions of male and female spheres, and the roles men and women are assigned in life. As a result, many reject gender equality and feminism, designating promoters of women's human rights as "genderuša" or "mahaluša" (Arabic: *mahalle,* adopted by Turkish; a neighborhood, or quarter, where everyone knows each other, knows personal details and gossips about them). So a woman who publicly champions women's rights is a "mahaluša," somebody who talks too much and who transmits gossip—in this case "false" information about equal rights of women and men in a society with a traditional patriarchal gender architecture. It might further imply that she is not reliable and not fit to engage in serious matters, such as politics or important public jobs, somebody who is "dangerous" because she is questioning the traditions and social norms of gender relations. To avoid labeling as feminist or "genderuša," observant women proposed new terms that would be "subtler" and "non-intrusive," such as "female issues," or "the woman's question," or simply women's rights. This strategy might seem helpful, but as some non-observant women from BiH noted, when a woman *publicly* defends her opinion about a certain issue, not necessarily about gender, men consider her a feminist. Those panelists went on to explain that men are afraid of powerful women, especially the ones who show strong intellectual capacity and the courage to debate men in public. Knowing that, most women choose to be less "intrusive" and less "aggressive" while trying to obtain their human rights. So it was individuals from the academic community and women's NGOs who built epistemic communities (Assiter 1996, 84) in BiH and Kosovo.

Non-observant Muslim women who were highly educated in religion and observant Muslim women both raised the question of the monopoly men have in the interpretation of Islam that significantly affects development of women's rights in Muslim societies. Classical Islamic theological and legal thought is often authoritarian, patriarchal, and very often discriminatory towards women. (Abou El-Fadl 2001) Today, in many Muslim countries where Shari'a is the only law—or a major source of applicable law—gender equality is reduced or denied. (Chapter 2) That is why Muslim women in BiH and Kosovo refer to Shari'a as negative, not desirable in their social contexts: they live in Europe and strive to become a part of the European Union. They want women to be involved in the process of interpreting Islam and not to take for granted the existing interpretative legacy that excludes women from partnership with men. A small number of these women are aware of the new literature published on women and gender issues. However, the bulk of literature that discusses women and Islam is still written by men who mostly perpetuate gender segregation, hierarchy or complementarity that enshrines the principle "separate, but equal," confining women to family life with the possibility of being engaged in the public realm only after they have fulfilled their primary duties as wives and mothers. (Spahić-Šiljak 2010,1 55, Šeta 2011)

> We are frozen as far as women's rights are concerned. Although Islam offers equality, men avoid talking about that, and the Arab world at large has destroyed that potential for equality. Here in Bosnia we are more European in our outlook, which may or may not be good, but does affect our religious practice, keeping it moderate. Though there is a growing body of *hadith*, religious literature, we still need women to inform other women about their rights. (observant, over 35, BiH)

> It is necessary to be constantly engaged in thinking and working so we do not take interpretations of texts for granted. (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo)

Non-hijabi women expressed their concerns about the stereotyping in Europe of Muslim women because of the way they are generally portrayed as wearing hijab or burqa, oppressed and subjugated to a man. They did not like to be associated with Muslim women from Middle-Eastern Muslim countries, but to be respected as *European* Muslims, who believe in God and practice Islam, but in harmony with their society. The strong social stigma and negative image attached to hijabi woman in Europe made some non-observant women in BiH and Kosovo shun any connection with hijabi or veiled women of Middle-Eastern origin. Ironically, their liberal feminist stance on secular religion leads them to discrimination and exclusion of others, in this case hijabi women, in secular European. They support the "othering" of women who are different, and claim the right to be arbiters of the relationship between religion and modernity.

> Members of other religions express strong prejudices about Muslims. For example, I had a baby in Germany, which was a difficult experience because once it was known I was Muslim, I was categorized as an Iranian women wearing a headscarf despite the absence of a hijab. Such prejudices have to be broken. (observant, over 35, BiH)

In BiH and Kosovo, both non-observant Muslim women who believe in God, but do not practice their religion, and highly educated observant Muslim women (with and without hijab) were more positive about the linkage of Islam and feminism, explaining that feminism in Islam is about dignity, equality and respect, which many Muslim scholars advocate. (Chapter 2) These women also think that the gender-equality principles enunciated in the Qur'an are already applied in Western countries while Muslim countries have failed to put those Qur'anic principles of justice, goodness, love, equality into practice and to provide women with a better position in their societies.

> I think that in many cases, religion slows down the development of equality. If Islamic feminism was accepted it could help to achieve gender equality. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

> In the Qur'an the role of women is clear. Western countries have integrated this reality into everyday life far more effectively than Eastern ones. Feminism exists in Islam, a religion which calls for justice, love, goodness. (observant, under 35, Kosovo)

However, non-observant Muslim women and observant Muslim women without the hijab in BiH expressed a negative outlook on the revival of religion after 1990 and the enforced display of religious symbols in public life, including hijab, as necessary for living a moral life and as a desirable code of conduct. Similar to discussions in Egypt, Iran and Turkey about hijab and veiling or unveiling as a precondition for the emancipation of women (Chapter 2), debates about hijab in BiH and Kosovo provoke opposing reactions among Muslim women. Non-hijabi women defend their right to declare Muslims identity without the hijab, criticizing the imposed perception that it is only the hijabi women who reflect moral and pious life. The secularized conception of religion prevents non-observant women from accepting the choice of hijabi as a doctrinal command (Mahmood 2009, 208), rejecting hijab and other forms of what they may consider religiosity.

Of course, wearing the hijab does not make a woman a moral and pious person, and is not a guarantee that she is, though its presence might be a helpful tool for helping keep religious boundaries and becoming closer to God, as some hijabi women explained during the focus groups. However, polarization of hijabi and non-hijabi women very often is supported by religious authorities who claim that a Muslim woman is sinful if she does not wear the hijab.

(Chapter 2) Some hijabi women engaged in women's faith-based organizations also contribute to further polarization, proclaiming that women are responsible for keeping moral values in the society.

> Instead of being a factor which helps in bettering the society, women make things worse. They wear such poor and provocative outfits, as if they want, by the language of their bodies, to announce to other people, I am available. Every man who is attracted by that kind of woman does not have a value and that kind of woman does not have a true natural value given by God. (Avdić 2001, 2)

Even if younger women do not observe religion, they use Islam as one of their primary identities. However, they do not accept hijab as a precondition for their faith in God, believing that the dress code is only a formal characteristic of the faith and does not make somebody a believer. Politization of religion and the increasing presence of religious symbols in public—including more hijabi women during and after the war in BiH streets, especially those veiled with the burqa, which is so associated with foreign Islamist organizations—made many women and men resistant to such *public* religion.

> Religious participation is focused primarily on external markers, even political preferences! For example, a woman wearing a headscarf is automatically assumed to be good despite the fact that a hijab says nothing about the individual. I share this view with others as a way to force them to re-think whether they actually act like Muslims immersed in their religion. I think that the way I dress does not affect my practice of religion. I keep reconsidering my views and studying Islam, one of my first identities. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

Notwithstanding that view, the hijab does appear to be a significant external marker of Muslim identity in BiH and Kosovo, and it serves to differentiate between the understanding of Islam and Muslim identity of women who perceive it as religious duty and a requirement for being a true Muslim and that of women who do not so perceive it. These non-hijab women also emphasize the difficulties hijabi women face, daily, because they display their religion in public and because, as Göle pointed out, they challenge modernity with their very presence (2011, 142); secularized Muslims and non-Muslims alike do not know how to respond to such a display. They either ignore it or ban it by law. For many of the non-hijabi, it also seems an extra burden in a social context that is distinctly not favorable to hijab, its wearers indirectly discriminated against in BiH, directly in Kosovo.

> From the beginning, what a Muslim woman is, is not clearly defined. I feel that a woman who believes in Allah in her heart and genuinely carries out her religious duties does not necessarily have to wear a hijab. I am a Muslim because I believe in

Allah; it is not hard for me to be a Muslim here in Bosnia Herzegovina. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

I don't think that a Muslim woman should be covered. If she observes prayers and other religious duties she can be strong woman and a Muslim, and it has nothing to do with hijab. (non-observant, under 35, Kosovo)

When discussing Muslim women's identities, most women referred to hijab as a demarcation line not only between observant and non-observant women, but also between observant women who do not think hijab obligatory and those who do. Observant hijabi women accept it as a sign of modesty and piety (Chapter 2), but admitted that they faced difficulties in everyday life, encountering discrimination just because they wear hijab—those in Kosovo even more than their counterparts in BiH, because Kosovo law on prohibiting hijab in public prevents many of them from getting an education and being employed by public institutions. In BiH, there are no legal obstacles, but, in practice, hijabi women suffer discrimination there, too, though it is cloaked in the sophisticated rhetoric of the ethno-national and religious leadership that glorifies motherhood as the most "honorable" job for women. Similarly, the secular elites also deprive hijabi women of their rights, arguing a need for women of a different image to represent their business or institution (Šeta 2011, 156-162), or to represent the state in secular Europe. The focus group narratives dramatized the stresses caused by secularization and de-secularization in Kosovo and in BiH and the obstacles hijabi women face in their struggle to be recognized as equal citizens and active agents of change in their respective societies.

Religion appeared to be one of the most important elements of identity and determinants of acceptability or unacceptability in BiH and Kosovo after 1989, and women were affected the most by it, especially the ones who accepted visible markers of their faith (hijab) and, as a result, were rejected as equal partners in those secular multicultural socio-political societies. Those women are triply oppressed: by the Western perception of Muslim women who adopt the hijab and, on the other hand, the bans on it in some European countries; by secular Muslims who do not want to be associated with radical Islam, with its overtones of terrorism and backwardness; and by the insufficient strength and confidence too often characteristic of hijabi women. Self-discrimination is also an important obstacle for many hijabi women, as confirmed by recent research on women and hijab in BiH (Šeta 2011, 145-146), which showed that many of these women had passive attitudes towards public engagement.

Focus group panelists in Kosovo reported that discrimination most affected women at universities and those who wanted to be engaged in the public domain. Their experiences reflect the prevailing prejudices and

stereotypes about religion as something backward and not compatible with modernity, progress, emancipation and liberation. The remnants of the socialist period linger on, portraying religion and its visible markers in a negative light, especially the hijab, which is mostly associated with rural, uneducated and less privileged women. Meeting hijabi women who are young, well-educated and outspoken in Kosovo—where hijab is legally banned!—comes as a provocative surprise to many coevals.

> It is very hard to be an observant Muslim woman in Kosovo because of the mentality and mindset of the people. When I was enrolled at University it was hard for me, because when people saw my hijab they looked at me like they saw a bear. They had a lot of prejudices and they assumed I was a conservative Muslim. If they want to know about my decision to wear a hijab, they should ask me, not judge me. This would reduce offense and harassment. (observant, under 35, Kosovo)

> My professor on the University informed me that I have two problems, first, I am woman and second, I wear a hijab. I told him my hijab, which I have worn for five years now, is a source of pride. I have faced additional challenges. Once enrolled in a Master's program, I applied for work. I was invited for an interview. During the meeting, I felt everyone was looking at me in a strange way, and subsequently, despite the fact that I had the best grades, the evaluation committee rated me very poorly, and I believe it was just because of the scarf. (observant, under 35, Kosovo)

Women in BiH focus groups reported similar experiences of hijabi women, who are judged both by Muslims and non-Muslims, with non-observant women raising that issue much more than hijabi women—perhaps because they were more exposed to behind-the-back comments and judgments about hijabi women. There is an interesting implication to the observation of one non-observant panelist who thought that hijabi women are better "protected" than women who expose their bodies. Thinking that the hijabi are better protected from men means that the context is traditional, patriarchal and very conservative, perceiving woman's body as something that can be disgraced, dishonored, and is necessarily invested with the honor of family, community and the entire nation (Eisenstain 1996, 43)

> Many people consider a woman a slave of her hijab. It is hard when people in her environment say, "Why do you mark yourself by that? You will not be able to go to the seaside!" I think that a girl with a hijab is protected from rude comments by boys, which is not the case with girl wearing mini-skirts. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

Most non-observant women under 35 in Kosovo do not consider the hijab consonant with emancipation and advancement of women in their society. There are prejudices and stereotypical perceptions about—and even fear of—

increasing numbers of hijabi women, who can "undermine" the secular nature of Kosovo. For the non-observant, modernity and hijab cannot be reconciled because they equate the hijab with illiteracy, docility, passivity, isolation and segregation—plainly unacceptable in a society where women, especially in urban areas, are active and interact with men.

> I believe most women who wear the hijab are not engaged with society. They don't work, they are not educated, society doesn't support them, and they don't work with foreigners. (non-observant under 35, Kosovo)

> Society doesn't support hijabi women. The increase in the number of these women will weaken feminism. (non-observant, under 35, Kosovo)

Muslim women in BiH also reported difficulties, especially if they live in Republika Srpska, where Serbian Orthodoxy is the dominant religion, or in parts of the Federation of BiH, with its Catholic majority. They usually say that it is easy to be a Muslim in Sarajevo, particularly in the Old City, with a Muslim majority and many hijabi women in the streets, while in other parts of BiH, especially where Muslims are the minority, hijabi women feel uncomfortable and unsecure. Revivalism of religion opened the debate both in BiH and Kosovo on the acceptability of religious symbols, in particular dress as an important symbol communicating attitudes toward religion and modernity.

BiH non-observant women under 35 explained that being a Muslim does not mean showing formal characteristics of the faith, but trying to adjust your life style to society's norms. They do not want to be associated with radical Muslims, who are considered aliens in BiH and Kosovo. Adjustment to modernity and the social context is important for the younger generation.

> One should adapt to modernity, which is different than the Prophet's time. We can believe [in God], but we have to adjust to the society or risk judgment by the general populace. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

> My city is a rather specific environment, a place where very few people practiced Islam before the war. The citizen majority were members of the Communist Party, hiding their faith. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

It is also interesting that non-observant women criticize those who had a troubled life, and suddenly decided to accept religion. The level of tolerance among these non-observant women is not high due to the expectations and rules of their society, so one who does not obey those rules is stigmatized. There are many pejorative epithets for newcomers to Islam who, having long distanced themselves from their religion and culture, suddenly experienced transformation and started practicing Islam. Indeed, many became over-enthusiastic about their

faith and would urge its more strenuous practice on other Muslims instead of being polite, friendly and non-intrusive as somebody was with them when they were seeking refuge in Islam. That kind of behavior provokes negative reactions from traditional Muslims, who do not want newcomers to preach to them and claim to be better Muslims than they are.

> Extremist groups fuel misunderstanding of those who are different. One person in my family has graduated from universities and gone from a tattoo to the headscarf, and still separated herself from our family of good Muslims. I do not understand her departure. (non-observant, under 35, Kosovo)

That statement indicates the importance of compliance with social norms, and anxiety about religious identity in public life, expressed by the younger generation in post-socialist BiH and Kosovo societies. Observant women were more concerned with feminist identity in public life, and reconciliation of the goals of feminisms and religion. Non-observant women were more wary about religious identity in the public domain, especially about hijab as a visible marker of woman's religious identity.

Both feminist and religious identities are partially accepted. Women appreciate the struggle for women's human rights, dignity, equality, while still respecting certain limits. Most of them declared religious identity, but made a distinction between faith and religion, between individual relations with God (or some higher power) and observing rituals, between formal symbols of religious identity and an individual's internal and spiritual state. When contemplating modernity, hijab—as the most controversial symbol of religion in public—provokes reactions both by opponents and proponents. Similar reactions, whether secular or religious, could be seen in regard to feminisms. Anxiety and judgments should be replaced by intercultural dialogue among all who are interested in power relations in both the private and public spheres of life.

Notes

[1] Putting something into practice in the Begova mosque usually means that it is to be put into practice in all other mosques because this is the main mosque; it is there that the Grand Mufti delivers the Friday and Bajram sermons (hutba), and is as the central symbol of religious life in BiH.

[2] Recent media portrayal of new Gender Studies graduates from the University of Sarajevo as "Masters of gayness" (Magistri pederizma), initiated by the Islamist magazine, Saff, demonstrates how difficult it is to step forward with gender and feminist identities. First came "The Masters of Gayness Promoted in Sarajevo: 44 Debauchery Experts" (U Sarajevu promovirana magistri pederizma: 44 magistra razvrata), in Saff, Number 303, October 28, 2011, then "European Union Against Gay Tyranny" (Evropsko ujedinjene protiv pederske tiranije), in Saff, Number 304, November 18, 2011, www.saff.ba, as a response to the Adjudication of Urgent Complaints Commission of the Press Council of BiH in reaction to their first text.

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5. Becoming A Feminist?

Zilka Spahić-Šiljak

Introduction

This chapter presents the life stories gathered in BiH and Kosovo from Muslim women who were recommended by focus groups panelists as prominent public figures, activists and proponents of women's human rights. As with the focus groups, most of the women selected declared a religious identity, describing themselves as Muslims, although most do not observe religious rituals—or observe it only partially—and can be classified as secularized believers who perceive religion as a private matter. Some, however, are observant believers with and without the hijab, and they want their observance to be accepted in public life as a part of their identity, and to be active in social life with the dress-code they find important to their belief system. We continue to use the same division of observant and non-observant as explained in Chapter 4.

After the main narrative of each woman's life story, and depending on how much she had already disclosed, we asked for additional information on the intersections of her identities as a Muslim woman and feminist—so we could make comparisons with what we had heard in the focus groups.

It is important to note that the life stories do reflect identities, but also how these women became what they are today. That was a shift from the focus groups, in which we discussed what it means to be a woman, to a concentration in the life stories on how outspoken female public figures told how they became public advocates of women's human rights and feminists. Most of them do not declare their feminist identities publicly or do not accept them at all although

their acts and deeds represent feminist engagement. In our analysis we tried to determine what type of feminism this engagement belongs to.

The life story methodology is specific, as explained in the Introduction, and is not identical to simply asking the interviewee to tell about her life: it is a construction of her story based on the weight she assigns to certain parts of her life. As some authors put it, "Historical truth is not the main issue in narrative... the subjective reality is, after all, what we are seeking in a life story." (Atkinson 1998, 60) Although no formal structure or procedure is imposed on telling the story, internal consistency of the narrative is important in interpreting one's life story, and we have tried to follow it in each interview. However, instead of going into a detailed analysis of each interview, we searched for common topics in all twelve, particularly those that are closely related to the intersection of feminine, feminist and religious identities.

We were looking for narrative strategies women in BiH and Kosovo employed while telling their stories and sharing their experiences of becoming engaged in the public arenas of their societies. Some of them placed emphasis on the early stages of their lives, some completely neglected the lives they led before they became engaged feminists; some referred to the war, and some did not even mention it. Some women were very contentious about their identities, debating with an imagined collocutor from their social context and criticizing the imported forms and practices of Islam, and also the forms of feminisms introduced from the West as well as some feminist practices in neighboring countries.

Through these kinds of arguments, some women attempt to escape collective identity "boxes," determined to identify themselves as *they* want to. They constantly oppose any kind of intrusions and limitations on their self-identifications, but they do not acknowledge differences both in feminisms and practices of Islam.

The topics we could extrapolate as common themes in the interviews are: family life, education, Muslim context and activism. Below, we follow this structure in presenting part of the life stories told us, with specific strategies each woman employed to explain her own process of becoming a feminist i.e. a human rights advocate. For anonymity, we use pseudonyms. The six women from BiH are: Zandra, Hana, and Bilka, all non-observant and over 35; Selma, non-observant but under 35; Ada and Zia, both women observant and over 35. The six women from Kosovo are: Miranda, Figen and Alma, all observant and over 35; Edita, observant under 35; Anita, non-observant over 35; and Vera, non-observant over 35.

5.1 Women and Family

Family appears as an important topic in life story narratives, corresponding to a certain extent to the discussion on being a woman in the focus groups (Chapter 4) because most women connect a woman's identity with family life and woman's duties in the family. In the Kosovo stories, being a woman is first and foremost connected to family life, but to a lesser extent in the BiH stories because women in BiH put more emphasis on professional orientation, work, and activism in explaining their becoming feminists. In this part of the chapter, we analyze how women described their families and family relations and how these relations shaped their lives and their identities. Family life mirrors all other relationships in private and public life, so it is important to see how the interviewees' family relations are governed and the sort of gender relations they have encountered in their own lives as well as which ones they champion today.

Social justice, Susan Moller Okin argued, is impossible so long as justice does not govern families, so long as inequalities in gender relations persist. Despite the extensive work of feminist political theorists in challenging the assumptions of the family as a non-political institution, the gendered division of labor within the family still exists, based on the unequal distribution of power, privilege and responsibility. In addition, contemporary theories of justice contribute to the gendered division of labor by *assuming* family life to be just. (Okin 1989, 9) As we noted in Chapter 1, political theorists maintained the separation of the "private" domestic life from the "public" political life (of politics and labor market), holding that these two spheres operated in accordance with different principles. Political views on the nature of women, reinforced by philosophical, religious, and scientific "wisdom" (Chapter 1), pronounced the family "non-political," which justified women's exclusion from civil and political life. Today— though perhaps not as explicitly as in the past, but cloaked in rhetoric about "democratic values," "human rights," and "differences recognized"—we can still discern the persistence of the same "separate spheres" tradition. Within the scope of theories, the family continues to be neglected (assumed to be just), while outside the scope of theories, injustice and inequalities in gender relations continue. Susan Moller Okin wrote:

> The substantial inequalities that continue to exist between the sexes in our society have serious effects on the lives of almost all women and an increasingly large number of children. Underlying all these inequalities is the unequal distribution of the unpaid labor of the family. (1989, 25)

In Chapter 5, women in the focus groups showed awareness of the unequal distribution of unpaid labor of the family, but many of them were not ready to

raise that question in public for fear of being labeled as feminists. Indeed, most opposed feminist identities in public because, in patriarchal societies, feminism is generally perceived as "anti-traditional" and "anti-family." The focus group discussions contained implications that the family is pre-personal, i.e., grounded in certain biological and psychological features of a male and a female. However, the discussions also revealed that, although the panelists accepted the essential biological differences, they also challenged the normative and social implications of these differences. Relying on these two theses extracted from their stories, we may conclude that some of these women are "difference feminists who stand for gender complementarity politics"[1].

The life stories had similar characteristics, but contained more in-depth illustrations of women's struggle to challenge the social implications of biological differences. It is important to note that these women's stories illustrate the process of women's constant negotiation with patriarchal cultural values and norms, and show the different influences that contribute to women's distancing themselves from the norms. Also, their stories demonstrated that their ethical decisions are based primarily on the perspective of care. According to Carol Gilligan (1982), that perspective gives special significance to attachment and compassion. Care can also be reinterpreted as a part of justice toward loved ones—and justice can be reinterpreted as a special mode of caring for others (Friedman 2000, 205-11). Okin insisted that the best theorizing about justice "has integral to it the notions of care and empathy" and "results from the carefully attentive consideration of everyone's point of view." (1989, 15) In the life stories, the distinction between justice and care is permeable (murky—as used by the women, the terms seemed almost interchangeable)—and one might say that the women's feminisms arise from this compulsion to care for others. After all, "care-focused feminists," as Tong wrote, "regard women's capacity for care as a human strength." (2009, 163) The research method itself, with its process-oriented nature, provided a multifaceted approach to understanding this permeability (ambiguity) of the justice/care binary.

In telling their stories, outlining the ways they have become what they are today, interviewees placed great significance on their experiences within their families. Many of them said that the family, as Okin put it, "is a crucial determinant of our opportunities in life, of what we 'become'". (1989, 16) Understanding of the family and the relations within it varied from story to story, but in most cases the stereotypical gender-dichotomized roles of women and men were clearly present. A few cases showed deviation from the set of social roles according to which mothers need to be self-sacrificial. (Tong 2009, 183) In a few stories, the women made no reference to family, which might be interpreted as a strategy to underline certain periods of their lives as crucial.

Overall, the differences in the women's stories on the subject of family involved their individual level of compliance with the traditional roles of women and men, and of distancing themselves from patriarchal norms and values.

Women's life stories revealed a few interconnecting factors that constituted the process of women becoming what they are today: tradition, education, activism and religion—all woven together as a part of the family fabric. Women perceived these factors as important in their constitution as ethical beings, even when they disagreed with particular outcomes (decisions and relations) that these factors initiated. In certain cases, women showed that family decisions caused by the influence of patriarchal tradition and religion could become a starting point for advocating different family relationships. For instance, Bosnian participant Selma (non-observant, under 35, BiH) expressed the highest degree of criticism towards the patriarchal hierarchies within the family but still admitted her ambivalence about changing these hierarchies. Thus, even in these cases, there is a strong inclination not to disturb the traditional family boundaries, and this very inclination is often the result of the belief in the natural matrix of unity. (Chapter 1) Nonetheless, diverse representations of family relationships and its complementary constituents (factors in the subject's formation) suggested that traditional norms and values within the primary family fluctuate from more to less patriarchal.

5.1.1 Primary Family

Primary family played an important role in identity formation of the interviewees and they referred to the parts of that period they found important. Interestingly, five out of six BiH interviewees underlined the communist heritage in their families, and some of them indicated that their fathers were members of the Communist League and wore partisan medals in the workers' movement. As children of prominent communists, they enjoyed certain privileges in education and employment. Most of them belonged to the Socialist Youth Movement, and later held important positions as Party members. The BiH women were very open about this: it was a part of family life and it helped these women reach high positions. For example, Hana (non-observant, over 35, BiH) became the leader of the Central Committee for Administrative Affairs at a very young age.

By contrast, in the Kosovo life stories there were almost no recollections of socialism—apart from brief explanations that they had to hide the fact that they observed religion so that they wouldn't lose their jobs. This could also be interpreted as one of the strategies Kosovar women employed in order to avoid speaking about the socialist period, which was evidently a difficult time for them. It also might indicate that women in Kosovo value the independence of

their state and the current social context more than women in BiH do. Memory politics in Kosovo and BiH are different, and through the life stories we can see what kind of memory politics women in both countries employ and what they find important in their lives.

Family and family life had a particular significance for Hana (non-observant, over 35, BiH), who in the introduction of her life story said that she felt as if her whole "life"—that is, her becoming a complete individual—was accomplished by age 35. By then, the major achievements in her life (getting a job, getting married, having a child) were made. The rest, she noted, "was just an upgrade." Other women over 35 felt the same. As Zia (observant, over 35, BiH) said, "It was as if I lived according to a list of rules: I was born, grew up, finished school, got married, raised children, got a job…" What Hana (non-observant, over 35, BiH) said displays a positive attitude towards her family and what she accomplished within, and with the support of, the family, while Zia's statement might be interpreted as a critique of her life before the war—lived without activism—and the beginning of her journey into the woman's movement in BiH and the construction of her feminist identity. There was a sort of "awakening" during the war in terms of re-discovery of their feminist, ethnic and religious identities, with the spirituality and strength to continue their education and work. This will be discussed in the sections on education and activism.

For Figen (observant, over 35, Kosovo) family is the foundation of a good society, despite challenges female children face in traditional family settings in rural areas. She was not allowed to go to school for a while, but thanks to her brother, and her decision not to give up, she continued her education and became a successful woman and activist. Although she characterized her life within the primary family as one that went against her wishes and desires, she still saw the family as the main parameter of a just and prosperous society and did not want to criticize the traditional family model (at least in certain aspects), as if she was afraid to lose something that meant very much to her—her identity and character.

Edita (observant, under 35, Kosovo) credited her connections with her primary family and partners as factors in her success in professional life and activism. Although proud of her successes, she emphasized that without her parents and her fiancée she would not have been able to achieve all this. Her parents supported her while she pursued her education and helped her become one of the best students:

> My mother usually taught us the social subjects, and our father trained us more in natural science subjects… they had so much patience with us, that helped me in those moments when I was tired and exhausted from studying; they kept encouraging me…

Selma's (non-observant, under 35, BiH) whole story revolved around the relationship with her mother. Mainly through this relationship, Selma expressed her attitudes towards the position of a woman in BiH society: family, marriage, motherhood, religion, and love relationships. The mother was always in direct communication and in direct confrontation. Selma even reproduced some dialogues, switching from her own voice to an imitation of her mother's. These parts of the life story were most often accompanied by sobbing. Selma seemed to despise her mother for not going against certain societal rules, but she also deeply sympathized with her for having to bear such a patriarchal husband and having to adapt to the new and revived religious identities of families. The father was presented as a passive family member who communicated with Selma only through her mother.

Her family was supportive in her education and career, but not in her independent life as a single woman. Although her mother was not religious she expected her daughter to marry a Muslim man, and have family. Selma is one of the rare interviewees who dared to deconstruct the concept of family and family life, questioning the happiness that traditional marriage is supposed to bring. Her mother emphasized ethnic and religious identity as the sine qua non for marriage regardless of her daughter's preferences regarding the personality and character of a future partner. Selma opposed this view, explaining that she dated some Muslim men who had only Muslim names but were not otherwise suitable and reliable. Through depicting this struggle with her family she wanted to deconstruct certain formal parameters imposed in traditional families for marriage—ethnic and religious identity without deeper insight into, or interest in, relationships requiring a look at a person's other values and characteristics.

> He must be a Muslim. No love there, you look at the checklist: he is normal, yes, healthy, yes, from a good family, yes. And that is it. This cripples the idea of love; everything becomes a duty, consciousness, function and this whole idea of suffering. Pain is the comprising part of life. I do not know where these constructs come from, perhaps poverty, communism. (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

Although religion became an important part of her life after the war, she does not want to live with somebody who just happened to belong to that ethnic and religious community and who fulfills the criteria constructed by other women who do not believe in love and partnership in the family. Another important moment in her life is her achievement in terms of economic independence and subsequent move out of the family home. This independence had its own price, as Selma passionately illustrated throughout her story. Ties with the primary family and traditional ways of life are momentous, and thus any move outside this realm carries many emotional sacrifices. Although her mother encouraged

her in becoming financially independent—"So that you have your own earnings; how important it is that a woman is economically independent"— that concept did not include becoming fully independent from parents before marriage. Selma acknowledged with disappointment that her mother did not share her joy in being independent, thus demonstrating a double moral standard for males and females. (Spahić-Šiljak 2010, 254) Whenever she insisted she wanted to live her own life, she would hear,

> "Your life, what life? From the parents' home directly to the husband's house; why should a woman live alone? It means she wants to be a whore" and other backward ideas… Whenever I come home at 2 a.m. she is upset and expects me to be ashamed in case someone saw. "What will people think of you?" … Or when my aunt calls from abroad and asks my mother "How are the virgins?" because despite the fact that my sister and I are in our thirties and financially independent, we are still expected to be virgins. "A girl is a girl and a woman is a woman." That is my mother's definition. And only when you get married do you become a woman. … "If you want to be a nice woman"— those are words I hate the most—"keep quiet, suffer, be a victim, always endure". (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

Selma's portrayal of her mother shows the intertwining of subordination and domination that enables women to stay within their assigned roles in patriarchal society and have power in the private sphere of life. When she asked her mother for permission to do something, she was usually sent to get permission from her father, and Selma would say:

> "Why? You are the one we always ask, your decision is always final." I remember that then she blushed and said "Shshshshsh….quiet, don't say that!" as if this is something that she knows, too, but that should not be said aloud … So I think that the patriarchal model is always there: you always seem to respect him, you ask him everything and he decides, but he actually does not have a clue.

This is a well-known example of strategies women in patriarchal societies use in order to have power and dominate family life while, on the surface, the father remains the head of family and seemingly makes all the decisions. Selma raises her voice against these patterns, seeking a more open and honest partnership in marriage and family, but at the same time finding herself repeating, unconsciously, the same patterns in her relationships. This is why she, throughout her narrative, repeated that she is torn between the way she was raised in her traditional family and a more egalitarian approach to gender politics. She admitted that she is a "combination of incredible contradictions," and that her friends keep telling her she is somewhere between being a traditional and a modern woman who knows what she wants and fights for it. But she always referred to the traditional norms of gender politics that surface

from time to time and are visible to people around her. She stressed the unequal distribution of housework, describing how her mother would wake up earlier and cook before work while her father rejected all domestic duties: "Well, there are the three of you, and you expect me to iron clothes?"

Another, quite different example of motherhood and its impact on woman's life appears in Bilka's (non-observant, over 35, BiH) story. She stressed the influence that her mother, as role model, had on her and her sister:

> My mother is a woman who was never a typical housewife... She was always a socially engaged woman, probably from her youth already. We grew up alongside a mother who did not work, who was getting vocational education … she always had an ambition to complete an education degree … although she never worked and she always encouraged us to read and go to the library … she was always attending some seminars and lectures … this left an impact on me … …What I got from that is this relationship: my mother instead of being at home is somewhere else. Perhaps if I searched for roots [of my activism] it would be this, to react against the stereotype question "what is a woman doing here instead of there [at home]" (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

Mothers were talked about in quite diverse ways: from occupying subordinated roles in their families, to having a dominant position within private sphere, to having equality with the father, to no reference to mothers at all. But in a majority of the stories, mothers were presented as guardians of their homes. They are the ones who kept practicing religion and transmitting these values to children during the socialist period (Spahić-Šiljak 2010) while fathers for the most part did not do so. However, even in situations where mothers were dominant within the family, they represent a model that our life-story participants do not support.

Motherhood was not mentioned much in the stories of Kosovo women, but most BiH stories refer to mothers as the important figures. Current feminist theories tend to focus generally on the way that motherhood and mothering are constructed by social practices. Rather than assuming that there is an innate mothering nature of women, these theories posit that the idea of motherhood is shaped by social norms and expectations, dominant assumptions as to what is a "good" and a "bad" mother, what women's roles should be, how they should be supported by communities and how the government should support families. (Kinser 2010) Motherhood and reproduction was present even in the BiH women's stories only to a certain degree. This lack of references does not mean necessarily that women were ignoring these issues; quite the contrary, their pervasive importance could be presupposed. Particularly interesting was the attitude of the Kosovo feminist, Figen (observant, over 35, Kosovo) who was

given an ultimatum when she sought to obtain a job at a university: she was to either take off her headscarf or seek employment somewhere else. In an attempt to demonstrate to her potential employer that her scarf was not merely a piece of fabric, but a part of her identity, she said: "Even if the future of my children was at stake, I would not take it off." She was using children not to devalue their importance, but to emphasize the importance of her own identity.

The importance of family in the women's stories is manifest in their understanding of power relations within the family. The women in Kosovo, almost as one, declared that their professional life is directly connected to their fathers' willingness to provide for their education. In some cases, fathers were seen as power figures who challenged the traditional patriarchal norms governing the family, which hold that education of young women is a special privilege. In BiH, this view is evidently less prevalent, but the participants from BiH still stated that their families instilled in them the values they uphold today. In both participant groups, families were mainly described as father-headed households, with the clear division of labor between mothers and fathers. (Spahić-Šiljak 2010) In some stories, this was presented in quite a neutral way; in others there was evident an awareness that, while this division of roles maintained peace in the family, this would not be the way the interviewees would manage their own family lives. Indeed, two of the younger women, one Bosnian the other Kosovar, specified gender relations within the primary family as the impetus that spurred their development in a way that made them gravitate toward feminism, activism and personal achievement.

Many participants stressed their role as supporters and helpers of their mothers—seen as something quite natural and expected from them. They did not explicitly emphasize close relationships with their mothers, but this can also be inferred as natural, not needing to be specifically articulated the way relationships with fathers must be. Take a Kosovo participant, Anita (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo) who said that six years after her mother's death, she has still not moved on from her grief. She found losing both of her parents painful, but the loss of her mother was particularly hard.

Fathers were dominant figures in the majority of the Kosovo feminists' stories. As noted, it was fathers who are credited with allowing female children to obtain an education, the merit even greater in families with many children. If we take into consideration that number of women who obtained higher education is still low, then the privilege felt by Kosovo participants was, in fact, quite unusual—the more so when we consider that education was not only a drain on family finances but inhibited by the socio-cultural limitations imposed by norms that militated against education of females—norms, as we

have seen, above, that some of the fathers challenged or ignored. Restricted access to education of female children in rural areas was even more evident in religious Muslim families because they were more concerned with controlling the movement of women and their sexuality. So, in addition to what are at very least three obstacles preventing their education in the general region, additional limitations are imposed in rural settings. In this light, a father's support for his daughters' education is understood as a modernist progressive approach and deviation from the norm.

The dominant figure in Miranda's (observant, over 35, Kosovo) story is her father and his achievements in professional and family life. He educated eight children, and since Miranda is the oldest, she started to work early in order to help him. She admires him, and the most emotional parts of her story were related to him. As a pious well-educated man he was supportive of her education and her activism, which was also not the norm at that time in Kosovo society. Fortunately, as she explained, the "norm" has been changing, and women nowadays have a greater access to education.

Vera's (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo) reference to her father also was positive: he also encouraged his daughters to pursue their education and career, although that brought him criticism from family and friends.

> I have been raised in a house were women were not discriminated against. We were lucky to have a father like that, because you know all the discrimination is done by fathers, they discriminate daughters' demands… Forty-five years ago my sister became an actress. Being an actress at that time was considered by the society to be immoral. (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo)

It seems that fathers played key roles in the emancipation of their daughters. Of course, pioneers in every society suffer from social pressure and stigma, but they accepted it in order to provide better lives for their children.

Anita (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo) also remembers her father's commitment to his family because he did not drink alcohol, something she appreciated very much along with the fact that her father was comfortable with her wearing a short skirt. For Alma (observant, over 35, Kosovo) her father was a shoulder to cry on, someone to discuss personal, day-to-day issues with, including boyfriends, then problems with her husband. This close relationship was established early in her childhood. However, as she noted, this was not the case in the majority of families she knows—a pity, because it seems that in those rare cases where women had their father's support and encouragement they were able to make positive changes in their own lives and the lives of others in their communities.

The role of the father, as well the primary family in general, did not bulk so large in BiH feminists' stories. There were no references (even implicit) to the dominant position of the father in the family, except for Hana (non-observant, over 35, BiH), who explicitly named him as the dominant person in the family, explaining that he did not support her wish to study outside BiH, refusing to support her financially, compelling her therefore to study in Sarajevo instead. She expressed this in quite neutral tones, without blaming him: "Everything depended on the family, my mother was a believer, but my father was dominant, and we were all led by my father and all the upbringing was done according my father's wishes." (Hana, non-observant, over 35, BiH)

The cooperative positive influence of parents is described in the story of Edita (observant, under 35, Kosovo). She stated that her mother and father were equally supportive to her education. They accompanied her to school, helped her with her homework, were there for her when she needed to talk to someone, helped her in her selection of field of study, profession etc.

5.1.2 Secondary Family

All interviewees dedicated a bigger part of their narratives to their primary families than to the families they built and the relationships they have today. The younger generation spoke more about the secondary family and, although they had made some progress in marriage and family relations, they did not fully depart from the traditional family life. Miranda (observant, over 35, Kosovo) emphasized family and choice of husband as serious issues and she described them as combining proactive (making choice) and passive (waiting) positions. She connected the reason for not marrying (or delaying marriage) to the issues of education and work, and she described her choice as a conscious decision. Social conditions have changed, and women are nowadays more educated and economically independent, but women's expectations remain almost the same: to study, get a job, marry and have children.

Edita (observant, under 35, Kosovo) the youngest Kosovo participant, named her fiancée as her main colleague, friend, adviser, supporter, and a "substitute" for family—someone she could trust, with whom she could share both professional and private life. In a way, this can be seen as breaking the sharp division between private and public spheres of life. It is a good example of a true partnership, mutual support and departure from the traditional family model of hierarchical relations.

Alma (observant, over 35, Kosovo) another Kosovo participant, also distances herself to a certain degree from traditional family relations. As an educated woman, she stood up to her husband's complaints about her business

trips, her work, etc. She told him that her father did not raise her to stay at home, and that she has a right to travel and be engaged in society. She broke the patriarchal hierarchical models of gender relations in which the husband is the head of family and makes all the decisions. (Spahić-Šiljak and Anić 2009)

As are many other participants, Figen (observant, over 35, Kosovo) is a passionate activist. In her story, she revealed that she gets great support from her family, primarily from her husband. They share the housework, and he also takes care of the children when she is busy. She also noted that she does "man's work" when he is abroad working. She presented herself as a very busy person who does not have a lot of time for housework. She and her husband discussed these issues and agreed on them before they got married, and they have been working through them as they agreed to in the beginning. Although at different times they each do all the family-care and housework (her husband works abroad several months during the year), she still differentiated between their roles. She said she feels that she needs to spend more time with children, but considering the importance of her work and her strong commitment to it, she finds it worth making such sacrifices. Figen at certain points, "disturbs" the traditional line of separation between private and public, and tries not only to care for her own children but also to help other children as well: her colleagues once proposed taping a sign on her front door announcing that she is running a "student's dormitory." She is what Tong called a "care oriented feminist" (2009, 163), and as Figen explained, she feels fulfilled and satisfied when she can help children.

Like the focus group participants, life story interviewees also acknowledged that women in both countries bear a double or triple burden; but they rarely offered solutions to lessen it:

> A woman who works eight hours a day has got eight more hours work at home. She thinks that she is the manager, but while her husband can go out for a coffee, she has to take children home [from school]… it is still considered natural for a woman to work sixteen hours a day while her husband only works eight. (non-observant, under 35, Kosovo)

In many cases, it seems that these women would rather abandon their paid public-sphere work than try to challenge and change the traditional patriarchal norms governing the family. It means that most of these women—selected as successful public advocates for women's rights—are not ready to request more justice in the family and re-distribution of housework. (Okin 1989, 9) Instead, they would reduce outside working hours, or find other women who will do housework for them and give them more time for career and political engagement.

Some women in BiH and Kosovo can be classified as "difference feminists," with prevailing gender complementarity politics, with essentialist views about women who naturally incline more towards the private and family life. (Chapter 1) Even in those cases in which women are proud of their careers and try to step out of the traditional norms and values, they still hold on to the traditional structures as if these were "natural" rather than socially structured.

Ada (observant, over 35, BiH) a very active and engaged woman, was very critical of the exploitation of women in present-day liberal capitalist societies because women lose their "true nature."

> A woman crosses the line when she loses her femininity, her biological, natural identity. … So today you have many women who are more men than women. You have courageous women, more courageous than men in many fields … but is that truly woman's nature? Women have developed a different type of nature. Can she survive normally in those circumstances? (observant, over 35, BiH)

This is a "difference feminist" and essentialist statement that considers biological differences to be ontological and that includes psychosocial features and style of reasoning. When the interviewer asked her, "When it comes to courage, don't we, for example, say that mothers have most courage?" Ada responded, "No such thing. We are just different, different by nature. And if we go on living like we do now, I can ask God the question, Why have You created us biologically different?" Clearly, her feminism is hedged about by biological differences. A woman should seek her rights and be engaged, but not at the expense of her "genuine" nature. For Ada, family is the "most natural" place for a woman. And being a woman—as was shown in Chapter 4 through the focus groups—means having a family and embracing woman's duties within family. Woman can also be engaged and successful in many other fields, using her femininity in expressing her intellectual capacities and talents. (Haaland-Matlary, 2005,6-7) But taking care of family comes first, and family is the important foundation of a society. The younger women, though, do somewhat depart from gender complementarity politics, although, for them, as well, family life is still the most important segment of woman's identity, without which a woman is not "complete."

Anita (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo) is employed full-time, with a successful career, but wishes she could spend more time at home, where she feels comfortable and happy to serve her family.

> I feel very good during the weekends: I clean, cook for my family…it is very relaxing. I would like to work part time, because while I like to work and am very dynamic, I would like to work only four hours a day and be able to spend the rest of my day at home. (Anita, non-observant, under 35, Kosovo)

Her statement illustrates the dual workload for women working outside as well as inside the home—the focus of criticism of second-wave socialist and liberal feminists (Chapter 1, Chapter 3)—a condition that is still present without indication that the women involved are aware that it needs to be changed. In other words, despite awareness that women may do double the amount of work that men do (their paid jobs and the unpaid housework), there is still a lack of critical awareness of the reason for that burden: the traditional patriarchal values and norms whose preservation within the family is explicit in most women's stories. Even when women do attempt to step out of rigorous family structures, they still tend to confine themselves to the natural order that these very structures promote and perpetuate in order to keep women in their "natural places."

When discussing the natural roles of women, life stories vary. Miranda (observant, over 35, Kosovo) for instance, is looking into the religious interpretative legacy, in particular the interpretation of the Qur'an to support complementary gender politics (Spahić-Šiljak and Anić 2009, 181-182) and, based on that, different roles of women and men in family and society. Edita (observant, under 35, Kosovo) advocates for gender-equality politics based on the teachings of Islam (Spahić-Šiljak and Anić 2009, 183-184), recognizing the same potentials and rights of men and women, who possess the same intellectual capacities. To support her statements, she mentioned competitions she ran in her organization for women and men: women won because, as she explained, "...It is an inside potential of women that could be seen, but I do not know when it will come out. They study, but they are more dedicated to learn and to understand than to show it publicly." She turned to religion during the last six years, and through her work in NGOs she met many women with amazing capacities, knowledge and skills, but, she said, it takes time in a patriarchal culture for women to show their talents in public and encourage other women to participate in the public domain. In these two examples we have positioning of two women in Kosovo as 'difference' and 'equality' feminists (Benhabib 1993) but through 'politics of location' (Rich 2000, 299-312) interrogating their personal and socio-cultural locations.

Selma (non-observant, under 35, BiH) is struggling to make the transition from her primary family and lessons she learned there about gender relations: "For me, being a virgin before marriage, being obedient, or having to cook are not values". And all of these things are promoted as *the* women's values both in BiH and Kosovo. She had experienced this during the few years she lived with her boyfriend:

> When he broke his leg his friend came over and I prepared lunch. And his friend said: Look at this, you are being pampered since you broke your leg. And he responds,

> This is how it is every day. Imagine the pride in having such attention and service every day, the expectations. And it seems that it can't be different. He calls to ask what is for lunch, of course, expecting that the woman will go to the market, cook… (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

These are the models of gender politics perpetuated in the family that younger women try to handle, but there is always another woman, particularly a mother, to make sure that the existing gender relations are sustained in the family and that their sons are "protected." The shift from the traditional model of gender relations to an egalitarian one is a process that, as Selma (non-observant, under 35, BiH) and Edita (observant, under 35, Kosovo) noted, leads to certain steps forward and to more of the partnership relations that the younger generation insists upon; but it will take time for it to be accepted by society.

In conclusion, family life is the underlying topic of almost all the life stories in BiH and Kosovo. Although there have been some changes among the younger generation in the way they understand the concept of family, marriage and family still comprise the most desirable model of life, the framework that best protects, nurtures, supports, and encourages women to become what they are today. It might also be restrictive and less supportive, as some interviewees explained, but women still incline to position themselves first and foremost in the family setting. The BiH lacked reference to the secondary family and partner relations. Those women mostly assert themselves through work, activism and professional achievements immanent to the second wave of feminism. (Chapter 1) From their seeming dismissiveness of lives in secondary families and their accentuating advancements in the public sphere it might be concluded that they further underline the private/public dichotomy.

In the Kosovo stories there is more reference to secondary family and the support the younger generation got from their partners. The father in Kosovo stories is dominant, and he is the one who departs from societal norms and hierarchical gender politics and supports the building and growth of consciousness of feminist identities in their daughters. In BiH stories the mother mostly mediates the relationships between children and father and, as we mentioned above, only in one case did the father appear explicitly as the head of family.

5.2 Muslim Context and Religious Identity

Religious identity is an important part of participants' stories. And, and as with any other, Muslim belonging is formed in relation to multiple and significant *others* that are not fixed categories. They include family, society, the Muslim community, men, other women, other religious communities, state policies, even the shared values of Western civilization, and many other factors—all intersecting with the Muslim identity of women in BiH and Kosovo. Indeed, *others* is numberless and plays a different role in the life story of each individual. The socialist past and the war period are also important *others* for construction of Muslim belonging in Bosnian and Kosovo post-socialist contexts. (Chapter 3.1)

The aim of the subchapter is not primarily to examine the participants' Muslim belonging, but to see how that belonging was formed, what role it plays in the participants' lives. As with the focus group analysis, we looked for strategies women employ in disclosing their "multiple positioning" (Davis 2008, 21-41) in respect to their religious identity. The subchapter is divided in two parts: the first outlines the process of becoming a Muslim (woman) through family socialization and personal journey to religion and spirituality. The second part elaborates on the role of religion—both privately and publicly—in challenging modernity, especially in respect to wearing the hijab (Göle 2011, 142), and the defence women mount against stereotypes, prejudices and misconceptions about Islam.

5.2.1 Becoming a Muslim Woman

All women in BiH and Kosovo declared their Muslim identity in their life stories, but not as a unique or a fixed category, nor was it always understood in the same way. Many factors shaped that identity, such as family socialization, personal interest in religion, the war experience and activism. As explained in Chapter 4, Muslim identity in BiH is mostly understood and lived as a "common culture" (Karić quoted in Bougarel 1997) while in Kosovo, as Duijzings noted, the common denominator is *national* identity. Although de-secularization in the 1990s reaffirmed and strengthened religious identity among Kosovars, the women interviewed declared their national identity first. (Chapter 3.3)

Not surprisingly, for all the women interviewed, their religious identity first came from their families, with upbringing in a religious or non-religious environment, and then was shaped by their reflections on religion and personal explorations of it, and the spiritual journey some of them undertook in the post-war period, and finally the role of religion in public life.

5.2.1.1 Religion as Family Heritage

Most women said that religion had been nurtured by grandmothers, grandfathers or parents. In some families it was only a cultural tradition (celebration of religious holidays and observance of some rituals), and in some it meant a full ritual practice that included the study of Islam.

Ada was raised in a traditional Muslim family but they did not invest religion with deep spirituality or conscious reflections about it. Her parents, as with many other Muslims in rural areas, could hardly find time for daily prayers, and certainly had neither the time nor the knowledge to go beyond those prayers. Despite that, she became interested in spirituality and felt the desire to learn more about Islam.

> From my early youth, age eleven or twelve, somehow in my heart, in my soul, the love towards the spiritual opened up, although at that time I did not know much about Islam. I was only aware that I was born a Muslim, that my parents were Muslim, and I think that nothing is a coincidence. (observant, over 35, BiH)

Ada is almost proud of the Yugoslav version of socialism, describing it as a soft communist political system that secured the freedom of religious expression. She remembers the stark differences between the former USSR, with its low level of freedom of religion, and former Yugoslavia, with its gentler approach to religion. (Chapter 3.3) From Ada's experience one can conclude that practicing religion was allowed in the socialist period, as long as it did not threaten—or perhaps even question—the political system. Ada also believes that a perception of one's expression of freedom very much depends on each individual, and she felt good in the socialist society as a woman and as a Muslim:

> Freedoms were such as they were. It all depended on what one's aspirations were. One person could say these were quite sufficient freedoms, for others they were insufficient. However, for me, as woman I felt good. I cannot say I was unwell. The truth is that the society was anti-religious, it promoted atheism more, but I believe that in fact that can also be a challenge, because you yourself cannot comprehend something unless you are in opposition to something else. (observant, over 35, BiH)

This statement demonstrates deep faith that allows questioning and even suppressing freedom of expression, and it declares that if one's faith is genuine, it will survive and even become stronger. For Ada, socialist Yugoslavia was far from perfect in terms of religious freedom, but was sufficiently open to let every individual develop his or her spirituality and pursue the study of religion. For the development of her Muslim identity, socialism played a positive role and she is grateful for that experience.

Miranda, (observant, over 35, Kosovo) introduced herself as a person "coming from a family with religious tradition, both from the mother's and from the father's side." Her grandfather was an imam (Albanian, *hoxca)*; her father was one of the first in Kosovo to study philosophy abroad. Many (male) family members also went abroad for the study of Arabic, other Middle Eastern languages and culture and related fields that enabled them to be the leading Muslim intellectuals in Kosovo today. Thus, Islam is traditionally a part of their everyday life as philosophy, practice, field of study and professional work. Miranda herself has a degree in philosophy. In Miranda's understanding, what distinguishes her family in relation to others is that they are religiously educated Muslims, and traditionally religious; generations of her family were Muslim intellectuals. They were steadfast in their religion under socialism and during the times when, in her opinion, it was difficult to show piety in public. She told about an uncle who held a high position but had to perform his five daily prayers (*namaz*) behind closed doors in his company—proof that her family practiced Islam even at a time when something like that was not favoured.

Unlike Ada, from BiH, who praised socialism for freedom of religious expression and saw it as an opportunity to test one's faith, Miranda made no positive references to socialism. This can be interpreted as a strategy to position herself only within the current Kosovo state, dismissing the socialist period that was not friendly to Albanians in Kosovo, and also—as can be inferred from her story—showing that she did not feel a sense of belonging or attachment to the Yugoslav state during that period.

Alma (observant, over 35, Kosovo) is very happy and proud to be a Muslim "Thank God I was born in a Muslim family… In our family everyone is praying although we are educated." It can be noted from this statement that, in the socialist period, educated people were not expected to practice Islam. She emphasizes this, because, even today, many perceive education, science and progress as being in opposition to religion. It was expected that socialism would foster the conditions that would allow educated people, in particular, to "overcome" religious beliefs, which according to the official dogma, limited human freedom.

> Under the circumstances of the self-management, it is only a person actively part-taking in the formation of the new (progressive) models of social values that can be called a free person. This process undermines the foundations of religion, which shall not be rejected, but dialectically overcome. (Ćimić 1966, 251)

However, the events following 1989 proved that religion re-emerged in the public sphere and challenged both Muslims and non-Muslims to find the

proper response to de-secularization and modernization, and to determine for themselves the role of religion in these processes.

Anita had a different experience with religion in her family.

> My grandmother on my mother's side never prayed and did not teach her daughters to pray, and my other grandmother prayed, although my dad was an "international" man; he was not a religious man at all. (non-observant, under 35, Kosovo)

Clearly, religion was not an important part of Anita's upbringing. It is interesting that she characterized her father as "international," immediately connecting that with the fact that he was not religious. When she was young, being "international" could mean being cosmopolitan, a citizen of the world, acquainted with different cultures, and not attached to one's religious tradition. Such cases show that secularization and modernization during socialist times expected educated people to outgrow religion as a construct that prevented progress and freedom.

Under the impact of religious narratives from her paternal grandparents, Anita had a dream to build a mosque. As a child she probably heard that pious Muslims build mosques, and thought that was a good way to serve Islam and Muslims. Her "international" father, however, responded to her desire by saying that it is better to support the poor and needy than to build a mosque. He advocated for equality and human rights, which seems to have had an impact on Anita's commitment to pursue the fight for human rights and to be an activist. She received religious education in the local mosque when she was 7-8 years old, but her father did not approve of it. However, Anita's mother, who was not raised in a religious family, supported her religious education, commenting that she should be informed about her religion. So, although Anita had learned something about religion during her childhood, after the war she wanted to study more to understand not only her Muslim identity, but also her inner feelings about spirituality and metaphysics. Although in most Kosovo stories, the father was credited as the one who provided education and a sense of well-being to their daughters, Anita's case shows that the mother also had power to decide some issues—in this case, religious education.

Zandra dedicated a significant part of her narrative to her family, to her grandmother and grandfather, Muslim intellectuals in a small city in central BiH. Her grandmother had a special place within her story because she taught Zandra religion and nurtured her Muslim identity, which she feels is an important part of her life:

> Nana [grandmother] was a believer, she was veiled, she wore dimije [Bosnian women's traditional trousers] in the house, but when she went out in public, she wore a longer

skirt and always wore long sleeves, and she prayed… [Grandmother] was wholly a believer, although she completed the secular school and although she was born in 1914 in Travnik, she was educated, literate, and what she always insisted on was that children must get an education…she insisted that girls go to school. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

As a child, Zandra used to go to the mosque during Ramadan to pray, but had many questions about the prayer and gender relations in the sacred place and family life.

In such a context, the family can never go together to the mosque, but they always go individually…we have these divisions in the place of uniting…even today after so many years…Even today, I think often about that. Where is the value, what is that value of the family that influences the religious. In Islam, the family should be connection. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

As with the debate in the focus groups about prayers in the mosque, Zandra cannot understand the segregation and the exclusion—or, in the case of the Friday Juma services, discouraging "exemption"—of women from certain rituals reserved for men, like the graveside *janazah* prayer for the deceased, from which women are prohibited, allowed only to ease their grief by saying the prayer at home. Zandra thinks that pain is something that needs to be shared and that such segregated rituals make that impossible. She feels inner conflicts about this, and cannot reconcile certain religious interpretations on separation and segregation: "If education and progress are values, and at the same time the family is a value, then everything needs to be shared with the family. At the same time, there are religious rules that exclude you." Muslim identity is still important for her, and she perceives it as "a traditional basis for life," but does not find herself comfortable in the traditional forms of religion. Going to mosque and praying in segregated premises is in contradiction to her principles of gender equality and her personal convictions as an outspoken advocate for women's rights. She did not go further to search for answers, but remained reluctant to practice traditional rituals, keeping her religion as an integral part of her identity, but without any visible connections with the life of religious ritual.

Bilka (non-observant, over 35, BiH) described the Muslim context of her childhood as having been marginalized by the communist lifestyle in her family, but said that the elderly in her family kept the tradition, as did neighbors in her hometown. Her grandmother was pious, and prayed, but did not teach her grandchildren to do so. The young wife of the local imam, though, liked her and expressed special love for her, accompanied by gifts that kept positive feelings about religion alive in her childhood. She recalls "the special smell" of Muslim

family life, with quince preserves made by grandmothers and mothers in her *mahala* (neighborhood). She has tried to make quince preserves after the war to recreate that delectable scent in her house, but was not as adept at it as her grandmother. This can be interpreted as keeping and nurturing relations with her Muslim identity through preservation of cultural customs and traditions of Muslim family life.

Hana (non-observant, over 35, BiH) re-affirmed her Muslim belonging during the war, and briefly touched on her pre-war relation to religion. "So before the war I ate pork, because this was normal, especially for my father, who was a communist." Hana believes that the attitude to religion depends on the family. She noted that her mother was a believer, but her father was dominant, and upbringing was governed by his views. Since he was a prominent communist leader, religious practice was not acceptable in their home. Her mother observed the Ramadan fast, but had to hide it and maintain the public appearance of a secular communist family. Although Hana referred to the socialist state as one that ensured equality for all, especially women, in the second part of her narrative, when she spoke of her "awakening" in the post-war period, she admitted that practicing religion in urban, highly educated families that occupied a high position was not desirable or acceptable. In life story analysis we consider coherence and internal consistency of the narrative (Atkinson 1998, 60), and in this case we notice glorification of socialism with its principles of equality and freedom, but on the other hand, criticism of the same regime for the lack of freedom of religion and preservation of Muslim identity. This might be interpreted as divided positioning toward the socialist period, with its advantages for women's rights and disadvantages for freedom of religion.

The participant who gave the most comprehensive view of everyday life as a Muslim woman in BiH was Selma, a young Bosnian participant. Like Bilka and Hana, Selma was also raised in a communist working class family. Her father comes from a traditional Muslim background, where family members practiced religion and women wore hijab. Her mother was not religious, and Selma was raised without particular affiliation to Islam. As a girl, she tried to enroll in Mekteb (a Muslim religious school for children), but it was literally such a cold place (most mosques during the socialist period did not have heating) that she gave up after several visits. It is interesting to note that such non-favorable physical conditions for religious education under socialism were also an obstacle for other children and parents, who finally abandoned it. But, ironically, that *abandonment* is also proof that in the 1980s religion was not really suppressed, and that religious education was available in most urban and rural areas. (Chapter 3.3)

5.2.1.2 The Individual Search for Religion and Spirituality

Socialization and upbringing in primary families were important for the development of the religious or non-religious identities of the women interviewed. But, as many of them said, the driving force in that development was their own interest and desire to learn, explore, and decide about the form of their religiosity. They did not want just to accept the inherited forms of religion, but wanted to be active agents in the search for spirituality, especially during the war, when they had to re-consider their entire lives, values, and the norms they had observed before.

Ada (observant, over 35, BiH) wants to distance herself from the traditional forms of religiosity, emphasizing that her acceptance of Islam is not something imposed by the family, but the result of her personal quest to understand the world, the purpose of life, and her role in it. Through her study and spiritual journey, Ada became a conscious believer, having her own reflections on social life and the place of woman within it, as well as the possibility of reconciling her female nature with the challenges that modern life brings.

The same wish to present the relationship to Islam as her own endeavor also informs the story told by Figen. She was immersed in the teachings and spirit of Islam at the age of five, when, for the first time, she declared *shahadah, the* first pillar of Islam (there is no god, but God). This was mentioned in the beginning of her story.

> That was somehow the sense of my identity, and it gradually turned into a strong character. It has brought to me some very good things, but also various challenges and obstacles because not many people understood that religion has a special place inside of me. They thought that it was a reflection from outside, because my brother was in Islamic Studies or because my grandfather was an imam. It is not a reflection, but my innate feeling about religion. (observant, over 35, Kosovo)

Figen structured her story around obstacles she faced because of her Muslim identity. Amid the increasing number of obstacles, her determination to remain true to herself was growing, and she became a stronger believer. In her life, religion is the main source of strength, hope, and happiness, and she does not want to be thought a person who simply inherited it, but as someone who independently built her faith. It can also be interpreted as an attempt to distance herself from the fame of her family, who had been highly educated in Islam, and to show that her journey to Islam was a personal conscious endeavor and not an inherited part of her culture and family tradition, as many Muslims define it when they try to legitimize their positions as Muslims. (Chapter 4.3)

Miranda also wanted to present herself as one who, in her approach to religion, was not shaped only by her family, particularly the males, who were highly educated in religion. She gradually integrated the teachings of Islam into her life, preferring to understand them first and then start practicing them. In that way, she explained, it was possible to attain happiness and peace.

> I was not knowledgeable about Islam in the beginning, but later I started to be drawn more and more to the reading of Islamic literature, and that brought me to regular prayer. This idea came from me, it was not imposed by my father. In beginning, I prayed twice a day and later five times a day. I feel very happy that I practice religion in the right way, but I still read and explore Islam. (observant, over 35, Kosovo)

Edita, young Kosovar participant, did not refer as much to religion and her journey to Islam. Her parents do not practice the daily prayers and she just briefly mentioned how she accepted the practice of Islam.

> The year two thousand five was the most special year for me. I got my driver's licence and, at that time, I understood a dream that I had. It was a turning point in my life and that year I started to practice Islam. I learned the daily prayers and I started to pray regularly. (observant, under 35, Kosovo)

However, the way she presented the relationship with her fiancé during the second part of her story might explain the reason for her starting to practice Islam and becoming a fully observant Muslim. Her activism is closely connected with her decision to become observant in religion because her fiancé was also an activist and a sport trainer at the place they met and where they continued working with other people and positioning themselves as active believers and citizens. In her case, the intersection of activism and religion was very important in becoming what she is today—an engaged pro-active woman's rights advocate.

Zia (observant, over 35, BiH) introduced herself as one who always was a Muslim and never questioned her Muslim belonging, declaring it proudly in public. Her understanding of Islam changed when she discovered feminism. She did not shun her Muslim identity before the 1992-95 war, but that identity was enriched with feminism and activism. "From that June second [1992], I got books by women feminists, Fatima Mernissi and others, and I started getting to know Islam, which I strived for." The confirmation of her Muslim identity was closely related to positioning herself as a feminist. Thus, this multiple positioning (Davis 2008, 70) with religious, feminist, and activist identities was reflected much more in her story than in the other stories, and helped her become a conscious believer, a feminist, and a person engaged in women's human rights.

The war was crucial for many women, impelling them to reconsider their identities and belongings, but also to define the role of religion in the public

realm during the de-secularization process in post-socialist societies of BiH and Kosovo. Hana was a refugee in Europe during the war, and faced multiple forms of oppression and discrimination in the refugee camp. Most examples are related to the children of her brother, who had difficulties enrolling in school, to maintaining basic hygiene with several hundred refugees, and to avoiding eating pork. In such terrible circumstances, struggling to survive, she formed the desire to learn more about her religion.

> The religious terminology was completely unknown to me; that this is simply what war did, in addition to all the horrors it made, it had a great impact on the people in BiH, and for the first time in my life, I started reading the translation of the Qur'an to see who I am and what I am in refuge. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

Hana was raised in a communist family, and although her mother practiced Islam in private, she did not teach her children religion. Therefore, Hana was determined to learn more and to teach her own daughter, who is, as Hana described her, a practicing believer. Hana practices Islam with morning and evening prayers, but does not go to mosque or observe the five pillars of Islam.

For Bilka the war was also a turning point in her awareness of belonging to a Muslim context. Her main narrative was framed by the war experience that is intertwined with the awakening of her Muslim identity.

> … in the midst of all the chaos, they were making a census in Z, lists of all inhabitants, visiting houses and finding out who is living where, et cetera. I thought they were some kind of military police, but they were really only writing down your name, surname and nationality. The people from Z know me. … So they asked me what my nationality was and I said "Muslim"—for the first time in my life, I said I was a Muslim. Until then I always said I was a Yugoslav. So I had no idea what kind of identity it was, I did not only say that in a very dangerous period of time in my life, but I said what I am, because it would have been much more profitable for me to say that my nationality was Yugoslav, but I said so because it made me feel good. I really felt good about it. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

The 1992-95 war in BiH had a specific impact on Bilka, as she lived separated from her parents and from her family, a woman with a Muslim name in a Serb-ruled territory. Bilka did not want to talk about the war in detail—she said a few times, "I do not want to go back to that"—but throughout the account of her life as it related to the beginning of the 1990s, it is clear that the war was a very difficult event in her life, and that it changed her life significantly. For the first time, during the war, Bilka identified herself as an ethnic Muslim. (Chapter 3.3) Before that she was Yugoslav, and she said, "I do not know why I decided

to say that I was Muslim, because it was a dangerous period [as noted, she lived in a Serb area], but I felt good." After the area was integrated into the territories controlled by the BiH Army, she was again perceived as an enemy because she had spent the war in enemy territory, and because her husband was not Muslim.

Anita (non-observant, under 35, Kosovo) re-connected with religion during the war, explaining that there are times "when your inner self gets out" This happened during the war: "… it was normal that I said *duat* [du'a, prayers]. In those moments you say that there is something, whether it is God or something else, I communicated to that as a Muslim." For Anita, religion is something spiritual that brings peace in the soul, not something that needs rituals to be fulfilled. She is—as most non-observant women in the focus groups put it—connected with the divine in her own way.

The war was also the turning point in the relation to religion of Selma (non-observant, under 35, BiH). After the war she decided to learn more about Islam because she admitted that she did not know much about religion before that. During the war many people were keen to revive their Muslim identity, but they did not have the knowledge or resources. Selma was 21 when she enrolled in Mekteb. Her father started to practice Islam again and went on pilgrimage (Hajj). Selma's recollection of the war is linked to the way people became more religious, but also more superstitious.

She built her own way of being a Muslim, and does not feel comfortable expressing it in front of people who are rather strict about practicing Islam. She thinks it is perhaps hypocritical because she likes having a glass of wine, but there are friends in whose presence she would never have it because she feels she would have to debate for a long time with them about it and that it is not worth it. Those friends call her approach to Islam the "filo-pastry" approach: "you can take parts that you like, and you can stretch them to your taste and needs…" Thus, intra-religious dialogue between fully observant Muslims and those like Selma who practice some parts of religion, but still drink alcohol, is a good reflection of the diversities of Muslim identity in BiH, and the understanding of the way women like Selma position themselves towards religion, tradition, and expectations they have in the post-socialist context of BiH.

Selma would like her lifetime partner to be a Muslim, but not a radical one: "I do not need a fundamentalist of some sort who would tell me, You need to be veiled, you should pray five times a day…I need a moderate person, I need to find someone who shares my beliefs, expresses them in the similar way I do…

Her relationship to being a Muslim is a new part of her life and she does not yet feel entirely comfortable with it. "The atmosphere [of prayer] and

holiness and peace is amazing. But, you know, it is like putting on new shoes which are not entirely comfortable yet. Sort of like that." She plans to go on Hajj once, but needs to build her faith before going. Although she observes some of the daily prayers at home, she is not ready to show her piety in front of her mother and sister and to pray in public. That would be some kind of betrayal of her mother and sister who would find it radical and are afraid of fundamentalism—probably a reaction to the many young people who became Salafi or Wahabi Muslims with strict and rigid forms of observing Islam that often exclude relationship with non-Muslims and non-observant Muslims, including even parents and relatives. (Chapter 4.3) Nonetheless, she feels and admires the rhythm of religious life.

> I like order and I think I would like to have the biorhythm that is set by the namaz. I think that it is a great organization of life. To really get up for the Sabah [morning] prayer, then noon. I think it is such a good daily organization. …I often tell myself off for never having prayed regularly. I would have been ashamed to pray at home. I think that it would have been OK for my father, but my mother and sister would find it strange. Like, has she gone wayward? They would be afraid of fundamentalization." (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

Selma is still in the process of searching and questioning certain aspects of religion, and is positioning herself as a moderate Muslim. That strategy might be interpreted as an attempt to reconcile her other identities and relationships within family and with her friends with her desire to practice Islam.

5.2.2 Private/Public Religious Identity

Participants discussed the role of religion in the public realm with particular emphasis on the visible markers of Muslim identity, of which hijab is the most controversial issue. Muslim belonging in Bosnian stories is constructed (among other categories) in relation to other religions/nations, taken in favorable or unfavorable ways. By contrast, in the Kosovo stories, there is almost no similar referral, while some other factors emerge as significant *others*, like education and hijab. Many participants construct their Muslim identity in terms of opposition to the set of misconceptions that exist about Islam, particularly its impact on women. In some stories it was explicitly expressed, and in some it was implied through other topics.

Bilka's relation to the Muslim context is positive when it comes to identity formation, but religion should be observed in the private sphere. She declares herself a Muslim, although she is non-observant—or, more precisely—practices it in her own way in private.

"…I have a natural [feeling of] rejection [of those outward expressions of religious belongingness], and I know that I am often reluctant to show anything, simply because I know it [religious belongingness] is manipulated with. That outward expression of religious affiliation, specific markings, I always revolted against. It is probably a part of my growing up in a communist family and environment." (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

For Bilka, religion should be protected from the manipulation and politization that is rampant in post-socialist BiH with ethno-national and ethno-religious elites in power. (Chapter 4.3) Similar rejection of religion in the public realm was noted by Zandra in her story, where she attempted shift from the usual positioning of Bosniac Muslims that includes both national and religious identification, saying, "…ethnic-national and religious affiliation, I would like to separate the two. Religious affiliation is for me a private area and, as a citizen, it is something I do not need to know about in the lives of others." Merging these two identities as inseparable distresses Zandra because the ethno-national elites in power, for political purposes, perform checks of "authentic" and "genuine" Bosniacs and Muslims. Zandra blames the Constitution of BiH that recognizes collective rights of the three constituencies—Bosniac Muslims, Serbian Orthodox Christians, and Croatian Catholics—but not their individual rights. (Chapter 3.3) For her "…religious rights are…the area of private life, just as sexual freedoms; we do not need to know what happens in a house."

For other participants, both in BiH and Kosovo, religion is something that needs freedom of public expression without discrimination, although those in Kosovo did not talk about religious ethno/national relations because of their different processes of identity formation and their positioning themselves first as Kosovars and then Muslims. (Chapter 3.3) Overlapping of ethnic/national and religious identities causes many troubles in the politics of BiH, and since Bilka and Zandra are two prominent public figures, they stressed the consequences of the interplay of these two identities in BiH.

5.2.2.1 Standing against Stereotypes

Women interviewed in BiH and Kosovo are concerned with the stereotypical image of Islam that infects international politics, the media, and discourses in universities and civil society. Hana and Zia, both from BiH, raised the importance of multiculturalism in BiH as a value that needs to be protected from imported customs and marginalization of religion in public.

Hana stands for multiculturalism that allows religion to be part of public life. She recalled traveling in a plane with hundreds of hijabi women on their way back to Sarajevo from the pilgrimage to Mecca and having the Catholic

Cardinal on the same plane. At the Sarajevo airport, there was a Christmas tree, and that in her opinion presented the true picture of the multicultural life she would like to preserve in BiH. In comparison to the multicultural life in the socialist period that banned public displays of religion, the post-socialist multiculturalism seems more inclusive to her, providing more freedom for religion: "Thus, that kind of multiculturalism had some effect on the fact that we did not know how we were, what we were, who we were…" Hana's "awakening" came when she realized that her Muslim identity was completely neglected and almost lost because, as she commented, "it was completely normal to eat pork, to drink alcohol, not to obey religious duties…"

For Zia, being a Muslim is in harmony with the multicultural and multi-religious life of BiH: she referred to her birthplace, where Muslims and Orthodox Christians coexisted peacefully. Zia was arguing with an unseen collocutors—probably some Muslim groups or individuals who have a different perception of Islam or biased non-Muslims—about Islam as an inclusive religion that gives her freedom of expression and interpretation. "Whenever people say Islam is rigid I always respond from my knowledge that we all read and interpret the Qur'an the way we want." Zia is greatly upset about stereotypes, in particular stereotypes about Muslim women. She feels that these stereotypes are deeply rooted in history, the social fabric, the upbringing in former Yugoslavia, and she blames the contemporary BiH movement she belongs to for not fighting them.

> There is no connection between women in history, a vertical connection [with like-minded organizations globally], and there is also no connection among women who are different; feminism seemed to speak about white women only. My friends who are feminists from the U.S., Germany, England, do not know anything about their Muslim sisters. Even in the former Yugoslavia we did not know anything about each other. (observant, over 35, BiH)

The lack of dialogue about Islam and Muslims, she believes, led to deterioration of Islam globally, and the increasing pressure on Muslims. Even though people of the former Yugoslavia lived together, it seems that they did not know much about each other. As Zia noted, women engaged in women's rights and feminist movements also show ignorance and lack of understanding for each other. The new practices of Islam that were imported to BiH during and after the war intensified the stereotypical portrayal of Muslim women. One of them is face veiling that was not welcomed by most Muslims in BiH, including Zia:

> I respect that this [face veiling] is a habit in Saudi Arabia; I don't know, as I have never been there. I did not go to Iran either; I don't know their habits, but I know very well what are the customs here. I don't need those other [customs], I need the Islam that brought me up here. That is sufficient for me. (observant, over 35, BiH)

Zia's understanding and respect for face veiling in some Muslim cultural contexts, but not in BiH, ignores the fact that face veiling was part of most urban BiH Muslim lifestyles until 1950, when it was prohibited. (Chapter 3.3) Stereotypes about Muslims as terrorists, and attempts by the media to reduce the Muslim woman in BiH to a group uniformly veiled, separated and excluded from the public realm, moved her to object to the revived customs. Her criticism, essentially, is of the Muslim community in BiH as not pro-active, open-minded, and inclusive enough to allow different voices to be heard; to other religious communities, with their preconceived notions about Islam; of colleagues/ activists in BiH who are not informed or are misinformed about Islam; of the West, in general, with its neo-colonial and Euro-centric politics; of the Arabic world, with its monopoly of interpretation of Islam; and of many *others* that construct her specific Muslim belonging, but also inform us on today's Muslim context in BiH. To stand against ignorance, prejudices, and exclusion, Zia proposes education and witnessing Islam, with its diverse and rich heritage and interpretative practices.

We find a similar example of fighting against prejudices about Islam in Anita's story (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo). Her friend, who lives in Sweden, changed her Muslim name to avoid pressure and discrimination after September 11. Anita decries such pressure—so intense that is can affect somebody's identity— all due to misrepresentation of Islam as an aggressive and militant religion, reminding us that "we should not talk only about Muslim fundamentalism, but should also open the discussion about Christian fundamentalism, which has never been raised." Anita thinks that, after September 11, all Muslims in Europe and the U.S.A are perceived as potential terrorists, and that makes her unhappy. She is distressed at the double standards in the West and the blame all Muslims bear for something that had been done by a few groups in the name of Islam.

Edita's story moves in a similar direction, referring to her work in a NGO that has been labelled an extremist Islamic organization. She fights against such portrayal because, as she explained, that is not what her organization is.

> They invited us for a debate, and every organization sent its representative. From our organization, which was labelled as extremist Islamic organization, I was sent to that debate. When they saw a female representative, their perception of my organization changed. (observant, under 35, Kosovo)

Like Zia, Edita also thinks that information and personal witness can refute, or at least vitiate, stereotypes, but that one does need to be active. So her work in a NGO is closely connected to her religious identity, and the two mutually construct and inform each other. For her, being a Muslim means being active and engaged.

5.2.2.2 Hijab - A Limitation or Liberation

Relations between the secular and religious are made difficult by many things, hijab being a particularly exacerbating issue. It recurred as an important question in Kosovo life stories, while BiH participants paid less attention to it, except when fighting stereotypes about face veiling. Legal constraints on hijab in Kosovo might be one of the reasons for raising this issue as an important part of the secular-religious divide. Not only hijabi women speak about it, but also non-hijabi women who contest the state policy in Kosovo as a violation of freedom of religion.

Figen (observant, over 35, Kosovo) wears the hijab, incurring prejudice in both her immediate and wider surroundings. Her story is completely embedded in the struggle to overcome these obstacles in education, employment and activism. For her, hijab is an integral part of her identity and she positions herself as a Muslim woman who consciously decided to wear it as a sign of her piety. Muslim identity is taken as a fixed category, as something intrinsic, and any deviations from it would mean betrayal of her faith and goals. As recounted in Chapter 4.1, when unveiling was presented to her as a condition for getting a job at the university, she said that she would not forsake her veil even if her children's future depended on it. But she also asked the professor if, during the war, his tenure had depended on his becoming a Serb, would he have done so? Of course he said "no," making her point for her.

As did Zia, she cited ignorance as the main factor in prejudices and stereotypes about Islam, astounded by the lack of knowledge of her fellow Kosovars who are not familiar with the basics of the Muslim lifestyle. She is therefore determined to overcome these obstacles through pro-actively putting herself forth and providing information about Islam. Her faith motivates her in that mission and informs her overall work and activism.

Being true to herself means being free. Figen's endeavor and consistency can be interpreted as having a dream, a vision, and an aim to accomplish something. It does not necessarily mean attaining success: what is important to her is to be on the path, believing that it is possible, giving her best to attain her goals, since then one can say that one did everything that was possible. Part of the doctrine of Islam is that a Muslim should have good intentions and compete in good deeds, and the rest is in God's hands. As she put it:

> … in the moment of success in building and maintaining your character [yourself], you are aware that others do not control you, and you do not obey them. Allah does not let you build the pride of your ego, and if you follow His orders, they will keep you in a balanced state. When some people say, it is good that you have made success

> in something, I feel that it was my obligation to do the right things, because it is my obligation to God. Doing it for God's pleasure brings my inner satisfaction and peace. (observant, over 35, Kosovo)

Ada, the only BiH participant who wears hijab, mentioned that she made that decision in 1986. It was solely her decision, and her parents were against it. Ada considers hijab a part of her conviction, not merely a symbol or tradition or fashion. Hijab is an integral part of her as a Muslim woman and she wears it with pride, but does not want to seem self-important because of that. Although hijab is a part of other religious traditions, in Islam, it is an immediate marker of its wearer as Muslim, and in that way women publicly express their Muslim identity. According to Ada, hijab is also important for maintaining healthy social relations. When people lost their values, principles and moral guidance, hijab was introduced in order to protect a woman and society from outrages. That is the main purpose of hijab for Ada, and everything else can be considered a fashion trend. That is a somewhat idiosyncratic view of the purpose and meaning of hijab. But Ada is very open to accept Muslim women who do not wear it.

> The hijab is just one part of one's conviction, which we carry on ourselves and within ourselves …do we have to make differences based on what someone is wearing? If I have a headscarf and you do not, is that a catastrophe? So what is in our mind is more important. (observant, over 35, BiH)

Both, Ada (BiH) and Figen (Kosovo) criticize the decrease in ethical social values within their societies, presenting themselves as those who have their own lifestyle and who firmly stand for it. However, Ada's choice of hijab does not face any specific challenges in every-day life while Figen is completely immersed in her struggle to keep her Muslim identity in public and to inform others about it. Legal constraints with regard to hijab in Kosovo might be one of the reasons activism intersects so much with religious identity in Kosovo stories.

Kosovar women who do not wear hijab also raise this issue in their narratives by presenting the attempt to communicate with Kosovo authorities and those who support banning of hijab in public. Anita (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo) noted that being a Muslim and declaring that identity in public was difficult not only in the socialist period, but is difficult even today. Women's rights to education and participation in the workforce are violated by enforcement of the legal ban on hijab. For Anita, it is a denial of women's rights and existence: "When I, as a mother, do not wear the headscarf, I would feel bad if my daughter were to wear it, but anyway you have to respect everyone's decision." Although she personally would not like her daughter to wear hijab, she would support her if it was her own decision. She cited the example of a bright woman interpreter

for English in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which monitors elections and human rights. The woman successfully participated in the TV debate on human rights, and Anita used her to underline the importance of woman's intellectual capacities and skills and not her dress-code: "It is important what is in her head and not on her head."

Similarly, Edita (observant, under 35, Kosovo) is concerned with banning hijab in public. Half of her colleagues in the NGO wear hijab and have trouble getting jobs, and she wonders what would happen to her place in society if she decides to wear hijab one day. She is against the state policy on hijab, but clarifies that her organization officially did not support the protest against it, though she personally did.

Alma also disagrees with the banning of the headscarf in public school.

> Why not let people exercise their rights? If a woman decides to wear hijab, there is nothing wrong with that, and especially with this outfit style they look beautiful… even my mother has kept it. Could I love my mother less because she had a scarf? It is the same with or without scarf, if there is a brain … the state leaders had their mothers with headscarves until yesterday and today they ban it. (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo)

Alma showed her anger towards state policies and the inconsistency of the Kosovo leadership that denies freedom of religion for women who consciously decide to observe religion and wear hijab. Interestingly, in several Kosovo stories there was a clear demand for consistency in dealing with religious feelings and the practice of religion. Any sort of departure from what had been practiced in the past and is understood in a certain way is taken as "unnatural"—whether a daughter's distancing herself from her mother's image as in Anita's case or the over-night radical changes in a person's behaviour and lifestyle that Zandra found problematic:

> Even today I cannot explain it to myself, especially when we talk about women and their identification in Islam, what were the motives. … How come women that I worked with till yesterday… I understand that someone said they decided to cover themselves, but the extremism from a mini-skirt to total covering [veiling] for me is not clear. What changes of identity happened? What were the factors that caused that change? (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

Similarly to statements in the focus groups, the one above shows intolerance towards newcomers, or "newborn" Muslims. Lack of tolerance is not only immanent in radical religious groups or individuals, but also in radical human rights advocates who cannot easily accept radical shifting in identity politics. As much as women do not want to 'box' identity politics and reduce

their identities to ethno-national, religious, or feminist, most of them do not accept the radical changes and shifts from one identity to another. There should be some consistency and stability in such attitudes if one is to be recognized and respected as a reliable and respectful person.

Ada also spoke of consistency in two important identities: that of a believer and a citizen. They do not exclude each other; they need each other.

> …to be a citizen means to live a social life, to cooperate with others, to work with others, to find out what others want, how they reflect on things, exchange views, arguments with others, participate in some systems that bring wellbeing to the society, et cetera. It is not necessary to be a believer in order to be a moral person and person of integrity; there is no difference between men and women in exercising their civil rights. (observant, over 35, BiH)

This statement is a pro-active witnessing of Islam in public through exercising equal civil rights, and—more important—it includes believers and non-believers in the circle of ethical and moral individuals who should first be good and accountable citizens, and then observant of religious (or non-religious) traditions.

Participants' stories demonstrate the complexity of a Muslim woman's identity in BiH and Kosovo with multiple significant *others* such as activism, feminism, ethnicity, the Western world, national authorities, and fellow Muslims with different visions and practices of Islam. All of these identities informed, constructed and mutually transformed each other in every individual case, depending on how the participants positioned themselves towards these identities.

All participants declared their Muslim identity, positioning themselves as Muslims either through tradition or by choice, or as believers who independently (from the parents) developed a Muslim belonging at certain stages of the life, no matter whether parents practiced religion or not. However, these women differ in positing Islam as a public or a private matter. Two of them in BiH were clearly against religion in the public realm, fighting against the misuse and politization of religion, while others in BiH and Kosovo did not explicitly refer to it except when they discussed hijab. In the Kosovo stories, in particular, hijab appeared as a central issue of the religious-secular divide, but most women criticized the state policy on hijab ban as violation of basic women's rights.

A significant portion of many interviews dealt with stereotypes, prejudices, and misconceptions (spawned mainly in the West) about Muslim women in BiH and Kosovo. With their multiple positioning as Muslims, feminists, activists, and human rights advocates, most of these women perceive Islam as an inclusive

religion that does not limit them, but gives them freedom and inner peace. For observant women who wear hijab, it is part of their identity, sign of their piety and inner peace, and finally something that liberates and empowers them to be active and engaged agents in public.

5.3 Women and Education

Education is one of the most important themes in the life stories. It had different meanings to the participants, from access to their own formal education-a dominant theme in all the Kosovo stories—to education as a process of socializing and growing up, to education as a main tool of their feminist activities and engagement in advocating for women's rights. However, for the all women interviewed, as well as for many others, education is what drove their emancipation and empowerment. Accordingly, the aim of this section is to analyze various aspects of education and see its relationship to the story-tellers' feminisms and private/public dichotomy. Education was the focus of the first wave of feminism (Chapter 1), but not all countries had the same development, and many women even today face difficulties in getting equal access to education. Women in Kosovo emphasized education as a crucial achievement, and they dedicated significant portions of their stories to it.

Although a majority of both the Bosnian and Kosovo participants were schooled under the same system—that of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia—where education was highly promoted and, in theory, formally guaranteed (Chapter 3), in general, there was a significant difference between BiH and Kosovo in the access participants had to education. In the BiH stories, schooling of the participants (and females in general) was taken as a regular constituent of their lives and socialization, and they did not make particular reference to it. By contrast, all Kosovo participants considered it a special privilege, facilitated by their fathers, brothers, or by both parents. Kosovo women, generally, are raised in families with many children in which education of all children, and particularly girls, is far from the rule. Most of the Kosovo participants are aware of that and expressed it either explicitly or implicitly.

Although the women spoke about both formal and informal education, this section is only concerned with formal education; the informal will be elaborated upon in the next section of chapter (Activism and Feminism) since it is closely related to these topics.

5.3.1 Formal Education

Most narratives, especially from the Kosovo participants, credited education as the *sine qua non* for emancipation, the road from backwardness to progress, from poverty to economic stability, from dependence to independence, from ignorance to enlightenment. The women's stories gave just a glimpse of the socialist period from 1960-1990, when most of the participants went to school and graduated from universities. Although most of the Kosovo women mentioned the education that was provided during the socialist period, they did not refer to it as a benefit accruing from the socialist system.

Miranda (observant, over 35, Kosovo) was the first of seven children. "To be educated" was a motto for her family, and at least the males received good education at universities abroad, holding quite responsible professional positions today. They studied Arabic, other Middle Eastern languages and culture and related fields. Miranda is very proud of the education and professional achievements of the male members of family, but did not mention her mother, aunts and sisters, who probably did not have the same opportunities. But she developed interest in the fields the males studied, and wanted to obtain formal education, not just be taught by her father at home. Unlike her brothers, though, she could not count on her father's paying for her education, but had to work while she studied. In families with a strong religious tradition—which Miranda's is—one would expect two contradictory tendencies to be at work: the protective attitude towards female children of Islamic religious tradition that should argue for their education, but on the other hand, the patriarchal "interpretation" of that tradition that prevents female access to education, especially in rural areas. In Miranda's case, although her father was, himself, educated and relatively enlightened, the family was big, and did not have the financial resources to educate all the children, so the sons had priority and Miranda, while not discouraged from seeking an education, was expected to work and pay for it herself. In her story, her own education, profession and achievements were overshadowed by her proud account of what the males in her family have accomplished. It also seems that she is the only female in her family with a higher education. As the eldest, she helped her mother take care of the family and helped support of her siblings—all of which prolonged the time it took to get her own education. Although Miranda sees education as a part of her family tradition, and accepted the fact of her own education, her narrative about the father, the dominant figure of her story, shows that she is aware that what she achieved is not the rule. Her whole story revolved around the theme of education and admiration of a father who afforded education to his children/sons. Miranda sometimes used the phrase "he educated all children" and sometimes "he educated all sons," not seeming to see the contradiction. But

her family was different from most in that place and time in *allowing* her to get an education, even if it had to be acquired on her own.

Unlike Miranda, Figen (observant, over 35, Kosovo) faced the difficulties in getting her schooling that most Muslim girls in a Kosovo village could expect to encounter. To introduce her story, Figen explained that she comes from a family with eight children, and that half of them have a university degree, while their parents have a secondary education, itself a rarity in Kosovo villages. Her emphasis on this record shows that education was not the norm, and that it was highly valued and appreciated. It did not come easily. Her desire to study and explore new horizons started when she was five and learned the first words in the Islamic tradition: *shahadah* (there is no god, but God). "Even sometimes when I took care of cows all day long, or when I was working on the farm, I had a book in my hand to read during breaks." She discussed her education mainly in terms of the difficulties she faced, particularly an interruption so as not to "embarrass" her father, who used to be an imam in the village. At that time (the late '70s) in some Kosovo villages, women were not expected to go to public schools, and pious Muslim families were expected not to send them. But, as Figen explained, her brother encouraged her to continue her education because—as she later discovered—the teachings of Islam encourage both women and men to be educated and not to stay ignorant and backward.

Figen's narrative demonstrates at least three additive levels of difficulty: education of a girl, education of village girl, and education of Muslim village girl in Kosovo. Although primary education is compulsory, the influence of tradition and its pressure on families, particularly fathers, is enormous. As we have seen, education of women depended on male members of family. Thus, women were completely dependent on men's will, their openness, support, and willingness to stand against prevailing cultural norms.

Figen is also aware that childhood in a rural setting differs from an urban one. She presented her childhood as a permanent struggle to reconcile work on family farm and school. Her family had a decent income, but what they lacked was their time for their parents to teach them and time to pursue their interests and schooling. They had to work in the field, and only then could they find time for reading, study, other commitments and individual pleasures. She did not have an easy childhood; she carried out her family duties, but early started to sense her own identity, interests and goals, and refused to let them be submerged by family. Poverty meant that her family could not educate all the children; but Figen managed to be one of the ones who were educated. A high level of individualism at an early age is evident in her story. As noted, she referred to age five as being when she started to feel what it means to have an identity.

For Alma (observant over 35, Kosovo), also the daughter of an imam, access to education in Pristina was easier than for girls in rural areas. Imams in urban areas were more progressive and brave enough to provide their daughters with schooling and to serve as examples. Alma was raised in a big, educated (but poor) family, the poverty having a significant impact on education of some of her sisters. She attended a Turkish school with her brother and sister because her family's origin is half Turkish, half Albanian, and although she could speak Turkish and Serbian, in addition to her Albanian, she faced difficulties studying in what amounted to a "foreign" language for her, first Turkish, then in high school some courses in Serbian. And always an outsider. As she explained, "It was very difficult because at the school Albanians called me Serb and Serbs called me Albanian, I always was under the pressure." She is proud of being one of the first women to study at the medical school in Belgrade. Her parents supported her, as did the director of the hospital in her hometown, motivating her to get educated and help people in her community.

Alma was lucky to complete her schooling; her sister had to stop school and take care of their mother. She grew up in family where boys and girls had equal rights. Thanks to her father's dedication and support she got a university education. Her father used to say, "boys can work at anything"—the statement of a protective father who realizes the difficult position of women in that society, having more restricted employment opportunities than men, and who hopes, through education, to expand those opportunities for his daughters when possible.

The role of male members of the family, particularly fathers, in female access to education is very well expressed in the story told by Vera (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo). She was brought up in an educated family, with five sisters, but she mentions the pressure her father experienced because he supported his daughters' education—pressure that grew stronger when her sister decided to become an actress, which was not thought a seemly occupation for Muslim woman at that time. Or today.

The situation, though, has changed. Edita (observant, under 35, Kosovo), who started her education in the '90s, describes her parents as educated people who developed in her a love for education, both equally supportive. We can see the shift with a new generation of educated parents who fully support their daughters' education. Indeed, education is both the main theme and background to all others themes in Edita's story. It is through education that she became interested in gender relations, family, activism and religion. She expressed deep emotions: joy, satisfaction, but also fear and anger about the injustice and discrimination many women suffered. She described herself as

hardworking, a student with a great record and expectations, her achievements couched in terms of the successes she enjoyed in the many competitions in which she participated—those in various school subjects, municipal competitions, in extra-curricular activities, election to students associations, etc.). Mostly, she said, she came in first.

> When I was in primary school I participated in a municipal competition and again I was the only woman from the school, five of us and just me as a woman among them. I won the competition. I was the first in this competition. (observant, under 35, Kosovo)

To be first is very important for her, showing her ambition to achieve something in her life. In fact, she started her story by describing herself as the first child in her family who had excellent record and aspirations for achievement. Thanks to personal devotion and drive for excellence—but also, she said, support from the people close to her—she had significant accomplishments in her work that left her happy and fulfilled.

It is interesting that, although an important part of her story was her selection of a field of study and her class work, within which framework her activism takes place, she never mentioned exactly what her field is. This curious lapse may have been because Edita knew that her interviewer knew what field she is in—or assumed that, because she was recruited for the life stories at least in part because of her prominence, she interviewer *must* have known—but it can be also interpreted as present lack of interest in her profession compared with interest in her current activism. Indeed, she still has not completed her studies, and in the latter part of her story she described her achievements as more those of her activism than related to school, a refocusing that was a conscious decision—to avail herself of different opportunities and contacts that became available to her. Edita will graduate someday. But for now, "Contact with people is the best work and the best school one can get," she said.

She takes all decisions regarding education very seriously, and she named all the people who made impact on her and contributed to her educational development. First were her parents, teachers, classmates, and today her fiancée. She considers even those teachers who did her some injustice important for the development of her personality and intellectual maturity. Her schoolmates and workmates in her activism are those with whom she shares common interests: preparing for the admissions exam with her, school, extra-curricular activities, advocating with her for certain issues regarding school, and similar activities. Feeling for teamwork that she developed at an early age helps Edita in her activism and NGO work.

Her parents' opinions are very important to Edita, although they did not want to interfere with or influence at least one big decision in her life, her selection of a field of study. Edita is aware of the delicate and valuable balance: having a person you can talk to and from whom you get great support, but in the end having the decision be hers. She knows it helped her achieve independence, this kind of parental attitude fostering the self-reliance that would inform the rest of her story, which centered on Edita's war experience. And that also was presented in terms of education:

> I remember that during the war I was in the seventh grade [when she, her sister and their parents had to walk to Albania as refugees)…and to tell the truth, I don't remember that as a bad experience because all the time mother and father constantly kept telling us how we would go back [home some day]...how to register for school, how to prepare for exams. We walked a day and a night, and they talked to us all the time about school. We asked questions all the time, and I remember that people were staring at us because we looked like we were at a picnic. (observant, under 35, Kosovo)

Their status as refugees was the framework of time and place within which this preparation for education took place. It underscores the way Edita thinks of her parents as people who were strong enough to keep hope alive in their children, encouraging them to think about study and the future. It gives sense of continuity in terms of goals and achievements, something that is very rare in stories of people who endured war. As Edita put it:

> Although I was in Albania, I continued my education and I didn't fall behind in [schooling]. Not because I wanted that, but because my parents pushed me and my sister to that course... My parents looked after us very much and as I said, I didn't feel the war so much. (observant, under 35, BiH)

Participants in BiH talked about dilemmas and challenges within their families and society that were different from those faced by the women in Kosovo. Selma spoke of how independent she was: she made all the decisions about her education, then just informed her parents of them.

> "My dear God, look at this child, she's always doing things on her own, earns her own money and doesn't ask for allowance..." Then it all started to bother them, they kept asking, "Why do you make decisions on your own instead of asking for our opinion?" I remember in 1999 I was to go to London for four weeks and I visited mom and dad and said, "I applied and I got a scholarship and I am going to London." My mother exclaimed "You just come and inform us, you never ask us about anything..." (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

Actually, her parents were proud of her and how independent and successful she was, especially after the war; but at the same time, as we can see

from what she said, her mother was not happy that she did not at least consult them, but decided everything on her own. In Selma's story are embedded different conflicts she feels because she decided to be fully independent and live in her own apartment and not marry. However, when she spoke about her student days or attending the music school, she said that her parents were always there for her. At the beginning, they thought her interest in music was just a phase, but after four years and positive feedback from her teachers, her parents bought her a piano. "Even today they talk about how they bought it in Mostar, how it arrived in Sarajevo on a train, how it all happened, how they talked about who would bring it up to the sixth floor..."

Zandra (non-observant, over 35, BiH) put emphasis on the fact that even her grandmother was educated, and on pursuing education as one of the most important values for women as well as men. She comes from a traditional Bosnian family and spent most of the time with her grandmother, who used to be an observant believer with hijab, but who graduated from high school before WW II. Zandra, herself, is highly educated, a lawyer with a brilliant career, and, as such, thinks education needs to be priority in BiH to make new generations more competitive and women successful in all areas. She also raised another important issue about education in the public schools of BiH: it is politicized and segregated and does not provide a multicultural environment for new generations who do not know their neighbors. She was the only one of the women who expressed this criticism of the current educational system in BiH, but it is not surprising: since she is so involved in human rights issues, she is particularly alive to the consequences of segregation and politization in education.

Hana (non-observant, over 35, BiH) was under pressure from her family in selecting a school. Even her earlier decisions in life where strongly marked by the wishes of her family, most prominently her father. What she wanted to study was not available in Sarajevo, and her family would not pay for her to go to Belgrade or Zagreb, so in order to keep financial support from her family during her university years she had to choose a completely different field of study. She did not complain about it, nor she is angry at her father because of it, but accepts it as part of her life, and she emphasized family connections as much more valuable than what she studied and where she worked. Hana also underlined the benefits women had during socialism, affording the possibility to enroll in any field of study, even those considered typical "male subjects" such as engineering:

> My view is that communism, I mean the Communist Party system we had, provided equal opportunities to everyone. For instance, I had no problem registering at the

faculty, and any woman could have registered for mechanical engineering. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

Ada (observant, over 35, BiH) also spoke about benefits the socialist system brought to women, especially in education and the workforce, saying that it was more favorable to women than the capitalist system:

> [The welfare aspects of socialism make it]…in my opinion, a more humane society than capitalism, in the sense that there was some, I can't say equality, but rather a feeling of approximately similar ways of life. I can only speak from my perspective and the experience of my family and my neighborhood, and—I do not know—but there were not any big differences. There were some differences, but they were not so drastic as what we have today. We all went to school wearing blue uniforms, so we did not know who was richer or poorer, or who came from any class; somehow we were all there on the same level. And for me that's a good thing. Now if you are in school, and if you do not have uniforms, certainly you can feel the difference. So, you see, that creates [inferiority] complexes for those children who do not have what other children have. This is not good. It is not humane." (observant, over 35, BiH)

Schooling for BiH women was important, but all six of them had favorable conditions for education. Three of them did not attend primary schools in Sarajevo, but in the smaller cities and villages where they then lived. However, they said that education was equally available for men and women. It of course does not mean that all women in rural areas in BiH had the same opportunities as men, but these women did not raise that issue as being very relevant. Instead, they talked more about their activism and the importance of informal education that helped them understand dramatic changes after 1990 and let them help in the re-building of their society.

In conclusion, we can say that education was a very important issue for women in Kosovo, so they dedicated a significant part of their stories to it, while women in BiH mentioned only some details. For them, it was not as challenging as the war, post-war reconstruction, and the processes of identity formation. They recognized the importance of the life-long learning process and shared some of their experiences in discovering new parts of "self" and their identities. The BiH women gave credit to socialism for providing equal access to education for women and men, while the Kosovo women barely referred to that period.

Most participants introduced themselves as coming from an educated family. They spoke of their parents as highly educated people, and they connected their own access to education with that fact; in a few of the cases it was a family tradition to be educated. An exemplar was Figen, half of whose family holds a university degree, while their parents have a secondary school education.

In almost all the Kosovo stories it was emphasized that, for girls, receiving an education in Kosovo was far from the rule. Since their education depended on their fathers and brothers, those men were dominant figures in the stories, and in very positive ways. Participants were aware that providing an education in big families was not easy, not only in financial terms, but in light of tradition. For fathers to educate Muslim rural girls meant to oppose that tradition and distance themselves from the norm. This early encounter with deviating from the norm made a significant impact on the women's development and personal growth.

In the Kosovo stories, on one hand schooling was described in a very affirmative way, yet on the other hand it was associated with many challenges and obstacles for women. Participants in both countries credited it as a source of their activism and empowerment.

5.4 Feminism and Activism

The most important part of the life stories was about the intersection of the four main topics: education, activism, feminism and religion. The interplay of these identities tells us how these women perceive feminism, the role of a woman in BiH and Kosovo societies and what challenges they face if they publicly declare themselves feminists. Here, we will provide an overview of the strategies the participants reveal through their narratives about their informal education and activism that they employ in defining, affirming and promoting their feminist identities. "Differential situatedness" (Haraway 1991, Yuval-Davis 2006) defines how women in BiH and Kosovo who are active agents of change in the same ethnic/national and religious groups employ different strategies to position themselves as activists and feminists, and what the social, political and cultural factors are that affect their positioning.

We expected these women to have made a more decisive step towards feminist identities because they are highly educated women who occupy high decision-making positions in public institutions and politics, and are widely recognized for their activism and promotion of women's human rights. However, their stories are testaments to the disparity between what they achieved in public life and politics and the traditional image of women that persists in BiH and Kosovo. Their path towards feminism was to a great extent limited by this discrepancy between private and public, between what is proclaimed by law and the reality of the traditional societies in which these women try to find their place, and finally between modernity and religion, which, for women in Kosovo in particular, presents a great challenge. In most stories we can recognize what

feminist political theory called the "ethics of care" (Yuval-Davis 2011) because the women mostly emphasized the importance of care, support, bounding and networking, and many of them can be classified somewhere between "care-oriented" feminists and "difference" feminists. (Gilligan 1982, Ruddick 1989, 213-30)

5.4.1 Informal Education: a Channel to Feminism

In the previous section of this chapter we analyzed women's stories about primary education, and the role of their families in that process. In this section, we present women's narratives about the informal education they got during and after the wars in BiH and Kosovo. The learning process continues to be an important tool of empowerment and emancipation for the whole of the participants' lives. Empowerment through education is about the power women get to change their own lives and the lives of their families and other women. But this kind of empowerment does not lead to exclusion of others from power or to diminishing others. It brings change and transformation in social and personal relationships (Miller 1992, 241, Held 1993, 136) as many participants showed in their narratives. They did not speak about domination but about transformation that informal education effected in them, helping them to be active agents of social change in their communities.

In the post-socialist and post-war period, many women in BiH and Kosovo lost their jobs and had to learn other skills in order to survive and to help their families and communities rebuild their lives. (Chapter 3) The war was a turning point in the lives of most women, and they used the momentum to learn and acquire skills, and also understand who they are and how to reconcile all their identities in the complex socio-political environments of BiH and Kosovo.

It is important to mention that there were no gender studies in BiH and Kosovo universities before 2006, and the only program of women's studies was initiated in 1998 in Sarajevo by the organization "Women to Women", for a limited number of women every year. So most women studied individually, attended seminars and training in NGOs or combined the two approaches. All of the life-story participants were determined to continue their education, which they recognized as the best vehicle for making changes and for personal empowerment. Their feminist identities first emerged through education that was directly connected to activism.

Empowerment of Yourself, Empowerment of Other Women

Most participants both in BiH and Kosovo were highly motivated to continue learning and studying during and after the war to be able to support other

women and to their own families. Living under socialism, as Zia (observant, over 35, BiH) pointed out, for many women meant "to live according to the established order"—to finish school, to get a job, and to have a family. The war made many women reconsider their positions, identities, gender and family relations and also their professions and occupations. They had to upgrade their knowledge and learn new skills to get a job because women were the first to lose jobs after 1990. (Chapter 3)

One of challenges for Figen (observant, over 35, Kosovo) was to get a job at the university and still remain hijabi. She did not give up, but looked for other options, learning new skills, and prepared herself to work with high school students and with women and children in a woman's organization in Kosovo. In that way, as she explained, she was "contributing to the empowerment of young generations in Kosovo to become motivated and to strive for advancement of their lives." Her particular passion for education of women is part of her feminism. An almost palpable deep desire to be the agent of change that she would like to see in society was nurtured from her early childhood when she "built and shaped her character and her personality." People often described her as a woman with a "male character," as is usual in patriarchal societies—comparing bright, wise and courageous women to men. This stems from the prevailing understanding of the gender-dichotomized nature of women and men that was built through centuries: when a woman does something extraordinary or shows decisiveness and a strong character people say she is "a real male character" or that she is "behaving like a man," which is considered a step forward from continuing in a woman's character. (Chapter 1) This dichotomy—male/female, culture/nature— is still strong, and devalues woman's character and the way women perceive, think, feel and behave. What's more, it leaves no scope for "difference feminism" to develop and enable women to request equal rights while still respecting the difference between sexes.

Although Figen emphasized "the strong character" that helped her in her life, she is aware that some women cannot be strong; therefore the family, society and the state need to provide a favorable environment and good education to empower women enough to obtain equal rights and opportunities. She stated that being a woman in Kosovo is hard, but at the same time honorable. Only minority women, though, perceive being a woman a privileged position within the family. As for Figen, she stressed self-confidence and building a strong character as the important factors in women's empowerment and independence. Her motivation for further education and feminism arises from the fact many women still do not have the same opportunities as men. Figen wants women— from the position of mothers, educators, workers and activists—to be able to get the power to be able to make positive changes, (Held 1993, 136, Ruddick

1989, 213-30) and to maintain dignity as people, not be valued only for their appearance. Figen believes that proper education can build and maintain women's dignity and capacity to forge and transform new relationships and help them be seen as human beings and not only as objects and passive, submissive recipients.

Providing better education for women was also the motivation and driving force of Vera's activism. She was brought up in an educated family and had thought that in Pristina everybody was educated or at least literate, and was shocked when she met women who were illiterate:

> Even in Pristina you have people who don't know to read and write, so I went quickly to my sister and informed her about it. We launched some activities together to help those people. We took the entire neighborhood of twelve women, so while she was teaching women to read, I was playing with their children. (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo)

After the war in Kosovo, Vera's whole family was engaged in supporting the education of women in her city. They knew they needed to do something for women, thus Vera's feminism was formed through her engagement in the activities that sought to provide education for women and girls. They found a region in Kosovo with only primary schooling, and, through the channels and support of her association, they did a great job with women and men in rural areas. She said that they decided to work both with women and men because, as she noted, both need support and education to attain progress in the family. Vera explained that women bear blame—along with patriarchal tradition—for their positions in villages because they educate their daughters to live as their grandmothers did. They perpetuate those old traditional patterns of gender relations that keep women in subordination and ignorance. Vera invested most of her time in providing better educational opportunities for men and women. She aided the process of building and rebuilding schools, forming libraries and providing books for students. Vera also spoke about her concerns and disappointments regarding some civil organisations that, after the war, were active as long as they had funding, but were not genuinely interested in the well-being of their citizens. She talked about the strategies employed, as she started working in the extremely sensitive political environment of pre-war Kosovo, in order to provide education in villages without getting caught by the Yugoslav police:

> In one of the villages, we opened the first library for men and women. We left a guy at the entrance of the village to inform us if police appeared. Soon he came to tell us that the police were coming because they had a spy in the village who informed them about that event. We had prepared ourselves for such a situation, and we took

out a tambourine and started dancing. We told the policemen that we were holding a wedding celebration, but they yelled at us, threatening that they would arrest us. (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo)

In spite of the danger involved, Vera continued her work, her family aiding her a lot. She is hard working, and she wants people to work together and share their achievements with others. For her, teamwork and work for the community are crucial, which is why she engaged to such a great extent in obtaining informal education for other women and men as well as herself. She also wants people to feel the ownership of their accomplishments, displaying a particular respect and sympathy for Mother Theresa and for Motrat Qiriazi, a feminist project established by the sisters Iqballe and Safete Rugova in 1990 in Albania to educate girls. The project was re-established in 1995 in the Kosovo region near the Albanian border, where illiteracy was high among girls. Vera worked in that region and proudly emphasized the support men gave for the education of their wives and daughters. However, as some authors have held, the reason men in that remote area suddenly decided to support education of their daughters and wives was that they found that education of women contributed to the empowerment of their nation. (Clark 2000, 147) Thus, while nation-building projects can be positive or negative for women, in this case woman's empowerment through education was perceived as a positive step toward nation-building in Kosovo. (Chapter 3)

Another Kosovo participant, Anita (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo), also continued striving to obtain additional education for herself and for others during the war in refugee camps, and after the war when she joined an international woman's organization. As a high-school teacher, she had some experience in gathering people around a specific cause, and she used that ability to work for women's human rights in Kosovo. She is proud of her success, because she was involved in enforcing the gender-equality law, establishing state mechanisms affecting gender and teaching women to understand, accept and promote a gender perspective in their work. As a trainer and human rights activist, she thought she also needed to upgrade her own knowledge, so in her late forties she undertook study for a master's degree in human rights. Like Figen, Vera and other female colleagues in women's human rights promotion, Anita perceives her own development and empowerment through education as an important link to the empowerment of other women. Only through personal empowerment they can have the power to transform a deeply patriarchal society.

References to informal education in BiH life stories are similar because most women continue to pursue their education to improve their own positions and help other women recover (or acquire) their rights. When the war started in

BiH, the participants had to learn new things: languages, skills for getting jobs, and skill in training, essential for educating other women. Hana, for instance, experienced a transformation in her life during the war and she reported that for the first time in her life she felt a deep desire to read the Qur'an and learn more about her religion and her Muslim identity. During her exile in Europe she learned German and English, which helped her find a job and establish connections with some women's organizations interested in the position of women in BiH during the war. Her language skills helped her establish an NGO in BiH once she returned home after 1995 and become one of the prominent members. She was very much engaged in educating social workers, pediatricians, psychologists, and psychiatrists to create teams of skilful experts to work on healing traumas, with particular attention to women and children. Her initial desire to study psycho-social therapy brought her into the same field as women's organizations, and, with psycho-social therapy, she helped the community heal. Self-education and providing education for other women is Hana's mission, and her feminism is based on care, justice, support and compassion. Empowered women are able to face challenges in their lives, and also improve relationships in their families and society.

Ada (observant, over 35, BiH) is another example of self-education and improvement of personal skills and knowledge undertaken in order to help other women affected by war and post-war traumas. The psychological and spiritual well-being of women and their families was plainly important at that moment, so Ada decided to start some courses for women to help them and their families survive the war and post-war traumas. She continued her study of Islam, but also developed interest in other fields, primarily psycho-social therapy, that enabled her to advance her work through a multidisciplinary approach to education and healing. The purpose of education and empowerment of women is to be better prepared for any job, but, at that time, the even more important purpose was to prepare them for taking care of their families, which were in danger in the post-war period:

> The way one is raised is very important, because if individuals have been raised in a good environment they will be able to control themselves, even regarding what they see and hear, in other words what passes through their filter. If the foundation of a good childhood environment is lacking, this filter is then full of [big] holes...both good and bad things pass through it in equal measure. (observant, over 35, BiH)

Ada does not limit women to the private sphere, but emphasizes that, today, BiH is not a social-welfare state as the former Yugoslavia was, and women do not have the support and benefits they once had (Chapter 3); therefore they do not have enough time to care for their families *and* be dedicated to their

jobs. Women bear a double or even triple burden and this—as some of both the life story participants and focus group panellists said (Chapter 3)—raises the question of whether it is all worth it. For Ada, however, the burden provides additional motivation to educate women not only to be able to resolve issues in their families more easily, but also to deal with the societal trauma, stress and difficulties women face daily. Education is important for women, and Ada uses that it to improve her own status and the status of other women. Empowerment through education became an important channel of her feminism and activism.

Searching for Herself

As noted, most participants spoke about informal educations as a tool for their own and other women's empowerment during and after the wars in BiH and Kosovo. The women in the next two stories, however, put more emphasis to their own informal education and their struggle to understand and accept the politics of ethno-national and religious identity when the war in BiH started. For Zia (observant, over 35, BiH), the war in BiH was a difficult yet revealing period of her life because that was when she started searching for herself, her identity, faith, and feminism. She was deeply engaged in that search, and for two years she was, as she explained, "simply immersed" in reading and in exploring her identities. This reflected her individual endeavor and desire to understand what had happened during the war, and determine how to continue living with the consequences of the war. She specifically mentioned the period of two years when she intensively was reading some books and authors that made a considerable impact on her life, those by Amin Maluf, Tariq Ali, Fatima Mernissi. They helped her understand herself, her being, and establish more fruitful relationships with other people. That search brought Zia to feminism, and today she is still active, learning and sharing knowledge and wisdom with other women. This is a good example of proactive positioning towards new identity politics in BiH when ethno-national elites started dividing people along ethnic-national-religious lines. Zia's resistance was education and self-empowerment that brought her to a position from which she could help other women and become a prominent activist in women's human rights.

Like Zia, Bilka (non-observant, over 35, BiH) also was searching for herself during the war in order to understand the identity shifts and ethno-national divisions. She had been raised in a communist family and lived in a mixed marriage, as did many BiH families, so she could not believe that after such a long period of unity and brotherhood somebody could divide BiH. When it happened, she had to find a way to understand it, to survive a family split and to explain to her children who are they now—to which ethnic/national group they belonged. But, first and most important, she had to find these answers for

herself. As we saw in Chapter 5.2, Bilka considered herself simply Yugoslav before the war; but in 1992, when Serbs collected data about the inhabitants of her community, she declared her Muslim identity. She felt relief, and it happened—as did many other things in her life—spontaneously, simply welling up from within her, and only later was confirmed by ratiocination. Since she was very busy during the war helping refugees, she did not have time to attend formal gender courses or specialized seminars. Instead, all her work was based on her individual studies and life experiences. She still has not had time to take a break and search for herself as Zia did. Bilka found in books what she already knew in practice. Her activism and field work informed her theoretical knowledge and vice versa. In these mutual transformations, she learned to reconcile her ethnic, religious, female, feminist and activist identities and was able to help other people in her community, in particular women. She realized that most women do not know much about gender equality and feminism, and she decided to read and learn about it in order to be able to understand the needs of women, as well as to be well enough equipped to advocate for those needs in parliament and government. Self-education was important, letting Bilka combine her work in politics and her activism and strengthen her public feminist identity. Although she was in public life before the war, her conscious feminist activism and standing for women's rights began during the war.

Bilka and other participants recognized informal education and self-empowerment as the best channel for positive changes, transformation of hierarchical gender relations, exclusion and domination. They believe that women can make a difference in family and public life only if they avoid predominant male patterns of power relations.

5.4.2 Becoming Activists, Becoming Feminists

We now analyze another important part of the women's stories—activism. We show, here, how activism and feminism inform and shape each other. The intersection of activism and feminism is also closely intertwined with education and religion. The interplay of all these factors constitutes the phenomenon of feminist identities of Muslim women in BiH and Kosovo. As the women's stories show, feminist, activist, religious and secular identities are not fixed and isolated from one another, but are sometimes polarized and in opposition, and sometimes in mutual interaction and transformation.

Post-socialist BiH and Kosovo are complex socio-economic and political contexts in which acting outside of the ethno-nationalist frameworks was hard, but the participants found ways to transcend some of these boundaries and advocate for gender equality. Through their life stories, they spoke about some

of the strategies they employed to become women's human rights advocates and feminists and to declare (or hide) that identity in public.

5.4.2.1 Activism for Change

Most of the women emphasized the importance of their activism during and after the wars in BiH and Kosovo when they felt they had to do something for themselves, their families and other women who suffered as refugees, returnees, widows, and from direct or indirect traumas. The war immersed them in unbearable situations in which they recognized their own capacities and strengths to cope with different challenges. All of the participants reported that the war was a turning point in their lives that moved them to become active agents of change in their communities and societies. Loss of family members also was an important impetus to re-think their lives and what they could do for themselves and other people.

Interplay of Activism and Religion

Most participants emphasized the importance of their activism, especially those in BiH, who did not say much in their stories about private and family life as did the women in Kosovo. Zia (observant, over 35, BiH), for instance, did not specifically describe her organization and activities, but throughout her story it could be seen that she is very active in work with women. For example, when she mentioned visits to villages where women asked her about feminism, she told them that "feminism means to have a life without oppression and limitations, and life with freedom of choice." Actually, her entire story was one of identities and activism. In her case, the intersection of the activist, Muslim and feminist identity was especially powerful because she positions herself *always* as a Muslim, feminist and activist:

> I am an activist, because activism helped me to discover that I like being Muslim. If I had not understood that, I would never be able to explain why I like being Muslim, but would have to imply it as others do…Feminism helped me clearly define what are my expectations from the Muslim and activist part of my identity. (observant, over 35, BiH)

Zia is one of the rare observant women who clearly states her feminist identity and gives special credit to it and activism for helping her understand and re-shape her religious identity. She passionately positions herself as feminist and proudly bears all three identities in public. She will not permit society to reduce her to pre-defined identity boxes, but insists on being free to identify herself as she likes. Her struggle is complex in its attempt to maintain her Muslim identity with a quite liberal interpretations of Islam in a traditional patriarchal Muslim society and Islamic Community, to make public her feminist identity—

which is not welcomed or thought desirable by most in her society, especially for a religiously observant woman—and to be activist in women's human rights, which is also not easy when somebody publicly declares religious and feminist identity. Although Zia works in a secular woman's organization, her entire life in the post-war period has been framed by both Islam and feminism, and it is not easy for the post-socialist mindset to understand the intersection and interaction of these identities. Despite the prevailing religious-secular divide, Zia seeks to go beyond imposed boundaries when she publicly, proudly pursues her Muslim, female and religious identities in BiH. This kind of example provides "spaces for new thinking and practice to meet the challenges of a pluralizing and increasingly interactive global environment." (Cady and Hurd 2010, 22) BiH is a plural society and is challenged by demands for both gender equality and religion in the public arena to find proper responses to those demands and proper channels of interaction and mutual transformation.

Ada's story (observant, over 35, BiH) also demonstrates the interaction of religion and the secular, challenging both to be more open and inclusive in regards to each other. As a hijabi woman, she wants her place in public life, and in that way she challenges modernity (Göle 2011), but also challenges the traditional image of believers who do not see activism as their duty in the secular state. The combination of her religious identity and deep faith drove her activism, but she does not consider feminism a relevant part of this interplay. She wanted to do something for women in the small city where she lived during the war, and she started a woman's organization:

> There was a need among women to socialize, to help each other. It was more of a psychological need to strengthen each other …there were many challenges and people, when challenged, simply need to be near each other because when tragedy strikes it is much easier to bear it and share it with others. … [H]ow to become a person, how to maintain the community, family, how to continue raising children, teaching them, life does not end. I think those were the main reasons why women spent more time socializing… (observant, over 35, BiH)

Ada's activism was motivated by the need of other women who were alone with children and had to maintain families in such a difficult period. As she noted, people can more easily overcome the consequences of perils like the war if they support each other. As an observant and highly educated Muslim woman, she felt an obligation to act upon her religious and civic identity. As she put it, "being a citizen is to be social, to cooperate with other people, to work with others, to understand what they want, how they reflect on certain issues…participate in some processes that bring benefit to the society." She further explained that a believer should be sensitive to his/her community's

needs, and also that a non-believer can be an equally good citizen if he/she acts the same way. The only difference is the source of moral and ethical values: for some, those values are rooted in religion and for some they are not, but the latter still act in accordance with certain codes of conduct. (Spahić-Šiljak i Anić 2009) Ada's entire life is embedded in the deep spirituality she searched for since childhood, and she perceives everything through the lens of the holistic approach that infuses the Sufi tradition of Islam, although she does not want to be labeled with any of these specific religious identities: she is a Muslim, devoted to God, and all other identities are not very relevant to her. The only important identity for her is being religious *and* activist.

We find a similar approach to religion and activism in the story of Alma (observant, over 35, Kosovo), who made a dramatic shift in her life—to leave her job as a physician and to work at peace-building and the dialogue that leads to it. The war and her husband's death were the turning points in her life, moving her towards activism. It made her re-think her life and her position in society. As an observant Muslim, Alma concluded that after the war her primary duty should be learning and teaching about dialogue, peace and reconciliation. She joined the Kosovo peace association that gathers people of different religious backgrounds, mostly Muslims, Catholics, Jews and Protestants, plus some of the Orthodox Christians who have not left that region. She worked mostly with the young. "I have worked with children and still work with them, because I enjoy talking to them, learning from them; but they also need to learn something from us."

As a peace activist, she continues working in the region but also travels around the world as a Kosovo representative in peace-building. However, she regrets that the Orthodox Christian Church is not willing to participate in their activities, although she has been attempting to win them over to the side of interreligious dialogue through training, seminars and lectures. She is proud of that and she thinks that through direct contacts and work with people she can make positive changes in Kosovo in respect to reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. Alma's story shows how the war, but also personal losses, can completely change the life course of an individual and spur her towards activism that provides new meaning of life with the clear goal of bringing people together again so they can coexist in peace. Although she did not mention her feminist identity, her emphasis on protecting women, especially from domestic violence, positions her squarely in "care-oriented" feminism because she is focused on people's need to live in peace.

Another life story from BiH was also based on the ethics of care and peaceful coexistence. Hana (non-observant, over 35, BiH) is the only BiH

participant who went into exile during the war. Activism during the exile changed Hana's life and the lives of many women she helped at that time. She was active in collecting humanitarian aid for refugees. And, because she was a highly educated woman with significant experience in state administration, she was also engaged in the promotion of BiH institutions in Europe. Since she had learned German and some English, she was qualified to work both for the BiH government and for women's organizations interested in providing support to BiH women. As a speaker at several conferences in Europe, she attracted the attention of many organizations that helped her start her own organization in BiH right after the war, providing a haven for women victims of war trauma, rape, torture—and of domestic violence. State institutions do not provide enough support to women in the field of social and health care, but as a woman experienced in state administration, Hana managed to get support from the state and establish a partnership between NGOs and the government, and to contribute to structural changes in promotion of women's human rights.

Her activism is motivated mostly by her desire to provide support for women and to educate them to become strong and self-confident individuals. Hana also found motivation in her desire to learn more about her Muslim identity; she started reading the Qur'an and other sources of Islam to understand why that part of her identity was suppressed during socialism and how to revive it in the post-war period. Her story has similarities to Zia's story, but Hana's interest in re-building her Muslim identity was more ethnic/national, less religious. For her, preservation of Muslim identity is relevant to preservation of the multicultural spirit of BiH, and being a Muslim means coexisting peacefully with others and maintaining multicultural BiH— which should be an obligation of every Muslim. She is proud of the image of BiH as a multicultural society where everyone has equal opportunities. Thus, her activism in the field of social work and women's rights essentially is framed by human rights and multicultural approaches in the process of re-building BiH.

Activism as a Way of Life

One of the next two stories came from the youngest Kosovo participant, Edita, and the other from the oldest BiH participant, Bilka. They both were activists from early student days and they both continue to be activists, although they have other jobs.

As a schoolgirl and later, in the university, Edita (observant, under 35, Kosovo) was an activist and someone whose ambition was always to be *first* and to show that women can do everything equally as well as men. She thought, for instance, that being first and best in school competitions in science would open the way for her in other traditionally male fields, so her competitiveness

stemmed from society's mindset that did not encourage women to compete with men, especially not fields like science. Her ambition and activism impelled her to work on the student magazine—where she was invited to fill the quota of female journalists—and later to represent students in the faculty senate, then in the student parliament. She used these positions to educate and empower women through seminars and training, and, as a successful lobbyist for women's issues at the university, she was offered a leadership position in a human rights organization. She took it with the support of her fiancé, and for a while she continued work at the student magazine, at the organization, and in the student parliament, but after some time she focused all her activism on the human rights organization. With her impressive experience in public presentations she was excellent at promoting her organization in the media and at public events, and she kept doing this because, as she noted, not many women are accustomed to speaking in public. Edita then broadened her activities to include sport, and she attracted many young women to sports. At the end of her story, she mentioned that religious intolerance and neglect of the rights of women and children in Kosovo is an additional motivation to keep going and stay active. She said that there is a good legal framework for gender equality in Kosovo, but that implementation is not satisfactory, so she thinks women need to be active as long as discrimination exists. Edita's entire story reflects the way she used her potential for activism to empower herself—and also other women.

Bilka (non-observant, over 35, BiH) has also been active since her student days in the Youth Communist League. This was followed by her work in the government and parliament. Besides that, her parents, as active communists, motivated her, by example, to become active. She gave special credit to her mother, who was active in some cultural organizations, bringing her children to some meetings where Bilka learned lessons of solidarity, equality, and activism. With family encouragement, Bilka dedicated her work in politics to women's rights, and she is one of the rare female politicians who combined work in state institutions with activism in NGOs. The war was her driving motivation to stay active and broaden her activities into the non-governmental sector. She is not happy about women who enter politics without any vision or devotion to effecting advances and changes. Bilka described them as "obedient to their political party's male leadership; they do not question anything and are just there to fill the quota." Such place-holding apathy means that women who are hard-working, and who have earned their positions through education and commitment to certain goals, cannot achieve much because they do not have support of those who, as Bilka said, "are just there to occupy positions." Bilka became visibly upset while discussing this because she expected more solidarity from her female colleagues in politics and a greater dedication to women's rights.

Activism *is* her life. And Bilka described some of the obstacles women face when they try to make changes, hedged about with preconceived notions about women, their nature, and roles. So she is very critical of the image of a woman in politics who does not need to be knowledgeable and experienced, but only decorative and silent—a "strategy" that some women realize they can use to get and keep positions in political parties or state institutions and parliaments, and they are not willing to compromise their tenure in those positions by going against the party leadership. They follow the path of least resistance, and do not contribute to women's rights or fight for other positive changes, but simply follow the rules and guidelines. They, as Bilka noted, are not activists and do not understand why she or some other women "waste" their time arguing with the male political leadership when it is easier to "follow orders." Although she holds a high decision-making position, and has significant experience in politics, she is still fighting to be accepted as equal to men:

> [I]t often happened that when I said something related to a certain attitude or defense of a certain stand, people would [see] that as coming out of my frustration—like I am weak or people do not see me strong enough… so that attitude I had apparently (for them) came out as a result of my frustration rather than because I felt or thought like that. The constant fight I have with people is because I want to be understood as an individual not just as a woman..." (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

She criticized the political party system that is formally open to women, but essentially quite patriarchal, delegating women to women's forums to deal with "women's issues" and not to interfere with *important* social and political issues. Women's forums in political parties are in fact important to her; but she feels that women need to be more active and request better positions within their party structures. Despite that, Bilka is determined to continue her activities both in politics and women's organizations because she believes that only through activism is it possible to make changes and encourage younger generations of women to be accountable politicians and public figures.

Activism is an important part of most of our participants' lives, but different family, social and political settings inform the shape of their activism. For some, religion was what drove them to become active; for some, it was compassion and care for the needs of women during and after the wars in BiH and Kosovo; and for others it was simply their way of life because from early school days they were active agents of local change.

5.4.2.2 Which Feminism?

Today, both BiH and Kosovo have gender equality laws, state mechanisms to address gender issues, and action plans for implementation of gender state policies. (Chapter 3) On one hand, the state ensures *de jure* equality with

international human rights norms and universal approaches to human rights; on the other hand, implementation is weak due to the structural patriarchy that does not include women as active agents of change and does not allow women to be in positions of power. Some scholars rightfully ask how equality is to be achieved when men built societal institutions in order to further their own interests. (Babić-Avdispahić 2004, 218) Women face only unappealing choices: they either conform to the male norm or take refuge in gender neutrality or insist on equality which, if blindly enforced, ends affirmative action and again puts women in a less favorable position. This is why feminists belonging to different branches of feminism argue about what approach to take in establishing equality of men and women.

In this section, we discuss how life-story participants position themselves regarding feminism, how they define it, and which forms of feminism they support, advocate for, or simply practice. Some participants declare their feminist identity in public; some are against the radical forms of feminism; some do not consider feminism an important part of their identity; and some did not even mention it in their stories. The Bosnian women were more open about feminisms, seemed more informed and also more critical towards some aspects of feminist development.

Muslim and Liberal Feminist Positioning

Only three participants, Zia, Zandra, and Bilka have publicly declared their feminist identities—while at the same time criticizing both feminists and non-feminists for ignorance, lack of activism and curiosity about each other.

As mentioned earlier, Zia (observant, over 35, BiH) was the only participant with interaction between her religious, activist and feminist identities. The war was a period of awakening for her, when she finally resolved the conundrum of her multiple identities: who she was and how to reconcile all three identities as equally relevant to her life. Zia is an outspoken Muslim feminist and activist, wanting interpretations of Islam to be effective and applicable to secular life in today's BiH. She wants to speak for herself and have her voice heard, much like many Muslim women in Egypt and Turkey. (Badran 2009, 242, cooke 2001, 62, Chapter 2) Zia, like many Muslim feminists, does not reject Islam, but, through constructive critique of some aspects of Islamic hermeneutics, seeks equality and the possibility of reconciling her religious and feminist identities in secular BiH. As noted in the interpretation of Zia's story, she challenges both religious and secular boundaries and does not accept imposed identity positioning and exclusions. As she explained, she likes being a Muslim and loves Islam, but she prefers to live in secular state. Even so, she is not a secularized Muslim who keeps spirituality and religion private matter, but an observant Muslim woman who

wants a place for her religion in public, and room for different interpretations of Islam. Through her work, Zia finds proper interpretations for herself and advocates for limitless positioning of her feminist and religious identities. She is her own *mufti*, who searches for the meaning and understanding of Islam instead of just uncritically accepting the mainstream traditional interpretations that impose limitations on women.

Zia's story about life under socialism revealed what might be a common factor for many women in BiH and Kosovo at that time—acceptance of life as a "final product." She thought the life she had before the war was everything, and that she accomplished what was expected from a woman—to finish school, to marry and have family and to work. She feels that her discovery of feminism in her middle years is something almost natural for all women because at that stage of life they grow out of other obligations and grow in their self-development:

> In 1992 and later, while reading all of that, I realized why women start to be occupied with feminism in their forties—because until then you deal with bringing up yourself, your children, the house, and then you sort of start picking and poking about who you are and what you are and why, in which way. You start questioning everything, and I think it is a wonderful thing that happened to me. I fell in love with this and that is why I cannot leave it. (observant, over 35, BiH)

Feminism also brought new knowledge to Zia and understanding of neocolonial politics, imperialist programs that seem still to be in power, and to enslave small, economically impoverished and politically weak nations. She believes that even the women's movement has fallen prey to globalization trends and what we call "improvement of women's status" is actually just a repetition of what has happened before. For Zia, there is no genuine liberation for women today because all emancipation projects are part of bigger political and economic globalization schemes. Zia is critical of the "memory politics" in the feminist movement because many courageous women and feminists who worked for women's rights centuries ago are forgotten, as is the fact that women had to fight over and over for their rights. According to Zia, discontinuous memory and ignoring women who performed heroic acts in the historical past keep women in the position of having permanently to fight the same battles. She thinks that feminism and women's rights should not be taken for granted and as finalized projects. Women do need to permanently think, work, cooperate and reflect these ideas in every moment of their lives. Feminism for her is a way of life.

Another problem for Zia is weak bonding and networking among feminists, not only globally, but also regionally and locally. She is greatly dissatisfied with the knowledge and approaches to feminism in BiH today. She feels women do

not know what feminism is, and that there are great misunderstandings among the general public, but also among the feminists themselves:

> What always surprises me is that the more educated women are, the more they are against feminism and feminists…They say, don't mention to me those lesbians and prostitutes. I am always disappointed when I hear that from educated women. (observant, over 35, BiH)

One of the reasons women do not want to be associated with feminism in BiH, Zia finds, is the patriarchal and ignorant environment that stigmatizes feminists. Therefore, she said, "women will rarely say that they are feminists because they do not want čaršija [downtown, what represents society] to bear a grudge. That is a problem. We cannot move past that…" Similarly, as was discussed in the focus groups, feminist identity is not welcomed in public, and feminists are called pejorative names like "genderuša" or "mahaluša" (Chapter 4.3), pejoratives that, at best, imply something inappropriate and irrelevant. Zia does not mind what *čaršija* (downtown) says about her feminism, but she would like more support and solidarity among feminists and, in general, among women who seem lost in their particularistic goals and visions.

Another outspoken feminist, Zandra (non-observant, over 35, BiH), could be described as a liberal feminist. For her, feminism is self-discovery, and it emerged from personal experience and reflections on the question of what it means to be a woman—an internal battle in construction of one's identity. The war also spurred her to engage in activism in women's organizations, but, as she said:

> [I]f someone asked me [before] about feminism and whether I was a feminist, I answered, "No, I am not a feminist, I only help those who are weaker, in this case women victims of war."…With time, when you realize that one battle seeks new battles, that it is a motivation for new goals, that one idea opens five new ideas, then you realize there is room for improving the status of women, and then through your activities it becomes clear that you are a feminist, only that identifying with it theoretically remains difficult. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

Zandra is also very much involved in the promotion of women's rights, and has been since 1992, when she left her job in government. Although she did not provide many details about her work in women's organizations, she kept repeating her contribution to women's human rights. Zandra discussed gender politics in BiH, but she continuously made references to religion and seeking to reconcile her secular liberal feminist positioning with the mainstream interpretations of gender relations in Islam. Although non-observant, she deems religion an important part of her family heritage. Unlike Zia, who spoke

passionately about her religion and feminism, and finds her own interpretations, Zandra challenged religious authorities to be more open and discuss the role of a woman in family and society from different perspectives. She personally thinks it is possible to reconcile Islam and feminism, but cannot understand why the Muslim leadership does not provide answers to the discrepancy between the ideal of the Qur'anic message and its distorted application:

> Should I, as a feminist who advocates for equal participation of women, still be one step behind my husband [in the mosque] or does Islam have to change…what are the rules that demand this type of behavior? It is the question of interpretation… therefore why not adjust it so it contributes to the development of the society? If the society feels the need for men and women to, in some way, be together, why not change some of the rules? (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

Zandra wants to see changes in interpretations of Islam to be egalitarian and inclusive and better reflect the development of society. There is a huge discrepancy between secular and religious discourses on women's rights, and Zandra cannot accept the fact that she, as a prominent politician, today, and advocate for women's rights, is equal in secular society, while in the religious private sphere she still stands behind her husband during prayers, and is excluded from certain rituals reserved for men. Plainly, her religious identity seems important to her because a significant part of her story was discussion about the religious-secular divide and possibilities to reconcile the two. She can be described as a secularized Muslim because religion is a private matter for her, but she still considers religious rituals and practices important. The problem for her is the imposed gender segregation that she finds unacceptable in a secular society that at least formally promotes gender equality. The clash between the religious and secular was patent in her story, but she does not seek a greater place for religion in secular life as Zia does. She challenges religious discourse and its "unacceptable" gender politics and gender segregation, but keeps religious identity as private matter.

Zandra does declare her feminist identity, but she understands that is not popular to be a feminist today in BiH due to prejudices and reduction of feminism to its radical forms. She also blames her fellow feminists who create counter-productive situations with debates, for instance, about gender-sensitive language although "it is not as important as having [regular] maternity leave benefits, having kindergartens and increasing the participation of women in government." She complained that "…there was so much lobbying for gender-sensitive language that it created… even some mockery…[O]ur language is really not that developed [to be fully gender-sensitive]." Zandra believes that women's basic rights need to be satisfied before going into more sophisticated

issues like gender-sensitive language. Interestingly, although an outspoken feminist and women's human rights advocate, she does not recognize that women cannot defer one battle for rights until another is won. Certainly, the social and healthcare benefits that women had during the socialist period (Chapter 3), then lost, are important, but so is gender-sensitive language because language is one key to building and shaping relations and politics, and the fight for it cannot be deferred because how people speak helps determine how they act, and changing the norms of gender-charged diction takes time. Zandra's secular views are progressive, but her discussion about feminisms demonstrates a tendency to stay moderate respecting the social context of BiH.

Like Zia, Zandra also thinks that "feminism is misinterpreted and that there is no knowledge of the possibility of [co-]existence of multiple feminisms… Most of women in BiH will not profess that they are feminists because for many years there was a view that feminism brings with it some kind of extremism." In that atmosphere, many women in BiH say that they advocate for women's rights, yet do not want to declare a feminist identity—a strategy women employ to survive in the public sphere when they hold a position of trust and fear that bringing a feminist identity into it might jeopardize it and reduce their chances to be accepted both by men and women as good and decent people who are not anti-family and anti-tradition. This mirrors the views ventilated in the focus groups about a public feminist identity.

Zandra is concerned about the status of feminism in BiH; she feels that it lags behind the way the world is developing, and that the woman's movement lost it strength and sharpness compared with how it was ten years ago:

> Feminism in BiH is in a descending trajectory and we have lost women leaders… [T]here were pioneers of such ideas; in a way, they are tired and the education system…was not set up to ensure such ideas are part of it.… If you do not have a strong women's scene, if you do not have strong women advocates [for] rights of women, equality, it is difficult to have an entirely developed idea of feminism. … The result is that [feminism] is not talked about anymore. If you do not talk about something, if you do not teach new generations about something, then you don't have those who could carry those ideas. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

Zandra worries about structural changes that ought to be introduced through the education system in BiH. Individual efforts and piecemeal approaches to women's human rights and feminism cannot bring positive changes. Feminists and activists are growing tired, with less motivation to continue the battle against patriarchy, re-traditionalization, and exclusion of women from positions of power.

Bilka (non-observant, over 35, BiH) also clearly positioned herself as feminist; as she explained, "My activism and engagement in politics speak in favor of my feminism." Like Zandra, she holds a liberal feminist position with emphasis on personal and political autonomy. Her activism and concerns about the social and economic rights of women bring her closest to "egalitarian liberal" feminism because she believes, as one writer put it, that "women's needs and interests are insufficiently reflected in the basic conditions under which they live, and that those conditions lack legitimacy because women are inadequately represented in the processes of democratic self-determination." (Baehr 2008)

Unlike many male and female politicians in BiH, Bilka thinks that all those active in society should work together to provide gender equality, therefore she is an advocate of stronger support and cooperation between state and civic organizations. As we mentioned earlier, she is determined to combine her activist and political careers and provide proper channels of communication between the two sides, which can foster better protection of human rights.

Bilka proudly declares her feminism and was a bit surprised that we posed this question because she believed that her feminism is demonstrated by her activism.

> Of course I am feminist. It is one of my identities and my entire work reflects my feminism. My feminist identity does not exclude other identities, but enriches them and helps me understand how power relations function and why I need to be active and help other women and men to understand the importance of gender-inclusive politics. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

Nevertheless, Bilka is aware of social pressure and the unwillingness of most women in BiH to publicly declare a feminist identity. Like Zia and Zandra, she thinks that women do not want to be "labeled," and do not have enough courage to live as a minority. Being feminist means being in the minority, with a meaning from the socialist period that connected feminism with a bourgeois heritage, radical feminism, lesbians and a "suspicious code of conduct." Bilka understands this fear that women have of being labeled and rejected, but she does not accept it as a final position. She believes that both state and women's organizations have not worked hard enough to promote feminism and explain what it means. Education and consistency in application of feminist principles of gender equality might be lead to wider acceptance of feministic identity and elimination of prejudices and stereotypes.

Positioning of Women's Human Rights Advocates

Out of twelve life-story participants, only three clearly positioned themselves publicly as feminists. All the other participants either did not even refer to

feminism, or made only short references with defensive statements distancing themselves from radical forms of feminisms, or positioned themselves as advocates of women's human rights in a way that meant they might well be considered "care-oriented" feminists and "difference" feminists. However, these women transcend such definitions; all have elements of some forms of feminism, but they also bring something new that broadens the scope of existing feminist identities.

The two youngest participants—one from BiH and the other from Kosovo—reject any public feminist identity, reflecting through their internal and external battles how complex female and feminist positioning is in the two post-socialist societies. Selma (non-observant, under 35, BiH) does not consider herself feminist. She learned something about it, but is afraid to be associated with radical feminists:

> I would still never say for myself that I am a feminist. I actually do not know what that concept includes. Will someone immediately have a prejudice that I am aggressive, frustrated…"did not get married, of course." … So I have some kind of fear of this term as if I would have to raise my head high and say "Yes, I am a feminist, do you want to fight?" (non-observant, under 35, BiH)

Her feminism rests on human rights activism and promotion of women's rights, and she recognizes that such activism might classify her. "So, I am a feminist," she said, "if I am fighting for the right of choice, because women definitely must make their own decisions." She invests all her efforts into making changes in her immediate surroundings, in family, fighting against the stereotypes within her own family—especially those her mother tries to project on her, like perceptions of what an ideal marriage, an ideal husband and an ideal life are. Her fight for independence from her family and their values is also her fight for feminism—a phenomenon we discussed in the section on education.

Selma recognizes that there are many issues women have to fight for in a social and cultural environment that nurtures stigma and animosity towards feminists. The mindset of people is rigid, intolerant, and inflexible, making it hard for women to go against it. It takes time, energy, willingness and dedication to be on that path, and, as Selma said, most women are not ready for that. She believes that women in BiH face many contradictions regarding their identities as female, feminist, religious or non-religious persons, and so on. There is an attempt to impose these identities as fixed categories and keep women within identity boxes, rarely allowing them to be active agents but only passive recipients. Some women prefer to stay within fixed identity boundaries, while some, like Selma, decidedly do not, her struggle showing how difficult is to get out of the assigned identities and gender roles. She admitted that she finds herself caught

between being a modern, emancipated, economically independent woman who knows what she wants from life, and playing, like most other women, the traditional role of a woman that her family had taught her. Selma's feminism wavers between the traditional and modern patterns of life, and she is not ready yet to make her feminist identity public. That is partly because she is aware of the social stigma; but the hardest part for her is the emotional battle with her family, especially with her mother and sister, and because of such huge emotional pressure by her family she still is torn between the sort of life she desires and envisions and the social and family norms that dictate what the life of a young girl should look like—which does not include moving out of the parents' house to an own apartment of her before marriage.

The story of the youngest Kosovo participant, Edita (observant, under 35), shows a feminist positioning similar to Selma's. Edita also does not call herself a feminist, but her entire life, worldview and activism display her feminism.

> Maybe the society itself where I belonged enabled [feminism] ... I grew up in a family where all the children were female. In school there was competition between boys and girls and there were the preconceived notions that if you were a girl you couldn't do this or that and this motivated me and that was why I decided to work in this field. My motivation increased when I came to places where women's rights are violated or when they are prevented from going to school. Those women, regardless of their will, would become feminists because their circumstances forced them go in that direction. Even if we were not exposed to these kinds of problems before, we might face them in the future. (observant, under 35, Kosovo)

Like Selma, Edita is aware of the effect of the difficulties women in Kosovo face every day. "Living in a society with many challenges and obstacles to exercising basic rights," she said, "unconsciously makes women feminists." Through their struggle to enjoy women's human rights, many women become feminists, even if they are not aware that they have done so. Their de facto feminism thus is born from difficult circumstances and a desire to help other women.

Edita criticized the state because it does not take women's rights seriously. It introduced a quota mandating that 30 per cent of the Kosovo parliament must be women—but it will not effect structural changes to redefine public/private spheres and accept women in all fields, not only as housewives (and token parliament representatives). Like Zandra, Edita thinks that significant changes cannot be achieved without structural changes of male-tailored society. (Babić-Avdispahić 2004, 218)

In her story, she did not find any tensions between Islam and feminism as some of her colleagues from Kosovo and BiH did; rather, she idealistically

glorified societies with Islamic laws in force. Without advancing persuasive arguments to support it, she expressed belief that in Islamic societies women do not need feminisms. However, as we have seen in the cases of Iran and Egypt (Chapter 2), women, there, face even bigger challenges than women in Kosovo and BiH when it comes to freedom of choice, freedom of movement, divorce, etc. Edita's attitude might be interpreted as her reaction to the banning of hijab in Kosovo and lack of freedom of religion and tolerance towards hijabi women, who are prevented from going to schools, universities and from working. It was specifically Kosovo's ban on hijab that affected Edita's positioning as a feminist, making her one out of necessity to stand up for freedom of religion. At the same time, she lacks information about Muslim societies and their laws that jeopardize other women's rights.

Although Edita is committed to developing women's potentials, capacities and skills, and their positive image in public as equally capable of doing any job, she deprecates women who should be more active and should be wise enough to form partnerships and alliances with men who are willing to support them. Her feminism might be described as between Islamic and liberal, although she said that she is an advocate of women's human rights. On one hand, she believes that Islamic law is a solution, and does not challenge its patriarchal interpretations—as, for instance, Zia and Zadra do in BiH; on the other hand, she is completely committed to a liberal conception of gender equality: her entire her story was one of wanting to prove that women can equal men's achievements if they have equal opportunities.

One more participant from Kosovo based her feminisms on activism. Figen (observant, over 35) said that she is feminist in respect to women's human rights protection, but went on to explain:

> I am very feminist, but it's not feminism that's at issue here, it is about the situations in which family loses its meaning. Family is the primary unit of society and if the family fails and does not function properly, then the state will also not function well. The state [Kosovo] destroys the meaning of a family. (observant, over 35, Kosovo)

Figen's main concern is to help women and children, and although she wants to preserve the family as a pillar of the society, it does not mean that she supports traditional architecture and hierarchal relations in the family. She criticized numerous discriminatory practices, like inheritance laws that work to women's disadvantage, making them economically dependent on their husbands. Family and marriage relations should be improved because, as she saw in her parents' marriage, everything functioned smoothly, but only because her mother always let Figen's father have his way. Figen was very critical of the lack of state policies and strategies in respect to family, social security for women, proper wages and

secured maternity leave—benefits women enjoyed during socialism (Chapter 3)
—although she did not refer to that period.

Figen's discussion focused on the private/public dichotomy and the
subordinate roles a woman is expected to fulfill at home as a wife even though,
at work, she is equal to some other woman's husband. State policy of gender
equality in the public realm does not affect family relations, so women must
continually cross back and forth between two spheres of life: in public, where
they are legally perceived as equal to men, and in private where they are
subject to traditional relations and expectations. Figen's criticism was similar
to Zandra's regarding gender equality in both religious and secular discourses.
Challenge to the traditional concept of family is visible in her husband's support
for Figen's activism—that support exceptional—and in her desire to break the
sharp division between the private and public domains. She expects women
to challenge and change their positions in families, where they are obviously
not equal and do not have the positions they deserve. In Figen's story we can
recognize a very strong and courageous woman who has a vision and strives to
reach it.

> I have a principle that nothing is impossible with the support of God, and people
> are the ones who make something impossible. When they graduate from university,
> many women think it is important to get married, to buy gold and other irrelevant
> things. These kinds of women cannot do anything. They cannot be Muslims and
> feminists at the same time, because they consented to live according to the rules set
> by their husbands, and families. They do not want to explore other possibilities. They
> say, We cannot do this or that; but they could if they really wanted to. It is possible to
> be a Muslim woman wearing a scarf and a feminist at the same time. (observant, over
> 35, Kosovo)

Figen's entire story echoed with the call for activism as the most important
channel to obtain women's rights. In Kosovo, as she explained, where the
majority of women do not have opportunities for a decent education, and many
are still illiterate, feminists have to stand up and work on the improvement of
women's rights. Thus, advancement of women's human rights and elimination
of violence and crimes against women drives Figen's activism and feminism. She
is disappointed at the general lack of ideals, optimism, and faith that anything
can be changed. Her religion is crucial in nurturing her optimism and activism,
and one of her strong messages was, "to stay faithful to yourself, and to not be
dependent on or influenced by others."

Another Kosovo participant, Anita (non-observant, over 35), also grounds
her feminism in the activism of promoting gender equality, both through her
work in women's organizations and through cooperation with state mechanisms

regarding gender. Unlike Figen, she is not religious, and religion is not the not the motivation or foundation of her self-empowerment and activism. Her feminism begins with the elimination of prejudices about Muslims discussed earlier in this chapter.

Anita is satisfied with the legal framework, but not with the state policy in implementing gender equality, blaming the state for double standards in application of laws. One of the reasons for such neglect is the mindset of Balkan people that still perceives woman as sexual objects. She noted that in the Balkans men stare at women (because they think they have a *right* to do so) with an open brazenness that, increasingly, even the "wolves" in the West would think unacceptable. Like Edita, Anita also thinks that the quota of 30 per cent women in parliament makes no significant difference because:

> They [people I general] have doubts about women ...[A] woman is viewed as a sexual object now, and also as something similar to a child who is to be controlled and supervised, but still has the freedom to go out and do everything she wants. This mentality must be changed. (non-observant, over 35, Kosovo)

A similar discussion occurred in focus groups (Chapter 4) about women in Kosovo who were perceived as sexual objects; the panellists also blamed the mindset of people, saying that it needed to be changed if laws about gender equality are to be implemented. Measures that the Kosovo state introduced to increase the number of women in politics, according to Anita, do not yield positive results because women are not included based on their merits, but on how many women come from certain political parties. She did not mention feminism explicitly, but did talk about women's rights and equal opportunities "for young women to work and be mothers at the same time." Like most of the participants, Anita is closest to "care oriented" feminism, and socialist feminism, struggling to maintain the balance between the private and public, and advocating for the participation of women in public life through government support of the family.

The BiH stories of Hana (non-observant, over 35) and Ada (observant, over 35) reveal much about feminism, yet neither woman considers herself a feminist. Hana admitted that she is not entirely familiar with the feminist movement, but knows some women who are—mentioning her friend, Amra, who is a feminist. "I am just a woman," Hana said, "and all I do is not from feminist theories… I fight for women's rights…" Hana is also aware that BiH provides a distinctly unfavorable context for feminism.

> I think that we do not have a living culture of feminism, and that somebody who declares her feminist identity, like Amra for instance—I think they are misunderstood

> in society as all other new things in Bosnia are. It is a completely distorted image of feminists, the term "feminist" is usually equated with "lesbian." It is some kind of a generalized obsession of our society. (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

Hana's rejection of feminism derives also from her experience in exile in Europe where she met feminists "who are exclusive… and do not have tolerance, although they constantly speak about tolerance." She thinks that being a feminist is to occupy a narrow space with some women who are feminists, but not seeming to include all women who fight for women's rights. It is almost as if feminism is reserved for a special group of women who construct their fight for women's rights differently from the way Hana does. She does not feel good about feminism, does not wish to be associated with it in any way:

> Yes, I am exclusive in that context. Like everybody, if I defend something, I believe that it is right. I am exclusive when I protect my clients [women victims of violence], but not because I am feminist, but because I choose that path." (non-observant, over 35, BiH)

She also mentioned another friend (and a participant), Zia (observant, over 35, BiH), who is a Muslim feminist with a positive experience with feminism on a personal level although she deplored what she sees as a lack of cooperation among feminist organizations. It is interesting that the two of them find enough common ground to work together on promotion of women's human rights and ignore their differences about feminism. From Zia's story it is evident that she continuously reads about and advances her knowledge about feminisms, while Hana says she does not know much about the subject, and has no interest in trying to learn in order to discuss and perhaps change the effect on her of her negative experience with some groups of European feminists. Hana does not feel comfortable with feminism, probably, as she explained, due to social stigma and misunderstanding, therefore she rejects that identity and positions herself as a women's human rights activist.

The rejection by most participants of a public feminist identity, and their uneasiness about it, does not mean that they are not, in fact, feminists. Ada (observant, over 35, BiH) is a good example because she is an activist and even interprets some Islamic traditions in favor of gender equality based on merit, not biology. Feminism for her is a temporary construct that has grown from the need to address discrimination against women.

> It is a phenomenon that appeared from a need, necessity. Each extreme creates another extreme. Thus in the times when women were oppressed, when they have not had rights and were abused… that actually gave birth to feminism, that is where its roots come from. (observant, over 35, BiH)

Ada does not call herself a feminist and does not feel she belongs to any feminist movement. Feminism seems to be a current historical necessity that can backfire against women if they continue to fight too hard. "I don't even like that word, 'feminism,' because looking at it in the long run, women will fight for their rights [and] in the end we will reach a point where men will start fighting for their rights, when women will maybe be doing violence against men." However, Ada compromised and accepted that feminism in some sense is acceptable, but that we need to distinguish, as she put it, "positive feminism" from "anarchic feminism"—terms she coined that, from the rest of her story, mean moderate and radical feminism. She showed that she realizes that in some parts of the world there is need for radical feminism:

> …in some African undeveloped countries, where women are really treated like animals, like slaves. We can understand that feminism needs to be radical there, but in countries that are developed, where the circumstances are not like that, I cannot understand why it is radical. (observant, over 35, BiH)

She said that the temporary construct of feminism would not even exist if society abided by religious principles and spirituality, in which case, "a woman would be in a privileged position, like an empress." Interestingly, like Edita (observant, under 35, Kosovo), Ada also glorified the position of a woman in Islam. However, she is more knowledgeable about the situation in Muslim countries, so did not give any Muslim country as an example, but cited Islamic principles and spirituality as the framework for gender equality. She is aware of misinterpretations of the Qur'an and attempts by Muslims and non-Muslims alike to give primacy to man over woman. She specifically referred to the Qur'anic verse 2,228, which literally says that a man is a degree above a woman—*but* explains that, before God, men and women are judged only by their deeds, their sex irrelevant, and she mentioned the Prophet's saying (*hadith*):

> "I dreamt that I entered *jannah* [Heaven], I hear steps behind me, I turn around and I see a woman. I ask her: "O woman, what have you done in your life to enter *jannah* immediately after the Prophet of God?" And then the woman listed all of her natural attributes: that she was a good daughter, a good wife, a good mother, raised her children well and said, Allah has rewarded me by allowing me to enter *jannah* immediately after you. Now, women could say we are better than men. No, the Prophet of God just wanted to say that, with God, there is no advantage regarding sex; only deeds can grant you advantage. (observant, over 35, BiH)

According to Ada, if both sexes keep their genuine female and male "nature" they can attain happiness in this world and in the Hereafter. Thus, her feminism and gender politics are similar to the mainstream interpretations of Islam on gender complementarity and specific male and female nature. (Spahić-

Šiljak 2009) Ada is between "care-oriented" feminisms and "difference" feminism because she believes that if a woman sticks to her "nature" and the God-given roles, she can be socially engaged and even successful in politics, but the environment must be women-friendly and must respect her motherhood. It is important that Ada does not see motherhood as a limitation, but as a motivation (Ruddick 1989, 213-30) to build a prosperous society for all women and men, given a condition that is properly protected, as it was during socialist times—to which she referred often in her story. Ada is an engaged Muslim woman who, like many other women, emphasized the importance of active citizenship and interrelation of her religious, activist and female identities. Her faith and activism nurture her feminism, but that feminism is not public identity, and it is acceptable to her only as a moderate outlook that acknowledges female and male natural differences.

Women in BiH and Kosovo designated activism as one of the crucial issues in their lives. The interplay of informal education, religion, the secular and feminisms—whether acknowledged or not—was visible in all stories, but strategies they employed to position themselves as feminists or women's human rights advocates depended on various social and political factors and conditions, ideas, and personal convictions.

Informal education was a first step in becoming a conscious feminist or a human rights advocate, and the war period both in BiH and Kosovo was the turning point in women's lives, forcing them to re-consider their positions in private and public life and identities embedded in ethno-national matrices.

Personal empowerment through education enabled them to become activists and to provide support and safe space for other women, children and men. Activism of most women can be understood and interpreted as their feminism. Many women, however, do not want to declare feminist identity publicly due to a huge social stigma born of biased understandings of feminism.

Half of the participants in BiH do bear a public feminist identity while the other half are reluctant to do so or outright reject it; none of the participants in Kosovo is willing to publicly declare it. One of the reasons for this disparity might be the greater opportunities of BiH women to learn about it both under socialism and in the post-socialist period. The women in BiH showed more knowledge about feminism than did the women in Kosovo, and consequently they expressed more criticism of radical forms of feminisms.

As a strategy to keep acquired positions in public life, most women choose to distance themselves from feminism and take either gender-neutral, or gender-equality positions that, in structural patriarchy, keep the male as the norm.

Notes

[1] Difference feminists, also called "essentialists," argue that there are ontological differences between men and women, and they critique patriarchal devaluation of the feminine. Difference feminism is not monolithic; it embraces different groups of feminisms. Changing structural patriarchy and the mindset of people is very difficult, therefore different feminists consider that sexual differences need to be recognized and accepted in intersection with class, race, ethnicity and other identities. (Anthias, Floya, 'Thinking through Lens of Translocational positionality: an intersectionality frame for understanding identity and belonging'. *Translocation: Migration and Social Change, An Interdisciplinary Open Access E-Journal*. ISSN Number: 2009-0420.

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Conclusion

Zilka Spahić-Šiljak

The economic and political transition after 1989 from socialism to a market economy and from a one-party to multi-party system naturally affected everyone throughout Central and South Eastern Europe. But in the Balkans the effect was even greater—especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Kosovo—because the transition was accompanied by terrible wars, destruction, war crimes and devastation of human and material resources.

And in both BiH and Kosovo, women suffered the greatest dislocation from the effects of the economic and political transition because in both societies, particularly BiH, the transition brought with it strong ethno-nationalist and ethno-religious tides that swept away whatever advances toward equality women had made, and re-instituted traditional gender roles, diminishing the role of women in public life and politics and subjugating them. That re-traditionalization of gender roles was abetted by the revival of religion, which, intertwined with ethno-national ideologies, relegated women largely to family life, and again subordinated their rights to "higher goals." Under socialism, those goals had been the Communist Party's economic, industrialization agenda; in the post-socialist period they were (and are) the agendas and attitudes of ethno-national and ethno-religious ruling elites.

All of this has been exacerbated by economic instability with an increasing unemployment rate, further limiting the possibilities for women. In sum, marked inequality in social and economic rights on one hand, and in civil and

political rights on the other hand, severely challenge the position of women in both the public and private spheres.

With this as background, our study explored how female, feminist and Muslim identities intersect, construct and transform each other in the post-socialist context of BiH and Kosovo. Only a very limited corpus of scholarly works has examined the life of Muslim women in these two countries. *This* study affords insight into some strategies Muslim women employ to stay faithful to both cultural and religious traditions and still fight for secular gender equality.

The discussion of female, feminist and religious identities and the way women position themselves toward these identities was the subject of fourteen focus groups composed of women who are members of women's organizations, both secular and religious, and was at the center of twelve life stories of women who are prominent public figures and advocates for women's human rights, all of them recommended by the focus group participants because of their reputations.

Combining these two research methods was delicate but useful. In the focus groups we got better insight into women's perceptions of their identities; through the life stories we gained not only information and answers to some questions, but also—and more important—explanation of the very process of becoming activist, feminist and Muslim.

Focus groups

The focus group participants demonstrated how female, feminist and religious belonging in BiH and Kosovo intersect and interrelate, one to another, and how women use different strategies to position themselves toward these identities. It would be naïve to expect a final answer to the question of what it means to be a woman because a woman's identity depends on the many socio-cultural and political factors of the environment in which she lives as well as each woman's individual experiences. Nevertheless, some strong considerations of what it means to be a woman emerged from the focus groups:

a) Guardian of, and educator in, the private domain - For most of the focus group participants being a woman primarily means being with family and for family, keeping the private sphere going and flourishing, being the educator and mediator in family matters—and only then being socially engaged. The observant women under 35 in Kosovo put special emphasis on being the educator within the family, which they understood as a religious duty, while non-observant participants in both countries, both under and over 35, emphasized the importance of education as a way to strengthen the position of

women in public life. Some younger observant women in BiH also supported education as an element of empowerment of women in both the private and public spheres, but felt that reconciliation of roles in the two spheres remains a challenge.

b)   Dancing to two beats – Being a woman also means maintaining the delicate balance of dancing with one foot to the rhythm of the private sphere while shaking the other to the rhythm of public life. But such gyrations are exhausting, and some participants in BiH questioned whether it is worth the effort—or even whether it is possible. Most, however, try to keep moving forward and believe that it is possible to be successful both in private and public life.

c)   Gender-neutral positioning - Some women, especially those who are non-observant over and under 35 in BiH, find gender-neutral positioning and avoidance of all stereotypes and limitations that attend the identities of women in patriarchal societies as the way out. Gender-neutral positioning can be understood to derive both as the result of inherited idelogy (Communism taught women not to separate their needs from those of men but to fight together for their class interests) and as a reaction to the imported ideologies of western cultural feminism, which represent women as victims—in other words, losers—in the process of economic transformation. (Chapter 1) But as some authors noted, women cannot be reduced to "general humanity" or to their femininity because "women have interests, capacities and ambitions that reach far beyond the sexual differences, however one defines these." (Moi 2005, Chapter 4.1)

d)   Differences in being a woman under socialism and post-socialism – These were also discussed, but mostly among BiH participants, who often refered to the socialist period, which had at least some positive impact on their emancipation. Women in Kosovo, in contradistinction, rarely mentioned that period, as if it was not all that important to them or as if they did not wish to recall it. Although we can partly discern the reasons for this (Chapter 3), including the political and economic neglect of Kosovo in favor of the other republics of the former Yugoslavia, the point should certainly be researched further in order to gain insight into why memory politics regarding the socialist period are so different among women from these two countries.

e) Urban/rural settings – Participants from Kosovo pointed out the strong patriarchal dominance in many families, especially in rural areas. As one non-observant participant under 35 put it, "Being a woman in Kosovo is very different than being a woman elsewhere, and is more difficult here, beginning with the father's authority." Being a woman in an urban setting is easier, with better access to education and employment. Women in BiH did not discuss this; but the conditions of being a woman in rural BiH are also less favorable than in urban settings.

All participants described themselves as Muslims and believers, but their understanding of that identity varies from those, the observant, who practice the five pillars of Islam, including the daily prayers, and the non-observant, who fulfill the daily obligations of those pillars only from time to time, or in their own ways, or believe in God though without ritual. (Chapter 4.3)

a) Secularized Muslims – A Muslim woman's identity is a part of a larger discussion of the ethno-national and ethno-religious revivalism and divisions in the post-war period, the interface of Islam and modernity, and the interplay of religion and the secular. Most participants from BiH and Kosovo can be described as secularized Muslims because they regard Islam mostly as their "common culture" (Karić, Chapter 4.3), and because most of them believe in God but do not practice the five pillars of Islam; furthermore, the younger generation does not find belonging to the formal Islamic community relevant to their faith.

b) Religious-secular divide - Observant and non-observant Muslim women in BiH discussed the tensions that exist between believers who observed Islam long before the war or cherish it as family heritage and Muslims who embraced Islam only in the last two decades. The latter are perceived as *novopečeni* (newcomers) because of the sudden, presumably war-driven nature of their piety and are scorned because they challenge modernity with their appearance in public wearing hijab, one of the region's most controversial issues because they challenge modernity with their appearance in public wearing hijab, one of the region's most controversial issues. Most women in BiH and Kosovo do not wear hijab and do not find it crucial for a woman's faith, but they do not deny the right to do so of the women who wear it as a part of their piety. Participants understand the religious-secular divide different ways: women in Kosovo put more

emphasis on the state's policy of banning hijab in public, and their activism is partially driven by what that ban means: lack of religious freedom; participants in BiH focused more on the correlation and intersection of religion and ethnicity due to the strong presence of ethno-national and ethno-religious politics and politicization of religion. Because of the different identity formation processes in their respective countries, focus group participants in BiH prefer a religious identity, Kosovo participants an ethnic identity.

c) Against radicalism and stereotypes – Most participants in BiH reject new forms of Islam—e.g., Salafi or Wahabi—which they described as practices imported to BiH and Kosovo during and after the wars. They are aware of social and political pressures that Muslims are exposed to in today's Europe, and they do not want to be associated with hijabi Muslims but thought of as modern European women who try to reconcile Muslim and secular identities, and feel good about both. They unconsciously position Muslim women in the Middle East as others. Participants in Kosovo did not raise this issue, but spoke more about religious-secular divisions and misunderstandings, especially in regard to observant hijabi women.

d) Feminism and Islam - Most participants specifically accepted their feminist identity in the course of the focus groups, but said that they are reluctant to declare it in public because of negative images and perceptions of feminism and ignorance about Islamic or Muslim feminism.

A minority of both observant and non-observant women denied the compatibility of feminism and Islam: the observant believe that Islam is a whole system of life, feeling that they do not need feminism to get rights that are guaranteed in the Qur'an; the non-observant find interpretations of gender in Islam too conservative and rigid to be reconciled with any secular concept of gender equality. Hijabi participants, both in BiH and Kosovo, accept feminism with reservations: they object to abortion and female imams, and prefer a "moderate" form of feminism that is more likely, as they explained, "not to disturb men." It is interesting that the most highly educated observant and non-observant participants claimed that Islam and feminism are compatible because both speak about dignity, equality and respect, a position many Muslim scholars advocate. (Chapter 2) They criticized some practices in Muslim countries that have failed to integrate into their societies Islamic principles on gender equality,

while some Western countries have done so. Therefore, they advocate new interpretations of Qu'ran and a stronger role of women in that process.

Participants in the two countries showed that they at least partially accept a place in the public realm for feminism and religion, both of which challenge modernity with insistence on gender equality and a feminist perspective and insistence on respect for hijab as a matter of a woman's choice and a sign of her piety, not as a symbol of political Islam, ethnicity or anything else.

Life stories

The aim of the life stories was to show how these women became feminists, and what strategies they employed to position themselves as feminists or simply human rights activists. Several themes prevailed in their stories: family life, education, religious identity, activism and feminism. Activism, though, comprised the most substantial part of their narratives and they portrayed their lives mostly through activism. In the Kosovo stories personal activism dominated while BiH participants mostly shared thoughts and attitudes about gender politics, the position of women today and general reflections on feminism and activism. Most stories were constructed around activism that had been developed and nurtured by family socialization, education—in particular the informal kind—and, finally, by religious, ethnic and other belongings.

For most women, the war in BiH and Kosovo and some personal losses triggered their activism because, to survive, they were forced to change their lives, and they felt impelled to help other women and children recover from the war traumas. To show solidarity and make changes in their communities, these women decided to continue learning through training, seminars and self-education.

a) Family life - Most women, especially in Kosovo, consider family the important foundation of their life: as Okin explained, family is "a crucial determinant of our opportunities in life, of what we 'become.'" (Chapter 4) Family is undoubtedly an important foundation for personal development, but among BiH participants, only Bilka mentioned, and only in passing, her mother's contribution to her activism, while two Kosovo women, Anita and Vera, credited the motivation and support they got from their families to pursue their activism. In addition, other Kosovo women emphasized the role of fathers and siblings who played crucial roles in their personal development. The father in Kosovo stories is dominant, departing from societal norms and hierarchical gender politics to support the building and growth of consciousness of feminist identities in their

daughters. In BiH stories the mother mostly mediates relationships between children and the father and, as mentioned above, only in one case did the father appear explicitly as the head of family.

In Kosovo stories secondary family also appeared important while BiH women rarely mentioned secondary families, but spoke more about professional achievements and activism, perhaps further underlining the public/private dichotomy. The two youngest participants, one each from BiH and Kosovo, spoke about their personal gender battles in order to break from traditionally assigned gender roles and what is "expected" of a young woman and to build more egalitarian relations with their partners, another aspect of their personal gender battles.

Socialism - The relation to family and the role of parents in personal development of women in the socialist period shed more light on the different dynamics in economic and cultural development in BiH and Kosovo as two republics of former the Yugoslavia. In BiH stories, family support and formal education was taken for granted; in Kosovo stories, it was so important that the narration of most of the participants centered on education and the role of the fathers in their families, but with very few references to socialism.

As in the focus group discussion, five out of six BiH life story participants underlined the importance of the socialist period in their lives as a time when they enjoyed rights to education, employment and social security. In the Kosovo life stories, as in the Kosovo focus groups, there were almost no mentions of socialism. Again, further research should explore the reasons for such memory politics and lack of relevance of the socialist period to women's lives in Kosovo.

b) Religious Identity - Activism is not much connected with the religious identity of the women who narrated their life stories, although religion is an important part of their culture. The life stories they told reflect the complexity of a Muslim woman's identity in BiH and Kosovo, with multiple significant others such as activism, feminism, ethnicity, the Western world, national authorities, and fellow Muslims who have different visions and practices of Islam. All women positioned themselves as Muslims either through tradition or by choice, or as believers who independently from their parents developed a Muslim belonging at various stages of life. However, these women differ

in the way they view Islam as a public or a private matter. Two of the women in BiH were clearly against the interjection of religion in the public realm, fighting against the misuse and politicization of religion; others in BiH and Kosovo did not explicitly refer to the matter except when they discussed hijab. As noted, observant women who wear hijab challenge modernity by their very presence, but they consider hijab part of their identity, a token of their piety and inner peace, and finally something that liberates and empowers them to be active and engaged agents in public affairs. Particularly in the Kosovo stories, hijab appeared as a central issue of the religious-secular divide, but even most of those who rejected it for themselves decried the state's hijab ban as a violation of basic women's rights.

Many interviews dealt with stereotypes, prejudices, and misconceptions—spawned mainly in the West—about Muslim women. With their multiple positioning as Muslims, feminists, activists, and human rights advocates, most of the participants perceive Islam as an inclusive religion that does not limit them, but gives them freedom and inner peace. Although they understand the religious-secular divide different ways, freedom of religion is better framed at least legally in BiH than in Kosovo.

c)   Informal education as a channel to activism and feminism - Education was an important theme in the life stories, particularly informal education—i.e., education gained "along the way" from experience, from living and working with others. However, participants in Kosovo, like their counterparts in the focus groups, placed greater emphasis on their formal education as being important in their lives, the older women stressing the role of their fathers, the younger women crediting both parents as facilitators of their becoming educated.

Women in BiH reflected more on informal education, citing it as the first step in becoming consciously feminist or a human rights advocate. The war both in BiH and Kosovo was a turning point in women's lives, making them re-consider their positions in private and public life and their identities that were framed by ethno-national matrices. The interplay of informal education, religion, humanistic values and feminisms was visible in all stories, but strategies the women employed to position themselves as feminists or women's

human rights advocates depended on various social and political factors and conditions, ideas, and personal convictions.

Personal empowerment through education enabled them to become activists and to provide support and safety for other women, children and men. The activism of most of the women can be understood and interpreted as their feminism.

d)   Feminism with and without the name - Most of the women, however, do not want to publicly declare a feminist identity due to the huge social stigma that attends such a declaration in their societies, a result of biased understanding of feminism. As a strategy to keep the positions they have attained in public life, most of the women rather distance themselves from feminism and take either gender-neutral or gender-equality positions. Only three of the twelve publicly declare their feminist identity, though keenly aware of the social pressure and misconceptions about this identity. All three are from BiH. The other women from BiH—and all from Kosovo—were reluctant to credit feminism (or even did not mention it) as an important part of their activism. But, as we have seen, activism is their feminism. Women in BiH showed more knowledge about feminism than did women in Kosovo, and consequently they raised more points of criticism about radical forms of feminisms.

None of the Kosovo participants is ready to declare feminist identity in public, although everything they do and advocate for can be interpreted as feminist activism. Their strategy, and the strategy of the other half of the BiH women interviewed, is to act as feminists without formal belonging or identification—feminism without the name. Some of the women in both BiH and Kosovo think that feminism is necessary as an organizing principle at a certain stage of development, but that as soon as women obtain fundamental rights there is no need for it anymore. Most women hide their feminism because, as they explained, doing so is the way to survive in a patriarchal society that does not accept *others* and those who are different.

Feminist and religious identities are others—the unknown (or, at least, not very well known)—inspiring fear, rejection and mistrust. Declaring a feminist identity, or even the term, "feminism," simply does not seem relevant

to most of these women because they are focused on their work and on the results they achieve and not so much on visibility and promotion. Because of the strong social stigma attached to feminism, they are afraid of losing positions they currently hold. Similarly, although most of them do not find it difficult to declare religious identity, the issue of practicing religion in public is another matter, with hijab as perhaps the most debatable and incendiary issue, especially in Kosovo.

So Muslim feminists face a double social stigma: they cannot expect understanding in the secular environment for their religious identity if they wear hijab, and as feminists they are not accepted in either religious or secular life.

APPENDIX 1. Research Sample

- 14 FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS
- 12 LIFE STORY INTERVIEWS

1. Focus groups

Eight focus groups were conducted in BiH, six in Kosovo. The BiH sessions were held in Sarajevo and Mostar, those in Kosovo were in Pristina, Prizren and Gjilan.

Table 1. Composition of focus groups

Muslim religious context	Age	BiH	Kosovo	Focus groups
Observant women	BiH<30, Kosovo <25	1 Mostar 1 Sarajevo	1 Pristina	3
	BiH >35, Kosovo >30	1 Mostar 1 Sarajevo	1 Pristina	3
Non-observant women	BiH<30, Kosovo <25	1 Mostar 1 Sarajevo	1 Pristina	3
	BiH >35, Kosovo >30	1 Mostar 1 Sarajevo	1 Pristina	3
Mixed groups	Kosovo >30		1 Gjilan 1 Prizren	2
Total focus groups				14

The research sample included different generations of women: those who grew up in socialist and post-socialist Bosnia and Kosovo, mostly women from 35 to 70; and those under 35 most of whose lives have been spent in the post-socialist period. Another important variable was the degree to which they practiced religion: observant Muslim women and those who were supposed to be non-observant and avowed agnostics or atheists. However, we could not check to what extent they observed religious ritual or ask them in advance whether or not they believed in God. Local partners in BiH and Kosovo were in charge of gathering women who were observant and those they knew were not and did not declare religious identity. Some women perceived faith as their own connections with God—or supernatural being or force—but not necessarily

attached to any institutionalized form of religious life, and some felt strong affiliation with Islam and the Islamic community.To our surprise, women who were invited to join the non-observant groups, and were supposed to be agnostic or atheist, declared religious identity, so the research team's intention of making a provisional division at the beginning of the research failed, demonstrating to us how complex identities are in BiH and Kosovo and that it is not possible to reduce them to simple categories.

Focus groups of observant Muslim women in BiH were selected with the support of the Center for Education and Research, "Nahla" in Sarajevo and "Sehara" in Mostar. Focus groups of non-observant Muslim women were selected with the support of Foundation "Cure" in Sarajevo, and the Woman's Association "Žena BiH" in Mostar.

Focus groups of observant women in Kosovo were organized with the support of the Woman's Department of the Islamic Association, focus groups of non-observant women using the snowball procedure and with the support of EDG Pristina, selecting women of different educational level, age and employment status.

Leading Questions

Focus group discussions were initiated with a few basic questions asked in all sessions in both countries:

1. What does being a woman mean to you (women's identity)?
2. What do you consider your role in the women's movement?
3. What does being a Muslim woman mean for you?
4. How does being a feminist affect being a Muslim and vice versa?
5. Is there an intersection between feminism and Islam?
6. Do you declare yourself a Muslim feminist?

With permission of the participants, focus groups were recorded, transcribed and finally analysed.

Focus group settings

At the very beginning of each session, the focus group facilitators (Zilka Spahić-Šiljak and Lejla Somun-Krupalija in BiH, Ardiana Gashi in Kosovo) shared the information about the project *Feminisms in post-socialist Muslim*

contexts in BiH and Kosovo, explaining the main goal and the structure of the conversation the group would have during the 2-3 hour sessions.

The settings were semi-formal and semi-structured, and our NGO partners organized each session in their own premises—with beverages available—making the entire atmosphere more relaxed and appropriate for informal conversation. Coffee and cigarettes provide a sense of everyday routine, giving BiH women more confidence and strength to speak. However, one group in Mostar met during Ramadan, when refreshments were not permitted, yet still were ready to be involved because it is important, as they explained, to spend time in useful activities, serving people or the community. In this case, helping the researcher understand the life of Muslim women in BiH so it could be accurately presented to the world was considered serving their community and a charity (*sadaqa*) during the fasting period.

All groups were supportive of this kind of research. They especially appreciated the fact that the research was done by local scholars, and they explained that they felt active agents in the process. Most of the women had not had experience in focus groups and they expressed some concerns whether they would know answers to the questions and be able to follow the discussion. When they heard that we had only a few questions and expected them to give and discuss their opinions only if they felt comfortable doing so, they relaxed. Some of them were more active participants than others, and facilitators intervened from time to time, politely prompting less active participants for their thoughts and reflections. All focus groups and life story interviews were translated from BCS into English by Lamija Kosović, Lejla Somun-Krupalija, Đermana Šeta and Dželila Šiljak, and from Albanian into English by Arjeta Gashi, Mimoza Tafarshiku and Palestina Qavolli. Final editing of the selected quotes in English was done by Marcie Lee of Arizona State University.

2. Life stories/semi-structured interviews

Life story interviews were organised in two countries: six in Bosnia and Herzegovina and six in Kosovo, all taking place after the focus groups. The age groups and levels of religious observance mirrored those of the focus groups. The women selected for life stories were not the same as those who participated in focus group discussions. Women were selected through the snowball effect, gathering information from focus groups and other women from partner organizations to nominate the most prominent women in public life with outstanding experience in the promotion of women's human rights and the position of women in BiH and Kosovo societies.

The life stories were recorded and transcribed for analysis and comparison of views on the research topics between the two countries and within each country.

Selection of interviewees

The criteria for starting the snowball selection of potential interviewees were based on the discussions in the focus groups and on the plan of the research proposal.

Eight interviews were planned for BiH (Bosnia) and six for Kosovo.

Interviewees:

- were to be from Sarajevo in Bosnia and from Pristina in Kosovo,

- were to be selected from two age groups: adolescents and adults at the outbreak of conflict in Bosnia and Kosovo,

- had to be persons who identified themselves as feminists or were prominent activists in the women's movement in Bosnia and Kosovo, and

- had to identify themselves as belonging in the Muslim context (cultural, religious or other).

Using these criteria, the following plan in the selection of interviewees was made, taking into account their age and the Muslim context in which they belonged:

Table 2. Composition of life story interviews

Muslim religious contexts	Cultural, non-observant (secular, almost atheist) M01	Religious and cultural, non-observant (secular) M02	Religious, observant (wearing a hijab) M03
BiH<30, Kosovo <25 years A01	M01A01 1 Bosnia 1 Kosovo	M02A01 1 Bosnia, 1 Kosovo	M03A01 1 Bosnia 1 Kosovo
BiH >35, Kosovo >30 years A02	M01A02 1 Bosnia 1 Kosovo	M02A02 1 Bosnia 1 Kosovo	M03A02 1 Bosnia 1 Kosovo

Interview process and results

Six women in Bosnia agreed to be interviewed, and the interviews took place in:

- November: M01A01, M03A01

- December: M02A02, M02A02, M02A01, M01A02

- February: M02A02, (M03A02)

Six women in Kosovo agreed to be interviewed and the interviews took place in:

- December: M01A01, M01A02, M02A01, M02A02, M03A01, M03A02

The problems faced in the selection of interviewees were:

Bosnia:

- Muslim contexts were difficult to define for many women, apart from wearing or not wearing a hijab. Whether they were more secular or more atheistic was difficult to determine prior to the interview. Potential interviewees whom the researchers had assumed belonged to *some* Muslim context (e.g., by name), said they did not, thus were ineligible to participate in the research.

- Interviewees the researchers had assumed were feminists (prominent women's movement activists) did not accept affiliation with feminisms but did agree to be part of the research. A few interviewees, upon hearing that the research had to do with feminisms, did not want to be identified as feminists and declined to participate.

- Young women who identified themselves as feminists and who had participated in the women's movement were difficult to include, so one M02A01 was replaced by an M02A02.

- The planned timeframe of two months seemed ample to complete the interviews, but end-of-year obligations, holidays, personal tragedies, all contributed to long delays. One interview was cancelled three times and the interviewee was replaced with another one; another was cancelled five times and was replaced.

Kosovo:

- Potential interviewees did not want to be identified as feminists.

- Potential interviewees had had bad prior experiences with interviews, their statements and views made public and paraphrased to mean something altogether different.

All women selected for the life story were informed about the aim of the project and were asked where they would like to be interviewed. Life stories took place at the interviewer home, in the office of the interviewee, and in one case in the interviewee's home. It was crucial that the environment was as comfortable as possible and that it was quiet. When one of the women came to the interviewer's home she asked for the curtain pulled back because she liked the sun: the interviewees were free to make themselves as comfortable as possible. They were informed that they would remain anonymous, but that they would be recorded, their interviews transcribed, analysed and incorporated in this book. They all accepted these rules and were very supportive, aiming to tell a story that was important to them. But they always started by asking if we had questions for them. In reply, the interviewer said merely, "Tell me your life story!" Some did not know where to start, and needed prompting; others were well prepared (one brought notes!); some got emotional while talking. They all congratulated us on the project and said they look forward to seeing the book.

As noted, their stories were recorded, transcribed and translated.

Analyses of life stories:

Life stories were analysed as follows:

1. General information about the storyteller/biographer

2. Identification of main themes: each theme highlighted with one colour so it would make analyses easier

3. Analyses of story for each theme

The template for the analyses consisted of: Life history; Linguistic and Contents Analysis; Beginning of the story; End of the main narrative; Summary of the analysis.

Glossary

Ahadith (sing. Hadith), report, statement: narratives of the Prophet Muhammad'a life transmitted through the chains of narrators.

Alim (pl. Ulama), scholar, learned person, theologian, jurist or religious scholar

Awra – parts of human body that are considered private and need to be covered in front of other people. It is debatable which parts can be exposed and it depends on cultural contexts and interpretations of ulama.

Ayah (pl. Ayat) – qur'anic verse, and sign of God's presence

Da'wa, preach, call, spread, and usually denotes proselytizing of Islam

Du'a, prayer, supplication

Burqa, woman's body-covering including head-covering face veiling.

Fard (pers. and turk. Farz), obligatory, religious obligation or duty.

Fatwa (pl. Fatawa), A non-binding legal opinion in response to legal issue

Hanafi (Hanafiyya), Sunni juristic school of thought named by its founder Abu Hanifa (d. 157/767). It is one of the four main Sunni jurist schools. Muslims of the Balkans mostly follow Hanafi school which is considered as the flexible school.

Hajj – fifth pillar of the Islam, obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca once in life if a person can afford it.

Hijab – curtain, barrier, hiding something from view, today head covering

Ijtihad – process of critical reasoning in bringing new interpretations based on the primary sources of Islam: Qur'an and Hadith.

Islam – submission to Good, and is related to *salaam* –peace

Juma – Friday, group, congregation, and Juma prayer is central weekly prayer obligatory for males.

Mawlid (bosnian: Mevlud) celebration of Prophet's birthday, but the ritual is practiced also on other occasions in the Muslim life cycle

Shari'a – water, source, path by which people search for God's Will. It is mostly interpreted as Islamic Law, but it carries broader meaning, and embrace all human actions. It is not restricted to positive law, but includes ethical and moral values and the jurisprudential process.

Tafseer – exegesis and interpretations particularly as it relates to the Qur'an

Tawheed – doctrine of God's Unity, Oneness of God, In the Balkans tawheed also refers to religious ritual . Women and men gather in honor of a deceased individual during the burial, and then again after seven days and after forty days. The ceremony is conducted by religiously educated women or men and creates a social and spiritual community. A *tawhid* congregation may also mobilize believers around specific needs, yielding positive feelings and peace during, for instance, natural catastrophes or other perilous periods, or simply helping believers attain certain desires, wishes, and protection.

Veil, face covering, worn by women. It covers whole face or some parts.

Wahabi – followers of the strict puritan teachings of 'Abd al-Wahhab. They are hostiles to somme religious practices such as cult of saints, visiting their tombs, Sufism, philosophy. Their creed is ery restrictive to women and today dominates in Saudi Arabia.

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Of particular importance to those who are interested in the ways relationships between womanhood, Islam and feminism are being constructed in these societies is the ambivalences (which differ among observant and non observant, young and old, rural and urban women) in which feminism is being perceived – the constraining stigma of the label feminist in contrast to its political and social message which is often embraced.

Nira Yuval-Davis, University of East London

This book brings forward the relevance of historical backgrounds to contemporary issues, the importance of women's issues in the processes of democratization and reconciliation and the ways in which identity politics always is a forceful political tool – for better or worse.

Catharina Raudvere, University of Copenhagen

One great strength of the book is that it combines an overarching feminist theoretical and historical analyses—both structural and cultural—which produce an important scholarly account, while maintaining substantive focus on women's narratives and processes of subject's constitution within and outside the text.

Vjollca Krasniqi, University of Pristina

This is a story about the unresearched and often neglected dynamics involving genuine participants with all their immanent characteristics in a specific social context covered by the „holy baldachin" (P. Berger). All this is presented in this book.

Dino Abazović, University of Sarajevo

Sarajevo, 2012