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In Dialogue with the Self and Others

**Intra- and Interreligious Dialogue within a Societal Multitude
on the Fringes of the Catholic World:
A Case Study of Central Bosnia-Herzegovina**

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Abstract

The Balkans' or, more precisely, the future Pope John XXIII's encounters with the Balkans' inhabitants approximately 40 years before the Second Vatican Council significantly influenced the Church and Council's recognition of the cultural multitude within itself and the religious, political, and cultural multitudes of the world in *nostra aetate*. However, the encounter of the Ottoman Empire's former European province with its northwestern and northeastern neighbors and the encounter of the local clergy with the Church's educational institutions in the West have had the utterly opposite outcomes. The political idea of making the inhabitants of a given realm into a uniform mono-collective, which developed in Western Europe during the Reformation, Thirty Years' War, and French Revolution, has found its way into the Balkans.

The field research conducted within the frame of this thesis proved that these two legacies remain present and vivid in the Balkans today—on one hand, the social norms that enabled various groups to cohabitate and interact and inspired John XXIII to summon the Second Vatican Council and, on the other hand, uniformization into a mono-collective according to the *cuius region eius religio* paradigm imported from Western neighbors. The dialogical spirit of the Balkans is present in Bosnia-Herzegovinian society among non-clerical opinion-makers, while contrary to the legacies of the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic clergy is generally incapable of any kind of dialogue—interreligious or intrareligious. Living in a bubble within the societal multitude, the clergy promotes uniformization and self-isolation instead of dialogue. The reasons for this attitude among the Catholic clergy in our times are sought in the clerical plausibility structure conveyed in theological education based on mediated, transmitted knowledge from previous generations and in clerics' lack of personal dialogue and knowledge of society.

Abstract (German)

Der Balkan, oder genauer gesagt, die Begegnung des künftigen Papstes Johannes XXIII. mit den Balkanbewohnern, ungefähr 40 Jahre vor dem Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil, beeinflusste erheblich die Anerkennung der Kirche und des Konzil der kulturellen Vielheit innerhalb der Kirche, sowie der religiösen, politischen und kulturellen Vielheit in der Welt in „*nostra aetate*“. Jedoch zeitigte die Begegnung der ehemaligen Provinz des osmanischen Reiches im europäischen Kontinent mit ihren nordwestlichen und nordöstlichen Nachbarn und die Begegnung des lokalen Klerus mit den kirchlichen Bildungseinrichtungen des Westens, ein völlig unterschiedliches Ergebnis. Die politische Idee, mit den Bewohnern eines bestimmten Gebietes ein uniformiertes Mono-Kollektiv zu schaffen, wie dies in Westeuropa während der Reformation, dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg und der Französischen Revolution geschehen ist, hatte nun seinen Weg in den Balkan gefunden.

Die Feldforschung, die im Rahmen dieser wissenschaftlichen Arbeit durchgeführt wurde, hat bewiesen, dass zwei Vermächnisse der Vergangenheit bis heute im Balkan präsent und lebendig sind: a) die sozialen Normen, welche es verschiedenen Gruppen ermöglichte zu kohabitieren und interagieren und Johannes XXIII dazu inspirierten, das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil einzuberufen und b) die Uniformierung in einem Mono-Kollektiv, gemäß dem von den westlichen Nachbarn importierten Paradigma „*cuius region eius religio*“. Der Geist des Dialogs des Balkans ist in der Gesellschaft Bosnien-Herzegowinas unter säkularen Meinungsbildnern präsent, während der katholische Klerus im Gegensatz zum Vermächnis des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils generell zum Dialog nicht fähig ist, weder interreligiös, noch intrareligiös. Der Klerus lebt in einer Luftblase innerhalb einer gesellschaftlichen Vielheit und propagiert Uniformierung und Selbstisolation, statt Dialog. Der Grund für diese heute anzutreffende Haltung innerhalb des katholischen Klerus ist einerseits die klerikale „Plausibilitätsstruktur“, die mittels theologischer Bildung, in der Wissen vermittelt wird, das auf dem Wissen früherer Generationen basiert, und andererseits der Unfähigkeit des Klerus zu persönlichem Dialog sowie deren fehlendes Wissen über die Gesellschaft.

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Introduction

*There are these two young fish swimming along, and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says, "Morning, boys. How's the water?" And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes, "What the hell is water?"*¹

David Foster Wallace opened an address to the graduating class at Kenyon College in 2005 with this parable. He continued:

*The point of the fish story is that the most obvious, important realities are often the ones hardest to see and talk about. ... But the fact is that, in the day-to-day trenches of adult existence, banal platitudes can have life-or-death importance.*²

It is hard to imagine a better allegory to open a presentation of research on dialogue and its significance for a small Catholic group living within a societal multitude on the fringes of the Catholic world today. Why? Let us imagine a minor alteration to Wallace's parable and change only two nouns: *fish* and *water* to *theologian* and *dialogue*. It might be thrilling to imagine a brief conversation between an older, passionate, life-long gatherer of personal knowledge on people in many different places, cultures, and contexts and two theologians who recently graduated or completed their post-graduate studies. The conversation might go like this:

Two young theologians are walking along and happen to meet an older theologian walking the other way. He nods at them and says, "Morning, boys. How's dialogue?" The two young theologians walk on for a bit, and then one looks at the other and goes, "Who does he thinks he is?"

The two young theologians' comments might be different, but one thing is certain: theologians, and not only young theologians, are rarely asked, "How's dialogue?" They do not have prepared answer to it, or perhaps they do not know what dialogue should be. Paradoxically, among so many banal platitudes that have life-or-death importance in the lives of clergy and lay theologians, they have little time to recognize the most obvious and most important realities. Some theologians might go all their lives without

¹ David Foster Wallace, *Das hier ist Wasser/This is Water*, KiWi paperback 1272 (Berlin: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2012), 39 In his speech, Foster argued against unconsciousness, the default setting, the constant gnawing sense of having had, and lost.

² *Ibid.*, 40

recognizing that dialogue is for them, as well as all their fellow humans, the same as water for fishes—and has been since the very beginning of time, when our foreparents, Adam and Eve, were cast out of paradise, with the heavy burden of the knowledge of good and evil on their backs. The knowledge of good and evil, as argued in Chapter 3, requires a close personal relationship with and study of the object of interest as the subject learns all the good and the not-so good sides of the object. In their mutual relationship, the subject inevitably is also observed by the object, who learns the good and the non-good sides of the subject. In this personal relationship of mutual learning, both might create something new. Knowledge of good and evil, too, directly results from personal relationships or dialogue with all possible objects, whether God, fellow humans, science, or nature, to name only a few. Regardless how poor, inaccurate, or insufficient this knowledge might be, nothing has been created without it. Personal relationship, personal knowledge, or personal dialogue with an object—it does not matter what we name it—is the water of life, a *condition sine qua non* no action may be taken.

One might argue that this description of dialogue is too banal and that theologians know very well that dialogue is the water of life for all humans. This might be! However, a clergyman participating in qualitative research carried out for this thesis stated differently:

In my opinion, dialogue is something intellectual, something metaphysical that might help us understand reality. Dialogue takes place only between intellectuals. Nobody gives importance to what happens in ordinary life. I would never say that my friendships with people of Muslim faith or contacts with my acquaintances and neighbors are dialogue. That is not dialogue to me. (Participant 14)

Although this statement demonstrates an understanding of dialogue that contradicts the previous definition, this should not cause surprise. This priest and theologian's answer and views give an honest description of the general reception of behavior and statements regarding dialogue by Church leaders and so-called experts on dialogue.

The Church (re)discovered dialogue only at the Second Vatican Council. Evaluating inter-Church dialogue since then poses a highly complex task. Nevertheless, Church leaders' encounters with the leaders of other faiths, confessions, and ideologies have not gone unnoticed. Hundreds if not thousands of so-called experts on dialogue have entered this highly popular religious and political issue in our times. Uncountable books and articles have been written on the topic, and many complex, noble, and even mystical

definitions and thoughts on dialogue have been invented and broadcast to the world. Paradoxically, however, these encounters, such as symposiums and round-table discussions, are treated as extraordinary events for select guests that do not happen every day. In other words, theologians' involvement in interreligious dialogue is perceived not as an essential duty of all Catholics and humans but as an extraordinarily tough endeavor by a small group of bishops and experts. Moreover, this small group of experts has accumulated much specific mediated knowledge and developed a distinctive jargon and language style puzzling to the majority of not only Catholics but also theologians. Whether deliberately or unintentionally, this overshadows the evident and vital reality of personal dialogue in our lives, rendering dialogue an intellectual intervention performed only by a select few, as described by Participant 14.

In this study, we do not deal with expertocracy in religious dialogue or report on the encounters of religious leaders and experts on dialogue and their messages and possible (lack of) resonance with the public. Instead, we attempt to determine why after centuries of silence the Church suddenly made a doctrinal turn on this issue at the Second Vatican Council. We also analyze the context of a small Catholic group in Central Bosnia-Herzegovina living in a societal multitude—a mostly Muslim-Christian and partially agnostic-atheistic environment—on the fringes of the Catholic world.

The first part of this thesis provides a general overview on the introduction of intra-religious and inter-religious dialogue into the Church's teachings, doctrine, and pastoral practices. Chapter 1 traces the genesis of the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions: *Nostra Aetate* and presents a contextual analysis of the major stages of its development and the attitudes of the most important persons involved in this internal dialogue. The epistemological and hermeneutical contexts of the *Nostra Aetate* are analyzed in Chapter 2, with particular reference to the NA 3, a text dedicated to Muslims. In Chapter 3, in a theoretical approach, dialogue is scrutinized as societal balance and as personal knowledge. It is argued that societal dialogue is a balance among the only Authority—that is, God—individual freedom, and the personal knowledge of every member of society, whereas dialogue as personal knowledge is versatile knowledge acquired in direct, personal relations with the objects studied, which are variable.

In first part of the dissertation, it is argued that the Balkans or, more precisely, the future pope John XXIII's encounters with the Balkans' inhabitants significantly influenced the

Church's recognition of the cultural multitude within itself and the religious, political, and cultural multitudes of the world in *nostra aetate*. However, in the second part of this thesis, "In the Dark Realm," it is argued that the Balkans' encounter with its northwestern and northeastern neighbors has had the utterly opposite outcome. The political idea of making the inhabitants of a given realm into a uniform mono-collective, which developed in Western Europe during the Reformation and the French Revolution, found its way into the former European provinces of the Ottoman Empire. These two legacies of the Balkans—on one side, the social norms that enabled the various groups to cohabitate and interact and inspired John XXIII to summon the Second Vatican Council and, on the other side, uniformization into a mono-collective according to the paradigm *cuius region eius religio* imported from western neighbors—remain present and vivid in the Balkans today. We can perceive those two paradigms in the following statement by a non-clerical participant in the qualitative research:

We organize an Easter futsal tournament in our small city; it is now a tradition. This tournament has become so popular that some teams from Serbia, Croatia, as well as some Bosniak teams, take part. Our parish priest once came and said that a non-Croat and a non-Catholic team could not win the first place and that a Muslim player could not be awarded the title the best player of the tournament. ... How could he come to such an idea? If someone is the best player, he is the best player. Any other reasoning is offensive! (Participant 6)

This example testifies to the coexistence and the clash of two juxtaposed worldviews in this society. The first is the welcoming world of people who, although they experienced injustices from their neighbors in the recent past, are proud and happy that an event they have organized for years attracts so many people to their small city. The second is a world of learned principles and ideas that tend to create their own paradise on the earth, that is, to build fences others cannot climb. The parish priest living in a reality constructed based on the ethnic-clerical plausibility structure sees nothing wrong in demanding that non-Catholic teams and players must not be entitled to first place or the title of the best player in the [Catholic] Easter futsal tournament. In other words, according to the parish priest, only those belonging to the "paradise" can hold titles related to the "paradise" festival.

Thus, as argued in Chapter 4, the Balkans is *terra incognita*, a place or society on earth that remains unknown and undiscovered by its closest neighbors. From the perspective of an impatient observer, it is not easy to evaluate and comprehend all the perplexing information this society fabricates. This realm, therefore, becomes the object of fantasies

and taboos. However, so-called experts on the Balkans have an equally difficult task. Some learned inhabitants of this part of the world, therefore, try to argue that they are not part of a dysfunctional, uncivilized, barbarous, immoral society. This subject is scrutinized in Chapter 5, which analyzes a cleric's scientific on the history of Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Lastly, Chapter 6 discusses the possible psychological drama of regret among Bosnia-Herzegovinians over lost opportunities to decide their personal and collective identities that might never return in their lifetimes.

The third and the last part of this thesis is entitled "Challenging the Straight Lines and Their Confines." The notion of straight lines is a metaphor for idealized, socially constructed ideas, habitual patterns of social behaviors transferred to new generations through education, and the desire to preserve such ideas and behavioral patterns unchanged as if they were timeless truths. In this context, it is investigated whether the present-day architecture-design of dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina, particularly the small Catholic community in Central Bosnia, is based on narrow, straight lines or the needs and social contexts of its inhabitants. In other words, it is considered whether in this society, the socially constructed ideal of paradise dictates the art and mode of relationships, particularly avoiding as much contact with individuals that do not belong to the earthly paradise as possible. Alternatively, the inherent human curiosity to experience and learn something new—immanent in children's behavior—might impel spontaneous interactions among individuals and other social developments. The focus of this study is not whether the local architects of dialogue—bishops and experts on dialogue—have successfully implemented in their project-design dialogue for local community what they learned in their studies or many official, arranged encounters with dialogue partners. Instead, it is whether the bricklayers—the opinion-makers—and the tenants—all the members of the societal sub-group—have relationships to dialogue, forming a trinity in architecture of dialogue.

The answers to these questions are sought in qualitative research carried out in the framework of this thesis. Chapter 7 presents the field research methodology and procedures, while Chapter 8 elaborates the immediate contexts of the qualitative research and new issues concerning the roles of education and age in dialogue that emerged in the research. Lastly, Chapter 9 presents an analysis of the interview data from the qualitative research, presents the general logical conclusions, and summarizes all the interviews.

Part I—On the Introduction of Dialogue in the Church

The first part of dissertation analyzes the introduction of dialogue with non-Christian religions in the Catholic Church through the introduction of dialogue within the Church itself. These types of dialogue—inter-religious dialogue and intra-religious dialogue—are interdependent and can be considered to be two facets of the same phenomenon: universal dialogue. Therefore, it can be argued that, regardless of the desire and instructions of some Church leaders to keep the Church isolated from different religions and societies, external dialogue, or relations and contacts with members of other religions and with multitude of modern society, precipitated intra-religious dialogue within the Church itself. However, it was the implementation of intra-religious dialogue within the Church that made interreligious dialogue possible by bringing about the doctrinal turn on this issue.

The first session of the Second Vatican Council saw the first public affirmation of the abandonment, at least temporarily, of the Church's age-old habitual pattern of behavior and unexpectedly introduced intra-religious dialogical practices in Church life and ceased sanctions of those who engaged in them. In this session, the synod fathers refused all presented documents drafted by preparatory commissions. Their authors had been fully convinced that these documents would pass smoothly in the first session because they were prepared in conformity with existing mediated knowledge on doctrinal issues, on Church teachings and doctrines, on long-standing historical sedimentation of societal norms and moral teachings, and were in accordance with the proposals to the council. The documents' authors, however, had ignored activities of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, commissioned by the pope to work on three important contemporary issues, and had assumed that the secretariat and its work were marginal and irrelevant. Therefore, the authors failed to notice that, in a very short time, the spiritual and social realities within the Church had changed significantly.

However, the providential preparation for changes in the Church had started much earlier, approximately 40 years before the Second Vatican Council, when Archbishop Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was sent as the Apostolic Visitor to the Balkans, where he stayed in

diplomatic service for two decades. His opportunities and his willingness to make personal contacts with Catholics living on the fringes of the Catholic world and their societies and with members of other religious and ethnic groups made him the Church's pioneer in dialogue.

In the first chapter the genesis of the *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions: Nostra Aetate* is retraced. The scope of this chapter is not to provide a historical overview of this document but to present a contextual analysis of the major stages in its development and the attitudes of the most important persons involved in this internal dialogue.

Although the development of *Nostra Aetate*, with all its fluctuations, is more illuminating for those interested in dialogue than the document itself, analyses of the epistemological and hermeneutical context of the *Nostra Aetate*, with special references to the NA 3, a text dedicated to Muslims, are presented in the second chapter.

In a theoretical approach, dialogue is scrutinized as societal balance and as personal knowledge in the third chapter. Thus, it is argued that societal dialogue is a balance between Authority, individual freedom, and the personal knowledge of every member of a society, while dialogue as personal knowledge is versatile knowledge acquired in direct, personal relations with the object(s) studied that are variable. Personal knowledge is adaptable knowledge, and as such, it is opposed to invariable or stable knowledge of objects held to be unchangeable, acquired through mediators and mediums in the form of societal norms sedimented over long periods of time. The prosperity of a society depends on dialogue within itself; consequently, dialogue cannot rely solely on inherited, mediated knowledge (i.e., societal norms and narratives) but demands the new, fresh knowledge that each person in society brings.

The aim of the first part of this thesis is to provide a general overview on the introduction of dialogue into the Catholic Church. The introduction of intra-religious and inter-religious dialogue into the Church's teachings, doctrine, and pastoral practices—at least in theory—cannot be observed separately from its general dialogue with the world or the society in which the Church has its place. Nor should dialogue be considered a duty and right reserved solely to the Church's leaders.

This last point is of especial importance for all members of the local Catholic Church in Bosnia-Herzegovina and their attempts to dialogue first with Muslims and with all other people whom they encounter. The introduction of dialogue in the Church, with all the uncertain steps and open questions of every newborn who enters human society, provides a model of courage in how to break from living in sedimented, mediated memories to move into the present, with its own real needs and missions. However, this model should not be generalized and merely copied into the life of local communities. Instead, it should serve as an impetus to discover the potential dialogues inherent to each society. If dialogue is standardized into static forms, it is emptied of its spirit and the particularities characterizing societies. Static standardized dialogue is void and uninspiring and so becomes yet more ballast in relations with fellow humans instead of a driving force for the development and prosperity of societies.

Chapter 1—Retracing the Genesis of *Nostra Aetate*

On October 14, 1965, Cardinal Augustin Bea addressed the synod fathers at the fourth session of the Vatican II.³ It was his fifth and final relation of the draft of the document known as the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions—*Nostra Aetate*. The synod accepted the declaration by vote on October 28, 1965.⁴

Why did the synod fathers make the historical and theological turn to accept the first written document in which the Church condemned anti-Semitism,⁵ recognized that all people share the ultimate goal—God, expressed that His salvific plan extends to the whole of humankind,⁶ promoted unity and love among men,⁷ and condemned all kinds of discrimination?⁸ Was it Cardinal Bea’s dramatic, emotionally charged speech? Was it the pressure of the international politics and world press? Or could it be a simple, visible deed of the Holy Spirit which overwhelmed the majority of bishops gathered at the synod?

This document certainly was one of the biggest surprises of Vatican II. It caused so much wonderment at the time of its release and even since for at least three reasons. First, *Nostra Aetate* is one of the first Church documents reflecting the shifts achieved at Vatican II, which redefined the understanding of the Church and its mission and role in the contemporary world through *aggiornamento*, eversion, and abandoning of the Church’s exquisitely defensive practices of internal and external relations and the egocentric physiognomy of the Church.

The second reason arises from the Church’s past relationships with non-Christians, especially Jews and Muslims, which, at least in Europe, can be described as unstable and complicated. Relations have varied from tolerable but distrustful encounters over bitter polemic and apologetic disputes to bloody conflicts and pogroms. In these turbulent past

³ Cf. Augustin Bea, *Die Kirche und das jüdische Volk* (Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 1966), 163–67.

⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 24.

⁵ Cf. *Nostra Aetate*, Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions, Vatican Council II at §§ 4.7 (01.08.2015), accessed May 1, 2015, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.

⁶ Cf. *id.*, §§ 1.2.

⁷ Cf. *id.*, §§ 5.1.

⁸ Cf. *id.*, §§ 5.3.

relations with other religions, Christian leaders and clerics played important roles, either encouraging the animosity or failing to prevent and heal these enmities.⁹ Consequently, *Nostra Aetate* appeared to be a forgery, if not a blasphemy, of the faith for its peaceable nature, stating that all people have one origin and final goal—God¹⁰; that His salvation plans extend to all people,¹¹ including Jews, Muslims, and all lesser-known religions in the world; that the Church “rejects nothing that is true and holy”¹² in other religions; and that Christians should forget the past.¹³ The document became a source of frustration for all those individuals and groups who, throughout their history, had built their social behavior and their religious and, in some cases, ethnic and national identities on narratives of permanent conflict with non-Christians.¹⁴

The third reason, which was much more apparent to the contemporaries of the Vatican II than us today, was that the Church’s relations with non-Christians were not on the council’s agenda. None of preparatory commissions were officially assigned to write a draft document on this issue. The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, which eventually drafted *Nostra Aetate*, was not considered a commission equal to other preparatory commissions but an agency of the synod responsible for informing non-Catholics about the outcomes of synod.¹⁵

Neither was this issue part of the questionnaire of pre-preparatory commission.¹⁶ However, in the responses to the call for proposals in the questionnaire¹⁷ was one

⁹ The possible responsibility of religious leaders and clerics of other religious groups for complicated interreligious relations is not mentioned or elaborated here, following the main goals of this thesis, the policies of Second Vatican Council, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions—*Nostra Aetate*, Paul VI’s Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, and, last but not least, the New Testament. Those interested in the Jewish interpretation of these issues in Europe can read, for example: Hannah Arendt, *The origins of totalitarianism*, with the assistance of Samantha Power, First edition (New York: Schocken Books, 2004).

¹⁰ Cf. *Nostra Aetate*, §§ 1.2.

¹¹ Cf. *id.*

¹² *Id.*, §§ 2.2.

¹³ Cf. *id.*, §§ 3.2.

¹⁴ This is unfortunately the case in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where ethnic groups define their identities through perpetual clashes with other ethnic and religious groups. An example of such practices can be seen in Chapter 5.

¹⁵ Cf. Giuseppe Alberigo, “Passaggi cruciali della fase antepreparatoria (1959-1960),” in Alberigo; Melloni, *Verso il Concilio Vaticano II, 1960-1962*, 37.

¹⁶ Soon after the Council was announced, the pre-preparatory commission sent a questionnaire to all bishops and the superiors of religious orders, Catholic universities, and schools to collect proposals for the Council. Cf. Otto Hermann Pesch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil: Vorgeschichte - Verlauf - Ergebnisse - Nachgeschichte*, Neuausg, TOPOS-plus-Taschenbücher Bd. 393 (Würzburg: Echter-Verl., 2001), 66.

proposal related to this issue. A group of professors from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome sent a petition entitled *De antisemitismo vitando* requesting that it be emphasized that Christians are the spiritual descendants of Israel and that the synod condemn anti-Semitism.¹⁸ In addition to those asked to send proposals, Cardinal Bea received two more proposals to the issue. One was petition from the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University in New Jersey in June 1960¹⁹ and second was the Memorandum of the Apeldoorn Working Group (August 28–31, 1960) from the Netherlands.²⁰

The first draft presented to the synod fathers provoked divided feelings. Some greeted it with enthusiasm, but others with irritation and vehement opposition. The matter addressed by this document was a hot political issue in postwar Europe, so diplomats and journalists also took an active part in shaping this document.

The first part of this chapter reviews the motivations and reasoning of the three most important persons in the introduction of dialogue into the Church, while the second part discusses the most significant moments in the development of *Nostra Aetate*.

The Initiators of *Nostra Aetate* and Their Motives

The initiators of the document that eventually overcame the Church's long silence and opened a new era of relations with non-Christians were neither powerful organizations nor mass movements but three men in their early 80s: Jules Isaac, Pope Saint John XXIII, and Cardinal Augustin Bea.²¹ Living long, rich, fruitful lives in interesting times, they acquired much experience and knowledge, were respected by their contemporaries for their knowledge and abilities, and held positions that enabled them to initiate one of the

¹⁷ The 50 working themes and questions were created so as to not provoke discussion but to limit the working subjects to doctrinal, disciplinary, and pastoral issues. Cf. Alberto Melloni, "Parallelismi, nodi comuni e ipotesi conflittuali nelle strutture della preparazione del Vaticano II," in Alberigo; Melloni, *Verso il Concilio Vaticano II, 1960-1962*, 465–66.

¹⁸ The proposal of the Pontifical Biblical Institute run by the Jesuits was received on April 24, 1960, before Jules Isaac's visit to Pope John XXIII. Cf. John M. Oesterreicher, *The new encounter Between Christians and Jews* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1986), 83–86; Pesch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, 293; Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II* (Maryknoll, NY, Leuven: Orbis; Peeters, 1995), 393; Wolfgang Seibel, "Eine Geschichte des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils," *Stimmen der Zeit*, no. 3 (1997).

¹⁹ For the full text of the petition, see: Oesterreicher, *The new encounter Between Christians and Jews*, 116–19.

²⁰ For the full text of the memorandum, see: Cf. *ibid.*, 119–26.

²¹ Cf. Stjepan Schmidt, *Augustin Bea: Der Kardinal der Einheit* (Graz: Styria, 1989), 415.

greatest shifts in the history of the Catholic Church. However, that shift was not new to them. Their biographies show that they lived it long before the Church implemented it.

Jules Isaac

Jules Isaac (1877–1963) was a Jewish French professor of history. During the Second World War, he witnessed the cruelty of the Nazi regime and the widespread callous indifference to the suffering of people as many of his relatives, including his daughter and wife, were deported and murdered. He devoted the last twenty years of his life to the recovery of Christian teaching about Judaism.²² It is believed that his writings had a great influence on the decision to introduce the declaration of *Nostra Aetate*.²³ However, it was not Isaac's writings, praiseworthy as they are, but his visit with Pope John XXIII in Rome on July 13, 1960, that is important for further understanding of the pope's decision to commission the preparation of a document on relations with non-Christians.²⁴

Long time before he was received in an audience with the pope, Isaac dealt with how to overcome certain theologically inexact interpretations of the New Testament and misleading assumptions that generated anti-Semitic sentiment among Christians. His ideas attracted the attention of Catholic and Protestant theologians and representatives of European and American Jews who gathered at the Christian–Jewish International Emergency Conference on Anti-Semitism in the Swiss village of Seelisberg during the summer of 1947.²⁵ The sixty-five participants from nineteen countries²⁶ invited to this conference for their relevant knowledge²⁷ addressed the issue of anti-Semitism, setting forth theoretical statements on anti-Semitic beliefs and laying the foundation for future Jewish–Christian relations.²⁸

²² Cf. André Kaspi, *Jules Isaac ou La passion de la vérité* (Paris: Plon, 2002).

²³ Cf. "Isaac, Jules Marx," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum, 2nd ed Vol. 10 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA in association with the Keter Pub. House, 2007), 36.

²⁴ Cf. Oesterreicher, *The new encounter Between Christians and Jews*, 104–8.

²⁵ It is highly likely that Roncalli knew about the conference and its outcome. At that time, he was an apostolic nuncio in Paris, and his colleague, Jacques Maritain, the French ambassador to the Holy See, sent a missive to the conference. Cf. Christian Rutishauser, "The 1947 Seelisberg Conference: The Foundation of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 2, no. 2 (2007): 35, <http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/scjr/article/view/1421>.

²⁶ For a full list of the participants in the Conference in Seelisberg, see: *ibid.*, 51–53.

²⁷ Almost all the participants in this conference had experienced the brutality of anti-Semitism as either victims of the Nazi Regime or those who had risked their lives to save others. Cf. Victoria Barnett, "Seelisberg: An Appreciation," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 2, no. 2 (2007), accessed June 26, 2015, <http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/scjr/article/view/1422>.

²⁸ Cf. Rutishauser 37.

The conference participants' knowledge of relations with others produced thoughtful conclusions. One of the conference's working groups, Commission III, reflected on the issue of future Jewish–Christian relations and prepared the *Seelisberg Address to the Churches*. The second part of this document, known as the *Ten Points of Seelisberg*,²⁹ was largely influenced by Isaac's manuscript *Jesus and Israel* and his 18 theses written underground during the Vichy regime.³⁰

Although the Seelisberg conference participants spoke in their own names and not on behalf of their communities, the *Ten Points of Seelisberg* were considered the foundation for the Jewish–Christian dialogue at a conference of Catholic and Protestant theologians in Bad Schwalbach in May 1950.³¹ The theses were revised and recommended for inclusion in religious education classes.

Many recommendations of the Seelisberg conference were incorporated into the Church declaration on relations with non-Christians twenty years later. The authors of the draft version of *Nostra Aetate* were not necessarily inspired by these recommendations or simply copied them into the Church document. There is no reason to make such a claim because *Nostra Aetate* does not quote these theses. Nevertheless, it seems safe to say that the recommendations of the Seelisberg conference pushed in a similar direction as *Nostra Aetate* simply because they have universal value. Anyone who is honestly, profoundly, and unconditionally devoted to peace, justice, and responsibility would come to same conclusions, even without knowing that the Seelisberg conference had taken place 70 years ago or that the synod fathers ever approved *Nostra Aetate*.

²⁹ The text reprinted in German: "Die 10 Seelisberger Thesen von 1947 zum christlichen Religionsunterricht," *Freiburger Rundbrief: Zeitschrift für christlich-jüdische Begegnung*, 8/9 (1950). The same text in an English translation: Rutishauser 44. Jules Isaac personally handed the *Ten Points of Seelisberg* to Pope Pius XII on October 16, 1949, in Castel Gandolfo. However, the meeting lasted only a few minutes. About this event, see Isaac's report: "Papst Pius XII. empfängt den Verfasser von „Jésus et Israël“," *Freiburger Rundbrief: Zeitschrift für christlich-jüdische Begegnung* 1949/1950, 8/9 (1950). About this event, see also: Marco Morselli, "Jules Isaac and the Origins of *Nostra Aetate*," in Lamdan; Melloni, *Nostra Aetate*, 26.

³⁰ The manuscript was published in 1948: Jules Isaac, *Jésus et Israël* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1948). Another book that complements the previous one was published in 1956: Jules Isaac, *Genèse de l'antisémitisme: essai historique* (Paris: Callmann-Lévy, 1956). The 18 theses are reprinted in: "Die 18 Thesen Isaacs aus "Jésus et Israël"," *Freiburger Rundbrief: Zeitschrift für christlich-jüdische Begegnung*, 8/9 (1950).

³¹ Cf. Dorothee Recker, *Die Wegbereiter der Judenerklärung des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils: Johannes XXIII., Kardinal Bea und Prälat Oesterreicher - eine Darstellung ihrer theologischen Entwicklung* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2007), 406. The final text of this conference was reprinted 1965 in the *Freiburger Rundbrief*: "Thesen christlicher Lehrverkündigung im Hinblick auf umlaufende Irrtümer über das Gottesvolk des Alten Bundes (1965 stilistisch überarbeitet, licht gekürzt)," *Freiburger Rundbrief: Zeitschrift für christlich-jüdische Begegnung*, 61/64 (1965).

Feeling the pressure of the short time left and sensing a great opportunity for changing of the Church's teaching on Jews at the announced forthcoming council, Isaac sought to meet Pope John XXIII by any means. Upon receiving the assurance that the pope would receive him in audience on June 9, 1960 he departed from France at age 83. However, when he arrived in Rome, he learned that his meeting with the pope had been cancelled. Nevertheless, with the help of Professor Maria Vingiani, an engaged activist in ecumenism and interreligious dialogue before the council to bypass official protocol, Isaac was received by the pope in a private audience on June 13, 1960.³²

According to the testimony of the pope's secretary Mons Capovilla, Pope John XXIII had not planned to include the issue of Christian–Jewish relations or anti-Semitism in Vatican II. However, after Isaac's visit, the pope was determined to put these issues on the council's agenda.³³ Hence, from a historical viewpoint, it seems safe to say that the encounter of Pope John XXIII and Jules Isaac opened the door for Jewish–Christian dialogue. However, the declaration that the past mistrust, unjustifiable discrimination, and sometimes even enmity of some Christians towards Jews was a “sin against God and against humanity”³⁴ and “a problem affecting the entire civilized world”³⁵ opened the doors for Jewish–Christian dialogue and for relations between the Church and all other non-Christian religions as well. It was happy outcome of which these two old men were unaware in that moment and which, unfortunately, they did not live to see.

Pope Saint John XXIII

Pope John XXIII, born Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli (1881–1963), was the most important initiator of the declaration on relations with Jews. Although the pope had not planned to include this declaration in the agenda of the synod, his prior efforts and actions related to Jews encouraged Isaac to put the requests before him. Thus, according to Oesterreicher, Isaac did not cause the pope to act but simply brought his sentiments to the fore.³⁶

³² The audience was likely cancelled by Cardinal Ottaviani. Maria Vingiani knew the pope from when he was the Patriarch of Venice (1953–1958), as well as his secretary Mons. Capovilla. Cf. Marco Morselli, “Jules Isaac and the Origins of *Nostra Aetate*,” in Lamdan; Melloni, *Nostra Aetate*, 26.; Cf. Schmidt, *Augustin Bea*, 417–18.

³³ Cf. *ibid.*, 419.

³⁴ Report of the Commission I Emergency Conference on Anti-Semitism. Quoted from Rutishauser 38.

³⁵ Report of the Oxford Conference of 1946. Quoted from *ibid.*...

³⁶ Cf. Oesterreicher, *The new encounter Between Christians and Jews*, 108.

Already in the first years of his pontificate (1959), the pope had removed the word *perfidis* from the prayer for the Jews on Good Friday: “*Oremus et pro perfidis Judaeis*”; “Let us pray for the unbelieving Jews”—unbelieving, that is, in Christ.³⁷ Subsequently, words that could offend Jews, Protestants, Muslims, or atheists were deleted from two more texts, the liturgy of adult baptism and the prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the “Act of Consecration of the Human Race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.”³⁸ Doubtlessly, changes to these mentioned prayers which could offend non-Christians or could lead to misleading assumptions among those not familiar with the Latin of Christian antiquity were doubtlessly important; prayers should be the source of solace and faith, not pain and bitterness.

Moreover, the efforts of the pope, while apostolic delegate to Turkey, to save the lives of 24,000 Jews³⁹ from Nazi persecution in Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria in the name of the Church testified to his unconditional willingness to help his brothers and sisters in need. He used all the available means, including his office, the diplomatic channels of the Holy See, and his personal connections, to help Jewish agencies in rescue operations.⁴⁰ He was firmly determined to act according to his own conscience and had no need for a declaration on Jews that eventually prescribed how a Catholic should behave when encountering a Jew.

These actions of Archbishop Roncalli and later Pope John XXIII were possible only because he occupied a diplomatic post but was not a diplomat by nature nor was he educated to be a diplomat. Giving a talk in New York in January 1960, Oesterreicher said, “No man could be less diplomatic than Pope John; what guides him is the conviction that modesty and gentleness are blood sisters of truth.”⁴¹ Recker is of the opinion that

³⁷ His Predecessor Pius XII ordered that the phrase should be translated: “Let us pray for unbelieving Jews” Cf. Recker, *Die Wegbereiter der Judenerklärung des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, 155–56.

³⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 106; 156–158; Elena Procario-Foley, “Heir or Orphan? Theological Evolution and Devolution before and after *Nostra Aetate*,” in *Vatican II: Forty years later*, ed. William Madges, College Theology Society annual volume 51 (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 308–39, 309.

³⁹ Cf. Peter Hebblethwaite, *Johannes XXIII: Das Leben des Angelo Roncalli* (Zürich [u.a.]: Benziger, 1986), 241–242, 244, 253–254.

⁴⁰ For more details about the rescue actions see: Recker, *Die Wegbereiter der Judenerklärung des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, 132–43; Hebblethwaite, *Johannes XXIII*, 241–45; Cf. Ira Hirschmann, *Caution to the winds* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1962).

⁴¹ Cf. John M. Oesterreicher, “Papal Teaching on the Jews Reviewed for Chair of Unity Octave,” *Catholic Messenger* 79, no. 10 (1961).

Oesterreicher exaggerated by arguing that the pope was not diplomat.⁴² However, Recker overstates Roncalli's diplomatic capabilities and neglects that he never aspired to become career diplomat. If pope John XXIII indeed were a career diplomat (i.e., a bureaucrat), he would never move heaven and earth by calling the Second Vatican Council. Instead, as any sage career diplomat should, he would be committed to his assigned duties as an elderly caretaker of the Church and would not have a flawed understanding of his role and the entrenched fundamentals of the pontiff's "social" position.

Regarding Roncalli's basic diplomatic activities of diplomatic cables while in the diplomatic service of the Holy See, Cardinal Domenico Tardini, then the assistant to the Secretary of State, later the head of the foreign section of the Secretary, and Pope John XXIII's State Secretary, commented on Roncalli's reports: "*Questo a capito niente.*"⁴³ Tardini considered Roncalli to be very naïve⁴⁴ and stated that he, as Roncalli's senior, had many disputes and disagreements with him⁴⁵ concerning the understanding of good diplomatic practice.

Roncalli reluctantly went to his first diplomatic post as the Apostolic Visitor to Bulgaria in 1925. He desired neither to take up a diplomatic career nor to move to a poor state newly independent after centuries of Ottoman rule.⁴⁶ In Bulgaria, he was welcomed by small Catholic communities in poor, remote areas and small communities of Eastern rites Catholics in union with Rome. In addition to being immersed in the reality of the poor Catholic minority and the unenviable situation of Eastern Catholics considered apostates by their Orthodox compatriots, Roncalli had the opportunity to gain insights into the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Jewish and Muslim minorities in Bulgaria. When he thought he had been forgotten, he was appointed the Apostolic Delegate to Turkey and Greece in 1934 because his temperament 39-year-old predecessor had come into conflict with officials of both countries and own personal.⁴⁷ In Turkey, Roncalli became acquainted with modern Turkish society, both cosmopolitan Istanbul, home to many Christian communities and Turkish Muslims but also ruins that were witnesses to the country's rich, pre-Ottoman Christian history. In Greece, he could sense the Greek

⁴² Cf. Recker, *Die Wegbereiter der Judenerklärung des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, 106; 158.

⁴³ "This man understands nothing." Hebblethwaite, *Johannes XXIII*, 220.

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 226.

⁴⁵ Cf. Giulio Nicolini, *Il cardinale Domenico Tardini* (Padova: EMP, 1980), 177–78.

⁴⁶ Cf. Hebblethwaite, *Johannes XXIII*, 154.

⁴⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 184, 188.

Orthodox distrust of a Latin bishop but also received the cordial gratitude of the head of the Orthodox Church after he negotiated the passage of ships carrying grain to prevent famine in wartime Greece.⁴⁸

As Roncalli lived and worked in the Balkans for two decades, he became an expert on the Balkans.⁴⁹ He had the opportunity to learn much about the many inhabitants of the Balkans and the social norms that enabled the various groups to cohabitate and interact. Thus, Roncalli's expertise included knowledge of issues specific to this part of the world which were of paramount importance for the contemporary Catholic Church: the existence of diverse believers and their internal social interactions and external relations. He could never have acquired such knowledge had he lived in Italy⁵⁰ or if he stayed in the Balkans for a shorter period. Although a variety of individuals and groups also lived existed in Italy, the population of the Balkans was distinctively more than diverse from Italy. Had he come from Italian Catholic society which had developed its own specific social norms and practices through a long period of historical sedimentation and had he stayed in the Balkans for a shorter period, Roncalli would have had more superficial contact with the Balkan people and, as many visitors do today, likely have found them either primitive or exotic. He likely never would have deemed them useful and worthy of deep deliberations about their origins and society.

We can describe Roncalli's expertise in more detail. First, he had experience of the life of Catholic minorities in non-Catholic communities in three different Balkan societies. He had opportunities to experience how Catholic minorities were treated beyond the Italian Catholic realm and how they lived on the margins of societies in their respective countries. In these situations, he could not be spoiled by the habitual social flattery of other clerics and believers, nor could he enjoy the fruits of his social status of a cleric and archbishop, as he could in his homeland. Here, he was limited to performing only his pastoral role: to be a good shepherd and advocate of the small Catholic communities before both the Holy See and before the non-Catholic civil and religious authorities of the host countries.

⁴⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 232–33.

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 185.

⁵⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 170.

Roncalli's second expertise arose from his official and private encounters with Orthodox clerics and laymen. He had, willy-nilly, to communicate with them while living in the Orthodox realms of Bulgaria, Greece, and Constantinople, the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarch (the *primus inter pares* in the Eastern Orthodox communion). Furthermore, he became close friends with the Bulgarian royal family, who were converts from Catholicism to Orthodoxy. However, it cannot be claimed that, at this time, Roncalli was working on ecumenism because the Catholic Church distanced itself from any form of ecumenical activities.⁵¹

His third expertise came from encounters with Jews in Bulgaria, cooperation with Jewish organizations in Istanbul, and interactions with Muslims and secularists in young Kemal's Ataturk Turkish Republic.

Roncalli's fourth expertise was in the relations between minority and majority groups in a given society. As an advocate for the Catholic minority in the Balkans and the pope's delegate to non-Catholic countries, Roncalli learned about the position and status of religious minorities in their respective societies. Consequently, he became sensitive to the position of non-Catholic minorities living in the Catholic-majority countries, where before Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church exercised quite exclusivist practices toward non-Catholics. Furthermore, as an important guest of small, local churches, he had opportunities to observe the interactions among members of these communities and to compare them with the social interactions within the large local church from which he came.

Certainly, Roncalli's knowledge of the Balkans and of the rapid dechristianization of workers in France, reported by Cardinal Emmanuel Célestin Suhard to Roncalli during his service as the apostolic nuncio in France,⁵² greatly influenced his decision to call the Second Vatican Council and his willingness to go beyond the customary social norms comprising the historical sedimentation of the Catholic Church.

⁵¹ Pius XI's Encyclical *Mortalium animos* argues that the only way to foster Christian unity is for those who have left the Church to repent and return to the Roman Catholic Church. Cf. Pius XI, *Mortalium animos: Encyclical Letter on the religious unity* (1928.), accessed July 26, 2014., http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19280106_mortalium-animos.html, §§ 10–11.

⁵² Cf. Hebblethwaite, *Johannes XXIII*, 277.

Augustin Cardinal Bea

The task to develop the draft version of a declaration on Jews was formally entrusted to Cardinal Augustin Bea as president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity three months after Isaac visited Pope John XXIII on September 18, 1960.⁵³ Augustin Cardinal Bea (1881–1968) was a German Jesuit scholar, “a man of learning and action, ... one who trusted the gifts God had given him and who could, therefore, himself be trusted.”⁵⁴ Before the pope made him a cardinal and appointed him to the post of president of secretary for Promoting Christian Unity, he was rector of Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome (1930–1949) for nineteen years and an Old Testament professor there for more than three decades.⁵⁵

Despite his advanced age, Cardinal Bea was commissioned to prepare not only the draft declaration on relations with Jews but also two other important documents during Vatican II: the Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio* and the Declaration on Religious Freedom *Dignitatis humanae*. All three documents went far away beyond earlier teachings, practices, and customs of the Church which had become entrenched over the centuries. When *Nostra Aetate* was finally promulgated, Cardinal Bea commented to a friend, “If I had known all the difficulties before, I do not know whether I would have had the courage to take this way.”⁵⁶

He was among the few persons who recognized and understood the motives of Pope John XXIII. Through astonishingly numerous and innovative activities and sage communication strategies, Cardinal Bea gave decisive, unquestioning support to the pope’s intentions to expand his goals for the council which conflicted with the goals of career members of the Roman Curia.⁵⁷ This made him the one of the most important and

⁵³ Cf. Bea, *Die Kirche und das jüdische Volk*, 21.

⁵⁴ Oesterreicher, *The new encounter Between Christians and Jews*, 28.

⁵⁵ Cf. Stjepan Schmidt, *Der Mensch Bea: Aufzeichnungen des Kardinals 1959-1968* (Trier: Paulinus-Verlag, 1971), 30–31.

⁵⁶ Cf. Walter Kasper, “The Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews: A Crucial Endeavour of the Catholic Church,” Speech on Boston College held on November 6, 2002., accessed February 10, 2011, http://www.bc.edu/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/Kasper_6Nov02.htm.

⁵⁷ Before the opening of the council, Cardinal Bea expressed his belief that: “[T]he Holy Father needs help to achieve his goals for the council, the ones he expresses in his radio messages and in his exhortations. These are not the same as those of the schemas, either because the Theological Commission, which directs them, is closed to the world and to ideas of peace, justice, and unity, or because of the division of the work and a lack of co-ordination. All posts have been taken. But where is the place for the Holy Spirit?” Antoine Wenger, *Les trois Rome: L’église des années soixante* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991), 96, here quoted from Giuseppe Alberigo, “La preparazione del regolamento del Concilio

influential persons on the council who, despite numerous intractable obstacles, completed his mission and successfully changed the course of the council. His important contributions to the development of the synod are presented in more detail through retracing the genesis of *Nostra Aetate* in the second part of this chapter.

Genesis of *Nostra Aetate*

The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity gained much global public attention shortly after it was established on June 5, 1960, as one of the preparatory commissions for the council. This interest of journalists and the public is unsurprising if we consider the many features of this secretariat which distinguished it from all other preparatory commissions of the synod.

The most important distinguishing feature of the secretariat was its task. Pope John XXIII had commissioned it to draft document(s)⁵⁸ redefining the Church's views on ecumenism, religious freedom, and relation with Jews. Additionally, the secretariat was charged with contacting other Christian churches and communities and inviting their representatives as observers to the council. The redefining of the Church's views on these three topics was delicate. The secretariat had to prepare drafts that would initiate discussions on then-unthinkable shifts in the Church external policies, in other words, its relations with all social groups throughout the world. Specifically, the ideas in the secretariat's drafts had to radically revise earlier understandings of religious freedom and ecumenism, publicly condemn the Holocaust, put to an end silence, and reprove all misinterpretations of texts on Jews in the New Testament.

The second distinguishing feature of this secretariat was its president. Cardinal Bea was a multiple outsider among the presidents of the other preparatory commissions. That does not mean that he was unknown; to the contrary, he was very well known by the Roman Curia, academics, and journalists. However, he was the only president of a preparatory commission who was not a career curial cardinal⁵⁹ and was a rare non-Italian in an

Vaticano II," in *Vatican II commence: Approches francophones*, ed. Étienne Fouilloux, *Instrumenta theologica* 12 (Leuven: Bibliotheek van de Faculteit der godgeleerdheid, 1993), 54–72, Ft. 56.

⁵⁸ At the end, there were three separate documents for each topic. However, the first draft included two draft documents: one for ecumenism and religious freedom and one on the Jews. In the second draft, there was only one draft document for all three issues.

⁵⁹ Cf. Giuseppe Alberigo and Matthew Sherry, *A brief history of Vatican II* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2006), 13.

important position with the Council. As well, he was the only representative of an influential academic institution, the Jesuit Biblical Institute, that was not under the control of the conservative Lateran University and the Italian curial bureaucracy leadership known as *Il Pentagono*.⁶⁰

The third distinguishing feature of the secretariat was Bea's team of assistants. All other preparatory commissions were headed by curial cardinals and staffed by the personnel from their curial congregations. Although the composition of all preparatory commissions was later changed, not without difficulties, through the nominations of new non-curial members and advisers,⁶¹ the number of curial employees in Bea's team was almost negligible. There were only three curial employees of 37 assistants in the Secretariat (8.13%), the lowest percentage of curial employees on any of the synod's preparatory commissions.⁶²

The fourth distinguishing feature of the secretariat was its relation to other preparatory commissions. Due to the aforementioned features, this secretariat was tolerated—in other words, ignored—by other preparatory commissions. Bea's team was not assigned any draft document to prepare by the Central Preparatory Commission but worked on its own initiatives and tasks commissioned by the pope. The other commissions considered the secretariat to be not another preparatory commission but a technical secretariat responsible for informing non-Catholics about preparation for the council and inviting observers to the council.⁶³

Here and there, Cardinal Bea mentioned to journalists and audiences in numerous interviews, press conferences, and lectures that the secretariat was working on proposals

⁶⁰ Cf. Eric O. Hanson, *The Catholic Church in world politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), 45–46. *Il Pentagono* refers to a small group of highly influential and doctrinally conservative curial cardinals under Pius XII and the early pontificate of John XXIII. Their nickname indicates their sympathy toward the United States in its struggle against communism. During the preparation for Vatican II, the most prominent members of this group were Alfredo Ottaviani, the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; Giuseppe Pizzardo, the head of the Congregation for Catholic Education; Marcello Mimmi, the head of Congregation for Bishops; Nicolo Canali, the Apostolic Penitentiary; and Clemente Micara, the Vicar of Rome. More details about this group can be found in: Carlo Falconi, *Il Pentagono vaticano*, Libri del tempo n. 50 (Bari: Laterza, 1958).

⁶¹ Cf. Alberigo and Sherry, *A brief history of Vatican II*, 13.

⁶² Cf. Antonino Indelicato, "Formazione e composizione delle commissioni preparatorie," in Alberigo; Melloni, *Verso il Concilio Vaticano II, 1960-1962*, 61.

⁶³ Cf. Giuseppe Alberigo, "Passaggi cruciali della fase antepreparatoria (1959-1960)," in Alberigo; Melloni, *Verso il Concilio Vaticano II, 1960-1962*, 37.

on religious freedom and ecumenism.⁶⁴ Talk that it was also considering a declaration on Jews provoked an avalanche of diplomatic reactions from Arabic states.⁶⁵ However, the Roman Curia made no public reactions to such rumors. The officials of the Roman Curia never defended nor denied the Church's intention to issue a statement on the Jews and never publicly protested the political pressure of other states on the internal religious affairs of the Church. Based on this important bureaucracy's attitude to this issue, it can be assumed that it either considered the tasks commissioned to the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity irrational and thus unfeasible or did not know how to respond to this completely new situation.

Unfavorable Political Circumstances—the First Draft

Bearing in mind all these features of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, it is unsurprising that the first draft of *Decretum de Judaeis*⁶⁶ was withdrawn without discussion at one of the last sessions of the Central Commission on June 20, 1962 and was never submitted to the Council.⁶⁷ The draft was withdrawn not for its ideas or doctrines but, as Cardinal Bea stated in his *Relatio* on November 13, 1963 at the second session of the Council, due to “some unfavorable political circumstances.”⁶⁸ Cardinal Bea did not explain in detail what these unfavorable political circumstances were, but he did disclose that there was more than “one political circumstance” that contributed to this situation. The so-called Wardi affair usually has been cited as the main reason for the withdrawal of first draft on relations with Jews.⁶⁹ However, there is a longer list of unfavorable political circumstances that had to be overcome on the way to the adoption of

⁶⁴ Cardinal Bea reportedly contributed more articles, interviews, and press conferences than all members of the curia over the previous five decades. Cf. Eugene C. Bianchi, “A Talk With Cardinal Bea: What are the problems that will be discussed at the coming Vatican Council?,” *America - The National Catholic Review*, August 11, 1962, accessed July 26, 2015, <http://conciliaria.com/2012/08/a-talk-with-cardinal-bea/>.

⁶⁵ One confidential talk with Cardinal Bea about the statement on Jews was published in 1961, resulting in a series of protests by Arab diplomats. Cf. Pesch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, 295.

⁶⁶ The full text of the draft can be found at: John M. Oesterreicher, “Erklärung über das Verhältnis der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen: Kommentierende Einleitung,” in *LThK.E II* (Freiburg 1967), 406–78, 426.. The first draft was created by a small, German-speaking commission within the Secretary for Christian Unity which consisted of Abbot Leo A. Rudolf, Gregory Baum, and John Oesterreicher. Cf. Pesch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, 295.

⁶⁷ Cf. Schmidt, *Augustin Bea*, 471–72.

⁶⁸ Cf. Bea, *Die Kirche und das jüdische Volk*, 141.

⁶⁹ Cf. Oesterreicher, *The new encounter Between Christians and Jews*, 160–61; Pesch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, 296–97.

this document within international politics, the Catholic Church, and, last but not least, the Vatican walls.

One unfavorable political situation on the international level was, as mentioned, the strained relations between the state of Israel and its neighboring Arab states. Diplomatic activities in the region reflected the growing political tensions in the Middle East. Throughout the council, political representatives of Arab states presented diplomatic notes and used all other diplomatic means to prevent adoption of a document that might favor Jews and be interpreted as an endorsement of the state of Israel by the Holy See.

The Holy See had many contacts with Jewish individuals, non-government and government organizations in the pre-Vatican II period that might be described as amicable relations, justifying the reaction of Arabic diplomats. These contacts intensified during the period of the Nazi regime in Germany and the Fascist dictatorship in Italy due to cooperation between Jewish agencies and the Holy See in the evacuation of Jewish refugees. The encounters did not cease with the end of the war, but the motives for the new contacts were different: soliciting the Holy See's support for settling displaced Jews in Palestine,⁷⁰ demanding reviews of and changes of Catholic teaching on Jews,⁷¹ lobbying for the newly established the state of Israel,⁷² expressing of gratitude for wartime help,⁷³ and engaging in cultural exchange.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Cf. A.A., "Pope Receives American Jewish Committee Aide: Asked to Intercede for Dp's," December 31, 1946, accessed July 29, 1946, <http://www.jta.org/1946/12/31/archive/pope-receives-american-jewish-committee-aide-asked-to-intercede-for-dps>; A.A., "Pope Pius XII Receives J.D.C. Leaders: Hopes for Early Solution of Dp Problem," June 13, 1947, accessed July 29, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/1947/06/13/archive/pope-pius-xii-receives-j-d-c-leaders-hopes-for-early-solution-of-dp-problem>; A.A., "Vatican Organ Publishes Text of Pope's Speech to A. J. C. Leaders," July 3, 1957, accessed July 29, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/1957/07/03/archive/vatican-organ-publishes-text-of-popes-speech-to-a-j-c-leaders>.

⁷¹ Cf. A.A., "Pope Considering Pronouncement for Christian-Jewish Understanding: N.Y. Rabbi Says," December 20, 1948, accessed July 29, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/1948/12/20/archive/pope-considering-pronouncement-for-christian-jewish-understanding-n-y-rabbi-says>.

⁷² Cf. A.A., "Pope Will Recognize Jewish State in Palestine if Peace Conference Decides on It," August 14, 1944, accessed July 30, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/1944/08/14/archive/pope-will-recognize-jewish-state-in-palestine-if-peace-conference-decides-on-it>; A.A., "Pope Receives American Rabbi: Report Vatican is Urged to Recognize Israel," December 9, 1948, accessed July 29, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/1948/12/09/archive/pope-receives-american-rabbi-report-vatican-is-urged-to-recognize-israel>; A.A., "Pope Receives Sharett: Discuss Conditions in Jewish State," March 28, 1952, accessed July 29, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/1952/03/28/archive/pope-receives-sharett-discuss-conditions-in-jewish-state>.

⁷³ Cf. A.A., "U.J.A. Gives \$250,000 for Christian Refugees; Half is Memorial to Pius XI," January 2, 1940, accessed July 28, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/1940/01/02/archive/u-j-a-gives-250000-for-christian-refugees-half-is-memorial-to-pius-xi>; A.A., "Pope 'deeply Moved' by U.J.A. Gift to Catholic Refugees,"

Between the announcement of the council and the opening of the council's first session, there occurred three events related to the development of the *Nostra Aetate*. The first, already mentioned, was the meeting of Pope John XXIII and Isaac on July 13, 1960. The second happened a few months later that same year as the pope gave an audience to a group of 130 American Jews from the United Jewish Appeal on October 17, 1960. On this occasion, the pope said to his Jewish guests, "I am your brother Joseph."⁷⁵ Although the baptismal name of Pope John XXIII was Giuseppe, the Italian Joseph, he sought to emphasize that Jews and Christians have the same origin.⁷⁶

Whereas the first encounter likely prompted the pope to think about a declaration on Jews, and the second showed his cordiality toward his Jewish guests and his sense of brotherhood with all Jews, the third event almost thwarted all these efforts. The World Jewish Congress announced its appointment of Dr. Chaim Wardi, an employee of the Israel government, as its unofficial observer to the Council.⁷⁷ The Minister for Religious Affairs and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel government publicly endorsed this appointment, so it seemed that the arrangement was a bilateral agreement between the Holy See and the state of Israel. However, no non-government organizations (NGO) or governments sent official or unofficial representative to the Council. This NGO's representative was not on the list of invited observers suggested by the Secretary for Promoting Christian Unity and approved by the Central Preparatory Commission. The secretariat did not invite any non-Christians to the synod, and no churches and church

March 4, 1940, accessed August 17, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/1940/03/04/archive/pope-deeply-moved-by-u-j-a-gift-to-catholic-refugees>; A.A., "World Jewish Congress Presents \$20,000 to Vatican in Recognition of Rescue of Jews," October 12, 1945, accessed July 29, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/1945/10/12/archive/world-jewish-congress-presents-20000-to-vatican-in-recognition-of-rescue-of-jews>; A.A., "J.D.C. Representative Received by Pope; Thanks Vatican for Aid to Jews During Occupation," November 9, 1945, accessed July 29, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/1945/11/09/archive/j-d-c-representative-received-by-pope-thanks-vatican-for-aid-to-jews-during-occupation>; A.A., "Pope Receives UJA Delegation: Blesses "charitable Endeavors" of Jewish Organizations," February 10, 1948, accessed July 30, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/1948/02/10/archive/pope-receives-uja-delegation-blesses-charitable-endeavors-of-jewish-organizations>.

⁷⁴ Cf. A.A., "Israel Orchestra Plays for Pope Pius XII in Historic Concert," May 27, 1955, accessed July 30, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/1955/05/27/archive/israel-orchestra-plays-for-pope-pius-xii-in-historic-concert>.

⁷⁵ The pope quoted a verse from the Book of Genesis 45:4 said by Joseph when meeting his brothers, who had sold him into slavery, at the Egyptian pharaoh's court for a second time.

⁷⁶ Cf. Nikola Bižaca, "Kako je nastajala saborska deklaracija "Nostra aetate" o odnosima Crkve prema nekršćanskim religijama," *Bogoslovska smotra* 68, no. 3 (1999): 401. Nevertheless, this was not the first time that Roncalli had stated that he considered Jews to be his brothers. Long before the audience in Vatican, Roncalli wrote a letter of thanks to Isaac Herzog Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem in which he called all Jews his brothers. Cf. Hebblethwaite, *Johannes XXIII*, 250.

⁷⁷ Cf. Pesch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, 296–97.

communities sent observers to the Council without invitation. The protocol was publicly known, so it was rare that the Secretary for Promoting Christian Unity was neither consulted nor informed about intentions of World Jewish Congress, especially because it appointed a man who worked for the Israeli government. In this context, this event aroused general disquiet and was seen as confirmation of the fears of Arab diplomats.⁷⁸

The political circumstances within the synod fathers were not much favorable either. All the patriarchs and bishops from Arab countries expressed the official political line of their countries. From the beginning until the end of the council, they opposed any form of a declaration or even a single Jew-friendly paragraph. They had argued that any tension that emerged between the Church and Arab countries as a result of cooperation with the state of Israel would threaten vulnerable Christian minorities in Muslim-majority countries. Therefore, a declaration on Jews was, according to them, not only unnecessary but also harmful for the Church and a danger to Christians in Muslim-majority countries.

However, all these unfavorable political circumstances were manageable and negligible compared to the political impediments to a decree on Jews within the Vatican walls. As mentioned, the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity was different from all the other preparatory commissions: its president was not a curial cardinal, its members were not predominantly curial employees, and the tasks and drafts on which it worked were neither assigned by the Central Preparatory Commission nor did they accord with the other drafts created according to the orthodox understanding of the Church's role and mission in the world. Consequently, two other commissions worked on draft documents on ecumenism: the Theological Commission and the Commission for Eastern Churches. Whereas Bea's team made a draft document on both ecumenism and religious freedom, because the former does not go without later, the other two preparatory commissions took diametrically opposed approaches: they agreed with Pius XI's *Mortalium animos* thesis on ecumenism that sincere ecumenism could be expressed only by returning to the one true Church. However, none of other preparatory commissions worked on second draft version of the declaration on Jews.

⁷⁸ Cf. Thomas Stransky, "The Genesis of *Nostra Aetate*: An Insider's Story," in Lamdan; Melloni, *Nostra Aetate*, 41–42.; Cf. Oesterreicher, *The new encounter Between Christians and Jews*, 160–61.

Documents prepared by preparatory commissions other than Bea's Secretariat were deeply embedded in official Church–European political views and, from them, derived theological views that responded defensively to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and societal changes that put the Church. All previous popes, with the approval and support of their curial cardinals, had strongly opposed these societal changes and the diminishing role of the Church in society, so curial cardinals and their employees in the preparatory commissions for the Second Vatican Council did as well. However, their attitude should not be judged harshly because they behaved as all good, judicious, reasonable, intellectual gate-keepers, diplomats, and bureaucrats of an organized hierarchical institution should. They earnestly understood the sedimented social roles assigned to them and decisively defended the institution and its societal norms—in other words, the institution as a developed social system in which they held societal positions and status and found the societal norms that made them eligible for such positions. They held their positions in the curia precisely because they had proven their bureaucratic obedience, that they were ready to unconditionally defend the existing system and its norms. Thus, the objective of their draft proposals was not to introduce novelties that might endanger existing postulates but to secure those norms or, more precisely, to entrench them, bringing to the fore arguments and theses in accordance with the youngest tradition originating from the 18th and 19th centuries. Therefore, in this particular case, it was wise to attach an extensive theological interpretation on ecumenism because directions on this issue already existed. The issue of religious freedom was not on the agenda because it had already been clearly condemned. The issue on Jews was complicated because the pope had acted and spoken on this issue but never given the clear-cut instructions and guidelines without which a bureaucratic apparatus cannot function. Furthermore, since antiquity, the Church had made hardly any changes to its teaching on Jews⁷⁹ In other words, the curial bureaucracy's proposals were intended to produce patches for existing postulates, not to innovate new, creative solutions in accordance with time and needs of the Church and believers.

In the situation, the reckless move by the World Jewish Congress and Israeli government officials in the Wardi scandal that triggered a wave of protests by Arabic countries could

⁷⁹ Cf. Oesterreicher 425.

only be welcomed as a *deus ex machina*, a good reason for the withdrawal the draft document on Jews by both sides, the curial cardinals and Cardinal Bea.

Shortly after the outbreak of the scandal, Secretary of State Cardinal Cicognani sent a letter to the Central Preparation Commission demanding withdrawal of the *Decree on Jews* due to political situation. However, the tone of his letter indicates that he is not only acting because of political pressure from Arabic countries but also from the concern of one in a powerful position to preserve the existing order of the institution's social system. Thus, Cardinal Cicognani's letter states, "*Verum stare debemus fini huius Concilii*,"⁸⁰ indicating that, in his opinion, a declaration on Jews was not an objective of the Council. From today's perspective, this sentence in the letter of Secretary of State sounds sarcastic. However, he was not sarcastic but very straightforward: there was no place for any document on which Bea's team was working. In other words, the postulates of Bea's team transgressed the existing postulates and norms of the pre-Second Vatican Church, and therefore, without a miracle, it was not possible to adopt and implement them.

The withdrawal of the decree on Jews without any discussion must have been seen as logical and perhaps with relief by all those convinced that the proposals of preparatory commissions would be smoothly accepted in first session of the synod. However, Bea and his team must have also seen this withdrawal as a logical move and a source of relief. There was no justifiable reason to insist on presenting the document on Jews at the first session of the synod along with other documents of the preparatory commissions because these documents were not compatible. Therefore, it was more prudent to temporarily abandon one of the secretariat's projects and to promote alternatives to other drafts through all open communication channels.

Thus, the first and chief impediment to even starting deliberations on ecumenism and interreligious dialogue was not theology but politics, both external politics (international and interfaith politics) and more importantly internal politics (relations between representatives of local churches and other Church institutions, between clerics and non-clerics and the public).

⁸⁰ "We have to stick to the objective of this council ..." Cf. Schmidt, *Augustin Bea*, 181.

The second chief impediment, which follows from the first, was that career bureaucrats were not supposed to create new politics. The bureaucrats in the Church hierarchy were educated and appointed to their positions according to the criteria for good caretakers, not politicians. Therefore, every venture to deliberate external and internal relations or any other issue in the bureaucracy was doomed to failure from the very beginning. The events in the council proved this thesis to be true. The very first session of the Second Vatican Council collapsed amid not only the politics of leading curial employees' insistence neglect (it is important to note that initially they did not show opposition but only ignorance) of new approaches to ecumenism, religious freedom, and relations with non-Christians but also their determined insistence of proposing new documents based only on existing and verified postulates. Their hard work to prepare impeccable documents that would only need to be approved by the synod fathers without lengthy discussion thus turned into a complete fiasco.

Emotions and Lack of Vision—the Second Draft

On December 13, 1962, Pope John XXIII approved the content of the second draft and the first version of the text presented to the council that would pass through many additional changes before becoming *Nostra Aetate*.⁸¹ This was his last intervention in and support of this document before he died in June 1963. The first draft *Decretum de Iudaeis* was recast as the supplementary fourth chapter of *Decretum de Oecumenismo*. The title of this chapter was *De catholicorum habitudine ad non-christianos et maxime ad iudeos* [On the Attitude of Catholics toward Non-Christians and Especially toward Jews]. The objectives of the new draft, supported by numerous New Testament quotations and studious theological deliberations, were to emphasize that Christ embraced all people, that the roots of Christianity are the same as those of Judaism, and that misinterpretations of the New Testament texts on Jews are unacceptable. Regarding the last, all clerics were remonstrated to be careful not to say anything in their homilies or catechetical instructions that might give rise to misunderstandings among their hearers and lead them to hatred or contempt of the Jews.⁸²

⁸¹ The pope had sent a handwritten note to Cardinal Bea stating: "I have carefully read this report of Cardinal Bea and I agree fully that the matter is serious and that we have a responsibility to take it up." Cf. Bea, *Die Kirche und das jüdische Volk*, 22.

⁸² Cf. Oesterreicher, *The new encounter Between Christians and Jews*, 167–68.

Although the title suggested that this text explained Catholics' attitude toward all non-Christians, only first paragraph concerned non-Christians in general, while the rest focused only on Jews. The term *non-Christians* was mentioned two times, once in the title and once in first paragraph. In the fourth paragraph, the term *Gentiles* was used, but it was not clear whether it term referred to non-Christians or non-Jews.

The draft was submitted to the Central Preparatory Commission in March 1963 and was issued two months after opening of the second session of the council, indicating that the attitudes of the leading persons in the curia on this issue had not changed much.⁸³ The text was presented by Cardinal Bea in November 19, 1963.⁸⁴ Despite the shortcomings of the text and the little time left for preparations, brief but valuable discussion started even before Bea's presentation. The major objections were the discontinuity of the content. Texts on the Jews or other non-Christian religions did not seem to be related to the issue of ecumenism, and the text should include other non-Christian religions.⁸⁵

A detailed discussion and procedural vote for this draft were postponed to the third session because of shortage of time. Nevertheless, the synod fathers had the opportunity to send written comments and suggestions to the secretariat until mid-February 1964.

Other reasons for postponing procedural voting on this document have been rumored.⁸⁶ Oesterreicher argued that the most plausible reason for the decision was upcoming visit of Pope Paul VI to the Holy Land planned for January 1964. The pope planned to travel to sites under Israeli control and to the Kingdom of Jordan, so it was prudent to avoid coming to any conclusions that might provoke emotions of the host countries.⁸⁷

Regardless of the reason, it was objectively not yet time to make any conclusions on this document. This project was in its early stages, and the working group of the secretariat that proposed draft version and the synod fathers who took part in short discussion expressed many emotions, both positive and negative, and pointed to a lack of concepts and visions on how to conclude this project. However, progress on the other council

⁸³ Cf. *ibid.*, 168.

⁸⁴ Cf. Bea, *Die Kirche und das jüdische Volk*, 141–47.

⁸⁵ Cf. Oesterreicher, *The new encounter Between Christians and Jews*, 170–78.

⁸⁶ Cf. Xavier Rynne, *Die dritte Sitzungsperiode: Debatten und Beschlüsse des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils; 14. September - 21. November 1964* (Köln, Berlin: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1965), 52.

⁸⁷ Cf. Oesterreicher 434–36.

documents that were prerequisites for this topic, as well as the determined moves of Pope Paul VI that followed, boosted this project.

Clear Directions and New Doctrine

Between the second and third sessions of the council, Pope Paul VI made several notable moves that were exceptionally important for the future of the document on non-Christians and for the future of interreligious dialogue. First was his visit to the Holy Land on January 4–6, 1964.⁸⁸ It evoked many emotions in Catholics around the world as the first visit of a pope to the Holy Land since St. Peter left it and the first trip by a pope outside Rome in a long time. Called the Pilgrimage of the Prayer and Penance, the pope's journey took him through two countries whose conflict had indirect impacts on the work of the council. In two days, the pope crossed the border that separated Jews and Arabs several times in places that no one typically did.

However, it should be noted that the pope behaved in an utterly neutral way throughout the trip. Although Jews and Muslim Arabs cordially saluted him on the streets, he did not address them. He did not pronounce the name of Israel. He did not visit the Yad Vashem memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. He did not ask for forgiveness from victims persecuted by Christians throughout the centuries. He did not mention the suffering of Palestinian refugees or meet with either Jewish or Muslim religious leaders. His successor John Paul II would do all of it 35 years later—but only because of the actions of Paul VI in 1964 and the outcome of Vatican II.⁸⁹

The pope's second notable move was his homily on March 26 and Eastern *Urbi et Orbi* on March 29, 1964. Although he was silent and did not address people while in the Holy

⁸⁸ In two days, the pope visited almost all the holy places in two states, Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan. He met King of Jordan Hussein bil Talal twice in Amman and Israeli President Zalman Shazar in Megiddo and Israel's portion of Jerusalem, along with Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras I, the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem Yeghishe Derderian, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Jerusalem Benediktos, and local Christians. However, the pope did not meet with Jewish or Muslim religious leaders. All of the pope's addresses can be found in: Paul VI, *Travels: Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, 1964*, accessed August 10, 2015, <http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/travels/documents/terrasanta.html>. Oesterreicher writes about Paul VI's visit to Holy Land with enthusiasm: Oesterreicher, *The new encounter Between Christians and Jews*, 178-183. *Freiburger Rundbrief* collected articles from French, Jewish, and British media and republished them in the January edition: "Die Pilgerfahrt Papst Pauls VI. ins Hl. Land," *Freiburger Rundbrief: Zeitschrift für christlich-jüdische Begegnung* XV, 57/60 (1963/1964).

⁸⁹ Cf. John Paul II. *Travels, Jubilee Pilgrimage to the Holy Land (March 20-26, 2000)*, accessed August 10, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/travels/2000/travels/documents/trav_holyland-2000.html.

Land, he did so in his homily three months later. He gave thanks for the hospitality and kindness offered from all he encountered there, including non-Christians who believed in one God:

*Ed un saluto cordiale mandiamo anche, con memore riconoscenza, ai credenti in Dio, dell'una e dell'altra confessione religiosa non cristiana, i quali accolsero con festante riverenza il Nostro Pellegrinaggio ai Luoghi Santi.*⁹⁰

In his Easter Message *Urbi et Orbi* a few days later, the pope proposed the radical new formulation that every religion:

*[H]a in sé bagliori di luce, che non bisogna né disprezzare né spegnere, anche se essi non sono sufficienti a dare all'uomo la chiarezza di cui ha bisogno, [...] ma ogni religione ci solleva alla trascendenza dell'Essere...*⁹¹

The doctrine of “the ray of light” in other religions was incorporated in the fourth draft of the Declaration on Jews and non-Christians as “the ray of that Truth.” The pope based this principle on *Lumen Gentium*, which was in the final stage of harmonization and voted on during the third session. The teaching in this dogmatic constitution somewhat departed from previous official Catholic doctrines. For centuries, it was taught that only the Roman Catholic Church had the means for all people to obtain salvation. A repetition of previous teachings on the Church⁹² had been inserted in first draft of the document on the Church entitled *Aeternus Unigeniti Pater* prepared by the Theological Preparatory Commission.⁹³ However, the draft was sent back to be improved in response to critics of the synod fathers for repetitions of the traditional and judicial approach to the nature of Church, the lack of consistency in the issues discussed, and a tone of triumphalism, clericalism, and

⁹⁰ “Also, remembering [them] with gratitude, We are sending a cordial greetings to those who believe in God, of both non-Christian religions [Jews and Muslims], who welcomed [Us] with joyful respect on Our pilgrimage to the Holy Places.” Interestingly, in this homily, the pope avoids naming the non-Christian religion. The complete homily is available at: Paul VI, “Omèlie: In coena Domini,” Giovedì Santo, 26 marzo 1964, accessed August 7, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/homilies/1964/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_19640326_in-coena-domini.html.

⁹¹ “Every religion contains a ray of light which we must neither despise nor extinguish, even when it is not sufficient to give the man the clarity they need ... but every religion raises us toward the transcendent Being.” For the full text in Italian, see: Paul VI, “Messaggi: Urbi et Orbi,” Pasqua di Risurrezione - Domenica, 29 marzo 1964, accessed August 17, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/messages/urbi_et_orbi/documents/hf_p-vi_mes_19640329_easter-urbi.html.

⁹² This draft version concurs in many ways with Pope Pius XII’s encyclical *Mystici corporis Christi*. This is unsurprising because the secretary of the Theological Commission was Sebastian Tromp SJ, the main author of Pius XII’s encyclical. Cf. Pesch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, 138–39.

⁹³ Cf. “Aeternus Unigeniti Pater,” in *Constitutionis dogmaticae “Lumen gentium”: Synopsis historica / a cura di Giuseppe Alberigo, Franca Magistretti*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo and Franca Magistretti (Bologna: Istituto per le scienze religiose, 1975), 381–91, 383–384.

juridicalism.⁹⁴ Therefore, Pope Paul VI was free to assert that “every religion raises us toward the transcendent Being” and, consequently, toward salvation.

In the third notable move of Pope Paul VI, he defined and expounded the three principal policies of his pontificate in his first encyclical on the Church, *Ecclesiam Suam*, published on August 6.⁹⁵ Those policies were deeper self-knowledge (“the Church must look with penetrating eyes within itself”⁹⁶), renewal of the Church through recognition and correction of its faults,⁹⁷ and dialogue with the world in which the Church lives and works.⁹⁸

Full implementation of all three of the pope’s policies would lead the Church into unconditional, open dialogue with all of society. The policies entail deep self-knowledge based on profound examination of the Church and its position and role in contemporary world. This cannot be done fully unless the subject which is also the object of the examination is unwilling to accept results that are not in accordance with its previous convictions. The awareness that the truth about a group or individual might be different than believed and the willingness to accept this truth are the first condition *sine qua non* for dialogue. Fulfilment of this first condition enables groups and individuals to recognize and correct their own faults, which is the second *condition sine qua non* for dialogue and the second policy of Paul VI. If these two conditions for dialogue are satisfied, then groups and person, in this case, the Church, are for dialogue with all of its society, its groups and individuals. Thus, dialogue is a mode of communication with others that, according to the Paul VI, is conducted in four circles: dialogue with mankind,⁹⁹ dialogue with monotheistic religions,¹⁰⁰ dialogue with Christians not in unity with the Catholic Church,¹⁰¹ and finally with follow Catholics.

⁹⁴ Cf. Edward P. Hahnenberg, *A concise guide to the documents of Vatican II*, Kindle Edition (Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007), KL 853-861, Cf. Pesch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, 141-44.

⁹⁵ Cf. Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam: Encyclical On the Church*, August 6, 1964, accessed July 10, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_06081964_ecclesiam.html.

⁹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, sec 9-10.

⁹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, sec 11.

⁹⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, sec 12-14.

⁹⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, sec 97-106.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, sec 107-108.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *ibid.*, sec 109-112.

*How greatly we desire that this dialogue with Our own children may be conducted with the fullness of faith, with charity, and with dynamic holiness.*¹⁰²

In this encyclical, the pope explicitly names the worshipers of the one God:

We would mention first the Jewish people, who still retain the religion of the Old Testament, and who are indeed worthy of our respect and love.

Then we have those worshipers who adhere to other monotheistic systems of religion, especially the Moslem religion. We do well to admire these people for all that is good and true in their worship of God.

*And finally we have the followers of the great Afro-Asiatic religions.*¹⁰³

The pope's fourth move, immediately before the third council session, was to establish the new dicastery of the Roman Curia for dialogue with non-Christians, the Secretariat for Non-Christians, on May 19, 1964. The first chairman was Paolo Cardinal Marella, who remained in this position until 1973.¹⁰⁴ Despite the establishment of a new secretariat, the declaration on non-Christians remained the responsibility of Bea's team.

Following the wish and ideas of Pope John XXIII to open the Church to dialogue with other religions and the world, Pope Paul VI meticulously accomplished all his forerunner had omitted or did not know how to do. He fulfilled the expected diplomatic formalities and convinced the majority that opening the Church was a good, doctrinally correct, and important task. Pope Paul VI was not as charismatic as John XXIII, but he was an exceptionally good bureaucrat. Therefore, in a bureaucratically logical and understandable way, he assembled the arguments necessary to encourage the synod fathers to look bravely into the future of the Church, instead of being terrified by it and consequently too attached to the past.

With a visit to the Holy Land, Pope Paul VI evoked emotions and awakened buried memory that Christianity originates not only from the spiritual land mentioned in the Bible but also from land that is a concrete place in this world, with real cultures and a people and faith in which Christ was born and crucified. That land is also a specific geographical place from where St. Peter left to go to Antioch and then to Rome. The pope knew that most bishops would have difficulty understanding the new approach of opening

¹⁰² Cf. *ibid.*, sec 112-115.

¹⁰³ Cf. *ibid.*, sec 107.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Edward Idris Cassidy, *Ecumenism and interreligious dialogue: Unitatis redintegratio, Nostra aetate, Rediscovering Vatican II* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), 132-33.

the Church to the world if it did not immanent from Catholic doctrine. Therefore, when he was assured that the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, in which the Church presents its self-understanding, nature, and purpose, would contain the necessary text about other religions, he publicly pronounced portions of that text in his homilies and *Urbi et Orbi* message. In this way, he clearly demonstrated his support for those texts in the constitution. In his encyclical, he explained what opening of the Church or the entering of the Church into world meant. His last move to establish the Secretariat for non-Christians was a clear message to all those who still doubted what the supreme authority of the Church and direct papal successor of St. Peter wanted.

First Draft Including Islam

The Secretariat for Christian Unity prepared a new version of the statement on the Jews which was supposed to be a supplement to the Decree on Ecumenism.¹⁰⁵ Following the intervention of the Coordinating Commission and under great, persistent Arab pressure, the text was subjected to further revisions. Among other things, the previous formulation which freed Jews from the guilt for deicide was significantly weakened.¹⁰⁶ However, the new draft elaborated more profoundly the Church's relationship with other non-Christian religions and explicitly mentioned Islam for the first time.

Cardinal Bea presented the new version of the text on September 25, 1964. In his *Relatio*, he emphasized that the subject of this document drew the major public interest and that many would judge the council according to its acceptance or rejection of this document. First, he argued about the role of the Jews and misinterpretations that lead many to believe in guilt of the whole Jewish people for deicide. In the second part of his presentation, which was significantly shorter than the first, he commented on the text on other non-Christians, particularly Muslims. He justified this extension by contending that various non-Christian religions increasingly sought contacts with the Catholic Church. Cardinal Bea also mentioned common dangers that threatened and brought together all religions, such as religious indifference and militant atheism.¹⁰⁷

The emotionally charged discussion that followed Cardinal Bea's introduction lasted from September 28 until September 30. The majority of participants enthusiastically supported

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Schmidt, *Augustin Bea*, 552.

¹⁰⁶ The whole text can be seen in: Rynne, *Die dritte Sitzungsperiode*, 463–65.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Bea, *Die Kirche und das jüdische Volk*, 148–67.

the enactment of such statements on the Jews and non-Christians. However, a minority, including almost all patriarchs of the eastern churches, demanded that this declaration be completely withdrawn due to the possible pastoral damage to the Christians living in Muslim-majority countries.¹⁰⁸

Lumen Gentium 16 or Nostra Aetate?

Shortly after the debate, a crisis threatened to undo the work on the document. Acting in the name of Cardinal Cicognani, the secretary of the State, Archbishop Felici, the Secretary-General of the council, wrote a letter requesting another review of the declarations on Jews and non-Christian religions by a mixed commission.¹⁰⁹ It was provided that one paragraph of new text should be inserted in the Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium 16*.¹¹⁰ The problem was not that the text on Jews might be part of the Constitution on the Church but that the whole text of future *Nostra Aetate* would be reduced to one paragraph by a mixed commission of six members, half named by Cardinal Bea and half by Cardinal Ottaviani, the most prominent adversary of the council.

From the very beginning, Cardinal Ottaviani, chairman of the Theological Commission was not happy with the existence of Secretariat for Unity and with its drafts. Cardinal Bea and his team understood that this request was an attempt by Ottaviani's party to end the political pressure from Arab states and remove the text on Jews from the council's agenda, contrary to the support clearly expressed by the majority of fathers in previous session.

Upon Cardinal Bea's intervention, the pope assured him that the declaration on Jews would be "neither amputated nor diminished."¹¹¹ Furthermore, a group of seventeen Cardinals expressed their concern in a letter entitled *Magno cum dolore* after they had learned that the intentions of Cicognani, Felici, and Ottaviani were not the pope's explicit

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Oesterreicher, *The new encounter Between Christians and Jews*, 195–213.

¹⁰⁹ Rynne reported that Cardinal Bea spoke with Archbishop Felici soon afterwards. Cardinal Bea asked Archbishop Felici if the letter had been written on behalf of Pope Paul VI. The archbishop answered that he did not have an explicit order from the pope but had written the letter "according to the mind of the pope." After this conversation, Cardinal Bea was received by Pope Paul VI, who shared that the mixed commission had indeed been the theme of discussion, but no conclusion had been reached. Cf. Rynne, *Die dritte Sitzungsperiode*, 89.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Schmidt, *Augustin Bea*, 655.

¹¹¹ Cf. Oesterreicher, *The new encounter Between Christians and Jews*, 219.

wishes.¹¹² Acting on behalf of these signatories, Cardinal Frings of Cologne was received by the pope and was assured by him that the Secretariat for Unity would not be hindered in its tasks to complete the document,¹¹³ even though *Lumen Gentium 16* also contained text on non-Christians.

First Vote

After the provisional deadlock, a new version of the text on non-Christians was composed, attempting to incorporate numerous requests and suggestions from the debate. The text on Jews underwent additional modifications, while the section on other religions was significantly expanded after secretariat was temporarily expanded to include experts for Islam and Asian religions. At this point, it was clear that the new draft would be an autonomous declaration and not a supplementary decree *De Oecumenismo*.

The new proposal was distributed to the synod fathers on November 18.¹¹⁴ Cardinal Bea delivered a *Relatio* on November 20, 1964, saying:

*Unless I am mistaken, no council in the history of the Church has ever set forth with such earnestness how to interpret the existence of [non-Christian religions]... We are dealing with more than a billion human beings who have never heard of Christ, never recognized Him.*¹¹⁵

On same day, 1,651 bishops voted in favor of the document, 242 voted yes with reservations, and 99 were opposed.¹¹⁶ Although it was not the end of the journey of the declaration, it marked the first official recognition of the secretariat's long efforts on this issue.

Demonstrations in the Middle East

The passage of the document would have been good cause for celebration if demonstrations and violence in the Middle East that surpassed predictions had not occurred. Although the last draft on relations with non-Christians was not a political declaration or recognition of the state of Israel, and the third section in the new draft referred explicitly to Muslims and relationships with Muslims, it did not prevent Arab journalists and politicians and even some Christian leaders from backing public ignorance

¹¹² Cf. Rynne, *Die dritte Sitzungsperiode*, 89–91.

¹¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, 91.

¹¹⁴ The whole text of this draft in: *ibid.*, 466–71.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Bea, *Die Kirche und das jüdische Volk*, 235.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Rynne, *Die dritte Sitzungsperiode*, 310.

and agitating protests and demonstrations.¹¹⁷ Overheated Arab–Jewish relations in Middle East left no option for Arabs to accept any Church document that gave any support for Jews. In such situation, Catholic Christians in Arab countries were frightened. The reports of the envoys Msgr. Willebrands¹¹⁸ and Father Duprey¹¹⁹ to the Middle East were not encouraging.¹²⁰ Despite these new circumstances, the Secretariat for Christian Unity prepared the final version for the fourth session of the council by the end of May 1965.

Promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*

Cardinal Bea gave his last *Relatio* on October 14, 1965, and the decisive, solemn vote took place on October 28, 1965 as 2,221 voted yes, 88 votes were negative, and 3 votes were invalid. It was the end of one journey and beginning of the new one as Cardinal Bea told the news agency ANSA on the day of promulgation:

*The Declaration on Non-Christian Religions is indeed a significant and highly promising beginning, but no more than beginning of a long and demanding way toward the not easily attainable goal of humanity whose members feel themselves children of the same Father in heaven and act as such.*¹²¹

Conclusion—The End of the Drama

All things in life come to an end; some end as planned, and others in completely unexpected ways with surprising outcomes. *Nostra Aetate* is an example of the latter. It is safe to say that, in the early preparations for the council, no one believed that, in five years, the council would vote on and the pope sign a document on relations with all other non-Christian religions. However, this might be said for all the documents of the Second Vatican Council, and applying the same arguments and logic, the council itself would never have happened.

Thus, the initiators of the document needed not only their motives but also their hard work ethic, skills, and education to be able to bring the work to a conclusion. However, those qualities were insufficient. As we have seen, the hard work of the skilled, highly educated members of the preparatory commissions was almost useless. Precisely those

¹¹⁷ Cf. Oesterreicher, *The new encounter Between Christians and Jews*, 237–43.

¹¹⁸ Msgr. Johannes Gerardus Maria Willebrands (1909–2006) was the secretary of the Secretary for Christian Unity. He later became cardinal and president of the Secretariat (1969–1975).

¹¹⁹ Father Pierre Duprey MAfr. (1922–2007) was the under-secretary of the Secretariat for Christian Unity and later its secretary and bishop.

¹²⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 248.

¹²¹ Henri Fesquet, *Journal du Concile* (Le Jas du Revest-Saint-Martin: Robert Morel, 1966), 1020, quoted from Oesterreicher, *The new encounter Between Christians and Jews*, 277–78.

characteristics detached them from the world and their brothers and sisters in Christ. Incapable of dialogue with the world, they and other Catholics could not investigate their environment with their own eyes and could not imagine the other realities of even the Church. However, their work on draft versions of the documents was not in vain. Once the synod fathers read it, they become sure that they wanted more than repetition of existing postulates.

The local Church in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as all of society, in many ways resembles those preparing for the Second Vatican Council. These many hardworking, well-educated experts could not move past the defined postulates and norms that sedimented into society a long time ago. The initiators and their motives remain missing.

Chapter 2—*Nostra Aetate*—A Document of Superlatives

When the *Declaration on the Relations of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*—*Nostra Aetate* received its final form, it was indeed the document of superlatives from Vatican II. Not only was this declaration initiated by three men in their 80s, it is also the shortest document from the Second Vatican Council: only 1,158 words in five sections, not including the title, signatures, and footnotes. It also has 15 footnotes, of which all but one consist of quotations from the Bible. The New Testament is quoted sixteen times¹²² and Old Testament three times.¹²³ One footnote refers to the previously voted-upon dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium*, and one to an 11th-century letter from Pope Gregor VII to the king of Mauritania.¹²⁴ No one other document or text is quoted.

Among all the conciliar documents, this declaration aroused the most interest in the public, international politicians, and world media. Many Catholics and non-Catholics were concerned with the development of this document, and many participated directly or indirectly in its formation. Thus, the development of this document demonstrated that the Church directions and teachings on social interactions and external relations with other socio-religious groups could not be considered solely internal Church affairs or outside contemporary international political affairs, even when the Church unilaterally intended such documents to serve internal purposes.

After the contextual overview of the development of this conciliar document in Chapter 1, this chapter examines the outcome of that process: the document itself. In the first part, the features of the document and its epistemological and hermeneutic contexts are presented. In the second part, a brief analysis of the conciliar texts dedicated to Muslims, *Nostra Aetate* 3 and *Lumen Gentium* 16, is provided. The aim is to bring to light features of this conciliar document important for the introduction of dialogue in *nostra aetate*.

¹²² The letters of Paul are quoted ten times, the Acts of the Apostles two times, and the Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John and the Book of Revelation one time each.

¹²³ The Book of Exodus, the Book of Wisdom, and the Psalms are quoted.

¹²⁴ Cf. Gregor VII, “Ep. III, 21. ad Anazir (Al-Nasir), regem Mauritaniæ,” in *Das Register Gregors VII*, 287–88, MGH. Ep. sel. (München: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1920; 1990 reprint)

Features of *Nostra Aetate*

Nostra Aetate as the Result of Compromise

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the initial aim of this conciliar document was to provide a clear, unambiguous statement on proper Christian attitudes toward Jews. After World War II and the tragedy of the Holocaust, the Church could not afford to be silent on this issue. This statement was planned to challenge all past assumptions Catholics made about Jews and Judaism and to condemn any form of discrimination, violence, and persecution of Jews that might arise as a result of such assumptions.

However, instead of a statement or declaration on Jews, a compromise document was drafted due to unfavorable global political circumstances, protests and threats to the Christian communities in predominantly Muslim countries, and vehement internal opposition to such a document within the Church. Although “people who are not Christians” were mentioned in one sentence of the second draft, only the fourth draft presented on September 1964 explicitly includes “Moslems who worship one personal and recompensing God” and all other people who have God as Father because all human beings are created in the image of God. However, the last version of the document, *Nostra Aetate*, refers to all non-Christian religions in the world.

This last version, accepted by vote and promulgated by Pope Paul VI, was the result of a compromise. Its supporters and opponents might have been equally happy or equally unhappy with it. Its supporters might have been glad that such document existed at all, while its opponents might have been glad that its content was quite vague. The most important criticism of the document, as Cardinal Kasper argued with good reason, is that it did not contain everything that had been planned and was necessary to be said about Judaism. Judaism has a significant, undeniable importance to the Christian faith, but in *Nostra Aetate*, it is placed in the context of all other world religions.¹²⁵ At the same time, the text on other world religions has certain shortcomings and does not offer all answers that a document entitled “on the Relations of the Church to” could be expected to.

In other words, if there had been no strong opposition to decree on Jews, a text on Jews likely would have been more comprehensive. However, if there had been no opposition to

¹²⁵ Cf. Kasper.

such a document, we would not have the Church's declaration on all non-Christian religions, albeit with significant shortcomings. In addition, Catholics would not have been involved in interreligious dialogue, this issue would have remained off the working agenda of Church leaders, and believers today likely would be more cautious and reserved in contacts with followers of other religions. Therefore, despite all the shortcomings and criticisms of this document, *Nostra Aetate* represents the biggest shift in the history of the Catholic Church and is "the most dramatic example of doctrinal turn-about in the age-old *magisterium ordinarium*"¹²⁶ on not only Judaism but also all other religions.

Title and Content: If Nostra Aetate Were Drafted in 'Nostra Aetate'

Michael L. Fitzgerald, head of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (2002–2006), believes that, if this document were drafted today, it might have been entitled differently. He proposes, the "Declaration on the Relations of the Church to Other Religions,"¹²⁷ replacing the phrase "non-Christian religions" with the term "other religions." Archbishop Fitzgerald bases this opinion on the renaming of the Secretariat for Non-Christians, founded by Pope Paul VI in 1964, as the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue by Pope John Paul II in 1988.¹²⁸ If we agree with Archbishop Fitzgerald that this document's title would be different today, we might assume that the content of this document would also be different.

The title of an office of the Roman Curia might be changed, but that does not mean that the general terminology used has been changed, as Msgr. Fitzgerald suggests. Namely, the article 159 of the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*, which defines the role of this dicastery of Roman Curia, states that the "Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue fosters and supervises relations with members and groups of non-Christian religions."¹²⁹ Although "non-Christian" was replaced in the title of the dicastery, the term was still used in the first sentence that outlines the main responsibility of the dicastery.

¹²⁶ Cf. Gregory Baum, "The social context of American Catholic theology," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 41 (1986): 87.

¹²⁷ Cf. Michael L. Fitzgerald, "The relevance of *Nostra Aetate* in changed times," *Islamochristiana* 32 (2006): 64.

¹²⁸ Cf. John Paul II, *Apostolic Constitution: Pastor Bonus* (1988), arts. 159-162.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, arts. 159.

We might well conclude that Archbishop Fitzgerald is correct that the title of *Nostra Aetate* would be different if it were drafted today, and we might claim that the content of *Nostra Aetate* would also be different. However, it is hard to imagine that either claim would be correct had the document *Nostra Aetate*, with all its shortcomings and vagueness, not been written fifty years ago. Moreover, we might assume that, in *nostra aetate*, it likely would be much easier to adopt a new declaration or statements on Jews that includes all what is lacking in *Nostra Aetate*. However, in the light of current world events and politics, could we say that a new declaration or statement on Muslims and the Church's relation to Islam would be accepted with the acclamation of all the bishops in the world?

Theological Literary Genre of Nostra Aetate

Vatican II ultimately produced sixteen documents: four constitutions, nine decrees, and three declarations. *Nostra Aetate* is considered to be a declaration, along with the documents on religious freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae*, and Christian education, *Gravissimum Educationis*. A declaration is a theological literary genre that does not approach substantive doctrinal and faith issues of the Church, as do dogmatic or pastoral constitutions, but presupposes the doctrinal teachings defined in the constitutions and addresses more practical questions or specific issues of pastoral concern.¹³⁰ Thus, as a declaration, *Nostra Aetate* contributes no new doctrinal teachings from the Church but elaborates, defines, and describes essential issues in the doctrinal teachings of the Church and nature of Christianity. Specifically, this declaration repeats and elaborates what was already been defined in the Old and New Testaments and the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* 16 promulgated in November 1964, one year earlier. As well, *Nostra Aetate* elaborates on issues that are not essential parts of Catholic doctrine.

Although not a dogmatic constitution or new doctrinal teaching, *Nostra Aetate* addresses doctrinal issues that had not been discussed in the entire history of the Catholic Church, or at least for which we do not have written sources of such discussions. Therefore, it can be said that, in the broader context of the development of this document, *Nostra Aetate*, although not a doctrinal statement, represents a doctrinal turn in the history of the Church.

¹³⁰ Cf. Giovanni Rizzi, "Nostra Aetate 3: Il Concilio Vaticano II e i Musulmani," *Islamochristiana* 32 (2006): 31–32.

Epistemological and Hermeneutic Contexts of *Nostra Aetate*

The first part of *NA I* lays out the main object and goal of the declaration: “Ecclesia attentius considerat quae sit sua habitudo ad religiones non-christianas. In suo munere unitatem et caritatem inter homines, immo et inter gentes, fovendi ea imprimis hic considerat quae hominibus sunt communia et ad mutuam consortium ducunt.”¹³¹ Thus, the document’s main object is the Church’s relationship with non-Christian religions. It is important to note that non-Christian religions are not the object of this declaration. Rather, they are potential subjects, invited to be partners in the promotion of “unitatem et caritatem inter homines,”¹³² which is the ultimate goal and task of the Church.

Nostra Aetate offers three reasons why the Church examines “quae sit sua habitudo”¹³³ with other religions. First is the historical context in which this declaration came into being: modern plurality or, as stated in the first sentence of the declaration: “Nostra aetate, in qua genus humanum in dies arctius unitur et necessitudines inter varios populos augentur.”¹³⁴ The second reason is of a theological and soteriological nature. The Second Vatican Council recognized that “omnes gentes, unam habent originem” and that “unum etiam habent finem ultimum, Deum, cuius ... consilia salutis ad omnes se extendunt.”¹³⁵ Third, the societal role of religions is not limited by time, space, or nation because “[h]omines a variis religionibus responsum expectant de reconditis condicionis humanae aenigmatibus.”¹³⁶

Thus, the first section of *Nostra Aetate* already offers an explanation for why some authors, such as the mentioned Baum Gregory, claim that it brought about a doctrinal turn-around in the age-old *magisterium ordinarium*. However, it was not *Nostra Aetate* that accomplished the turn-around. Rather, *Nostra Aetate* was possible because the synod fathers had already made a turn-around in their approach to the Church’s internal and external relations. Hereafter, three the most important terms in the declaration—religions, plurality, and relations—are explored in the epistemological and hermeneutical contexts of *Nostra Aetate*.

¹³¹ *Nostra Aetate*, sec. 1.1.

¹³² *Id.*

¹³³ *Id.*

¹³⁴ *Id.*

¹³⁵ *Id.*, sec. 1.2.

¹³⁶ *Id.*, sec. 1.3.

Religiones

It is important to note that *Nostra Aetate* uses the word “religion” in its plural form: *religiones* (lat. religions). This first appears to be nothing unusual. In everyday use of this term, both singular and plural, we rarely think about its original meaning and take it for granted. However, this has not always been the case. Before Vatican II, this term was rarely used in official Church documents and speeches and even more rarely in the plural form.

The word religion originates from Latin, and its meaning has differed over the long course of its usage of Latin. In classical Latin, it referred to a ritual, cult, the fulfilment of justice through reconnection (*relegare*), and care for others.¹³⁷ When Christianity arrived in Rome, the primary definition of the term was the collection of beliefs, cults, and narratives of an organized group of people. However, the young Church never perceived itself as one of the Roman religions¹³⁸ but as the one true, revealed faith in one God. Once Christianity became the dominant religion of the empire, and other religions faded away, there was no need to use the term anymore. Furthermore, as the one true religion overwhelmed the known world and its politics, economy, societal behavior, and culture, it became much more than a cult and collection of beliefs.

If other religions did not exist, then there could be no relations with them. Although Jews were present in Europe throughout all the history of Christianity, Judaism was not considered to be a religion but a separate community that would eventually convert to Christianity. When Islam appeared in the seventh century, the Church was sovereign throughout the ancient world. Those who did not profess Christianity, mostly those outside the known world, were called pagans, sectarians, or heretics. Thus, Islam was not considered to be a new religion either but a heresy.¹³⁹ The east–west schism did not change this perception. The centers of the western and eastern churches were far from each other, and both had jurisdiction over their respective territories. They named the

¹³⁷ Cf. Peter Henrici, “The Concept of Religion from Cicero to Schleiermacher: Origins, History, and Problems with the Term,” in *Catholic engagement with world religions: A comprehensive study*, ed. Karl J. Becker and Ilaria Morali, Faith meets faith series (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2010), 1–20, 3.

¹³⁸ Cf. *ibid.*...

¹³⁹ Cf. John of Damascus, “De Haeresibus,” in *Encounters & clashes: Islam and Christianity in history*, ed. Jean-Marie Gaudeul, II, Collection “Studi arabo-islamici del PISAI” 15 (Roma: Pontificio istituto di studi arabi e d’islamistica, 2000), 20–24.

other a heretic, not a religion. However, in the territories under their jurisdiction, nothing changed. Only one faith had absolute influence over the whole of societal life.

However, this situation changed with the western schism, the Ottoman conquest of the Eastern Roman Empire, and the Muslim conquest of North Africa, Middle East, and Spain seven centuries earlier. Under the rule of a non-Christian sovereign, eastern Christianity lost its unique and dominant position in society and eventually became another minority religion in a non-Christian Empire. The Church's status in Muslim-majority countries has not changed in the present. Thus, Christians in this part of the world encountered, become familiar with, and shared the same territory and eventually the same language and culture as followers of a non-Christian religion.

Although the east–west schism did not diminish the status of the one faith in the west, the western schism shattered it. In territory under control of rulers who supported the Reformation, new Protestant communities assumed the role of the Catholic Church and became the only supervisors of morality and faith. However, the Protestant Reformation was only the first fruit of the radical uprooting of the established religious identity, and this process was replicated several times over the course of several centuries, giving rise to new Protestant communities. Although these communities were Christian in their essence, and hence of the same religion, their teachings, practices, and ultimately their moral teachings and lifestyles were different. Thus, the centuries-old rule of one faith that had shaped all of social life no longer existed.

To avoid a state of constant tension, irritation, and conflict, the Protestant communities had to learn to tolerate each other by allowing religious beliefs, practices, and lifestyles of which they disapproved. The process of learning to tolerate not only other religious communities but also individuals¹⁴⁰ gave birth to religious tolerance in feudal Christian Europe¹⁴¹ and, later in the process of secularization and modernity, the concept of freedom of religion in Western Europe. A type of religious tolerance had already existed for centuries in the part of the world under Muslim rulers. However, the religious

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Michael Walzer, *On toleration*, The Castle lectures in ethics, politics, and economics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 67.

¹⁴¹ Cf. John Locke, *Four Letters concerning Toleration* [1685], *The Works of John Locke* vol. 5 (London: Rivington, 1824), 1–58. Among others, John Locke proposed that all religions should be tolerated, except for atheism and Catholicism. Atheism should be prohibited because the denial of religion could result in disorder in the state, and the Catholic Church should be because Catholics have another sovereign who could incite his subjects against their king.

tolerance that arose from the Protestant Reformation, which resulted from the uprooting of previous identities, the unlearning of everything considered the wrong or bad in the old socio-religious group, and learning how to share the same territory with socio-religious groups and individuals without the same beliefs, became the cradle of democracy and trigger for the major social changes in modern Europe.

In the east, the religious tolerance of Muslim rulers was a wise investment in the rapid development of early Islamic societies. Muslim rulers did not reject or ignore the knowledge of their non-Muslims subjects. However, this religious tolerance did not imply emerging of new socio-religious groups, while at the same time regulations and taxes imposed upon all non-Muslims fostered conversion to Islam, or exodus.¹⁴² Consequently, the diversity of socio-religious groups slowly declined, and with it, social creativity and prosperity faded despite the region's abundance of natural resources.

Returning to the west, the Roman pontiffs were unsurprisingly horrified by the societal changes and “destructive opinions” about “certain” freedoms of conscience, opinion, and speech,¹⁴³ particularly beliefs that salvation could be obtained by the profession of any kind of religion.¹⁴⁴ Among these pernicious novelties, those that might endanger the unique position of the faith and diminish the authority of the pope and bishops were seen as especially destructive. To maintain sacred, faith, and civil order, no novelties that did not originate from the pontiffs themselves were not allowed.¹⁴⁵ Pope Gregory XVI wrote so in his first Encyclical *Mirari Vos* in 1832, which his successor Pius IX reiterated in his encyclical *Quanta Cura* and well-known annex *Syllabus of Errors* in 1864.¹⁴⁶

The Catholic Church had lost its unique influence over the princes and their subjects who converted to Protestantism. A few centuries later, the novelties, such as freedom of speech, writing, and conscience, had endangered the Church's position in purely Catholic

¹⁴² In 1914, approximately 24% of the population in the Middle East was Christian. However, almost a century later, it is estimated that Christians make up less than 6.6% of the population in the Middle East. Cf. Andrea Pacini, “Introduzione,” in *Comunità cristiane nell'islam arabo: La sfida del futuro*, ed. Andrea Pacini, Universi culturali e modernità (Torino: Edizioni della Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1996), 1–29, 24–25.

¹⁴³ Cf. Gregory XVI, *Mirari vos: Encyclical On Liberalism and Religious Indifferentism* (1832), sec. 14.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, sec. 13.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, sec. 10.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Pius IX, *Quanta Cura: Encyclical on Condemning Current Errors* (1864). and the annex of the Encyclical Cf. Pius IX, *The Syllabus* (1864). In *Syllabus of Errors*, Pius IX repeats that only Catholicism is a religion: “Aetate hac nostra non amplius expedit, religionem Catholicam haberi tamquam unicam status religionem, ceteris quibuscumque cultibus exclusis.” Cf. *ibid.*, LXXVII.

realms. These novelties were produced directly or indirectly by religious tolerance, the absence of the potent influence of only one faith in social life, and the presence of more political factions in non-Catholic regions of Europe. Freed from religious supervision and censorship, science took its own way, too. New technology made printing easier, faster, and less expensive, which enabled many to write and publish pamphlets and books. Overall, this turbulent period in European and Church history saw great advancements but also wasted opportunities. To fight this fire in the house, the popes called for the methods and tools necessary for a state of emergency: the physical eradication of errors by the incineration of erroneous writings¹⁴⁷ and the eradication of erroneous opinions¹⁴⁸ by keeping the flock far away from mistaken, pernicious opinions.¹⁴⁹

Evaluating the outcomes of such firefighting methods, we can conclude that they were inappropriate, ineffective, and outdated, even for the times when they were applied. The main point Gregorius XVI made in his argumentation is that error has no legal rights, and therefore, it should neither exist nor be allowed to spread its poison among people. He is scandalized that some—he does not say who—assert that all erroneous writings should be countered by publishing books that defend the truth.¹⁵⁰ He refuses any *a priori* possibility of dialogue, that is, verbal confrontation, with erroneous writers and, instead, advocates the formerly successful tools.

Gregorius XVI was not alone in such thoughts. The popes who occupied the Holy See after him expressed similar opinions. Even a decade before Vatican II, Pius XII, in an address to Italian lawyers in 1953, criticized tolerance of other religions because “religious and moral depravity must always be avoided, whenever possible, since the tolerance of these is in itself immoral... [W]hat does not correspond to the truth and moral norms has no objective right to existence, nor propaganda, nor the action.”¹⁵¹ Essentially, this statement repeats the early Christian apologetic argument that only the truth, not error, has rights. Therefore, the truth, represented in the pope, always takes

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Gregory XVI, *Mirari vos*, sec. 15-16.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, sec. 14.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, sec. 13.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, sec. 15.

¹⁵¹ The original Italian text reads: “Il traviamiento religioso e morale deve essere sempre impedito, quando è possibile, perchè la sua tolleranza è in sè stessa immorale. [...] [C]iò che non risponde alla verità e alla norma morale, non ha oggettivamente alcun diritto nè all'esistenza, nè alla propaganda, nè all'azione.” Pius XII, “Alocutiones: Iis qui interfuerunt Conventui quinto nationali Italico Unionis Iureconsultorum catholicorum,” *AAS* 45 (1953): 799.

precedence over any other religion. Thus, toleration of other religions as such is erroneous.¹⁵²

Although similar to the ideas presented in *Mirari Vos*, the address of Pius XII had different impacts. Pius XII did not write an encyclical on this subject, did not recommend methods to eliminate the depravities of other religions, and addressed his speech to a relatively small group of people. Although he recognized that contemporary Italian society was pluralistic, he did not repudiate ideas that could be practically applied only in a society dominated by one religion and one political system or ruler. In other words, his claims could be indisputable and irrefutable if he referred to relations within a homogeneous community or society, such as the Catholic Church, that shared common fundamental beliefs. These claims could be also applied to the majority of homogeneous European principalities that emerged after the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 in accordance to axiom *cuius regio eius religio*. Addressing the Italian lawyers, though, Pius XII did not talk about the past or the Catholic Church but the contemporary secular Italian state. Nevertheless, he insists that local governments should consult bishops for all faith and moral issues and the Roman pontiff for such issues on the international level.¹⁵³

Considering all these matters, it is not difficult to imagine why the issues elaborated in declarations *Dignitatis Humanae* and *Nostra Aetate* wrought so much turmoil among the synod fathers. Likewise, it becomes clear why both documents were considered to be a doctrinal turn-around in *magisterium ordinarium*, although neither is a doctrine *per se*.

In contrast to the previous condemnation of religious indifference and the denial of the morality of religious tolerance, *Nostra Aetate* acknowledges the existence of other religions and rejects that there is nothing “vera et sancta”¹⁵⁴ in those religions. The first part of the document states that “[u]na enim communitas sunt omnes gentes, unam habent originem”¹⁵⁵ and that “cuius [Deus] providentia ac bonitatis testimonium et consilia salutis ad omnes se extendunt.”¹⁵⁶ However, it names only two religions: Hinduism and

¹⁵² Cf. Heinz R. Schlette, “Religious Freedom,” in *Encyclopedia of theology: A concise Sacramentum mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner (London: Burns and Oates, 1975), 1403–6.

¹⁵³ Cf. Pius XII 799.

¹⁵⁴ *Nostra Aetate*, sec. 2.2. This is the only text from *Nostra Aetate* quoted in *Dominus Iesus—On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church*, a declaration by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

¹⁵⁵ *Id.*, sec. 1.2.

¹⁵⁶ *Id.*

Buddhism. In the parts of the text devoted to Islam and Judaism, neither is mentioned by name. Instead, words that refer to the collective body of the followers of those two religions—Jews and Muslims—are used. In the third section, the adjective form of Islam (*fides islamica*) is used but not in the context of an *habitudinem* (i.e., in relation with the Catholic Church); instead, it refers to the specific faith of Muslims: “Abraham ad quem fides islamica libenter sese refert.”¹⁵⁷

Although some bishops from Africa and Asia wanted that document address also African religions, no other world religions are included in the document. However, they are addressed, though not by name, at the end of first part of the second section: “Sic ceterae quoque religiones, quae per totum mundum inveniuntur...”¹⁵⁸

It is interesting to note that, in addressing “tandem qui Evangelium nondum acceperunt,”¹⁵⁹ *Lumen Gentium* 16 explicitly names only Muslims: “inter quos imprimis Musulmanos,”¹⁶⁰ Jews are described but not named: “In primis quidem populus ille cui data fuerunt testamenta et promissa et ex quo Christus ortus est secundum carnem, populus secundum electionem carissimus propter patres: sine poenitentia enim sunt dona et vocatio Dei.”¹⁶¹ All others who do not know the words of the Gospel are described as: “qui in umbris et imaginibus Deum ignotum quaerunt.”¹⁶²

Plurality

The very beginning of this declaration, remarkably entitled “in our time” in Latin, describes the phenomenon of our time “in qua genus humanum (...) arctius unitur et necessitudines inter varios populos augentur.”¹⁶³ This conception of plurality connotes

¹⁵⁷ *Id.*, sec. 3.1.

¹⁵⁸ *Id.*, sec. 2.1.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Vatican Council II at sec. 16 (01.08.2015), accessed May 1, 2015, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. *id.*

¹⁶¹ Cf. *id.*

¹⁶² Cf. *id.*

¹⁶³ *Nostra Aetate*, sec. 1.1. Many conciliar documents use similar formulations:

“The present-day conditions of the world (...) so that at all men, joined more closely today by various social, technical and cultural ties...” *Lumen Gentium*, sec. 1.

“In these days when cooperation in social matters is so widespread, all men without exception are called to work together. (...) This cooperation, which has already begun in many countries, should be developed more and more, particularly in regions where a social and technical evolution is taking place...” *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Decree on Ecumenism, Vatican Council II at sec. 12 (01.08.2015), accessed May 1, 2015, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html.

people with various ethnic, cultural, ideological, religious, or otherwise different identities who live and socially interact within a society in the condition of civic peace.¹⁶⁴ Thus, these statement in the declaration witness that the synod fathers recognized that the Church has a place in a modern plural society and that the reality of “our time” is different from the past. The acknowledgement of this phenomenon without condemnation suggests that the synod fathers were aware that this new phenomenon inevitably influenced Church life and that the Church was also becoming more diverse. Although this issue cannot be comprehensively analyzed here, to avoid facile generalizations, this phenomenon is briefly explored in following paragraphs in its historical context before and during the Vatican II.

Fitzgerald claims that pluralism is not a new issue to the Church “for it can be said that Christianity was born in the pluralistic world of the Roman Empire.”¹⁶⁵ Although it is modernity that leads to plurality,¹⁶⁶ we may agree partially with Fitzgerald. However, if we accept that Roman society was religiously pluralistic, then we have to also mention the other kinds of pluralism that the Church has experienced throughout its long history. In some societies, such as the Ottoman Empire, Christianity was tolerated along with other religions, and in other pluralistic societies, such as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Church had no other option but to accept that other denominations and religions were tolerated. Nevertheless, on all other continents, except Latin America, the Church has always been part of inhomogeneous societies in which it is more or less tolerated along with other religions.

Although Roman culture incorporated many ethnicities and cultures, the empire did not countenance religious pluralism, at least not in contemporary terms, unless the coexistence of the Roman religion and Christianity from 1st century A.D. until the disappearance of the Roman religion is understood as pluralism. The Roman Empire did

“One of the salient features of the modern world is the growing interdependence of men one on the other, a development promoted chiefly by modern technical advances.” *Gaudium et spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vatican Council II at sec. 23 (01.08.2015), accessed May 1, 2015, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Peter L. Berger and Anton C. Zijderveld, *In praise of doubt: How to have convictions without becoming a fanatic* (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 7.

¹⁶⁵ Fitzgerald 63–64.

¹⁶⁶ Modernity does not lead to secularization and the absence of religion, as was assumed, but to plurality. Cf. Berger and Zijderveld, *In praise of doubt*, 6–7.; Paul M. Zulehner, *Verbuntung: Kirchen im weltanschaulichen Pluralismus* (Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag, 2011), Religion im Leben der Menschen 1970-2010, 319.

not have many religions but a single state cult that was a mixture of beliefs in diverse gods, goddesses, rituals, and superstitions—or, in other words, a blend of multiple religious influences.¹⁶⁷ Even if we accept Roman polytheism as kind of religious pluralism, today's religious plurality is much more complex. There are many branches of monotheistic religions, diverse polytheisms, and beliefs in everything, not only in Europe but throughout the world.

Christianity, by its nature, could not assimilate itself into the Roman religion. It never understood itself as an integral part of the empire's polytheism. Christian monotheism was radically new to the Roman mind and threatened to destabilize the millennium-old religious and state system and order, so Christianity was repressed and persecuted until the Edict of Milan (313 AD) granted toleration to Christians throughout the empire. The edict did not make Christianity the only religion in the empire. However, after the edict was issued Christianity expanded, and Christian apologists wrote numerous works defending the only true religion against the profane religion of Rome.¹⁶⁸ Only the appearance of Islam in 7th century and its rapid expansion throughout the realm where the Church was sovereign, along with schisms within the Church, challenged the Church's unique position.

Thus, for its part, the Church never tolerated other religions, denominations, and ideologies. However, the Church coexisted with other religions and ideologies wherever it was tolerated. What had changed so that the synod fathers suddenly recognized that the Church lived in a pluralistic world?

One reason for the change in approach was the Church's final, or at least nominal, acceptance of the secular order and society and the Church's new role in that society. Therefore, for the first time in the Church's history, no other ideology, belief, or cult was condemned. Another important reason was the historic moment when Second Vatican Council took place. The council was convoked 15 years after the Second World War as most of the world was still recovering from mass slaughter and destruction. A new world order and international institutions were created to prevent future international disputes from growing into armed conflicts and to protect the rights of each person and nation.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Mary Beard, John North and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome: A History* 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Henrici 4–5.

Since the end of WWII, the world had been divided into two blocks: the Western capitalistic bloc and the Soviet communist bloc. A third block, the Non-Aligned block, founded in 1961, gathered almost all countries that were not members of these two rival blocks. Humankind lived in the shadow of the Cold War and constant fear of mass destruction. Even as the council met, the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred, and the Berlin wall was erected.

In postwar Western Europe, a new chapter in European history was being drafted. On May 9, 1950, approximately ten years before Vatican II, French Prime Minister Robert Schuman proposed establishing the European Coal and Steel Community to integrate the industries of the age-old rivals France and West Germany. His West German colleague Konrad Adenauer wholeheartedly supported the project. Joined by Italy and the Benelux countries, the ex-rivals became the leaders of new European cooperation. Although Schuman's 1950 speech initiated process that culminated with the creation of the European Union (EU), he was inspired not by the utopic idea of the United States of Europe but by national interest, particularly the increasing need for energy sources and raw materials. When the fathers of EU saw that the European Coal and Steel Community was good, they prepared for the next steps. As cross-border cooperation increased the wealth of nations and improved the living standards of citizens, the exclusivist and rivalrous rhetoric of the political elites and the mood of citizens changed.

At the same time, Eastern Europe lived in another reality locked behind the Iron curtain. Here, too, cross-border cooperation was developed under the leadership of national communist parties and the patronage of the Soviets, except in former Yugoslavia which was independent of direct Soviet control. The motivation and goals of cooperation were different from those on the other side of Iron Curtain, and after the implosion of communism in Eastern Europe, few traces of this era remained, except for the feeling of lost time, poverty, and futility.

During this time, European colonies developed their own identities, and many demanded independence. Unfortunately, to a certain extent, the creation of national identities in former colonies followed similar patterns as the creation of nation-states in Europe, including political turmoil in many new African states.

Although the region of North Africa and the Middle East was an integral part of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire, it seems to have lost its pluralism after the dissolution of

this empire and amid the stronger influence of Western European states, primarily the United Kingdom, France, and later the United States. Moreover, Jews who had been forced to leave Europe after the Reconquista and found refuge throughout the Ottoman Empire lost their homes again after a new wave of European Jewish refugees established the state of Israel. Today, the majority of inhabitants in this part of the world, with the exception of Israel, are Arab by ethnicity and Muslim by religion. Nevertheless, the region is still home to many small religious and ethnic minorities. Each Arabic state has developed its own national, linguistic, and cultural identity.

A regional organization founded by six Arab states in 1945, the League of Arab States has 22 member states today. However, the Arab League's influence on member states and their citizens is negligible compared to that of the EU. The majority of the league's projects are related to education, science, and culture, and it has undertaken no larger economic projects or consensus political program on issues important for all Arab nations. Dissent and the absence of solidarity between Arab nations are especially evident in the disproportionate economic development of the league's member states. However, at the time of the council, diplomats from all member states of Arab League acted unanimously to protest the declaration on Jews and organize demonstrations throughout the region. Arab states were not interested in the Church's internal affairs but wanted to prevent a declaration by the Church that they believed would confirm the right of Jews to create their own state in Palestine. These fears were not unfounded because the Jewish government used every possible opportunity to gain support for its political goals.

During the council, protests which turned into mass demonstrations also spread in the southern United States. These demonstrations were not against Vatican II but the segregation of African American citizens in the United States. These demonstrations happened a hundred years after all the slaves in the United States became free citizens under the Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 and the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution ratified in 1865. Although the United States appeared to be the leading model of pluralism, democracy, and openness to otherness, one part of its own citizens were excluded and could not enjoy their civic rights.

Overall, Vatican II took place in interesting, challenging, colorful historical times. The council itself contributed to this atmosphere by surprising and mobilizing Catholics and non-Catholics throughout the world.

De Habitudine

The third important keyword of *Nostra Aetate* is *de habitudine*, a Latin ablative noun meaning “on relation.” The term *habitus* refers to the Church and its relations to an undefined number of non-Christian religions and non-Christians, as the subtitle of the declaration suggests. Accordingly, we might expect that a document with such a subtitle describing its contents would be a unilateral declaration on the Church’s external relations, with clearly defined norms, standards, regulations, communication methods, and responsibilities for and supervision of the implementation of its policies. However, attentive readers will find very little mention of these matters in this document.

Although many non-Catholics were interested in, pushed for, and participated in the shaping of this document, it should be regarded as the result of the willingness of all the bishops gathered at the synod. The synod encourages, invites and appeals to non-Christians, as well advocates for certain actions through the document, but this document does not bind anybody outside the Catholic Church. Through this unilateral document, the council explains the Catholic position on a limited numbers of issues, addressing most for the first time in Church history. Additionally, it opens a number of new theological issues and challenges for which the Church of our times should have answers.¹⁶⁹ The writing style and the use of Christian and biblical terms show that this document is primarily addressed to Catholics.¹⁷⁰

In this declaration, the synod emphasizes to Catholics their universal task of promoting brotherhood, unity, and peace among all peoples and nations;¹⁷¹ encourages them to witness to their faith and life through dialogue and cooperation with followers of other

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Iesus: On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church* (2000), sec. 14.

¹⁷⁰ The council addressed Muslims and Jews in only two places. Muslims and Catholics are urged “to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.” *Nostra Aetate*, sec. 3.2. To Jews and Catholics, the synod recommended “mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues.” *id.*, sec. 4.5.

¹⁷¹ Cf. *id.*, sec. 1.1, 5.1, 5.2.

religions;¹⁷² urges both, Catholics and Muslims to forget the past and to work to promote freedom, peace, and social justice;¹⁷³ recommends that Catholics learn about Judaism through the study of Holy Scriptures and dialogue with Jews;¹⁷⁴ warns them to not teach or preach about others “quod cum veritate evangelica et spiritu Christi non congruat;”¹⁷⁵ and, at the end of document, implores all Christians “cum omnibus hominibus pacem habeant.”¹⁷⁶ Hence, the declaration offers no protocols and directions for how Catholics should behave and what kind of religious hospitality they should offer to followers of non-Christian religions.

De ecclesiae habitudine ad Muslimos (NA 3 & LG 16)

In last part of this chapter, we take a closer look at the third section of *Nostra Aetate* and a sentence in *Lumen Gentium* 16 in which the synod indicates possible directions for Christian–Muslim relationships despite all past misunderstandings and conflicts. The authors of both texts attempt to present selected topics about the Muslim faith and religious practices that could be compatible with Catholic tradition and understandable to Catholics. Based on these shared values, Christians and Muslims are invited to cooperate for the common good of society as whole in the second part of *NA* 3.¹⁷⁷ The absence of discussion on the most important issues in the Islamic faith and in the age-old history of Muslim–Christian encounters, disputes, and clashes is not a shortcoming but is a positive signal of a true desire for change and a new beginning.

***Lumen Gentium* 16**

As mentioned, there are two principal conciliar texts on relations with Muslims: the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* 16 and *Nostra Aetate* 3. *Lumen Gentium* was promulgated in November 1964, one year before *Nostra Aetate*. The text on Muslims from *LG* 16 is, with some modifications and additions, incorporated in *Nostra Aetate* 3.1, as seen in Table 1.

¹⁷² Cf. *id.*, sec. 2.3.

¹⁷³ Cf. *id.*, sec. 3.2.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. *id.*, sec. 4.5.

¹⁷⁵ *Id.*, sec. 4.6.

¹⁷⁶ *Id.*, sec. 5.3.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. *id.*, sec. 3.2.

<i>Lumen Gentium 16</i>	<i>Nostra Aetate</i>
Sed propositum salutis et eos amplectitur, qui Creatorem agnoscunt,	Una enim communitas sunt omnes gentes, unam habent originem, cum Deus omne genus hominum inhabitare fecerit super universam faciem terrae, unum etiam habent finem ultimum, Deum, cuius providentia ac bonitatis testimonium et consilia salutis ad omnes se extendunt, donec uniantur electi in Civitate Sancta... NA 1.2
inter quos imprimis Musulmanos,	Ecclesia cum aestimatione quoque Muslimos respicit... NA 3.1
qui fidem Abrahae se tenere profitentes,	...cuius occultis etiam decretis toto animo se submittere student, sicut Deo se submitit Abraham ad quem fides islamica libenter sese refert. NA 3.1
nobiscum Deum adorant unicum, misericordem,	qui [Muslimos] unicum Deum adorant, viventem et subsistentem, misericordem et omnipotentem, Creatorem caeli et terrae, homines allocutum... NA 3.1
homines die novissimo iudicaturum.	Diem insuper iudicii expectant cum Deus omnes homines resuscitados remunerabit. NA 3.1

Table 1. Comparison of the text of *LG 16* and of *NA 1.2 & 3.1*.

The soteriological message that refers not only to Muslims but to all “qui Creatorem agnoscunt”¹⁷⁸ is placed in the first section of *Nostra Aetate*. The plan of salvation, as presented in *NA 1.2*, is defined more broadly: “Deum, cuius providentia ac bonitatis testimonium et consilia salutis ad omnes [gentes] se extendunt, donec uniantur electi in Civitate Sancta.” In other words, the text of *LG 16* includes all those “who acknowledge the Creator” in God’s plan of salvation, but *Nostra Aetate* extends this plan to “omnes gentes” (all people).

Both texts mention Abraham, who is considered to be forefather of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims. However, the formulation used in those two conciliar texts differs significantly. This issue is addressed in more detail later in this chapter.

Interlocutor of Conciliar Documents Muslimos, not Islam

Neither conciliar document uses the term “Islam.” Instead, *Nostra Aetate* uses the term *Muslimos*, and *Lumen Gentium 16* the term *Musulmanos*. The term *Muslim(os)* is a Latin

¹⁷⁸ *Lumen Gentium*, sec. 16.

word that originate from the Arabic word “Muslim.”¹⁷⁹ The term *Musulman(os)* was equally used in Latin and other European languages and likely originated from Persian.¹⁸⁰ However, one sentence of *NA 3* uses the adjective form of Islam: *fides islamica*. According to Rizzi, avoiding using the term “Islam” for the interlocutor is among the most significant silences of the conciliar texts. He assumes that the authors wanted to address not the political and administrative organizations that might be associated with religion but the *umma*,¹⁸¹ the Arabic word for community or people, which indicates the transnational religious community of persons who profess the faith of Islam and its beliefs, practices, and morals.¹⁸² In an article on Islam in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, section 5, Luis Gardet and Jacques Jomier claim that, in some European languages, the word “Islam” denoted not only religions but “the whole body of Muslim peoples, countries, and states, in their socio-cultural or political as well as in their religious sphere.”¹⁸³ Likely for this reason, the authors of the conciliar texts intentionally avoid using the term Islam, as well as Judaism, and instead use terms denoting the followers of those two religions.

Habitudo

As mentioned, the Declaration on Relation with Non-Cristian Religions does not clearly lay out norms, standards, and protocols for relation with other religions. Neither does section 3 of *Nostra Aetate*. Here, too, the reader cannot find clearly defined protocols and instructions for how Christians should behave and which kind of religious hospitality Christians and Muslims should offer to each other when their paths intersect. Nevertheless, this section of *Nostra Aetate* offers four directions for Christian–Muslim relationship.

¹⁷⁹ The Arabic word *Muslim* is the active participle of the IV form of the root *s-l-m*, which refers to a person who professes Islam. Cf. Arent J. Wensinck, “Muslim,” in Bearman; Bianquis; Bosworth; van Donzel; Heinrichs, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

The literal meaning of the word *Muslim* is “one who submits to God.” Cf. Louis Gardet and Jacques Jomier, “Islām,” in Bearman; Bianquis; Bosworth; van Donzel; Heinrichs, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

¹⁸⁰ The Latin word *Musulman* likely is derived from a Persian adjective with the suffix *-an*. Cf. Arent J. Wensinck, “Muslim,” in Bearman; Bianquis; Bosworth; van Donzel; Heinrichs, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Frederick M. Denny, “Umma,” in Bearman; Bianquis; Bosworth; van Donzel; Heinrichs, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

¹⁸² Cf. Rizzi 36.

¹⁸³ Cf. Louis Gardet and Jacques Jomier, “Islām,” in Bearman; Bianquis; Bosworth; van Donzel; Heinrichs, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

a) The Church's Esteem for Muslims

The first direction refers to the everlasting present, in other words, the time of the synod but also now, in this moment, without any changes: “Ecclesia cum aestimatione quoque Muslimos respicit.”¹⁸⁴ Thus, this direction binds all Catholics, all members of the Church from the top down—from the pope to all believers throughout the world—to respect all Muslims without any reservation or condition. The synod does not prohibit the disputes that inevitably occur in the course of life and coexistence, but it insists that the Church esteem all Muslims even in difficult situations.

The other three directions appeal for all Muslims and Christians to actively take part in social interactions and to implement these directions into political agenda. As such, these directions are not only acts of faith.

b) Forgetting the Past

The second direction of the synod refers to the past but should be applied as soon as possible. Specifically, the Holy Synod urges that “omnes [Christianos et Muslimos] exhortatur, ut, praeterita [dissensiones et inimicitiae] obliviscentes.”¹⁸⁵ With the formulation of this direction, the synod does not bind anyone. Instead, everyone, Christians and Muslims, are urged to accomplish this goal and forget the past filled with numerous quarrels and hostilities. This statement is the most radical direction concerning Muslim–Christian relations. This direction is especially confounding for societies that have built their ethnic and religious identities on collective memories nurtured by socially shared representations of the past in which their ethnic and religious groups were the victims of Muslim or Christian governments and thugs, as is the case in the Balkans. Forgetting the past and abandoning collective memory then demands an uprooting of identity, making this direction risky for anyone who commits to fulfil it. However, the authors of the declaration are completely correct to urge all Muslims and Christians to forget their past conflicts because narratives about these conflicts are unfailing sources, driving conflicts and recruiting unexperienced novices for new conflicts.

c) Mutual Understanding

The third direction refers to the near future. Unlike previous directions that should happen at once and do not need to be repeated, this process shall not end as long as there are

¹⁸⁴ *Nostra Aetate*, sec. 3.1.

¹⁸⁵ *Id.*, sec. 3.2.

Christians and Muslims on this earth. The Holy Synod appeals to all Christians and Muslims to “se ad comprehensionem mutuam sincere exercent”.¹⁸⁶ This direction of the synod is probably the one most welcomed by all people because there are many institutions, as well as individuals, involved in various projects which have aimed to facilitate mutual understanding with more or less success.

d) Promotion of Social Justice and Peace

The fourth direction for Muslim–Christian relations is a future-oriented process that will not end. The synod appeals to all “pro omnibus hominibus iustitiam socialeam, bona moralia necnon pacem et libertatem communiter tueantur et promoveant.”¹⁸⁷ In this direction, the synod appeals to Catholics and Muslims to promote social justice, the common good, morality, freedom, and peace. This direction should be regarded as part of the political agenda in which the Church believes that Christians and Muslim should be involved.

So far, many international institutions and NGO organizations, secular as well as religious, have supported this direction of the synod. Nevertheless, such efforts have not always been successful. The major problem is the degree of incompatibility of the moral norms and social values of these two religio-cultural societies. In other words, not all moral values and activities that can improve social justice and freedom are equally valued in a society with Hellenistic-Judaeo-Christian roots and a society with Semitic-Quranic roots. Furthermore, the practices of societies’ different socio-political systems can be insurmountable obstacles to working for social justice.

Presentation of the Faith of Muslims in LG 16 and NA 3.1

The authors of the texts on Muslims in *Lumen Gentium* 16 and *Nostra Aetate* 3.1 formulated concise statements to describe the faith of Muslims in a way comprehensible to Christians. Even though the majority of Christians at the time of the synod, and still today, knew very little about Islam, that does not mean that they had no opinions or prejudices about Muslims. Therefore, the authors of these two texts did not have an easy task. In only a few words, they had to present the most important beliefs and practices of Muslims similar to those of the Christian faith and practices using language that

¹⁸⁶ *Id.*

¹⁸⁷ *Id.*

Christians could understand and in which Muslims could recognize themselves. Today, we can say that the authors' work was generally good.

a) *Deus*

In both texts, particular attention is paid to define who the God adored by Muslims is. The authors attempt to answer this important question by explaining that Christians adore the same God as Muslims, that the Arabic word "Allah" means God and is not the personal name of God and that Christians and Muslims use similar names and attributes for God.

1) Nobiscum

In *Lumen Gentium* 16, we read that Muslims "nobiscum Deum adorant."¹⁸⁸ By using the adverb *nobiscum*, the authors of this text indicate the most important connection between Christianity and Islam: Muslims adore God "with us." This formulation unambiguously affirms that the synod fathers viewed the God adored by Christians and Muslims as the same. In *Nostra Aetate*, the adverb *nobiscum* is not used in relation to the God adored by Muslims. Instead, a much wider definition of God as the God of all people and their "*finem ultimum*"¹⁸⁹ is employed.

Although the synod's statement unambiguously recognizes that Christians and Muslims adore the same God, it does not make the Muslim faith a Christian denomination. Similarly, in an address to a group of Muslims in the Philippines, Pope John Paul II clearly indicated that we adore the same God, and according to the foundations of our faith, we name Him similarly but still differently:

*"Dear Muslims, my brothers: I would like to add that we Christians, like you, seek the basis and model of mercy in God himself, the God to whom your book gives the beautiful name of al-Rahman, while the Bible calls Him al-Rahum, the Merciful."*¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ *Lumen Gentium*, sec. 16.

¹⁸⁹ *Nostra Aetate*, sec. 1.2.

¹⁹⁰ The original text in Italian reads: "Cari musulmani, fratelli miei: mi piacerebbe di aggiungere che noi cristiani, come voi, cerchiamo la base e il modello della misericordia in Dio stesso, il Dio al quale il vostro Libro dà il bellissimo nome di al-Rahman, mentre la Bibbia lo chiama al-Rahum, il Misericordioso." John Paul II, "Travels. Apostolic Journey to Pakistan, Philippines I, Guam, Japan, Anchorage (February 16-27, 1981): Meeting with the representatives of the Muslim community" (Airport of Davao Philippines, February 20, 1981), accessed May 3, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1981/february/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19810220_davao-comunita-musulmana.html.

2) *Allah is not the Personal Name of God*

Both texts use Latin term *Deus* with the first letter capitalized to indicate the God adored by Muslims. The authors of the texts seek to avoid any possible contradiction with the previous recognition by the council that the God adored by Muslims is the God adored by Christians. Moreover, this formulation acknowledges that the term Allah is not the personal name of God but simply the Arabic term for God.¹⁹¹

3) *Names, Titles, and Attributes of God*

Both council texts include several names of God, titles attributed to God, and brief descriptions of certain aspects of Muslims' faith in God. Thus, *LG 16* lists the following names and titles attributed to God in Islam: the Creator, the one God, the merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind.¹⁹² The text of *NA 3.1* adds five more names and titles attributed to God: living, subsisting in Himself, all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men.¹⁹³ In footnote 5, the authors referred to a letter of Pope St. Gregory VII (1073-1085) to Anzir the Muslim King of Mauritania (A.D. 1079)¹⁹⁴ which uses some of those titles and attributes of God.

However, it should be noted that the list of titles and names attributed to the God adored by Muslims in *LG 16* and *NA 3.1* is by no means complete. These documents contain only a few, probably because these are commonly used by both Christians and Muslims. A comprehensive analysis and comparison of all the names and titles listed cannot be undertaken here. However, we should be aware that, although all those terms are used in professions of faith by both Muslims and Christians, their doctrinal and theological meanings differ fundamentally.

b) Abraham

Regarding Abraham, whom all monotheistic religions hold to be their forefather, the authors of both texts change their style and, compared to other issues, give a relatively large amount of space to explain the link of Muslims with Abraham. *LG 16* states that Muslims “*fidem Abrahae se tenere profitentes,*” while *NA 3.1* introduces a new aspect of

¹⁹¹ The Arabic term *Allah* is used in in the Quran to denote the God of monotheistic belief. Cf. Louis Gardet, “Allāh,” in Bearman; Bianquis; Bosworth; van Donzel; Heinrichs, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

¹⁹² Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, sec. 16.

¹⁹³ Cf. *Nostra Aetate*, sec. 3.1.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Gregor VII in *Das Register Gregors VII*

faith: “cuius occultis etiam decretis toto animo se submittere student, sicut Deo se submitit Abraham ad quem fides islamica libenter sese refert.”

In general, the historical person of Abraham presented in the Old Testament and Christian tradition does not have much in common with the Quranic Ibrāhīm and Islamic tradition. As with the names and attributes of God listed in both conciliar texts, the similarity between Abraham and Ibrāhīm almost completely ends with the name and level of importance that he plays in both religions. However, while the names and attributes of God are presented with terms that known by and comprehensible to Christians, the text about Abraham uses terms understandable for Muslims but completely unknown or incomprehensible to Christians.

The phrase “the faith of Abraham” used in *LG 16* refers to Islam or “millat Ibrāhīm” according to Quranic texts and Islamic tradition.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, in the Quran, the phrase “religion of Abraham” has an apologetic meaning emphasizing that the Islam is only true monotheistic religion in contrast to Christianity and Judaism. The use of the term “the faith of Abraham” in *LG 16* coincides with the term “fides islamica” in *NA 3.1*. Additionally, the Latin phrases “se submittere” and “Deo se submitit” are literal translation of the Arabic words Islam [to be submitted] and Muslim [the one who submits to God]. Bearing this meaning in mind, this sentence in *NA 3.1* could be understood as follows: Abraham submitted himself to God; hence, he was Muslim, and Islam is the faith of Abraham.

Furthermore, the formulation in *NA 3.1* that Muslims submit to the “occultis etiam decretis” as Abraham did touches upon another important concept in the faith of Muslims and one of its six articles of faith: al-Ḳaḍā’ Wa’l-Ḳadar. The general meaning of this term is “the Decree of God,” as it is rendered in the Latin text. Other possible translations of this article of faith are predestination, fate, and destiny.¹⁹⁶

All the mentioned terms used in the conciliar texts to describe the link between Muslims and Abraham are not comprehensible to most Christians and, therefore, could lead to misconceptions. However, the use of these terms does not indicate approve or condemnation of them or any specific meaning and concept in the faith of Muslims.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. 2,135; 3,67&95; 4,125; 22,31&78

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Louis Gardet, “al-Ḳaḍā’ Wa’l-Ḳadar,” in Bearman; Bianquis; Bosworth; van Donzel; Heinrichs, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

c) Jesus and Maria

Nostra Aetate 3.1 also touches upon the theme of the concept of Jesus and Mary in Muslim belief: “Iesum, quem quidem ut Deum non agnoscunt, ut prophetam tamen venerantur, matremque eius virginalem honorant Mariam et aliquando eam devote etiam invocant.” The discussion of this topic differs from the approach to other issues in this declaration: this is the only topic in which the authors indicate differences between the Christian and Muslim faiths. In precise and clear words, the conciliar texts explain that, for Muslims, Jesus, or ‘Īsā, is one in a series of the prophets¹⁹⁷ and not God.¹⁹⁸ Muslims deny the divinity of Jesus, so this statement in *NA* 3.1 respects the faith of Muslims and demonstrates the clear limits for theological Muslim–Christian dialogue.

The authors of *NA* 3.1 emphasize that Muslims respect Jesus’ mother as chaste and virgin.¹⁹⁹ According to the Quran, she miraculously gave birth to Jesus without being touched by a mortal man. She received a visit from rūḥ allāh [ar. Spirit of God]²⁰⁰ and conceived by the will of God.²⁰¹ The Virgin Mary is regarded as chosen above all women,²⁰² she is the only woman called by name 34 times in the Quran,²⁰³ and surah 19 has the title Maryam [Mary].²⁰⁴ Unsurprisingly, Muslims devote Christian shrines to the Virgin Mary, especially in the Middle East.²⁰⁵

d) The Last Judgment

The last sentence in *LG* 16 on Muslims refers to the Last Judgment when God all “homines die novissimo iudicaturum.” The belief in judgment or directions on the Last

¹⁹⁷ Jesus, according to the Quran, was the only one who was a prophet from the cradle. Cf. 3,46; 19,29-33.

¹⁹⁸ According to Quran, Jesus was an ordinary man and not the Son of God. Cf. 9,30-31; 43,59. The Quran refers to Jesus in 93 verses. In addition to Quranic verses, various additions drawn from the apocryphal gospels and mystic Christian literature enriched Islamic Christology. Cf. Georges C. Anawati, “‘Īsā,” in Bearman; Bianquis; Bosworth; van Donzel; Heinrichs, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. 21,91; 46,12

²⁰⁰ Cf. 19,17

²⁰¹ Cf. 3,47; 19,20-21

²⁰² The other women in Quran, such as the wives of Noah and Lot and the queen of Sheba, are anonymous and not mentioned by name.

²⁰³ Cf. Maurice Borrmans, “Presentazione,” in *Maria nella devozione e nella pittura dell’Islam*, ed. Luigi Bressan, 1. ed. italiana (Milano: Jaca book, 2011), 13–19, 13.

²⁰⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 19.

²⁰⁵ The most important Mary pilgrim sites in the Middle East are visited and venerated by Christians and Muslims. These include Saidnaya, a city 30 km north of Damascus; a Marian shrine on Gibel el-Teir in a Coptic orthodox monastery close to the city Samallut in Egypt; the shrine of Meryem Ana Evi (the Mother Mary House) on Mt. Koressos in the ruins of ancient Ephesus in Turkey; Our Lady of Harisa in Lebanon; and Our Lady of Zaytun in Cairo. Additionally, the feast of Annunciation on March 25 has been a public holiday and national Muslim–Christian feast in Lebanon since 2010. Cf. Luigi Bressan, ed., *Maria nella devozione e nella pittura dell’Islam*, 1. ed. italiana (Milano: Jaca book, 2011) Maurice Borrmans, 14-15, 25-27.

Day, the Day of Judgment, or the Day of Resurrection [yawm al-dīn, yawm al-kiyāmah, al-sā‘a] is central part of Muslims’ faith.²⁰⁶ The last part of *NA 3.1* also mentions beliefs related to Islamic eschatology: “Diem insuper iudicii expectant cum Deus omnes homines resuscitados remunerabit.” This text in *NA 3.1* mentions, in addition to the Last Judgment, two other important elements of Islamic eschatology that correlate to Christian eschatology: remuneration and resurrection.

f) Moral and Religious Practices

The description of the Muslim faith in *NA 3.1* ends with the statement that Muslims “exinde vitam moralem aestimant et Deum maxime in oratione, eleemosynis et ieiunio colunt.” This statement relates to the preceding eschatological topic. Thus, believers, in this case, Muslims, are motivated to value moral life and worship God by the prospect of eternal life. The statement that Muslims “value moral life” confirms the first direction of the *NA 3* and the shift in the Church’s understanding of all other religions and Christian denominations. Thus, with Vatican II ends the argument made since St. Augustin that everything that is not true—all other religions—is immoral in and of itself.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that *Nostra Aetate* is indeed a document of superlatives not only because it is the shortest document of Vatican II, and it has all the other specific technical features mentioned in the first part of this chapter but also because its exceptional content was for the first time drafted by a council and signed by a pope. Although the Church’s relations with Muslims and with all other non-Christian religions in the world were not on the agenda for Church policies in Vatican II, and even though this issue was introduced by accident as a necessary compromise to issue a declaration on Jews, we should be aware that the declaration would not have been possible had the bishops on the council not been ready to shift their understanding of the Church in their contemporary environment. Once they did so, it was possible to draft the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium*, in which the Church is depicted anew, and the pastoral constitution *Gaudium at Spes*, in which the Church is repositioned in relation to the contemporary world.

²⁰⁶ Cf. Louis Gardet, “Kiyāma,” in Bearman; Bianquis; Bosworth; van Donzel; Heinrichs, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

Therefore, as argued in first chapter, it is not *Nostra Aetate*, *in sensu strictissimo*, that recognized the existence of other religions in the world and accordingly made relations with them possible. By itself, this document could not introduce or foster those changes and processes. It is only persons who can do so, but they can also block such processes. Thus, *Nostra Aetate* was possible only because the bishops had shifted their understanding of the term “relation(s)” in their contemporary environment and the Church. Thus, their own shift in the understanding of the term and the process of relations with others led to the shift in the Church as well. This relation, or more precisely the nature of this relation, is discussed more comprehensively in the following chapter.

Chapter 3—Dialogue as Balance and Knowledge

The first two chapters of this dissertation both deal, albeit from different approaches, with the introduction of internal and external dialogue into the theory and practices of the Church. An attempt is made to explain the context of this process and why it was an extraordinary move in the history of the Church, indeed “the most dramatic example of doctrinal turn-about in the age-old *magisterium ordinarium*.”²⁰⁷ Thus, in Chapter 1, the remarkable genesis of *Nostra Aetate* is retraced, and in Chapter 2, *Nostra Aetate*, that document of superlatives, is described, particularly the third section in which the synod indicates possible directions for Christian–Muslim dialogue.

Although the historical context of *Nostra Aetate* has been presented briefly, many unanswered questions remain. For example, if open, universal dialogue is a logical consequence of a plural society, why did the Church need so much time before taking the first step? If it was prudent, intelligent, and the right time to seek contact and unity with all other Christian denominations and to foster relationships with all non-Christians and non-believers in the world, why did no one in the Church hierarchy recognize this necessity before? Why did none of curial cardinals who presided over the preparatory commissions propose this shift?

Although—or exactly because—they were then considered to be the most educated, most competent, and most informed about situation in the Church and the world, the curial cardinals were also the major opponents to any departure from existing social norms and the age-old *magisterium ordinarium*. Consequently, the impetus for inter- and intrareligious dialogue did not come from those considered to be “the learned and the clever”²⁰⁸ but from three men in their early 80s, an age at which most do not initiate new projects or doctrinal turn-about. All three, though, were eccentrics who transgressed existing societal norms, dared to ask questions that nobody else asked, and imagined fantasies that nobody believed could become real. Refusing to behave as an educated bureaucrat was supposed to, Saint Pope John XXIII was probably regarded as lacking the

²⁰⁷ Cf. Baum 87.

²⁰⁸ Lk 10:21

intellectual capacity to occupy the throne of the pontiff, yet he dared to call and preside over a council. Cardinal Bea was never a member of the cardinals' elite, and Isaak was not Catholic.

However, there is nothing surprising in the responses and attitudes of the career curial cardinals regarding this issue. In Chapter 1, it is argued that they behaved as all good, judicious, reasonable, intellectual gatekeepers, diplomats, and bureaucrats of an organized, hierarchical institution should. They likely were the only persons who truly understood the sedimented social roles assigned to them and who decisively defended the Church and its societal norms from any novelty that might endanger the existing postulates. Although we today might not approve of their attitudes or their understanding of the good, we cannot claim that they were not working for the good of the Church. However, they were so sure they knew what was good for the Church—they had learned it through knowledge inherited and transmitted through the Church—that they missed feeling and experiencing societal balance and personal dialogue. The learned and the clever—not only curial cardinals—often ignore these two kinds of dialogue. Therefore, it is not strange that Saint Pope John XXIII and Cardinal Bea did not bother to polemicize with the curial cardinals or try to influence the work of preparatory commissions before the first session. From lifelong experience working with the learned and the clever and, more importantly, experience of societal dialogue and personal knowledge (technical terms explained later in this chapter), they knew that none of them alone would convince the cardinals to change their mind. Therefore, the pope summoned all bishops in the world to the council, and Cardinal Bea communicated his message through the media to all people in the world. They knew that they could achieve their goal by encouraging societal dialogue and awakening the personal knowledge in each bishop and all interested Catholics and non-Catholics throughout the world.

These issues related to the difficulties of introducing dialogue into the Church are examined from a theoretical perspective in this chapter. The first section of this chapter focuses on the general difficulties to (re)discover, (co)create, and introduce a matter that is not complementary to an existing system of standardized thoughts, as was the case, for example, with the council's (re)discovery of dialogue in the Church. A cobweb of system of standardized thinking, constructed, upgraded, and monitored by the most learned in society, impedes the development of new ideas that go beyond the existing system of

thoughts. If new ideas nonetheless arise, then the learned paradoxically are the first to oppose and reject them.

In addition to this cobweb of standardized thinking, the production of new ideas, or lack thereof, and the related economic stability and technological progress—that is, know-how—indicates whether a society and its standardized thinking sustain or disrupt societal balance and personal dialogue, and consequently, how that society and its members relate to Authority, other people within the society, other societies, and all other creatures and things in the world.

In the second section of this chapter, an attempt is made to explain why societal balance is an important condition for economic prosperity and technological progress and, consequently, for the quality of life of every individual in a society. Societal balance cannot be achieved by choosing the right way between good and evil or between good and a middle way, as is usually suggested. The outcome of choosing between two extremes, good and evil, is never balance—almost everyone chooses only good—so this process cannot be considered to produce balance. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the good we are choosing is not necessarily the universal good but the desired good as interpreted and understood under the influence of standardized human thinking. Therefore, it is possible that the bad or evil might be understood, admired, and chosen as the good. In contrast to choosing between good and evil, societal balance arises from a dialogue between Authority and the person who enjoys personal freedom and readily acquires needed knowledge.

The knowledge that a person might possess generally can be divided into two categories: transmitted knowledge acquired through mediators and mediums and personal knowledge individually acquired through unmediated personal experience and a close personal relationship with the object studied. The last section of this chapter is dedicated to the later form of knowledge. It is argued that acquiring personal knowledge is, in essence, a dialogue because it implies that the subject learning an object is at the same time the object of learning. In other words, regardless of whether the object of study is a person, thing, or natural phenomenon, the dialogical essence of the acquisition of personal knowledge entails establishing a new relationship between the subject and object of learning, out of which new creations and new values are produced.

Standardized Human Thought and (Re)discoveries

Standardization of Scientific Thought

Today, many guidelines and standards on how to conduct scientific research and write scientific theses and articles are available. Most advise using—it would be politically correct to say *consulting*—recent literature. In addition to staying informed of the newest trends among scientific researchers, there are many other reasons why the newest literature should be consulted. To mention only one, reading the latest literature might reveal that another scholar in the world works or has worked on the same or similar research projects or that another team is very close to solving a puzzle on which someone else is also working. Despite these benefits of consulting recent literature, this practice could have unfavorable consequences if it results in the standardization of scientific thought so that it might be compared and evaluated. In other words, an unfavorable consequence of such approach could be making the standardization of human thought the only goal and an end in itself.

Here, the term *standardization of science* does not refer to the standardized process and methodology of churning out scientific papers but of limiting the scope of scientific thought which, when established as a system of developed ideas, behaves like a cobweb and prevents the healthy, curious human thinking peculiar to children and naïve adults. Consequently, scientists who have learned and become captured in cobwebs of standardized ideas have difficulty not only looking for new solutions but also accepting (re)discoveries.

To explain what is meant by that, we can use Ayn Rand’s dystopian fiction novella *Anthem* as an example.²⁰⁹ “For the glory of mankind,” the protagonist, street sweeper Equality 7-2521, dares to speak to the World Council of Scholars and present them with the “greatest gift to men”: a “glass box” that makes a “wire glow” and could “flood the world’s cities with light,” replacing what was until then the greatest discovery “of the

²⁰⁹ This novel was written in 1937 and first published in England in 1938. Cf. Ayn Rand, *Anthem* (The Project Gutenberg, 1938; 1998; Last update 2013), accessed March 20, 2014, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1250/1250-h/1250-h.htm>.

twenty illustrious men who had invented the candle.”²¹⁰ However, his (re)discovery is utterly rejected by scholars.

There are at least three reasons for their rejection, and none relates to the scholarly passion for knowledge and truth, the longing to discover an unknown world, or the wish to co-create something new and improve the well-being of society. The first reason is social status of Equality 7-2521, who was assigned by the Council of Vocations to the occupation of street sweeper. Although all men are brothers, a brother should do what he is assigned and qualified to do. However, to make this allegedly great discovery and present it to the learned in society, Equality 7-2521 transgresses many social borders and moral standards.

The second reason is the social status of the scholars. They had worked hard to perfect their knowledge and adopt standards for the production and use of candles and to plan for future needs for this precious product. If a new product that might be a better solution for giving light to men is introduced into society, all their hard work will have been in vain. Moreover, even if society did not deride them for their inability to discover what a mere street sweeper could, they would feel ashamed and miserable because their hard work would be considered to be irrelevant and meaningless. Thus, the scholars’ social status as intelligent and learned is at stake.

However, the most important reason for the rejection of the street sweeper’s (re)discovery is that it exceeds the scholars’ standardized system of thought. They cannot understand what he talks about. His ideas do not accord with their standards, so they consider his explanation to be absolute nonsense and him to be an intruder and transgressor. Therefore, even though they are not authorized to decide the punishment for his transgressions, they cry for the street sweeper to suffer capital punishment, either by the pyre or by lashing “till there is nothing left under the lashes.”²¹¹ In the end, there is no discussion about his great rediscovery, as an observer might have expected.

Based on three reasons revealed by the dramatic scene of the revelation of the rediscovery by the talented street sweeper Equality 7-2521 to the most intelligent and educated members of his society, we might ask: are scholars indeed unable to enter in discourse

²¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*...

²¹¹ *Ibid.*...

and ponder topics beyond their standardized thoughts? What if many scientific projects are only supplementations of previous hypotheses that might later be proven to be mistaken or useless or only developments of old discoveries which have ignored obvious facts and are not only wrong but also danger and regressive for humanity? Although this dramatic scene did not happen in reality but in a dystopian fiction novella, the history of humanity is abundant with dogmatized, standardized scientific thinking and the denial of (re)discoveries that challenge the rightness of such thinking.

The Difficulty of Identifying Obvious Facts

Nevertheless, when we talk about obviousness of facts, we have to be very precise. The obviousness of facts has not and has never been easily recognizable and transparent. The obviousness of facts is always constrained by the time and space in which humans live and interact and by the accumulated and transmitted knowledge from previous discoveries, constructed social norms, and moral doctrines. In other words, the identification of obvious facts is highly socially influenced, regardless of the nature of the facts or the researched object. Therefore, science laboratories and scientists' councils might be and, amazingly, often are strongholds of ignorance.

For example, today, we know that the heart is the organ that pumps blood so that it circulates through blood vessels and, among other functions, transports oxygen and nutrients to cells and eliminates carbon dioxide and the waste of cellular metabolism from cells. This fact seems obvious and is known to all from adolescence. However, that the heart is a pump and blood a medium for transport has been known in Europe only since the 17th century. In 1628, after long observations, William Harvey published the booklet *Exercitatio Anatomica de Motu Cordis et Sanguinis in Animalibus*²¹² in which he explains these facts which we take for granted today. His discovery was not accepted with praise, and many illustrious physicians of that time refused to acknowledge these obvious facts and considered them to be fanciful because they contravened standardized human thinking. For them, it was obvious and beyond any doubt that the heart is a furnace whose function is to warm the body and that blood itself is a kind of nutrient and spirit consumed by body, as claimed by the great medical authority Galen (AD 130–200),

²¹² Cf. William Harvey, *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus: with an English translation and annotations by Chauncey D. Leake* (Springfield, Ill.: Thomas, 1928).

whose influence extended more than a thousand years after his death. For centuries, physicians in Europe and the Arab world held these incorrect assumptions to be obvious facts, even though Chinese medicine books from the 20th century BC described the proper function of the heart and blood. Some Arab and European physicians challenged parts of Galen's assumptions but never offered comprehensive explanations.²¹³

This is not a criticism of science and the failures of the majority of scientists to endow humanity with great discoveries. Nor is there any alternative to laboratory scientific teamwork that supplements and refines previous discoveries through all the bureaucracy involved in introducing great human innovations into practical uses previously unthinkable in social reality. The value of this work should not be doubted. However, we can critique the originality of their work and willingness to go beyond standardized thought.

We should not forget that all the great inventors in history have been considered to be heretics, eccentrics or magicians by their contemporaries and, in some cases, by people even centuries later. These like Galileo, Copernicus, Harvey, and many others dared to look for answers to questions that were already regarded as definitively answered for centuries. For example, Nikola Tesla is still today regarded as eccentric because he dared to ask questions no one else could imagine asking. To many who know about his discoveries, he appears to be a magician who extended his hands into the emptiness beyond the sight of man, picked up something that was so perfect but, at same time, so simple and logical and had existed since the beginning of time, and gave it as a gift to humanity without requiring anything in return.

We say that these people were ahead of their times. However, this saying does not mean that they lived in times other than their contemporaries; it is only a political correct phrase that indicates that they were not considered to be ordinary persons. Rather, they were seen as transgressors who had little respect for social norms and tradition of their time. Lacking that respect and not fearing punishment for transgressions, they stepped outside the borders of knowledge that, long before them, had been established and fortified.

²¹³ Cf. M.D.J. McKechnie and C. Robertson, "William Harvey," *Resuscitation* 55, no. 2 (2002).; Cf. Theodore Zeldin, *An intimate history of humanity*, 1st HarperPerennial ed (New York: HarperPerennial, 1996), 194.

Up-to-date Thoughts in the Humanities

Returning to the topic first raised in this section, we ask: is it feasible and desirable to apply the same methodology for writing scientific papers, particularly consulting recent literature for the re-production and refinement of new trends, to academic work in theology and other disciplines of the humanities?

Simply put, yes. Other explanations and comments besides an affirmative answer are not necessary because a negative response can be considered to be degradation of the humanities in relation to science. What, though, does it mean to use the latest literature in the humanities? Does that necessarily mean that, in the humanities, too, old or ancient literature should be considered to outdated and therefore irrelevant?

Indeed, the circumstances and conditions amid which women and men live in this world are changing constantly—or at least, that is what we would like to believe. These circumstances and conditions determine the habits, behavior, and *de facto* situation of women and men (1) in this world, (2) toward the world, and (3) among themselves. Some conditions and circumstances humans know and might influence them. Other they know but they cannot control them. A third group of conditions and circumstances emanates from human behavior, attitudes and relations, and cultural perceptions of the world. In general, the first two groups of conditions and circumstances are the objects of study in the natural sciences, while the latter group is the object of study in the social sciences and humanities.

We should not ignore that human progress in detecting, describing, defining, and eventually mastering natural conditions and circumstances over the course of history is almost embarrassingly misperceived. If presented in a chart, all human discoveries might follow an ascending line. In other words, we might say that humanity's general knowledge of human-independent conditions has grown consistently. However, simultaneous with and despite the increase of the knowledge and control of these conditions, the area of our ignorance has also expanded—the number of conditions that are not yet detected, described, or defined and so cannot be yet controlled. As American

theoretical physicist John A. Wheeler said, “We live on an island surrounded by a sea of ignorance. As our island of knowledge grows, so does the shore of our ignorance.”²¹⁴

The Inability to See What One Has Not Learned to See

It is no “wonder whether one can ever ‘see’ something of which one has had no previous knowledge,”²¹⁵ as biologist Otto Lowenstein writes in his book *The Senses*, describing the experiences of those whose opened their eyes for the first time after chirurgical intervention. The world they previously knew was “a world of tactile experience, of sound and scent.”²¹⁶ As they discovered the unknown world of colors and shadows, they expressed “longing at times to return to the relative seclusion in their former world”²¹⁷ because they needed “a lot of time and efforts before they recognize the objects around them as separate items.”²¹⁸

This example can make it easier to understand, as we have argued, that the obviousness of objects, facts, environments, and the conditions that determine might not be as obvious as they appear. Even an object in front of a person’s nose might escape notice. It is impossible to discern the object in the general picture of landscape because one does not know of it, is not trained to see it, or does not know how to behold the environment. It might be more illuminating to learn that humans, or the human brain, refuse to accept the new definition of an object, condition, or total environment when their eyes are literally opened, and they search for safe refuge in their known world.

Changing Perceptions of the World and Our Role in the World

Constant change affects the circumstances and conditions that originate from human perception of the world and from internal and external interactions—interactions within communities, between different communities, between members of different communities—as well as from the humanities and social sciences whose object of study they are. These changes, observed in relation to a specific time and space, might be

²¹⁴ Quoted in: John Horgan, “The New Challenges,” *Scientific American* 267, no. 6 (1992).

²¹⁵ Cf. Otto Lowenstein, *The Senses*, Pelican books A835 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966)., quoted in: Marshall McLuhan, Quentin Fiore and Jerome Agel, *War and peace in the global village: An inventory of some of the current spastic situations that could be eliminated by more feedforward* (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press, 2001, c1968).

²¹⁶ Ibid...

²¹⁷ Ibid...

²¹⁸ Ibid...

assumed subjectively (with bias and prejudice) or objectively (with impartiality and neutrality) to be advanced, denied, or limited by stagnation. Thus, present social, political, cultural, and religious conditions are regarded as better, worse, or indeterminately different in relation to time, past or future, and in relation to contemporaries who live outside the boundaries of one's real or imaginary habitat. These perceptions exist even when there is no experience, reliable evidence, or reasonable explanation for why some social conditions or circumstances are better, worse, or different than the time or other social groups that occupy another defined virtual or real space.

Therefore, we can say that progress in science and technology is followed by changes in a society and the humanities and social sciences in specific times and spaces. In other words, the progress or stagnation of technological and scientific development and the related economic prosperity is a social condition that has important, although not overwhelming, impacts on the definition of the socially constructed circumstances of the society that lives within a defined, bordered territory and time or of a group of people that do not share the same territorial space but a virtual space of identical interests and beliefs.

However, we might ask: does technological progress belong only to society in which it originates, or does it belong to the whole of humankind? Is the progress in technology and science the progress of a particular society or group in a specific time and space and not the progress of mankind? Depending on the starting point, whether economic philosophy or soteriology, and on whether the intent is to answer these questions subjectively or objectively, idealistically or reasonably, naïvely or persuasively, there are only two possible answers (discounting such answers as “I don't know” or “I never thought about it”). Both might be valid, incomplete, or incorrect:

a. Yes, progress in science and technology is the advancement of all of humankind.

b. No, progress in technology and science is the advancement of those societies that financed the research or bought and implemented the patents.

We might believe validity of the statement that technological achievements over the course of human history can be presented in an ascending line. Can we say the same for achievements in the humanities? Is the ascending line of technological achievements in whose accuracy we like to believe paralleled by an ascending line in the humanities? Here too, there are at least two answers:

a. Yes, if men and women are subordinated only to physical laws, in other words, if their psyches are subtracted, and they are dehumanized.

b. No, people's role and their worldview of the environment surrounding them cannot be depicted in a graphic line that follows the line of technological progress or stagnation because a society and the interactions between members of that society have their own path that depends on the societal balance.

Eventual accomplishment of the dehumanization of humanity would also spell the end of technological progress because it would lose its substance and purpose. Ultimately, if there were not women and men in this world, there would be no world: our planet would continue to circle the sun, but if there were no humans, technological progress would have no meaning. If we have to graphically depict the line of societal balance in relation to the line of technological progress, the line of societal balance would be on the x axis. Minor fluctuations in the balance line from the x axis, in either a positive or a negative direction, would accelerate or slow the technological development and economic prosperity in a society. Social earthquakes would result from larger oscillations in any direction—like the (re)introduction of dialogue or the ambition to establish and defend an ideal society as a political and religious paradise by defending standardized human thoughts and transmitted knowledge. Technological progress cannot be directly related to social development because the former ideally grows and follows linear progression, and stability is desired in the later. Therefore, they are incompatible, even though they have huge impacts on each other.

Therefore, regarding relevant sources for humanities research, new sources do not necessarily have an advantage over older sources. Depending on the object studied, it might even be necessary to explore old sources. Although all theories, social systems, and their related ideologies and other intellectual products have a lifespan, categorizing them as correct or incorrect, accurate or inaccurate displays partiality. Certainly, we can discuss their ethics and morality, feasibility, success or failure, legacy, value, and relevance. Whatever the current status of a theory or ideology, it is irrational to praise and emphasize the importance of one and expel the other from memory because they all, willy-nilly, are integral parts of human history and so still influence our lives regardless of which ideology we prefer.

Co-Responsible Co-Creators of One's Own History

This goal can be accomplished in society only if individuals recognize themselves as subjects—co-responsible co-creators of their own history. Of course, the condition *sine qua non* for this is that individuals are free men,²¹⁹ that society promotes and protects at least fundamental human rights, and that individuals are mentally capable of understanding that they create their own history: that they live in the present, not the past of their memories or in the future, already testing the eschatological life. Otherwise, by accepting the role of object, they consciously or unconsciously subordinate themselves to the role of passive reproduction, whether biological, civilizational, or both. However, passive participation in one's own history and the history of humankind only seemingly sets individuals free from responsibility. Acting or failing to act in ignorance does not absolve one of responsibility.²²⁰

Societal Balance—Dialogue with Authority

In previous section, it is claimed that the quality of life of every individual in a society is conditioned by its economic prosperity and technological progress, which, in turn, are conditioned by the societal balance. An attempt to illustrate this phenomenon is made in this section. To eliminate possible ambiguity about this phenomenon based on transmitted knowledge learned through mediators and mediums, what the societal balance should not be is first argued. Namely, it is not the process of weighting or choosing between good and evil or between good and a middle way. The outcome of choosing between two extremes can never be balance, so this process cannot be considered to be balance either. Next, the three essential elements of societal balance are presented: personal freedom, Authority and knowledge. The section ends with an explanation of how these three essential elements are related to each other—that is, how they provide societal balance—and why every society that strives to attain the objectives of economic stability and technological progress must achieve, maintain, and safeguard societal balance.

²¹⁹ Here, *free man* refers to a person who is not subjected to any form of slavery, or in words of philosopher Sen Amartya, a free man is a person who has a real opportunity to accomplish what he values. Cf. Amartya Sen, *Inequality reexamined* (New York, Cambridge, Mass: Russell Sage Foundation; Harvard University Press, 1992), 31. It is estimated that, in 2013, 29.8 million people were enslaved or owned by criminals globally, and of these, 1.82%, that is 550,000, are in Europe. Cf. *The global slavery index, 2013*, [1st ed.] (London: Walk Free Foundation, 2013).

²²⁰ Cf. Mt 24:8–30, Lk 19:24–27

It is important to note that, although societal balance is related directly to society and influences the lives of individuals, the elements and actions essential for societal balance relate directly to the individuals who, as members of that society, must be tolerated by society and to their actions accomplished within that society. In other words, as a multitude of individuals constitutes society, so does a multitude of actions related to essential elements accomplished by individuals constitute societal balance.

Balancing: Not a Choice between Good and Evil

The primary importance of societal balance is that it creates and maintains equilibrium in society. However, we should be aware that the process of societal balancing is not a matter of weighting or choosing which of two sides is good and right or bad, wrong, and even evil. If balance were simply choosing between good and bad or good and evil, it could easily be predicted that the outcome action would not be balanced because the great majority of people, if not all, would choose only good. This does not mean that humans do not make mistakes or choose evil. Indeed, the opposite is true: the history of humanity, as well as individuals, is rich with examples when humans have chosen the not-good instead the good, decided to accomplish wrong instead of right, and deliberately done evil to others and themselves instead of doing and spreading good in the world. However, paradoxically, humans choose the bad and do evil only because they believe that they are choosing and doing good. In other words, a man is willing to choose the bad, wrong, or evil only if he is convinced by his own conscience or if he is manipulated to believe that bad, wrong, or evil are good. Therefore, it can be noted that the good discussed here is not necessarily the universal good but a value interpreted and understood to be good and as such mediated further in a way that satisfies the needs and wishes of individual and parochial egoism. Thus, in most cases, contrary to Plato's legacy,²²¹ the good understood by the majority of humans is the desirable good and, as such, might not be the intrinsically good. The desirable good might be mistaken for the good, while the universal good might be understood as the not-good and, therefore, the not-desirable.

In other words, when faced with a choice between the good and the not-good, all or most people will choose what is good for them according to their internal or externally

²²¹ This is contrary to Plato's legacy as presented by Laszek Kolakowski: Cf. Laszek Kolakowski, "The Good," in Jones, *Encyclopedia of religion*.

imposed, subjective perception of the good. Nobody, or almost no one, will intentionally and willfully choose bad, wrong, or evil for themselves,²²² unless they live an ascetic, altruistic life or have no ability to judge what is good and not good for themselves.

Even as “evil as we humans are,”²²³ rarely, if ever, do people choose bad or evil for their children, family, close friends, community, and countrymen.²²⁴ The more the ties of kinship are loosened, though, the less people are concerned about choosing good for others.²²⁵ However, it is not our indifference to choosing good for others who we do not know that causes immense suffering for millions of people worldwide but, rather, our selfishness. When we choose good for our loved ones and ourselves, others whom we never met or are yet to meet might suffer due to our decision. This is the most important paradox of our inability to distinguish good from bad: a choice that is good for one person might have evil consequences for another.²²⁶ Even if the former is aware that his choice will harm another human being, the lack of the kinship relations or personal relations with the other permits choosing the good for himself. Thus, the act of choosing between good and evil, in which individuals almost always choose what they believe is good for themselves and their kin, usually has very little to do with the morality, humanity, compassion, intelligence, and accomplishments of the decision maker. Usually, all that matters are personal existential interests or fears that some existential interests might be lost because the good option has not been chosen.

²²² There is almost no culture, civilization, religion, or ideology in which humans have been immune to existential egoism.

²²³ Mt 7:10

²²⁴ Cf. Mt 7:9ff

²²⁵ If it serves political interests, members of a collective identity might be suddenly, literally overnight, informed by their political leaders that they have nothing in common with members of a neighbouring collective, even if they have shared the same territory and many other common features and characters for centuries. Thus, overnight, Russians became the enemies of Ukrainians, Serbs of Croats and Bosniaks, and Hutus of Tutsis. Cf. Amartya Kumar Sen, *Identitet i nasilje: iluzija sudbine*, with the assistance of Maja Veić (Zagreb: Poslovni dnevnik: Masmedija, 2007), 21. When friends become enemies, they no longer choose what is good for the other and, moreover, are willing to choose what appears to be good for themselves and evil for their former friends.

²²⁶ For example, purchasing products whose prices recently decreased significantly while the market supply increased (“once a luxury and now cheap to buy” Cf. Kate Hodal and Chris Kelly, “Modern day slavery: Globalised slavery: how big supermarkets are selling prawns in supply chain fed by slave labour - video,” *The Guardian*, accessed June 10, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/video/2014/jun/10/slavery-supermarket-supply-trail-prawns-video>.) might seem to be a good choice for the middle class globally. However, this choice might be bad for those who produce such products in unhuman conditions where “the human costs of their production are unimaginable” (Ibid). The more people buy such products, the more other people are forced into desperate life conditions, including forced labor, debt bondage, and slavery. Cf. Siddharth Kara, *Bonded labor: Tackling the system of slavery in South Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

Balance then cannot be the choice of a middle way, something between good and not-good. Our choices are limited by our abilities and knowledge, so we cannot select the greater good if we are not aware that it exists. Therefore, if we choose a less perfect option, we do so not because we are making a compromise by choosing something between good and not-good but because we are limited and do not know the better good.²²⁷

Personal Freedom

The first essential element of societal balance that is important for social equilibrium and progress is personal freedom. If properly understood—that is, if it is not abridged or manipulated—freedom always relates to individuals and only through them to society: a society is free if its individual members are free. Therefore, society must recognize and safeguard personal freedom, and individuals must accept that they enjoy personal freedom. However, personal freedom also implies personal responsibility for one’s own choices, decisions, and deeds. Thus, there is no freedom in society if individuals are not free and if they do not assume responsibility for their deeds and omissions.

Although all revealed religions eschew dogmatic dualism, with its enticing cause-and-effect logic, oversimplified black-and-white worldview, and associated pastoral care practices and politics, dualism has never disappeared from the minds of many of their followers. We can argue that this is not fault of religions but of imperfect man; nevertheless, in pastoral and religious practices, a common error occurs: the symbols and learned, theoretically objective ideas are mistaken for reality.

If all human actions were reduced to the choice between good and not-good, personal freedom would become utterly irrelevant because humans would not differ from any of God’s other creatures that do not possess reason but can recognize their existential interest: to choose what is good and to avoid what is not-good for it. In a dualistic world that determines and teaches individuals what is good and bad, societal balance is impossible because in such systems, individuals are by default deprived of their freedom and responsibility. Thus, an oversimplified dualistic world view deprives individuals of their humanity and, as argued later, also deprives them of God.

²²⁷ We buy products that we can afford. The choice to buy less expensive products does not mean that we want lower quality goods but that our wealth limits our choices.

Authority

Another essential element of societal balance is Authority. Here, the term Authority does not refer to a person or institution whom others have delegated legitimacy to make decisions on their behalf and whose enforcement might reduce or even abrogate individual freedom. Here, Authority refers only to Him who never questions or limits individual freedom because it is this Authority that gives freedom to individuals. Therefore, to have societal balance, individual freedom cannot be unlimited although not limited by Authority. In other words, societal balance is undermined if individuals assume absolute freedom by denying Authority, if they are deprived of freedom, or if they deliberately consign their whole being, including their freedom, to authorities.

Instead of the term Authority we could use the term God or God's authority. However, many individuals and societies in the world do not embrace God—that is, their concept of God differs from a Christian understanding—as their Authority but do have their own concept of Authority and enjoy or could enjoy societal balance. We should be aware that God reveals Himself to all people as He wants. Therefore, it cannot be denied that every person and societal group, independent of their beliefs, accept the existence of a transcendent Authority even when they are not ready to name Him God.

Knowledge

Along with personal freedom and Authority knowledge plays an important role in societal balance. The knowledge individuals possess not only determines their identities but also influences their understandings of personal freedom and their relation to the Authority. Knowledge individuals possess can generally be divided into transmitted and personal knowledge. While the later form of knowledge is elaborated in more detail in the next section, it is enough here to say that individuals acquire this type of knowledge through unmediated personal experience and close personal relations with the object of study.

The former kind of knowledge is acquired through passive communication with mediators and mediums with no direct personal relation with the object studied. To acquire transmitted knowledge, individuals must trust and thus establish personal relations with their mediators or mediums. However, the objects studied are not the mediums or mediators as in personal knowledge but, rather, the knowledge that the mediators have acquired through other mediators or in personal relations with the object

studied. Undoubtedly, inherited and transmitted knowledge have priceless value and importance for individuals and societies. However, we should not overlook that much knowledge has never been transmitted due to inefficient communication channels, ignorance, the inability to adopt all knowledge, and new environmental and societal conditions in which previous knowledge lost its importance.²²⁸ It must also be noted that such knowledge inevitably has been evaluated, selected, interpreted, and often reinterpreted, changed, and embellished by the learned and policy makers.

Although this knowledge is commonly imperfect and perhaps only partially transmitted, flawed, or even misinterpreted and falsified, it inevitably shapes the lives and societal relations of individuals. Therefore, this knowledge can help maintain societal order but also standardize human thinking and weaken the innate human desire for personal contact with the object studied peculiar to children—namely, to ask questions no one has asked and to search anew for answers to questions thought to be already answered. Furthermore, transmitted knowledge, if falsified and misinterpreted, can throw society in complete misbalance, isolation, and chaos. In short, if it does not limit human freedom, transmitted knowledge learned through mediators can encourage the development of individuals and society by maintaining societal balance. Otherwise, if it limits or denies personal freedom, it becomes an ideology that prevents individuals from establishing relations with Authority and undermines societal balance. Human history has many examples of groups and societies that have reinterpreted inherited and transmitted knowledge in such ways that they have come to a cul-de-sac.

Societal Balance as a Dialogue with Authority

To end of this section and before drawing conclusions about societal balance, we turn to two concrete examples of why a society that strives for economic stability and technological progress must also strive to achieve, maintain, and safeguard societal

²²⁸ For example, early communities and individuals highly valued the discovery of fire and the techniques to ignite and maintain a fire. Once humans mastered knowledge of fire, they did not let it pass away. However, this has not been the case with all great inventions, such as Romans' paved roads and postal service. The sophisticated Roman paved road network was completely devaluated after the fall of Rome and lost for more than a millennium. For the newcomers to Europe, this Roman invention had no value, so they left it fall into oblivion, with some exceptions in medieval France and Germany, where people used and reconstructed part of old Roman roads. Only in the 18th century were new roads and bridges built in Europe and other services related to the road transport rediscovered. Cf. Maxwell Gordon Lay, *Ways of the world: A history of the world's roads and of the vehicles that used them* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 52–60.

balance. The first example from the dystopian fiction novella *Anthem* is presented in the previous section, while the second example comes from the Church's preparation for and the first session of the Second Vatican Council.

The society in which street sweeper Equality 7-2521 is born is well organized due to inherited and transmitted knowledge. Although the intellectual elite seem interested in maintaining economic stability, they show no interest in technological progress that exceeds their knowledge, and they cannot tolerate new ideas that challenge their standardized thinking. For the good of society, individuals are expected to obey their elders and accept their assigned roles. No members of society enjoy personal freedom, nor is there faith in a transcendental Authority. Instead, a system of unyielding doctrines, rigid regulations, futile norms, and empty rituals has become the authority. It denies individual freedom, prescribes what is good and not good, and demands that all members of society behave accordingly. Consequently, this society lacks societal balance and can neither initiate nor welcome technological progress; therefore, it is fated to isolation and stagnation.

In some ways, the description of street sweeper Equality 7-2521's fictional society resembles the Church immediately before and at the beginning of the Second Vatican Council. Despite the impression that the Church then was stable and well administrated because it was headed by the most educated clergy, that time was characterized not by progress but by stagnation, uncertainty, and fear. New technology—that is, know-how—that went beyond standardized thinking was not welcomed. Instead, leaders who successfully accumulated inherited and transmitted knowledge stood firmly in defense of the existing system of unyielding doctrines, rigid regulations, norms, and rituals. In other words, the system had become an end in and of itself and an authority that replaced Authority. Personal freedom was denied by prescribed instructions of what is good and not good, including sanctions for those who did not behave accordingly. Only because the Church was not in societal balance did it come as a huge shock for the most educated clergy when the pope called the council. The pope did not behave as he was supposed to behave; he behaved badly. However, he was free to do so, not only because he possessed the power to do so as pope but because he was not a prisoner of transmitted knowledge. He learned it through mediators and respected it, but he also accumulated personal knowledge through numerous contacts with people from all walks of life. Thus, he

(re)discovered his personal freedom which made possible his unhindered and unmediated relation with Authority. Once he had experienced societal balance in his immediate environment, nothing prevented him from spreading it throughout the Church when he became pope.

Finally, we end this section with short definition of societal balance: societal balance is the dialogue with Authority through which free persons, having acquired transmitted and personal knowledge, become aware of their own co-responsibility in the co-creation of their own history. Therefore, they do not seek to resolve dilemmas of what is good and evil in their society by following the instructions of educated who claim to have answers. Instead, in dialogue with Authority, they look for the modes, forms, and type of actions which often are outside the limits of transmitted knowledge to achieve the greater good for their society.

Personal Dialogue and the Knowledge of Good and Evil

In the previous section, it is argued that the knowledge acquired by individuals plays an important role in societal balance because it influences their understanding of personal freedom in relation to Authority and determines their personal identity. It is claimed that there are two general types of knowledge: transmitted knowledge and personal knowledge. Transmitted knowledge is defined as knowledge that individuals acquire through passive communication with mediators and mediums. This knowledge is partly inherited from the previous generations, while other transmitted knowledge originates in contemporary times. This kind of knowledge generally does not bring an individual into close relationship with the object studied. To the contrary, if used excessively, transmitted knowledge becomes standardized human thought which prevents people from establishing personal relations with their object of study.

In this section, personal knowledge is elaborated and compared with transmitted knowledge. It is claimed that, to acquire personal knowledge of an object, an active subject—that is, a learner—must enter into an unmediated personal relationship with that object. Acquiring personal knowledge is, in essence, a dialogue because it implies that the subject learning about an object is, at the same time, the object of learning for that same object. In other words, regardless of whether the object studied is a person, thing, or natural phenomenon, the dialogical essence of the acquisition of personal knowledge

entails establishing a new relationship between the subject and object of learning. Consequently, after acquiring personal knowledge, subjects are likely to produce new creations and co-create new values.

Every person has the ability to acquire personal knowledge through a close, unmediated relation with an object of study, but that does not mean that all persons use that ability. At the beginning of life, infants and children learn about the surrounding world through self-exploration. Only later do they learn to accumulate mediated knowledge, which might encourage them to continue more efficiently with personal explorations or discourage them from personal contact with potential objects of study.

Following the discussion in the first part of this section, the context of the narration of the fall of man is presented here, paying special attention to the phrase *the knowledge of good and evil*. The consequences of the literal interpretation of this phrase are presented in the second part of section, while the idiomatic meaning is elaborated in the third part. Keeping in mind that this narration and phrase are placed immediately after the description of creation of the world and all beings, it is believed that the context of this narration and the meanings and interpretations of the phrase are essential for understanding transmitted and personal knowledge, their interrelationship, and their impact on individuals and society. Finally, it is hoped that understanding the idiomatic meaning of the Semitic phrase *the knowledge of good and evil* will help us comprehend the essence of dialogue and prevent us from creating standardized human thinking about dialogue as a dialogue between good and evil.

The Fall of Man and the Knowledge of Good and Evil

Humans can easily be enticed to believe that they know what and who is good and evil or bad. Naïve dualism can be seen in all social activities of *zoon politikón*. Indeed, from trivial social interactions, such as gossip between close friends, to sage intellectual discussions, there is almost always present, although not always easily recognizable, the paradoxical division of good²²⁹ and bad or evil men.²³⁰ The paradox lies not only in the unbearable superficiality of determining that another person who does not share the same interests is bad or even evil but also in the irony that these who consider themselves to be

²²⁹ Usually, the good are we, our group or community, and our doctrines and way of thinking and life.

²³⁰ The bad or the evil are them or others and their doctrines and way of reasoning and life.

good might be considered to be bad or evil by others.²³¹ Such reasoning relativizes the meaning of good while granting evil undeserved and undue power and authority. In other words, evil and bad acquire permanent positions in human thinking whenever we cannot see through the arguments of those whose interests we do not share—we do not know him/her/it/them personally or consider their reasoning—and whenever our real or imaginary interests of any kind might be threatened.

All human beings inevitably find themselves caught in this dilemma and making same mistake uncounted times in their lives, so it is no wonder that the narration of the fall of man and the tree of knowledge of good and evil comes immediately after the description of creation of the world and all beings in the Book of Genesis. This narration not only reports the first sin of humanity but also records many other events and actions that happened at the beginning of time. Thus, we can say that the first human sin was preceded by very first human social and political activity. In this Old Testament myth, we read about very first communication of the first man and woman between themselves and other(s). This communication was prompted by the first logical problem and moral doubt that was introduced in a conversation with another (the serpent). Afterward, they make the first joint decision followed by the first joint action, which turned out to be the first sin followed by the first divine sanctions in human history. After committing the first sin, the first man and woman become *like* God, as we read in Gn 3:22: “God said, ‘Now the man has become like one of us in knowing good from evil.’”

Regardless how the role of serpent is interpreted and understood in our fantasies influenced by transmitted knowledge, one element remains constant: the serpent—that is, the other in the first conversation—was not lying and deluding its conversational partners. We could claim its action was a provocation, inciting the curiosity of the first people or warning that they would be *like* God if they eat the tree’s forbidden fruits,²³² but it was not a lie. Only several verses later in the same chapter, God repeats the words said earlier by serpent.²³³

Thus, according to the Biblical narration of the first man and woman, humans are not only created in the image of God, but they became *like* God. Through possessing *the*

²³¹ The others might be we.

²³² Cf. Gn 3:5

²³³ Cf. Gn 3:22

knowledge of good and evil, they acquired a special feature which had been reserved only for God. That knowledge was reserved only for God, and God still possesses it, so man's possession of it cannot be regarded as a sin. Therefore, the essence of the first sin was disobedience—transgression of the only Creator's command to not eat from *the tree of knowledge*—and not the possession of *the knowledge of the good and evil* which the first man and woman obtained by eating from that tree.

What did possession of this knowledge bring to Adam and Eve and consequently to all of humanity? They acquired this knowledge directly, so do their descendants possess it inherently, or do they have to acquire it through education and training? What is the substance and manifestation of that knowledge? Finally, does every person have the possibility to have *the knowledge of good and evil*? We might assume that our contemporaries, as well as those who lived earlier, generally have two different opinions depending on the knowledge they have acquired about this issue:

a) *Yes. The first man and woman disobeyed the command not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, so they and all their descendants have either inherent knowledge of good and evil, the capacity and desire to learn it through education and training prescribed by sage elders and authorities, or both—some knowledge inherent to every person and other knowledge acquired through education. Such knowledge is an indispensable social condition without which there would be no world, and the life of humans on earth would not be possible. This knowledge is a guarantee of the social and political stability of one's own social group and the continuation of culture and whole civilizations. Therefore, the knowledge of good and evil must be guarded, defended, studied, and delivered to the younger generations without exception.*

b) *Yes. The first man and woman decided to be disobedient and ate the forbidden tree's fruits, so they acquired the knowledge of good and evil, and all their descendants possess it inherently. Through education and training prescribed by sage elders and authorities, the knowledge of good and evil can be enhanced and developed. However, through education, training, and other modes of political repression, the knowledge of good and evil might also be declared to be unwanted and, consequently, suppressed and forbidden. Nevertheless, this knowledge is an inherent part of human nature, so it can never be completely eliminated, although its scope might be significantly confined. This knowledge is an inherent feature of each person without which our world would be considerably different or it might be even impossible.*

As it might be noted, these two opinions vary significantly. The core reason for their differences lies in the basis of the first opinion on the literal meaning of the expression *knowledge of good and evil* and the second on the idiomatic meaning of this Semitic expression. Thus, in the former opinion, it is assumed that man has the capacity to learn what is good and evil and to act accordingly—that is, to do good and avoid evil (i.e., sin), to teach others to do the same, and to create an environment in which all people do only

good because they are prevented from sinning. In the later opinion, it is assumed that the role of every person is to use their talents and actively participate in the co-creation of new inventions and values. The following two parts touch upon these issues in more detail.

Longing for Paradise

It seems that humans cannot resist the temptation to claim to know—in the literal meaning—good from evil and to let others know that they possess such knowledge.²³⁴ However, the first paradox of such claims is that many who claim to know and do good or even act in the name of God for the good of their own community and all of humanity have committed exceptionally many non-good and evil acts. One reason is that persons might believe they know good from evil based on education and transmitted knowledge or on a profound adherence to a religion or ideology. Individuals could be also motivated to behave so by social status, private interests, greed for power, and the influence of learned, opinion makers and powerbrokers. Once such delusions became an essential part of the standardized human thinking and socio-political system guarded by an army of bureaucrats, it is no longer easy to recognize and re-examine their shortcomings and the social damages they cause. Thus, such delusions are accepted as valid, not based on the results of scientific research nor out of moral awareness but due to loyalty, indifference, and the feeling of safety and happiness they create. To push past the boundaries of such societal delusions, one can only transgress the laws and norms of that society.

To better understand this matter, let us take a short excursion into the fictional earthly paradise United State described in Evgeny Ivanovich Zamyatin's dystopian roman *We*. State poet R-13, the best friend of D-503, the main protagonist of the roman, interprets the outcome of the paradise narration in the context of the ideology of the United State:

*There were two in paradise and the choice was offered to them: happiness without freedom, or freedom without happiness. No other choice. Tertium non datur. They, fools that they were, chose freedom.*²³⁵

Zamyatin, thus, describes the paradise on earth as a fetter for which all generations have longed after Adam and Eve were cast out of it. It is a condition or environment in which all people are happy. The United State described in Zamyatin's roman, thus, becomes the

²³⁴ Cf. Mt 15:14; 23:13f

²³⁵ Evgeny Ivanovich Zamyatin, *We*, A Dutton everyman paperback D39 (New York: Dutton, 1952), 59.

actualization of all humans' longing to enter and live in a paradise on earth. There is no lack of the basics, such as food, uniforms and shelter in houses with transparent walls. There is no deficiency of interesting social, physical, and professional activities. However, the citizens of the United State live under the constant surveillance of guardians. They are loyal to the United State, so it is not clear if they are aware that they are not free because the only thing they are not allowed to do is to cross the border of the State and to transgress the laws. Those who dare to transgress the wisdom of the laws of United State die. The State deprives the people of their freedom for their own good because "if human liberty is equal to zero, man does not commit any crime."²³⁶ However, the inhabitants of the United State are allowed to choose certain goods for themselves—the good is the behavior recognized by the State as good—such as immediate denunciation of offenders, attendance on Days of Justice when offenders are annihilated by the Well-Doer Machine, and voting for the Well-Doer on days of Unanimity. Nevertheless, the individuals who, despite all safety measures, violate the State's law indicate either that personal freedom has not been completely eliminated or that human freedom is intrinsic to human nature and cannot be eliminated.

Zamyatin's roman *We* depicts a society considered to be a paradise by the majority of its members. The society guards and defends the knowledge of good and evil in its literal meaning and teaches new generations that knowledge. Although Zamyatin writes about a fictitious society—or describes a society founded on fictions—he describes the real human utopist craving for the paradise on the earth. We can surely recognize many past or present-day societies in the world that resemble the United State. Those who find themselves in such an environment might enjoy happiness but only if they renounce their freedom. However, those unwilling to accept this earthly paradise have only one option: to look for a refuge, whether either outside that paradise or by building private refugiums that might at least provide societal anonymity.

The word *paradise* originates from the Old Persian *pairidaeza*, which means walled garden or park.²³⁷ Interestingly, paradise, independent of how it is named in different cultures and religions and independent of the historical moment, is always represented as a place isolated from the rest of the world. Thus, paradise might be a garden surrounded

²³⁶ Ibid., 34.

²³⁷ Cf. Harry B. Partin, "Paradise," in Jones, *Encyclopedia of religion*.

by walls, an island surrounded by oceans, or a mountaintop that mortals cannot reach. Even as the paradise is an ideal place where the gods dwell, it is also a place of human nostalgia. Generally, in all versions of paradise, its residents do not have to work and are never hungry or thirsty because there is plenty of food and water. They can communicate with animals, and there are no sexual tensions. There are no conflicts because those in paradise live in peace.²³⁸

Although this general depiction of paradise is only the representation of human nostalgia in imagination, views, and beliefs, and paradise can be understood only in the eschatological dimension, humans, both believers and atheists, have never given up the desire to know good from evil and establish a great earthly paradise. However, such paradises on the earth are usually so great and large that there is no place for any others. Therefore, seeking to establish utopian paradises on the earth as isolated islands of religions, ideologies, ethnicities, and nations cannot be regarded as an innocent or rational undertaking. However, inhabitants of such paradises are rarely aware that their home is not a healthy environment.

Idiomatic Meaning of the Phrase the Knowledge of Good and Evil

In the previous part, it is argued that people claiming to *knowing good from evil*, in the literal meaning of this phrase, tend to create and support a religious, ethnic, or national earthly paradise where they can put into practice what they believe to be good and avoid what they believe is evil. However, the inhabitants of these paradises are likely to ignore that, under the pretexts of doing good and securing and defending their paradise and its ideology or religion, their authorities and sometimes themselves too repress or even tyrannize their immediate neighbors living outside the borders of their society who they imagine to represent a threat to their earthly paradise.²³⁹

However, the phrase *knowing good from evil* should not be understood literally, not only because people claiming to know what is good and evil are likely to act to the contrary—doing evil while believing they are doing good—but because the first man and woman were expelled from Eden because they possessed it. Therefore, those who claim to dwell

²³⁸ Cf. *ibid.*...

²³⁹ It is not necessary to go to the distant past to find the belief in earthly paradises. It is enough to open any daily newspaper and read about social groups in the world that fight for their earthly paradises through political means, repressive methods, and even armed conflict.

in a paradise cannot possess knowledge inappropriate for that paradise and remain there. Furthermore, in this part, it is argued that the idiomatic meaning of the Semitic phrase *knowing good from evil* has little to do with transmitted knowledge learned through mediums and mediators of laws, norms, beliefs, and customs that determine what is good and what is bad. Rather, *knowing good from evil* relates only to knowledge that results from personal experience in an unmediated relation with other(s).

Let us start with the Hebrew verb יָדָע [yada]. This verb is commonly translated into English as to know, to make known, learn, acknowledge, and understand. However, the verb יָדָע in Old Testament has a much wider meaning than its literal translation, and in some cases, the meaning is significantly different from present-day usage. This does not mean that we cannot understand the meaning of this verb and related verb phrases by using our imagination, but rather, that we are unlikely to use it in the same context.

For example, this word is used in the Old Testament to:²⁴⁰ a) name the action of copulation or intercourse;²⁴¹ b) say that someone is virgin;²⁴² c) know something or someone from personal experience or to not know something or someone because of a lack of personal experience;²⁴³ d) to meet or see someone face to face or to see something with one's own eyes;²⁴⁴ e) to know someone or something for long time;²⁴⁵ and f) to acquire knowledge indirectly through a mediator or medium without personal experience.²⁴⁶ Today, we never use the verb *to know* in the meaning of a) and b); we

²⁴⁰ The Bible verses quoted are from the English edition of the New Jerusalem Bible *The New Jerusalem Bible*, Reader's ed (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1990).

²⁴¹ *The man had intercourse with his wife Eve...* Gn 4:1; *Cain had intercourse with his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch.* Gn 4:17; *The girl was very beautiful. She looked after the king and waited on him but the king did not have intercourse with her.* 1 K 1:4; *So kill all the male children and kill all the women who have ever slept with a man.* Nb 31:17.

²⁴² *I have two daughters who are virgins.* Gn 19:8; *The girl was very beautiful, and a virgin; no man had touched her.* Gn 24:16; *She had remained a virgin.* Jg 11:39.

²⁴³ *[H]aving seen the incident or known the facts...* Lv 5:1; *That is a path unknown to birds of prey, unseen by the eye of any vulture...* Jb 28:7; *Surely you see that this can only end in bitterness?* 2 S 2:26; *[Y]ou were caught before you knew it.* Jr 50:24; *They will know I am Yahweh...* Ez 28:22; *I know you by name...* Ex 33:12; *He fed you with manna which neither you nor your ancestors had ever known...* Dt 8:3.

²⁴⁴ *Since then, there has never been such a prophet in Israel as Moses, the man whom Yahweh knew face to face.* Dt 34:10 *[T]ake note where he lies...* Rt 3:4; *'I do not know,' he replied. 'Am I my brother's guardian?'* Gn 4:9; *For I have singled him out to command his sons...* Gn 18:19; *His sister took up position some distance away to see what would happen to him.* Ex 2:4;

²⁴⁵ *If Abraham will not own us, if Israel will not acknowledge us, you, Yahweh, are our Father...* Is 63:16; *You are well aware how long I have worked for you.* Gn 30:26; *[Y]ou left your own father and mother and the land where you were born to come to a people of whom you previously knew nothing.* Rt 2:11;

²⁴⁶ *[L]et Israel know it too...* Jos 22:22b

rarely use it for situations mentioned in d); we use it quite often in the meaning of c) and e); and we mostly use the verb *to know* in the context indicated in f).

Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin, in the article on “Knowledge and Ignorance” in 2nd edition of *Encyclopedia of Religion*, states that: “To the Hebrews, knowing was less a logical, discursive process than a direct psychological experience” and was “less the expression of objective truths than a personal engagement.”²⁴⁷ He adds that *yada* signifies sexual intercourse for Hebrews.²⁴⁸ Paul Haupt shares the same opinion that the verb *yada* primarily refers to sexual intercourse.²⁴⁹ Haupt asserts that the verb *yada* and related verbs in other languages have similar meanings and follow the same logic. Thus, the Assyrian words *ilmad* (to learn) and *iltamad* (to know) are used in the Code of Hammurabi in the context of sexual delicts.²⁵⁰ The Ethiopic verb for to know *a'mára* originally meant to see, and the Arabic عرف to smell. Both verbs describe actions in which the subject who sees or smells someone or something—knows someone or something—has to be very close to that object. The French verb *sentir* and English *scent* or *sniff* (*sniff the danger*) have similar meanings.²⁵¹ The Greek γινώσκω means to know and to be related by blood, kinsman. The later has parallels in English. For example, *kin* means race, breed, family, and *ken* knowledge but also to beget, to bring forth.²⁵²

Thus, the original meaning of the verb *yada* is to come or to be in very close proximity of someone or something in order to be sensed and identified: to be seen, heard, smelled, touched, felt, and tasted. The human senses have a limited reach, so the distance between the object of learning and the subject who learns must be within that range. This implies that the learning process is not only a psychological experience but also encompasses a personal engagement and, no less importantly, physical contact.

Duchesne-Guillemin rightly notes that the Hebrews of the Old Testament understood this term and the process of acquiring knowledge somewhat differently than those in the present day. However, can we agree with his claim that knowing is an exceptional process fully separated from personal psychological experience? This would indeed be true if we

²⁴⁷ Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin, “Knowledge and Ignorance,” in Jones, *Encyclopedia of religion*.

²⁴⁸ Cf. *ibid.*...

²⁴⁹ Cf. Paul Haupt, “To know = to have sexual commerce,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 34, no. 1 (1915).

²⁵⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 71.

²⁵¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 72.

²⁵² Cf. *ibid.*, 73.

believe that knowledge can be acquired only through objective mediums and mediators but never through personal contact with an object of study. However, if the objective truth is detached completely from personal engagement by the researcher, then it is also detached from real life. In other words, Duchesne-Guillemin likely is of the opinion that knowledge acquired through personal dialogue with the object studied is not objective and therefore cannot be named knowledge. How then can we acquire objective knowledge if not through direct personal contact with object of studied that also involves our psychological experience? Surely, mediators of knowledge can assert to their students that they transmit objective knowledge acquired from other mediators. However, the author of the mediated knowledge—the researcher who first transmits discoveries through mediums—inevitably has personal, unmediated contact with the object studied.

Duchesne-Guillemin and Haupt are only partially correct when they claim that verb *yada* primarily refers to sexual intercourse. In particular, it is difficult to argue that the phrase *knowledge of good and evil* connotes primarily or explicitly this meaning. If, after acquiring this knowledge, the first man and woman became like God, and God still possess this knowledge, then sexual intercourse likely is an inappropriate meaning. However, even though it is unlikely that the verb *yada* in this phrase means sexual intercourse, we can imagine that the outcome of intercourse could be knowledge. In other words, the action of close unmediated contact and a personal relationship with an object, including but not limiting to sexual intercourse, *per se* is not knowledge. The outcome of such dialogue, though, is indeed knowledge. This knowledge—*in sensu stricto*—cannot be the process or action that lasts for a limited time as the knowledge is acquired; rather, this knowledge is indefinitely lasting theoretical understanding, practical skills, opinions, judgments, emotions, memories of the object and encounters with it, and other psychological experiences. However, the most important outcomes of personal unmediated contact with an object are a long-term relationship with that object and the production of a new creation, thing, or idea that did not exist before with the object.

These two outcomes of personal relation to an object—a long-term relationship with the object and the production of something new—likely are the meaning of the phrase *the knowledge of good and evil* we are seeking. This kind of knowledge is indeed inherent to God—He created the heavens and earth and has an infinite relation with all His creations regardless of they behave in good or evil ways. In this sense, sexual intercourse is

knowledge of good and evil because it assumes a lifelong relationship between two persons through good and evil and likely the procreation of children, as well as many other material and spiritual values.

As well, a health care professional's personal, unmediated relation with human anatomy and other health issues is *knowledge of good and evil* because it assumes long-term relationship with a health issue in all its good and bad aspects that is intended to result in the healing and nursing of patients and the discovery of new healing methods. The relation of theologians and believers with God is *knowledge of good and evil* because it assumes a lifelong relationship with God through all possible troubles and difficulties that can arise in discovering His plans and the co-creation of human history through diverse actions. The relation of all Catholics—including the pope and believers—with the Church is *knowledge of good and evil* because it assumes a lifelong relationship with the Church through good and evil times and the procreation of new pastoral methods to fulfil the Church's mission. Interreligious and interreligious dialogue are *knowledge of good and evil* because they presuppose a lifelong relationship with all the good and bad experiences and the mutual co-creation of communication channels and platforms for encounters and a better societal environment. The relation of all humans with our planet and natural environment is also *knowledge of good and evil* because we are dependent on them all our lives, and at times, nature also depends on us. The relation between man and nature produces many good and bad outcomes, and for the sake of nature and future generations, we are obliged to nourish this personal relation and co-create a better place for living.

One can argue that such formulation of *knowledge of good and evil* is not sustainable because a lifelong relationship does not come out of all sexual intercourse, not every physician uses knowledge to heal, not every theologian and believer is interested in working in the co-creation of history and communication channels with other believers and nonbelievers, not every Catholic is willing to search for new pastoral methods, and not every human thinks that nature must be protected. That is correct. However, people fail to behave in these ways not because this formulation is wrong but because they share the mainstream, standardized human thinking and so believe they know what is good and what is evil.

Conclusion

The question we have attempted to answer in this chapter is why the Church took so long to embrace intrareligious dialogue and dialogue with all other non-Catholics. Today, more than 50 years after the council, we take the idea of dialogue for granted, as if it had always been an essential constituent of the Church teaching and mission. However, recalling the historical context briefly elaborated in previous two chapters, we know that no form of dialogue was on the Church's agenda before the council. Therefore, the introduction of dialogue was, borrowing the example from Lowenstein's book *The Senses*,²⁵³ like someone had opened the eyes of the Church to dialogue through a chirurgical intervention. Since then, the Church has been exploring the hitherto unknown, colorful religious and societal multitude of the world.

Here likely is the whole paradox of the Church's age-long silence on dialogue: even if we see something with our own eyes, we cannot recognize it as long as we are not trained to recognize it. Thus, even though an item is an important object painted on God's canvas, we cannot see it if we do not know it, and everything outside our knowledge does not exist for us because we cannot imagine its existence. This temporal general inability of the Church to see and recognize dialogue for so long is by no means specific to the Church or to dialogue. The phenomenon called the system of standardized thoughts in this chapter can be recognized in all past and current societies throughout the world and applies to answers to questions no one else could imagine to ask and to new answers to questions that were already thought to be answered and had been canonized for centuries.

Systems of standardized thoughts *per se* are very important for managing accumulated knowledge, improving and exploiting previous discoveries, and making the government of society more organized and efficient. However, if standardized thoughts dominate a society without allowing scope for human freedom and personal dialogue, then that society risks failing to achieve societal balance and the related economic stability and technological progress.

According to Lowenstein, people who gained sight through chirurgical interventions needed much time and efforts before they could recognize objects in the new, unknown

²⁵³ Cf. Lowenstein, *The Senses*.

world of colors and shadows. Consequently, at times, they longed for their former world and relied more upon tactile experience, sound, and scent than their new sense. This example can help us understand why so many Catholics today—clergy and laypeople—and other Christians tend to rely more on knowledge transmitted through mediums and mediators that offers simpler, more clear-cut answers than searching for the answers oneself in a unmediated dialogue with the objects of interest. The belief in the ability to find all answers in transmitted knowledge accompanies the tendency to claim to be able to learn and know what is good and evil. However, as argued in this chapter, those who believe they know good from evil easily mistake good for evil and alienate themselves from objects they believe they know.

However, if scrutinizing the idiomatic meaning of the Old Testament phrase *knowledge of good and evil*, we likely will come to conclusion that this phrase does not refer to indefinitely long-lasting theoretical understanding or even to practical skills but to close contact with an object we want to know, including its good and bad. In other words, the *knowledge of good and evil* is dialogue, not between groups or leaders but between two subjects that are simultaneously objects in their relationship. The outcome of this relationship is knowledge about the partner in personal dialogue and the likely procreation of new creations and values, an exceptionally great characteristic that makes humans *like* God.

Personal knowledge is unique as the partners in the personal dialogue and is never part of standardized human thought or follows the postulates of transmitted knowledge, so the learned, entangled with transmitted knowledge and its interpretations, fail to see and recognize it.

Part II—In the Dark Realm

In the first part of this dissertation, it is argued that dialogue with non-Christian religions and dialogue within the Catholic Church were introduced due to the endeavors of three wise men, particularly Pope John XXIII. It is claimed that the two decades when the future pope lived and worked in the Balkans—becoming an expert on the societal features of the various post-Ottoman Balkan social groups and mastering the societal norms that enabled them to preserve their religious and ethnic particularities while cohabitating and interacting with each other—were formative in his attitude toward dialogue and his wish to implement *aggiornamento* in the Church. Thus, in a way, the Balkans or, more precisely, the pope's encounters with the inhabitants of the Balkans had important impacts on the Church's recognition of the cultural multitude within the Church and the religious, political, and cultural multitudes of the world in *nostra aetate*.

In the second part of this dissertation, it is argued that the Balkans' encounter with its northwestern and northeastern neighbors has had utterly opposite outcomes. The political idea of the uniformization of the inhabitants of a given realm into a mono-collective that developed in Western Europe found its way into the former provinces of the Ottoman Empire on the European continent. The Balkan clergy, then the most educated and mobile segment of the Balkan population, traveled to the newly created Western (Catholic clergy) and Eastern (Orthodox clergy) mono-collective states and brought with them these political ideas. However, in the Balkans, the implementation of this political idea that one nation constitutes one national state (a notion with origins in the principle of Peace of Augsburg of 1555 *cuius regio, eius religio*) unavoidably required deconstruction of the religious, cultural, and ethnic multitudes of the region. That idea was radically new to the Balkans and, as we learned in recent past, has been the most destructive driving force in the history of this region.

Thus, as Archbishop Roncalli learned about the Balkan multitudes in Bulgaria, Turkey, and Greece in the early 20th century, Catholic priests from the Balkans studying at the Catholic universities in Western Europe learned that a multitude is an error that has to be

eradicated. These priests brought to their homelands not only the Church's teaching on the religious multitude but also their experience and enchantment with western mono-collectives and their national ideologies. Consequently, the Balkans and, in a narrow sense, the Catholics and the Church in the Balkans became more and more the mirror of their western neighbors after the end of Ottoman occupation. In turn, the Balkans' western neighbors, after the Second World War, and the Church, after Vatican II, became the mirror image of the Balkans. However, they did mirror each other not in real time but with a delay of decades.

The title of the second part of this dissertation, "The Dark Realm," or in languages of the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia *Tamni vilajet* (*tamni*: dark; *vilajet* or *vilayet* from Ottoman: realm, region, province), refers to the Balkans. The phrase "the dark realm" has at least three different meanings directly related to the Balkans. These three meanings arise because different observers examining the same object from their own perspective see it differently. Although these three meanings contradict each other, they nevertheless also paradoxically complement each other, creating a comprehensive picture of the studied object.

In Chapter 4 "Love Your Neighbors," it is argued that the dark realm, (i.e., the Balkans) is *terra incognita*. It is a place or society on earth that remains unknown and undiscovered even by its closest neighbors. The dark realm is not unknown because there are not enough data, books, or research about it. It is unknown because, from the perspective of an impatient observer, it is not easy to evaluate and comprehend all the perplexing information about the dark realm and its society. Consequently, the dark realm is transformed into the exotic *terra incognita*, a non-geographic term referring to a place of fantasies and wished-for but unrealized taboo desires. Although such a dark realm is only a fantasy, it can have enormous influence on the lives of its inhabitants. These fantasies are an unending spring of inspiration for fiction authors whose works give proof for the impatient observers, not eager to read more demanding literature, that their fantasies are true. At the same time, naïve inhabitants mistakenly take such fictions for reality and deliberately play the roles that the authors of fantasies (neighbors) and fictions (writers and politicians) allocate to them. Thus, paradoxically, their behavior makes fantasies real, evidencing that these fantasies are not merely the product of fanciful romantics.

At the same time, serious inhabitants of the dark realm, not realizing that the dark realm is only the object of fantasies and taboos, try to prove that they are not part of such a dysfunctional, uncivilized, and, moreover, barbarous and unmoral society. This subject is scrutinized in Chapter 5 “Historians Know Everything, but Perhaps It Is Too Late,” which analyzes a cleric’s scientific on the history of Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Following and defending the ideas of clerics who lived before him, the author claims that the dark realm existed during an historical period of occupation of a realm that ought to belong to the Catholic world. Thus, along with his forerunners of Catholic clergy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the author points to the others, Muslims and Orthodox Christians, who, he claims, are the heirs and present-day representatives of the dark realm and dark age for Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina and are doing all they can to reduce the number of Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

However, from the fund of folk wisdom and the theology of the un-educated, “The Dark Realm” is also the title of a Balkan folk story, “*Tamni Vilajet*,” which gives another perspective on this phrase and its third meaning.²⁵⁴ Once, while visitors to the dark realm are “going across it, all the time they were feeling under their feet some tiny stones, and from the darkness something yelled: ‘Who takes of these stones—will be sorry, and who does not take—will be sorry!’” After coming out of the dark realm, the visitors realize that the stones are gemstones. All the visitors are then sorry. Those who did not take any stones are sorry because they do not have any. Those who took some stones are sorry because they did not take more. It can be claimed that the visitors to the dark realm find themselves in a tormenting dilemma between two choices. Whatever the choice they make, they are sorry. If they take stones, they are sorry, and if they do not, they are sorry. In this way, the dark realm can be understood as a problem that cannot be solved successfully for it seems to offer no good solutions, if any. However, if we study this folk story more deeply, we can conclude that it does not discuss two choices. Rather, there is simply no choice. The story actually narrates the psychological drama of regret and sorrow surrounding a lost chance that might never again come back in one’s lifetime.

Following this theme, the last chapter of this part, Chapter 6 “Identity Vagueness in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” discusses the possible psychological drama of regret among the

²⁵⁴ The story is in English published online. Cf. Author Unknown, *The Dark Realm*, accessed September 15, 2015, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Translation:The_Dark_Realm.

people of Bosnia-Herzegovina for lost opportunities to decide their personal and collective identities that might never return in their lifetimes. In this chapter, it is argued that collective identity and its continuity are social constructions. A collective identity cannot be transmitted identically from generations to generations. The more the time since the moment of the creation of a collective identity has passed, the more the collective identity has changed. Unable to perceive these changes, though, many people believe that they are choosing an unchangeable, collective identity, not a reinterpreted image of that identity.

Chapter 4—Love Your Neighbours

In this chapter, the significance of Bosnia-Herzegovina's socio-geographical position in relation to the rest of the Balkans and European continent is scrutinized. It is important to note that the intent of this chapter is not to describe the geographical features or to present statistical data on this small country but to explore the socially constructed geography that shapes the fantasies of individuals and collectives in geographical terms. It is argued that the understanding of geographical terms, such as territory and society, and the origins of individuals and groups is largely influenced by the fantasies of individuals and collectives. The Balkans and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as part of the Balkans, thus are not observed in terms of geography but in terms of the fantasy of an observer. Therefore, it is possible that there might be many different answers to the question of where and what the Balkans are.

Some fantasies of geographical terms are irrational and opposed to reality based on geographical, historical, or socio-political facts, but such fantasies are never one-way phenomena. They are never limited to the judgment of the holders of such fantasies and their relation to the objects of their fantasy but also influence the judgment and behavior of the objects of these fantasies. In other words, the objects of such fantasies, in addition to having their own fantasies of others, adjust their behavior according to the fantasies of their immediate and distant neighbors. Consequently, the fantasies of neighbors can be stumbling blocks to or incentives for the socio-political progress of societies that are the objects of fantasies.

Adjusting behavior according to neighbors' fantasies does not happen due to a mutual desire to strengthen the links between these parties; rather, those who have fantasies of others prefer to hear narrations about them that accord with their fantasies. For example, in the fantasies of the Balkans' northwestern neighbors, the geographical term "the Balkans" usually serves as a synonym for barbarism, uncivilized societies, and conflicts and troubles in relations between different ethnic, religious, and other social groups. However, if a person claimed that the Balkans are troublesome because their inhabitants are trying to imitate their western and northern neighbors and that the entire history of the

Balkans has been less conflict-prone than, for instance, the history of Germans, French, English, and Russians, such a narration would remain unbeknown, not because it opposes the facts but because it opposes the fantasies about the Balkans.

In contrast, narrations on the Balkans confirming the fantasies of its western and northern neighbors by Balkan artists, such as novelist Ivo Andrić and film director Emir Kusturica, both born in Bosnia-Herzegovina, have been awarded with the Nobel Prize in Literature and two Golden Palms. Although their works are fictions, they have become for visitors, diplomats, politicians, and journalists visiting and working in Bosnia-Herzegovina the first source and a small open window into the unknown soul of Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Balkan men, the Balkans' "gloomy" history, and its never-ending hatred.

Fantasies and fictions that nourish our imaginations, even if they narrate a gloomy past or trouble-filled societies, are not problematic as long as they are understood as fantasies and fictions. However, the tribulations and perplexity starts when people regard them as reliable, credible information sources and attempt to make them real.

Where and What Are the Balkans?

*You don't know that the path from you to me
Is not the same as the path
From me
To you
You know nothing about my riches
Hidden from your mighty eyes*

Mak Dizdar, The Paths

The most common answer to the question: "What is the geographical position of Bosnia-Herzegovina?" is "the Balkans." The answer might be accompanied by a blissful smile from a person who knows more about the Balkans or originates from the Balkans. What, though, is the answer to the question that might follow: What is the exact position of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Balkans? Is Bosnia-Herzegovina situated in the: a) central, b) western, c) northern, d) eastern, or e) southern Balkans? We might get different answers, none of them wrong. Indeed, Bosnia-Herzegovina could be part of the Balkans, but it could also not be considered part of the Balkans at all. The answer to this question does

not depend on knowledge of the natural features and the borders of societies in the contemporary world but on the fantasy of the person questioned.

Klemens Wenzel von Metternich, minister-president of the Austrian Empire (1821–1848), reportedly said that the Balkans begin at the Rennweg,²⁵⁵ as recounted in *Das Balkan-Dossier* by Alois Mock, the former foreign minister of the Republic of Austria (1987–1995).²⁵⁶ We might assume that the two completely different state organizations for which these influential politicians Metternich and Mock worked at different times have the same seat in Vienna but are different in their political systems, geography, and fantasies about the Balkan people of their times. Therefore, we might also assume that Metternich, in one of his numerous patrician circumventions and confrontations with Russian and French statesmen, expressed the political aspirations of the Austrian Empire: that the whole Balkan region ought to be part of the Austrian Empire and not, for instance, part of the Russian Empire.

Depending on how a fantasy understands what the Balkans are, a person might say that some thirty years after Metternich stepped down from office and the reorganization of the Metternich system began, when the empire, under the new name Austria-Hungary, received by the 1878 Treaty of Berlin special rights over the then western Ottoman province in Europe that a) the whole Balkan region became an integral part of the empire; b) a part of the Balkans became part of the empire; or c) one part more of the Balkans became an integral part of the other part of the Balkans, that is, the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

More than a century later, in the shadow of armed conflicts in former Yugoslavia while Mock was foreigner minister of the Republic of Austria (1987–1995), he recalled this point of view. He confirmed that the Balkans begin in Vienna, but according to the interpretation of “some” of Mock’s contemporaries, this is not because Vienna’s inhabitants behave as the Balkan people; they are not grungy or looking for bakhshes. Rather, it is because many citizens of Vienna are descendants of immigrants from the Balkans.²⁵⁷ From this reinterpretation, we might derive how some of Mock’s

²⁵⁵ Rennweg is a street in the third municipal district of Vienna, near the city center.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Alois Mock, ed., *Das Balkan-Dossier: Der Aggressionskrieg in ex Jugoslawien - Perspektiven für die Zukunft* (Wien: Signum, 1997), 7–9.

²⁵⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 9.

contemporaries see the Balkans and, of course, the Viennese in their fantasies. It is obvious, at least in this reinterpretation, that “the Balkans” is not a geographical term but a socially constructed term, the product of the fantasy of Austrian society. Thus, in this case, “being the Balkans” is a style of behavior and ultimately the reputation of certain groups of people. Although we might assume that Mock’s intention was not to offend others, he was not politically correct; however, if he had been, we would not know about his fantasies or those of some of his contemporaries about the Balkans.

At approximately the same time as Mock published his records about the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, who, unlike Mock, is deliberately politically incorrect in all his public appearances and written works, shares his thoughts about the Balkans with German readers in the introduction to the German translation of his book *The Plague of Fantasies*.²⁵⁸ A philosopher and not a politician, Žižek does not start with an explanation and reinterpretations but, instead, a question: Where do the Balkans begin?²⁵⁹ He then describes the politically incorrect fantasies about the Balkans held by his Slovenian compatriots and their neighbors.

According to Žižek, most Slovenians refuse to think of Slovenia as part of the Balkans. For Slovenians, however, the Balkans begin in Croatia. Yet the Croats in Croatia would also claim that they are not part of the Balkans. Some would proudly proclaim that they are *Antemurale Christianitatis*—the last Christian outpost before the wild, uncivilized barbarians. However, most Croats would claim that they are like Slovenians and Austrians and are part of Central Europe. The Croats in Croatia see the Balkans as starting in Orthodox Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. For some Serbians in Serbia, the Balkans begin in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. For those from Belgrade or the northern region of Vojvodina, the Balkans are everything south of Belgrade. However, for some Italians and Austrians, Slovenia and everything south of Slovenia are the Balkans. For some Germans, Austria and Italy are regarded to be part of the Balkans. Žižek thinks that Bavaria, with its Catholic character, is considered to be part of the Balkans by north Germans. Germany is positioned in the Balkans by the French and the

²⁵⁸ The book was published in English in 1997 and 2008: Cf. Slavoj Žižek, *The plague of fantasies*, The essential Žižek (London, New York: Verso, 2008). However, the quoted text is only in the introduction to the 1999 German edition: Cf. Slavoj Žižek, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten? Nein, Danke! Die Sackgasse des Sozialen in der Postmoderne*, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Volk & Welt, 1999), 7–13.

²⁵⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 7.

whole continent by the British.²⁶⁰ Žižek stops the comparison with the United Kingdom, although he could add that, for the United States, the whole of Europe might be the Balkans.

If we return to the question in which part of the Balkans Bosnia-Herzegovina is, we can begin to realize why there are so many possible answers while any of them logically excludes all others. For example, if a location is in the northern part of one region, it cannot at the same time also be in the southern or central part of that region. However, the non-geographical meaning of the term “the Balkans,” even if it is not named as such, refers to different geographical positions according to the imagination of the individuals living in a certain geographical region and historical period. For example, Metternich understood “the Balkans” as a synonym for a territory, “a piece of cake” that “belongs to” and has to be consumed by the Austrian Empire and not Russia.²⁶¹ One century later, Mock and his contemporaries associated the term “the Balkans” with certain unacceptable behaviors. Thus, if we speak of unacceptable behavior by certain groups that another group recognizes and names as the Balkans, then the Balkans might be anywhere in the world.

Even if we want to speak about the Balkans in a strict geographical sense, we might encounter difficulties: Its physical geographical boundaries are unclear. There exist ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups that were never politically united except under the Ottoman Empire, which does not enjoy a good reputation among most people in the Balkans. In contemporary times, there are many newly independent states that are, according to their self-image, either on the Balkan Peninsula or on the borders of the Balkans.

However, the Balkans or the Balkan Peninsula cannot stand as a synonym for a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-confessional, metalinguistic society because nowadays there are more ethnicities, religions, and languages in one city, such as Glasgow, Lyon, Berlin, and Vienna, than in the entire Balkan region. There are also many relatively small

²⁶⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 7–8.

²⁶¹ The Austrian Empire, from the 1699 Treaty of Carlowitz, and the Russian Empire, from the 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, regularly conquered and annexed Ottoman Empire territories along the northern shores of the Black Sea and in the Balkans.

geographical regions in the world where historically more ethnicities, languages, and cultures have coexisted than in the Balkans.

Neither can the Balkans stand as a synonym for conflicts, troubles, and problems. Compared to, for example, the German, French, English, and Russian histories of internal conflicts and struggles with their immediate and more distant neighbors, all the Balkan conflicts together—that is to say, all conflicts in the whole history of the Balkans—are insignificant, and the number of victims, the savagery and the war crimes, and the scale of destruction are not comparable. Therefore, the assumption that the Balkans were always a problematic, conflict-prone area in contrast to the still image of the key players in “the peaceful Europe” with zero tolerance for conflict is only pure fantasy.

While a number of European countries worked on the EU project, promoted not as an economic but a peace project for which EU institutions received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012, they tolerated conflict on their borders in the former Yugoslavia. Paradoxically, if there is a real union of states and not the so-called union of the *Herren der Verträge*²⁶² that deserves the Nobel Prize for bringing peace to Europe, it is only the United States of America. Through military means and actions and diplomatic activities, the United States restored peace to Europe three times in the 20th century: in World War I, WWII, and the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. In contrast, the most horrible global conflicts during the same period originated in Europe.

Any comparison of the geographical Balkans and all its cultures with any other region in Europe is futile. Unless all of Europe, with all its features, is compared to the Balkans, one cannot get a full picture of the Balkans. The Balkans cannot be compared to France, Spain, or the UK, regions which all had similar predispositions, territories, cultures, and ideologies to become nation-states. The Balkans cannot be compared to Germany or Italy, where national ideas were ripe long before smaller territories were united. Nor can the Balkans be compared to countries, such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Hungary, where during the times of national uprisings, there was no national

²⁶² ‘*Herren der Verträge*’ (Ger. masters of the treaties) is a political and juridical *terminus technicus* applied to EU member states. This term generally implies that the EU is based on treaties between member states, not on a common constitution and central government. Cf. Sarah Seeger, “Herren der Verträge,” in *Das Europalexikon: Begriffe, Namen, Institutionen*, ed. Martin Große Hüttmann and Hans-Georg Wehling, 2., aktual. u. erw. Aufl (Bonn: Dietz, 2013), accessed December 14, 2015, <http://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/lexika/177047/herren-der-vertraege>.

idea nor compact territories, but there was a strong predisposition for the success of national projects.²⁶³ The Balkans can be compared only to the EU: a cluster of collectives which, if their elites recognize common economic and political interests and they have no other options, might create different kinds of alliances that must be defined to the smallest details²⁶⁴ as each group attentively observes whether its interests are affected.

While the Balkans are only one part of the European continent in geographical terms, what are the Balkans in the fantasy of Europeans? Could the Balkans be just another side of the same coin—the dark, hidden side of Europe and its desires, fantasies, or, in short, its taboos?

Once the public learns that an individual is a prostitute, it is usually the fornicators who organize to harangue her and urge for her removal from the community. There is no honest justification for such a reaction, as shown in Jesus' writing in the sand. We can only guess what He wrote about the members of the mob. They might have sinned with her and be afraid of her possible public confession. Perhaps, they were tempted to sin with her or were afraid that she might have more success in her public activities than they. This is how we might describe the relation between those who consider themselves to be in the Balkans in geographical and non-geographical terms and those who think that they are not the Balkans in either geographical or non-geographical terms. As we will see, a person accused of being the Balkans is supposed to behave as the Balkans, and some do so deliberately.

²⁶³ To explain the different courses of the birth of the nation-states in Europe, Gellner identified four zones in the European continent, moving from Western to Eastern Europe. He put France, Portugal, Spain, and the UK in the first zone. In these states, nations emerged in territories and cultures defined in pre-national period. We might argue that the UK and Spain do not belong to this group and that national arousing completely bypassed these two monarchies. However, Gellner's main idea is that these dynasties' power was changed by the power of the nation. In the second zone are Italy and Germany. Suggesting that their territory was roughly the territory of the Holy Roman Empire, Gellner adds that the idea of the nation was ripe long before national unification in Germany and Italy, which means that it existed even when Germany and Italy were only clusters of small territories. In the third zone are, according to the Gellner, all Central and East European countries. These countries were long under Austro-Hungarian, Russian, or Ottoman rule. Therefore, they had neither a single culture nor territory before emerging as nations, and to organize nation-states, the process of national awakening was needed. In the fourth zone, Gellner puts all nations in Eastern Europe that had not completed their national projects before Communists took the power. In this group he puts former Yugoslavia. Cf. Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), 50–58.

²⁶⁴ The last constitution of the Yugoslavia was the longest in the world, but is nothing in comparison with the uncountable pages of the treaties by which the EU operates.

Interestingly, in Žižek's representation of the Balkans, they are always either east or south. Paradoxically, for the British, the Balkans are a continent from which they originate and have received all the social markers necessary to build their society. For the French, the Balkans are Germany and everything east or south of France, although they inherited their name from the Franks, a German tribe that first occupied the region after the Romans and organized France. For the western Germans, eastern Germany can be considered the Balkans, although the idea of German national identity was enforced by Prussian swords, and Prussia was the eastern part of Germany. Interestingly in this context, present-day German Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Joachim Gauck come from eastern Germany. For northern Germans, the Balkans begin in southern Germany and include everything south and east of Germany, although Christianity and the particular Christian worldview and art that still mark German culture arrived through and from the south and east. At the very peak of the geographic Balkan region, we find Greece, the cradle of the European civilization. Just to the southeast over the sea is Palestine. In these last two places lived the personalities who shaped the whole of European civilization. Today, the former is called the Balkans, and the latter the Orient.

At the very peak of the Balkans and its surrounding regions, ordinary citizens do not have fantasies about the taboos of their contemporaries in northwestern Europe. What they dream about is an organized society which, paradoxically, is taboo there. This does not mean that the lack of security in Balkan society has arisen because the Balkan people have lived northwestern fantasies in which they are "eating, drinking, and fornicating in a never ending warfare," as presented in the film *Underground*.²⁶⁵ Nor have they lived for centuries with unlimited hatred for each other, as we can read in the works of Ivo Andrić, the only Yugoslavian winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature.

The Narrators of the Fantasies about the Balkans

The movie *Underground* by director Emir Kusturica, a naturalized Serbian of Bosniak origin, was awarded the Golden Palm in Cannes in 1995, just two months before the final defeat of the Serbian armies in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Was it for artistic value,

²⁶⁵ Cf. Emir Kusturica, *Underground: Podzemlje*, with the assistance of Miki Manojlović et al. (Cannes, 1995).

political reasons, or others that the Cannes jury accepted the film, which was recorded in Serbia during the war, and later awarded it the Golden Palm?

The movie's three main characters, Marko, Petar, and their mistress Natalia, conform to clichés about the Balkan people. Constantly drunk, they cannot control their impulses and are always ready to fight, swindle, and love. They are not Hollywood gangsters but callous hedonists who are always ready to forgive but never willing to forget. Ordinary members of the Communist Party and the people of Yugoslavia are represented as rats that live in an underground bunker. They produce weapons for battles against fascism because their comrade, Marko has lied to them that WWII is not yet ended in the 1990s. He uses his comrades' ideological naiveté for his own personal benefit and his lucrative business as an arms dealer. There is not as much blood or killings as might be expected in an anti-war movie. The largest massacre happens in the Belgrade zoo, where many animals were wounded, killed, or stayed without shelter after the Germans bombed the city in 1941.

If not artistic value, what then was the reason for awarding this movie the Golden Palm just a few days before the massacre in Srebrenica? Was it not, we may ask, a resolving of conscience? The Serbian politicians and warlords are represented as idiots who inevitably behave in an uncivilized manner. Even if civilized Europe tried to intervene, nothing would change because, under such leadership, the Balkan people would still fight each other. The rest of the population consists of rats living underground, enslaved by a communist gang, naïve and easily persuaded to believe any ideology. Therefore, no one can be blamed for the wrongdoing. The Serbian leadership cannot be blamed for the conflict; they do not know how to handle things differently. The citizens of Serbia cannot be blamed for not organizing resistance against their leadership and warlords, and civilized Europe cannot be blamed for not demonstrating solidarity and attempting to avoid or stop the conflict. The movie simply confirms well-behaved Europeans' fantasy about the Balkan people: they hate each other, and there is nothing that can be done about them—and that is exactly what the Balkan warlords want. The movie gives all these parties alibis for their roles, deeds, and omissions in the conflict.

The situation seemed to be stable, supportive of the *status quo* and the process of the reconciliation of the conscience. Then, however, Serbian general Ratko Mladić ordered the slaughter of eight thousand Bosniak men in the United Nations-protected area of

Srebrenica, the Croatian Army defeated the Serbian forces in Croatia in four days, and Croat and Bosniak armies advanced against the Serbian military forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The main victims of the Yugoslav wars, Bosnian Muslims, became martyrs, and Croats and Bosniaks, who up to that moment were victims, would also become the victors. This scenario did not fit the European fantasy about Muslims (and likely also Catholics), so it was an opportune moment to intervene. In the following months, some European states finally joined U.S. efforts to end the conflict, the sides in the conflict were forced to sign a peace agreement, the movie was forgotten, and the pictures of the war in the Balkans disappeared from the television news. The fantasies survived until the next conflict in Kosovo, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria...

The aforementioned writer Ivo Andrić became famous for his short stories and novels, mostly on the Balkan and Bosnian people in allegedly historical contexts. Although born into a Catholic family in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1892, Andrić wrote his most important works in an eastern variant of Serbo-Croatian.²⁶⁶ His language is simple and scenic, not as simple as in oral tradition but not as complicated as most works by contemporary authors of the same linguistic group. In short, the language in his works is not slang but vernacular. Original ideas are touched on and elaborated only briefly and are not repeated. Even his relatively long novels are more or less collections of short stories connected through places shown in different periods of time, as in, for example, his two historical novels, *The Bridge on the Drina*²⁶⁷ and *Bosnian Chronicle (Chronicles of Travnik)*.²⁶⁸ In both novels, the main characters—the bridge in the former and the city Travnik in the latter—are passive supernumeraries or, more precisely, scenes or backgrounds that do not speak and do not interfere in the performances. They are voiceless witnesses. Since none of the historical actors who played roles on these two stages wrote chronicles, few written traces of them have been left for future generations of actors. The greatest evidence from history is the simple existence of these stages: the bridge in the first novel and the city in the second. Their existence and survival over time is a strong argument that people lived there in the distant past and constructed them. At

²⁶⁶ If Andrić were not famous, none of the national camps would dispute whether he was a Croat—because he was born into a Bosnian Catholic family—Bosniak—because he was born in Bosnia-Herzegovina—or Serb—because he wrote in Serbian and died in Belgrade 1975.

²⁶⁷ Cf. Ivo Andrić, *The bridge on the Drina*, with the assistance of Lovett F. Edwards (Beograd: Dereta, 2011).

²⁶⁸ Cf. Ivo Andric, *Bosnian chronicle* ([S.l.]: Head Of Zeus, 2015).

the same time, the lack of written witnesses of the time and the resistance of these stages to time compared to ephemeral human life are unfailing sources of wonder. The scars on the stones of the bridge and the ruins and gravestones on surrounding the bridge and Travnik left in older times cannot narrate what really happened. However, these traces are sufficient for an imaginative writer arranging stories like a cobweb. In the absence of recorded stories and chronicles, no one can truly or precisely sketch an outline of the mental portraits of the Balkan people in the past. Therefore, like a painter, Andrić takes his contemporaries as models, describes their mental shapes, and narrates their dialogues by situating them on the historical scene as on empty canvases.

Due to the simplicity of the language, these short stories do not demand profound or lengthy concentration, which gives the impression that Andrić's characters are people from the readers' neighborhood or public life. Regardless of education level, all Serbo-Croatian speakers can read his works. That is not the case with Andrić's contemporary, Miroslav Krleža, whose works are harder to read and understand. It is not only due to the high standard of language(s) he uses, which is a "foreign language" to many inhabitants of the former Yugoslavia,²⁶⁹ and to his complex syntax of phrases that demands profound concentration; it is also due to his detailed, lexicographic descriptions of historical facts and political and sociological situations in long dialogues among the characters. Although both authors wrote about past times in the Balkans, they cannot be compared. The main reason, in addition to the language, is that Krleža writes only about historical facts he knows very well and, in doing so, outlines the people of the time and place in his narration. Andrić, in contrast, writes about historical facts that clearly have happened but, in absence of archives and historical details, allow his imagination to work freely.

It is, of course, by no means a crime to write fiction in which the emotions of 20th-century men are narrated by characters that lived or are imagined to have lived in the 16th–19th centuries. Krleža does not go far into history, but the core story of both authors is the troublesome period of the national awakening in the Balkans and the following time period.²⁷⁰ Therefore, compared to Krleža, Andrić is a romantic. Krleža has never

²⁶⁹ The works of Krleža are complex and profound. He uses not only standard Croatian but also dialects, as well as Hungarian, German, and English.

²⁷⁰ One should be aware that Krleža does not write about Bosnia-Herzegovina. He focuses on Croatia, the young Croatian nation's relations with Austrians, Hungarians in Austro-Hungarian Empire, and mutual influences of the independent Serbian state and Croats under the Hapsburg administration.

commented publicly on Andrić's writing, but we might assume that he would say that Andrić is a naïve, unskilled novice author who has to make an excursion into the distant past to explain contemporary problems and is himself part of the problems that he tries to explain.

The Travelers into the Past

Throughout Europe's recent history, many national(istic) romantics, and others, have perceived it as necessary to travel into the distant past in order to embellish it. They have correctly observed that inventing and controlling the past might produce desired social effects in the present. Was such a past real throughout the course of time—that is to say, was a nationalistic past real—we would have a great opportunity to return to the starting position through time travel. However, the romantics' past is faked, so we are stuck in their experiment, deprived of the possibility of travelling into future. We have never returned to our present because we live in the present and dream the future of the faked past. If the very first travelers into the past found themselves stranded in their own fictions, it is not strange that their descendants cannot find the exits from such forgeries. Indeed, the enriched history becomes dogma over the course of time, and any requests for its revision are regarded as blasphemy. When fiction becomes truth, then its adherents become completely unaware of their reality and surroundings and, eventually, unconscious prisoners of their forefathers' fantasies.

One might argue that Krleža, Andrić, and Kusturica are not historians but, instead, the authors of fiction. Although that is true, what is the difference between the works of historians if their interpretations of history are fictions and the works of authors whose fiction speaks about history? Both genres then are fiction, despite the writing style. Moreover, are not the authors of these fictions situated in history more honest than writers whose scientific historical works are fictions? The former group declares that its works are fictions, but the latter does not. A person who gives credence to fiction novels bears the fault, but historians who write fictions commit falsehood.

While Krleža pretends to be a neutral observer and hides his intentions behind profound, detailed descriptions, no one could claim that he is a regime writer. In contrast, Andrić follows contemporary ideas that did not originate in the Balkans. Thus, without a predisposition to be implemented in this region, these ideas reveal its ultimate

irrationalities and cause troubles for its inhabitants. Nevertheless, the presence of these ideas in stories brings the region closer to the rest of the Europe. For the first time in history, an author from the Balkans, Andrić, wrote about the Balkans in the manner that the rest of Europe in its fantasies imagines the Balkans to be. Rendering the idea of the exotic and barbarian Balkans into terms known to the rest of Europe made Andrić popular abroad and in the former Yugoslavia. At the same time, Krleža has remained mostly unknown beyond the circles of Slavicists.

The biggest merit of Andrić is that he has approximated the fictions to his compatriots. However, he makes the central theme of much of his writings his obsession with the organic hatred between the people in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Balkans, a conflict arising from their traditions and rituals. His fictions might be accepted by superficial readers as authentic, trustworthy texts about the past and as serious historical or sociological works. In this sense, Andrić's fictions foster nationalistic myths and grant alibis for the nationalistic programs and pogroms of the 1990s. Here, we might see that his works inspired General Mladić who, after Serbian forces overran Srebrenica in July 1995, presented himself as an instrument of national retribution²⁷¹ and, in front of television cameras, said, "Finally, ... the time has come to take revenge on the Turks in this region."²⁷² He could not understand that contemporary Bosnian Muslims had far less in common with the Turkish nation than the Serbian nation. However, his fantasy enhanced the fictions that the Bosnian Muslims were the Ottoman occupier, the ghost of the past from which he had to defend his Serbian nation.

The first and only Nobel Prize laureate in literature from the former Yugoslavia, Andrić has had his works translated into all European languages. Consequently, for all diplomats, politicians, and reporters in Bosnia-Herzegovina, he has become the first source and a "small open window" onto the unknown soul of Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Balkan men, the Balkans' "gloomy" history, and the region's never-ending hatred. Andrić has not created that fantasy about the Balkans. That fantasy originated many centuries before him, when Bosnia was the western province of the powerful, dangerous powerful enemy,

²⁷¹ Cf. Julian Broger, *Butcher's trail: The secret history of the world's most successful manhunt* (New York: Other Press, 2016)

²⁷² Cf. A.A., *The Mladic Files: Mladic Entering Srebrenica*, Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina July 11, 1995 (The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2011), accessed October 10, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfInjlNoT4Q>.

the Ottoman Empire. However, whether purposely or unwillingly, he has supplemented and supported such fantasies about the Balkans.

Therefore, film director Kusturica, one of Andrić's great devotees, worked on a project called Andrić City in Višegrad.²⁷³ There, he opened a museum, a whole small city, in the city in eastern Bosnia where Andrić spent his childhood and later wrote the historical novel *The Bridge on the Drina*. In addition to the bridge, Andrić City serves as a tourist attraction for all those seeking confirmation of their fantasies about the Balkans. In such a sense, the narrations and fantasies of the Balkans can be compared with *One Thousand and One Nights*, fairy-tale fictions that are connected with reality only in imagination. Thus, the fantasies concerning the Balkans can be compared with the fantasies of the Orient.²⁷⁴

Although we might criticize, like, or dislike Andrić's style, he is not at all a bad author. We might contend that some of his arguments are wrong or correct, but we cannot, by any means, assert that he was unaware of the past reality in which he wrapped his fictions. When reading his short story "The Letter from 1920,"²⁷⁵ written before World War II, one must read through the last word. Only then can one draw conclusions and decide to re-read the text between the lines.

Andrić narrates this story in first person. Whether he tell his own story or the "I" in the story is a fictitious person is not important because the story is not about the author but his friend Maks Levenfeld, born in Sarajevo. Maks's father is from Vienna, and his mother is a descendant of French immigrants to Trieste. After completing grammar school in Sarajevo, Maks studies medicine in Vienna and, immediately after his studies, is sent into the military during WWII. After the war, he returns to Sarajevo, where he finds that his father is dead, and his mother has gone back to Trieste. Only after three months in Sarajevo, he decides to escape far away from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Years later, he writes a letter to a childhood friend trying to explain why he fled from Sarajevo. His letter is actually a hymn to the congenital hatred, expressing a never-ending fear that governs the people in Bosnia as an invisible force. Although Maks tries to escape from the hatred that

²⁷³ Cf. <http://www.andricgrad.com/>

²⁷⁴ Cf. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, Penguin classics (London: Penguin, 2003).

²⁷⁵ Cf. Ivo Andrić, "The Letter from 1920," in *The damned yard and other stories*, ed. Celia Hawkesworth, 183–201 (Beograd: Dereta, 2009).

is so peculiar to the Bosnia-Herzegovina, he, after living in Trieste and then Paris, goes to Spain during the civil war and works in a hospital healing the wounded. There, he is killed by an air bomb which hits the hospital. Andrić's short story ends with the sentence: "Thus ended the life of the man who ran away from hatred."²⁷⁶

If we search online for this short story by Andrić, we find an enormous amount of quotations concerning the letter of Maks, even the whole letter posted on websites. Almost all of these sites quote Maks's comments on hatred that is presumably peculiar to the Bosnian and Balkan mentality. However, the last sentence of the story indicates that Maks, although he ran from the hatred inherent to Bosnia, is killed by hatred that is not related to the Balkan but more general human hatred.

Conclusion

In this chapter, it is argued that the Balkans and Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of the Balkans are not only geographical terms, but these two terms, especially the Balkans, also have other powerful, socially constructed meanings. In the fantasies of people who supposedly live outside the Balkans, the name turns out to be a vague, non-geographical term, an imaginary *terra incognita*, a set of unacceptable behaviors, conflicts and troubled relations among different ethnic, religious and other social groups, and a site of fantasies and wished-for but unrealized taboos. Such fantasies about the Balkans shape perceptions of the region and relationships with its societies, and this place on the earth, along with its various societal groups, remains unknown, undiscovered, and consequently incomprehensible.

Paradoxically, the fantasies of the Balkans' neighbors are easily transmitted to it, so the Balkans have also become an unknown imaginary *terra incognita* to its own inhabitants. The fantasies of others can be transmitted through many social channels. In this chapter, only one powerful social channel is mentioned: the works of local fiction authors, writer Ivo Andrić and film director Emir Kusturica, who readily incorporate the fantasies of others into their works. Once transmitted, the fantasies of others influence the thought and behavior of local people who might deliberately decide to play the roles attributed to them by the authors of fantasies and fictions.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 201.

Nevertheless, Balkan societies not only echo the fantasies of their northwestern neighbors but also mirror their past. Actually, both mirror the past of the other. In this chapter, the Balkans are compared to the EU. It is safe to say that, in our times, the EU stands for a peace project and the multitudes in Europe, whereas the Balkans stand for conflicts and the denial of social multitudes. In recent history, western societies have advanced all kinds of societal multitudes, but Balkan societies have actively worked toward their annihilation by cleansing territories of other groups and minorities. However, a few centuries earlier, the situation was the opposite. While western societies, starting with Peace of Augsburg of 1555, applied the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, inhabitants of the western Ottoman provinces lived in a multi-confessional society. Thus, in a certain sense, the inhabitants of Western European societies can observe their turbulent past in the present-day Balkans and its recent history, and the Balkan people can contemplate their past in the religious, cultural, and ethnic multitudes of northwestern European societies. Although support for political factions and ideas to minimize the European societal multitude or even abandon the European multitude are rapidly spreading among EU citizens, we can only hope that EU societies will not mirror the Balkans' recent history.

Thus, if we have fantasies about the Balkans, the answer to the question asked at the beginning of this chapter (where and what are the Balkans?) is very simple: the Balkans of our fantasy begins in us. In other words, the Balkans of our fantasy is a fantasy, and it begins not at the Rannweg in Vienna, as Metternich said. However, as our fantasy, it starts in us and our immediate neighborhood regardless of where we are on earth.

If we indeed want to explore the geographical region called the Balkans and to learn about its people, we have to work on the deconstruction of our own fantasies. Nevertheless, to get the full picture of the Balkans, we have to be aware that our explorations must not exclude the fantasies of others about the Balkans.

Chapter 5—Historians Know Everything, But It Might Be Too Late!

The modern state of Germany first appeared in history as a confederation of 39 independent statelets in 1814. Soon, starting in 1848, a national movement driven by revolutions emerged, resulting in the formation of the German nation-state in 1871. Thus, the oldest European nation, immediately after the little bit older French nation, was born in modern form. Shortly after the formation of modern nation states throughout the continent, European romantics began to describe their particular territories as paradise on earth. Historians competed to prove which nation was the oldest and, therefore, the most important. They sought for their nations' roots in Tibet, Nepal, India, Iran, and Egypt. Unfortunately, today, it is not known who the winner is. Probably, the top scientists' research led them to Adam and Eve, who, however, were driven out of the paradise, so the scientists, of course, ceased the research and concealed the results. Consequently, today, almost all European nations live peacefully, enjoying their paradise, while the less fortunate, such as those in Bosnia-Herzegovina, still dream and fight for it.

Throughout recent history, the peoples of the Balkans, although lagging somewhat behind, have taken a similar course as their northwestern neighbors. Social events and thinking primarily from German-speaking countries but also Russia, France, and other European countries have passed into this region and influenced its philosophical, legal, political, and theological consciousness, though often with a delay of one or more decades or even centuries. However, national projects could not achieve same results in the Balkans as in the rest of Europe because after centuries of Ottoman dominance, the socio-cultural context of the Balkans is emphatically different. National projects did not improve wellbeing of the inhabitants of the Balkan people or make them happy but, rather, undermined the particular social norms that had enabled various groups to cohabitate and interact in the same realm over centuries.

While national(istic) projects across Europe produced numerous conflicts between neighboring nation-states, the conflicts in the Balkans were aroused internally, within the societal multitude. As the Balkans' multitude became a burden for national(istic)

programs, *cuius regio, eius religio*, the principle that had ended the armed conflict between Roman Catholic and Protestant forces with the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, paradoxically become the precondition, in the form of ethnic and religious cleansing, for the accomplishment of those very programs.

In Chapter 4, it is argued that one writer and one film director, both born in Bosnia-Herzegovina, made fiction about the Balkans in accordance with the fantasies of its northwestern neighbors. In this chapter, it is shown how an academic and cleric from one ethnic and religious group presents in ‘academically responsible way’ presents the history of his own ethnic and religious collective inspired by the national(istic) political programs of the Balkans’ northwestern neighbors. This presentation, as well as every presentation of history in service of national(istic) ideas in the Balkans, is not optimistic and encouraging as national romances usually are but, instead, produces a feeling of humiliation, inability, and an aversion toward others.

In this chapter, Tomo Vukšić’s article *Kontinuitet Hrvatskog i katoličkog umiranja u Bosni i Hercegovini* [*The Continuity of Croat and Catholic Dying in Bosnia-Herzegovina*], which elaborates on the history of Catholics and Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina, is analyzed.²⁷⁷ For many reasons, this article was chosen from among the many articles and books written about the history of the ‘bondage’ of Catholics and Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina throughout their turbulent history.

First, the author is a theologian. Vukšić completed his theological studies at the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Sarajevo and later studied in Rome at the Pontifical Oriental Institute where he obtained licentiates and a doctorate in theology and the Pontifical Urban University where he obtained licentiate in the Canon Law. Since 1991, he has been a lecturer at the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Sarajevo. He has published more than 750 various works, mostly published in daily newspapers and weekly magazines. Among these are seven books; two are publications of his doctoral thesis in Italian and Croatian, and he is the co-author of one book. One book is a collection of his various articles previously published in other books or journals, including the article study. His main fields of interest are patrology, ecumenism, and eastern theology. Therefore, in Vukšić’s

²⁷⁷ Cf. Tomo Vukšić, “Kontinuitet Hrvatskog i katoličkog umiranja u Bosni i Hercegovini,” in *Mi i oni: Siguran identitet pretpostavka susretanja: miscellanea de oecumenismo*, 29–70, Biblioteka Radovi 2 (Sarajevo: Vrhbosanska katolička teologija, 2000).

article, we can expect to read about the Catholic past in Bosnia-Herzegovina from the knowledge of an experienced and engaged theologian.

Second, the author is a cleric and has been the first military bishop in the Armed Forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina since 2011. This position confirms that his work in his diocese, Mostar-Duvno, and various educational theological institutions is well accepted and recognized by the Church and state institutions and leaders.

Third, in the first footnote of the article analyzed, Vukšić writes that the first version was published as a feuilleton in five articles in *Glas Koncila*²⁷⁸ in 1992 and 1993.²⁷⁹ In 1994, it was presented at a symposium and published in symposium proceedings.²⁸⁰ The third version was published in a collection of articles in 1995²⁸¹ and republished in the mentioned collection of Vukšić's articles in 2000.²⁸² If an author has published a work this many times, we might presume that he is deeply convinced that the ideas and message of the work will be enriching to many readers and that the work is very valuable.

Fourth, Ratko Perić, the bishop of Mostar-Duvno, wrote a preface to the 2000 collection of articles entitled *Dobrohotnom čitatelju [To the Benevolent Reader]*.²⁸³ This preface is written in the form of a letter addressing all who read the book. Writing about the duty of all members of the Church to promote unity among Christians, the bishop emphasizes that “the role of a theologian is to offer a reliable analysis and healthy synthesis in that process [ecumenism] listening to the pulse of the magisterium.”²⁸⁴ Perić is convinced that “[t]he reader will not be able to say that the author is not sincerely honest, and that he is not only writing studious, but also writing with his heart, however without affect.”²⁸⁵

²⁷⁸ *Glas Koncila* is a Catholic weekly published in Zagreb.

²⁷⁹ Cf. Tomo Vukšić, “Procesi i uzroci nestajanja katolicizma u Bosni i Hercegovini,” *Glas Koncila* 51 (1992); Tomo Vukšić, “Prijelazi na islam i pravoslavlje,” *Glas Koncila* 52 (1992); Tomo Vukšić, “Porez u službi pravoslavizacije katolika,” *Glas Koncila* 1 (1993); Tomo Vukšić, “Pokušaj obnove katolištva,” *Glas Koncila* 2 (1993); Tomo Vukšić, “Stradanje katolika iz BiH u obje Jugoslavije,” *Glas Koncila* 3 (1993).

²⁸⁰ Cf. Tomo Vukšić, “Kontinuitet hrvatskog i katoličkog umiranja u Bosni i Hercegovini,” in *Znanstveni skup - Hrvati u Bosni i Hercegovini: Ciljevi i mogućnosti.*, ed. Ante F. Markotić (Mostar, Toronto: Hrvatska budnica, 1996), 47–65.

²⁸¹ Cf. Tomo Vukšić, “Kontinuitet Hrvatskog i katoličkog umiranja u Bosni i Hercegovini,” in *Crtajte granice ne prećtajte ljude: Zbornik radova u povodu imenovanja vrhbosanskog nadbiskupa Vinka Puljića kardinalom*, ed. Marko Josipović and Mato Zovkić, *Studia Vrhbosnensia* 7 (Sarajevo [u.a.]: Vrhbosanska Visoka Teološka Škola, 1995), 303–42.

²⁸² Cf. Tomo Vukšić in *Mi i oni*.

²⁸³ Cf. Ratko Perić, “Dobrohotnom čitatelju,” in *Mi i oni: Siguran identitet pretpostavka susretanja: miscellanea de oecumenismo*, 5–7, *Biblioteka Radovi* 2 (Sarajevo: Vrhbosanska katolička teologija, 2000).

²⁸⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 5.

²⁸⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 6.

Fifth, the title of the collection of Vukšić's various ecumenical articles is *Mi i oni: Siguran identitet pretpostavka susretanja* [*Us and Them: A Secure Identity as a Precondition for Encounters*]. In this title, *us* means Croats–Catholics, and *them* Serbs–Orthodox. The subtitle suggests that only if an identity is secure can an encounter with others, here an ecumenical encounter, happen. What kind of secure collective identity does Vukšić promote? Is it an identity free from the fantasies and interventions of the past? Or does a secure identity mean the same for Vukšić as it does for H.E. Ms. Suchocka: that bishops (and clergy) have the solution (as is argued in Chapter 6)?

Finally, the sixth reason I choose this article is that I know the author personally. I hope that he will not take my analysis as an *argumentum ad hominem* but as an honest scientific analysis which might well include imperfections and mistakes.

This chapter is only one small piece in the mosaic of the context of contemporary Bosnia-Herzegovina, and an answer to a very important question is not to be found here: while traveling into the future, will we ask for advice from our experts in history who, knowing our past failures and omissions, can suggest our current historical circumstances? Could *magistra vitae*, thanks to them, help us have a better future because historians, like pathologists, know best what has to be done? If the answer is yes, could it even so be too late? The reader should search for the answer.

General Information about the Article

Kontinuitet Hrvatskog i katoličkog umiranja u Bosni i Hercegovini [*The Continuity of Croat and Catholic Dying in Bosnia-Herzegovina*] is the first article in the second part of the book entitled *Katoličko i Hrvatsko stradanje u Bosni i Hercegovini* [*Catholic and Croat Suffering in Bosnia and Herzegovina*]. The article has approximately 15,200 words and, without footnotes, approximately 11,400 words. The authors most often quoted are Dominik Mandić (16 times) and Krunoslav Draganović (13 times), while Vukšić's other works are cited 10 times. The most quoted sources are Krunoslav Draganović's doctorate thesis *Massenübertritte von Katholiken zur „Orthodoxie“ im kroatischen Sprachgebiet zur Zeit der Türkenherrschaft* [*Mass Conversions of Catholics to Orthodoxy in the Croatian-speaking Area During the Turkish rule*]²⁸⁶ (8 times), Dominik Mandić's book

²⁸⁶ Cf. Krunoslav Draganović, "Massenübertritte von Katholiken zur „Orthodoxie“ im kroatischen Sprachgebiet zur Zeit der Türkenherrschaft" (Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1937);

Etnička povijest Bosne i Hercegovine [*Ethnic History of Bosnia-Herzegovina*]²⁸⁷ (8 times), and Vukšić's doctoral thesis *I rapporti tra i cattolici e gli ortodossi nella Bosnia ed Erzegovina dal 1878 al 1903* [*Mutual Relations between Catholics and Orthodox in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1878 to 1903*]²⁸⁸ (5 times).

The first part of the article follows the same structure of Draganović's doctoral thesis written in 1937. The majority of arguments, claims, and conclusions are taken from Draganović and Mandić. Only once in a footnote does Vukšić comment that, “[a]lthough the thesis of the departed Dominik Mandić is really maximalist [exaggerated], it is not without the fundamentals.”²⁸⁹ In no other place throughout the article does Vukšić question whether Draganović's doctorate dissertation or Mandić's book are scientific and whether they follow modern historical methodology. Vukšić also raises no problems with the unconventional and apologetic nature of the claims and arguments in these works which renders them unreliable. To the contrary, in this article, these two Catholic priests, alongside other authors who, by coincidence, are also Catholic priests, are described as unquestionably masters and accurate sources of information.

Without any intention to analyze the abovementioned works, here is presented one example of how Vukšić's use and interpretation of such sources leads him to interesting arguments and even more interesting conclusions; other examples follow later in the text. For example, when he quotes *Povijest Katoličke crkve među Hrvatima*²⁹⁰ [*History of the Catholic Church among Croats*] by Buturac Josip and Ivandija Antun who estimated the number of Catholics, Bosnian Christians, and Orthodox in first half of the 15th century in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Vukšić writes:

Krunoslav Draganović, *Masovni prijelazi katolika na pravoslavlje: Hrvatskog governog područja u vrijeme vladavine turaka*, Biblioteka Crkve na Kamenu knj. 29 (Mostar: Biskupijski ordinarijat, 1991).

²⁸⁷ Cf. Dominik Mandić, *Etnička povijest Bosne i Hercegovine* (Roma: Hrvatski povijesni Institut u Rimu, 1967).

²⁸⁸ Cf. Tomo Vukšić, *I rapporti tra i cattolici e gli ortodossi nella Bosnia ed Erzegovina dal 1878 al 1903: Uno studio storico-teologico*, Collectanea Croatico-Hieronymiana de Urbe 5 (Roma: Pontificio Collegio Croato di San Girolamo, 1991); Tomo Vukšić, *Međusobni odnosi katolika i pravoslavaca u Bosni i Hercegovini (1878.-1903.): Povijesno-teološki prikaz*, Acta et studia 1 (Mostar: Teološki Institut Mostar, 1994).

²⁸⁹ Cf. Tomo Vukšić in *Mi i oni*, Ft. 20.

²⁹⁰ Cf. Josip Buturac and Antun Ivandija, *Povijest Katoličke crkve među Hrvatima* (Zagreb: Hrvatsko Književno Društvo Sv. Ćirila i Metoda, 1973).

*According to the opinion of some very honorable authors, in Bosnia-Herzegovina ... in first half of the 15th century, there were approximately 750,000 Catholics, 80,000 Bosnian Christians, and 30,000 Orthodox.*²⁹¹

Furthermore, Vukšić does not indicate that the data are estimations; instead, he goes one step further and gives the estimated numbers greater reliability by calculating them as percentages with two decimals:

*In percentages, it looks as follows: 87.21% Catholics, 9.30% Bosnian Christians, and 3.49% Orthodox.*²⁹²

Moreover, Vukšić suggests that all Catholics and at least half of Bosnian Christians were Croats:

*[I]t is permissible to make the conclusion that, at that time [the first half of 15th century] Croats ... constituted more than 90% of the whole population in the territory of contemporary Bosnia-Herzegovina.*²⁹³

In footnote 20, he raises Mandić's claim that all Bosnian Christians and part of the Orthodox population were Croats, which brings Vukšić to the conclusion that 96.51% of Croats lived in contemporary Bosnia-Herzegovina before the Ottoman occupation.

Structure of the Article

The article tends to present history from a point of view of Catholics and Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina who are struggling to survive. It is divided into four parts, which each examine a different historical period.

1. Period before the Ottomans: The Creation of Assumptions and the Beginning of a Retreat

In this part, we read, following Draganović's claims, that Montenegro and Serbia were Catholic countries before they become Orthodox in the 12th century. Since that time, Orthodoxy has slowly infiltrated the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina.²⁹⁴

2. Ottoman Period: The Tragic Survival of Catholics

In this part, Vukšić claims that the Ottoman period was the most tragic period in history for Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina as many emigrated from Bosnia-Herzegovina and converted to Islam or Orthodoxy. However, Vukšić does not write much, if at all, about

²⁹¹ Tomo Vukšić in *Mi i oni*, 35.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid., 36.

²⁹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 30–35.

conversions to Islam. He focuses on the supposed tricks and other misdeeds Orthodox clergy committed in their efforts to convert Catholics to Orthodoxy.²⁹⁵

3. Austro-Hungarian Period: A Time of the Awakening of the People and the Church.

In this part, Vukšić claims that the Austro-Hungarian Empire marked a renaissance for the Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina because freedom of religion was introduced for first time. Although it was the best time for Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina as the Church hierarchy was re-established, Catholic schools and faculties were opened, and the first Catholic journals were printed, Vukšić complains that the administration of the empire was not completely fair to Catholics and Croats.²⁹⁶

4. Period of Two Yugoslavia: The Suffering of the Croat Catholic Continues

In this part, Vukšić claims that no Croat wished to be part of either country of Yugoslavia. The first Yugoslavia (1918– or 1936–1941) was not acceptable because, according to Vukšić, it was predominantly an Orthodox country, and Orthodoxy was virtually the state religion. The Catholic Church received only little support from the state, while, at the same time, those Catholics who considered themselves to be Yugoslavian enjoyed privileges. The second Yugoslavia (1945–1990) was worse because it was a communist country.²⁹⁷

Vukšić tends to present the “continuous dying” of the Catholic and Croat collective in Bosnia-Herzegovina by exploring all periods of history in Bosnia-Herzegovina under different empires and states, but he completely neglects one period. Compared to other historical periods, this period was short, lasting only four years. However, it does not matter how short this period was; it had huge impacts on the Croats and Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina and their relations with the other two ethnic and religious groups. This was the time of the Second World War (1941–1945), when Bosnia-Herzegovina was part of the Independent State of Croatia, a puppet state of Nazi Germany. During this period, many non-Croats were killed by Croat military forces. Many Catholics and Croats were killed too by different armies, including the militaries of the Independent State of Croatia. Why is Vukšić silent about this period? Does it mean that, for him, those who

²⁹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 35–52.

²⁹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 52–61.

²⁹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 61–69.

were literally killed during this time do not deserve to be mentioned as those who died metaphysically because they converted to other confessions?

Continuity

In his article, Vukšić is not concerned about the continuity of the Church or the Catholic or Croat collective identity in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The continuity which concerns him, paradoxically, is the continuity of the dying of these two collective identities, a process that, according to him, has lasted at least last five centuries. How could this be possible?

Although Vukšić does not write about the continuity of the religious or ethnic collective identity it does not mean that he does not believe in such continuity. Furthermore, that he speaks not about the continuity of the collective identity but about the hardships of that continuity, that is to say, its dying, reveals that he is a romantic and has gone even one step further than the romantics of collective identities usually do. He fully accepts that the ideas of national romantics are true and do not need to be proven. In this sense, Vukšić behaves as a defender of the accumulated information taken to be truths, or to use Peter L. Berger's terminology, he reinforces "a plausibility structure."²⁹⁸ If such plausibility is dismantled, though, then emerges the danger of the disappearance of the dogmas of collective identities and, consequently, the collective identities themselves. Furthermore, it seems that, for Vukšić, religious identity (i.e., Catholicism) and national or ethnic identity (i.e., Croat) are the same. This phenomenon and its claims are discussed in the course of the analysis of his text. For the moment, we remain on the subject of continuity.

The reason for the continuous dying of the collective identity, according to Vukšić, is not to be found within the group, although some individuals within the group have contributed to the dying of the collective identity with their quarrels, undisciplined behavior, and groundless, internal accusations.²⁹⁹ However, the main problem or the 'deadly disease' is the 'others' who, using their earthly power, slowly but economically attack Catholics with tricks and misdeeds and, given the insufficient number of the

²⁹⁸ The term "plausibility structure" was coined by Peter L. Berger. As he has defined the term in his work *The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmations*, a plausibility structure "represents a central concept for an understanding of the relationship between society and consciousness." In other words, humans need confirmation of their beliefs from their immediate surroundings and members of their collective. Cf. Peter L. Berger, *The heretical imperative: Contemporary possibilities of religious affirmation*, 1st ed (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1979), 17.

²⁹⁹ Cf. Tomo Vukšić in *Mi i oni*, 68–69. In this light, this analysis could also be qualified as a groundless internal accusation.

Catholic priests, abduct or seduce Catholics and Croats in a process of ‘eating away’ at the Croat and Catholic organism in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Consequently, the number of Croats and Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina decreases continuously, while the number of Orthodox and Muslim peoples increases, as Vukšić writes in the first sentence of the article:

One of the characteristics of the Catholic Church in the Balkans in general and in particular of the Croatian people in Bosnia-Herzegovina, starting somewhere in the 11th century is the continuity of the historical process of the losses and retreat of Catholicism and Croats from east to west. In short, it is about the fact that, on one hand, others, that is Orthodox Christians and Muslims, for centuries continuously occupied Croatian territory and more and more spread in it, which has as a consequence, on the other hand, Croatian disappearance from the same area—a disappearance which unfortunately is still going on and whose end cannot be seen.³⁰⁰

This process of the dying-out of Croats and Catholics in the Balkans, according to Vukšić, was already happening in the pre-Ottoman period when the inhabitants of present-day Serbia and Montenegro converted from Catholicism to Orthodoxy. However, the most disastrous period for Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina was the four centuries of Ottoman rule, after which Catholics made up only 18% of the total population in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The third dwindling of Croats and Catholics happened under the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and communist Yugoslavia. According to Vukšić, in the times of the two Yugoslavias, many Croats and Catholics emigrated from Bosnia-Herzegovina, mostly due to an economic disadvantage and injustice against Croats by the governments of these two states.

If we skip all the text between the first lines of the introduction and first lines of the conclusion to Vukšić’s article, we come to the following sentence:

At the end, I hope that this article has convinced those who read it that unfortunately the continuous process of Croatians and Catholics disappearing in Bosnia and Herzegovina has already lasted more than 500 years.³⁰¹

From this quotation, we can see that Vukšić has no doubts that the information, arguments, and claims presented in his text are reliable and truth. Furthermore, he expects that the reader will be convinced that his text is reliable. However, what if his thesis and claims are not plausible to us, and therefore, we dare to question them?

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 29.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 69.

Insubstantiality of the Thesis of the Continuous Dying of Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina

It cannot be denied that the number of Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina has seriously declined, not only during but also before and after the Ottoman period. However, are not those who, according to Vukšić, converted to Orthodoxy in Bosnia-Herzegovina descendants of the same ancestors as contemporary Catholics? If this is true, then Catholics and at least some Orthodox Christians and Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina have the same ancestors. If the previous statement is true, then it refutes Vukšić's main claim made even in the title of his article that Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina are continuously "dying out." No, they have not died, nor have they have disappeared. They, as well as their descendants, have continued their earthly lives within another confessional collective identity.

Indeed, Vukšić does not claim that they are physically dead. However, Catholics who converted to Orthodoxy and Islam are dead to the Catholic collective identity, which itself is dying because the number of its members is diminishing. In other words, Vukšić writes not about the literal physical death of those who converted from the Catholic Church in Bosnia-Herzegovina to other confessions but about their virtual death within Catholic collective identity. He describes this as the process of the dying of this collective identity because it has lost its significance, and consequently, the Church leaders have lost jurisdiction over those who converted.

Had this hypothesis been written before the Second Vatican Council, it would seem acceptable. However, Vatican II happened several decades before Vukšić wrote his text repeating a thesis of Catholic priests from pre-council times. Therefore, we might wonder why he laments the past instead of offering proposals to ameliorate relations with the Orthodox and reunite with our "beloved sisters and brothers"³⁰² with whom Catholics, at least in Bosnia-Herzegovina, share not only the same Christian faith but also the same ancestors.

³⁰² The children who are born into these Communities [different than the Catholic Church] and who grow up believing in Christ cannot be accused of the sin involved in the separation, and the Catholic Church embraces upon them as brothers, with respect and affection. For men who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, § 3.

Those who independently converted to Orthodoxy in Bosnia-Herzegovina, whether due to seduction, compulsion, or free will, are not dead to the Catholic Church. Consequently, the claim that the Catholic collective identity is continuously dying because some of its members left for another Christian collective identity is false. Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina thus are not victims, and they should not blame others but their own clergy and theologians for hopelessness they preach and promote.

Insubstantiality of the Thesis of the Continuous Dying of Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Although Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina might not be victims or continuously dying, Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina, indeed, have been victims from very beginning. However, that does not mean that Vukšić is correct. Contrary to his claims that Croats are continuously dying or that the number of Croats has continuously decreased since the pre-Ottoman period, the Croat population in Bosnia-Herzegovina decreased significantly only during and shortly after WWII and the most recent armed conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1991–1995).

The ideas of nation and nationality emerged only with the appearance of modernity in society. Therefore, applying the meaning of national identity and belonging to the national collective identities of our ancestors is anachronistic. The idea of the nation was strange to all inhabitants of feudal Europe who had no option to declare their belonging to the collective national identity because absolute rulers owned the whole body of their subjects.³⁰³ In Western Europe, absolute rulers also decided to which religious collective identity their subjects belonged.

Vukšić does not deny that national identity and nationality are products of modern times. He writes that a 19th-century “national awakening” occurred in the Balkans: “In the 19th century, that is known by national awakening of the Balkan people...”³⁰⁴ As well, he reports that, in 1850, the Serbian and Orthodox community attacked Fra. Rafo Barišić, the apostolic vicar in Mostar, “although he was nationally colorless [did not consider himself to be Croat].”³⁰⁵ The third part of the article is entitled *The Austro-Hungarian Period: A*

³⁰³ Cf. Michael Walzer, *Exodus and revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 30.

³⁰⁴ Tomo Vukšić in *Mi i oni*, 50.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

*Time of the Awakening of the People and the Church.*³⁰⁶ Vukšić complains that the Austro-Hungarian administration tried to prevent the national awakening: “The State government [the Austro-Hungarian government] ... was repressive toward all attempts to awaken the modern national consciousness.”³⁰⁷ He acknowledges that, even in the first Yugoslavia in the early 20th century, some priests in Bosnia-Herzegovina were Yugoslav oriented instead of Croat oriented. Finally, “there were also, although very unusually, some Catholic priests who considered themselves, who knows for what reason, to be Serb. Moreover, in Bosnia, there were many Catholics who were not nationally awakened, and the most responsible for these situations were Catholic priests who were not doing properly their pastoral work.”³⁰⁸

Thus, Vukšić admits that a national awakening occurred not only in the 19th century but also the 20th century and that some who he believed should consider themselves to be members of the Croat national collective did not, in fact. How is it possible then that Croats had continuously decreased in numbers for centuries even before there were Croats?

Here is the paradox of the thesis of continuity of the dying of Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina expressed by the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croat national romantics quoted by Vukšić: After they—leaders of the Croat national ‘awakening’ program in Bosnia-Herzegovina, that are the Catholic clergy—realized that they could influence only the majority of Catholics for the idea of the Croat national identity, and Catholics made up only about 18% of the population in Bosnia-Herzegovina at the end of the 19th century,³⁰⁹ they started to lament the misfortune of the Croats who lost to Serbs and Muslims even before their national project had fully materialized.

Thus, it was not Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina but the creators of the national programs who had lost that battle. However, it is Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina who shall feel that they are miserable because they are outnumbered by the Other. In other words, it is “the fathers of nation” and those who have transmitted the idea of the nation to the people in Bosnia-Herzegovina who “have eaten unripe grapes,” and it is the people whose “teeth

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 52.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 58.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 62.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 56.

are set on edge”.³¹⁰ Were they, the nation’s forefathers and the mediators of these ideas, striving to win a battle against their own pride so that they would not lose a battle they could not win. Or, in other words, had they not claimed to have knowledge, they would have found knowledge through personal contact with the people with whom they breathed the Bosnian-Herzegovinian air.

The Numbers

Any scientific or popular text in which an author attempts to prove claims about a continual social process over a period of several centuries must contain many numbers, and unsurprisingly, Vukšić’s text does. In addition to years, many statistics presented as whole numbers and recalculated as percentages in tables indicate the size of confessional and national groups in the territory of contemporary Bosnia-Herzegovina at different times. Although any statistic on a social group before the first official census in Bosnia-Herzegovina conducted by the Austro-Hungarian government in 1879 can be partially known and therefore only an estimation, Vukšić does not indicate this, nor does he express any doubt about the statistics he introduces in the article.

However, to prove the claim that specific social phenomenon are truly happening, it is not sufficient to copy numbers or data from other authors or databases that do not originate from official, recognized statistical institutions. In such cases, the author is expected to explain why he prefers data from one author over another. Furthermore, he should explain the variables that might influence data accuracy and values. If an author omits these steps, then the reader could conclude that the author’s text is biased and, as such, unreliable. Here, we do not question all the data presented in the text but only two points.

Argumentum ad Auctoritatem

Before, it was mentioned that Vukšić confirms the reliability of data he drew from two authors, Buturac and Ivandija, writing, “According to the opinion of some very honorable historians...”³¹¹ In other words, these authors are, according to Vukšić, honorable, and therefore, their data should be reliable, too. However, Vukšić does not explain what it means to be an “honorable” author in his opinion. Therefore, we might think that they are honorable to him because he thinks that they are serious scientists and historians or

³¹⁰ Ez 18:2-4

³¹¹ Ibid., 35–36.

because their data and theory fit with his understanding of the history and science in question. Of course, if the latter is true, then it would imply the former as well. However, we might argue that such confirmation of the accuracy of the data is *argumentum ad auctoritatem*, an unreliable form of argumentation. In other words, arguing that someone is honorable or an expert in a field is not sufficient proof that their data and statements are correct or incorrect. For example, one might claim that:

- a. Buturac and Ivandija are honorable historians (i.e., they are experts in the field).
- b. They wrote that, in the first half of the 15th century, there were approximately 750,000 Catholics, 80,000 Bosnian Christians, and 30,000 Orthodox Christians in present-day Bosnia-Herzegovina (i.e., they wrote *x* about the object *y*).
- c. Therefore, their claim (estimation, data, or statement) is true (i.e., therefore, they are correct).

We might conclude that such an argument is weak and possibly also fallacious because conclusion c cannot be derived from premises a and b. We might add more premises:

- a1. In addition to historians, Buturac and Ivandija are priests.
- a2. Vukšić, who quotes Buturac and Ivandija, is also a priest.
- a3. All priests say the truth and nothing but the truth.

However, none of those additional premises could ensure that the conclusion c is correct. This is not because we believe or do not believe that Buturac and Ivandija are honorable or experts or that clerics always tell the truth and nothing but the truth, but because all these premises—a, a1, a2, and a3—are irrelevant to the subject discussed.

Furthermore, when more than one expert has different opinions on the same subject, and there are many who might offer different numbers in this matter, than the use of *argumentum ad auctoritatem* is inconceivable. For instance, after presenting estimations from Buturac and Ivandija in footnote 20, Vukšić quotes Mandić's estimations, which are different from those of the previous two authors.³¹² However, Vukšić does not note that one source is incorrect; to the contrary, he writes that Mandić's claims, "although indeed maximalistic, are not unfounded".³¹³ However, in this case too, Vukšić does not provide any argument or explanation for his opinion that Mandić's claims, although exaggerated,

³¹² Cf. *ibid.*, 36.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

are not unfounded. Consequently, if Mandić's data are not unfounded, we might conclude that Buturac and Ivandija's data, too, are unfounded or incorrect.

Instead, to provide a reliable argument that might support Vukšić's claims and his chosen works from these authors above those of others writing about the same issue, he translates the quoted data into percentages. Of course, presenting statistical data as percentages is not unusual. However, Vukšić precisely calculates the estimated values down to the second decimal point. Thus, the estimated overall number of Catholics 750,000 becomes 87.21%. For what purpose or reason does Vukšić need this percentage? We might assume that he wants to convince the reader that the estimated numbers are absolutely reliable.

Regardless of his reasons, Vukšić uses data in percentage form to introduce a new conclusion without providing any more premises. Namely, Buturac and Ivandija's estimations refer to the number of Christian groups in Bosnia in the first half of the 15th century. Vukšić, however, uses that data as a percentage to claim that, at that time, all Catholics and at least half of Bosnian Christians considered themselves to be Croats. That means, according to Vukšić, that more than 90% of the inhabitants of 15th-century Bosnia-Herzegovina were Croats.³¹⁴ The percentage of Croats during that same period increases to 96.51% when Vukšić uses Mandić's data.³¹⁵

From another section later in the article, Vukšić writes of data from the first official census in Bosnia-Herzegovina conducted by the Austro-Hungarian administration in 1879: "If the abovementioned numbers [all above mentioned estimated including census data] are to be believed ..."³¹⁶ From those words, we might conclude that he expresses doubts about the accuracy of the statistical data he presents. However, that does not prevent him from concluding: "the Catholic loss [or calamity] in Bosnia-Herzegovina during Turkish [Ottoman] rule was 69.13%, and the Croat loss as a nation ... even higher."³¹⁷ Even if the estimated data which he uses in his text are close to the truth, that does not mean that Vukšić's conclusion about the extent of the Catholic and Croat tragedy is correct, as argued.

³¹⁴ Ibid..

³¹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, Ft. 20.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 51–52.

Who Got More Money: Us or Them?

Here, we present one more example of Vukšić's poor interpretation of statistical data. While describing the relations between confessional groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Vukšić writes that Orthodox clerics constantly complained that government granted more money to the Catholic Church than the Orthodox Church. He claims that such complaints and accusations were untrue: "In fact, just as an example, during the period between 1878 and 1904, the state granted the Orthodox Church ... exactly 6,139,742 crowns and the Catholic Church in the same period ... exactly 4,840,578."³¹⁸

Vukšić is absolutely correct when he states that 6,139,742 crowns are more than 4,840,578 crowns. However, here it is not a question of whether the former sum is greater than the later but of which group got more money. To determine the best answer to that question, we need to know more facts which Vukšić neglects to mention. For example, he does not mention the conditions and criteria established by the state administration for confessional groups to receive state grants. Did the state regard all confessions as equal, independent of the number of followers, and therefore entitled to equal financial support? Was the number of followers an important criterion for the allocation of financial support? Was the sum allocated in accordance to the needs and demands of different groups? Were there other criteria?

If the first hypothesis that all confessional groups were entitled to the same amount of financial support is true, then Vukšić is correct. However, he omits to mention and prove that claim, so we cannot assert that his claims are valid.

If the second hypothesis that the amount of financial support depended on the number of followers of each confessional group is true, then we arrive at a completely opposite conclusion than Vukšić: the Catholic Church did receive greater financial support than the Orthodox Church. We might come to this conclusion based on the census results during the Austro-Hungarian period in Bosnia-Herzegovina (see Table 2)³¹⁹ and the total sum of the financial support granted.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 53.

³¹⁹ *Ortschafts- und Bevölkerungs-Statistik von Bosnien und Hercegovina = Štatistika miesta i pučanstva Bosne Hercegovine* (Sarajevo: K. u. K. Regierungsd., 1880); *Ortschafts- und Bevölkerungs-Statistik von*

Year	1879		1885		1895		1910	
Population	1,158,164		1,336,091		1,568,092		1,898,044	
Catholics	209,391	18.08%	265,788	19.88%	334,142	21.31%	434,061	22.87%
Orthodox	496,485	42.88%	571,250	42.76%	673,246	42.94%	825,918	43.49%
Muslims	448,613	38.75%	492,710	36.88%	548,632	34.99%	612,137	32.25%
Other	3,675	0.31%	6,343	0.47%	12,072	0.76%	26,428	1.39%

Table 2. Census results in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1879, 1885, 1895, and 1910

In Table 3, the percentage of grants received by both churches from 1878 until 1904 has been calculated taking into consideration the average number of Catholics and Orthodox according to the available census results. Such results are not precise. They would be more accurate if we had statistics on the number of followers and exact sums granted each year during the 1878–1904 period. The calculations show that the Catholic Church received 5.71 crowns (55%) more per person than the Orthodox Church.

	State grants received in period 1878–1904	Average number of followers in period 1879–1910	State grants per capita in period 1878–1904
Catholics	4,840,578	310,846	15.57
Orthodox	6,139,742	623,034	9.85

Table 3. State grants received per capita for two Christian communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1879–1910

However, all the previously mentioned conclusions and results could be wrong and misleading because we do not know the criterion set for receiving the grants. Therefore, we cannot with certainty claim who received more money because we do not know why they were granted that money.

What if the third possibility is true? That is, what if the state administration was more Christian than both churches and granted financial support to those communities most in need? What if the administration followed the principle of justice and granted religious groups sums in accordance to the scale of the taxes paid by their followers? What if the administration followed the principle of first come–first served and granted financial support to those who asked for such support first but not to others who asked late, were

Bosnien und Herzegovina nach dem Volkszählung-Ergebnisse vom 1. Mai 1885. (Sarajevo: Landesdruckerei, 1886); *Bosnien und der Herzegovina. Statistisches Departement, Hauptresultate der Volkszählung in Bosnien und der Herzegovina vom 22. April 1895.: Zusammengestellt vom Statistischen Departement der Landesregierung.* (Sarajevo: Landesdruckerei, 1896); *Bosnien und der Herzegovina. Statistisches Departement, Die Ergebnisse der Volkszählung in Bosnien und der Herzegovina vom 10. Oktober 1910: Zusammengestellt vom Statistischen Departement der Landesregierung. Mit einer Übersichtskarte der Konfessionen* (Sarajevo: Landesdruckerei, 1912). Vukšić uses the same data: Cf. Tomo Vukšić in *Mi i oni*, 56.

incapable of submitting applications for grants, or waived their rights to the grants?³²⁰ There could be many other reasons. Since we do not know them, we can only guess at them. However, without knowledge of these criteria, we cannot conclude nor claim who got more money.

The Terms

In his presentation of Catholic history in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Vukšić uses some anachronistic and emotional terms. Although we can assume that he does not do so purposely but acts from a lack of understanding of the proper meaning of these terms and social processes, an inexperienced reader might be completely misguided.

Anachronisms

a) Names of Nations

The term *Croat(s)* is used quite often inappropriately in regards to the historical period before the 19th century. The same could be said for the term *Serb(s)*. This term is anachronistically used as an adjective 11 times when the author writes about the principality Raška in contemporary southern Serbia and about the Orthodox patriarchy in the 15th century, Orthodox monks, and the people who lived in the territory of present-day Serbia. If the Balkan nations were created only in the 19th century, then the use of their names before that time is inappropriate.

The term *Turks*, instead of the *Ottomans*, is used anachronistically 92 times, while the term *Ottoman* is used only five times. Although the Ottoman Dynasty originated from the Turkic Anatolian tribe, and the terms *Turkish Empire* and *Turks* have been widely used by western historians since the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire was an absolute monarchy and not the state of Turks in modern understanding. Only at its beginning was this empire mono-ethnic. In addition, those involved in the ruling institutions, administration, and military service were non-Muslim non-Turkish slaves loyal only to the ruling dynasty, while all other Muslim and non-Muslim citizen *reaya* were not

³²⁰ In another article Vukšić brings an interesting detail from a notice of a Russian consul in Sarajevo, in which it is mentioned that many Orthodox priests in Bosnia were not able to read and write. Cf. Tomo Vukšić, “Nadbiskup Josip Stadler (1881.-1918.) i Srbi,” in *Mi i oni: Siguran identitet pretpostavka susretanja: miscellanea de oecumenismo*, 145–70, Biblioteka Radovi 2 (Sarajevo: Vrhbosanska katolička teologija, 2000), 154..

involved in state affairs or the military.³²¹ The first Turkish national project was started only in the early 20th century, and despite its aim to make Turks out of all inhabitants of contemporary Turkey since that time, it was not completely successful. Not all inhabitants of the state consider themselves to be Turks. At the same time, the term *Turks* has a pejorative meaning in Serbo-Croatian, which is used by Croat and Serb nationalists who name South-Slavic Muslims Turks, even though they do not use any of the Turkic languages or have Turkic origins.

b) Freedom of Religion

The phrase *freedom of religion* has also been used anachronistically. Vukšić writes that “freedom of religion was legalized for the first time ... in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the Austro-Hungarian Empire occupied these provinces in the summer of 1878.”³²² However, the contemporary legal meaning of the concept according to Article 18 of the *Universal Declaration of the Human Rights*³²³ differs in context from the term *Glaubens- und Gewissensfreiheit* from the Austro-Hungarian *Staatsgrundgesetz* of 1867.³²⁴ Furthermore, in 1891, the Austro-Hungarian administration introduced a law in Bosnia-Herzegovina that prohibited all conversions.³²⁵ In addition, the Austro-Hungarian state administration financially supported each religious collective in Bosnia-Herzegovina and directly interfered in their internal and external affairs.

Considering all these facts, it is strange that Vukšić claims that religious freedom was first introduced into Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Austro-Hungarian administration, which fully controlled the affairs of all religious communities. As well, in another section, Vukšić writes: “the Catholic Church never allowed degrading involvement of the Turkish [Ottoman] state administration into internal affairs [of the Church].”³²⁶ Knowing that the k. u. k. administration interfered in the appointment of bishops and other high clerics, that

³²¹ Cf. Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic tradition*, A phoenix book (Chicago [u.a.]: Univ. of Chicago Pr, 1980), 219.

³²² Cf. Tomo Vukšić in *Mi i oni*, 52.

³²³ Cf. The Universal Declaration of the Human Rights at The Article 18, accessed September 15, 2015, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml#a18>.

³²⁴ Staatsgrundgesetz über die allgemeinen Rechte der Staatsbürger für die im Reichsrathe vertretenen Königreiche und Länder, RGrBl. Nr. 142/1867, Reichs-Gesetz-Blatt für das Kaiserthum Österreich 394 at Article 14, 15, and 16 (21.12.1867), accessed October 8, 2015, <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxc?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10000006>.

³²⁵ Cf. “Verordnung der Landesregierung für Bosnien und die Hercegovina, betreffend den Uebertitt von Landesangehörigen zu einer der in Bosnien und der Hercegovina vertretenen Glaubensgenossenschaften,” in *Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für Bosnien und die Hercegovina*, 305–9.

³²⁶ Tomo Vukšić in *Mi i oni*, 43.

the state was controlling the affairs of the religious collectives, as well as that conversions were not allowed while in the Ottoman Empire many people converted to Orthodoxy and Islam, it comes out, according to Vukšić's abovementioned statements, that there was greater religious freedom during the Ottoman Empire than the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

c) Fifth Column

One other term is used anachronistically twice: *fifth column*.³²⁷ Vukšić claims that the conditions of Catholics were very difficult under the Ottoman Empire because, among other reasons, they were seen as a fifth column—a term coined during the Spanish Civil War—by the Ottoman government. Vukšić claims that, even before the civil war in Spain, there existed a “papal fifth column”³²⁸ in Bosnia-Herzegovina from the 15th to the 19th century.

Emotional Terms

Throughout the text, Vukšić uses expressions and terms appropriate for dramatic narrations from an eager supporter of a fan club or a political speech loaded with emotional kitsch. Thus, the author is not only affective and emotional but also biased, which brings into question the scientific value of his article. One possible reason that he acts in this way is that he writes about the sufferings of his own religious and national collective during a time when many had undergone extremely hard wartime (1991–1995). Nevertheless, compassion for one's own collective cannot be an excuse for mistakes and weak argumentation.

If Vukšić wanted to write a text to give voice to his emotions and express his “own solidarity and compassion with all Croatian and Catholic struggles and deaths in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the past and present, but also with all those who are unjustly suffering,”³²⁹ as he writes in the first footnote, why did he use the form of a scientific article? A scientist is supposed to search for the truth. There is no need to picture and narrate own emotions and use the form of a scientific work. It is histrionics, entertainers, fiction writers, actors, singers, clowns, and marketing workers who seek the attention of others by narrating or showing their own emotions. While the latter do it because of their job, for

³²⁷ Ibid., 39, 44.

³²⁸ Ibid..

³²⁹ Ibid., Ft. 1.

what reason does Vukšić contaminate his article with unnecessary emotional expressions and obstructions?

a) Emotional Phrases

In Table 4 are some sentences and titles with emotional content from the article.

<p>“[T]he characteristics of the Catholic Church in the Balkans and the Croats ... are in a continuous process of losing...”³³⁰</p> <p>“I want ... to underline that that was LOSING for the Catholic Church and for Croats.”³³¹</p> <p>“[A] proportion of the Catholics’ casualties was terrible tragedy.”³³²</p> <p>“[I]t is hard to indulge in statistical estimations about the proportion of the Catholic loss...”³³³</p> <p>“Since Bosnia-Herzegovina entered with Turks [Ottomans] in this very tragic period...”³³⁴</p> <p>“Namely, the Catholic losses were too high...”³³⁵</p> <p>“The horror of this Croatian tragedy especially makes the fact that many areas had been lost forever since Muslims and Orthodox lived there.”³³⁶</p> <p>“The Catholic tragedy, therefore, was almost complete.”³³⁷</p> <p>“Catholics were still doing well.”³³⁸</p>
<p>1.3 <i>Orthodoxy crosses the Drina</i>³³⁹</p> <p>1.6 <i>Threat on the horizon</i>³⁴⁰</p> <p>2.2 <i>The causes of the Croat and Catholic disaster</i>³⁴¹</p> <p>2.4 <i>The Catholic catastrophe is 70%, and the Croat—even more</i>³⁴²</p>

Table 4. Emotional phrases

Almost all the ideas in these sentences have been discussed, so there is no need from more words about them here. However, one term, *the dark realm*, deserves more attention.

b) The Dark Realm

Vukšić uses the term *dark realm* once in his text. In the introduction of the second part of this dissertation, it is argued that *the dark realm* has at least three different meanings all

³³⁰ Ibid., 29.

³³¹ Ibid., 30.

³³² Ibid., 36.

³³³ Ibid., 40.

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Ibid., 50.

³³⁶ Ibid., 51.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid., 64.

³³⁹ Ibid., 31.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 35.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 38.

³⁴² Ibid., 51.

related to the Balkans. One meaning is that the Balkans are *terra incognita*, a place on earth or society that remains unknown and undiscovered to its immediate neighbors. Second, *The Dark Realm* is also the title of a Balkan folk story³⁴³ that describes a psychological drama of regret and sorrow for a lost chance that might never again return in the characters' lifetimes. Third, this term takes a literary meaning applied to a certain realm and its society that experience a dark age and sink into a dark abyss during the period in question.

At first, it is not clear what Vukšić is trying to say when he uses this term in the following sentence: "In fact, throughout the centuries of Ottoman rule (1463–1878), when Bosnia turned into 'tamni vilajet', the religious landscape of this country had entirely changed."³⁴⁴ Does he want to say that, during Ottoman rule, the inhabitants of Bosnia found themselves in the dark realm or, in other words, in difficult dilemmas, such as whether to stay in Bosnia or go into exile? Whatever they choose, they regretted. Whatever their choice, they were foreigners: a foreigner ruled in their homeland, as well as elsewhere. Nonetheless, the other choice was also seen as a lost chance that might never again come back in this lifetime. Perhaps, Vukšić thought that the Catholic inhabitants of the Balkans found themselves confronting the question of whether to convert to Islam or Orthodoxy. However, Vukšić does not follow this line of thinking further; he is completely silent about the possible dilemmas facing the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina at this time.

However, in one another sentence in this article, he writes: "In the darkness of the Turkish [Ottoman] rule in Bosnia, they [Bosnian Christians] have completely disappeared."³⁴⁵ Here, he does not use the term *the dark realm* but *darkness of the Turkish rule*. We thus might assume that he associates the adjective *dark* and the noun *darkness* with the Ottomans and Ottoman rule and not those who find themselves in the psychological drama of *the dark realm*. In other words, Vukšić sees the period of Ottoman rule as a dark age and Bosnia as a land without light, a light turned off by the Ottomans. Thus, we might conclude that he uses the literal meaning of the term dark realm.

³⁴³ Cf. Author Unknown, *The Dark Realm*.

³⁴⁴ Tomo Vukšić in *Mi i oni*, 36.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

Why, though, does he think that the period of Ottoman rule over Bosnia-Herzegovina was literal darkness? Surely, from a present-day perspective, it is not a time that many of us would like to travel to, were that possible. There is no denying that life in that period of history was harsh for the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, it was not easy life for anyone in Europe at that time. For most peasants on the continent, living conditions depended on Mother Nature and the mercy of their lords. European peasants who did not live under Ottoman rule also had to pay taxes to their lords, regardless of whether their lords were Christians and not Muslims. Their sons were also taken into military service and battles which were not their own. Why then did the lives of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Catholics under the Ottoman Empire weigh heavier than the lives of any other peasants in Europe?

Furthermore, had the sultan applied the tenets of the 1555 Peace of Augsburg and the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, especially *cuius region eius religio*, there would not have been a single Christian in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Why then does Vukšić insist that, especially for the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the period of Ottoman Empire was a period of darkness and that Bosnia-Herzegovina under Ottoman rule was literally a dark realm but not Europe as a whole? Perhaps he is thinking of the development of culture, literature, architecture, and infrastructure in Bosnia under the Ottoman rule, which truly was poor. Again, though, Vukšić does not mention that Bosnia was only one remote province in a huge, centralized empire and shared the same destiny as any other remote province of that empire, as well as any other remote province of any huge, centralized state in the world throughout history. Finally, Bosnia-Herzegovina is on the periphery even today.

So far, Vukšić's arguments that Ottoman rule was a literal dark time can be understood only as an emotional lamentation by a member of the opposition group. This position, though, does not mean that he is wrong. If this were presented as Vukšić's personal subjective opinion or the subjective position of his party, that would be acceptable. Subjective opinions, personal memories, and interpretations of the past can be valuable sources of information for sociological, anthropological, and philological observations and studies that help us understand some historical facts. However, Vukšić claims to write a historical text. If it is true, then his claim is wrong, not because his opinion that Ottoman rule was a dark age might be wrong, but because he imposes his own opinions and fantasies on the reader, who is misled.

Conclusion

Moving from these critiques of Vukšić's article, we must ask: is Vukšić really following the instructions of his bishop and magisterium? Does he really provide a reliable analysis and healthy synthesis for the process of ecumenism, as Bishop Ratko Perić writes in the preface of Vukšić's book? Is Vukšić's truly "sincerely honest?"

Evaluating the scientific value of the article, we might conclude that it is scientifically and historiographically weak. Vukšić does not follow the rules and methodologies of modern historiography to be expected for an article written in the 20th century and republished in the 21st century. His choice of statistics and interpretations of them comes up short. The application of terms and phenomena from more recent history onto older periods is awkward and unwelcomed. Last but not least, failing to maintain neutrality toward the research object in a scientific research and its textual presentation, along with the use of emotional terms and expressions, are not the attributes of a serious scientific work. Considering all these shortcomings, it would be hard to imagine that this article might be published in a peer-reviewed journal of history. However, is that the fault of the author? Should we conclude that Vukšić's article is worthless?

If we take into consideration other important facts, we might not be so sure that the text has so many shortcomings as it seems to. Most of the literature the author quotes consists of doctoral theses, books, and articles by Catholic priests from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia who completed their doctorate studies at clerical institutions in the Catholic part of Western Europe in the early 20th century. At that time in Catholic Europe, religious and other multitudes were considered to be inconceivable and erroneous. It was taught that an error has no legal right to exist or spread its poison, so the young Catholic priests from the Balkans learned not only that multitude in which they had been born and grown up was intolerable to the Church but also that such a multitude had to be eradicated as any other error. Thus, this new generation of priestly doctoral students had no option but to adopt such postulates. Following the patterns of their Western European colleagues, the Balkan priests too embraced national(istic) program as a political tool to eliminate the religious multitude in their society. Their goal and task were to fight the errors of their homeland's multitude and those who followed erroneous beliefs. Later, these priests were not concerned whether their forerunners' theses were in conformity with the facts, undesirable in their societies of origin, and unwanted in the Church, especially after

Vatican II. These Balkan priests could not question them. Indeed, there was no reason to question them because the pre-Vatican II postulates and theses of their forerunners were made plausible, convincing, and effective in the Balkan priests' ethno-religious communities and ethno-clerical collective. Any attempts to scrutinize these theses would be understood as quarrelling, undisciplined behavior, and groundless internal accusations that contribute to the dying of the collective identity,³⁴⁶ according to Vukšić, and probably lead to expulsion from the community.

Therefore, it is not surprising that all the persons involved in the publication of Vukšić's article are priests, too. Ivan Miklenić, the editor of the *Glas koncila* in which the Vukšić's feuilleton was published in 1992/93, is a priest. Mato Zovkić and Marko Josipović, the editors of the book *Crtajte granice ne precrtajte ljude* in which the article was published in 1995, are priests. Josipović is also the editor of the book *Mi i oni* in which the article was republished in 2000. The reviewers of the same book are Benedikt Vujica and Jure Zečević, both priests and friars. In addition, Bishop Ratko Perić wrote the preface. Moreover, all except Miklenić hold doctorates in theology—from the universities of Rome, Zagreb, and Vienna—and are working as professors at different Catholic theological faculties in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, educating new generations of young Catholic theologians and priests.

Knowing this background, we can understand the author's logic, intention, and methodology. Vukšić has remained completely loyal to the plausibility structure of his ethno-clerical collective even in matters that are not intrinsically important to the mission of the Church and that possibly conflict with current Church's teaching on the discussed subject and with modern historical methodology. Vukšić maintains solidarity with the priests who wrote the first history of Catholics in this area, although they were written before Vatican II, when apologetic works were a popular, unique form of scientific work. However, Vukšić is not only loyal to his collective and in solidarity with his forerunners; he is also surrounded by his colleagues whose consensus reinforces this social arrangement.

In this light, we should be aware that all the mentioned shortcomings of the article should not be considered to be shortcomings but part of the plausibility structure of the social

³⁴⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 68–69.

arrangements of the collective in question to which Vukšić belongs. Therefore, there is no reason to doubt that Vukšić indeed follows the instructions of his bishop and magisterium of his time. From their perspective, he indeed provides a reliable analysis and healthy synthesis for the process of ecumenism. Therefore, there is no other option but to conclude with bishop Perić that Vukšić is indeed “sincerely honest.”

Fortunately, the last conclusion does not imply that Vukšić’s interpretation of history is correct, but from it, we can learn much about the present-day context of the local church in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia and the plausibility structure of their beliefs about society, immediate neighbors, other Christian churches, and other religious communities. Were Vukšić correct in his interpretation of the past, it would imply that the Catholic and Croat collective in Bosnia-Herzegovina would soon lie on autopsy table as an unbiased pathologist examined the cause of the death of their collective, as emphasized so many times by Vukšić. In such circumstances, the cause of death would surely be known. But would it be too late?

Chapter 6—The Vagueness of Bosnia-Herzegovinian Identity

This chapter explores the vagueness of Bosnian-Herzegovinian identity and the invisible edges of faith in either someone (God) or something (an ideology or idea) that are trespassed and replaced with the sentiment of obedience and belonging to a collective. The consequences of the blurred edges of faith do not indicate the absence of faith but, rather, the transformation of the transcendental or metaphysical object of devotion into something presumably more tangible. At the same time, the religious collective is eventually equated to an ethnic and/or political collective. Consequently, it is sometimes impossible to determine whether a public speech or homily has spiritual, patriotic, or political objectives or only the latter.

However, the process of gaining distance from religious, ethnic, or political collectives and the abandonment of constructed collective identities, although slowly emerging, is also occurring in this small, forsaken society. Through these processes, individuals are distancing themselves from collectives in which they are born. Even as they abandon the collective identities of their parents, individuals preserve all the dominant social markers and symbols of that collective but give them new meanings and interpretations. For instance, if people decide to abandon the religious collectives in which they were born, that does not mean that they do not believe in God anymore, even when claimed otherwise. However, they have distanced themselves from the views of God, faith, and religious practices prevailing in the religious collective. Therefore, atheism and agnosticism are not necessarily the denial of or doubt in the existence of God but, rather, the refusal to accept and believe that a golden calf—usually a collective identity—is a god.

Similarly, those who start to question their ethnic identity and distance themselves from it do not suddenly start speaking another language or radically change any of the important cultural markers peculiar to that collective. Depending on the intensity of the subjective feeling of being distanced and the number of individuals involved in this process, the old identity can be reconstructed, or a new collective identity may be constructed. Socially

constructed identities are always subject to change, development, and shaping. However, if taken for granted or proclaimed and believed to be definitive and unchangeable, they become stumbling-stones to social interaction and triggers for inter-collective conflicts, especially in periods of economic and political instability.

For example, the Constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina defines Bosnia-Herzegovina as the state of three ethnic groups: Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs. However, it does not mean that this was true in the past or that such a society will exist in the future. The same is true for any collective identity that exists in our times. That these collective identities exist in the 21st century is not an argument that they existed before or that they will exist in future. This claim does not imply that “there is no history ... but that the historical process does not follow the logic of narration.”³⁴⁷

The problems that might occur in the social interactions within a collective and between two or more collectives are never caused only by ephemeral, socially constructed terms but, rather, by the process in which the attributes of the social constructed reality are applied to the faith or ideology. Nevertheless, once the deification of the collective starts, it likely marks the beginning of the decay of the socially constructed identity to which attributes of the deity had previously been applied.

In the first section of this chapter, it is argued that the general assumption that the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina consists of three ethnic affiliations which cohere completely with their associated religious affiliations needs to be re-examination because this view neglects social and demographic dynamics and the dynamics of the socially constructed phenomena. In addition to three main ethnic groups, one part of citizens in Bosnia-Herzegovina do not fully align with traditional ethnic and religious groups, and an astonishingly huge number of individuals have abandoned Bosnia-Herzegovina for good. Support for the former claim comes from a pilot census conducted in November 2012, in which 35% of the respondents did not identify with the three constitutional peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and for the latter claim the 2013 census results. After the results of the test census became public, political and religious elites organized large campaigns to instruct citizens on how they should declare their ethnic and religious affiliations in the upcoming 2013 census. As a result of these short but exceptionally vociferous campaigns,

³⁴⁷ Žižek, *The plague of fantasies*, 15.

the 2013 census statistics are significantly different than the pilot census conducted a year earlier. This shift, however, is not proof that the sentiment of belonging to traditional collective identities has not been affected but that exactly the opposite is true. A total population decrease of approximately one-fifth from the previous census in 1991 is merely one outcome of loosening sentiments regarding traditional collectives.

In the second section of this chapter, two snapshots are presented and analyzed: *Two Thousand Years of the Church* and *Bishops Have the Solution*. Those two snapshots do not originate from Bosnia-Herzegovina but are discussed to demonstrate that any religious community in the world and its members and leaders might be tempted to commit the same mistakes as the Bosnian-Herzegovinian people. The first mistake is to create an idol of one's own collective identity, in first snapshot it is the Church, in contrast to contemporary political communities. Another mistake is to believe that religious leaders are qualified to offer solutions for contemporary socio-political issues. The history of humanity proves that these mistakes are pernicious to both insiders and outsiders of group.

At the end of this chapter, it is argued that all collective identities are dynamic. None is identical to the collective identity of its predecessors, and it will be not identical to its descendants. There is no such a thing as the continuity of a collective identity, unless inheritance of the collective name and societal markers, which usually have different interpretations in different times, is considered to be continuity. More likely, the continuity of a collective identity is the continuation of discontinuities.

Bosnian-Herzegovinian Ethnic and Religious Collective Identities

It is generally assumed that the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina have ethnic affiliations that completely correspond with their religious affiliations. Specifically, this assumption means that a child born to ethnic Bosniak parents is by default Muslim, a child born to Croat parents is Roman Catholic, and a child born to Serb parents is Serbian Orthodox. However, even when official statistics prove that an assumption is generally correct, that does not mean it is completely accurate. A person could declare on a census belonging to a certain collective identity or to more interrelated collective identities. However, all collective identities, including ethnic and religious collective identities, are fluid, constantly changing, and almost never static, even among those who believe that they belong to a fixed collective identity. These qualities emerge because collective identities

are societal constructions, so they can be—and often are—reconstructed, fragmented, and deconstructed. Furthermore, individuals declare their belonging to collective identities based primarily on subjective sensations influenced by the inputs of charismatic or authoritative leaders and sometimes on their own interpretations, fantasies, and beliefs about a collective identity. Consequently, it is rarely questioned whether people possesses all the required societal markers to be part of such collectives, and there are no certificates that must be provided.

We might ask hypothetically whether the religious and ethnic collective identities among the majority of the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina are indeed two different collective identities or whether they are only two different manifestations of the same collective identity. If they are indeed two different identities, why would a person want and insist on binding one ethnic identity to a specific religious identity? What is the situation of those individuals who claim to be agnostics and atheists or those believers who claim to belong to another ethnic community? Does their lack of belonging—first to a religious and later to an ethnic collective identity—make them less ethnically and religious cognizant? Moreover, if a child born to ethnic parents automatically belongs to a predefined religious community do that assertion and practice not contradict social and demographic dynamics and fundamental individual rights that are intrinsic to contemporary times and modern societies—including the Church—such as the freedom of conscience, to believe or not believe, and to be a member or not be a member of a particular collective identity or religious community?

Despite the prevailing assumptions about simultaneous affiliations to religious and ethnic collective identities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, some individuals do not identify with any of the three ethnic collectives or the traditional religious communities. Those who do not belong to one of the three ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina are termed Others—written with the first letter capitalized—as the preamble of the Constitution states: “Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs, as constituent peoples (along with Others).”³⁴⁸ Thus, existence of Others, although in parenthesis, is officially recognized. However, the Constitution provides the constituent peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina with specific

³⁴⁸ Cf. General Framework Agreement: Annex 4; Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Paris, 14.12.1995), accessed May 2, 2012, http://www.ohr.int/dpa/default.asp?content_id=372.

privileges and rights in state governance and administration but says nothing similar about the Others.

Does this mean that, according to the Constitution, too, communitarianism—a strong sense of belonging to one’s own community, in this case, to an ethnic group—is unquestionable in present-day Bosnia-Herzegovina, and therefore, Others are irrelevant? In other words, does this mean that all the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in addition to being citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina, belong to these constitutionally defined constituent people? Or does this mean that the authors of the Constitution determined that every citizen must belong to one of the three ethnic communities—and probably also to the one of the three religious communities?

If the former principle that all citizens *per se* belong to one of three ethnic communities is true, then nothing can distort this sense of community. Why then does it have to be defined in the Constitution? Is it not only the politicization of the ethnic collective identities that undermines group dynamics, internal communication, and external communication with other groups with whom the same territory is shared?

If the latter principle that everyone must belong to an ethnic group is true, it seems to imply that public acknowledgement of belonging to an ethnic group does not result in an unconditional, disinterested, personal sense of belonging to that group. If that is true, then it jeopardizes the very essence of an ethnic community. In other words, if every person must belong to an ethnic group as defined in the Constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina to access the benefits of the public, political, and social infrastructure, and individual ambitions and interest are attained only in this way, then the essence of ethnic groups is eliminated. They are assumed to be interest groups that unite individuals through temporary economic and political interests and not groups distinguished by linguistic, cultural and other ethnic particularities.

To understand the complexity of this paradigm presented in the Constitution, we might use an example from last period of communism in Romania, when the regime imposed restrictions on its own citizens travelling abroad. Then, a foreign journalist asked President Nicolae Ceaușescu whether these restrictions violated human rights. He answered that these constraints were imposed to protect another, more important human

right: the “right to the safety,”³⁴⁹ which might be endangered by “too much travel.”³⁵⁰ Although constraints on free movement are not imposed on citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the virtual borders between communities within Bosnian-Herzegovinian society defined in the Constitution indeed indicate that the right to the safety might be endangered if it were unknown who belonged to which ethnic community. However, as it was the case in Romania, the imposition of the right to the safety on all inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina in order to safeguard collective identity is likely to produce outcomes it was intended to prevent.

Paradoxically, the main reason why a community is supposed to be a community is overshadowed by individual interests—getting a job, concession, and similar—that presumably could never be achieved if ethnic groups were not recognized by the Constitution and if the rights and privileges of each ethnic group were not defined and protected by the Constitution and state laws. In concrete terms, the principle of the parity of ethnic groups must be respected by each state institution. That means that the employees of each public authority should reflect the ethnic diversity of the state, region, or local community according to the latest census data.³⁵¹ In other words, some people, regardless of competence, would not enjoy their rights if they did not belong to a recognized constitutional group.

Although the principle of ethnic parity was introduced as a tool to protect ethnic particularities and the participation of the members of each ethnicity in state institutions according to their numerical strength, this principle undermines the very essence of ethnicity. Being a Bosniak, Croat, or Serb then becomes important only to get privileges and fulfil private interests, not to serve the particular interests of the ethnic group. Such distortion of the essence of ethnic groups makes it possible for “private interest [to] assume public significance”³⁵² in a community, what might be merely another channel for legal corruption and political propaganda that promotes and preserves inequality.

³⁴⁹ Cf. Žižek, *The plague of fantasies*, vii.

³⁵⁰ Cf. *ibid.*.

³⁵¹ *General Framework Agreement: Annex 4; Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Art. IX. 3; Cf. “Zakon o radu u institucijama Bosne i Hercegovine,” in, *Službeni glasnik BiH*, 26/04, 7/05, 48/05:Art. 8. 9.; Cf. “Zakon o državnoj službi u institucijama Bosne i Hercegovine,” in, *Službeni glasnik BiH*, 19/02, 35/03, 4/04, 17/04, 26/04, 37/04, 48/05, 2/06, 32/07, 43/09:Art. 2. 2., ect.

³⁵² Cf. Hannah Arendt, *The human condition*, Charles R. Walgreen Foundation lectures (Chicago [etc.]: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 33.

Paradoxically, the politicization of ethnicities in Bosnia-Herzegovina has distorted the ethnic groups, making them almost exclusively political entities and perverting the state from tri-ethnic (and Others) state into a tri-political entities (and Others) state. As it is evident from the recent history of political life in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the political platform and the color of a party are not very important to voters. The only thing that matters is whether a party is Bosniak, Croat, or Serb. Consequently, there are no visible differences in the policies and platforms of nominally conservative and socialist political parties, although some differences can be noticed in platforms of different ethnic parties.

Therefore, for the political and religious elite, the 2013 census—the first since 1991—was not solely a counting of citizens and their affiliations but a highly important political event, even more important than elections because it would shape a new power framework determining the political strength of each ethnic group. The ethnic declaration of each person on the census then was more important than their votes in elections; it was not so important if people decided to abstain from voting as long they were counted in the census as members of their ethnic group. Ethnic political leaders can exercise the political power guaranteed by Constitution independently on the participation of voters³⁵³ unless their ethnic political strength is usurped by members of other ethnic groups.³⁵⁴

Thus, it is safe to claim that this society in which all individuals must belong to predetermined collective identities is managed by private interests that are assumed to be collective interests. Given the matrix of existing interests in this society, internal and external dialogue—within ethnic and religious groups and between members of different ethnic and religious groups—is not high on the working agenda of political and religious elites. Under the premise that a (local or state) government or institution can be just (and good) only if it is controlled by the elite of one's own group, internal dialogue is replaced by the narrative of the unquestionable unity of the collective, supported by the narrative of general potential injustices and threats from others who might usurp the rights of one's group. Such discipline imposed upon members of a group renders relationships with

³⁵³ The seats in executive, legal, and administrative institutions on all levels are generally occupied by members of different ethnic groups based on census data.

³⁵⁴ An example of the usurpation of ethnic political space in Bosnia-Herzegovina occurred when Croat Željko Komšić, a candidate of a nominally multi-ethnic left party (SDP) but *de facto* ethnic Bosniak party for the Croat member of presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2006 and 2010, received support from Bosniaks whose outnumbered Croat voters. This political movement was technically legal because Komšić publicly called himself a Croat, so the key political position guaranteed to the Croat ethnic group was not taken from them.

members of other groups unthinkable or, if they nonetheless occur, irrelevant. Relationships between groups are handled through encounters of elites and experts in dialogue who have sole responsibility for communication with others and providing their communities with reliable, essential information about such encounters. Therefore, the word *dialogue* is repeated innumerable times in public settings, as if the simple repetition of *Zauberwort dialogue*³⁵⁵ completely compensates for the absence of dialogue. In such a social environment, societal and personal dialogues are unthinkable.

Despite these obstacles, some individuals in Bosnia-Herzegovina refuse to be identified as Bosniak, Croat, or Serbs. They do not see these ethnic groups as the coherent, unique communities that they claim to be and might refuse to align themselves with traditional collectives for several reasons. Some have different ethnic roots than those mentioned in the Constitution. Others come from mixed marriages of couples who have different ethnic origins and likely different religious affiliations, which makes it difficult for their children to align themselves with their parents' ethnic groups.

As well, others blame the ethnic parties and their leaders for claiming to be the only righteous defenders of their ethnic group from fellow citizens and for engaging in emotional, unjust politics that in the past triggered eruptions of emotions and armed conflicts among the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina. With only short intermissions, various ethnic parties have held the power in this state, so they can be blamed for the poor infrastructure, social and economic conditions, political instability, and many other easily preventable sufferings of the citizens. For these reasons, some refuse to identify themselves with any of the ethnic groups. Finally, the fourth group of the ethnically nonaligned consists of those who do not understand what ethnicity is and why they should belong to any of the ethnic groups.

³⁵⁵ *Zauberwort* (Ger. "magic word") is a German expression used to learn children to say *please* ("Sag das Zauberwort!; Wie heißt das Zauberwort? Bitte!"; "Say the magic word! What is the magic word? Please!") The word *dialogue* becomes indeed *Zauberwort* for internal and external communication in Bosnian-Herzegovinian society. It is continuously repeated by local elites and international visitors. However, to the young child, *Zauberwort bitte* means nothing more than the bizarre conditions which have to be fulfilled to make parents, grandparents, relatives, and other adults happy and willingly to meet the wishes of child. Similarly, a *Zauberwort dialogue* is a bizarre condition of external power-makers to term every interest arrangement made by the Bosnian-Herzegovinian elite as a dialogue. This condition has to be fulfilled to gain access to international funds and privileges or simply to be left in peace while carrying out one's own business while external power-makers might praise their political efforts to establish peace and political stability in Bosnia-Herzegovina as successful.

Regardless of the reasons for not associating with a constituent ethnic group and regardless of who the unaffiliated people are, they do not seem to be insignificant. In the pilot census conducted in October 2012 shows, approximately 35% of the respondents reported belonging to collective ethnic identities other than the three main ethnic groups.³⁵⁶ Since then, many campaigns to teach populations who they are have been organized and carried out vigorously by political ethnic leaders and even more emphatically by religious leaders.³⁵⁷ For example, the campaign slogan of the Bosniak ethnic parties was: “It is important to be Bosniak.” There were countless billboards all over the state with clear instructions for how Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims should declare themselves in the upcoming census: “My faith is Islam. My nationality (ethnicity) is Bosniak. My language is Bosnian.” In this context, the Grand Mufti of Bosnia-Herzegovina Husein Kavazović stated in his *khutbah* at the end of Ramadan in 2013:

Before us is a census, an important task that has to be fulfilled as an obligation to the country. Bosnia is a country of peoples who have their own names, languages, traditions, and cultures. Our [Bosnian Muslims] national [ethnic] name is Bosniak, and our language is Bosnian...

*Therefore, we need to be entered in the list of the people who inhabit this land. Let's do it as a nation that is aware of itself, our language, our religion, culture and tradition. It is our duty towards the country and ancestors who preserved our name and our life in history.*³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ A two-week-long pilot census in Bosnia-Herzegovina was conducted in November 2012. Although there are no official results from the pilot census, a daily newspaper reported that 35% of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian population did not identify as Bosniak, Croat, or Serb. However, as mentioned, these unaffiliated people are not a coherent group because they variously identify themselves as Bosnian-Herzegovinian, Bosnian, Herzegovinian, Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox, and other categories. Cf. Mensur Osmović, “Mladi se izjašnjavaju kao Bosanci i Hercegovci, smanjuje se broj Bošnjaka, Hrvata i Srba,” *Dnevni list*, November 1, 2012; Cf. M. E. Jukić, “Bosnia Census Might Be Postponed, Experts Predict,” *BalkanInsight*, November 20, 2012, accessed December 1, 2012, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnian-2013-census-might-be-postponed>.

³⁵⁷ Cf. Dženana Karabegović and Enis Zebić, “Popisna uputstva političkih i vjerskih lidera šamar multietničnosti BiH,” September 21, 2013, accessed September 30, 2013, <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/popisna-uputstva-politickih-i-vjerskih-lidera-samar-multietnicnosti-bih/25126990.html>.

³⁵⁸ Original text in Bosnian: “Pred nama je popis stanovništva, važna zadaća koju treba da izvršimo kao obavezu prema zemlji i domovini. Bosna je zemlja svojih naroda, koji imaju svoje ime, jezik, tradiciju i kulturu. Naše narodno ime je Bošnjak, a naš jezik je bosanski. (...) Kao takvima, valja nam se upisati na listu naroda koji nastanjuju ovu zemlju. Učinimo to kao narod koji je svjestan sebe, svog jezika, svoje vjere, kulture i tradicije. To je naš dug prema zemlji i precima, koji su sačuvali njeno ime i naše trajanje u povijesti.” Rijaset Islamske zajednice u Bosni i Hercegovini, “Bajramska hutba reisu-l-uleme,” August 8, 2013, accessed August 30, 2013, http://www.rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17276:bajramska-hutba-reisu-l-uleme-2013&catid=201&Itemid=457.

A message with similar purposes was sent to Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Cardinal Vinko Puljić signed a written statement on behalf of the Episcopal Conference in Bosnia-Herzegovina, obliging all parish priests to convey the following message to all Catholics:

It is the moral obligation of all Catholics to declare proudly and publicly their religious affiliation and always to declare themselves as Catholics in the census because the public profession of faith is one of the fundamental duties of every Catholic. Keeping and cherishing of national [ethnic] identity is an honorable obligation as well, especially in these times in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where almost all Catholics belong to the Croatian people.³⁵⁹

The census, postponed several times, finally took place in October 2013. The results, also postponed several times, were officially presented and published three years later in June 2016. The census conducted in 2013 revealed that Bosnia-Herzegovina had 845,847, or 19.33%, fewer persons than the previous census in 1991. The census also revealed that the cohort in their sixth decade of life (ages 50–59 years) is the biggest. Overall, 15.15% of the population belonged to this group, while all the younger cohorts had fewer members: the fifth cohort: 14.22%, fourth: 14.21%, third: 13.60%, second: 12.33%, and the first, youngest cohort (0–9 years old): 9.94%. These statistics are likely the outcome of continuous emigration of younger generations.

However, the religious and political elites could be satisfied with the census outcomes because their campaigns to teach populations who they are, which goes along with their politics, were spectacularly successful: the 35% who did not align with one of the three ethnic groups in the pilot census in 2012 melted down to only 3.68%. In addition, 96.64% of the population declared that they belonged to one of the three main religious communities, almost completely concurring with the numbers of the three ethnic groups. The final census results do not show if adherence to ethnic and religious collective identity are related. There are no data how many Bosniaks are Muslims, how many Croats are Catholics, and Serbs are Orthodox. However, from the available data, we can come to the conclusion that the ethnic collectives and their associated religious collectives have

³⁵⁹ Original text in Croatian: “Moralna je obaveza svakog katolika javno i ponosno očitovati svoju vjersku pripadnost i uvijek se izjasniti katolikom, pa i na popisu stanovništva, jer je javno ispovijedanje vjere jedna od temeljnih obaveza svakog katoličkog vjernika. A časna je obaveza čuvati i njegovati svoj narodni identitet, posebice u ovim vremenima u Bosni i Hercegovini gdje skoro svi katolici pripadaju Hrvatskom narodu.” Katolička tiskovna agencija Biskupske konferencije Bosne i Hercegovine, “Poruka kardinala Puljića u vezi s predstojećim popisom stanovništva,” August 28, 2013, accessed September 30, 2013, <http://www.ktabkbih.net/info.asp?id=38966>.

almost identical numbers: there are 1,769,592 Bosniaks and 1,790,454 Muslims, 544,780 Croats and 536,333 Catholics, 1,086,733 Serbs and 1,085,760 Orthodox Christians.³⁶⁰

At this point, we do not evaluate the census results further but conclude that they prove that the religious and political elite successfully restricted free movement across the virtual borders of ethnic and religious collectives imposed to protect the so-called right to safety. Consequently, possible reconstructions or formation of new collective identities in Bosnia-Herzegovina were prevented. At the same time, the prevailing plausibility structures, hierarchical and moral orders, legal and political systems, and vested interests that pushed apart society, driving armed conflict among all ethnic groups in the early 1990s, seem to be unimpaired. This is not an outcome of which to be proud or boast. The society that sees identity constraints and a cobweb system of standardized thinking as more important than societal balance—to which the Sabbath is more important than a man³⁶¹—and that lacks of economic and technological progress does not provide a healthy environment conducive for individuals to unfold their creativity in personal dialogue with all persons and objects in their environment. Consequently, along with the fading of social creativity and prosperity, the number of citizens and the diversity of groups inevitably decline through brain drain, economic emigration, and falling marriage and birth rates—as these census results unfortunately show to be true.

Thus, the imposition and vigorous defense of constraints on free movement across the virtual borders of ethnic and religious collectives have exactly the opposite outcomes desired by the religious and ethnic elites: general, pervasive economic, cultural, scientific, and religious impoverishment of the collectives. These results occur because all collective identities, including the ethnic and religious collective identities of the people in Bosnia-Herzegovina, are socially constructed and therefore liable to change over time. Trying to prevent the normal process of these—sometimes unrecognizable and ignored but sometimes radical—alterations and reconstructions of collective identities is a Sisyphean task that also changes a collective but not for the better.

³⁶⁰ The sources of these statistics are Hasan Zolić, ed., “Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava, stanova i poljoprivrednih gazdinstava 1991.: Stanovništvo,” special issue, *Statistički bilten*, no. 265 (1998); Usporedni podaci 1971, 1981 i 1991. and Velimir Jukić, ed., *Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2013: Final Results* (Sarajevo: Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2016).

³⁶¹ Cf. Mk 2:27

Therefore, religious elites, in particular, should avoid making any attempts to prevent natural changes and developments in even their own religious collectives or to impose any solutions on non-religious collective identities. In this context, two snapshots are presented and analyzed in the following section. The first snapshot, *Two Thousand Years of Church*, demonstrates that the common belief that the Church is a very old, unchangeable collective is only an illusion. The second snapshot presents the political conviction of a conservative politician that only clergy can provide good solutions for ethnic and national identities.

Two Snapshots

Two Thousand Years of Church

In a discussion with a Polish Dominican about the current issues in the Catholic Church, an acquaintance from Germany suddenly said: “The Church has lasted for two thousand years and has outlived many states and institutions.” With those words, the discussion ended. Why did he say this? Perhaps he noticed that the theologians’ opinions were diametrically opposed, so the discussion would likely never end. Maybe he believed that an institution which had survived two thousand years of history must have a solution for every problem and that there was no need to waste time discussing it. However, he gave no explanation, and no one asked him to explain what he meant. Were he a theologian, the discussion would certainly have become even more heated, but he was not a theologian and so might have been happy that the pointless, futile theological discussion finally ended.

There is nothing wrong with the statement that “the Church is 2000 years old,” as there is nothing wrong with the statement that “water boils at 100° C.” Water indeed boils at 100° C but only in laboratory conditions. For instance, in an aircraft thirty thousand feet above sea level, water boils at approximately 70° C. This fact does not refute the validity of the statement that water boils at 100° C but shows that it is true only under certain conditions. Therefore, if a person told a group of physicists that water boils at 100° C, they would not argue that that fact is not correct, but they would wonder why somebody said that. Either, he is not well informed or is using rhetoric to achieve an undisclosed objective. Similar curiosity might be aroused if a person told a group of Catholic theologians that the Church has two thousand years. Clearly, this statement is not wrong but is also not

completely correct, and the one who said it is either not well informed or wants to distract the attention of his audience or interlocutors.

This argument might have an impressive affect in an auditorium if uttered by an experienced orator: “two millennia of existence!” Any other institution or collective identity on this earth looks small and irrelevant compared to the Church. Who in the audience would ask if this statement is correct? Who would ask about the intentions of the speaker? Even if no one asked, some would simply repeat what they had heard, and they would not be completely wrong. However, if an argument is taken out of context, it is likely that the argument will become misleading. Passionate tea drinkers from Asia will continue to complain that personnel on European carriers do not brew tea at the correct temperature (ca. 90–95° C) while in flight, and the personnel will continue to feel offended because they know that the water must come to a boil. Nevertheless, the context is different—they are significantly higher than the altitude where water boils at the accustomed temperatures.

A similar situation happens with this argument about the Church’s age. When a person says that the Church is two thousand years old, it might seem that, from a historical point of view, he is not wrong. We know that Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, was born approximately two thousand years ago, and since His resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, the visible Church has existed. Essentially, it is just as correct to say that, throughout the past two millennia, humans have successfully wiped out countless kingdoms, states, tribes, and peoples, destroyed many cultures and languages, exterminated many plants and animals, and converted arable land, green woods, and clean rivers into lifeless deserts but have not yet destroyed the Church.

However, the intention here is not to argue whether the historical foundation of the Church happened exactly two millennia ago, thirty-forty years later, or several centuries earlier. The number of accumulated years has no significance for the faith and ecclesiology. What we want to attempt here is to deconstruct the meaning and intentions of those orators who use such an argument in a non-historical context and to identify what consequences it might have for the Church and its believers.

First, is the essence of the Church any different if it came into being two, twenty, two hundred, two thousand, or two million years ago? Is a religion more worthy and trustworthy if it is older? Is the age of a religion the quality that speaks on behalf of its

revealed truth? If this particular information is crucial for the verification of the truth, does it mean that religions older than Christianity possess more truth? Furthermore, if the age and accumulated experience of a religious organization are crucial, then the teachings of the contemporary *magisterium* should have ultimate importance and superior to that of, for example, the New Testament. However, this argument is not true. The trustworthiness of a religion is not usually gauged by its age. The authenticity of the contemporary *magisterium* is based on its fidelity to the oldest scripts, usually not the converse.

Second, does it mean that the contemporary Church, which had existed and survived as such, as we (do not) know it, has not changed during the past two millennia? Has it been the case than it needs to be protected from all enemies and their crazy innovations? However, as a matter of historical fact, the Church is never the same; it never existed before in the form that we see it today. Rather, the Church, with her long traditions, is one of the best examples of how a collective can be shaped, updated, upgraded, and changed over the centuries, that is, if we accept the Church's historicity. To use modern language, we might say: the starting point of the history of the Church happened not before two millennia ago but many years earlier in the time of the prophets. Two millennia ago, the Church was upgraded or regenerated by her Founder and later renamed by her followers. Throughout the first century, she received philosophical patches from Greek philosophy. Since then, she has been updated many times to fulfill her mission in a world that is constantly changing. The most recent major update, popularly known as Vatican II, happened approximately half a century ago. Although the Church's mission has never changed, its historical appearance has never been the same. All of this is possible because the Church is active, alive, and dynamic, not a permanent museum exhibit.

Third, it might be possible to compare the Church with a party, state, institution, or industry using the argument of its age if only the context of the latter is applied. For faith, as well as theology, the age of the Church has no importance, so it is only the context of the age of the party, state, nation, or another socially constructed group that might be (mis)applied to the Church. Therefore, this argument is nothing but political spin intended to protect not the Church but a cultural and political Christian fun club and its temporal political interests. Only in this way can it be explained why it is so important to the

“masters of the emotional kitsch”³⁶² and their admirers—the members of the fan club who feel deprived of their collective identity—that their golden calf—their fan club—is older than the fan club of others.

However, when people refer to the age of an institution, they usually do not think about all the possible meanings and consequences of these statements. Their intentions might be only to express their pride in their group, in this case, the Church, and in themselves as members of the Church. Nevertheless, this ignorance is not an excuse. When people celebrate themselves or something else, they turn themselves and their object of celebrations into an ephemeral object of worship. Initial optimism always turns into pessimism and despair, so those who preach pride destroy hope.³⁶³

In addition, this pride can be expressed only in relation to the Other. Were there no Other to whom to express this pride, it would make no sense. Consequently, if people are proud of the Church and being a member of the Church, their pride excludes or jeopardizes the mission of the Church.

Bishops Have the Solution

In September 2012, Hanna Suchocka, the first female prime minister of Poland and then the Polish ambassador to the Holy See, gave a short lecture to postgraduate students from the CEE region at the University of Angelicum in Rome. She argued that, in the years following the fall of the Iron Curtain, Polish national identity lost the place in society it ought to have because patriotism, which according to Suchocka has to be distinguished from nationalism, does not play a major role in Polish society. In her opinion, the only solution, repeated several times during the lecture, is that “the Church has to define the moral frontiers for the new Polish national identity.”

For those who have listened to similar strong statements in the public space of the former Yugoslavia over the past twenty-five years, the words of Suchocka would not be surprising. However, when such political statements with allegedly religious connotations are materialized in the political life of a society, they cannot bring anything good, neither

³⁶² Cf. Ian Buruma, *Murder in Amsterdam: The death of Theo van Gogh and the limits of tolerance* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), 65.

³⁶³ “Proud men... find it difficult to know God, because they are particularly tempted to make themselves God.” Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christianity and power politics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946; c1940), 212.

for those who purportedly need to be awakened to patriotism nor for those whose role is to be scapegoats in this awakening.

Patriotism expressed as a love for one's own community, country, or people, that is to say, the love for one's own collective identity, is not nationalism as long as it does not prevail as a religious-political program in society. Political patriotism or nationalism advocates that a state must use its monopoly and exercise its strength, including force, to persuade its citizens to behave as good, moral patriots should. Extreme political patriots or nationalists do not wait for the accomplishment of their expectations by the state but enforce justice with their own hands. The behavior to which citizens ought to adhere, according to the nationalists, is metaphysically determined by the faith. However, that faith is not based on a transcendental God—even though religious leaders might be voluntarily involved in shaping the patriotic religious-political programs, and religious terminology might be (mis)used—but faith in a transcendental collective identity.

Such deformed patriotism, as any deformed religion, can bring neither salvation nor solutions to the fabricated problems in society. If the problems are fabricated, that is, if things that are not problems are presented as problems, they can be solved not by real actions but by irrational measures. Once the masses give credence to the prophets of false religions and fake patriotism and accept irrational solutions to non-existent problems, a nightmare begins in society. Such fake patriotism, which strips the humanity of from humans, brings nothing good but takes all. Once humanity is taken from humans, the freedom and morals of each individual are buried.

One example in recent European history of fake patriotism that takes all and brings nothing good is Serbian patriotism during the 1990s. Serbian leaders provoked a series of wars with all their closest neighbors. The heroes of Serbian patriotism, most of whom later appeared in front of international tribunals for war crimes in the former Yugoslavia, fabricated problems and applied irrational means—in this case, war—to solve them. The outcome of this fake patriotism was complete defeat: the Serbs lost all the wars they started. Instead of expanding territory, taking it from neighbors to protect Serbs who lived outside the borders of Serbia, Serbia ended smaller than it started. Especially painful for followers of the Serbian patriotism was the loss of Kosovo, the holiest symbol of Serbian patriotism. In addition, Serbia ruined the international reputation it had enjoyed since the 19th century and many people, and instead of living in the promised land, as promoters of

patriotism promised, the majority of Serbia's population lives impoverished in miserable conditions.

Serbian society is only one in long queue of European societies that have believed in the distorted religion of patriotism. Both the Croatian and the Bosniak masses were too short-sighted. The only difference was that the objectives of Croatian and Bosniak patriotism were smaller than those of Serbian. However, that does not mean that these two fake patriotisms were more human. None of the fake patriotisms has a human face.

Let us look back at Suchocka's statement: "The Church has to define the moral frontiers for the new Polish national identity." What does this statement mean? First, it would be very useful to identify who the subject in that sentence is—that is, who the actor is—what the object is—the problems and solutions—and what the predicate is—the proposed actions and measures. Such identification will make it possible to comprehend all the possible consequences of this patriotism.

Here it is important to emphasize that this example is proposed not to discredit Polish patriotism but to examine the patriotism that allegedly originated in religion as it is understood by Suchocka, her party, and likely many clerics in Poland. This focus is the best way to explain how patriotism and religions which excluded love of neighbors polluted Bosnian-Herzegovinian society. However, Polish society and all other societies in which patriotism that originates in religion is used as an argument for political discourse and actions could learn from the Bosnian-Herzegovinian case what might happen if they would give credence to such fake patriotism.

Subject

Grammatically, the subject of Suchocka's statement is the Church. That answer was the easy part, but what does the term *the Church* really mean in the ambassador's sentence?

a) One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church

Is it the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church as the Catholic Church, Orthodox churches, Anglican Church, and most Protestant Churches professed every time the Nicene Creed is pronounced? If the answer is yes, what then does the Church defined as such by the First Council of Nicaea in 325 and later redefined by the First Council of Constantinople in 381 have to do with the new Polish national identity? Not much. Additionally, the Polish collective identity could be completely deconstructed before

another ecumenical council discussing the issue. For instance, none of the contemporary collective identities existed during the time of these two mentioned councils, perhaps the Jewish and Chinese peoples, but they have also changed much over the past 17 centuries.

b) The People of God

Is the Church, the subject of this sentence, the people of God? This term is mentioned in the New Testament, *Lumen Gentium*, and many other Church documents. Pope Benedict XVI gave the most innovative definition of the Church as the people of God at the farewell ceremony of World Youth Day 2008 at Sydney Airport: “a great celebration of what it is to be the Church, the people of God throughout the world, united in faith and love and empowered by the Spirit to bear witness to the risen Christ to the ends of the earth.”³⁶⁴

If this is the subject we are seeking, then what does the people of God “united in faith and love” have to do with the Polish national identity? In other words, why should a Catholic from Austria, Brazil, Canada, Angola, Japan, or Russia take part in defining the moral frontiers of Polish national collective identity, which is only one among hundreds of collective identities? Would the Polish people be happy if their moral frontiers were set by Catholics around the world, including their neighbors?

c) The Polish National Catholic Church

Is the Church we are looking for the Polish National Catholic Church in the United States? There is also another church with a similar name in Poland: Polish Catholic Church. These two Churches include mostly people with Polish origins, so they could be concerned with defining the moral frontiers of the Polish national identity. However, both communities are breakaway Catholic Churches, and therefore, it is hard to imagine that the ambassador to the Holy See referred to churches not in union with the Roman Catholic Church.

³⁶⁴ Benedict XVI, “Farewell ceremony: Address of his Holiness Benedict XVI,” Apostolic journey of his Holiness Benedict XVI to Sydney (Australia) on the occasion of the 23rd World Youth Day (July 12 - 21, 2008), accessed December 6, 2012, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/july/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080721_farewell_en.html.

d) Bishops (and Clergy)

It seems that all possible meanings for the term Church have been exhausted, and still none meets the prerequisites to fulfil the task laid out by Suchocka. Therefore, we might presume that the term *Church* here refers to bishops or, more broadly, the clergy.

To be clear, there is no theological argument for why bishops and priests can be labeled and defined as the Church. Nevertheless, the usage of the term *Church* is made by cultural Christians, others unfamiliar with Christianity, and, paradoxically, clergy. To paraphrase this paradox, we can use Lacan's humorous expression drawn from Proverbs 30:22: "[T]he madman is not only a beggar who thinks he is a king, but also a king who thinks he is a king."³⁶⁵ Thus, if the king who thinks he is a king is a madman, what then is the king who thinks he is a kingdom, and, to adapt this question to the issue in question, what is a cleric who thinks he is the Church?

Clearly, ambassador Suchocka is familiar with theological language and Church terminology. Indeed, almost two decades of her professional career were firmly linked to Church affairs, playing a very important role in the Catholic Church in Poland.³⁶⁶ While she was the prime minister of Poland (July 1992–October 1993), the Concordat between the Holy See and Poland was finally signed on July 28, 1993.³⁶⁷ A few months later, on January 19, 1994, Pope John-Paul II appointed her a member of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. However, the Polish parliament did not ratify the Concordat until February 28, 1998, after Suchocka became the minister of justice in October 1997. From 2001 through 2013, Suchocka was the ambassador of Poland to the Holy See. Therefore, we can assume that her public statements are not only the opinions of the government that she represented but also of the bishops of Poland. Therefore, her faux pas about the meaning of the term *Church*, or the faux pas of the informants and lobbyists surrounding her were not faux pas at all.

³⁶⁵ Cf. Slavoj Žižek, "The Matrix, or, the Two Sides of Perversion" (Inside the Matrix: International Symposium at the Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe, October 28, 1999), accessed December 6, 2012, <http://www.lacan.com/zizek-matrix.htm>.

³⁶⁶ Cf. Torild Skard, *Awomen of Power: Half a Century of Female Presidents and Prime Ministers Worldwide* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2014), 344–46. A biography of Suchocka is also available on the official website of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (<http://www.pass.va/content/scienze-sociali/en/academicians/former/suchoka.html>).

³⁶⁷ Cf. "Konkordat między Stolicą Apostolską i Rzeczpospolitą Polską, podpisany w Warszawie dnia 28 lipca 1993 r.," in *Dz.U. 1998 nr 51 poz. 318*, 2045–55.

Although we could never reach this conclusion when being obedient to the Gospel and researching documents of the Catholic Church, we ultimately can only assume that the subject *the Church* in Suchocka's statement is bishops (clergy) of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland. With this identification of the subject of Suchocka's statement, we can also write it: "The bishops (clergy) have to define the moral frontiers of the new Polish national identity."

Object

Grammatically, the ambassador's sentence has two objects: the moral frontiers and the new Polish national identity. However, the first object is a metaphysical term which cannot be an independent subject and, therefore, cannot autonomously perform an action. Furthermore, this object is tightly connected with the action, or the predicate. Therefore, it is analyzed along with predicate later in this text. The second object—the new Polish national identity—is in its essence also a metaphysical term. However, this term is more likely to be associated with an active subject: the Polish people.

What is "the new Polish national identity" supposed to be? Why would a person need a new identity? There generally are three reasons why a person might need a certain new thing: either he does not have it yet, his neighbor has better one, or it is already possessed but no longer serves its purpose because it is outdated, broken, and irreparable. However, identity is not a product usually offered in the market. A personal identity is created and defined by a person, a society, and the social and natural environments. If a person needs a new identity, then an event seriously bad or wrong has occurred: the person has no identity at all, the person is a criminal and needs a new identity to hide himself or criminal activities, the person might be persecuted because of his identity and needs a new identity to hide, or the person resents his past and wishes to get rid of it.

However, why does an existing national and ethnic group that has a history and collective identity need a new identity that is clearly different from the current one? If the group's members were all criminals, they would never hide behind a new identity as a group. If they were persecuted, they might assimilate, emigrate, or fight back. If they resented their past and wanted to get rid of their own history, they might falsify it.

Two centuries ago, national romantics indeed launched projects intended to create new collective identities not known before across Europe. These efforts included embellishing history with new interpretations of past events and facts. Suddenly, the new identities

were not new but had existed since the oldest times. For example, important personalities who died long before the creation of these national collective identities were posthumously labeled Austrian, Italian, German, Croat, and Serb. Kafka, though, likely had no idea what the Austrian identity was, the great innovator Leonardo da Vinci certainly did not consider himself to be Italian; Martin Luther could barely imagine what the German identity would look like in the 19th century and onward, and despite being born on an island that is part of Croatia today, Marco Polo never heard of the collective identity of Croats as he travelled the old world. Along with other ideologies in recent European history, the mythologies of fascism and communism have churned out glorious new histories as foundations for ‘old identities.’ Unfortunately, the work of mythologies has not stopped with the departures of these infamous ideologies. New ideologies and their mythologies claiming to be histories follow the very same pattern as their forbearers.

Is there no way to quickly realize the concept of a new national identity that does not cleanse the society and embellish the past? If not, then the ambassador’s sentence might be further restated as follows: “The bishops (clergy) have to define the moral frontiers for the necessary cleansing of society and the embellishment of the past to create a new Polish national identity.”

Predicate

The predicate of this sentence is: “have to define.” In a wider sense, as discussed, the predicate includes “the moral frontiers.” The imperative “have to” stresses the author’s belief that there are no other options: something must be done by the subject. This action is the exclusive duty and obligation of the subject because no one but the Church—that is, the clergy—is explicitly mentioned. The imperative is followed by the verb “define,” that is “to define the moral frontiers.” If we think this phrase here refers to the morals of the Church, then we are in a cul-de-sac for three reasons.

First, the morals and especially the moral frontiers of the Church are quite well defined, although there are some matters, such as nanotechnology, bionics, and other not-to-be-invented technologies which might influence humanity that have not yet been discussed and defined. Certain complex border issues regarding morals can never have clear limits, and there will always be disagreements between scholars. What that has not yet been defined then needs to be defined?

Second, some scholars do not agree with the Church's official teachings on certain moral issues. However, from the predicate, it cannot be concluded that a demand for the reconsideration and redefinition of already defined moral frontiers and teachings is made here.

Third, the moral frontiers that have to be defined deal exclusively with the Polish people, as seen in the object of the main sentence. We do not have the information regarding what makes the Polish people different from other nations in the area of morals and if they need extra attention. If this matter only concerns the definition of national identity, it is not clear what anyone in the Church has to do with this particular national identity.

Apart from the claim that the Polish people are not good patriots, which is not an issue of moral theology, no other moral issue is introduced in the speech of the ambassador. Therefore, it might be assumed that the ambassador does not demand the introduction of new teachings in moral theology. As well, there is no request to redefine existing moral teachings. The only possibility remaining is that existing moral teachings have to be declared loudly and clearly for those who are disobedient and so not good patriots. In other words, the predicate means: what individuals in Poland are not allowed to do needs to be pronounced.

If this sentence is correctly analyzed, the full restatement should be as follows: "The bishops (clergy) have to say what has to be done and what must not be done for the necessary cleansing of society and the embellishment of the Polish past to create a new Polish national identity."

The Bishops Have the Solution

The analysis and reinterpretation of Suchocka's statement can be summarized in one clear, short sentence:

THE BISHOPS HAVE THE SOLUTION!

This reinterpreted statement of Suchocka sounds very similar to the religious-political slogan of Imam Khomeini, "Islam has the solution," which, after the revolution in 1978, turned out to be "The Ayatollah has the solution!" That solution turned Persia into Iran and the monarchy into the only contemporary theocratic political society where the clergy has limitless power.

Is that what Suchocka and the bishops of Poland covet for Polish society? Could it be that Jarosław Kaczyński's PiS conservative party, after securing decisive support in the most recent parliamentary elections in 2015 and winning enough seats to govern alone, has started to implement this statement into practice by rendering already conservative Polish laws more conservative? Is this the beginning of a cleansing of a society, overcoming a recent unprincipled past to create a new national identity based on conservative clerical Catholic model of good Poles?

Epilogue

Believers often tend to imagine the Church, or their religious community, as a transcendental institution where saints dance, an orchestra of angels plays heavenly melodies, and all other mortals must adhere to a prescribed set of rigorous doctrines, morals, and rituals. However, all believers, including theologians, have experienced troubles in their lives when they have unresistingly followed such currents, which do not flow from the Gospel and the shores of faith.

Each baptized person should have two religious identities, along with all other identities each individual carries. First is the personal identity of the believer who maintains constant communication with God. The second identity is the identity of a member of a group that witnesses, supports, and inspires insiders and outsiders. If the first identity blurs with the second, then the doctrines, morals, and rituals of that collective do not differ from any other interest collective. Thus, faith in a transcendental Being can be mistaken for faith in a transcendental collective being, prohibiting skepticism and turning doctrines, morals, and rituals into tools to enforce obedience. Such faith could indeed foster religious nationalism, patriotism, and idolism. However, are those communities that profess such faiths indeed religious communities, or they are only political entities with defined moral frontiers?

Vicissitude of Collective Identities

All collective identities, including ethnic and religious identities, are socially constructed and, as such, are continuously shaped, updated, and upgraded but also abandoned and eventually deconstructed through the interactions among individuals.³⁶⁸ The abandonment

³⁶⁸ In a famous lecture "*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*" delivered at the Sorbonne in 1882. French author Ernest Renan describes how the inhabitants of France have changed, deconstructed, and constructed new

of a collective identity for another or the deconstruction of one identity and the construction of a new identity is general happening when the interests that pleased individuals and held them together as a group cease to exist, or their attraction become weaker than the desire to improve the conditions of an individual or group's life.³⁶⁹ Although decisions to change or reshape personal and group identities—whether opening them to new challenges and social environments or rejecting confrontation with new societal challenges and opting for self-isolation or any other substantial change—sometimes appear to be abrupt and radical, they are almost never made in haste. Indeed, it is more perplexing that, in times of increased general and social mobility, such changes do not happen more often. However, what appear to be radical decisions to break links with all or part of collective identities and their associated habits and traditions are usually made after personal sentiment that a change is the best option and that no other options are left, and not necessarily personal experience, has long matured.

The dynamics of constructing, reshaping, deconstructing, and building new collectives is one of the most important foundations of our civilization and the world we know. Had our predecessors not deconstructed their old collective identities and embraced new ones, the world would not look as it does today. None of the present-day religious groups would exist if no individuals and groups had decided to convert and embrace new faiths. None of the present-day national collective identities existed only two centuries ago. Who would be French today if there had been no French Revolution because there was no French national identity before the revolution? Who would be German today if the patchwork states that came into existence following the Treaty of Westphalia had not been united in the 19th century because Germany as a state with the collective identity of Germans had never existed before? Who would the Croats and Serbs be today if the 19th-century national movements had not been successful at awakening so-called dormant thousand-year collective identities? Who would the Bosniaks be today if the delegates of

collective identities. According to Renan, the French people are mostly descendants of the Celtic Gallic people, who abandoned the Celtic language for Latin during five centuries governed by the Roman Empire. Later, they adopted the name of their German conquerors, the Franks, who assimilated into these Celts, giving up their Germanic language for French. Cf. Ernest Renan, "What is a nation?," in *Nation and narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London, New York: Routledge, 1990), 8–22.

³⁶⁹ For political and economic reasons, many people, even whole groups, are ready to change their collective identity. Gellner Ernest, in the introduction to his book *Nationalism*, shares the interesting example of "[a] certain Himalayan trading community" that, "having come to the conclusion that the future lay with the Hindu Nepalese state and not with the previously prestigious Tibetan-Buddhist culture to the north, decided to switch from its own tribal language to Nepalese and from Buddhism to Hinduism." Gellner, *Nationalism*, 2.

the Second Bosniak Congress in besieged Sarajevo had not decided on September 27, 1993, on behalf of all Serbo-Croatian-speaking Muslims, to give the new “old” name of Bosniaks to the Muslim political collective identity?³⁷⁰

If these collective identities were not known in present-day Europe, individuals would certainly affiliate themselves with other collectives. The First and Second World War would not have happened, but there might have been other human-made catastrophes. Even on a world without the borders and limitations known to us, history would still happen. Individuals would be equally intelligent as we are and might have more or less chances and information than we do today. Finally, I would be I, and you would be you. We would still be what we are now as biological individuals but, at the same time, different because our languages, religiosity, philosophies, and lifestyles might be different.

A good example of this presumption is the city of Vienna, a former center of power that nearly a century ago was the capital of a huge deconstructed monarchy and is successful and growing today due its ability to attract new flows of immigrants. While a significant share of the contemporary inhabitants of this city likely have ancestors with Germanic origins, an exceptional percentage of Vienna’s inhabitants have Slavic, Hungarian, and other origins, which can be proved by a review of the largest Vienna city cemetery, *Wiener Zentralfriedhof*. In the oldest parts of the cemetery from the late 19th and early 20th century, one can observe that great number of the gravestones have non-Germanic names engraved on them. The newer gravestones also have many non-Germanic family names but Germanic first names. The disappearance of the non-Germanic first names, as well as the likely oblivion of these forefathers’ language and culture, does not mean that the k.u.k. servants from throughout the monarchy, refugees, and economic migrants were forced to adopt a new identity or be murdered. This shift rather was a conscious act, taking advantage of the circumstances.³⁷¹

³⁷⁰ Renan is correct when he stated that a new collective identity cannot be established without forgetting the old. Once the old identity or parts of it have disappeared can the history of the new ‘historical’ identity be created. Cf. *ibid.*.

³⁷¹ One might wonder what prevented the k.u.k. court, unlike its contemporaries, from playing the role of the Piedmonts or Prussians in the cultural and eventually the national unification of Central Europe and applying the same process that occurred in Vienna for centuries to the whole monarchy. Instead, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was the cradle of the numerous small nations and, therefore, the progenitor of the process known as Balkanization. Austrian author Norbert Mappes-Niediek is of the opinion that the

If contemporary collective identities do not have a centuries-long past, they cannot have a long future either. We are not what our predecessors were in their lifetimes, nor will our descendants be who we are. Although children inherit many features, customs, and behaviors from their parents, they are neither biological nor social clones of their parents. Each child shares more biological similarities with all of humanity than special peculiarities with their closest ancestors. On a social level, each civilization and society, through education in families, schools, religious communities, and political parties, attempts to produce more or less identical copies of itself in new generations. A process that ensures that new generations inherit the identity of their predecessors first requires obedience and faith in the collective and its tradition—conditions that the founders of all new collective identity and reformers disobeyed. Paradoxically, the very first transmission of a socially constructed collective identity to new generations is a radical change and corruption of that identity.

The sentiment of belonging to a collective identity is transmitted to new generations, but this transmission is always corrupted, so identity can never be identical. To perceive the discontinuities in identical identities, we can consider expatriates and their children. The children of immigrants born in host countries usually do not speak the language of their parents well but speak the language of the host country better than their parents. The children might feel attached to their parents' ethnic community, but their sentiments toward their parents' homeland and ethnic group are certainly different than the sentiments of their parents. We can continue reviewing other samples, and in all, we would likely find that social markers of a collective identity are present in both children and their parents. However, none of these markers would have same quality or, intensity, and sometimes, the meaning would also differ. Although the differences in social markers would be less obvious in a native family, the outcome would be same: collective identity is interpreted differently by parents and children.

Certainly, collective identities have existed since modern *homo sapiens* appeared, but the vulnerability of the collective identity is not obvious because the lifetime of the collective

Habsburgs were afraid of one strong Austrian nation which, like the French nation, might no longer need its monarch. Consequently, the Habsburgs supported the development of small nations, hoping that they will be in a permanent state of tensions and therefore dependent on a high judge, a role that would be played by the monarch. Cf. Norbert Mappes-Niediek, *Die Ethno-Falle: Der Balkan-Konflikt und was Europa daraus lernen kann*, 1st ed. (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2005), 127.

is usually longer than the lifetime of individuals. When individuals encounter their own vulnerability, insignificance, and mortality, generally in early adolescence, they develop a state of unbearable uneasiness, striving to attain metaphysical qualities of an idealized human being, such as invincibility, eternity and unchangingness, and idolize the collective identity to which they belong.

This state is not limited to only individuals passing through the turbulent years of growing up. Collectives, too, pass through the periods when they are exceptionally active, impulsive, self-confident, and self-satisfied: when they examine their own limits and frontiers, confronting and oppose the ballast of the past, challenging the self-confidence and boundaries of their neighbors.

A period of the maturation of collectives, from emotional, fragile groups into more organized, self-sustained groups, follows periods of shock caused by social apathies and tragedies and amid the happiness that follows revolutions, wars, and other social earthquakes that give birth or re-birth to collectives. During this period, the members of the newly established or essentially renewed collective are full of enthusiasm. They demonstrate solidarity and likely unconditional loyalty, ready to bear any sacrifice to attain the desired objective of the collective: freedom. All the major collective narrations—like myths of genesis, heroes, and martyrs—and moral doctrines and views originate from this period that, paradoxically, symbolizes the group's imperceptible detachment from the beliefs that initiated its formation, suggesting that the primary group objectives are replaced with new ones. The air from the base no longer blows, and the sails of the collective have to be adjusted so that they can be driven by other winds. The enthusiasm which fueled the masses is being replaced by obedience and interest, while enthusiasts are replaced by conformists.

Every being that is built through the union of individuals is driven by ideas, emotions, and habits.³⁷² Ideas are only apparently originate from the masses. In reality, intelligence is not a characteristic of groups,³⁷³ so ideas originate from passionate enthusiasts who can convey their message and convince others to join the group, thereby attaining their

³⁷² Cf. Gustave Le Bon, *Psychologie der Massen* (Hamburg: Nikol, 2009), 16.

³⁷³ A group is usually not an especially intelligent being. The intelligence of a collective is not the sum but the average of the intelligences of all its members; otherwise, groups would be more intellectually productive than individuals.

interest. Once the great ideas, or transcendental Being,³⁷⁴ have achieved the desired objectives, and the collective is formed, the ideas that led to the establishment of that collective are replaced by the ideas of the great, new collective. Learned guardians introduce and present as tradition new customs, norms, and morals that sustain and guide the new group and protect the achieved results.³⁷⁵ Thus, faith in the transcendental Being or great ideas is replaced, or at best coexists, with faith in the collective, a socially constructed identity.

To keep that faith, emotions³⁷⁶ and rituals are needed. All generations have to learn the narratives that originate from the period of the collective adolescence and refer to the time of the genesis of the collective identity, as well as obeying moral doctrines and participating in rituals. While the members or followers change as people age, and new members join, the narratives, moral, and rituals usually do not change much. Depending on how fast the environment is changing and how much the members of the collective are isolated from the rest of the world, these narratives, morals, and rituals lose their primary meaning over the course of time. What members of collective at first did by default, later might be done only if the authorities insist on obedience. The more morals and rituals do not accord with the environment and the life of the followers, the more obedience to fulfill them must be demanded. Ultimately, if obedience becomes the most important objective of the faith in the collective identity, what is *per se* deviation from tradition, that creates tensions which inevitably lead to alterations in that identity.

Hence, individuals who venerate and believe in the eternal nature of their earthly being, their socially constructed collective identity, can be upset if the existence of their identity is questioned. If the socially constructed identity is the object of veneration, so it must also be also the final goal and resting place of the dead. The alteration of the narratives, morals, and rituals is the disturbance, deformation and, therefore, desecration of their resting place that is supposed to be eternal. In turn, eternal life is lost.

³⁷⁴ Cf. Ex 19:4-8

³⁷⁵ Once God had taken His people from Egypt, giving freedom to the slaves, He was not needed anymore. His place was taken by the golden calf, and great Israel had outsmarted the Pharaoh, as the Book of Exodus records. Cf. Ex 32:1-5

³⁷⁶ Dominique Moisi believes that three emotions—hope, humiliation, and fear—drive all socio-political affairs. Cf. Dominique Moisi, *Geopolitics of emotion: How cultures of fear, humiliation and hope are reshaping the world*, Kindle edition (London: Random House. Kindle Edition, 2009).

If this is true, then might we question what constitutes the faith in the transcendental Being? Does it mean that people truly venerate phantom religions, and no one is fully aware of it? Is there really a Jewish YHWH, Christian God, or Muslim Allah, or are they,³⁷⁷ for the sake of these religions, relegated and buried in the synagogue, church, and mosque as Nietzsche claims?³⁷⁸ If this is the case, then through such religious collectives, dead predecessors control the lives of the living. Those who have died have achieved eternal life because they live and reign as long as there is a collective identity venerated by those who live. In other words, those who live are dead; those who are dead live on, and only those who die will live!

Conclusion

The vagueness of identity and vicissitudes of collective identities are the main issues of Chapter 6. Following Nelson Mandela's statement about the non-congenital nature of hating others—no one is born hating another person, people must learn to hate³⁷⁹—we can add that nobody is born affiliating with a set of norms that constitutes a collective identity. People must learn to be part of a socially constructed identity (e.g., a school system, catechesis) and pass through an initiation process (e.g., studying for degrees, sacraments) to secure full membership in a group and access to its social infrastructure. Belonging to a group depends on learning to belong to that group, so the sentiment of belonging might have different intensities according to the methods of learning (and forgetting) and the age of the group and individual. Thus, if the group's existence depends on the learning of its members, the collective identity remains unchanged only if the group and individuals in it learn nothing new compared to their precursors. The group that constantly learns more is in constant change.

These two issues—the vagueness of identity and the vicissitudes of collective identities—recur throughout the second part of this thesis. In Chapter 4, it is argued that the fantasies of the Balkans' neighbors influence the lives, thoughts, and behaviors of the Balkan

³⁷⁷ Whether the transcendental Being is God or gods depends on which monotheistic religion is venerated: a religion of one almighty, eternal, transcendental God who has three names that refer to the same God or a religion of one almighty, eternal, transcendental collective identity whose three names indeed refer to three different gods.

³⁷⁸ Cf. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche and Walter Arnold Kaufmann, *The gay science: With a prelude in rhymes and an appendix of songs*, 1st ed (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 181–82

³⁷⁹ “People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” Nelson Mandela, *Long walk to freedom: The autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1994), 542.

people who, deliberately playing the roles attributed to them, mirror the past of their neighbors. Thus, their identities shift according to the fantasies of their northwestern neighbors whose identities also change. In Chapter 5, an article on the “tragic” changes in the Balkan collective over many centuries is analyzed. However, the author of the article not only examines past changes but, in accordance with the prevailing plausibility structure of the ethno-clerical collective inherited from pre-Vatican II generations, also tries to impose and maintain in the present day changes in the social behavior of the collective to keep it apart from other collectives.

In this chapter, it is argued that all collective identities, including the ethnic and religious identities of the people in Bosnia-Herzegovina, are socially constructed and, therefore, continuously shaped, updated, and upgraded through interactions between individuals and might eventually be abandoned or deconstructed. Thus, if there are in a society claims and beliefs that collective identities are definitive and unchangeable, then these collectives have already replaced their Creator or founding ideas with golden calves. These false religions are triggers for conflicts and stumbling-stones for intergroup relations and social interaction between groups.

According to the final results of the most recent census in Bosnia-Herzegovina, conducted in 2013, changes in the collective identities of the people in this state do not seem to be happening. Compared to the previous census in 1991, the 2013 census did not confirm the vicissitudes of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian collective identities but, rather, the solid homogeneity of these ethnic and religious collectives. Overall, 96.32% of the respondents affiliated with one of the three main collective ethnic identities, while 96.64% declared their affiliation to one of the three main religious communities. These census confirmed that Bosnia-Herzegovina is one of the most religious societies in Europe, and that religious and ethnic affiliations, as in no other society in the world, almost completely correspond (there are almost identical numbers of Bosniaks and Muslims, Croats and Catholics, and Serbs and Orthodox), and the edges of the sentiment of belonging to a religious and an ethnic collective are blurred or do not exist all.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the dynamics of changes in collective identities, one of the important fundamentals of civilization and indicators of societal and personal dialogues in a society, are completely absent in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian collectives or that the members of these groups do not learn new knowledge. However, these shifts are

not happening in the centers of Bosnian-Herzegovinian collectives but on their peripheries and, therefore, are, for the moment, not easy recognizable. The possible societal earthquake that 35% of the population might declare affiliation with none of the three constitutional ethnic collectives on the census, thus forcing changes to the constitution, political system, and societal infrastructure, did not happen, thanks to the campaigns of the religious and political elites. Ethno-religious elites, determined to defend the construction of the collective identities they represent, vigorously conducted campaigns to teach uncertain members of population who they were and thus prevented societal changes, closing the doors to societal dialogue and possible new beginnings. Can they indeed block changes and keep collectives in isolation?

The results of the census, however, do reveal other huge changes in Bosnian-Herzegovinian society. It has lost nearly a fifth of its population, which is 19.33% smaller than the population living in Bosnia-Herzegovina 22 years ago. Furthermore, all the younger age cohorts, starting with the fifth cohort, grow progressively smaller. To these results, we add the trend of economic migration by younger generations. Even if the ethno-religious picture of the country remains almost untouched, the social structure is entirely changed, shaking collective identities. If approximately one-fifth of the population has abandoned their societies of origin, then that interests that held together and made them happy in those societies and their collectives have ceased to exist or become weaker than the desire to improve their personal lives.

Part III—Challenging the Straight Lines and Their Confines

In the first part of this thesis, it is argued that the Catholic Church introduced dialogue with non-Christian religions through implementing internal dialogue within the Church itself. It is also claimed that critical influences on John XXIII's later thinking, demeanor, and actions came from his attempts to familiarize himself with the Balkans multitude, its social norms of interaction enabling its inhabitants to live alongside each other in a multi-religious, multi-ethnic society, and the circumstances of the small Catholic Balkan communities on the fringes of the Catholic Church with completely different lives than the Catholics in the center of Catholicism. John XXIII came to see the convocation of Vatican II as possible and necessary through his personal encounters with Catholic minorities on the fringes of the Catholic world, Orthodox and Muslims in predominantly Orthodox and Muslim societies in the Balkans, Jewish refugees from across Europe passing along the Balkan route to safety, and French industrial society during his mission in France. The convocation of the Second Vatican Council was not an act of courage or of a senile, old man but a prudent decision by a man with great personal knowledge uncommon in the Roman Curia then.

Understanding the Balkan multitude thus played an essential role in the redefinition of the Church's mission and role in contemporary society. However, as argued in Part II, modern western society, on one hand, and the Church and her universities, on the other hand, have played different role in the Balkan societies and the Church in the Balkans. Neighboring western societies lacking personal knowledge of the Balkans—that is, having insufficient knowledge on the societies behind the former so-called *antimurale christianitatis*, the socio-psychological precursor to the notion of the Iron Curtain—projected, and still project, their fantasies and taboos onto the Balkans, with profound impacts on Balkan societies.

For their part, Church administrators and particularly teachers in Church educational institutions have failed to recognize the significance of the Balkan multitude and

encouraged young clerical students from the Balkans to disdain the multitude of their society. Upon returning to their home dioceses, these students have assumed positions in the education of clergy, as well as in the hierarchy, from which they have promoted scorn of the multitude. Consequently, although the universal Church has recognized the value of the multitude in the Church and the world and redefined its mission in Vatican II, the clergy in the local church in the Balkans, or at least Bosnia-Herzegovina, have despised and undermined the societal multitude. An example of such an attitude is presented in Chapter 5 in an analysis of an article by a bishop and professor of theology in Sarajevo and a former student in Rome. Consequently, it is not strange that today, the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina have identity vagueness, as argued in Chapter 6.

The last part of this thesis is entitled “Challenging the Straight Lines and Their Confines”. The notion of straight lines is a metaphor for idealized, socially constructed ideas—habitual patterns of social behaviors transferred to new generations through education and the desire to preserve such ideas and models of practice unchanged and straight as if they were timeless truths, not human-made constructions originating from human’s temporal and variable habitat. As the width and depth of geometric straight lines are negligible, so are the constraints of their social counterparts. All social straight lines, therefore, are narrow and empty, pointless, and potentially fatal for the human soul. As Vienna artist Hundertwasser points out while speaking against rationalism in architecture, “The straight line is godless and immoral. The straight line is not a creative line; it is a duplicating line, an imitating line. In it, God and the human spirit are less at home than the comfort-craving, brainless, intoxicated, and unformed masses.”³⁸⁰ Thus, for Hundertwasser, straight lines are essentially artificial; they do not exist in nature, and God does not create them. Nevertheless, believing that the right and good path follows only straight lines allegedly created by God, humans are anxiously preoccupied with preserving and reproducing these lines. Consequently, we can find them everywhere, in almost every human creation, in architecture and the design of societies and social groups.

Especially significant is Hundertwasser’s interpretation of the trinity in architecture: architect–bricklayer–tenant. In his view, true architecture exists only if these three persons or functions are in unity or, even better, the same person, as in the Holy Trinity.

³⁸⁰ Friedensreich Hundertwasser and Pierre Restany, *Hundertwasser* (New York: Parkstone Press International, 2008), 123.

Otherwise, the architect and bricklayer have no relationship to the building, and the tenant has no relation to the structure. In other words, if an architect designs a building following lessons learned during education and the rules of construction authorities but ignores the nature and context of the future tenants, the trinity in architecture is broken. The trinity of architecture is also broken if the bricklayer is not allowed, under the threat of job loss, “to vary, if only slightly, the construction of a wall according to his own moral and aesthetic concepts.”³⁸¹ However, if neither the architect nor the bricklayer will live in the construction they have designed and created, there is no reason for them to worry about it. They are doing what they are expected to. However, the tenant who will live in the construction has no relation to it because the tenant’s needs depend on the personality and social context and might be completely different.

Hundertwasser’s concept of the trinity in architecture can be applied to the architecture of any societal constructions, including—but not limited to—the societal design of dialogue, education, and authorities. Here, we have arrived at the point when we might ask our hypothetical questions: what if the trinity of dialogue is broken? What if the architects of dialogue in a society design a construction that is in accordance with their education and the prescriptions of the competent authorities but does not have a personal relationship with the society or experience in dialogue? What if the bricklayers of such structure of dialogue also lack a relationship to it because they are not allowed to vary the construction of a wall according to their own moral and aesthetic concepts? What if the architects and the bricklayers of dialogue are not concerned about buildings they are designing and building because they do not plan to dwell within them? What then happens with the tenants? Could they have relations to dialogue within such a structure?

Given these considerations, the title “Challenging the Straight Lines and Their Confines” indicates that in this part, the social constructions of dialogue and their confines are challenged. If the structure of dialogue is built on straight, narrow, constrictive lines, it will be not hard to challenge it. However, this does not mean it will be easy to replace it.

The attentive reader has already noted that none of the post-Vatican II architects of dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina, whether theologian or non-theologian, has been quoted in this work. The reason for this is not that no authors have written exciting papers on

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 120.

dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina, or that I am ignorant of them. Rather, I intend to investigate whether the present-day architectural design of dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina, particularly within the Catholic and/or Croat community, is based on narrow, straight lines, or whether it considers the individual needs of its inhabitants/members and their social contexts. In other words, this study focuses not on the question whether the architects of dialogue have successfully implemented lessons learned from education, along with the prescriptions of the competent authorities, but whether they, the bricklayers and the tenants, have a relationship to the dialogue, making up the trinity in the architecture of dialogue.

The answers to the questions posed in this introduction are sought in the qualitative research carried out in the thesis framework. The research methodology and field research procedures are presented in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 elaborates on the immediate context of this qualitative research and the new issues concerning the role of education and age in dialogue raised during the qualitative research. Chapter 9 presents the qualitative research.

Chapter 7—The Field Research: Sampling and Interview Techniques

Qualitative research is a relatively new type of inquiry in practical theology and other theological disciplines. Other human sciences, particularly sociology, preceded theology in this field and have strongly influenced qualitative research methodologies and techniques. However, the objectives and task of qualitative research in practical theology are quite specific and can be summarized in three words: see—judge—act. In other words, the aim of qualitative research in practical theology is to provide concrete answers to contemporary questions: what is happening in the society or community at question (see, hear, experience), why it is happening (judge, analyze, make an informed decision), and how to respond to it (act, plan and carry out actions).³⁸² This logical, three-step process, implemented in the encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (1961) by John XXIII, was first developed by Belgian Cardinal Joseph Cardijn (1882–1967).³⁸³

Qualitative research, though, has not been welcomed in all theological circles. This resistance has arisen not only because qualitative research methodologies and techniques originated in sociology. Moreover, the see–judge–act approach, unlike the pray–study–act approach,³⁸⁴ requires a dialogue of architects–bricklayers–tenants and the joint design of new constructions appropriate for its tenants. This approach is radically new and incomprehensible in the sterile world of straight lines. The dialectical nature of qualitative

³⁸² These stages normally are followed by the application of social principles to practice. First, one reviews the concrete situation, secondly, one forms a judgment on it in the light of these principles, and thirdly, one decides what, in these circumstances, can and should be done to implement these principles. John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra: Encyclical of Pope John XXIII on Christianity and Social Progress* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1961), accessed January 16, 2016, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater.html, 236.

³⁸³ Cardinal Cardijn prepared a dossier of ideas and suggestions for the proposed encyclical. Cf. Cardijn.info, “See, Judge, Act – Fifty years of Catholic social practice,” Cardijn Community International, accessed February 5, 2016, <http://www.cardijn.info/2011/05/see-judge-act-fifty-years-of-catholic.html>. As a young priest, Cardijn was perplexed by the easy abandonment of the Church by young workers who associated it with the oppressors of the working class. As a chaplain in a suburb parish of Brussels, he examined the nature of this phenomenon and the circumstances of these young workers before designing and building a construction for them and together with them. Using the see–judge–act method and inviting the young workers to do the same, Cardijn was one of the first true architects of dialogue and worker communities.

³⁸⁴ This was a slogan of the Association catholique de la jeunesse française (ACJF) (1886–1954). Cf. Pierre Pierrard, *Les laïcs dans l'Eglise de France: XIXe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Editions ouvrières, 1988), 123–25.

research in theology has the potential to change the known limits of social straight lines, so the suspicion directed toward this approach is understandable.

This chapter presents the methodologies and techniques used in the field research. The purpose of these interviews was to collect descriptions of the interviewees' lifeworld and their views on personal and societal dialogue, particularly with Muslims and within their collective group and the society in question. The first section of this chapter is dedicated to the sample methodology. First, the chosen complex mixed non-probability sampling technique is presented, followed by additional criteria for selecting informants. Finally, the general demographic and geographic context of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the reasons for limiting the sample to one specific geographical region and demographic sub-group are explained. The second section reports the interview procedures used and the methods for processing of the collected materials after the interviews were conducted. The two interview techniques used (semi-structured, face-to-face interviews and structured e-mail interviews) are discussed first, followed by the interview guide, predefined topics, related questions, and other important aspects of the field research, such as informed consent, anonymity, voice recordings, notes, and transcription. The third section of this chapter elaborates on more pertinent features of this qualitative research, including the mode of contacting potential candidates, the location of interviews, gender, language issues, and other particular details related to the sampling methodology and the context of the field research.

Sampling Methodology

It was not possible to ensure the reliability of random probability sampling for this research because basic accurate demographical data for Bosnia-Herzegovina were missing. Reliably establishing the total members of ethnic and religious groups was not feasible, so other sample schemes were sought. It was decided to seek potential suitable research participants through a combination of parallel sampling design of two subgroups of opinion-makers with two mixed non-probability sampling techniques: purposive critical case sampling and snowball sampling conducted in two stages.

Critical Case Sampling

The framework of the sample design in this research is critical case sampling. This technique is generally used to select a relatively small number of participants from a

larger population who are likely to “yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge.”³⁸⁵ The distinctive feature of “a critical case is a statement to the effect that ‘if it [research case] happens there, it will happen anywhere,’ or vice versa, ‘if it doesn’t happen there it won’t happen anywhere.’”³⁸⁶ In this research context, it is logical to expect that, if the chosen group of informants has difficulty with personal and societal dialogue, particularly in relations with Muslims and within their own religious and ethnic groups, then the whole population has such problem. However, if they informants engage in both dialogues, it is logical to expect that whole population also does so.

Regardless of how convincing the evidence for this technique might be, application of this non-probabilistic sampling technique does not allow making broad generalizations to all possible cases. However, the weight of the gathered evidence might allow us to claim logical generalizations in the case studied.³⁸⁷ The critical case group in this research is a group of opinion-makers who affiliate with the Catholic Church and/or the ethnic Croat community in Bosnia-Herzegovina and live or work in geographical region of central Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Opinion-makers

In this research, the term *opinion-maker* is used to refer to individuals who belong to the higher echelons of society; however, their social status does not entail top decision-maker responsibilities. In a wider sense, their role might be viewed as societal intermediators as they mediate the decrees of top decision-makers to subordinates and ordinary citizens and transmit voices from bottom up, to the decision-makers. Thus, the duties and social positions of opinion-makers, independent of whether they are elected by their peers or appointed by their hierarchical superiors in their societal sub-group (that is, whether they are appointed from above and elected from bottom), depend on their communication skills to transmit and process information from the top to the bottom of society and vice versa.

³⁸⁵ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*, 3 ed (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2002), 236.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 236-237.

Although opinion-makers do not participate in top executive decision- and policy-making processes within their social sup-groups and their society, they usually have communication channels available through which they can—although not all necessarily use these communication tools—influence decision making and implementation processes. Depending on the competence and communication, analytical, and interpretation skills of opinion-makers, top decision-makers use their reports and advice to judge and assess which decisions might be useful, desirable, and applicable and which are inconceivable. Thus, opinion-makers have important social roles: to maintain social balance, ensure societal peace, and shield top decision-makers and mainstream ideology from danger, harm or unpleasant criticism. Nevertheless, we should be aware that, through blind obedience or simple conformity, an opinion-maker might come to “view himself as the instrument for carrying out another person’s wishes, and he therefore no longer sees himself as responsible for his actions,” as Milgram proposes.³⁸⁸ However, even if opinion-makers might deny responsibility for their own actions in such situations, they cannot claim to not know that certain processes are happening in society.

Based on these characteristics of opinion-makers, it is safe to say that they have more insight into a variety of social phenomena and processes than any other population stratum, so, since it was not possible to ensure a statistically representative sample, these qualities make opinion-makers the best representative sample in the probabilistic sample technique.

Parallel Sampling Design

Parallel sampling is a very important part of the sampling design in this research. This approach has been adopted to gather, compare, and analyze feedback from two groups of opinion-makers. In Onwuegbuzie’s words, “parallel sampling designs ... represent a body of sampling strategies that facilitate credible comparisons of two or more different subgroups that are extracted from the same levels of study.”³⁸⁹ The aim of using parallel sampling design is to collect feedback from two groups who address the research questions according to their own characteristics and interests. The subsequent examination and comparison of their arguments is believed to achieve broad

³⁸⁸ Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to authority: An experimental view* (London: Tavistock, 1974), xii.

³⁸⁹ Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie and Nancy L. Leech, “Sampling Designs in Qualitative Research: Making the Sampling Process More Public,” *The Qualitative Report* 12, no. 2 (2007): 230, 243-246.

understanding of the research questions. The participants of this research belong to two sub-groups of opinion-makers with equal number of participants: a group of clerics and a group of non-clerics.

Snowball Sampling in Two Stages

Two diverse criteria were applied in two stages of snowball sampling in this field research. In the first stage, potential respondents were traced through the researcher's social contacts and those contacts of first two respondents. I selected the first two interlocutors, who each suggested two other potential respondents. Accordingly, in the first stage of the field research, there were six respondents and six interviews.

Unlike the first stage of sampling, the tracing of potential respondents in second stage did not rely on social contacts but on the answers, comments, and statements of all the previously interviewed respondents. Persons directly or indirectly mentioned in the interviews were considered to be candidates for the next interviews, giving preference to those mentioned in negative contexts and whose statements or actions were criticized by one or more respondents.

Sample Size

The sample size in this research depended primarily on the research objectives and available data, which limited the choice of the sample design. The selected critical case sampling technique of two sub-groups of opinion-makers combined with two stages of snowball sampling significantly restricted the pool of potential respondents. However, this sample design was believed to ensure the best possible selection of potential informants and information collected. Therefore, it was assumed that conducting fourteen qualitative interviews in this phase of the research would be a sufficiently large sample size to enable the comparison of results and logical generalizations.

Participants

Fourteen opinion-makers in two groups with equal numbers of participants took part in this research. The participants' professions and other social markers important for this study are discussed here without disclosing their identities.

Group of clerics. Three participants in this group are engaged in parish pastoral work: two are parish priests, and one is a parish vicar. Two other priests work as teachers at two

Catholic theological faculties in Sarajevo. The last two participants in this group perform other pastoral ministries in the local church. Four clerics are diocesan priests, and three are Franciscan priests. All the participants in this group live and work in central Bosnia-Herzegovina. Five were born and grew up in this part of the state, while the other two were born in other parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition to their obvious affiliation to the Catholic community, they all associate themselves with the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croat ethnic group.

Group of non-clerics. The group of non-clerics has more heterogeneous professions than the first group. Two are professional politicians; one is a member of a mainstream ethnic Croat party that is in power, and another is a member of smaller Croat ethnic party in the opposition. One participant is an executive manager in a large, state-owned company, and another is an entrepreneur and owner of a large private company. One participant is a high-ranking military officer, one is an intelligence officer, and one is a journalist. Five participants are married and have children, and two are unmarried. All the participants were born, grew up, and have residences in central Bosnia-Herzegovina. Five also work in this region, while two work in other parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Five participants in this group associate themselves with the Catholic Church. Two of these five are directly related to the Catholic Church, and the other three consider themselves to be regular churchgoers. The two other participants have very good relations with clergy and great knowledge of Christianity and Islam but consider themselves to be agnostics. Six affiliate themselves with the Croat ethnic community, and one who is from a mixed family (his father is a Muslim Bosniak, and his mother is a Catholic Croat) associates himself with the category of Other.

Geographical and Demographical Limitations of the Sample

The participants in this research are Croats and/or Catholics who have residences in one of the three cantons in central Bosnia-Herzegovina: Zenica-Doboj Canton, Central Bosnia Canton, and Sarajevo Canton (numbered Cantons 04, 06, and 09, respectively, on Map 1). These geographic and demographic limitations of the research sample were selected due to the specific demographic, cultural, and social contexts. It was believed that in-depth evaluation of this sub-group of Croats and Catholics would yield rich qualitative results related to the issues studied and provide a relatively balanced picture of the overall status

of the intragroup and intergroup relationships and societal and personal dialogue in present-day Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The differences between this group of central Bosnia-Herzegovinians Croats and Catholics and those who live in northern and southern Bosnia-Herzegovina are evident in their traditional, historical, and ethnological heritage, such as dialects, folklore, music, customs, and religious devotions. These differences are reminders of the historical circumstances and geographical features of inhabited areas that determinate the economic conditions and, consequently, the lifestyle of this social group. Another very important social factor that has shaped the character and indelibly marked the culture and identity of this subgroup of Croats and Catholics are their immediate neighbors of different religions and ethnics, mostly Bosniaks and Muslims, with whom they have shared the same territory and therefore a common history for centuries. Social interactions between these groups and personal contacts between immediate neighbors have resulted in many common customs, language dialects, and other similar cultural and social features.

Before industrialization, the inhabitants of central Bosnia-Herzegovina, regardless of religion or ethnicity, inhabited a mountainous area with a continental climate, and they bred cattle and cultivated a limited number of crops. Later, with the beginning of industrialization, they also earned livings working in forestry, mining, and related crafts and trade professions. In the second half of the 20th century, a number of technological, mining, and metal processing industry centers developed in this area. Residents of northern Bosnia-Herzegovina based their economy on agriculture and later also the food industry. Unlike the other two areas, southern Bosnia-Herzegovina is characterized by the modest natural resources of karstic regions whose inhabitants engaged in livestock breeding and agriculture.

The political transition from socialism to democracy in early 1990s, followed by an armed conflict (1992–1995), and a long period of uncertainty after the war, has shaped the lives of all inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Through this history, the status and position of all Croats and Catholics in the state have completely changed. However, each of three subgroups had a different kismet.

The Croats in the previously underdeveloped south of the country who are accustomed to working hard have taken advantage of the absence of major war activities in their region, the lack of government controls, unbroken communication with neighboring Croatia and,

through Croatia, with the rest of the world, and huge logistical demand for many kinds of supplies from the rest of the state. Consequently, during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, this region developed economically and politically. Some individuals from this area also exercised political authority and influence in the legislative and executive branches of the government of neighboring Croatia, influencing and complicating for a long time the relations between these two newly independent states.

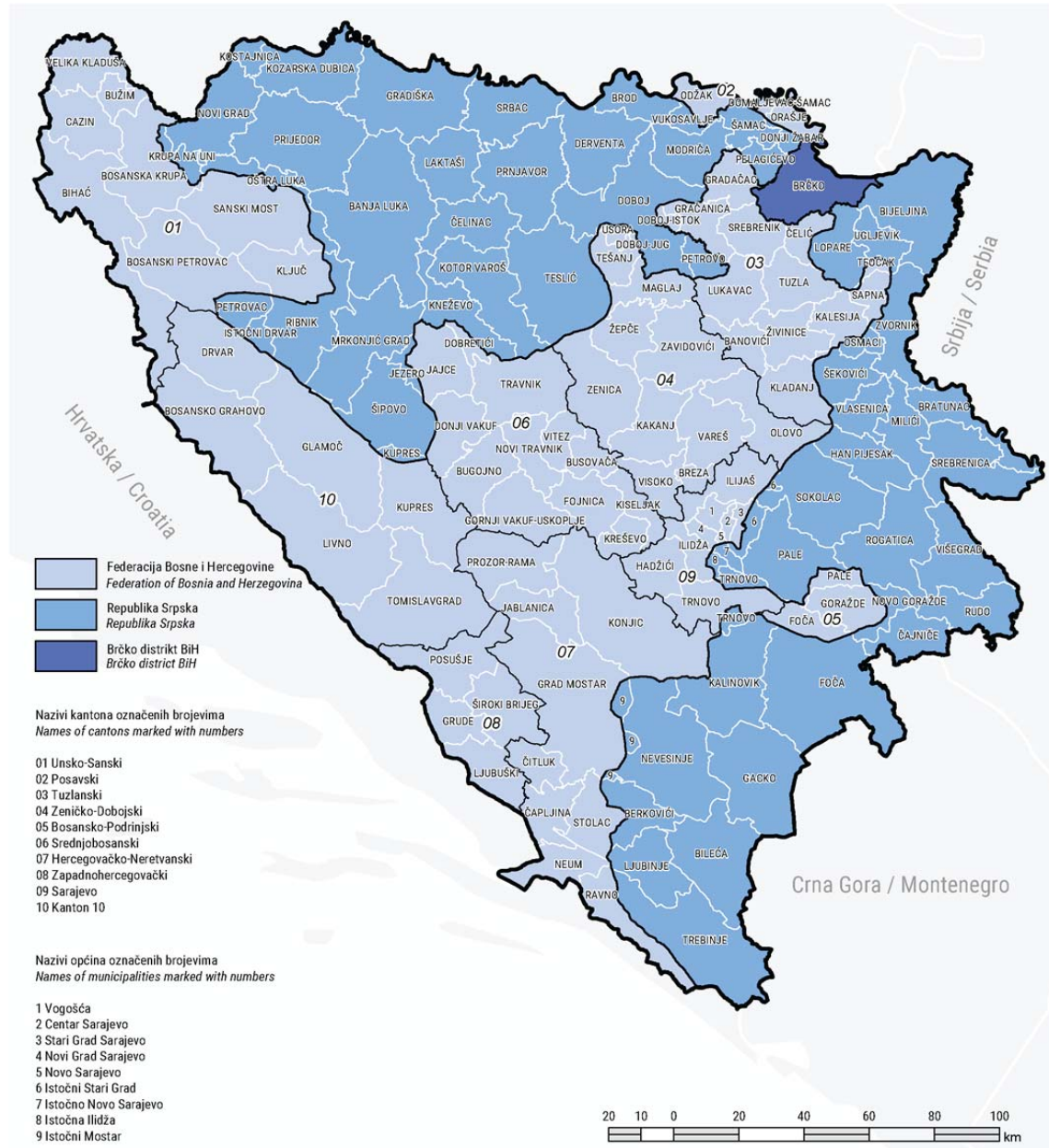
During this same period, Croats in northern Bosnia-Herzegovina experienced the worst exodus in their history. Various armed forces of Serbs from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia expelled almost all non-Serbs at the very beginning of the conflict in 1992. Only a tiny area which today is part of the Posavina Canton successfully resisted. After the war, a negligible number of refugees returned to these municipalities that have become an integral part of the Republika Srpska. Most refugees have remained in the Republic of Croatia, while others have immigrated to other countries. Individuals from this region who were entrepreneurs before the war have continued their businesses in Croatia, and some individuals in this group have also become involved in politics in the Republic of Croatia.

While some Croats who lived in central Bosnia-Herzegovina were also expelled by Serbian military forces at the beginning of the war, a much larger group than the first one was expelled by Bosniak military forces. A third part of Croats in central Bosnia lived in a few small enclaves under siege by Bosniak forces in 1993–1994.³⁹⁰ After the Washington Agreement was signed in 1994,³⁹¹ ending the siege, a large number left the region. Most of those expelled by Serbian or Bosniak forces temporarily lived in southern Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia and later managed to move to other parts of Croatia or Western Europe, while others returned to their devastated homes. However, the reconstruction of infrastructure and the possibility of economic development and prosperity in either part of Bosnia-Herzegovina were not satisfying. Pre-war industrial plants were devastated or had become outdated. Engineers and experienced, educated workers, were not available. Without the human capacity and financial resources, it was

³⁹⁰ There were two enclaves in the present-day Central Bosnian Canton (Lašva valley and Kreševsko-Kiseljak-Fojnica) and two in the Zenica-Doboj Canton (Žepče-Vareš and Usora).

³⁹¹ The Washington Agreement brought an end to the conflict between Croats and Bosniaks and established the Bosniak-Croat federation, officially the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Washington Agreement (01.03.1994), accessed November 1, 2015, <http://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/fullpeace/BoH%2019940301.pdf>

unrealistic to expect the old industry to reawaken. However, soon after the war, an entire new profile of business and companies emerged in the smaller areas of this region that had been less favored and undeveloped during the communist period. Political representatives from the Croats of this region, though, remained overshadowed by their colleagues from the southern part of the state.



Map 1. Administrative map of Bosnia-Herzegovina administrative units established by the Washington and Dayton agreements³⁹²

³⁹² Jukić, *Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 2013, 21.

As result of the Washington Agreement (1994), which ended the Croat-Bosniak conflict, and the Dayton Agreement (1995),³⁹³ which ended the war between all parties in the conflict, Bosnia-Herzegovina was constructed as a single political unit composed of two largely autonomous entities: the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to which the small, self-governing administrative unit of District Brčko BiH was added in 1999 [Map 1].

The Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina is composed of ten autonomous cantons. Bosniaks constitute the majority in five cantons,³⁹⁴ Croats the majority in three cantons,³⁹⁵ and two cantons³⁹⁶ have an approximately equal number of Croats and Bosniaks. Serbs are the minority across the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina but the majority in the Republika Srpska, where Croats and Bosniaks are minorities.

This present-day majority status of one of the three ethnic groups in the administrative territories differs from the situation before the transition from socialism to democracy and the armed conflicts between ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early 1990s. Here are briefly presented the demographic changes in the number of Croats in three sub-groups according to the present-day administrative organization and the available data from the 1991 and 2013 censuses.

In 1991, 760,852 Croats lived in Bosnia-Herzegovina, accounting for 17.38% of the country's population. In 2013, there were 544,780 Croats living in Bosnia-Herzegovina, or 15.43% of the total population. Over this period, the total number of Croats decreased by more than one-quarter (28.40%).

While the three groups of Croats were approximately the same size in 1991, the situation was significantly different 22 years later [Figure 1]. In 1991, southwestern Bosnia-Herzegovina was home to 33.56% of the total number of Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Herzegovina-Neretva Canton: 14.41%, West Herzegovina Canton: 11.32%, Canton 10: 7.82%). In 2013, 50.78% of all Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina lived in this region.

³⁹³ The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, known as the Dayton Agreement, was drafted at the United States Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, and signed in Paris on December 14, 1995, putting an end to conflicts between all sides in Bosnia-Herzegovina. *General Framework Agreement: Annex 4; Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina*.

³⁹⁴ Una-Sana Canton (01), Tuzla Canton (03), Zenica-Doboj Canton (04), Bosnia-Podrinje Canton (05), and Sarajevo Canton (09).

³⁹⁵ Posavina Canton (02), West Herzegovina Canton (08), and Canton 10.

³⁹⁶ Central Bosnia Canton (06) and Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (07).

Although the percentage of the total Croat population in Bosnia-Herzegovina living in this region increased by 17.22%, that does not mean that the number of people in this group significantly increased; there were only 21,234 more persons in this sub-group. Instead, the number of Croats in the other two groups significantly decreased.

In 1991, 33.88% of all Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina lived in central Bosnia-Herzegovina (Sarajevo Canton: 4.56%, Central Bosnia Canton: 17.33%, Zenica-Doboj Canton: 11.98%). In 2013, 29.18% of the Croat population in Bosnia-Herzegovina, meaning that there were 98,860 (38.34%) fewer Croats in this region.

Nearly one third of Croats (32.54%) lived in 1991 in present-day Republika Srpska 20.01% and 12.52% in the other four northern and eastern cantons of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Posavina Canton: 5.94%, Tuzla Canton: 5.18%, Una-Sana Canton: 1.38%, Podrinje Canton: 0.01%). Twenty-two years later, there are only 20.04% of all Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina in this region. Thus, the 2013 census revealed that this sub-group of Croats has 135,986 (55.46%) fewer people than it did 22 years earlier.

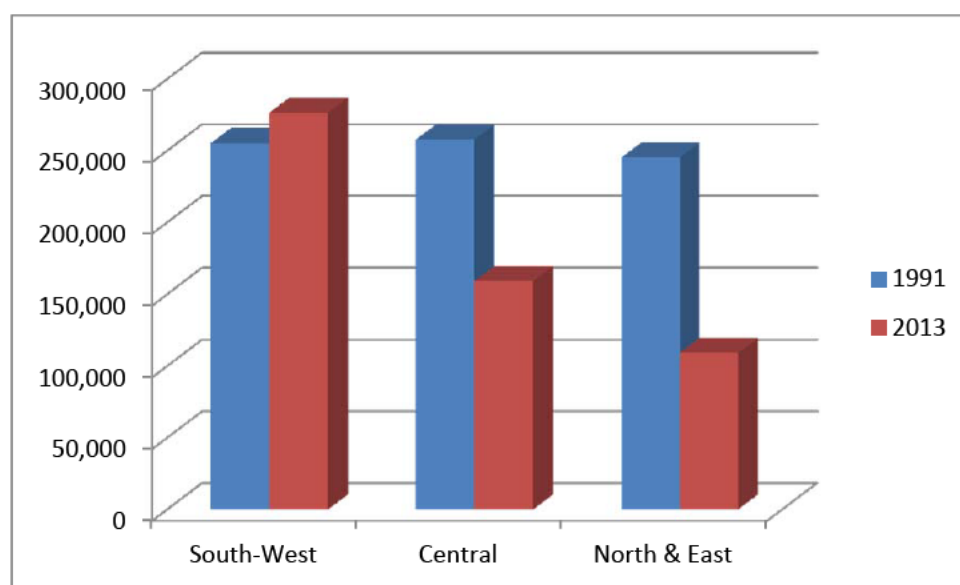


Figure 1—Bosnia-Herzegovinian Croats in three geographical regions in 1991 and 2013³⁹⁷

Based on these population changes, it can be assumed that the societal and cultural contexts of the sub-groups of Croats in the northern and eastern parts of country have

³⁹⁷ Figure 1 based on data from Hasan Zolić, ed., “Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava, stanova i poljoprivrednih gazdinstava 1991.: Nacionalni sastav stanovništva,” special issue, *Statistički bilten*, no. 234 (1993); Rezultati za Republiku po opštinama i naseljenim mjestima 1991. and Jukić, *Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2013*.

been greatly influenced by their relations with their Serbian neighbors and exceptionally burdened by armed conflict with Serb militias and exodus of Croat population in this region in early 1990s. Similarly, the identity of Croats in the central part of the state has been shaped by their relationship with their Muslim-majority neighbors, which were burdened by Croat-Bosniak conflict in early 1990s. The third sub-group of Croats living in the south-western part of the state had limited contact with other ethno-religious groups, are suspicious of all others including the other two groups of Croats who have been influenced by their neighbors, and have difficulty communicating with all who might attempt to limit or bring into question their political and economic advantages in any way.

Therefore, an in-depth evaluation of the sub-group of Croats and Catholics living and working in the central part of the state was expected to yield qualitative information related to intrareligious and intra-ethnic dialogue, especially the sub-group's interreligious and inter-ethnic relations with their Muslim and Bosniak neighbors.

Interview Techniques

Thirteen face-to-face interviews were conducted in locations chosen by interviewees. Due to difficulties arranging one interview and per the interviewee's request, the questions and responses were sent via e-mail in one case.

The three main topics were pre-defined in the interview guide used with all respondents. However, face-to-face interviews involve immediate communication, so the predefined topics and related questions were used as general guiding themes and interview anchors, allowing the conversation to flow freely around them. In addition, the interviewees raised complementary issues and topics. The semi-structured interview methodology, interview environment, and other factors, such as anonymity, sample methodology, and synchronized communication,³⁹⁸ ensured that the interviewees generally did not repeat what they said or wrote in public. Furthermore, social cues, such as voice, intonation, and

³⁹⁸ Cf. Roberta Bampton and Christopher J. Cowton, "The E-Interview," *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 3, no. 2 (2002): 6, accessed December 22, 2015, <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/848/1842>; Cf. Raymond Opdenakker, "Advantages and Disadvantages of Four Interview Techniques in Qualitative Research," *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 7, no. 4 (2006): 1, 5., accessed December 22, 2015, <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/175>

body language, could be observed.³⁹⁹ The interviewees had no or very little time left to reflect on questions, so it is assumed that their answers were spontaneous.⁴⁰⁰

Tangents in the face-to-face interviews raised a number of unexpected deliberations and issues, generating much more data for analysis than expected.⁴⁰¹ In addition to the time-consuming process of transcription, analysis, and evaluation of context, it was also necessary to redefine the hypotheses of this thesis, which also required modifying the enquiry, concept, and content of the dissertation and introducing new issues elaborated in various chapters of the dissertation. In other words, a new structure woven from the interview conversations throughout the field research emerged. Thus, these interviews had a significant impact on the overall research and its outcomes.

In general, the outcomes of face-to-face interviews and their impacts on research are not tangible in the context of a text-based environment. Since an e-mail interview consists of asynchronous written communication, independent of time and place,⁴⁰² the role and influence of a researcher are quite limited in many aspects. It is the interviewee who interprets the questions and has much time to reflect on them and formulate answers.⁴⁰³ Once the questions have been sent, the interviewer cannot modify or reword them in the course of conversations or push the interviewee in directions important for the research. As well, there are no opportunities to ask additional questions or short sub-questions, seek further clarification, or observe conversational cues.⁴⁰⁴ Given these disadvantages, spontaneous answers are missing in e-mail interview. The interviewee followed the schedule and answered each question without raising any additional topics himself. His answers were concise, and to a certain extent, he repeated positions and opinions previously expressed in public.

³⁹⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, §§ 7.

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, §§ 8.

⁴⁰¹ Cf. Graham Gibbs, “Two short videos of lectures on issues of transcription: Part 1 and 2” (Huddersfield, March 09, 2010), accessed January 11, 2013, <http://onlineqda.hud.ac.uk/movies/transcription/index.php>

⁴⁰² Cf. Bampton and Cowton 6.; Opendakker 5, 29.; Joëlle Kivits, “Online interviewing and the research relationship,” in *Virtual methods: Issues in social research on the Internet*, ed. Christine Hine (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2005), 35–49, 35.

⁴⁰³ Cf. Bampton and Cowton 8; Cf. Opendakker 32.

⁴⁰⁴ Cf. Bampton and Cowton 16; Kivits 40.

Interview Guide

The interviews conducted for this research were semi-structured. Three main topics and related questions were pre-defined and outlined in an interview guide, as shown in Table 5. The topics served as interview anchors around which the conversations flowed freely, and the outlined questions as memory prompts. Therefore, no questions asked in the interviews were identical. Instead, all the questions were personalized to make them comprehensible for interviewees while, whenever possible, covering all three topics from the interviewees' perspective and in their own terms (e.g., their values, beliefs, emotions, behaviors, relations, stories).

Topics	Outlined questions
1. Personal relations/dialogue with Muslim(s)	a) Personal opinion of Muslim neighbors
2. Societal relations/dialogue with Muslims	b) Views on the local Catholic church's efforts to build and maintain dialogue with Muslims
	c) Does, in opinion of the interviewee, the Catholic clergy promote dialogue with Muslims?
	d) Do, in opinion of the interviewee, ethnic politicians and the state administration encourage or dissuade interreligious dialogue?
	e) Who, in opinion of the interviewee, has more influence on the formation of public opinion: the political or the religious elite?
c) Personal and societal dialogue within own ethno-religious group	f) Does the interviewee see any polarization in his ethno-religious group?
	g) How does the interviewee view personal relations within his group and, in particular, relations between elites on one hand and believers and voters on the other hand?
	h) How does the interviewee view the attitudes of the clergy and believers toward agnostics and atheists?

Table 5 – Interview guide

Informed Consent and Anonymization

Explanations of the research and the extent of confidentiality preceded each interview. The explanations given to every interviewee covered: 1) the subject, objectives, and aims of the research; 2) the possibility to quote excerpts from their interviews in the final work; 3) assurance that all participants' data and responses would remain confidential and

anonymous; and 4) the participants' right to refuse to answer on any or all of the questions and to withdraw from the study at the any point. All the interviewed research participants indicated that they understood the explanations and agreed to proceed with the interview. Willingness to proceed with the interview was assumed to be freely volunteered, informed consent.⁴⁰⁵

Special attention was paid to guaranteeing the anonymization promised to all the interviewees. In an attempt to balance ensuring the anonymity of informants and preserving their information,⁴⁰⁶ all identifying information data have been replaced by codes or removed from the corpora of the transcribed interviews. In addition to the ethical concerns of ensuring that respondents “should not suffer embarrassment or harm”⁴⁰⁷ or compromise their “relationship with their colleagues,”⁴⁰⁸ business partners, hierarchical superiors, and decision-makers, there are at least two more connected reasons for believing that “hiding behind a cloak of anonymity”⁴⁰⁹ was necessary. First, it is believed that concealment of the identity of the research participants is a sort of temporal removal of their public and professional identities to ensure that individual replies reveal interviewees' personal opinions on the questions asked, instead of—and this is the second reason—producing more public spaces to serve their own political projects or plausibility structures to which they consent by accepting public roles and duties in their professional community. In other words, given the public roles and duties of the participants who were opinion-makers and public figures in their social groups, protecting their privacy was intended to provide them autonomy to express personal opinions that do not necessarily coincide with the expectations of their societal groups. The professional statements of any public person inevitably are restricted by the established policies, moral, practices, and customs of the social sub-groups to which they belong or the institutions they represent (i.e., socially constructed facets). As well, such statements are usually available publicly,

⁴⁰⁵ Cf. Louise Corti, Annette Day, and Gill Backhouse, “Confidentiality and Informed Consent: Issues for Consideration in the Preservation of and Provision of Access to Qualitative Data Archives,” *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 1, no. 3 (2000): 6., accessed 03.2016, <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1024/2207>

⁴⁰⁶ Cf. Frances Rock, “Policy and Practice in the Anonymisation of Linguistic Data,” *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 6, no. 1 (2001): 2.

⁴⁰⁷ Conventionally, in Punch's words, “respondents should not be identifiable in print and that they should not suffer harm or embarrassment as a consequence of the research.” Maurice Punch, *The politics and ethics of fieldwork*, Qualitative research methods v. 3 (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986), 45.

⁴⁰⁸ Judy H. Shulman, “Now you see them, now you don't: Anonymity versus visibility in case studies of teachers,” *Educational Researcher* 19, no. 6 (1990): 12.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

so their repetition in interviews would offer relatively little new information and would not be of great use for this research. Moreover, such statements likely would not provide insight into interviewees' lifeworld and views on interreligious and intrareligious dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Therefore, it was believed that anonymization would result in answers giving clearer insight into the research subject. Therefore, not only the interviews excerpts in this dissertation but also the corpus texts that might be eventually scrutinized in secondary use⁴¹⁰ are free of direct identifiers (e.g., personal name) and other indirect identifying information (e.g., geographical location, societal status, age, education) that might breach the confidentiality of the interviewees or any other person or entity.⁴¹¹

Nevertheless, absolute anonymity in qualitative research that focuses on a relatively small social group, as Hopkins⁴¹² and Nespör⁴¹³ argue, is not attainable. For instance, it cannot be avoided that some persons will know or guess the identity of research participants. The persons who helped contact and access potential research participants know the identity of at least one other interlocutor. Also, the interviewees who mentioned in their interviews other persons interviewed later—as part of the sampling methodology—might know or guess the identity of other interlocutors. Also, beyond the researcher's control, participants' intimates and associates might guess their identities from reading the excerpts quoted in this paper despite anonymization. Although absolute anonymity is not attainable, high levels of anonymity have been achieved by conducting the field research in several cities whose names are not disclosed, not linking the participants' professions and the codes representing them, anonymizing all direct and indirect identifiers, and relying on the confidence of all persons involved in this research.

It is worth mentioning that four of the fourteen participants indicated that they would not object to publishing their names and entire interviews; however, they consented for their

⁴¹⁰ Cf. Denise Thomson et al., "Central Questions of Anonymization: A Case Study of Secondary Use of Qualitative Data," *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 6, no. 1 (2005), accessed January 3, 2016, <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/511/1102>.

⁴¹¹ Cf. UK Data Archive, *Qualidata Process Guide: Qualitative Data Processing* (Colchester, 2012), accessed December 15, 2015, www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata/documents/dataprocess.doc, 15.

⁴¹² Cf. MaryCarol Hopkins, "Is anonymity possible? Writing about refugees in the United States," in *When they read what we write: The politics of ethnography*, ed. Caroline Brettell (Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, 1993), 121–29, 124.

⁴¹³ Cf. Jan Nespör, "Anonymity and place in qualitative inquiry," *Qualitative Inquiry* 6, no. 4 (2000): 547–549.

interviews to remain anonymous due to the research aims. Two participants emphasized that their interviews must be anonymized as the research topic and content were sensitive for them. Eight participants had no comment on the explanation that the interviews would be anonymized. As well, one potential interviewee refused to participate in the research if the whole interview and his name were not published. Such conditions were unacceptable, so an interview was not conducted with this potential interviewee. The final findings, which show that the private opinions of opinion-makers on the issues raised in this research often differ from their publicly presented and advocated opinions, justify the decision to maintain the anonymity of participants.

Audio Records and Notes

With the consent of the interviewees, all face-to-face interviews were voice recorded. None of the interview partners refused being tape-recording, and I did not notice that any of them, except for one cleric, was alarmed or uncomfortable at the prospect that their words would be preserved. This attitude is presumably related to the professional roles in which almost all of the participants give different kinds of public speeches, briefings, and interviews in which their words are likely to be tape-recorded, with or without their consent.

Whenever possible, an interview was recorded in a single audio file. However, some interviews were unavoidably interrupted once or more by phone calls or third parties. To respect the privacy of interviewees, the voice recorder was switched off during such interruptions. As well, one interview was interrupted to find a quieter place away from the disturbing background noises at the interview site initially chosen by the interviewee. For these reasons, some interviews were recorded in two or more audio files. As well, during one interview, the researcher forgot to switch on the type recorder again after interruption, so 5–10 minutes of interview voice records were lost.

The shortest tape-recording of an interview was 18 minutes, the longest was 83 minutes, and the average duration of all interviews about 53 minutes. However, it is important to note that introductory talks and after-talks were not voice-recorded. As soon as possible after each interview, short notes were made, including the setting, time, and place of the interview, a description of how the interview went, and new aspects interesting to the researcher.

Transcription

All the face-to-face interviews have been transferred from audio files into text. The process of transcription was tedious, time-consuming work. Bryman suggests transcribing an hour-long record takes five to six hours.⁴¹⁴ Although this figure might be valid for English, the transcription of interviews conducted in the vernacular language(s) used in Bosnia-Herzegovina took five to ten hours for every one hour of audio recording. The reasons why some interviews took more time than others included the background noises, language, speaking style, number of words spoken per minute, and interlocutors' tone of voice.

Although laborious and time consuming, the transcription process was very useful because it was also the moment when data analysis was started. The process of transcription, which includes repeatedly listening to the recordings, was helpful for noticing features of interviewees' answers that would otherwise go unseen if not recorded and transcribed.⁴¹⁵

The short text of the interview conducted via e-mail was simply added to the transcribed texts of other interviews. The corpus of transcribed texts contains little more than 78,000 words.

Other Features Related to the Research Sample

Contacting Potential Participants

The potential participants were contacted directly by e-mail, phone calls, or contact persons. Overall, it was easier to arrange dates and places for interviews with non-clerics than clerics. None of the non-clerics contacted as potential participants refused to take part in the research. The timing of three interviews was agreed in advance by e-mail. The other four interviews took place immediately or within a few hours after the first contact.

Three terms for interviews with clerics were arranged by e-mail, and two other interviews took place within a few hours after first contact. However, arranging the date and place

⁴¹⁴ Cf. Alan Bryman, *Social research methods*, 3rd ed (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 453.

⁴¹⁵ Cf. Tim Rapley, *Doing conversation, discourse and document analysis* (London: SAGE, 2007), 50.

for last two interviews was not easy. In the following, the attempts to contact four priests to secure two interviews are described.

Three potential cleric participants were contacted initially through e-mail, while a fourth was reached through two contact persons. In the e-mails, I introduced myself, briefly explained the purpose of contact, requested participation in the research, and left my contact details. One of the three priests contacted per e-mail always politely answered my e-mails but never my phone calls. None of the suggested dates were acceptable for him, and he insisted on an e-mail interview, which I eventually accepted.

Two priests did not answer on e-mails and phone calls. I met one by coincident on a street in Sarajevo and conversed with him. He confirmed receiving my e-mails and apologized for not answering due to his many duties in the local church. However, he refused to take part in the research because of the anonymity. If the entire interview and his name were published, he would consider taking part. Otherwise, he would not even think about participating in an initiative not transparent and open to the public.

One priest reached through a contact person promised to participate and requested my phone number. However, he did not call me or answer calls from myself or my contact person. A few months later, I asked another person to contact him. Again, he promised to take part in an interview and asked for my phone number to call me. However, again, he did not call me or answer my phone calls on the next two days. When I called him from another phone number, I finally talked with him. His reaction made it obvious that he was not happy to talk to me. He wanted to know everything about the research, the questions, the other participants, and me. He wanted to know why I needed an interview with him because there were many specialists and professors of theology who he thought might speak better than himself about the issues researched. When he heard about the sample methodology and that someone might have recommended or mentioned him in previous interviews, he seemed to panic. He wanted to know who had recommended him and what had been said about him. I explained that I could not provide such information. He repeated to himself several times that, as the second contact person had recommended me, I must be an OK person, that I must not be an agent provocateur, swindler, or brigand. He asked me several times to confirm that I was not a journalist or an undercover reporter and that the interview would be not published. After receiving confirmation, he asked for what purposes an interview would needed if it would not be published.

At the end of our phone call, we agreed to meet in the rectory of his parish at 4 p.m. the next day. However, two hours later he phoned back and apologized that he urgently had to go to Zagreb because of personal health issues and would not be available for an interview the next day. Nevertheless, I could meet at the same time for an interview with a parochial vicar who had already spoken with the priest and was ready to talk with me. I accepted the offer because both figures were potential candidates, so it was not much important which took part in an interview. The parochial vicar was also suspicious. Before the interview started, he asked me if the interview was a prank, hoax, or trick, if I had a spy-camera, and if I intended to create a provocation because a priest in the diocese of Dubrovnik in Croatia had committed a murder a few days earlier, and some journalists hostile to the Church might seek to provoke priests.

Time and Places of Interviews

One disadvantage of face-to-face interviews and synchronous communication in time and place is the demands of time and costs. Usually, the time needed for field research is devoted not only to the collection of data and for analysis. Much time might also be used to arrange the time and place for interviews and then travel to those sites. The interviews for this research were held in five cities at a distance of approximately 100 km in central Bosnia-Herzegovina on four occasions, while my residence was approximately 700 km from the interview sites. However, the great majority of the interviewees were exceptionally uncomplicated and cooperated in arranging the time and place of the interviews.

In general, the interview partners proposed the locations of the interviews. All seven interviews with non-clerics were held in public coffee bars. Two interviews with priests were also conducted in coffee bars, another three interviews with priests were conducted in rectories, and finally, one was conducted in a priest's private apartment.

Gender

No women participated in the qualitative research as interviewees. One possible reason is that a small number of women hold positions that can be defined as the opinion-maker positions in either the political or social sectors of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Even if a woman holds a leading position in a political body, it is generally assumed that she does so due not to her political engagement and status within the political organization but to her

biological gender. To fulfil the formal requirements of the laws on gender equality⁴¹⁶ and elections,⁴¹⁷ a large number of women are listed on electoral papers. For example, the elections laws stipulate that each sex must hold a minimum of 40% of the government and administrative positions at the state, administrative unit and local levels. However, women have very little influence on internal party decisions and inter-party agreements regarding seat distribution. Therefore, the number of women who receive mandates and administrative positions is much lower than the minimum legal requirement.⁴¹⁸ The same policy is followed in all state institutions, where women are underrepresented. Although gender equality is at least statistically monitored in state and political institutions, the number of women occupying important positions within Catholic institutions is unknown and probably even lower.

Another reason for women's lack of participation in this research arises from the selected sample methodology. None of the interviewees in the first phrase recommended or mentioned women, which was an essential prerequisite for potential participants in this research. As well, I did not choose a woman as one of the first two collocutors who had the opportunity to recommend other potential informants. Although it was, of course, impossible to select, recommend, or mention a woman in the group of seven interviewed clerics, there was at least a theoretical possibility to select, recommend, or mention a female interlocutor in the group of non-clerics.

The fieldwork was not yet completed when it was realized that no women would participate in the research. At that moment, I wanted to correct this 'omission' by modifying previously determined sample rules. However, it was not easy to identify which women in Bosnia-Herzegovina who were members of the Catholic and/or Croat

⁴¹⁶ Article 20 of the Law on Gender Equality in Bosnia-Herzegovina Cf. "Zakon o ravnopravnosti spolova u BiH," in, *Službeni glasnik BiH*, 16/03; 102/09; 32/10.

⁴¹⁷ Article 4.19 of the Law on Elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina Cf. "Izborni zakon Bosne i Hercegovine," in, *Službeni glasnik BiH*, 23/01; 7/02; 9/02; 20/02; 25/02; 4/04; 20/04; 25/05; 52/05; 65/05; 77/05; 11/06; 24/06, 32/07; 33/08; 37/08; 32/10; 18/13.

⁴¹⁸ Although women outnumber men in Bosnia-Herzegovina (women made up an estimated 51% of the population in 2011 Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Women and Men in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Sarajevo: Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine, 2013), accessed April 10, 2014, http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibilteni/BHAS_Zene_Muskarci_BH.pdf and 50.94% in the 2013 census source: Jukić, *Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2013*), women held only 22 of 148 executive political positions after elections in October 2010. At the same time, women accounted for only 20% of the workforce in state and entity institutions. Cf. Jelin - Dizdar, Tina, "Politika u BiH je muški posao," *Radio Slobodna Evropa*, January 10, 2012, accessed April 11, 2014, http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/politika_u_bih_je_muski_posao/24447286.html

community could be classified as opinion-makers. Therefore, I sought help from four previous participants who gave similar responses: “I’m not sure if there is a woman who has real impacts on public opinion in our society.”

After briefly thinking out loud, one participants suggested the name of a high-ranking female politician. The next step was to find a contact person who could organize a meeting, but when I asked whether the same participant would propose the research topic to her, he responded negatively. He said that he would do it to help me but only if it was necessary to meet the formal requirements of the research. I did not intend to meet only the formal requirements and apparent political correctness, so I gave up attempting to make such corrections.

Is the lack of female participation a failure of this research? I am deeply convinced that it is not. If any part of the chosen research methodology has its shortcomings in this matter, it shows the unmistakable reality of Bosnian-Herzegovinian society in which women do not have a recognizable place in public life, politics, or religion. Keeping in mind the social position of women, we can make assumptions about the characteristics of that society and consequently about its possibilities for dialogue. A society in which women do not have a distinctive role nor have fought for their place in public discourses is a society in which decisions are not rendered through dialogue and agreements but are imposed. How it can be expected, even when the best legal solutions are available, that the rights of Others will be respected if more than half of the population does not participate in shaping public space?⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁹ Most present-day laws and regulations in Bosnia-Herzegovina have been adapted from those of other EU countries or drawn by international and local experts but unfortunately have not achieved the desired results. For example, despite the passage of the Law on Gender Equality in Bosnia-Herzegovina (2003; 2009; 2010) and the establishment a whole infrastructure to implement and monitor implementation of the law (the Agency for Gender Equality in Bosnia-Herzegovina, gender centers in entities, canton boards and municipal committees Cf. Jasminka Babić-Avdispahić, Jasminka Bakšić-Muftić and Aleksandra Arsenijević-Puhalo, *Gender Audit Bosna i Hercegovina: (Consultant's Report)* (Agencija za ravnopravnost spolova BiH; Gender Centar FBiH; Gender Centar RS, 2005-2006), 10–36), the position of women in Bosnia-Herzegovina had not improved five years later, according to a report by the Agency for Gender Equality Cf. Almir Terzić and Belma Bećirbašić, *Političarke u medijima tokom predizborne kampanje 2010: Slika koje nema* (Sarajevo: Agencija za ravnopravnost spolova BiH, 2010). According to three authors (Aganović, Miftari, Veličković, 2015), ten years after the law came into effect, there are more recognizable female leaders in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but women’s general situation has not improved much despite the best legal solutions and administrative structure. Cf. Arijana Aganović, Edita Miftari and Marina Veličković, *Žene i politički život u postdejtonskoj Bosni i Hercegovini: 1995-2015*, Edicija Gender Sarajevskog otvorenog centra (Sarajevski otvoreni centar).

Confirmation of these assumptions can be found in Islamic feminist Zilka Spahić-Šiljak's pioneering qualitative and quantitative research on the position of women in religion and politics in all three constituent peoples and three major confessions in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Her findings and conclusions can be summarized with the following points: women have unrestricted access to education and political life but are completely excluded from public mainstream activities. At the same time, there are no women in key positions within religious communities that do not require the status of clerics.⁴²⁰

Language

It is important to note that, although 13 of the 14 participants in this research associate themselves with the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croat ethnic group, the language they used in the interviews, with the exception of the one interview submitted in written form, was not the standard Croatian language.⁴²¹ Instead, the vernacular language spoken in Bosnia-Herzegovina was used.

This finding is highly important because the language used in everyday conversations is a significant part and precondition of personal and societal interaction. That, in more informal conversations, Croat opinion-makers in Bosnia-Herzegovina use the spoken vernacular language that is, albeit with some variations, spoken by all people in Bosnia-Herzegovina suggests that the Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina are not isolated from other ethnic groups. To the contrary, this finding implies that the intensity of interaction between the people in Bosnia-Herzegovina is greater than assumed.

Persons who use freely language and terminology that follow their train of thought are truly emancipated. In public space and speeches, addresses, and written documents, the Croat opinion- and decision-makers almost exclusively use standard Croatian. The use of the standard language in Bosnian-Herzegovinian public space has an utterly different function than the use of vernacular language. The function of the latter is to make relations easier, whereas the function of former is to demonstrate the identity of the speaker or writer and so delineate the social borders that segregate individuals and social

⁴²⁰ Cf. Zilka Spahić-Šiljak, *Žene, religija i politika: Analiza utjecaja interpretativnog religijskog naslijeđa judaizma, kršćanstva i islama na angažman žene u javnom životu i politici u BiH* (Sarajevo: Internacionalni multireligijski i interkulturni centar IMIC Zajedno, 2007).

⁴²¹ This was noted only due to the voice recordings. For more on the four variations of Serbo-Croatian (Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian) that political decisions rendered four different standard languages, see: Cf. Snježana Kordić, *Jezik i nacionalizam* (Zagreb: Durieux, 2010).

groups from other ethnic groups. In other words, the use of the standard language indicates the unreliability of speaker and the artificiality of the speaker's thoughts. However, as we will see in Chapter 8, the function of the use of official Croatian in public space implies distinctions not only between ethnic groups but also between social subgroups within ethnic group.

Conclusion

This chapter discusses various topics related to the field research conducted for this thesis. The aim of the field research was to collect narrative descriptions of the interviewees' lifeworld and views of personal and societal dialogue with Muslims and within the Catholic and/or Croat community in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

It was not possible to ensure reliable random probability sampling, so it was decided to use a parallel sampling design on two subgroups with two mixed non-probability sampling techniques: purposive critical case sampling and snowball sampling in two stages. In practice, this meant that two groups of opinion-makers—those who mediate between policymakers and ordinary citizens—consisting of seven priests and seven non-clerics were interviewed. These two groups were expected to yield the most information and have the greatest impacts on the development of knowledge on the issue in question. The field research was geographically limited to central Bosnia-Herzegovina because relations between Catholics and/or Croats and Muslims and/or Bosniaks in this part of the state have varied from good to somewhat difficult and conflictual in the recent past. Moreover, for this religious and ethnic group, internal dialogue has great importance to rearticulate the ethnic and religious identity shaken and blurred by the war and post-war politics.

In total, fourteen interviews were conducted: one e-mail interview and thirteen semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. An interview guide with three main topics and eight related questions as memory prompts was prepared. Special attention was paid to ensuring anonymization for all the respondents. All identifying information data were replaced by codes or removed from the corpora of the transcribed interviews. All the audio recordings of the interviews have been transcribed and prepared for analysis.

Some features of the sample emerged only during or after the field research. For example, the majority of opinion-makers who were potential candidates readily agreed to

participate in this research, but difficulties were encountered convincing some priests to take part. Although most of interviews were held in public places, such as coffee bars, treated as public grounds in Bosnia-Herzegovina, some clerics preferred more quiet places, such as their rectories, private apartments, or virtual space which was free of disturbance and live communication. These two features do not allow us to make generalizations but could be indicators of how clerics understand their role of opinion-makers in their own communities.

Other important features of the sample noted after completion of field research and elaborated in this chapter are that no women participated in the research and that the language used by participants in face-to-face interviews was the vernacular language spoken by all people in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The former indicates that women play negligible roles in their communities and the society in question, whereas the latter indicates that the Croat community in Bosnia-Herzegovina does not live in a segregated reality and is not isolated from its neighbors. Two additional features of the sample, age and education, are discussed in Chapter 8.

Chapter 8—Age and Educational Level

The preceding chapter describes how the necessary data for the qualitative research were collected in fieldwork. Using the terms of practical theology, one can say that chapter 7 revealed what has been done and how it has been done to see, hear, and experience the interviewees' lifeworlds, particularly their interpretations of personal and societal dialogue. The third section of chapter 7 reports on not only seeing but also certain elements of the second step of Cardijn's method: to judge, or analyze and make an informed judgment. Four features of the research sample are presented and briefly analyzed in the last section of chapter. Using a similar methodology and approach, chapter 8 elaborates two additional features significant for this study: the age and educational level of opinion-makers.

It is important to emphasize once again that this research uses critical case sampling. It, therefore, cannot be claimed that the observations, hypothesis, interpretations, and conclusions from this study are generally applicable to the whole population in question. However, the quality and weight of the evidence yielded may permit claiming that the study results are logical generalizations.⁴²²

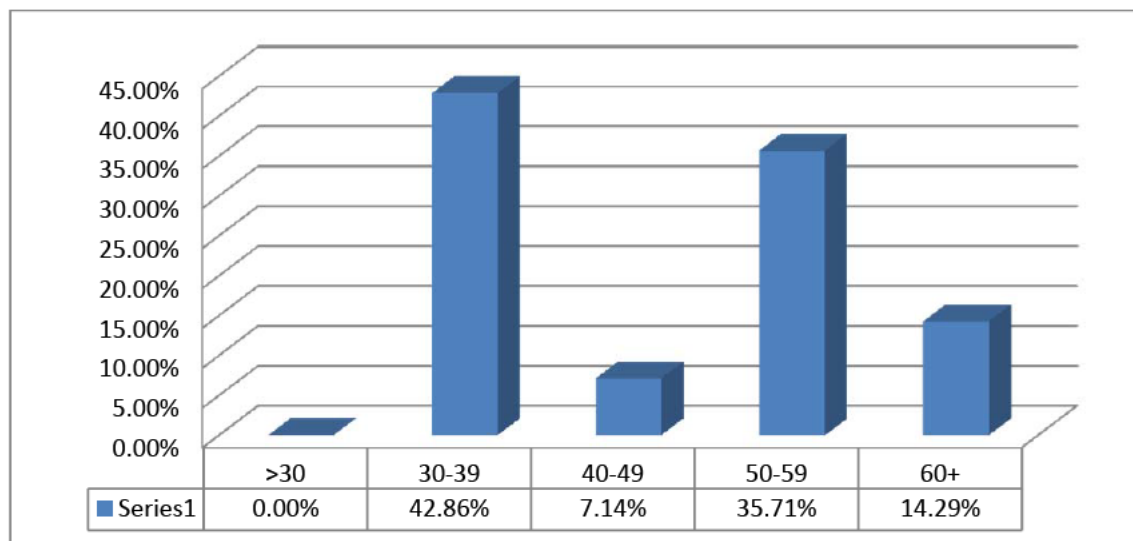


Figure 2—Age of the interviewees by cohort

Although the statistical data on this sample are not as reliable as those generated from random probability sampling, the handling of the data reveals interesting results on the

⁴²² Cf. Patton, *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*, 236-237.

age and educational level of the study participants, fourteen opinion-makers in two groups, that cannot be explained simply and unambiguously. Regarding age, it was found that only one participant (7.14%) belongs to the fifth cohort (40–49 years old), and none is younger than 30 years old (Figure 2). Furthermore, all the participants have university degrees. Two of the 14 have completed master’s degrees, and three PhDs (Figure 3).

To clarify the reasons for these findings and investigate their implications, the results, although from a distinctly small sample, are compared with available samples from Bosnian-Herzegovinian society and neighboring countries. The social group best fitting the profile of the opinion-makers is chosen as a comparison sample: members of the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This state parliament has 42 members selected through direct elections.

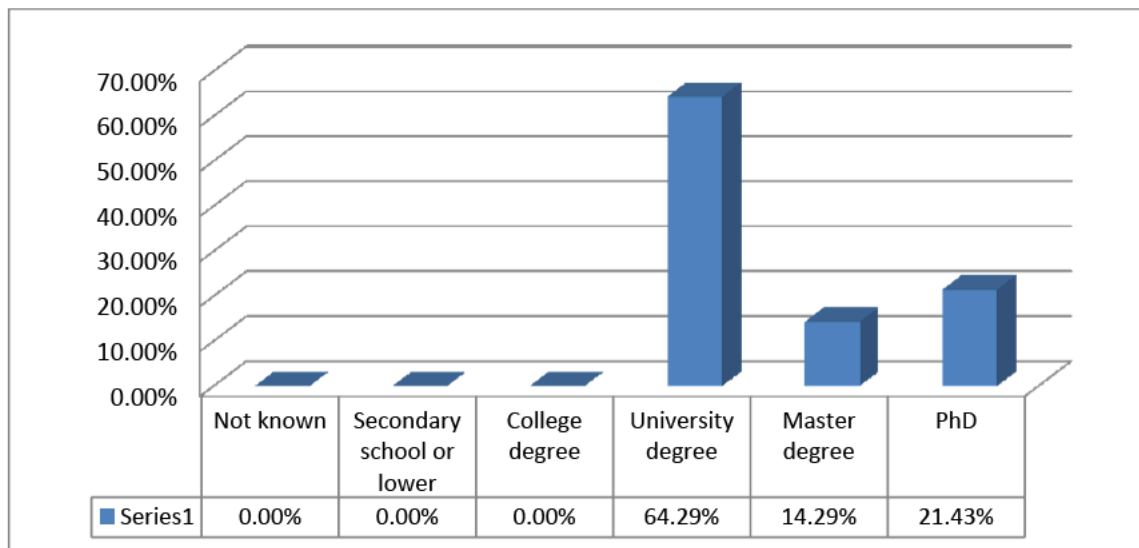


Figure 3—Education level of the interviewees

Members of parliament (MPs) can be assumed to have a corresponding status to opinion-makers for several reasons. MPs usually do not hold executive offices or, for the most part, leadership positions. They do not make executive political decisions but do have greater access to information and the socio-political processes than other citizens. They have indirect or direct opportunities to influence executive authorities and citizens: indirectly through activities such as lobbying and advocating for specific projects, ideas, and ideologies and directly through drafting, adopting, and blocking adoption of laws that may affect the executive branch and the whole population. Members of parliament should also mediate two-way communication, both bottom up and top down. They are also recognized as opinion-makers by both the leadership of political parties and citizens. The

hierarchy of political parties and other political organizations nominate them, while citizens vote on them in elections.

The inclusion criteria for the sample are affiliation with Croatian ethnicity and/or the Roman Catholic Church and residence in central Bosnia-Herzegovina, but these limitations are not applied to MPs. The main reason is that, except for direct queries to all MPs, there is no method to reliably determine who among the members of the House of Representative of Bosnia-Herzegovina is Croat or Catholic. It would be quite naïve to assume that all representatives of the nominal Croatian parties are Croats and/or Catholics or that no Croats or Catholics are in other non-nominal Croatian national parties. The comparison of the sample with ethnic and religious affiliations as inclusion factors with MPs of different ethnicities and religions may be deficient. However, in this case, it is not of paramount importance for two reasons. First, only two basic statistical features are compared: age and education. Second, the characteristics of a society affect all members to a greater or lesser degree, regardless of their ethnic, religious, and gender identity.

Comparison of the age-related results of the two analyses for both samples (Figure 4) shows similar values, as do the results for educational level (Figure 8). These outcomes do not help clarify the results of the statistical analyses of the data sample, but they do open new, more complex issues. Specifically, it is easier to assume that the sample obtained by the sample design has an illogical group of individuals regarding their age and educational level rather than the other sample of MPs approved as such from above and below.

We find this very unusual social phenomenon quite by accident, so for further study, basic biographical data on members of parliaments in the neighboring countries and administrative subdivisions of Bosnia-Herzegovina are collected (Table 6). The purpose of this unexpected, additional research is to reveal and explain why certain cohorts of the Bosnia-Herzegovina population are not opinion-makers. Also, one more question should be answered: why are opinion-makers in Bosnia-Herzegovina almost exclusively university-degree holders?

Method of Collecting Biographical Data on Members of Parliament

The collection of biographical data of MPs was not integral to the main field research methodology of this work, so it is necessary to briefly explain how the data were

collected and processed. In addition to data on members of the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina, data were collected on members of both the Bosnian-Herzegovinian entities, House of Representatives for the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, National Assembly of the Republika Srpska, and Assembly of the District Brčko, a small, self-governing territory. Additionally, data were collected on members of the National Assembly of the Republic of Austria, Croatian Parliament, Assembly of Kosovo, Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Parliament of Montenegro, National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, and National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia (Table 6).

One might expect MPs' basic biographical data to be easily obtainable online from the official websites of the parliaments or political organizations or parties. In practice, though, this was not the case with all MPs and all parliaments. Most data could be found on the aforementioned parliaments' official websites. Biographical data were available on the websites for all members of the National Parliament Assembly of the Republic of Austria⁴²³ and the Republic of Macedonia.⁴²⁴ Basic data were not published for two members of the Croatian Parliament⁴²⁵ on its website; however it were found from other online sources. For one member of the House of Representatives in Bosnia-Herzegovina,⁴²⁶ information on education was missing, and this institution's official website lacked data for eight members, but biographies of all eight were found from other sources. On the website of the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska,⁴²⁷ one biography was missing, and seven members had incomplete biographies. For the three of them data were supplemented from other sources.

⁴²³ Cf. The Austrian Parliament, The National Council (Republik Österreich Parlament, Nationalrat) <http://www.parlament.gv.at>, retrieved 09.03.2012, last check 25.04.2012.

⁴²⁴ Cf. Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (Собрание на Република Македонија): <http://www.sobranie.mk/en/default-en.asp>, retrieved, 06.04.2012, last check 25.04.2012.

⁴²⁵ Cf. Croatian Parliament (Hrvatski Sabor): <http://www.sabor.hr/Default.aspx?sec=361>, retrieved 9.3.2012, last check 27.04.2012.

⁴²⁶ Cf. Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina, House of Representatives (Parlamentarna skupština Bosne i Hercegovine, Zastupnički dom): https://www.parlament.ba/sadrzaj/domovi/predstavnicki_dom/default.aspx?id=20408&langTag=en-US&pril=b, retrieved 9.3.2012, last check 25.04.2012.

⁴²⁷ Cf. National Assembly of the Republika Srpska (Narodna Skupština Republike Srpske) <http://www.narodnaskupstinars.net/eng/>, retrieved: 11.03.2012, last checked 25.04.2012.

Only 12 of the 98 members of House of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina⁴²⁸ had published biographies on the institution's official website, making it the least transparent parliament in the region concerning presentation of MPs. For 73 MPs, at least one or both of the required information fields were found from other sources through time-consuming work. For 28 of the 30 members of the Assembly of Brčko District,⁴²⁹ biographies were published in its online index; other sources provided biographies for the other two members. The official website of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia⁴³⁰ lacked biographical information for ten members and had incomplete biographies for another ten. Nine incomplete biographies and missing information on eight members were supplemented from other sources. For four members of the Assembly of Montenegro,⁴³¹ data were incomplete, while two other sources provided information for two members. The institution's website had no biographical entries for 22 members, and 13 biographies were supplemented from other sources. Nine members of the Assembly of Kosovo⁴³² had incomplete data, and data were not disclosed for 53 of 120 members. Data on these deputies were not obtained from secondary sources due to limitations of time and efforts. For all 250 members of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia,⁴³³ the official website published year of birth but not education level, so only data on age and gender of the members of the parliament were compared.

In total, the database contained 1249 names of MPs from these countries. For 902 (72.23%), information on both age and education were found in databases. The data were incomplete for 282 (22.65%) MPs, including 250 in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. For 64 MPs (5.12%), there were no biographical data. Except for the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, which consistently described its MPs without mentioning their educational level, it remained unclear why so many MPs in other parliaments did not have published biographies or have incomplete biographies. The

⁴²⁸ Cf. Assembly of Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, House of Representatives (Parlament Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine, Zastupnički dom): <http://predstavnickidom-pfbih.gov.ba/hr/>, retrieved 12.03.2012, last check 27.04.2012.

⁴²⁹ Cf. Assembly of the Brčko District (Skupština Brčko Distrikta BiH): <http://skupstinabd.ba/hr/index.html>, retrieved 06.05.2012, last check 07.05.2012.

⁴³⁰ Cf. The National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia (Državni Zbor): <http://www.dz-rs.si/wps/portal/Home/>, retrieved 12.03.2012, last check 25.04.2012.

⁴³¹ Cf. The Parliament of Montenegro (Skupština Crne Gore): http://www.skupstina.me/index.php?language_-id=2, retrieved 26.04.2012, last check 25.04.2012.

⁴³² Cf. Republic of Kosovo Assembly (Republika Kosova - Skupština): <http://www.assembly-kosova.org/?cid=-2,1>, retrieved 25.04.2012, last check 26.04.2012.

⁴³³ Cf. National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia (Народна скупштина Србије): <http://www.parlament.gov.rs/national-assembly.467.html>, retrieved 12.03.2012, last check 26.04.2012.

data were taken as given in MPs’ biographies in primary and secondary sources. The authenticity was not further examined, and responsibility for accuracy lies with their authors.

#	State (entity)	Parliament	Members of parliament	1	2	3	4
1	Austria	Nationalrat	183	183	0	0	0
2	a Bosnia-Herzegovina	Zastupnički dom BiH	42	33	1	8	8
	b Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina	Zastupnički dom F BiH	97	12	0	85	73
	c Republika Srpska	Narodna Skupština RS	83	74	8	1	3
	d District Brčko	Skupština Brčko distrikta	30	28	0	2	0
3	Croatia	Hrvatski sabor	151	149	0	2	2
4	Kosovo	Skupština Kosova	120	58	9	53	0
5	Macedonia	Sobranje na Republika Makedonija	123	123	0	0	0
6	Montenegro	Skupština Crne Gore	80	54	4	22	15
7	Slovenia	Državni zbor	90	70	10	10	17
8	Serbia	Narodna Skupština Republike Srbije	250	0	250	0	0
Total			1249	784	282	183	118
1. Biographical data (age and education) published on parliaments’ official websites							
2. Missing data on one biographical factor on official websites							
3. Missing data on two biographical factors on official websites							
4. Supplementary sources for incomplete data							

Table 6—Overview of biographical data collected (age and education level) on members of parliament

Secondary data sources included the official websites of the MPs’ political parties and organizations. If biographical information was not published on those sites, it was sought in the online databases of non-governmental organizations monitoring MPs’ work and, finally, various news articles. However, it was impossible to find information from any online sources for members of certain political parties, including both MPs who recently took office and some active in public political life for decades. This lack of transparency and full biographical data on persons involved in the state’s public political life and representing all citizens was beyond the scope of this research and not discussed here.⁴³⁴

⁴³⁴ Due to the large number of MPs whose basic biographical data were collected from various sources, it is not possible to cite all the sources here.

Due to the different methodologies of the various parliaments in Europe, only the parliaments of the countries mentioned were included, although it would be interesting to extend this research to other national parliaments in Europe. Most data were collected in March 2012 and most recently checked and corrected on April 28, 2012. Later, on May 6, 2012, the Brčko District Assembly was added. Changes have taken place in all the parliaments, so only the situation in the parliaments on these dates are discussed.

Age

It can be expected that in societies such as Bosnia-Herzegovina that float in postmodern streams with their hawsers steadily tied to pre-modernity docks, a relatively small number of young adults, if any, is recognized by fellow nationals as opinion-makers. Such societies are not only reluctant to recognize young adults as opinion-makers, but the whole social structure, particularly the education system, has been shaped, both intentionally and unintentionally, to prevent them from desiring to assume any crucial societal role. Although those younger than age 30 years might be expected to be not recognized as opinion-makers in Bosnian-Herzegovinian society, those 40–49 years old have surprisingly insignificant roles. Comparing the age of the study participants and members of the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Figure 4), the same inconsistencies in age groups can be seen in the research sample and the MPs. The House of Representatives also has no member younger than 30 years old, and the number of those in the fifth cohort (40–49 years old) is disproportionately small compared with the fourth (30–39) and sixth (50–69) cohorts. Examining the data on the other parliaments in the region, we find that the fifth cohort tends to have more MPs than the fourth cohort and less than the sixth cohort, unlike in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Figure 5).

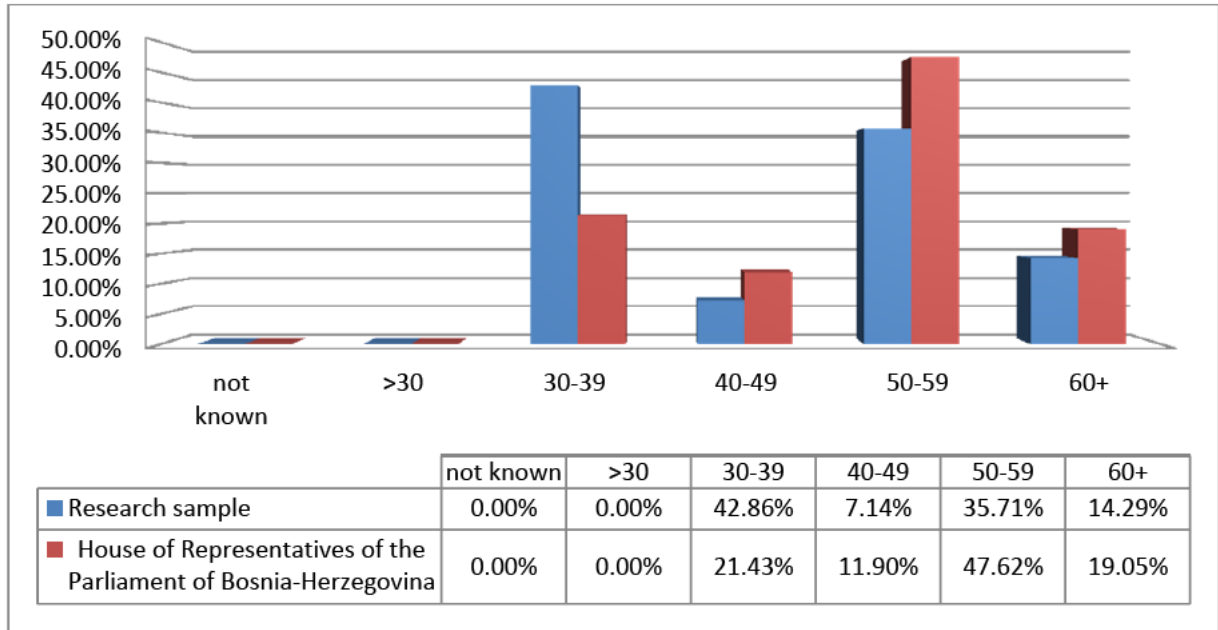


Figure 4—Age of the interviewees and members of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina by cohorts

Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Lost Generation

Possible reasons for the disproportionately small number of opinion-makers in the fifth cohort in Bosnia-Herzegovina can be found in the (dis)advantages of the country’s recent history. This cohort was born in 1963–1972, approximately 20 to 30 years after the World War II. As the world population lived in the shadow of the Cold War, the former Socialistic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its people experienced the highest economic and social development in its history. However, along with economic development, economic nationalism also arose due to unequal advancement among the republics in the federation.⁴³⁵ After WWII, the Communists did not introduce a new Yugoslav identity and became more flexible towards the question of national identity than the previous monarchy. However, Yugoslavia was “a fragile mosaic persistently in search of cohesion.”⁴³⁶

⁴³⁵ Cf. Dusko Sekulic, Garth Massey, and Randy Hodson, “Who Were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia,” *American Sociological Review* 59, no. 1 (Feb. 1994): 86-87.

⁴³⁶ "Cf. " Cohen 1983 #49: 161.}

The post-conflict period and the period of societal transition into capitalistic system	2012	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	The fifth decade of life
	2011	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	
	2010	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	
	2009	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	
	2008	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	
	2007	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	
	2006	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	
	2005	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	
	2004	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	
	2003	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	
	2002	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	
	2001	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	
	2000	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	
	1999	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	
	1998	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	
	1997	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	
	1996	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	
	The period of societal tensions, economic crises, and conflicts	1995	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
1994		22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
1993		21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
1992		20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
1991		19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Period of gradual economic and state disintegration of Yugoslav Federation	1990	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	University or/and first years of employment - The third decade of life
	1989	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
	1988	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
	1987	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
	1986	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
	1985	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
	1984	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
	1983	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
	1982	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
Period of economic growth and relative political stability in Yugoslav Federation	1981	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Secondary school age
	1980	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
	1979	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
	1978	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
	1977	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
	1976	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
	1975	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	1974	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
	1973	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	1972	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	1971		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
	1970			0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	1969				0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	1968					0	1	2	3	4	5	
	1967						0	1	2	3	4	
	1966							0	1	2	3	
	1965								0	1	2	
1964									0	1		
1963										0	Year of birth	

Table 7—Fifth cohort during the recent history of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Complete cohesion, however, never happened. Consequently, the second Yugoslavia under communist rule was a federation of equal nations, regardless of their size or geographical position. To avoid any form of nationalism, changes to the constitution in 1953 replaced the House of Peoples with the Chamber of Producers on the belief that workers would embrace a new identity promoting the interests of the working class without any reference to local interests.⁴³⁷ However, from the very beginning of the new organization of the state, the growing economic gaps among the Yugoslav republics led to precisely what the Communists wanted to avoid. The worker self-management system more effectively served local interests than the interests of the entire working class in Yugoslavia. Economic nationalism gradually developed, and new, or old, national and ethnic nationalism flared in the late 1980s.⁴³⁸ Similar developments can be seen in the present-day European Union (EU), where amid growing economic nationalism and inconsistent solidarity, which should be the foundation of the EU, nationalism draws increasing support.

However, at that time, the Yugoslav population did not discern the hints of future disasters and enjoyed economic prosperity and relatively good social living conditions. During the childhood and primary school age of the fifth cohort (1970–1986), the socio-economic situation in Yugoslavia, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, improved. Through infrastructure investments, the government increasingly assumed the appearance of a modern industrial state. At the international level, Yugoslavia had significant diplomatic successes, and its citizens traveled throughout the world without restrictions. We might compare this with the situation of contemporary EU citizens, who can travel to most countries without obstacles. However, one should not forget that at the time of Yugoslavia, the world was divided into two blocs, and Yugoslavia, although communist, had relatively good relations with both blocs.

Although outside and inside this state, supporters and enemies believed the socialist Yugoslav Federation would last forever, its gradual disintegration was laid at its foundation: the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. When lifetime President Josip

⁴³⁷ Cf. Lenard J. Cohen and Paul Warwick, *Political cohesion in a fragile mosaic: The Yugoslav experience* (Boulder (Colo.): Westview press, 1983), 74-76.

⁴³⁸ Cf. Dusko Sekulic, Garth Massey, and Randy Hodson, “Who Were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia,” *American Sociological Review* 59, no. 1 (Feb. 1994): 86-87.

Broz Tito died in 1980, a collective presidency took over his role. Most Yugoslavian citizens did not see the near end of the state and remained unaware of the problems that had emerged in internal dialogue within the League of Communists of Yugoslavia.

During the latter half of the 1980s, while the youngest in the fifth cohort were adolescents attending high school and the oldest in college and entering their first jobs, the first major economic crisis happened, followed by political turmoil within the ruling communist regime. In 1989, just before the definitive end of the communistic regime and the Yugoslavian federation, which were not yet evident to most citizens, this cohort were 18 to 27 years old. This generation, which had grown up in an anationalistic environment, watching partisan and Hollywood war movies and Asian martial arts, was soon pushed into the harsh reality of war.

Here, anationality should not be perceived as anti-nationality or the suppression of national particularities. In a qualitative study conducted in 2007, respondents born in 1968–1974 did not deny awareness of their nationality and ethnic differences. However, these differences did not disturb them.⁴³⁹ Similar attitudes can be expected in any generation in a heterogeneous society amid peacetime, economic prosperity, and the absence of political crisis. However, when the thin line separating peace from conflict is crossed, all fragile, constructed formal and informal forms of groups and the personal encounters and interconnections often built contrary to previous rigid norms and borders collapse easily. In uncertain, troubled times, formerly antisocial outsiders in peacetime became models of desirable behavior, and in worst-case scenarios, leaders promote the norms and principles of limited social interactions between the groups, which in practice means building fences around groups. Peacetime leaders and models, if they do not join the new narrowly defined social environment, become undesirable aliens. Thus, both processes are possible in any multinational, multi-faith, multilingual society or any environment in which groups may differ from another.

⁴³⁹ The phrase *anational* is taken from Cf. Dino Abazović, Maja Kaljanac and Matea Košar, *Izgnubljeni u tranziciji? Generacije 1968-1974* (Sarajevo: Centar za ljudska prava Univerziteta Sarajevo; Fondacija Heinrich Böll, 2007), Studija na osnovu intervjua, 11. An anational environment should not be confused with a societal environment in which feelings of national and ethnic belonging do not exist. Anationality, instead, is an environment in which individuals are aware of their national and ethnical identities, but these do not impede or limit communication, friendships, and business with others. In their research, the authors found that members of the 1968–1974 generation quite often mentioned that the society of their adolescence before the armed conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina was not dominated by national or ethnic concerns, although they were aware of their national belongings.

The conflict that grew out of Yugoslavian economic nationalism changed with old–new real fears and demands that promoted new forms of old nationalism. The members of the fifth cohort indirectly or directly endured the highest burden of the war. In the years when they should have developed socio-psychological skills and taken up roles in society, they were forced into exile or military action. Those who survived the war achieved neither psychological satisfaction nor recovery. All the sides in the war were losers, only a few enjoyed privileged positions in the post-war society, and those privileged were certainly not those younger than 30 years old—the age of the fifth cohort at the end of the war. Then, as today, those younger than 30 years old had limited access to opinion-making social roles. The war murderers did not become the heroes, as in Hollywood and partisan war movies. Although they receive decorations from the war leaders, they might later be charged as war criminals or live in fear of charges, not respected and honored as heroes. Thrown into the war, they, along with all citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina, were the victims of necrophilia nationalistic politics. This politics tried to perpetuate the victim role of each ethnic group for as long as possible, promoting the cult of the living victims and dead martyrs who died to enable their fellows to live the life of victims.

The cult of the victims, however, did not help any group or individual. Those who venerated their victim role were double victims: first, victims of the other who harmed them or represented only a theoretical threat and, second, the victim of one's perceptions of oneself as a victim. This psychological condition might be described as a paranoid delusion. Leaving such a role is challenging, especially if society accepts the cult of victimhood as a reasonable attitude, in other words, if abnormal behavior is considered to be normal. In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, all national(istic) politicians, both right wing and left wing, as well as the majority of clergy, encouraged the cult of the victims in their own ethnoreligious groups.⁴⁴⁰ However, we should not underestimate or ignore that

⁴⁴⁰ This de facto situation unfortunately was not characteristic of only Bosnian-Herzegovinian society. All neighboring societies (former Yugoslavian republics) cultivated the cult of victimhood on common grounds. Despite some cultural differences, similar social phenomena can be identified in all European post-communist countries. Nevertheless, the recent popularity growth of right-wing political populism in Western Europe, reinforced by both old and new fears and victim roles, indicates that these societies, too, are not immune to the cult of victimhood.

all of Bosnia-Herzegovinian society was and remains a victim—not of the exaggerated threat of a projected enemy in others but of its own political and religious infantilism.⁴⁴¹

Indeed, if the real enemy is to be found in others and not oneself, the obsessive, infantile need for more security, affection, and the protection of wealth, power, and status would never lead to self-pitying lamentations, the self-granted victim role, and the strong temptation to domesticate God, who favors only one's group and destroys one's enemies, that is, others. If there were no political and religious infantilism, doing good, which is an inseparable part of human nature, would never be mistakenly replaced by doing evil, and a passionate desire to do good to others would never give way to obsessive aggression against others.

Those who died in the name of the cult of victimhood cannot be celebrated as martyrs. Neither can those who murdered in the name of this cult be considered heroes because the cult of victimhood is a self-destructive, hopeless illusion, offering nothing but anxiety,

⁴⁴¹ According to von Hügel, religion has three essential elements: institutional, critical, and mystical. These elements correspond to three main stages in human development: infancy, adolescence, and adulthood. In each stage, humans experience God and practice religion according to their activities and predominant needs. Thus, institutional elements correspond to the needs and activities of infancy, critical elements correspond to adolescence, and mystical elements to adulthood. Although religion must include all three elements, and no one element negates the others, there is a constant danger that one (or two elements) might be emphasized to the exclusion of the other(s). Institutional elements correspond to infantile needs and activities for security, protection, and affection, that is, trusted, reliable authority, so childhood (institutional) needs and activities continue to exist in healthy adults. However, if adults tend to overemphasize institutional element while ignoring the needs and activities of adolescence and adulthood, that is, if they avoid the critical and mystical elements, they express and practice their faith in a form of religious infantilism. There are two main reasons for this widespread phenomenon among healthy adults. First is the mode of religious instruction for children, adolescents, and adults. On one hand, if the adolescents are taught history, doctrine, and morality using complex, technical, abstract theoretical language, not all can be expected to understand it. Consequently, some will never be able to meet their adolescent needs and activities, meaning that they will be not able to develop the critical elements of their religion. On the other hand, if the adults are instructed to accept mysterious language with the credulity of children, they cannot be expected to value and embrace mystical elements as worthy of adults. Consequently, they will not be able to practice adult religion. In addition to the religious instruction of adolescents and adults, the second reason why many adults practice a form of religious infantilism is the mode of ministering to believers. The dominant authoritative mode of the institutional element in religion and all its institutions, in which religious authority emphasizes obedience, prevents followers from criticizing or reading and listening to anyone who might question authority or given teachings and implies that authority prefers to minister infants, not adolescents and adults. Cf. Friedrich von Hügel, *The mystical element of religion as studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and her friends*. Vol 1. (London, New York: J. M. Dent & SC / E. P. Dutton & Co., 1923), 50–82; Cf. Gerard W. Hughes, *God of Surprises* Rev. and updated ed (Luton: Andrews UK, 2010), <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xat&AN=381437&site=ehost-live>Chapter 2. Clearing the Approaches. Similar to religious infantilism, political infantilism is preoccupied with the needs and activities of infants, that is, issues of national and individual security, protection, and public affection. However, anxiety over individual and collective security and affection is not based on the critical approach and mystical elements of religion and politics, so it typically has undesired social impacts.

fear, and depression. Even when specific privileged groups seem to benefit by promoting this cult, they sooner or later become the real victims of their ideology because victims themselves are the main fuel powering the cult of victimhood. It, therefore, is difficult to escape this collective psychological disease, whose consequences reveal it as the religion of false prophets.

In this sense, the members of the fifth cohort in this research were indeed the victims of society. They grew up and were educated in a state system emphasizing brotherhood and unity as the basic social norms, but soon that very same society obligated them to defend their groups with their lives from those they once shared brotherhood and unity. Assuming victimhood as the new basic social norm, they became deprived of the ability to communicate with their neighbors, not only ex-enemies who were once friends but also brothers within their communities. Consequently, only a few have been recognized as opinion-makers, while most have been excluded from social processes unless needed to create tensions when ‘dangerous’ announcements of new brotherhood with others emerge.

Of course, not only this generation was disadvantaged during the war and the uncertain years that followed. The third cohort of Bosnian-Herzegovinian society born in 1983–1992 was deprived of a carefree childhood. Fortunate younger members of this group born in 1988–1992 were not directly exposed to the wartime destruction and likely did not remember the horrors of war. Presumably, those younger than 7 years old in 1995 when the war ended and were exposed to the war did not fully remember atrocities. The older members of this cohort, born in 1983–1988, were 7–12 years old when the war ended, and most had been unable to attend kindergarten or first grades. They certainly carry memories of the war, and heard stories that adults, often recounted from their own experiences with the dramaturgy and exaggerations peculiar to grown-ups that do not have to be objectively true.

The war deprived the fourth cohort of a natural childhood and adolescence. The war environment required faster psychological maturation of them. However, this generation received only a little of the former communist education of brotherhood and unity. Consequently, for them, the conflict between the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina was not a complete collapse of the known world, as for the older cohort. Their formative socio-psychological development took place in the years after the war, allowing them to adapt

to their new social environment. Consequently, individuals in this cohort have had better opportunities to be recognized as opinion-makers in society.

The war and post-war period were undoubtedly also stressful period for the older cohorts of opinion-makers. However, before the war, they were mature enough to be able to predict events and consequences, and some were directly involved in the making and enforcement of political and military decisions. Most had been politically active as dissidents or members of the League of Communists or had been involved in the state administration. It, therefore, can be assumed that most were not directly involved in military actions during the war but held other positions in civil and military organizations. All these reasons, among others, contributed that the older cohorts' continued dominance as opinion-makers in post-war society despite their role in the destruction and impoverishment of society.

Comparison with Parliaments in the Region

Comparing the age of the members of national parliaments in the surrounding countries and Austria (Figure 5), it is evident that only the Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Montenegrin national parliaments do not have members younger than 30 years old. Only the Macedonian national parliament has more representatives in the fourth cohort than the Bosnian-Herzegovinian parliament, which has the smallest percentage of representatives from the fifth cohort. Additionally, the House of Representatives of Bosnia-Herzegovina has the highest percentage of members from the sixth cohort and slightly more representatives older than 60 years old than the Serbian National Parliament.

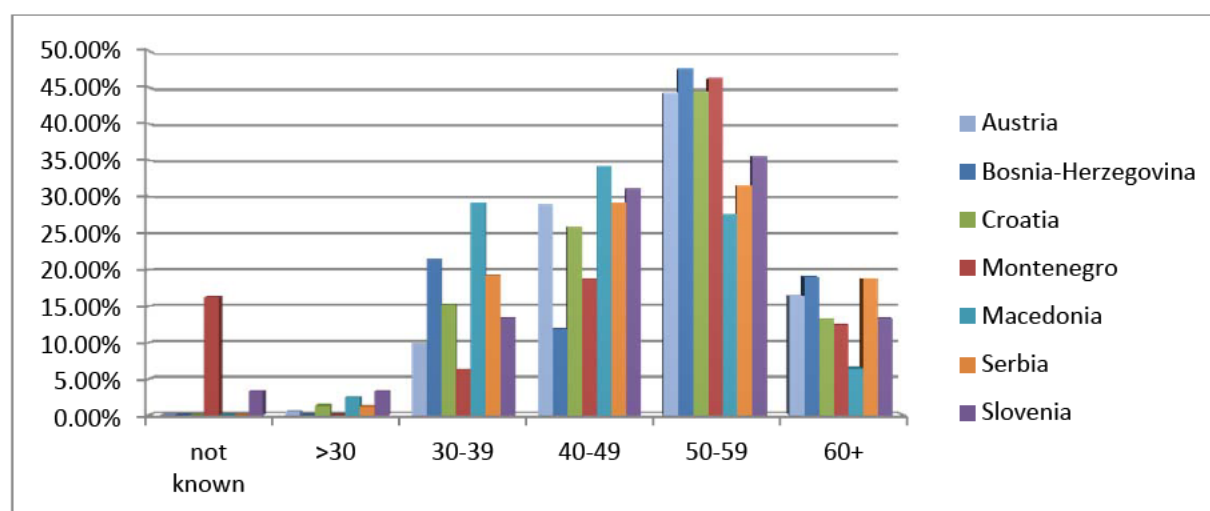


Figure 5— Age of members of parliament in Bosnia-Herzegovina and neighboring countries

If we consider that Croatia and Kosovo, in addition to Serbia and Montenegro, also saw armed conflicts in the 1990s, we can ask why the data on the age of MPs are not similar. From 1990 to 1995, no war activities took place on the soil of Serbia and Montenegro, but troops from there participated in the armed conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, first as members of the Yugoslav Army and later as members of other military and paramilitary formations. The population of Serbia and Montenegro suffered economic sanctions but not the direct consequences of military actions and were not exposed to the risk of military action in this period. No one cohort lost years of their lives in anxious uncertainty apart from economic disadvantage.

In contrast, although the war lasted longer in Croatia than Bosnia-Herzegovina, 25.83% of Croatian MPs are in the fifth cohort but 11.9% in the House of Representatives of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Comparing these findings with data from other countries in the region, it can be seen that the percentage of MPs from this cohort is smaller in the Croatian Parliament but still higher than the average (21.03%) for all national parliaments.

The fifth cohort in Croatia might not have experienced the same fate as Bosnia-Herzegovina's fifth cohort because military actions in Croatia were limited to areas with relatively low population density. Consequently, relatively few people were exposed to constant endangerment of their lives. In addition, the Croatian population was never isolated from the rest of the world. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the military demarcation of warring parties occurred throughout the state, and some enclaves were completely isolated from the rest of the world. We should not forget that much of Bosnia-Herzegovina experienced similar situations, exposing the population not only to the threat of war but also to shortages of basic necessities. Similar situations happened in Croatia but on a much smaller scale, in some cities, not the whole country.

Furthermore, in areas outside war activities in the Republic of Croatia, the state administration functioned without interruption, and education was not interrupted. Although the traumas of war were possible, no one generation lost its childhood, adolescence, or other vital years for human growth and maturation. In contrast, in most parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, it was not possible to organize any social life, and education was disrupted. Additionally, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, all males capable of military service were mobilized, while in Croatia, soon after the military forces were organized, only

professional military forces were engaged in war activities, with occasional involvement by other able-bodied males.

The scope of tragedy for the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina, with almost 100,000 deaths, nearly two million displaced persons, and destroyed infrastructure, make it the biggest loser after the collapse of the former Yugoslavia. After the war in Croatia, it was quite obvious who emerged as the winner, and the transition to peacetime in Croatia was not as traumatic as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where all the warring parties embraced the role of victim.

Comparison with the Parliaments of Administrative Territories within Bosnia-Herzegovina

If we compare the age of the MPs in the House of Representatives of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the parliaments of the two entities and the Brčko District (Figure 6), then the hypothesis about the lost generation of opinion-makers becomes untenable. The entity parliament of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina has 20.62%, the National Assembly of Republika Srpska 22.89%, and the Parliament of Brčko District 21.88% of MPs in this cohort. Thus, the percentage of MPs in the fifth cohort is close to the average percentage of the fifth cohort in parliaments of the states formed from the former Yugoslavia.

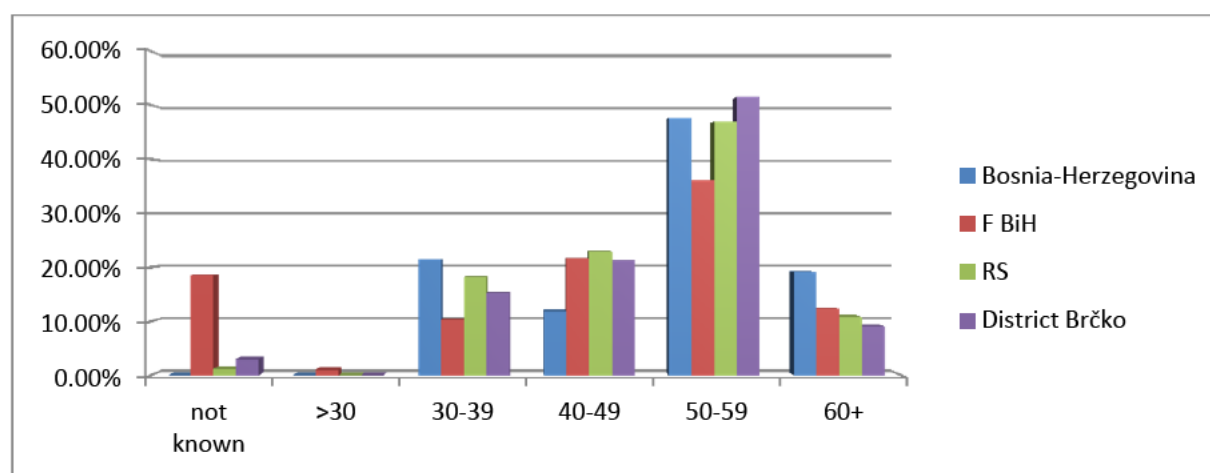


Figure 6—Age of members of parliament in Bosnia-Herzegovina, entities, and district

The hypothesis on Bosnia-Herzegovina's lost generation of the fifth cohort based on data collected from the two entity parliaments and the parliament of the district seems to be untenable. However, it cannot yet be rejected entirely without attempting to understand why the data on age are not similar for all legislative levels in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The National Assembly of the Republika Srpska has 19 MPs ages 40–49 years. Of these, three are women, two are representatives of dominant Bosniak parties, and 14 belong to predominantly Serbian parties. Two of the Bosniak parties' representatives were displaced during the war, and 14 of the 19 MPs in predominantly Serbian parties come from areas and cities somewhat distant from the frontlines and war actions. Ten MPs, the largest number in this age group, belong to the SNSD party of Milorad Dodig, the former prime minister and current president of this entity. Although the name of this party includes the prefix “Social-Democrats,” its ideology can best be described as Serbian nationalism and separatism. Other representatives of this age group belong to Serbian nationalist parties promoting Serbian nationalism and conservatism (SDS: 4, PDP: 2, DNS: 1).

It, however, is difficult to arrive at any definitive conclusions concerning the House of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina due to the lack of MPs' biographies published and the scarcity of available information from online sources. However, after extensive research, only 18.56% of these MPs have unknown age groups. From the data collected on the other MPs, 21, including five women, belong to the fifth cohort. All members of this group come from cities and places exposed to direct military actions during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition, four are military officers who transitioned to political careers after the war. These MPs represent a mixture of parties; indeed, all the parties present in this Parliament have representatives in this cohort (SDP BiH: 6, SDA: 5, SBB: 3, HSP-DNZ: 3, NSRzB: 2, HDZ BiH: 1, SB&H: 1).

The Assembly of the Brčko District has a similar composition as the entity parliaments. Seven of the 30 MPs (21.88%) are in the 40–49-year-old cohort. The district of Brčko has a unique location and importance relative to both entities. A former municipality in north-eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina became a neutral, self-governing territorial administrative unit within Bosnia-Herzegovina after the war. Although almost equal parts of this district belong to the entities, the district is not under their control. During the entire war, this area saw high military activity. Among these seven MPs, there are no women. It is interesting that four of these seven MPs, as in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, belong to SDP BiH. This name contains the prefix “social-democrats,” indicating that it is a non-ethnic party, but it is a predominantly Bosniak ethnic party. Two MPs in this age group represent Serbian national-conservative parties (SDS and PDP), and one a Bosniak national-conservative party (SDA).

This overview of entity parliaments and the district in Bosnia-Herzegovina, unfortunately, does not reveal the shift in strength from nominally right to nominally left political parties during the general elections in 2006 and 2010. Although the two most influential parties that won the most votes, SNSD in Republika Srpska and SDP BiH in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, are purportedly leftist, they have similar narratives as the national(istic) parties that dominated the war and post-war Bosnian-Herzegovinian political scene.⁴⁴² However, it is interesting to note that the majority of the MPs in all three regional parliaments come not from the national(istic) parties but from presumably left political parties.

The ages of regional and the state MPs might differ because all the parties have dual policies: at the state level, more pacifist, irenic, dialogistic, and moderate and at the local parliaments and government level, more ethnically charged. This speculation arises from the recurring theatrical verbal clashes between Bosniak politicians from the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where Bosniaks are the majority, and Serbian politicians from the Republika Srpska, where Serbs constitute the majority in the National Assembly. Croatian politicians play minor roles in these verbal clashes because they are smaller than the other ethnic groups.

We can conclude that this study's hypothesis about the Bosnia-Herzegovina's lost generation of opinion-makers is not entirely proven but cannot be refuted either. That some members of this cohort are in the local parliaments, unlike the state parliament, does not necessarily mean that it is an exception or the rule. The situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina might be much improved if the entity parliaments, which have more power than the state parliament in many cases, had less participation by the fifth cohort.

Education Level

In chapter 3, it is argued that the fundamental concept of dialogue in a society is the ability of its members, particularly policy-makers and opinion-makers holding positions

⁴⁴² Nina Caspersen noted that in elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the end of the war, the influence of national political parties decreased, while their public discourse softened. Cf. Nina Caspersen, "Good fences make good neighbours? A comparison of conflict-regulation strategies in postwar Bosnia," *Journal of peace research* 41, no. 5 (2004). At the same time, the influence of nominally leftist parties increased, while their nationalistic rhetoric hardened. This paradox probably occurred because both consociational and integrative elements were applied in the post-war political life of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

in society that demand creativity, to acquire personal knowledge about the objects with which they communicate. Personal knowledge of the objects with which the subject communicates depends on the subject's personal relationships with them, which are variable, never static. Such knowledge is usually not a part of a curriculum. Personal knowledge is not necessarily acquired through formal education, mediators, and mediums but personal relations with the object studied. It cannot be standardized. No school or university degrees demonstrate that the holders possess personal knowledge enabling them to enter in communication or relations with objects and their social and natural environments. A diploma or university degree can testify to the accumulation of certain information over a specified period, but this accumulated information does not necessarily have utility. Accumulated information does not hold any value for a person or a society if individuals do not have knowledge that enables them to start and maintain dialogue with the object of their knowledge.

If education is intended only to reproduce learned information, it is neither a good nor a smart investment⁴⁴³ for a very simple reason: education based on straight lines might reproduce the best straight lines, but straight lines have time-limited use-value in society. The reproduction of straight lines does not sustain the creation of new values, and those who reproduce straight lines have remarkably limited potential to create new values. Instead, such education creates an aberrant, godless society to which its architects, bricklayers, and tenants are not related.⁴⁴⁴ If a society subsidizes and sustains such an education model, sets it as an ideal model for the organization of a whole society, and permits only those that complete the highest educational levels to become policy-makers and opinion-makers, such society will be not able to produce new values. Instead of heading toward a smarter world, such a society will experience internal tensions and tend toward self-isolation. The campaign to develop a smart society with highly educated leaders thus backfires. In other words, the consequence of empowering the highest educated persons as leaders in a society, if they are educated to only reproduce learned information without acquiring personal knowledge, has the opposite, undesired outcome. The paradox is not that highly educated persons—reproducers of straight lines—cannot improve the societal environment but that someone ever believed they could!

⁴⁴³ Cf. Paulo Freire, *The politics of education: Culture, power, and liberation* (South Hadley, Mass: Bergin & Garvey, 1985); Cf. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling society* (London: Calder & Boyars, 1971).

⁴⁴⁴ Hundertwasser and Restany, *Hundertwasser*, 120-123.

Human history presents many examples of this phenomenon, some mentioned in previous chapters, confirming that the previous statement is correct. This trend is not confined to the past; there are many contemporary examples, including the three decade-long social, economic, and political crises in Bosnian-Herzegovinian. Observing the quantity and variety of the frustrating problems in this society, one might claim that only uneducated leaders and opinion-makers can create such problems and maintain an unhealthy social environment for so long. However, Bosnia-Herzegovina probably has the most highly educated policy-makers and opinion-makers in Europe. The educational level of Bosnian-Herzegovinian politicians is almost identical as that of the policy-makers and opinion-makers in the Catholic Church. The Church also has many unsolved issues today, even though its policy-makers and opinion-makers (the clergy) are well educated. In this respect, Bosnian-Herzegovinian society, as a whole, might reflect the symptoms and problems in societal dialogue also existing within the Church as a whole. It is not easy to see one's own imperfections without a mirror, so Bosnian-Herzegovinian society might be a mirror of dialogue for the Church, and vice versa.

Educational Level of Opinion-makers in Bosnia-Herzegovina

What level of formal education should opinion-makers have? Should it be higher than or match the average level in society? May opinion-makers be less educated than the average of society? The responses to these questions might differ if those answering the question have personal knowledge of the issue. Otherwise, the majority of those asked, under the influence of their social context and straight lines, might answer that the higher education the policy-makers and opinion-makers in a society have, the better off it is. However, as argued, a university degree is no guarantee of intelligence, abstract thinking skills, or the ability to develop individual opinions about societal phenomenon. The same can be said for those who have the status of opinion-makers regardless of whether they have university degrees. In other words, neither a university degree nor status as an opinion-maker is proof of dialogical abilities or personal knowledge. It, therefore, is quite naïve to argue that people with lower education levels cannot enjoy the status of opinion-makers or, worse, how low levels of education of opinion-makers is necessarily unsuccessful and underdeveloped.

Teaching and Learning

The majority of the socially active and influential members of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian population completed their education during the communist period. Today, the education system and teaching methods remain quite similar, although the information students must accumulate might differ. In these teaching methods, the professor or teacher stands as the mediator, center of attention, and only subject of action. The teaching is the predicate, an action the students must endure. In this teaching process, the students are objects not of learning but of teaching. In other words, this process emphasizes not learning but teaching. Learning should be discovery of knowledge about the objects of study, but teaching is not, mainly because only selectively chosen information is taught for fear younger generations will deviate from the straight line or the right path.⁴⁴⁵

We may assume that the goal of this education system is to encourage neither creativity to adopt the skills necessary for knowledge acquisition nor healthy curiosity about the unknown but, instead, to instill discipline and self-control. The knowledge evaluated to assess the success of students and professors is measured quantitatively by the selective knowledge teachers pour into the students' heads. Paradoxically, theological faculties apply the same system of education, although neither the communist regime nor the present-day regime influences them.

Teaching as a Source of Conformist Radicalization of Society

Is it possible that in a culture that represses creativity through formal education, opinion-makers are not merely the officers and executors (bricklayers) of the will and opinions of the hierarchy and policy-makers (architects)? Of course, it is. Although the opinion-makers are expected to implement the will of the hierarchy, they do conduct the will of

⁴⁴⁵ During the communist period in Yugoslavia, a popular song went: "Comrade Tito, we swear to you that we will not turn off from your path." The conformity with authority and submission to the system or collective expressed in this song, of course, are not peculiar to the communistic ideology. A similar attitude we can name idolatry can be found in some religions, including Christianity. It is reflected in the newly powerful elite's desire to control the education system and teach younger generations the only truth, so they will not deviate from the right path. However, the first deviation shows up in the very first generations taught the right path. They do not praise the right path but the path of its author or teacher for his wisdom. Regardless of whether an ideology is secular or religious and how big, powerful, or important the entry of an ideology and its creators in human history was, the moment when an ideology defines the teaching curriculum for younger generations as ideological truth is the moment when its death agonies start. The eternal truths defined by mortals cannot be ultimate truths or last forever. In other words, eternal truths not subjected to questioning and reinterpretation can find their end only in the trash dump of eternal truths, where their authors also find their resting place. For the devoted guardians of eternal truths, history usually reserves no place.

hierarchy but according to how they understand it whenever they have opportunity. The situation would be the same even if the education system were utterly different. However, if the hierarchy had less control or used fewer means of control, the deviation of the opinion-makers' interpretation from the will of the hierarchy would be greater. The fewer controls or interventions there are, the more important the impression of freedom is. A practical consequence is that opinion-makers' interpretations and actions may differ.

However, the only common quality of societies that repress creativity is that they have more opinion-makers whose conformism is often even more radical than required. Radicalism itself is not a problem as long as it is an ephemeral state of mind and does not originate from conformism. The situation becomes complicated if the hierarchy prefers conformists over those who do not loudly praise the wisdom of the authorities and criticizing policy-makers' decisions. Consequently, the more conformist opinion-makers a society has, the more corrupted its leadership is. One may argue that leaders may be unaware of members' conformist behavior. However, in this case, we can speak not only about the corruption but also the incompetence of the leaders.

Higher Educational Level: More Rigidity versus Dialogue

All the study participants had completed a university education. On average, the clerics who participated in this study had invested more time in education, primarily because mandatory theological studies last five or six years, one or two years longer than most non-theological faculties. Two participants also obtained master's degrees, while three have doctorates.

From the conducted research, it can be concluded that rigid attitudes versus dialogical attitudes are, on average, higher among the participants who had spent more time in education and have higher degrees. At the same time, exclusivity, on average, decreases proportionally with time since completion of formal education and in public work. It, therefore, can be concluded that the education system, regardless whether it is state or Church affiliated, generally produces people who are exclusive at the beginning of their careers. This exclusivity decreases with longer public engagement and more encounters with others, challenging learned and accumulated information and increasing personal knowledge. In other words, those who spend more time in education and achieve high levels of education are less ready for dialogue and need more time to open themselves to communication with others, if they are ever able to.

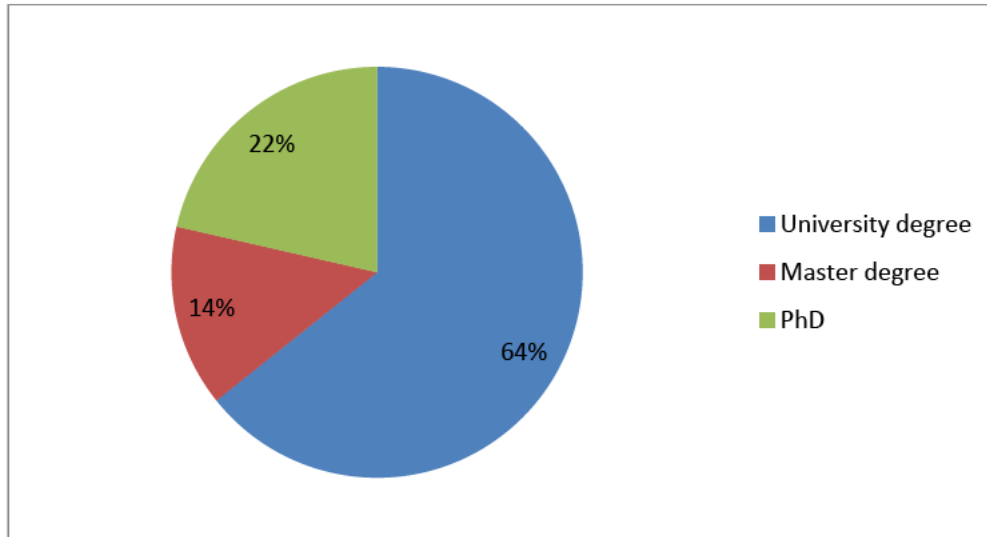


Figure 7—Participants' educational level

Dialogue, as discussed here, refers to not only dialogue between Christians and Muslims but also to dialogue and openness in general: dialogue with exclusivists, friars, diocesan priests, laypersons, atheists, agnostics, and supporters of particular politics. If the participants expressed attitudes toward dialogue with any of these groups of others in the interviews, it was evaluated as entirely negative. If dialogue is knowledge, then that knowledge cannot be limited to only a particular group or groups while intentionally ignoring or excluding surrounding groups. If dialogue is knowledge, and the refusal to engage in dialogue ignorance, the latter denies the former. However, such behavior should not be construed as hypocrisy. It is only the pure outcome of formal education!

Educational Level of the Research Sample and Members of Parliament in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Region

While all of those interviewed in this research had university degrees, only 5% of all citizens in Bosnia-Herzegovina had university degrees as of 1991.⁴⁴⁶ However, the comparison of data on the educational level of the members of the House of the Representatives is much more striking than the comparison of the age of the participants and MPs (Figure 8).

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. Zolić In statistics from 1991, Bosnia-Herzegovina had 215,468 persons with university degrees, or 6.43% of the population 15 years and older. Unfortunately, more recent data on the education levels of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian population are not available. It can be assumed that the percentage of highly educated people in Bosnia-Herzegovina is higher than in 1991 even though many intellectuals have left over the past three decades.

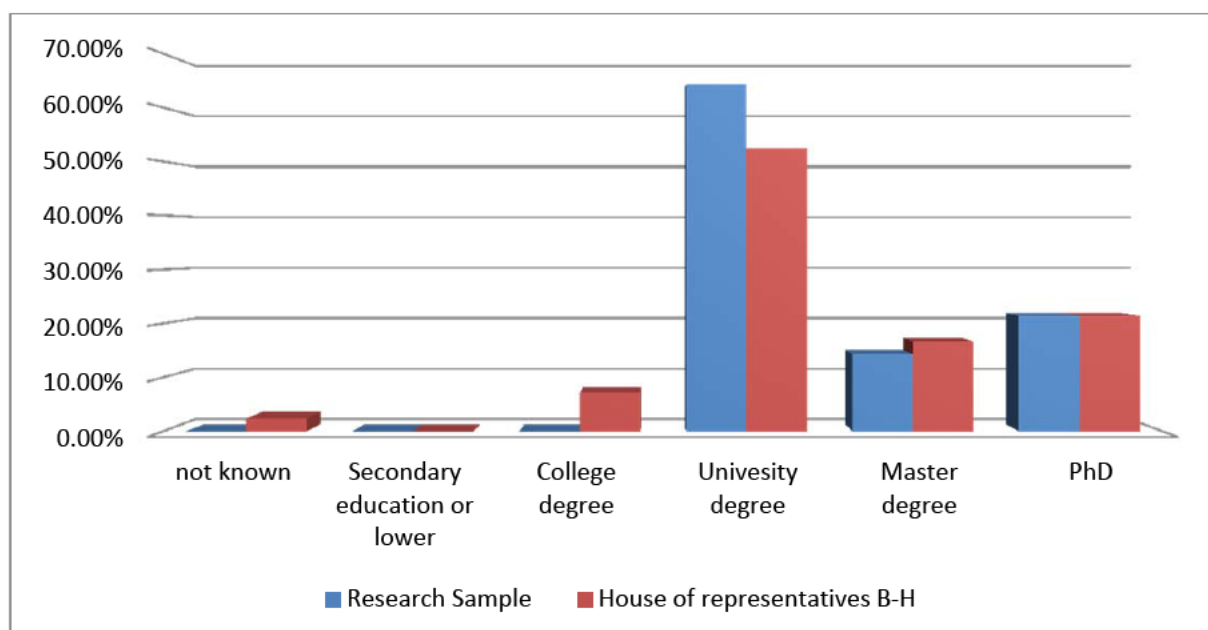


Figure 8—Educational level of the participants and members of the House of Representatives of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Members of the House of Representatives of Bosnia-Herzegovina have almost identical levels of education as the study participants. Except for one MP whose qualifications are not known, all the other MPs have obtained higher education level. Overall, 7.14% of all members of the House of Representatives have VŠS degrees,⁴⁴⁷ 52.38% university degrees, 16.67% mater degrees, and 21.43% PhDs. Those results seem to be more confusing than helpful. That all the interviewees had at least a university degree is not puzzling given that 90.48% of members of the House of Representatives also do. Based on the collected data, 9 of 10 opinion-makers in Bosnia-Herzegovina are university educated, and the rest have college degrees.

Comparing the data with other parliaments in the region (Figure 9), we might conclude that the Bosnian-Herzegovinian House of Representatives paradoxically has the most educated MPs in the whole region. However, the difference in the educational levels of MPs in former Yugoslavian states parliaments (Figure 9) is negligible compared to the astonishing differences in educational levels in the National Council in Austria and the Bosnian-Herzegovinian national parliament. While 90.48% of members of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian House of Representatives have at least a university degree, only 37.16%

⁴⁴⁷ Visoka Školska Sprema (VŠS) is similar to the German concept of Fachhochschule, covering two to three years of education after the secondary school. VŠS is labeled as a college degree in **Figure 8**.

MPs in the Austrian National Council have the same.⁴⁴⁸ Comparing the data permits claiming that homogeneous educational levels of opinion-makers in a society can be a major challenge to internal communication in that society. Whereas the MPs in the Austrian national parliament come from all walks of life in society, ensuring balance and representation of all social groups, a minority of highly educated people occupy the highest legislative positions in the former communist Yugoslavian republics.

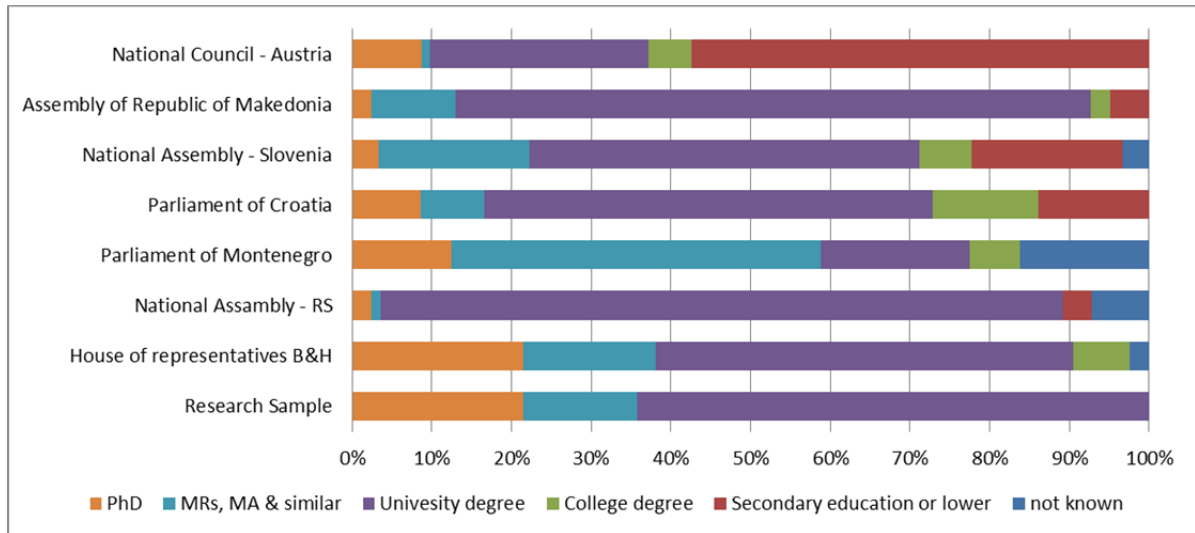


Figure 9—Educational level of the participants and members of parliament in neighboring states

One, therefore, might assume that not only the members of the legislative bodies of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, and the Republic of Srpska but also other state key officials responsible for national socio-political prosperity do not belong to an uneducated political elite. At the same time, workers and farmers with less education are excluded from the legislative bodies in the states and administrative territories that emerged after the dissolution of the Yugoslav Federation. The situation is likely similar throughout the former communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe. In contrast, the representation of professions and education levels in the Austrian National Council is

⁴⁴⁸ Similar phenomena can certainly be found in all CEE post-communist countries. In Rome in 2012, I presented statistics on the education levels of the opinion-makers in ex-Yugoslavia to master and PhD. students from CEE countries. I presented two charts related to the educational level of MPs in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Austria without disclosing that the data originated from these two states. The audience was asked whether they would prefer to live in a state where 90.48% or 37.16% of the MPs have at least university degrees. Fourteen of the fifteen participants selected the first option but were shocked to learn that they had chosen Bosnia-Herzegovina.

more balanced.⁴⁴⁹ Consequently, all population groups in this society have political representation regardless of their educational level.

Comparing the educational level of Austrian and Bosnian-Herzegovinian MPs, on one hand, and the socio-economic and political situation in these two countries, on the other hand, we might conclude that a society led exclusively by highly educated policy-makers and opinion-makers does not profit from the knowledge accumulated during their years of education. In contrast, permanent chaos and internal tensions characterize such a society. However, this does not mean that highly educated leaders and opinion-makers are not smart and harm or even evil for their society but rather that they are not qualified for such societal positions due to their formal education. That all the policy-makers and opinion-makers are highly educated aggravates their position because they do not have a counterbalance. In such situation, they are not forced to have personal knowledge of people whom they should represent and serve. Not entering such personal contact, they

⁴⁴⁹ Presumably convinced that Bosnia-Herzegovinian voters think it is essential for their political representatives to have higher education, a journalist writes in Sarajevo's Bosniak daily newspaper *Dnevni Avaz* on May 5, 2012 "the (new) fellows (counterparts) of the prime minister of Canton of Sarajevo are university professors, engineers, jurists, opera singers." In this short article, the author glorifies the titles and experiences the new ministers had acquired through their political and educational careers. Cf. A. Nalo, "Zanimljive biografije čelnika Kantona: Među ministrima pravnici, operski pjevači, inženjeri," *Dnevni avaz*, May 5, 2012. The same author also wrote the article about the MPs of Canton of Sarajevo and their education and profession published two days earlier: Cf. A. Nalo, "Šta su po zanimanju oni koji sjede u poslaničkim klupama: Uz profesoricu, sjednicu vode i diplomirani pravnici," *Dnevni avaz*, April 30, 2012.

Although the quoted author does not mention a single word about the success of those highly educated politicians in executive and legislative state bodies, many other articles published on the same date in the same issue on politicians and their politics do. For example, in an interview, a professor in Islamic pedagogical faculty at Zenica Mehtić Halil states: "Many of them (politicians) do not see politics as an activity which seeks to regulate society and induce prosperity and peace but as a nice opportunity to get wealth easily (usually not legal) and without accountability. They understand political power as a privilege instead of understanding it as responsibility, a great burden, and duty." Cf. Amil Dučić, "Hafiz Halil ef. Mehtić, profesor na Islamskom pedagoškom fakultetu u Zenici: Bošnjački funkcioneri su korumpirani!," *Dnevni avaz*, May 5, 2012. In another article, an author opines: "Thanks to the Government and inexplicable actions of some ministers, the 'Bosnalijek' affair (involving a pharmaceutical company) came into focus of public interest in a way that it witnesses nothing good for that government. Through this case, it is shown that, in fact, we do not have any serious democracy but an unknown form of oligarchic domination. Although from outside it seems to be an electoral democracy, inside prevail undemocratic practices. ... In fact, we see that the emperor is without clothes, but we are forced to speak that he is dressed in the finest clothes." Cf. Muhamed Filipović, "'Bosnalijek' lakmus naše demokracije: Naš car je gol-golcat," *Dnevni avaz*, May 5, 2012. A third article in the same issue by a Serbian author. He calls the politics of Serbian politicians in Bosnia-Herzegovina an "industry of hate." "The rifles are since a long time here silent, but politicians fire shots from all kinds of weapons. It turns out the politics is consistent in continuation of the war with non-military means. (...) The industry of hatred in Serbian politics is neither incidental nor tactical factor. Its purpose is strategic. The goal is to shatter any enthusiasm for living together." Cf. Vlastimir Mijović, "Politička industrija mržnje: Što ne može rat, može pogan jezik!?" *Dnevni avaz*, May 5, 2012.

are tempted to teach their constituents, but they do not know their constituents, so their correct teachings induce tensions. The problem is not the high educational level of leaders and opinion-makers but, instead, their lack of personal and societal dialogue. Consequently, formal high education without personal knowledge of the object of the study is neither an excellent nor a smart investment for society.

Conclusion

In this chapter, two significant features of the research sample, age and educational level, are presented and analyzed. These two features are believed to have critical influences on the personal dialogue of opinion-makers and, through them, the societal dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This chapter examines the irregularities and unexpected anomalies in the sample that required additional explanation. They were detected through the use of two mixed non-probability sampling techniques, critical case sampling and snowball sampling methodology. Random probability sampling likely would have not uncovered these features. Additional research on these two features in similar social groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina, neighboring states, and the Republic of Austria, presented in the first section of this chapter and in figures and tables throughout the whole chapter, confirm that these two features are specific to Bosnian-Herzegovinian society.

Regarding age of opinion-makers, analyzed in the second section of this chapter, Bosnian-Herzegovinian society does not have opinion-makers younger than 30 years, and the fifth cohort of opinion-makers has an unexpectedly low number of members. It is argued that the absence of opinion-makers younger than 30 years in Bosnia-Herzegovina is related to the fact that this society floats in a post-modern stream while its hawser remains tied to a pre-modernity dock. Younger generations are kept out of essential roles in society or disqualified from active participation. The absence of the fifth cohort of opinion-makers is related to their role in the war conflict in the early 1990s. Born and educated in a developing country and the friendly environment of brotherhood in a multi-ethnic society governed by the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, they were, in their 20s and 30s, thrown into fighting as soldiers in ethnic military groups against brotherhood and multi-ethnic society. It is believed that their role in the war made them incapable of performing societal roles of opinion-makers, forming a cohort of lost generations.

The second feature of the sample, the educational level of opinion makers, is analyzed next in this chapter. A majority of Bosnia-Herzegovina's opinion-makers have college,

university, or higher degrees. While the neighboring countries have disproportionately high representation of educated opinion-makers compared to the education level of the general population, none of the societies presented here has as a high percentage of highly educated opinion-makers as Bosnia-Herzegovina. For comparison, while 97.62% of MPs in the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina have college, university, master's, or PhD degrees, 86.09% of MPs in the Croatian Parliament have the same educational level, 77.78% of MPs in the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, and 42.62% of the MPs in the Austrian National Council. It is argued that the more homogenous and the higher the educational level of the opinion-makers in a society is, the less ready to enter into dialogue with all social sub-groups they are.

The cause of this phenomenon is believed to lie in education itself. If education is teaching oriented and not learning oriented, it does not encourage students to relate to the objects of their learning. The result is that after completion of education, students think they know everything about the studied objects without ever entering personal relationship with them. Instead of communicating with such objects, therefore, the educated are tempted to teach to or about it. However, their knowledge of objects does not arise from personal relationships with the objects, so their teaching cannot be correct. Consequently, instead of developing a smart society, societies with higher than average number of professional opinion-makers experience internal tensions and gravitate toward self-isolation from other societies.

Chapter 9—Analysis of Interview Data

In chapter 1, it is claimed that through working in various posts in the Holy See's diplomatic service in the Balkans over two decades, Pope Saint John XXIII gained personal knowledge about the multitude within the Catholic Church, as well as the religious multitude in his new immediate neighborhood. This personal knowledge not only made him an expert on the Balkans' social and religious groups but also later enabled him to preside over the new intrareligious and interreligious dialogue of the Catholic Church. It can be argued that he probably would never have acquired such personal knowledge if he had lived all his life in his homeland of Italy, although this certainly was not the only factor that made him capable of profound mediation between religious and other societal multitudes. Many people born and living surrounded by religious and societal multitudes remain incapable of acquiring such personal knowledge. Thus, in this last and longest thesis chapter presenting the analysis of the interview data, we explore how much of the Balkan multitude that inspired Pope Saint John XXIII to convoke the Second Vatican Council is still present there. Would it be possible today to accumulate the same knowledge the Pope learned almost one century earlier?

As mentioned in chapter 7, the sample design framework in this research is critical case sampling. This qualitative research technique is generally used to select a relatively small number of participants from a larger population who are likely to “yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge.”⁴⁵⁰ Regardless of how convincing the evidence collected through this non-probabilistic sampling technique might be, the weight of the gathered evidence might allow making only logical generalizations for the case studied, not broad generalizations for all possible cases.

The critical case group in this research consists of fourteen opinion-makers who are affiliated with the Catholic Church and/or the ethnic Croat community in Bosnia-Herzegovina and live or work in the geographical region of central Bosnia-Herzegovina. The critical group of fourteen opinion-makers has two subgroups with equal numbers of

⁴⁵⁰ Patton, *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*, 236.

participants: clerics and non-clerics. This indicates that the sampling design in this research also involved parallel sampling, an approach adopted to gather, compare, and analyze feedback from two groups who address research questions according to their characteristics and interests. After transcription of the face-to-face interviews and anonymization of all interviews, including one interview submitted in written form, the process of conceptualization and analysis was begun. In general, abstract categories from the data were generated, classified, and categorized, and then themes that might help to explain the phenomenon under study were identified.

Three chosen themes and a summary of each interview conducted, including the profile of each interviewee, are presented in this chapter. The interview summaries are nested in the text immediately after a participant is mentioned for the first time to present the context and general ideas of each participant. Some inserts are quoted in the data analysis, but no further general conclusions are drawn from them. The themes are examined in three sections, whose content and processing methodology could enable them to stand as separate chapters. Each theme has an introduction and three general conclusions. The first section, “Existence and Intensity of the Interreligious Interactions of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Catholics with Their Muslim Neighbors,” investigates how Catholics’ majority or minority status in central Bosnia-Herzegovina influences their interreligious relations with their Muslim neighbors. The second section, “Clergymen, Politicians, and Ethnic Politics,” examines relations within society, emphasizing religious–political or, more precisely, clergy–politician relations. The last section, “Personal Dialogue and Personal Knowledge,” discusses the participants’ personal knowledge on their Muslim neighbors.

Existence and Intensity of the Interreligious Interactions of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Catholics with Their Muslim Neighbors

Using the mathematical theory of probability, we might conclude that the number of encounters and social interconnections between Muslims and Catholics in a geographical region depends on the number of Catholics and Muslims living there. It, therefore, could be expected that the most random encounters occur in the regions, municipalities, cities, and villages where approximately equal numbers of members of these two groups live. Correspondingly, the number of mathematically possible random encounters decreases as the number of members of either group decreases or increases.

However, the mathematical calculation of possible random encounters between the followers of two religions in a geographical region does not mean that interreligious dialogue is truly taking place, nor it can measure the nature and quality of such relations. Although more random encounters might result in divergent social relations, including but not limited to interreligious relations, interreligious dialogue does not ever have to take place in a society or geographical regions home to multiple religious communities. This holds true if the number of possible random encounters is very small, meaning that few followers of one religion live in a place.

Using data from qualitative research, this section examines how Catholics' majority or minority status in central Bosnia-Herzegovina influences their interreligious relations with their Muslim neighbors. In chapter 7, it is discussed that Catholics are a religious minority on the national level in Bosnian-Herzegovina. However, in many micro-regions—some cantons, municipalities, cities, and villages—they constitute a relative or absolute majority. First presented and analyzed are the opinions of two participants, one non-cleric and one cleric, that Catholics' minority or majority status strongly influences their readiness to communicate with their Muslim neighbors. Second, the statements of two other participants, both clerics, are explored. Both believe that Catholics are doing everything, including engagement in interreligious dialogue, better than others, but the participants are aware that their claims are not valid outside their micro-regions where other conditions influence Catholics' attitudes. Third, the statements of two local politicians are discussed. Both are members of city councils, one in a city where Catholics are the relative majority and one in a city where Muslims are the relative majority. Both confirm that in practice, the political representatives of both majority groups never make decisions without consensus from representatives of the minority groups. Finally, general conclusions related to the issues studied in this section are drawn.

Minority Groups' Greater Interest in Dialogue with Majority Groups

These two participants believe that the intensity of religious groups' interactions depends on both their demographic status and the geographical region where they live. In other words, the participants believe that Catholics living in micro-regions where Muslims are majority are more involved in dialogue than Catholics living in regions where Catholics are the majority, as seen in the statements:

I think that in places where Catholics are minority, their willingness for dialogue with Muslims is greater. In places where they are the majority, they are not interested in engaging in dialogue. (Participant 11)

Why should a stronger group engage in dialogue with a weaker group? A smaller group needs dialogue. (Participant 14)

Given the significance of these two variables—demographic status and geographic region—the interest of smaller groups, in the participants’ opinion, is in intense intergroup relations, while such interactions are less relevant to bigger groups. However, the participants perceive different causes for this trend based on different interests in possible interactions between two groups.

Before entering detailed analysis of these claims, let us first get a brief insight into the personal context of these two participants. Both Participant 11 and Participant 14 were born, grew up, studied, and, at the time of interviews, lived and worked in cities with a Catholic minority and Muslims majority.

Participant 11 is married and has one child. His family is a rare non-Muslim family living in a multiunit house. Many of his immediate colleagues and associates are Muslims. He works in a state agency for national security. He often reads theological texts, including those by Muslim authors, and has no difficulties talking with Muslims about any topic, including Islamic religious topics, which is not typical of many Christians. He sympathizes with Muslims and Bosniaks for their war trauma but is annoyed by their fatalistic acceptance of the victim role and veneration of the victim cult; in his opinion, their exaggeration of their victim role makes them unable to perceive their own mistakes. He believes that Muslims in Bosnia are in a transitional religious and ethnic period, with many simmering developments in their community, such as the emergence of radical Islamic groups to the puzzlement and little response from most Muslim theologians. He also criticizes the Catholic hierarchy for playing the game of politics and gambling away the authority and reputation it had in society. At the same time, he is bothered by the public criticism of politicians by some Catholic clerics, who speak up too late, seemingly to excuse their own sins and justify their inaction. Ironically, in his opinion, it was the Church’s folk pedagogy that contributed to the masses voting for such politicians and their politics. He is very concerned about institutional interreligious dialogue and feels that certain Catholic religious leaders and clerics have no idea how to handle it. However, it is not only them who should be blamed for this situation for at least two reasons. First, they have no training in interreligious dialogue; the curriculum of theological studies does not include dialogue or pastoral-theological courses or training in interreligious pastoral activities. The second reason is even more critical: no one will take the first step and show others the way. All parties involved have good intentions, but none dares take the first step. Consequently, many good ideas are never implemented. In his opinion, many Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina do not regard dialogue as a fundamental postulate of their faith emanating from the Credo. Instead, they perceive dialogue instinctively and unconsciously as a survival strategy.

Participant 11

Participant 14 is a priest, who lives in a huge parish house next to the parish church. His closest neighbors are Muslims, and next to the church and parish house are a mosque and

the house of the local Muslim cleric. Looking through the dining-room and kitchen windows, he can see the Muslim cleric coming and going from his house. However, since he arrived in the parish three years ago, he has not contacted him and does not know his name. He thinks that there is no reason for such contacts. He has random encounters with Muslims in the city and claims to have Muslim friends, although his descriptions of their relations are somewhat vague. He describes his encounters with Muslims in a wholly factual and unvarnished way. He states that in such contacts, he rarely emphasizes religious and ethnic differences. Personal contacts, in his opinion, must not be considered to be dialogue because it is not necessary to study theology or read the Church documents for such encounters. To him, dialogue is more metaphysical, conducted only by religious leaders and discussed by intellectuals. He cannot imagine how dialogue between Muslims and Christians might be possible because in his opinion, the Islamic community is a parallel world that has very little in common with the Catholic Church. He does not see dialogue as a high priority for the leaders of either community because the official encounters are occasional, narrow, and fruitless; that is, they do not generate anything substantial and important for either religious community. It is also questionable how open-hearted such encounters are.

Participant 14

After a brief presentation on Participant 11 and Participant 14 and the societal contexts in which they live and work, we can continue to analyze their statements. According to Participant 11, members of Catholic minorities are apparently more willing to enter formal and informal relationships with members of Muslim majorities than members of Catholic majorities with members of Muslim minorities. Dialogue engaging members of Catholic minorities happens spontaneously, almost unconsciously. The aim of such dialogue is not to accomplish, in the words of Participant 11, their Christian duty “emanating from the Credo” but to access the social infrastructure and engage in social life. In other words, to overcome the disadvantages related to exclusion from social activities by the majority and the self-isolationism of the minority group to which they belong, members of Catholic minorities are more willing to interact with Muslims than members of Catholic majorities in other micro-regions. In such interactions, however, Catholic minorities do not engage in interreligious dialogue or necessarily publicly reveal and witness their Christian identity. Instead, they assimilate into the cultural environment of the majority that inevitably includes Islamic narration, here the societal narration of the majority group. Participant 11 accordingly labels such interactions individual “survival strategies.”

This dynamic interaction of Catholic minorities with Muslim majorities is unknown to Participant 14. He does not engage in such interactions himself, so they do not have any significance for him. As a parish priest in a small city, he can allow himself to be isolated from his Muslim neighbors and communicate only with persons he desires to. He does

not have to worry that such exclusivist behavior might affect his income and endanger his existential needs in a societal multitude as his parishioners do. Moreover, in his opinion, simple personal interactions and friendship relations between Catholics and Muslims do not constitute dialogue because he is convinced that dialogue happens between groups, not individuals. He, therefore, asks a hypothetical question: “why should a stronger group engage in dialogue with a weaker group?”

However, dialogue between groups presupposes that individuals, leaders, and representatives of groups converse with leaders or representatives of another group. Ironically then, if representatives or leaders of groups are not willing or do not consider themselves sufficiently intellectually prepared to enter dialogue with other groups—as it is case with Participant 14 and his closest neighbor, a Muslim cleric who reportedly do not even know each other’s names—dialogue will inevitably fail. Such practice *de facto* denies the thesis of Participant 14 that “a smaller group needs dialogue” and that to enter dialogue with others, one must study theology and read Church documents because he, as a theologian and the representative of a small local group of Catholics, *a priori* refuses any dialogue with representatives of the Muslim majority. However, even though this priest, as well as many of his colleagues, consciously avoids any form of interreligious dialogue and almost all encounters with his Muslim neighbors, this does not mean that the societal life in this multitude has ceased, contacts between two groups and individuals do not exist, and interreligious dialogue does not take place. It only means that some clergy, possibly a majority, have excluded themselves from this process through self-isolation from the society in which they live and work.

Catholics’ Better Skills at Interreligious Dialogue

Two other participants, priests working in the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, claim that Catholics are more engaged and willing to enter in dialogue with Muslims. According to Participant 1, the Catholic minority where he lives and works is more open to dialogue with Muslims than Catholic groups in other parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In his opinion, the main reason for such behavior is the conflict between Croats and Bosniaks at the early 1990s.

I can proudly say that we Catholics are forerunners in dialogue. I guess it is because we are not so many. We are simply directed toward it [dialogue]. We need it. In order not to vanish, we have to find a way to survive in this sea of diversity. However, if you go outside Sarajevo, ... you will find a completely different situation.

People believe there that only cowards approach others [Muslims]. Why? It is assumed that only cowards flatter others to survive. I believe that this is related to the fear that a person [collaborating with Muslims] will be not respected by other members of their own ethnic group. If I, as a Catholic, try to make friends with a Muslim, I will be considered less of a Croat; I will show my meekness and cowardice. I think this is just a spasm reflex of the war. We have never got rid of it. (Participant 1)

Participant 9 believes that relations between minority and majority groups in other micro-regions are influenced by local clergymen and politicians.

Muslims do not care for Catholics in places where they are majority. Do Catholics care for Muslims where they are the majority? Many things depend on the majority or minority status of a group and, of course, on the local clergy who are influenced by local politics and interweaved with the local politicians because of financial and other kinds of support. Nevertheless, I believe that we Catholics are more open to dialogue and cooperation with others. It is not only because we are a smaller and politically insignificant group. It is also not because we feel subjectively and objectively threatened, as that is almost always the case with minority groups in any society. I believe it is because Christianity in its nature is readier to provide more and better than other religions. (Participant 9)

These two statements seem to be more complex and, at the same time, more ambiguous than the first two participants' statements. Participant 1 and Participant 9 have worked and lived in Muslim-majority environments for decades, so they regularly encounter, talk with, and cooperate with many Muslims from all walks of life. They are respected by their Muslim neighbors, sometimes, they feel, more so than by their own parishioners, coworkers, and colleagues. None mentions any unpleasant experiences with Muslims but, to the contrary, have only good words to speak about Muslims. Both make reserved statements as if they are not wholly immersed in the societal multitude in which they live and work.

Participant 1 is a priest. Although he is one of the most influential gatekeepers in the diocese, he is quiet, modest, and unpretentious. Apart from a short period of secondary education in Croatia, he has lived his whole life in places in Bosnia-Herzegovina where Muslims constitute a majority. He proudly points out that he grew up together with Muslims, maintains good relations with them, and counts Muslims among his best friends. However, he adds that his friendships and relations with Muslim friends did not prevent him from becoming a priest. He considers his contacts and friendship with Muslims to be very important experiences and personal enrichment. In that sense, a Muslim-majority environment is a home for him. Nevertheless, he is not happy with all Muslims. He is very irritated by then Grand Mufti of Bosnia-Herzegovina Mustafa Cerić who he believes behaves very hypocritically. When abroad, Cerić is honey-tongued and presents himself as a moderate Muslim scholar open to dialogue, but in Bosnia-Herzegovina, he insidiously agitates against non-Muslims. Cerić is open and welcoming to everything he can get from the West but is unwilling to cooperate with his non-Muslim neighbors or advocate for persecuted Christians in other Muslim-majority countries. Although Participant 1 understands that many Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina, including priests, are

disenchanted with Muslim religious leaders, as well as their politics and politicians, he is convinced that Catholics must continue dialogue. He is aware that many of his colleagues are resent dialogue and prefer to ignore problems or sweep them under the carpet. However, he is convinced that this strategy will bring only more problems for Catholics, as well as all of society.

Participant 1

Participant 9 is a priest in his early seventies. He has worked almost his whole life in cities in Bosnia-Herzegovina where Muslims are the majority. He is convinced that the majority of people in Bosnia-Herzegovina do not have any opinions on religious or political issues but simply blindly follow what their religious and political leaders say. Regarding the issue of interreligious dialogue, in his opinion, none of religious leaders' endeavors reflects the population. Most Catholics do not know, or care, what the cardinal is doing in this area, and no one listens to what the so-called experts on dialogue have to say. In his opinion, interreligious dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina is an incomplete theatrical plot that has never been played on the stage; it is decorative folklore, a hopelessly futile endeavor. Ordinary Catholics either have private relations with Muslim friends or have no contact with Muslims at all, while for the most part, Catholic and Muslim clergy mutually ignore and avoid each other.

Participant 9

Having presented Participant 1 and Participant 9 and their societal context related to the dialogue with Muslims, we can continue with analysis of their statements. Both express a sense of pride in being Catholic. These two participants proudly claim that Catholics are forerunners in engagement in interreligious dialogue. Accounting for this behavior, Participant 1 states that Catholics' minority status directs them toward dialogue. In other words, survival compels them to engage in dialogue with Muslims. This argument recalls Participant 11's understanding of dialogue as a form of enculturation or social assimilation that enables individuals and groups to engage in social activities in their environment. In the opinion of Participant 9, Catholics' minority status is not the main reason why they are forerunners in dialogue. He goes further and surprisingly offers an argument that contradicts the several examples of good personal experiences of relations with Muslims he mentions in his interview, stating, "Catholics and Christians are simply doing things better than others!"

Nevertheless, even when making seemingly unambiguous claims, these two participants immediately add other perspectives, admitting that their views do not have universal value because outside their micro-regions, the situation might be very different. Participant 1 believes that outside Sarajevo, the scars of the recent Bosniak-Croat armed conflict are still alive. Despite some tensions between Croats and Bosniaks in besieged Sarajevo during the recent war, there was no open armed conflict between them as

elsewhere in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In his opinion, therefore, Catholics outside Sarajevo see Muslims not only as neighbors who are followers of another religion and members of another ethnic group but, first and foremost, as enemies threatening the existence of the Catholics and Croats. Friendship or even simple contacts with them, therefore, according to him, is regarded as an act of cowardliness and conscious acceptance of an inferior status.

Regarding Catholics outside the area where he lives, Participant 9 is not sure that they are doing things better in their micro-societies simply because they are Catholics. He recognizes that dialogue there greatly depends on the attitude of the clergy. However, he opines that the primary responsibility for this situation lies with local politicians, who, in his words, are “not only lairs; they are ignorant liars.” Later in this section, we examine what participants active in politics say about this issue, but for the moment, we concentrate on why these two participants react in such an unanticipated manner.

The short profiles of those two participants shows that both live in Muslim-majority environments, have Muslim friends, and regularly communicate with Muslims. They do not have problems with this situation; to the contrary, that is the place where their home is. Participant 1 states clearly: “My best friends are Muslims.” However, we should bear in the mind that such behavior is not the rule but the exception among Catholic clergy in Bosnia-Herzegovina and may be met with disapproval by most colleagues. Consequently, Participant 1 immediately adds: “But it [having Muslims as best friends] did not prevent me from becoming a Catholic priest.” Participant 9 behaves similarly. He consciously avoids giving precise answers in the interview questions. Publicly expressing opinions opposed to the ethnic-clerical political mainstream risks the accusation of being a sympathizer to others’ politics and a traitor of one’s ethnoreligious collective, which he had certainly experienced many times in his life. Consequently, instead of expressing his personal opinions in the interview, he highlights several exceptional personal experiences of relations with Muslims.

Both participants 1 and 9 praise their ethnoreligious group for doing good here and now. They find gratification in the sentiment of belonging to their ethnoreligious collective that is doing good and in being Catholic priests in a dominant Muslim environment. Nevertheless, they are aware that this sentiment does not exist outside their micro-regions and that they can find neither understanding nor support from most of their colleagues.

Participant 1 states that in micro-regions where Catholics are the majority, persons like him are seen as cowards because they “flatter others [Muslims] to survive.” He does not say precisely who these people who regard those communicating with Muslims as cowards are, but we can assume that they are primarily other Catholic priests (one example of such scorn is presented later). Both participants try to identify possible reasons (e.g., war scars and corrupted politicians) why their colleagues and members of their ethnoreligious group in other micro-regions behave differently. The participants find themselves in a permanent tension between their ethnic-clerical and patriotic love and loyalty to their ethnoreligious group, on one hand, and their personal knowledge on Muslims acquired through concrete experiences and relationships with Muslim friends and neighbors, on the other hand. In other words, we can imagine them sitting on a socially constructed fence between two societal groups. While the fence prevents the divided groups from seeing and meeting each other, participants 1 and 9 can observe and encounter both sides from their perch on the fence. In a way, they have a home on both sides of the fence, but paradoxically, they are aware that for this very reason, they cannot fully belong to either side. Despite loyalty to their own groups and good relations with some Muslims, they will never be fully accepted by either side. Consequently, they are sometimes harshly criticized and publicly scorned by individuals on both sides of the fence in what must be a brutal experience.

The Balkans’ Local Political Modus Operandi

The next two participants whose statements we analyze here are local politicians. Both sit on city councils in central Bosnia-Herzegovina; one lives and works in a city where Catholics have a relative majority, and one in a city where Muslims constitute a relative majority. Unlike the previous four participants who believe that majority groups do not care about minority groups, these two local politicians draw on long experience in cooperation with their Muslim colleagues to make completely different claims, as we see in their statements:

I am involved in local politics as a member of the city council. Croats are the majority in this city, and we have developed very good relations [with Bosniaks/Muslims]. I can affirm that we Croats have never outvoted our colleagues Bosniaks. Never! If there is no consensus for a certain decision, we take it off the agenda of the city council and try to find other consensus. Each time, we have gotten an agreement. I repeat: we have never made any decision against the will of our colleagues [Bosniaks] in the city council. (Participant 7)

Participant 7 is the chief executive officer and shareholder in a large Bosnian-

Herzegovinian company. The headquarters of his company are in a place where Catholics and Croats are the majority. Nevertheless, the company has many subsidiaries throughout the state, and many of his employees and partners are not Catholics. He says that he respects all Muslims and all other religions and emphasizes that religion, ethnicity, or any other personal identity does not play a role in business because: “money does not have a smell, and you never know where it comes from.” He is also involved in local politics as a delegate on the city council. He does not know much about or have interest in the interreligious dialogue between the top religious leaders or what they are doing. However, he thinks that such relations should be good; if not, then the top religious leaders are not doing their work properly. He is not happy with the local clergy and does not praise their contributions to local community and communication among all groups.

Participant 7

Participant 7 describes how decisions are made in a city council on which Croat delegates constitute the majority. According to his statement, they have never used their majority status to outvote Bosniak members in the city council, although the basic principle of democracy, majority rule, would allow them to do that. Instead, with sufficient political experience at the local level, including handling complicated relations and a divided city during the recent armed conflict, they have learned that it is prudent to postpone voting on issues not supported by the majority of delegates of both ethnic groups. Thus, in the words of Participant 7, the Croat-majority delegates not only respect the basic rights of the minority group but also seek to establish consensus with the Bosniak minority on each decision taken by the city council. His statement thus opposes other participants’ assertions that Croats in regions where they are the majority do not care for Muslims. However, his statement is limited to local political institutions in which the political representatives of the Croat ethnic majority do not ignore the representatives of the Bosniak minority. It can be assumed that the local government and legal institutions behave according to the same pattern, but it does not necessarily follow that other local social subgroups do so.

The following statement describes the situation on the city council in a city where Bosniaks are the majority and Croats the minority.

On our city council, we are a minority. Thus, the main question [for us] is how we are going to attain our objectives in this city as a minority. There is no way other than dialogue and negotiations. [Before each assembly, w]e have a preliminary meeting at which we define the city council agenda. I never had a problem with my Bosniak colleagues. I always try to articulate our proposals and positions. Probably a mitigating circumstance is that we are all of approximately the same age. We have now known each other for more than 35 years. We have been trying so hard to manage our modus vivendi in a way that does not deny or reduce any rights of each group; we do not disdain the legitimate needs of others; we do not block and reject the ideas and projects of others.... Quite often I have more problems with our

delegates than with others. Sometimes I need 10 minutes to get an agreement with Bosniaks and 90 minutes to convince our delegates that we should accept such agreement. Some of them accuse me of being an opportunist. In such situations I ask them: what is the alternative? (Participant 6)

Participant 6 testifies that Bosniak politicians in a city where they constitute majority also care for the Croat minority. The political representatives of both ethnic groups on his city council try to manage their *modus vivendi*, their way of communicating and taking decisions important to both groups. He confirms that the demands of the smaller group are heard, respected, and supported by their Bosniak colleagues. Thus, the representatives of the “stronger” ethnic group, the term used by Participant 14, indeed do care for the “weaker” group and are willing to engage in political dialogue with the minority group on the city council.

Participant 6 is a member of the executive committee of the most popular Croat ethnic party in Bosnia-Herzegovina and a member of the city council. He lives and works in a city where Muslims have a relative majority. He admits that some of his colleagues analyze every decision suspiciously and react emotionally if their ethnic political proposals and projects are not accepted. However, in his opinion, this is not a good approach. Croats are a minority in that city, so to attain their objectives, they must be ready to compromise. He acknowledges that he usually needs less time to reach an agreement or compromise with Muslim colleagues than to get his colleagues from his own party to accept these compromises. He considers himself to be an agnostic. He is not happy seeing clergy from all three confessions entering the public square to discuss issues in which they have no competence. He is very annoyed at Cerić’s political engagements while also the leader of one of the biggest religious community, which, in his opinion, complicate relations between peoples in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The grand mufti thus becomes the major problem for Bosniak ethnic parties. He compliments the endeavors of some religious leaders who engage in interreligious dialogue for the good of the whole society; however, in his opinion, there are fewer contacts than problems generated. However, one of the biggest problems is not that clergy do not or only half-heartedly engage in dialogue with others but that they consciously or unconsciously seek to ghettoize their own religious groups.

Participant 6

According to the statements of participants 6 and 7, the representatives of the majorities in these two cities respect the representatives of smaller groups and expect the same from them, even though the basic principle of democracy allows representatives of majority groups to govern without and even against the will of delegates of smaller groups. Participant 6 lists three main reasons why they behave as they do and not otherwise: 1) the demands of the minority group are clearly articulated; 2) the rights, needs, ideas, and project of others are mutually respected, so none denies or reduce the rights of any another ethnic group; 3) and, most importantly in his opinion, all the delegates have

known each other for many years and work to manage a *modus vivendi* acceptable for all people in the city.

Participant 6 also reveals the usual procedure for taking sensible decisions. It is an outstanding example of how open inter-group dialogue fosters intra-group dialogue. In the first step, inter-group dialogue takes place as representatives of both groups discuss the proposals of every group and together set an agenda for the upcoming city council assembly. In the next step, intra-group dialogue is requested, and the representatives negotiate the proposed agreements within their groups. In the third step, proposals are taken off the agenda if there is no consensus, or they are not accepted by all sides on the city council. Conducting this procedure establishes inter- and intra-group dialogue and mutual trust. Participant 6 admits that intra-group negotiations are sometimes dramatic and emotionally laden. He does not say that there are tensions in inter-ethnic relations, as might be expected, but instead describes them as usually expeditious and constructive. In contrast, he needs much more energy and negotiation skills to conduct intra-ethnic dialogue, as he states: “Sometimes I need 10 minutes to get an agreement with Bosniaks and 90 minutes to convince our delegates that we should accept an agreement.”

Although such *modus operandi* in local politics is unexpected in societies such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and indeed praiseworthy, it should not be idealized for two reasons. First, such practices compromise conventional democratic processes by substantially slowing decision-making procedures. In other words, politicians have many issues to solve but cannot because each political decision requires consensus. Consequently, ethnic politicians are accused of opportunism, inefficiency, and incompetence, as Participant 9 claims: “It seems that politicians always lie. However, they are not only liars; they are above all ignorant liars!” Second, this *modus operandi* is not the optimal because it generates potential long-term problems and threats to society. As current political practices decrease voters’ confidence in ethnic parties, politicians in ethnic parties seeking re-election might make more radical campaign promises. The more radical promises politicians make, the more they alienate themselves from their voters when they can fulfill none of these radical and exclusivist ethnic promises without transforming the current political *modus operandi* respecting minorities’ rights into an ethnic dictatorship in which the majority tyrannizes the minority. This it is not possible without initiating new conflicts, so radical promises must remain unfulfilled, and voters become dissatisfied. These potential long-term problems and threats of radical ethnic promises

and frustration with the general societal situation could lead, on the one hand, to the emergence of radical groups that might replace current ethnic politicians through either political or non-political means and, on the other hand, to emigration and the alienation of individuals from ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the statements of these two local politicians give hope that the infrastructure they use in their inter- and intragroup political dialogue could invigorate dialogue among other inter societal groups and subgroups.

General Conclusions

Random encounters of Muslims and Catholics in daily social and private activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, regardless of their quantity and the minority or majority status of either group, cannot be considered to indicate the existence and quality of interreligious dialogue between these two groups. However, the existence and quantity of random encounters can indicate the presence of a social infrastructure that makes such encounters possible. All fourteen participants in this study confirm that they know that infrastructure for formal interreligious encounters between the highest-ranking clerics in Bosnia-Herzegovina (the Interreligious Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina) exists. However, only one participant knows about this council and its activities, while the majority have no interest in its undertakings. No participants indicate that based on their knowledge and experience, there is any other infrastructure for formal or informal interreligious encounters. However, from the non-clerical participants' responses, it can be concluded that in addition to the general societal infrastructure in a secular democratic society, politicians, businesspeople, and officials have their own formal and informal infrastructures for encounters between Croats and Bosniaks. Thus, alongside formal business relations between politicians at all levels and managers in state-owned and private companies, informal relationships exist. At the same time, infrastructures for random encounters organized by secular governmental institutions and NGOs make random encounters with others possible for all citizens and enhance their mobility and inclusion in social activities.

In addition to the theoretical mathematical probability of random encounters between Muslims and Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina, this section examines how Catholics' majority or minority status in micro-regions in Bosnia-Herzegovina their relations with Muslim neighbors. The participants in the field research often mention this as a major factor that enables or thwarts relations between the groups. It has been claimed that

minority groups (or members of minority groups) in micro-regions engage in more dialogue with majority groups (and members of majority groups), while majority groups (or members of majority groups) are less interested in dialogue with minority groups.

In addition to theoretical assertions, the participants share their experiences and describe how they have behaved related to this issue as members of majority or minority groups in micro-regions. Statements on this issue from six participants, three clerics and three non-clerics, are presented and analyzed in this section. One priest who lives in a Muslim-majority micro-region deliberately decides to isolate himself from his Muslim neighbors and minimize random encounters with Muslims. He is not the only one priest who displays such behavior. Two other priests who took part in this study and are presented later behave similarly. Two other priests, described as fence-sitters, have Muslim friendships, unavoidable random encounters with Muslims, and good experiences in these relations but exercise some restraint in engagement in dialogue with Muslims. Three non-cleric participants presented in this section, as well as four other non-clerics discussed later, have many encounters with Muslims, random, organized, and planned. They do not try to avoid encounters with Muslims or have any reservations about conducting business and partnerships with Muslims regardless of whether they live in micro-regions where their ethnic or confessional group constitutes the majority or the minority. The hypothesis that a group's minority or majority status is a decisive reason for involvement in interreligious or interethnic dialogue cannot be proved from their statements. In particular, participants active in local politics state that the opposite is true: political representatives of ethnic majorities, whether Croat or Bosniak, take care of the other minority ethnic group.

We, therefore, can draw three general conclusions on the existence and intensity of interreligious interactions of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Catholics and Muslims. These three conclusions are related to three societal subgroups that generally behave differently in this area: ordinary citizens, clergy, and all other powerful figures and opinion-makers.

Ordinary Catholic citizens generally do not take part in interreligious dialogue with Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, some have personal relations with Muslim neighbors, friends, and colleagues.

Catholics' minority or majority status in micro-regions influences the number of their random encounters with Muslim neighbors. Catholics living and working in Muslim-

majority micro-regions have more random encounters with Muslims than Catholics living and working in Catholic-majority micro-regions. Bosnia-Herzegovina has no infrastructure for interreligious dialogue between ordinary citizens—or if such infrastructure exists, it is not developed or visible enough for the public to recognize—so encounters between Catholics and Muslims primarily occur within existing societal secular infrastructure (e.g., work, public administration, health care systems, higher education, public transportation, tourism, and shopping centers). In such encounters, the participants do not meet with the intention to discuss and witness their faith, so these encounters usually do not have the character of interreligious dialogue. Nevertheless, such random encounters can lead to the acquisition of personal knowledge on Muslims; that is, some Catholics do have personal dialogues with Muslims. Thus, interreligious interactions between ordinary Catholic citizens and their Muslim neighbors take place on the personal level under the condition that they have opportunities to meet each other; in other words, random encounters occur in the secular societal infrastructure.

Catholic clerics generally ignore any form of interreligious dialogue with Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, disregard or even scorn colleagues who have personal relations with Muslim neighbors and friends, and seek to minimize all avoidable encounters with Muslims.

The Catholic clergy is a largely autonomous societal subgroup, but paradoxically, clerics use this privilege to isolate themselves from the society in which they should provide pastoral work while seeking a high-profile presence in the public square. Consequently, Catholics' minority or majority status in micro-regions where they live and work generally does not influence the number of their random encounters with Muslims. In other words, as a financially independent and autonomous societal subgroup, Catholic clergy generally do not have to use the secular societal infrastructure in which they might randomly encounter Muslims and can afford to isolate themselves from the society in which they live and work. Although an infrastructure for interreligious dialogue between clergy of all confessions exists, only some representatives of the hierarchy and so-called experts on interreligious dialogue use it. Clerics who have personal dialogues with Muslims consider themselves to be fence-sitters or even mediators between two worlds. These two worlds are not divided by physical fences nor are they detached from each other but are immersed with each other in the same society. Nevertheless, the majority of clergy successfully avoid any contact with the other world.

Politicians, businesspeople, officials, and other opinion-makers generally do not take part in interreligious dialogue with Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina but regularly encounter Muslim partners, colleagues, neighbors, and friends. Additionally, they keep themselves informed about the major events and developments within the Islamic religious and Bosniak ethnic communities.

Catholics' minority or majority status in micro-regions where politicians, businesspeople, officials, and other opinion-makers live and work generally does not influence the quantity of their encounters with Muslims. This is the most mobile social subgroup, and in addition to random encounters with Muslims in the secular social infrastructure, they have business and private encounters organized through subgroups' formal and informal infrastructures. Their encounters usually are not interreligious in nature but might lead to personal dialogue.

Clergymen, Politicians, and Ethnic Politics

As discussed in chapter 6, it is assumed that the ethnic affiliations of the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina almost universally correspond with their religious affiliations. Thus, ethnic Croats, one of the three biggest ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina, likely are Catholic. Even atheists and agnostics who affiliate with the Croat ethnic group have a cultural link to the Catholic Church. It, therefore, can be claimed that the majority of Croats and Catholics living in Bosnia-Herzegovina constitutes a single ethnoreligious collective identity. This uncommon correspondence of two collective identities, ethnicity and religion, within a secular society has its origins in the so-called national awakening in the Balkans in late 19th and early 20th centuries influenced and inspired by the creation of most European nations decades or even centuries earlier. The main difference in this process was that, unlike in the rest of Europe, except for the state bureaucrats in the declining Ottoman provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Habsburg Empire in late 19th and early 20th centuries, the only highly educated group were Christian clergy, who, after their education abroad (as discussed in chapters 4 and 5) introduced the idea of nationhood to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Nevertheless, the clergy were not an adequate societal subgroup for such a socio-political task. Then, as today, the clergy had only narrow societal infrastructure and communication channels that prevented them from developing a distinct national project for the whole Bosnia-Herzegovinian society and rendered them incapable of expanding a national awakening project outside their religious

group. In other words, the clergy could not imagine one Bosnian-Herzegovinian nation that included followers of other confessions.

Instead, certainly under the influence of national awakening projects in neighboring countries, Catholic clerics imported Croat national ideas for the Catholic population, while Orthodox clergy imported Serbian national ideas for the Orthodox population. Thus, they introduced the old western European axiom *cuius regio eius religio* to the Catholic and Orthodox Christians of western Ottoman provinces in a somewhat distorted non-territorial version: *cuius religio eius ethnicus*. Muslims were awakened as the third Bosnian-Herzegovinian ethnoreligious group much later. The reworked Catholic–Protestant axiom was tragically changed from its original form into *cuius region eius ethnic-religio* during the Second World War and armed conflict in the early 1990s, as the armed forces and paramilitary militias of all three ethnoreligious groups violently implemented political programs of ethnoreligious cleansing in the territories under their control.

Although clergy fueled the ethnonational awakening in Bosnia-Herzegovina and today still consider themselves to be irreplaceable guardians of ethnoreligious collective identities, they paradoxically seem to have a marginal role in societal and political life. The majority of the study participants, both clerics and non-clerics, believe that beyond distinct moral authority within their own religious communities, clergy in Bosnia-Herzegovina have very limited, if any, influence on the politic and social lives of their ethnoreligious groups and society. This does not mean that Catholic clerics remain neutral observers of politics and social life. In fact, as we see in this section, the opposite is true. Clergy are exceptionally active in using all available communication channels to spread their political “revelations” and persuade a limited number of the users of their societal infrastructure that their political preferences are the best. Ethnic parties endorsed by clergy usually win all elections. However, as it is presumed that clergy have only limited political influence, it cannot be claimed that these parties have won almost all elections since the transition to democracy due to clergy’s support. It is also possible that clergy support these ethnic parties only because they are most likely to win.

Keeping in mind the socio-political and religious environment in Bosnia-Herzegovinian society, it is likely that present-day and past political events directly influence not only interreligious relations within society but also intrareligious relations within

ethnoreligious groups. Accordingly, all the study participants were asked a set of question about social relations, including religion–politics or, more precisely, clergy–politician relations. The most representative answers are presented and analyzed in this section. First, unconditional and uncritical support for the most popular ethnic party and its leadership, which is believed to be the attitude of most clergy in Bosnia-Herzegovina, is presented. Second, the opinions and confusion of non-clerics about clergy’s political preferences and practices and relationships with Muslim neighbors are discussed. Finally, some critical clerical voices on politicians, their politics, and their love–hate relationship are raised, followed by the general conclusions.

Loyalty to the Existing Clerical Plausibility Structure

Fence-sitters tend to not condemn bad behavior by any group but, instead, try to understand the reasons for such behavior. Nevertheless, they are exposed to criticism and attacks from colleagues who do not share their compassion for those on the other side of the fence. Here is a somewhat restrained statement on “fence-sitter by clergyman who works and lives in a Catholic-majority area:

The huge difference between us [priests] can be sensed when we gather. Our attitudes and opinions differ depending on the places where we live. There are diametrically opposed opinions on the issues we are discussing now [in the interview] between me and someone who works, for example, in Sarajevo. We especially disagree about our ethnic politics and our [ethnic] political representatives. I cannot believe that someone can even think like that. (Participant 5)

In this statement, Participant 5 expresses frustrations with Participant 9’s hard-hitting public criticism of the most popular Croat ethnic party and its leadership and politics. These criticisms unfortunately cannot be presented here because they would reveal the identity of Participant 9. Nevertheless, to understand the context and the issues discussed by both sides, we can instead consider somewhat milder criticism issued in the same context by the second fence-sitter.

I’m not sure whether Croatian politics at all supports our existence here in Sarajevo. I heard some of our Croatian politicians—doesn’t matter whether they are Catholics or not—saying that they do not want to live here with Baliije [pejorative word for Bosnian Muslims]. None of them live here. The majority of our political leaders are from Herzegovina. They do not have a sense of dialogue with Muslims, nor do they need it because they are in the majority [in Herzegovina]. They want to make one sheepfold, and we [all Croats living outside the sheepfold fence] should move into it. (Participant 1)

It is interesting to note that Participant 5 mentions both fence-sitters in his interview, discussing Participant 9 directly and Participant 1 indirectly. During the interview, Participant 5 had in front of himself a text related to Participant 1: a review of a controversial, emotional book by a right-wing populist author on Muslims in Europe and the persecution of Christians in Muslim-majority countries. At one point, Participant 5 demonstratively pointed to the text and said: “I’m really glad I read this today. The ideas presented here [the ideas of the author of the reviewed book] are indeed very radical; they could not be more radical. However, maybe I should not say it as a priest, I agree with 90% of them.” Nevertheless, before analyzing the criticism of Participant 9 by Participant 5, let us first read his profile and interview summary. The statement of Participant 1 is analyzed later in this section.

Participant 5 is a parish priest with more than 35 years of experience in parish ministry. For the past fifteen years, he has been a parish priest in a Catholic-majority city. He does not have many contacts with Muslims. Here and there, he comes across Muslim neighbors or beggars and engages in small talk with them. He says he is willing to talk with all Muslims except clergy. He does not want to meet them. He does not hate them but simply cannot stand to be close to them. The mayor organizes receptions on all major Catholic and Muslim holidays and invites all Muslim and Catholic clerics working in the city. Participant 5 never goes to these receptions. He cannot explain why he behaves this way but says there is something inside him. He believes that Muslim clerics are neither honest nor fair. In his opinion, leaders of the local Church, especially Cardinal Puljić, are doing a lot of interreligious dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina, probably more than necessary. He believes that the cardinal must be directed by Rome to act in this way. He admires the cardinal for having so much patience and perseverance in engaging the Muslim religious leadership. He is aware of his total failure to accomplish his tasks concerning dialogue on the parish level but nevertheless has no plans to change.

Participant 5

In the preceding quotation, Participant 5 expresses his anxiety and frustrations with some colleagues working in Muslim-majority micro-regions. He does not say that he is annoyed with their different attitudes toward Muslims or their greater contacts and personal relationships with their Muslim neighbors in contrast to his deliberate avoidance of contact with Muslims whenever possible. What upsets him is that some express different, more precisely, diametrically opposed opinions on and even dare to criticize the present Croat ethnic political leadership and their politics. He thus indirectly suggests that the social environment of Muslim-majority micro-regions influences some of his colleagues to have different opinions on ethnic politics and to engage in treacherous criticisms of the politics of ethnic representatives from the most popular Croat ethnic party that might undermine the position of their own ethnoreligious group. Although such

approach is a populist, right-wing stereotype present in almost all contemporary western societies—that is, those who have almost no contact with Muslims claim to know more about the Islamic threat to western Christian civilization than those immersed in Muslim social environments—let us try to examine the source of the anxiety and frustration of Participant 5.

From his statements, it cannot be concluded that he is concerned about a potentially uncertain future for Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although they live in an exceptionally poor socio-economic situation compared to that before the transition to democracy and in other former Yugoslavian countries, he laments another, to him, obviously more important societal condition in which Bosnian-Herzegovinian Catholics live: “Our biggest problem is that we are a negligible minority. They [Muslims] know that. They, therefore, do not have to use violence [against us]; it is enough to yell at us to intimidate us. They are grinding us slowly and unscrupulously.” He does not explicitly mention the miserable socio-economic situation but stresses that “all small peoples have a difficult life.” He repeatedly points out that Muslims persecute Christians in Muslim-majority countries, but he does not say that Muslims persecute Christians in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Instead, he indicates that religious- or ethnic-motivated violence is essentially nonexistent: “they do not have to use violence;” that is, at present, there is no religious- or ethnic-motivated violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Nevertheless, he maintains that Muslims threaten Catholics because “they yell at us!” From the context, it can be assumed that “yelling” refers to the juxtaposition of the political interests of the two political rivals and the related common discourses in which political adversaries do not hold the same opinion on issues or even speak civilly with each other—that is, they publicly criticize and even deride their rival parties and their political ideas and programs. If the latter assumptions are correct, we can suppose that Participant 5 identifies himself and his whole ethnic group with ethnic political representatives—the Croat ethnic party leadership—and thus sees threats not only in the Muslim politicians yelling at them but also in those who dare to criticize them and the democratic system that presumes and permits such political discourses.

Although not concerned about the future and unable to speak about the real threats of Muslims to Catholics, Participant 5 is highly disappointed with general conditions in which Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina live. The first disappointment is Catholics’ minority status, fueled by the mainstream romantic clerical-ethnonational ideology

defined by Catholic priests in the early 19th century according to which Orthodox and Muslim clergy have responsibility for low numbers of Catholics and Croats, respectively. The contention by Participant 5 that Muslim clerics are *per se* “neither honest nor fair” without ever actually meeting one in his 35-year career as a parish priest in a multi-confessional society confirms that he has remained loyal to the plausibility structure of his ethnic-clerical collective based on this ideology. He is completely loyal to the presentation of the past and others in the historical context, as well as authors of such doctrines. Their doctrines are reliable and existential, so he sees no need to question them; to the contrary, he advocates, defends, and promotes them without seeing anything wrong. He is convinced that he is doing what is expected from him: doing good.

Here we come to the second disappointment of Participant 5: he is shocked that some colleagues dare to criticize the leaders and politics of the strongest ethnic political party. He cannot believe that a priest can even think to do so. Knowing the context, we might argue that he reacts so because he cannot believe that some clerics consciously criticize the only remaining institution that can ensure and maintain the unchangeable status of their plausibility structure. The state is constitutionally secular, and no emperor can ensure the existence of the ideology and *raison d’etre* of the ethnic-clerical plausibility structure, so the only remaining guardian is the single ethnic political party. In this context then, a cleric who dares to criticize the party and its leaders, in his opinion, is sawing off the branch on which the clergy sit.

Politicians on the Clergy—Rejection of the Clerical Ghettoization Ideology

The clerical plausibility structure, however assuring it might be found in ethnic-clerical circles, is not feasible for Bosnian-Herzegovinian Catholics who cannot isolate themselves from their neighbors in a multi-confessional society. For example, Participant 4 mentions the behavior of Participant 5 and expresses strong disagreement with his advocacy of ethnic-nationalistic politics:

I think that many of our parish priests are closed in themselves. They keep themselves imprisoned by their worldviews, and they are not ready to promote universal values that imply normal relations between humans. I argued once with a priest [Participant 5]. He said [to a group of people]: “Go, and vote in the election. It will be not good if all of you do not vote.” That means if each of us Croats is not going to vote for a Croat candidate, he is not going to win. I strongly oppose such attitudes. I believe that no matter who is going to be our city mayor, he must work for the good of all people living in this city. Maybe elected mayor will not be my friend, and maybe I will be not ready to drink coffee with him, but that is something

completely different. I think that Kwaśniewski once said that Lech Wałęsa is his friend, and he will always be ready to drink coffee with him. However, he will never again vote for him because he is not a good president. A priest should build in people a feeling that they can live here; he should spread a faith that here, too, can be better despite so many disadvantages. They must not promote ethnic vulnerability. The situation here is indeed not good, but telling people to vote because if they do not do it, it will be worse. ... I do not know. Sometimes when you see how some people are doing their jobs, you just got the impression that even the Devil would be better than such incompetent persons. (Participant 4)

Participant 4 is a manager in a state-owned company and previously was a career politician and a key person in the executive government. He does not consider himself to be a believer, but that does not prevent him from being friends with many priests. He was born and grew up in a Muslim-majority city, and today he lives in a part of a city where Croats are the majority. He says that he has had only positive experiences in his relations with Muslims. His encounters with Muslims are probably friendlier and warmer than with people from own ethnic group. Nevertheless, when he observes the whole Muslim collective in Bosnia-Herzegovina, he is somewhat worried. In his opinion, the Muslim community, by accepting some Islamic cultural elements not inherent to the Balkans, has become increasingly radicalized and alienated from two other ethnic groups. Such developments reasonably disturb Croat and Serb neighbors. Nevertheless, he understands such these tendencies: whereas Croats and Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina have cultural and political support from Croatia and Serbia, Bosnian Muslims have nothing similar, so they orient themselves toward other Muslim nations. Regarding interreligious dialogue, in his opinion, the leadership of the Catholic Church has appropriate relations with Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but he does not see a similar approach at the lower level. There are some exceptions, but in his opinion, the majority of the Catholic clergy promotes a populist ethnic-nationalistic ideology. They operate within the imagined confines of their fictional worldview and are not ready, or perhaps not willing, to see the pernicious environment they are creating among believers. Instead of promoting universal values and normal relations with others, they are spreading fear, advocate political isolation, and promote constant tensions. He is also very annoyed and disappointed that some dare to suggest what their parishioners should do in elections.

Participant 4

Although Participant 4 does not consider himself to be a believer—he does not say whether he is an agnostic or atheist because this issue and distinction are not important to him—he never refuses an invitation to attend church for a celebration, wedding, baptism, funeral, or patron. Additionally, he socializes with many local Catholic priests, including Participant 5. These encounters are informal; that is, he must not meet them for work or spiritual support. To use his own words, he is always ready to “drink coffee” with local priests because they are good, friendly persons and, equally important, intellectuals in his small sphere for socialization. Consequently, he probably encounters local priests more often and spends more time with them than most churchgoers.

Nevertheless, he is convinced that the local clergy he knows are completely incompetent on political issues and communicating with people who do not belong to their ethnic-

religious group and clerical subgroup, that is, with those whose worldview they do not share. Accordingly, he sees it as inconceivable reasoning and behavior for a priest to call for voting for Croat mayoral candidate, arguing that a Muslim mayor is inherently a worse option than a Croat mayor. He argues that a city mayor is not required to be friendly but competent. It is irrelevant whether the mayor is Croat or Bosniak because the mayor must serve for all those living in the city. If the mayor does not do the job properly, there are democratic instruments to force the mayor to do so and legal remedies to prevent the mayor from violating city statutes and state laws. Thus, even if one's preferred political candidate does not win, city officials should still respect laws and rights. In short, Participant 4 criticizes local clergy for their ignorance of political issues and democratic processes, sluggishness to certain political options and clerical plausibility structure, and general underestimation of the importance of personal dialogue with all people regardless of religion, ethnicity, and social status. Democracy consists not only of voting and calling for voting but also taking an active role in democratic processes by monitoring the general situation, encountering people, and writing petitions demands, among other actions. To take an active role in a democratic society, one does not have to be a politician, but one must have a personal relationship with that society and its people and environment. Furthermore, one needs personal knowledge on a society, its human capacity, its weaknesses and possibilities, the needs of its people, and the competences of its representatives—knowledge that Participant 5 does not have.

Participant 4 is not alone in criticizing some priests' attitudes and advocacy of single ethnic political parties. Participant 8 also laments political campaigns and propaganda conducted from the altar:

Once I asked a priest if he could be less active in promoting a certain political platform. I'm going to the church not because I want to attend a political meeting but because of the holy mass, to hear a message from the gospel and preachers' comments on the gospel text. I asked him to spare me and other people from political campaigns in the church. I do not need it. (Participant 8)

Participant 8 is a senior officer in the Armed Forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina. He is a devoted Catholic, regular churchgoer, and former member of the parish council. However, religious identity does not play any role in his professional relationships with his colleagues and subordinates or his private relationships with friends and others. He does not want to comment on interreligious dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina because he does not consider himself to be an expert on the issue. He believes that about 90 percent of Bosnian-Herzegovinian's Muslims are normal believers; however, the rest, about 10 percent, identify their religion with their political identity and are the loudest. He regularly reads articles by Bosnian Muslim intellectuals and can agree with most of them. However, he believes that Cerić, the grand mufti of the Islamic Community in Bosnia-Herzegovina, has

an exceptionally dangerous agenda; in his opinion, some of Cerić's public addresses cannot be related to religion at all. He is aware that many clerics in the Catholic and Orthodox churches are not immune to the same phenomenon [intolerance, arrogance, and hate speech], but he can compare no one to Cerić. In his opinion, the clergy of all three confessions insufficiently perform their role as the public conscience. Moreover, some support more radical ethnic-nationalistic politics than politicians of ethnic-nationalistic parties. That should be inconceivable for any religion.

Participant 8

We can imagine how frustrated a senior officer must feel listening to a sermon flavored with details from the analysis of daily politics written and disseminated by a party PR service or, even worse, with slogans and empty phrases taken from political parties' campaigning pamphlets. While active, senior officers—to stay in the service and earn promotions—must keep informed about not only military science but also all issues related to security and the general situation in their society, neighborhood, and world. Depending on their rank, they have limited or unrestricted access to military intelligence files and analysis. They also have own networks of friends, acquaintances, colleagues, and subordinates with whom they might consult or receive relevant information. Of course, an officer might have an interest in hearing what a parish priest has to say on society, including political issues, on which he have his own opinions. However, is the pulpit right place for this? Would it be appropriate for a senior military officer to speak about spirituality to his subordinates at a morning briefing? If a parish priest promotes a political party in a homily, as Participant 8 recalls, or uses the pulpit to speak on political issues, though an amateur with no knowledge on society, as in a previous example, an officer and any other opinion-makers sitting in the pews who came to church to meet their spiritual needs must be frustrated. In short, Participant 8 believes that parish priests who promote political platforms in sermon are not only doing something they are not qualified, entitled, and expected to but also make a fool of themselves and the people sitting in the pews.

However, the strongest resentment of parish priests' backing of political parties, as we might expect, comes from a politician of the rival party.

To be honest, I resent backing of the biggest Croat party by the [Catholic] priests. Clergy should be above politics. They should be the first to realize all the negative consequences of such an attitude for our society. They still preach that if we do not vote for the strongest ethnic party, we will be forced to leave our homes or that those who do not vote for that party have betrayed the sanctity [of our ethnoreligious group]. It is a catastrophe! Exactly because of such politics, our situation here is worse and worse. The people cannot understand it. I am deeply convinced that once

the clergy change their narrative, our political reality will be changed as well. When I was a minister in the canton government, I authorized a few donations to our parish. The parish priest never mentioned it in public. That was okay for me. However, in one public address, he praised another party and a man who didn't contribute anything to the parish. I reacted wrathfully. I told him: "You've known me for years, you baptized all my children, and you purposely choose to ignore me and praise the man from the other party. Was it all just because I do not belong to that party? You must not mention me, but then you should not mention him as well. You should have the same criteria for both." In the end, he was the one who felt offended. (Participant 10)

Participant 10 is an opposition politician from a small Croat ethnic party. He lives and works in part of a city where Croats are the majority. He openly admits that his opinion on Muslims has changed radically since he became a career politician about ten years ago. Before then, under the influence of ethnic-nationalistic politics, he considered Muslims to be enemies, believing that their political goal was the ethnic cleansing of Croats from central Bosnia. Today, he has many Muslim friends, and through these contacts, he has realized that they are normal people, open to dialogue and cooperation. He, therefore, emphasizes that Catholics in Central Bosnia were indeed victims—not of Muslims but the very wrong politics of their own ethnic political elites that influenced his opinion, as well as the opinions of all Croats in the region. He is convinced that political dialogue with Muslims is possible and necessary. Regarding the engagement of the local Church and clergy in interreligious dialogue, he states that he does not see them doing anything. Local parish priests, in particular, do not show any interest or enthusiasm for dialogue with Muslims but precisely the opposite. He thinks that someone should work with them to change their attitudes. Not more radicalization but more prudence is needed.

Participant 10

More study participants state that local Catholic priests readily talk about politics, either in their sermons or at other public occasions. Some participants also report that Catholic clergy prefer and support particular Croat ethnic political parties. At present, several Croat ethnic parties are active in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although all are right-wing conservative parties—some are more populist or right-oriented platforms and practices than others—and there is no nominally Croat ethnic left-wing party, one Croat ethnic party usually has won the most votes from Croat voters since the beginning of the democratic transition in the early 1990s. There is no need to mention the names of Croat ethnic parties or to analyze their political platforms. The extent of support is arguably the most important political feature for voters in Bosnia-Herzegovina, more important than political platform or results, so it is sufficient to state that there is one big Croat ethnic party and several smaller ethnic parties. In other words, neither the quality of the largest Croat party's political platform nor its poor performance during the past term is important because the outcome is always the same: the party predestined to be the strongest wins the majority of votes. How can one party enjoy such status and repeatedly win the majority of Croat voters?

Participant 10 opines that the likely cause is the support of the Catholic clergy, who preach that “if we do not vote for the strongest ethnic party, we will be forced to leave our homes. Or that those who do not vote for that party have betrayed the sanctity” of our ethnoreligious group. Thus, Participant 10 claims that Catholic clergy preach that Catholics will lose everything they have, material and spiritual, if the biggest Croat party does not remain the most influential Croat party in Bosnia-Herzegovina. If true, this claim implies that Catholics repeatedly vote for the same party at the instigation of the Catholic clergy. Is this possibly true, and if so, why would Catholic clergy do this?

Participant 4 states that a priest called for a group of people to vote for a Croat mayoral candidate from the strongest party. As well, Participant 8 claims that the same priest promoted in a homily not only a candidate in local elections but the political platform of the strongest party. No other study participants of this research talk more explicitly about Catholic clergy’s direct involvement in political campaigns and support for one party. However, Participant 6, a member of the strongest Croat party’s executive committee, states:

In my own experience, religious institutions have a large influence on the opinion of the majority of people. However, they do not influence me. [Laugh] I wouldn’t say that the cardinal supports our party. Some priests also do not support us. (Participant 6)

With this statement, Participant 6 confirms that the claims of Participant 10 likely are correct. According to Participant 6, Catholic clergy have strong influence on the opinions of most Croats living in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and some Catholic clerics actively support his party, while, in his opinion, only a few—one bishop and some priests—do not support it openly. Participant 6 does not state whether the party leadership has sought this support and, if so, what favors the clergy expect in return. He also does not confirm that such services are taken for granted.

However, it seems that those clerics who actively support this party do so as if they were defending the faith, and their support seems to be indisputable and sturdy as if this party’s power status and election victories were matters of life and death for Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This could be why nothing affected the parish priest of Participant 10. Donations to the parish, knowing each other for many years, regular churchgoing, and a family active in parish life did not make the parish priest change his political attitudes and downplay his ardent support for the candidate of the other party. Ultimately, when

Participant 10, according to his statement, protested and asked parish priest to correct himself, it was parish priest who felt offended. Of course, if the priest believes that promotion of one ethnic party and its candidate and ignoring alternative ethnic party is his duty and an indisputably good thing, objections cannot change him. To the contrary, he must feel offended because Participant 10 asked him to betray his beliefs.

Although Participant 6 understandably has no complaints about the promotion of his party by Catholic clergy, he cannot believe the extraordinary demands he sometimes receives from local priests.

I'll give you an example. We organize an Easter futsal tournament in our small city; it is now a tradition. This tournament has become so popular that some teams from Serbia, Croatia, as well as some Bosniak teams, take part. Our parish priest once came and said that a non-Croat and a non-Catholic team could not win the first place and that a Muslim player could not be awarded the title the best player of the tournament. ... How could he come to such an idea? If someone is the best player, he is the best player. Any other reasoning is offensive! I have never heard any of our party leaders ever saying something similar. (Participant 6)

This example gives a glimpse inside two juxtaposed worlds that, despite their incompatibility, coexist and mutually support each other. The first is the welcoming world of people who, although they have experienced injustices from their neighbors in the recent past, are proud and happy that an event they have organized for years has attracted so many people to their small city. They see it as recognition of their hard work. Their biggest concern is to be good hosts, so their guests might come again. This world cannot understand that someone might deny first place and the title of the best player in the tournament to those who won them due to their origin, ethnicity, or religion. The second world is a world of learned principles, ideas intended to create paradises on earth by building fences others cannot climb. In this world, every person must learn from transmitted knowledge what is good and what is bad and accordingly categorize other people. Errors cannot be allowed, and those who have erroneous beliefs must stay on the other side of the fence of paradise—in this case, they must not be allowed to win first place or be awarded the title of best player at a tournament in paradise.

Parish priest who live in a reality constructed according to ethnic-clerical plausibility structure sees nothing wrong in demanding that non-Catholic teams and players not be entitled to earn first place and title of best player in the (Catholic) Easter futsal tournament. In other words, according to the parish priest, those not belonging to paradise cannot hold any of the titles related to the most important festival of paradise. In contrast,

Participant 6 lives in a socio-political reality in a concrete time and place where he has acquired knowledge through regular encounters with people from all walks of life and ethno-religious groups. Consequently, he knows that only through fair play politics and permanent contact with people can his ethnic group enjoy its full rights and improve its position. He, therefore, sees nothing wrong in awarding the best-player title to the best player in the tournament and first prize to the winning team regardless of ethno-religious belonging and the presumed principles of paradise.

It is not strange that these two worlds, one welcoming and one refusing, exist simultaneously in one society. However, it is perplexing that they closely cooperate with each other. Knowing the general features of clerics' worldview, it is puzzling that they are willing to support the world created through the norms and the written and unwritten rules of the Balkan multitude. Moreover, it is confusing that the later accept the gifts of the former. Ultimately, this could be a Danaos gift for the whole ethno-religious group, as well as society.

Let us define what a Danaos gift might be in this situation: If it is true that the clergy promote a certain ethno-political party, it can be assumed that to do so, they use images of their own imagined, isolated paradise on earth that is endangered by others. If so, and if that party's leaders do nothing to distance themselves from such images and deconstruct the myths of an isolated paradise but instead tacitly accept playing that game to win elections while, at the same time, carrying out a politics of wide-ranging cooperation with colleagues from other ethnic groups with politics completely different than imagined by clergy, both clergy and politicians are building expectations in society that they cannot fulfill. Consequently, any progress achieved, regardless of its importance for society, is ignored and overshadowed by inflated, unrealistic expectations, which could lead to unpredictable societal ventures by individuals and groups that even bigger and richer societies could not control. Another consequence of this Danaos gift is that although the majority of Catholic clergy and politicians from the biggest ethnic party tacitly cooperate, they do not like much each other in reality.

Clergy on Politicians: Resentment, Rebels, and a Love-Hate Relationship

Non-clerics' opinions and comments on local Catholic priests, their support of one ethnic party, and their worldview incompatible with the Balkan multitude have been discussed. This section presents the clerical participants' opinions on politicians, explanations of

their political involvement, and reasoning why clergy unofficially, of course, participate in election campaigns.

Resentment of Ethnic Politician Leadership

We start with the statement of Participant 1 presented earlier but not yet analyzed.

I'm not sure whether Croatian politics at all support our existence here in Sarajevo. I heard some of our Croatian politicians—doesn't matter whether they are Catholics or not—saying that they do not want to live here with Balije [pejorative word for Bosnian Muslims]. None of them live here. The majority of our political leaders are from Herzegovina. They do not have a sense of dialogue with Muslims, nor do they need it because they are in the majority [in Herzegovina]. They want to make one sheepfold, and we [all Croats living outside the sheepfold fence] should move into it. (Participant 1)

At first, this statement by Participant 1 appears to put to question everything discussed and analyzed so far in this chapter, particularly regarding the behavior and features of politicians: that ethnic politicians unreservedly collaborate and engage in political dialogue with Muslim colleagues and represent a world welcoming and respecting others in contrast to the isolationist world of the clergy. However, if we examine his statement, we come to the conclusion that it refers to a phenomenon not yet elaborated here. We note several important details to understand the thinking of Participant 1. Here, he speaks about Croat ethnic politics and politicians involved in state politics, not local politics. These ethnic political representatives on the state level largely come from micro-regions in Herzegovina, that is, southwestern Bosnia-Herzegovina with negligible Muslim and Bosniak populations. These politicians do not live in Sarajevo—the place where they work—but commute instead. They do not have Muslim neighbors where they live and do not come in personal contact with Muslims where they work, so they have limited personal knowledge on Muslims. However, from this statement, we do not know how, in the opinion of Participant 1, their lack of personal knowledge on Muslims influences their relationships with Bosniak ethnic politicians. Do they easily cooperate with Bosniak politicians as do local politicians in central Bosnia?

Instead, Participant 1 focuses completely on an issue that has plagued many Croats in Sarajevo and other Croat-minority micro-regions for years: should they stay where they were born or leave their homes and look for someplace else to live? They find themselves in an abyss and a dark realm; they are immersed in an assumed problem they cannot solve by themselves. They do not want to leave their homes but do not know whether their political representatives have already decided—following paradigm *cuius regio eius*

religio—that they must relocate to some other place, as happened in these same micro-regions during earlier armed conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Consequently, the remark by some Croat politicians from Herzegovina that they would never live with *Balije*—a pejorative for Bosnian Muslims—is understood as mockery addressed not to Muslims but to Catholics living in Muslim-majority micro-regions. An independent observer unbiased in regard to Bosnia-Herzegovina’s internal concerns and preferences probably would understand such comment as a remark by a thoughtless, undiplomatic, ill-mannered provincial politician, and the observer likely would be correct. However, when addressed to people immersed in the psychological dilemma of whether to stay in their hometowns or go into exile, such a comment acts as salt rubbed into their wounds. Whether the biggest Croat ethnic party ever planned to relocate all Croats from Muslim- and probably also Orthodox-majority micro-regions into Herzegovina and Croatia and thus conduct a self-ethnic cleansing, or whether the notion was merely a conspiracy theory, many people are still concerned about the possibility. No one has asked for their opinion on the issue, so they feel like sheep that must follow their shepherds—that is, their ethnic and religious leaders—into the new sheepfold, a mono-ethnoreligious paradise free of other sheep. In this sense, Participant 1 expresses his disappointment with Croat ethnic politicians who do not engage enough to at least morally support the Croat minority in micro-regions but instead make inopportune, pointless comments. Regardless of whether this is part of a political plan, Croats, as seen in chapter 7, are leaving their homes and homeland.

A more hard-hitting criticism comes from the second fence-sitter, Participant 9. He has accumulated more experience in relations with ethnic politicians working in governments and assemblies at the state, entity, and cantonal levels, so he is neither much bothered nor fascinated with their thoughtless, provincial political jokes. He feels no need to analyze them, trying to find hidden message simply because, in his opinion, they have nothing to say and should not be taken seriously:

You never know how honest politicians are. Since their knowledge is extremely limited, they are only saying what they guess, while nobody knows what will happen. Therefore, it appears that they are professional liars. However, they are not only liars; they are ignorant and liars. Sometimes they hit the mark, but it is so rare that the people usually remain disappointed. (Participant 9)

He seems to be too harsh with politicians because it might be impossible to predict what will happen in politics; however, in his opinion, politicians in Bosnia-Herzegovina generally are so frivolous that they do not deserve any attention.

A general criticism of politicians comes not only from fence-sitters. Participant 2 expresses great resentment of ethnic politicians. However, he has quite different reasons from the two preceding priests.

When economic times are tough, being a career politician is a good job. Therefore, the politicians are ready to do anything to keep their jobs and salary on which they can live well. (Participant 2)

The societal context of Participant 2, as we can see in the brief presentation on him and the summary of his interview, differs somewhat the context of fence-sitters. He has spent much of his life abroad and therefore not had many chances to encounter and talk with his non-Catholic neighbors. All of these encounters, if they happen at all, seem to be superficial. For example, he has no Muslim friends and only irregularly, particularly on major holidays, encounters some Muslim colleagues, while he spends almost all of his time, including his free time, in a Catholic bubble surrounded by Catholic students, colleagues, and friends.

Participant 2 is one of the diocesan's key persons in charge of the education of priest candidates and lay theologians. He was born in a Catholic-majority village but has spent most of his life abroad, where he completed his education. For the past fifteen years, he has lived and worked in the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina. He has some acquaintances but no close friends among Muslims. He has positive personal experiences of relations with professors in the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo. Nevertheless, he complains that Muslim religious leaders are not collegial enough toward Catholic clergy and the Catholic minority in general. He believes that the purpose of interreligious dialogue is to solve problems instead of sweeping them under the carpet. He respects Islam and Muslims but cannot accept their religious truths.

Participant 2

Although we know something more about his social context, we can yet only speculate as to what about politicians he objects in this statement. We could only say that Participant 2 speaks about leading ethnic politicians and asserts that are willing to do what they normally would not and are not supposed to. The reason for such behavior, in his opinion, is a very personal interest: safeguarding one's income during financial crises when it is not easy to find other lucrative jobs. However, this assumption seems to have relatively little plausibility: except in a dictatorship, career politicians should be able to find new jobs even in harsh financial times.

Participant 2 more precisely describes what he resents about ethnic politicians later in the interview:

Regarding the position of our nation [i.e. ethnic group] in this country, [our ethnic] rights and deprivation of these rights [by others], etc.—if no one talks about it, then we [clerics] must say something to admonish those who are in charge for these issues but don't do their work properly. (Participant 2)

According to this statement, whenever ethnic politicians fail to protect the rights of their ethnic group, Catholic clergy should warn them that they are not doing their job properly. Relating this statement with his previous statement that career politicians are ready to do anything to protect their private income, we can presume that Participant 2 means that politicians are ready to neglect the rights of their own ethnic group to serve their private interests. This is possible and would not be the first time in the history that politicians privileged private interests over public interests. However, we should also ask: is it also possible that Catholic clergy, due to their private interests, convictions, or belief that they are protecting the good of transmitted knowledge, neglect the rights of their own ethnoreligious group and thus fail to fulfill their duties and mission? It would not be the first time in the history of the Church that clergy failed to recognize what they should do.

This issue is very important, so let us reword this question: what could a person like Participant 2 living inside the bubble of one ethnoreligious group within a societal multitude know about the interests of the whole ethnoreligious group, and how he could possibly define and defend the rights of that group? Would he not be tempted to recognize the interests and rights of his ethnic-clerical group as the interests of the whole group and their discourse as the plausibly structure for the whole group? Anyhow, anyone, is at least nominally free to have and publicly promote a political opinion. Participant 2 confirms that he and the clergy in general use their right to admonish politicians that they are not doing their work properly. But how the clergy do so? Do they organize demonstrations, submit petitions, have private encounters with politicians, or rebuke politicians in sermons? He does not mention anything about this question. However, discussing how politics influences interreligious dialogue, among other things, Participant 2 states:

The state should be separated from the Church and other religious communities. According to Catholic doctrine, we [clerics] should not be directly involved in politics. Still, it is happening that some Church people [clergy] and monks publicly advertise and opt for this or that political platform and for this or that party. That is certainly not pleasant to watch and listen. (Participant 2)

Although he earlier states that clergy must rebuke politicians when they do not do their job properly, he claims here that they should not be involved in politics. Nevertheless, he

is aware that some clerics or, in his words, “some Church people and monks” do not refrain publicly advertising certain political options, which to him is an unpleasant and disagreeable practice.

Rebel Clergy

Some clerics indeed question the mission and the role of the clergy, as well as the role of the leadership of the biggest Croat ethnic party, in *nostra aetate* in Bosnia-Herzegovina. These clergy enter public space and offer an unexpected alternative clerical voice. Uncommonly acerbic for clerical circles and therefore exceptionally unpleasant and disagreeable to the clerical and political hierarchy and, of course, pious Catholics and voters of that ethnic party, they openly criticize the local Church leadership, politicians of the biggest Croat ethnic party, and, in their opinion, the tacit unnatural alliance between politicians and clergy. They also question the responsibility of the Church and ethnic parties’ leaders for the poor social situation of Catholics and Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the sufferings of Catholics and all other people in Bosnia-Herzegovina caused by certain decisions by Croat ethnic politicians since the end of communistic regime, and the clergy’s silence on injustices of the Croat ethnic political leadership and crimes committed under their governance. These clerics break silence on matters that, in their opinion, have critical importance for the future of Croats, Catholics, and all other ethnoreligious groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina. As might be expected, the other side labels and insults them as spokesmen and promoters of rival ethnoreligious groups and parties. In other words, by asserting that group leaders are doing things that are “not good,” they are destroying the faith in the “good people”—that is, the political and spiritual representatives of their ethnoreligious group—who seek to do and promote “good” for the group and supposedly dedicate all their lives to “doing good” for the group. They question the faith, so few want to believe them.

Two rebel clerics took part in this study. Before presenting their comments on politics and religion, let us first read their portraits and interview summaries.

Participant 3 is a priest in charge of pastoral duties different from parish pastoral duties. He was born and grew up in Bosnia-Herzegovina but studied theology and earned a PhD abroad. He is not involved in dialogue with Muslims much and does not mention his private relations with Muslims in the interview. However, he has a general opinion on his immediate Muslim neighbors and interreligious dialogue. In his view, Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Muslims are engaged in the process of searching for and (re)constructing their ethnic and religious identity. Within this process, they are essentially choosing between two forms of Islamic identity. The first option is to preserve and further develop a

specific Bosnian Islam and a so-called secularized Bosnian Muslim ethnic character. The second option is to adopt an exclusive and radical form of Islam under outside influences, that is, the influence of wealthy Arab Muslims. However, public religious practice in Bosnia-Herzegovina should not deceive us. The people are not as religious as presented and assumed; they know very little about their own religions and even less about their neighbors'. Their religiosity is based on attendance of religious events on major holidays; however, deprived of their religious meaning, these become folk holidays. Thus, the faith is based on traditional beliefs, superstitions, folk practices, and emotions. There is too much pseudo-religiosity in the public sphere. Regarding interreligious dialogue, he believes that Bosnia-Herzegovina is one of the rare countries in the world with so many initiatives by local and international organizations sincerely willing to initiate projects related to dialogue. Nevertheless, many such initiatives are never realized because they are blocked by the highest religious leaders. In public addresses, leaders from all religious groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina say that they support dialogue, because there is no alternative to dialogue. However, he has the impression that they only declarative promote dialogue while creating a pseudo-dialogue. It is good for their image to speak about dialogue, but in reality, they oppose any form of dialogue, as well as each other. They provoke conflicts, undermine projects at lower levels, and complicate and encumber interreligious relations. Whenever they have opportunity, they lament the situation of their own religious group, speak about apparent threats from others, and shift responsibility to others. Consequently, it is hard to expect that the deadlock in interreligious dialogue will be broken soon.

Participant 3

Participant 13 is a priest and university professor, who obtained a PhD abroad. He does not say much about his personal relations with Muslims but emphasizes that he has lived and worked in places with Muslim majorities for years and that his experiences with Muslim neighbors have been more than positive. When he speaks about Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims, he mentions "our Muslims." In his opinion, Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina live their faith normally and unbiased. Nevertheless, he is concerned with some negative emerging trends imported and generously financed from abroad. In particular, some radical groups publicly argue that Bosnia-Herzegovina Muslims are not good believers and do not practice their faith properly. However, he is convinced that these radical movements' efforts will never enjoy major success in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Regarding interreligious dialogue, he is very reserved. He is very bitter and resentful toward Muslim and Catholic religious leaders who have no communication apart from their official encounters. In his opinion, they are not engaged in true dialogue at all. Instead of being involved in the process of reconciliation, they are increasing tensions among their followers through frequent public disputes and accusations against each other.

Participant 13

Participants 3 and 13 discuss the relationships between politicians and clergy:

The relationship between religion and politics is very burdened in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Religious communities and their leaders supported the democratic changes in the early 90s, which was positive. However, later they completely got into the daily political discourse and through such behavior politicized religion. At the same time, the ethnic-nationalist parties maintained close relationships with religious communities through which politics is partly clericalized but in its worst pseudo-religious sense. As a result, religious ceremonies are included in celebrations of some public holidays. (Participant 3)

Here in Bosnia-Herzegovina, politics is sacralized and religion politicized. In their public speeches, politicians often use religious terminology, while religious leaders

use political discourse. Religious communities and some ethnic parties are closely related to each other. There are many municipalities where religious holidays became municipality holidays, which is, in my opinion, absolutely unacceptable because people of other religions live in these places, too. The alliance between religious and political decision makers is based on material and power interests. Today, it is stronger than ever. (Participant 13)

Similar themes are recognizable in both statements. Both participants criticize, on one hand, all ethnic-cleric groups and their religious leaders that directly interfere in daily politics and, on the other hand, ethnic politicians who sacralize politics by using religious symbols and terminology and introducing religious rituals and holidays into state affairs. In the participants' opinions, clerics are not trained for political discourses, and politicians are not fit to handle religious topics, so their public affectation and role changing do not contribute to society. To the contrary, religion and politics both suffer because nobody does their job: instead, clergy produce political noise, and politicians promote pseudo-religious beliefs and rituals as part of state affairs.

It must be noted that in both statements, the participants criticize not only Catholic clergy and Croat ethnic politicians but also clergy and politicians in general representing all religious communities and politicians in all ethnic parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This view on the issue, however, does not diminish the participants' offense of disloyalty to their ethnic-clerical group in the eyes of their colleagues and most Catholics. To the contrary, the Catholics targeted by the rebel priest' comments are not interested in whether their observations are correct but in who said them. Criticism of religious practice in the public space in general and the arguments these priests use recall communist narratives that pushed religion out of the public square and deprived politicians of faith based on tradition and popular morals. Nevertheless, the rebel priests' endeavors are understood not as criticism of clergy's behavior but as political agitations against the biggest Croat ethnic party and thus also the ethnic group. In this respect, as might be expected, this small group of priests is marginalized by colleagues.

Love-Hate Relationship: A Marriage of Convenience

Regardless of different opinions on relations between religion and politics, almost all the clergy participating in this study claim that money is a major reason for the close relationship between clergy and politicians in which clergy feel subordinate and dependent. One participant offers an interpretation of why this relationship exists, two try to justify it, and one priest claims that there is nothing untoward in it. All the statements

related to this issue are quite unambiguous, so a concise introduction to each case and analysis is provided.

The first statement comes from Participant 14, whose profile and interview summary are presented in the previous section in this chapter. He comments on the relationship between politicians and clergy and the role of money in it:

The priest must be on good terms with politicians. Cooperation between these two is based on petty interests. It is a marriage of convenience. Politicians receive the legitimacy of religion [clergy], and religion [clergy] receives financial support. Since their relationship here is not properly established, they do not serve each other in the right way. Religion [clergy] does not control politics and does not give instructions to politicians. On the other hand, politicians do not give sufficient financial support to the religious communities [clergy] for a normal, happy life. (Participant 14)

Participant 14 describes the friendly relationship between clergy and politicians as a marriage of convenience. In that marriage, the clergy play the role of a starlet in constant need of money to remain popular in society, while politicians play the role of the playboy in permanent need of confirmation of his success and societal status as proved by his starlet companion. Participant 14 does not criticize this marriage as it might be expected but expresses sorrow that it lacks a prenuptial agreement defining the playboy's duty to follow starlet's instructions and provide more money for her needs. Consequently, she is not happy: the playboy is not under her control, she does not receive enough money, and the world is in chaos.

Perceptions of the Church as a starlet, provided that the Church means clergy, is not far from reality considering that the attitudes and public appearances of some clergy indeed resemble the qualities of a starlet. We, therefore, should be very thankful to Participant 14 for describing a noteworthy insider fantasy of Catholic priests in the Church: clergy long for more financial grants to have an even happier life while they dictate instructions to politicians to impose their solutions on society. With partial insight into the worldview, context, and positions on dialogue with neighbors held by Participant 14, we can imagine what solutions he might want to implement in society and what instructions he might want to give to politicians. However, can we imagine that the whole population would be happy with these solutions?

Unlike Participant 14, who focuses on the role of the money in relations between clergymen and politicians, participants 2 and 3 try to justify clergy's dependence on state grants from politicians and the possible consequences of such dependence:

The politicians know how to use religious communities for the purpose of propagating their ideology. They make donations to religious communities that are in need because of the general social situation. However, these donations can be double-edged swords. Sometimes it is the only an expression of the goodwill of people in government, and sometimes it is a mean to purchase votes. (Participant 2)

The unresolved issue of the financing of religious communities is a problem. Political parties use it to influence religious communities and keep them dependent. Given that hundreds of churches and mosques were destroyed or damaged in the war and that after the war they must be restored, they [the clergy], of course, saw interest in a pact with political parties. (Participant 3)

Participant 2 claims that due to the general desperate economic situation, religious communities—that is, clergy—were thankful for government grants and became dependent, manipulated, and used for political ends. Participant 3 presents a similar argument. However, instead of the generally bad economic situation, he mentions a concrete, quite expensive project: rebuilding and restoring all the churches and mosques destroyed and damaged in the war. These projects demand much money and overcoming significant administrative barriers, so clergy must seek financial and political support from politicians, becoming their debtors.

Although these two participants' assertions that clergy have become dependent on politicians and their services likely are correct, it is a very perplexing situation to explain and defend. Are not politicians responsible for the poor socio-economic situation in the state? Did not bad politics result in religious sites becoming the targets of military operations during the armed conflict? Do not politicians live in the same society as clergy? Why should clergy become dependent and allow themselves to be manipulated if they receive state grants for projects with obvious public interest in the communities they legally represent? Also, if the purpose of state grants is to reconstruct the religious sites destroyed during the war, should not such grants be considered to be compensation for damage? Furthermore, politicians administer taxpayer money through state grants, so why should the recipients feel obliged to politicians and not to taxpayers? Finally, if the state administration can collect taxes politicians allocate as state grants to religious communities, then is the societal situation not so desperate that clergy, if they have good projects, cannot also raise funds?

The third statement comes from Participant 5, who confirms the previous statements about finances in the clergy–politicians relationship. However, Participant 5 makes one important difference: he does not criticize or try to justify this phenomenon; instead, he describes his practice of it:

It seems to me that politicians are trying their best. ... I do not know if they are only pretending [to be good] to us [clergy]. In any case, they prefer to keep good relationships with us [clergy]. They allocate some funds for demolished churches and mosques. Although it is only about material things, it is a form of positive interference [in religion]. I think it's more positive than negative. They all want at least to get the picture [with us]. There is a mutual benefit: we get out our own interests, and they get their interests. Money is the Devil. (Participant 5)

Participant 5 confirms clergy's belief that they are in a marriage of convenience with politicians. He believes that politicians are trying their best to be on good terms with the clergy, want to be seen with them, and give religious communities public funds even when not requested. Participant 5, a priest, talks about politicians as if he were in love with them. He admits that politicians interfere in religious affairs but shrugs his shoulders and raises his hand as if to say: that's life; it's more about interests and money than principles. All parties in the marriage are satisfied because “money is the Devil.”

General Conclusions

An impatient observer evaluating the perplexing question of collective identities within Bosnian-Herzegovinian society could easily conclude that only religion divides the three largest ethnic groups. If it is true that religious affiliation determines the *raison d'être* of all ethnic identities in this state, then religion must play a strong role in the lives of all individuals and all socio-political relations within society. Although this conclusion seems plausible, it is too simplistic because it does not flow from the context of the formation of ethnoreligious groups in this society, does not consider *de facto* relations between religion and politics, and assumes that each individual is *per default* embedded in the general picture assigned by society.

The formation of ethnic groups—*nacije* or “nations” in the languages of the peoples of Bosnian-Herzegovina—began with the ethnonational awakening in the Balkans in late 19th century under the influence of European national movements. However, this process could not follow the narrative of nation formation set elsewhere in Europe because the conditions were starkly different. Occupation by Austro-Hungary in 1878 also started the process of (re)integrating Ottoman- and Muslim-dominated provinces in European

continent into Central European Christian-dominated realm. In this process, the former Bosnian-Herzegovinian Ottoman society, with its members divided by religious affiliations while sharing the same *Lebensraum*, living next to each other, retained its historical Islamic model of societal polarization. However, this model of societal divisions was reinforced by old and new patterns polarization in Europe. In the old polarization pattern, dogmatic teachings fortified centuries-old religious and inter-confessional intolerance. In the new European polarization pattern, nationalism strengthened individuals' sense of group attachments by endorsing blood, cultural, historical, and other vague romantic bonds within each group, leading to the desire for territorial demarcation from those not within the group. Thus, the old European axiom *cuius regio eius religio* eventually emerged in Bosnia-Herzegovina as *cuius region eius ethnic-religio*. However, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, this axiom was not applied in a religious context, resulting in religious wars, but in an inter-ethnic context. In other words, the historical backgrounds of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian ethnic group were indeed three confessional groups or *millets*, but with the introduction of European ideas of nationhood through Christian clergy, the only highly educated group in Ottoman Bosnia-Herzegovina, *millets* also became ethnic groups with political leaders. As a result of the ethnonational awakening process in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the (re)integration of this society into Central Europe, the multi-confessional Bosnian-Herzegovinian society became multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-linguistic—in other words, multi-polarized.

All Bosnian-Herzegovinian ethnic groups thus have their origins in confessional groups, many religious symbols, markers, and norms are constituent parts of ethnic collective identities, and clergy eagerly advanced national awakening. However, it is immoderate to claim that only religion has determined societal polarization or shaped socio-political issues in this state. The relationships between politicians and clergy or between the state and religion can be described as benevolent and generally free of conflicts but also aloof and devoid of content. It, therefore, is safe to say that religion and clergymen generally have insignificant influence on politics, political decisions, and broader public opinion within groups and society. In other words, clergy play marginal roles in the socio-political life of their ethnoreligious groups and societies not because they cannot have more influence on society and politic but because the content of their public addresses is obsolete and sometimes inconceivable to society and consequently is ignored.

From the participants' statements presented and analyzed in this section, it can generally be concluded that clergy have very limited knowledge on politics and political procedures. Nevertheless, this does not mean that clergy stay outside of politics. The majority of Catholic clergy use all available communication channels, including but not limited to homilies, to persuade a limited number of users of their societal infrastructure to vote for a particular nominally ethnic-conservative party and its leadership. The clergy do this not because they sympathize with the party's political platform, approve of its politics, or admire its leadership. Instead, the clergy do it only because it is the most popular and biggest party within their ethnic group that might guarantee the *raison d'être* of their own political agenda, plausibility structure, and worldview. Theoretically, then any ethnic-conservative party could fulfill clerical demands, provided that it had the support of the majority of voters, even when its political agendas and that of the clergymen did not match at all. Clergy's unconditional support of one party coincides with their disapproval of other conservative political parties within the same ethnoreligious group that might decrease the authority of the preferred party. Furthermore, the clergy identify the political activities of other ethnic groups' parties as *per default* unjust and hostile to own ethnoreligious group. Such clerical political principles and worldview generally are incompatible not only with democratic processes and societal multitude but also with any intra- and inter-group dialogue.

A minority of clergy characterized as fence-sitters and rebel clergy have somehow different worldviews—the former have personal knowledge on non-Catholic neighbors, and the later embrace another plausibility structure—are perplexed by the political agenda of most of their colleagues. However, neither group can or tries to change the general clerical political preferences and rejection of dialogue with the societal multitude. The fence-sitters indeed criticize the biggest ethnic party and its leaders, supported by the majority of Catholic clergy, but disillusioned and anchored in the same clerical plausibility structure, they cannot think of an alternative. At the same time, the small group of rebel clerics makes the same mistake as their colleagues, the founders of the present-day exclusivist clerical plausibility structure who a century ago brought anti-multitude ideas from Western Europe into Bosnia-Herzegovina. They, too, are trapped in the clerical plausibility structure of the places and societies abroad where they have studied that are unfortunately not compatible with Bosnian-Herzegovinian societal reality. The clerics limit their political activism to verbal criticism of the political and clerical

leaders of ethnoreligious groups, assuming academic neutrality as unbiased observers as if they were not members of the cleric collective.

Most politicians and other non-cleric opinion-makers, seeking contacts with other opinion-makers—an important feature of this societal subgroup—often encounter Catholic clergy. While they find clergy to be amiable and eloquent conversation partners with whom they might socialize, this group is shocked by their imprudence on general political, interethnic, and other dialogical issues. Opposition politicians resent clergy who continuously promote fear of others, politicians from the biggest ethnic party are astounded by clergy's extravagant demands and conclusions, and other non-clerical opinion-makers have no sympathy for clerical-ethnic-nationalistic ideologies and worldviews. Confronted with clergy's thinking and argumentation on political, democratic, and dialogical issues, non-clerical opinion-makers are generally surprised, disappointed, and resentful. However, they do not comprehend the clerical context and react only to symptoms they perceive as unacceptable for their ethnic group and society.

It, therefore, can be claimed that the present-day political agenda, plausibility structure, and worldview of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Catholic clergy are not inherent to the Balkan multitude. Instead, they are learned through transmitted knowledge based on the historical atavism of pre-Vatican II mono-Catholic society and the Catholic Church hierarchy's efforts to eradicate the erroneous multitude, on one hand, and on clerical-ethnoreligious-nationalism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, on the other hand. Non-clerics are not familiar with this ideology, and except for clergy, fortunately no other formal institutions or organizations embraces this ideology. It, therefore, can be concluded that this ideology is uncritically and obediently transmitted only through the formal and informal education of priest candidates.

Here, we can draw three general conclusions on clergy's political agenda, worldview, and relation to the contemporary socio-political processes within their ethnoreligious groups and society that directly reflect their general attitude toward intra- and intergroup dialogue. The first general conclusion relates to clergy's political agenda, the second the discrepancy between clerical political goals and contemporary societal processes, and the third the general opinions of politicians and opinion-makers on first two general conclusions.

Clergy have political solution for their ethnoreligious collective. They do not hold political office or serve in public office, so they use other available communicational channels (e.g., sermons and other encounters with believers) to promote their political solution.

Convinced that their political solutions based on the same political ideas that brought their ethnoreligious groups into existence and sustained them must be correct, Catholic clergy plead for, in their opinion, the best and the only possible political solutions for their ethnoreligious collectives. In other words, clerical faith in the correctness and integrity of their political solutions is not based on a critical examination of and reflection on society in *nostra aetate* but on complete loyalty to the clerical plausibility structure, which arose from the political doctrines of earlier local clergy and the Church's centuries-old teaching on itself and others transmitted as inherited knowledge through the educational institutions of the local and west European Church. For three reasons, it is unrealistic to think that the clergy's political solution for ethnoreligious group and society is suitable and acceptable for that group and society today. First, all clergy must be obedient to the clerical plausibility structure; otherwise, they risk abjection within and exclusion from the local clerical community or even banishment from the priesthood. Second, in general, Catholic clergy in Bosnia-Herzegovina, most likely due to the local clerical plausibility structure, have exceptionally little personal knowledge on the people affiliated with their ethnoreligious group and others, as seen in the next section. Third, they consistently avoid encounters with others as much as possible. Their political solution is essentially an anti-dialogical political program, so it is more likely to assume that their political solution is incompatible or, better stated, inconceivable within the dynamic of that ethnoreligious group and society. In other words, local clergy's political solution for their ethnoreligious group is an ideological program that generally denies individual capability for a holistic, unmediated approach to personal dialogue with one's environment and complicates, or even makes impossible, any attempt at inter- and intrareligious dialogue.

Clergy generally make populist resentment, aversion, and distrust toward democracy mainstream as they involve themselves in political processes to weaken and restrain democratic developments.

In accordance with the first general conclusion, clergy generally perceive democracy and the plurality of political subgroups within their own ethnoreligious group as threats to their political solution for their ethnoreligious group and collective identity. Instead of using their societal status and influence within the group to apply any available democratic instruments and to challenge politicians to improve the general socio-economic and political situation in the state, most clergy covet an authoritarian political system and vehemently promote it as the only guarantee for the survival of their ethnoreligious group. Like any other lobbyists operating on populist premises and having no interest in basic democratic processes, they generally use moral arguments to maintain the fear of others and to deafen the tenuous voices of political plurality without deeply reflecting on their agenda for the political and economic transformation of society. By doing so, clergy complicate the transition from a communist regime into democracy, compromising political dialogue and, no less importantly, promoting political corruption.

Politicians and opinion-makers generally perceive clerical involvement in political processes to promote clerical political solutions for the ethnoreligious group as a stumbling block to the political transformation of the group and society, as well as to interethnic cooperation.

Non-clerical study participants, both believers and non-believers, generally respect the Catholic Church, socialize with local clergy, and claim that some Catholic priests are their friends. However, regarding the clerical worldview and the public and private political statements by local clergy, no participants, whether career politicians or those not involved in politics, could hide their disapproval and dissatisfaction, asking how clerics could possibly think and act as they do. Non-clerics' bafflement at clerical political opinions and worldviews indicates that the clerical plausibility structure is not inherent to the entire ethnoreligious group and that societal opinion-makers cannot identify themselves with the content of this worldview or approve of clerical political solutions today. They do not question the historical value placed on clerical political solutions or their affiliation to the ethnoreligious collective identity. However, they unanimously hold that today, the clerical political solution is unacceptable and does not contribute to the development of society or to coexistence with other ethnic and religious groups in a multiethnic, multi-confessional state.

Personal Dialogue and Personal Knowledge

Depending on our starting point—that is, how we understand society and the role of each individual and institutions in it—one can argue that there is no evidence that interreligious dialogue is taking place in Bosnia-Herzegovina because there is no visible infrastructure for interreligious dialogue accessible to all members of society. Others might claim that there is a wide spectrum of interreligious dialogue activities in this state due to the excellent organization of the infrastructure for interreligious dialogue between the highest representatives of the religious communities and so-called experts on dialogue. Still others could argue that they live out interreligious dialogue and, therefore, need neither a societal infrastructure for interreligious dialogue nor institutions to organize, supervise, and restrict their interreligious practices and to direct and guide them in how to behave when they encounter a person who adheres to another confession.

Related to the first claim, the first section of this chapter questions how the majority and minority status of two groups in micro-regions—that is, Muslim and Catholic groups in small regions and places in Bosnia-Herzegovina—affects interreligious dialogue. It is concluded that the size of either group living in the same micro-region can influence the quantity of possible random encounters between their members provided that there is a secular societal infrastructure that makes such encounters possible. However, even when such encounters occur within a societal infrastructure, they cannot be taken as evidence that interreligious dialogue is necessarily taking place.

Regarding the second claim, if a person is prepared and willing to accept an institution and representatives of a group—in this case, religious leaders and so-called experts on dialogue—as those in charge of conducting interreligious dialogue in the name of the whole group, then it is safe to say that an infrastructure for such dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina exists (the Interreligious Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina). Their projects are praiseworthy even though only a few individuals use this infrastructure and know or have an interest in knowing what this small professional and expert group is doing. Nevertheless, given that clergy generally assume that they have solutions for all members of their ethnoreligious groups and disseminate populist resentment, aversion, and distrust of democracy and a plurality of opinions on societal issues (as concluded in the second section of this chapter), it can indeed be claimed from clergy's perspective that interreligious dialogue between religious leaders and so-called experts must be sufficient

and is the only way to approach this complicated issue. All others, of course, are invited to hear what their leaders have to say on this issue in question and behave accordingly.

These two claims, summarized as the conclusions of the first two sections in this chapter on the *de facto* situation of interreligious dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina, do not contradict each other, as they might first seem to, but supplement each other. In other words, it can be said that societal interreligious dialogue and its fruits in Bosnia-Herzegovina are perceived as non-existent because institutions, particularly religious leaders and experts on interreligious dialogue, successfully supervise formal interreligious encounters and restrict interreligious practices. Unlike almost all research on interreligious dialogue, this study does not analyze what religious leaders and so-called experts on interreligious dialogue say on this issue or are doing in this field. However, it is also not questioned whether they intentionally obstruct interreligious dialogue, keeping members of their communities from addressing this issue. We, therefore, can only assume that a possible reason for conscious or unconscious obstruction of interreligious dialogue by religious leaders and experts is their total loyalty to the plausibility structures of their ethnic-clerical collectives and their uncritical solidarity with the clergy, who wrote the first written histories of every confession in this area in times when apologetic works were a unique form of scientific work. Unable to renounce those plausibility structures, clergy reinforce existing social arrangements that make them generally incapable of mobilizing people for any goal that might contradict their plausibility structure, including but not limited to interreligious dialogue. In other words, the cause of the obstruction of interreligious dialogue is a state of mind and beliefs, or knowledge of good and evil in the literal interpretation of this phrase, that views the obstruction of interreligious dialogue as a good that therefore must be systematically implemented.

This section examines how such a general approach of circumvention adopted by leading clergy and so-called experts on interreligious dialogue is reflected in the personal dialogue and knowledge on other inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina. All the participants in this research were asked to describe their personal opinions of their Muslim neighbors. To prevent misunderstandings and narrations unessential for this study, they were kindly asked to describe their personal relations and experiences with Muslims and to avoid general interpretations of historical events, narrations on current and past political events, reflections on the religious doctrines and official documents of the Church, and all other views on the issue in question they have learned from knowledge inherited and

transmitted through intermediaries. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that many participants simply avoided speaking about their personal relations and experiences and instead gave more general answers.

What do their responses mean? Do they have no personal experiences of the issue in question? Or do they consciously or unconsciously value the transmitted knowledge, skills, arguments, and interpretations they have learned in their formal and informal education over their personal knowledge and so suppressed it? Before drawing a general conclusion on this issue at the end of this section, let us first analyze the answers of eight selected study participants.

Progressive Architects of an Inapplicable Abstract Model of Society

The participants most critical of religious leaders and their relationship with politics—assigned to the so-called group of rebel clergy—ignored the question and thus completely avoided narrating about their personal opinions and experiences. For example, Participant 3, answering a question on what he thinks about his Muslim neighbors, states:

Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, after all their experiences in the last 100 years, including the experience of the recent war, are in the process of searching for their own identity. They suffered the most in the last terrible war. They were victims of Greater Serbia politics, Croatian political ambitions, and very bad political decisions of their own political elite. With regards to religious identity, the main question remains open: will a distinct form of Bosnian Islam, which some also name secularized Islam, continue to exist in Bosnia-Herzegovina, or will that form of Islam disappear in a collision with Arabian or other more radical forms of Islam? I believe that these forms of Islam coming from other countries will not be able to take hold in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnian Muslims are mostly educated and secularized and have the strength and desire to nurture their form of Islam while not giving up their own foundations of faith which they share with all other Muslims in the world. (Participant 3)

The ideas expressed in this statement are thought provoking because they do not fit into the general mainstream Catholic clergy's views on Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Such thoughts expressed by a Catholic priest, therefore, might be found to be a remarkable personal description of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims by those who observe relations between the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina, provided that they do not have personal knowledge on this society, and would be received with approval by those educated in the same social context as Participant 3. Although both would likely recognize in this statement a constructive and probably unbiased personal description of Muslim community, they would do so for two completely different reasons: the former from

ignorance because they lack knowledge on this society and the latter because their knowledge makes them ignorant, that is, they have the educational background and training to use this or similar arguments and narrations as Participant 3 and to ignore all other kinds of subjective narrations.

This phenomenon is discussed in more detail later, but for the moment, let us return to the very basic question: what does the answer of Participant 3 express about his personal opinion on Muslims and experiences in relationships with them? Almost nothing. He says nothing about his personal relationships with Muslims, nor does he mention any personal experiences with Muslims in the whole interview. The only element in his answer that can be labeled a personal expression is his narrative style, which can be recognized as a general sentiment of sympathy and compassion with Muslims and an overall positive description of them.

Although the ideas Participant 3 expresses in his answer do not accord mainstream thinking, they are not original because they reflect views of a small, informal group of Catholic priests labeled rebel clergy. Almost identical thoughts on Muslim religious identity in relation to Arabic Islam are found in the statement of Participant 13 analyzed later in this text. Thus, the ideas presented here cannot be classified as an expression of personal knowledge individually acquired through unmediated personal experience and close personal relationships with the object studied, his Muslims neighbors. Instead, the answer is the statement of an educated person who skillfully presents acquired information in a form uncharacteristic of the region where he works and lives as a priest. It cannot be concluded that he has no personal knowledge on Muslims because he simply avoids discussing his sentiments. However, his refusal to describe his personal experiences and relationships with Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims does not allow us to claim that he does not have that knowledge.

Participant 13, another rebel clergy, follows the same pattern. He too shows great sympathy and compassion for his Muslim neighbors but, like Participant 3, tells almost nothing about his personal knowledge on Muslims and, as we see, nothing new from Participant 3.

I have lived and worked among the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims for years, and my experiences with them are more than positive. When comparing Islam as practiced here and in some other Islamic countries, we can say that our Muslims live quite normal and unburdened their faith. However, recently there have been some

negative trends imported from abroad (Saudi Arabia). Certain groups of people (Wahhabis, Salafists) are trying to convince our Muslims that they are not good-enough believers and that they do not to practice their religion properly. I am glad that these movements, generously financed from outside, have not taken deep root among Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims. (Participant 13)

The first sentence of this answer might be understood as a description of the participant's personal relation and experience with Muslims. He states to have positive experience with Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Later, he uses the possessive pronoun "our" with the proper noun "Muslims," making a clear distinction between Muslims elsewhere in the world and "our Muslims," that is, Muslims living in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Both statements can be described as remarkable. However, his statement can be considered to be an unusual description of personal experience with Muslims by a Catholic priest only if we ignore the context. For example, he states that he has worked and lived for years among Muslims. If we do not know the context, this information could support the conclusion that his testimony about positive experiences of relationship with Muslims comes from only personal experiences of working and living with Muslims over many years. However, he does not state that he works together with Muslims in an office, school, or factory—because he does not work with them. Also, he does not state that he lives in the same house as Muslims or a building with Muslim neighbors—because he does not! He lives in a building that, like almost all clerical residences, is an island within a society where clergy can live completely isolated from followers of other religions and even other Catholics and the whole society. By saying that he lives and works among Muslims, he essentially claims that he lives and works in Muslim-majority micro-regions. There, he might have more random encounters with Muslims than in Muslim-minority regions, but he can also avoid most encounters with them.

Furthermore, the answer of Participant 13 contains no emotions or sentimental narrations usually associated with descriptions of personal experiences and knowledge on the object in question. It cannot be concluded whether he has Muslim friends, personally knows any of his Muslim neighbors, or encounters Muslims only randomly. We, therefore, do not know from where he draws his general positive opinion on his Muslim neighbors: personal relations he avoids mentioning, superficial, random encounters with Muslims in the secular societal infrastructure, or impersonal, mediated contact with them, for example, through books and news articles.

The comparison of two kinds of Islam and the almost identical arguments and conclusions used by participants 3 and 13 raise doubts that either has personal knowledge on Muslims. Both compare the Muslim faith practiced in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Saudi Arabia or an undefined number of countries where Muslims live and conclude that Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims have a more balanced faith. We do not examine whether these statements are correct. What interests us here is whether either participant could come to such conclusions from personal knowledge they acquired through unmediated personal experiences and close personal relationships with Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina and other countries or whether they obtained this knowledge from intermediaries.

It is quite improbable that these two participants have personal experiences of the practice of Muslim faith in other countries—they say nothing about living and working in Saudi Arabia or other Muslim-majority countries—so we can argue that their knowledge on Muslims' religious practices in other countries could be only transmitted to them only through intermediaries. A person who acquires knowledge through unmediated personal experiences and close personal relationships with objects studied very cautiously compares that knowledge with transmitted knowledge. Especially, as we see later in several examples, when the object of study is relations between Catholics and Muslims, personal and transmitted knowledge cannot be compared because they are completely incompatible. It, therefore, can be claimed that both participants compare knowledge about their Muslim neighbors and Muslims elsewhere acquired through intermediaries, not personal contact.

Although it is argued that these two participants' answers do not fulfill the question and instructions and describe personal experience as asked, it cannot be claimed that their answers are completely free of personal opinion. If we use the logic of those who, based on their educational background and training, completely reject entering a personal relationship with the object of study with the aim to remain an objective and unbiased observer, we come to the opposite conclusion. From that perspective, these two participants' answers are unambiguously descriptions of personal opinions and experiences even though they result from acquired transmitted knowledge and pseudo-personal relations to the objects of study. In essence, therefore, these two so-called rebel clergy do not differ much from the majority of Catholic priests. Although their reasoning can be defined as different and even juxtaposed to the mainstream, their approaches to the

knowledge on object in question do not differ much. In other words, the source of personal opinions for both groups—the small group of generally young, highly educated, hierarchy-critical priests, on one hand, and the majority of priests obedient to the hierarchy and tradition, on the other hand—is not their personal relationships with the studied object but inherited knowledge acquired through intermediaries. The thoughts narrated by participants 3 and 13 about their personal opinions on Muslims might be found remarkable by persons who share the same mediated knowledge, trivial by persons who have learned different mediated knowledge, and superficial and ignorant by those who claim to have personal knowledge and close personal relationships with the object studied.

Traditional Architects of the Obsolete Isolationist Model of Society

The following three examples come from participants believed to share the Catholic clergy's general mainstream views on Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Unlike the rebel priests, this group of clergy discusses their personal encounters and experiences in relationships with Muslim neighbors but almost nothing about their personal opinions on Muslims. These priests' descriptions of personal experiences can generally be characterized as sparse and unstructured. Nevertheless, in their answers, we can detect an embedded—that is, inherited and learned—societal model for Muslim Christian encounters adopted by the Catholic clergy in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is believed that recognizing and understanding this age-old model can help us not only grasp the *de facto* situation in this sub-societal group but also draft appropriate recommendations for this issue.

Participant 2 started to answer the question only after taking a deep breath and pausing. He was not comfortable with the question about his personal experience and opinion about Muslims. He was also quite annoyed because he was asked not to use the learned lexicographical template narration of his societal ethnoreligious group and clerical subgroup but to generate, probably for the first time in his life, an answer based only on his own experiences. He continued to ponder while answering this question and spoke unusually slowly, weighing and searching for each word.

I perceive Muslims primarily as neighbors. Muslims were not living in our village but in the next village. We encountered each other in school, on the street but also in moments of need. However, I cannot speak about my personal experience with Muslims in a way detached from a historical approach to this issue. History made a

modus vivendi and shaped our way of mutual communication. ... There were some persons with whom I was close and with whom I had some kind of friendship. We never discussed faith issues, our personal relationship with God, and institutional religion. They were probably believers, but I am not sure. Maybe they were not believers. It was not a big friendship. However, we had some kind of friendly relationships. Even during the war, I asked about them: are they alive? Are they okay? ... I've heard that they asked about me, too. Thus, I have no prejudices in respect of relations with Muslims. I do respect Muslims and their emerging spirituality. However, I do not approve negative trends—such as Talibanism and fundamentalism—which are emerging as side-effects in their community. They have their own truths of faith. That is their right. However, I cannot accept them. It is not the same; it is not equally worthy as our salvation history. (Participant 2)

Although it was not easy for him, Participant 2 indeed tries to answer the question, giving insight into his personal relationships with Muslims. At first, he narrates his perceptions on the Muslims from childhood. He states that he perceives them as neighbors, but there are two kinds or categories of neighbors in his narration: the Muslims lived in the nearby village, not in his village. While he had contact with his neighbors of his ethnoreligious group every day, he encountered Muslims only here and there. Thus, in his childhood perceptions, the physical distance between two villages created psycho-sociological distance between these ethnoreligious groups. The physical distance between the two villages is viewed as a passive, natural barrier and, at the same time, an active, chosen obstacle to closer personal relationships with Muslims. Nevertheless, the secular societal infrastructure made random encounters with Muslims possible. Discussing past experiences, he states that he encountered some Muslims in school, on the street, and during all other societal duties and activities, such as compulsory military service. He confirms that his memories from such encounters are pleasant. Without going into detail, he emphasizes that he was close with some Muslims in difficult times. He does not say whether he helped Muslims, they helped him in difficult times, or they gave mutual support. Nevertheless, he cannot categorize any of his relationships with Muslims as friendships. They were not that close to each other, and he admits that he is not even sure whether any of his Muslim acquaintances—he thinks they were Muslims because they had typical Muslims names—were believers because they never talked about their religion and faith. Today, about three decades later, they do not have any direct contact but from time to time ask mutual acquaintances about each other.

Stating that Muslim spirituality is emerging today, Participant 2 indicates that he has only recently noticed the presence of Islamic spirituality in the public square. Of course, as a cleric living isolated and independent from society, he can allow himself to ignore all

avoidable information coming from other social groups, including the existence of Islamic spirituality. However, he does not ignore negative trends. He immediately adds that in addition to spirituality, he has observed the emergence of religious extremism among Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Unlike the rebel priests, who compare this trend in Bosnia-Herzegovina and other Islamic societies, Participant 2 does not further discuss this issue or comment on any other development in the Islamic community.

Participant 2 states that he respects Muslims, has no prejudices regarding relations with them, and expresses neither negative nor positive sentiments about Muslims. There is no reason to doubt his words, but nevertheless, we might question whether he truly has any relationships with Muslims. His personal knowledge on Muslims is rather superficial, the personal contacts with Muslims he mentions in the interview are only random encounters within the societal infrastructure, and he shows no interest in mediated knowledge on Muslims. In other words, the model for Muslim–Christian relationship arising from his answer and his childhood is of mutual respect of physical distance between Catholic and Muslim communities that coexist in different physical bubbles and have little contact. In this model, the physical or virtual distance between the two groups has two complementary features: the natural border keeps the two groups at a safe distance and provides natural protection against possible contacts and eventual conflicts. This model of the relationships between Catholics and Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, however, is an ideal of intergroup relations that originates in the clerical plausibility structure and is transmitted generationally among priests in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This, however, does not mean that Participant 2 does not describe his personal experiences on the issue in the interview. He does so in the context of transmitted general societal norms and narrations. In other words, traditional knowledge inherited from previous generations deeply influences his personal relationships with his Muslim neighbors.

Participant 14 belongs to the same clerical subgroup as Participant 2. However, his approach to the issue resembles that of the rebel clergymen; that is, he also tries to avoid speaking about personal experiences with Muslims. It is argued that the rebel clergymen do so because they likely do not have many personal contacts with Muslims but do have acquired, transmitted knowledge on Muslims and, therefore, prefer speaking about latter. Regarding the former, it can be argued that Participant 14, too, has no personal contacts with Muslims. Nevertheless, while the rebel clergy demonstrate an uncommonly large amount of acquired information on Muslims, Participant 14 seems to have no interest in

such knowledge and consequently cannot say anything about it. In an attempt to avoid answering the question, he changes the topic, arguing that he does not have much personal experience on the issue and consequently cannot have a personal opinion on it. However, the issue discussed in which he does not have much experience is not his personal experiences of relationships with Muslims but dialogue between Muslim and Catholic intellectuals, an undertaking that, in his opinion, is impossible because Christians and Muslims occupy two “parallel worlds.”

In this case, I, as the interviewer, intervened and tried to bring his train of thought back to the desired tracks. This part of our conversation is a good example of a not always visible difference between learned transmitted knowledge—sometimes used and interpreted incorrectly—and personal knowledge on the object studied—often neglected as a valuable source of knowledge—so the largest portion of the transcribed interview with Participant 14 related to the first question is presented here:

Participant 14: They are parallel worlds. I do not see any opportunity for dialogue with them. Dialogue can take place between those who are equal and alike. Dialogue with a parallel and completely different world is impossible. I am not saying that we do not need dialogue, but we should not idealize dialogue, nor should we have many expectations. Dialogue cannot offer a final solution, nor can it be our goal. Actually, I have no experience with it, nor do I have an opinion about it.

Interviewer: But you are speaking about dialogue now ...

Participant 14: Of course, about dialogue!

Interviewer: But then again, the question was what your personal opinion about Muslims is? Do you have personal contacts with Muslims? Do you have a Muslim friend?

Participant 14: I meet Muslims every day. However, for me, it is not dialogue. In my opinion, dialogue is something intellectual, something metaphysical that might help us understand reality. Dialogue takes place only between intellectuals. Nobody gives importance to what happens in ordinary life. I would never say that my friendships with people of Muslim faith or contacts with my acquaintances and neighbors are dialogue. That is not dialogue to me.

Interviewer: What interests me is exactly your personal relationship with Muslims, not intellectual conversations ...

Participant 14: These [personal] encounters happen with mutual respect for differences. In such encounters, it is completely irrelevant that we are different. However, such encounters are not dialogue. My friendship with Izudin [Muslim name] or my relationship with my brother is not dialogue. That is simple human contact and nearness. I would never say that that is dialogue. Dialogue is, for me, a form of official communication between religions. There is no need for dialogue on a personal level. We meet each other, talk, and drink coffee together; we phone each

other. ... But such kind of encounters is completely irrelevant. I would never mention it [in the context of dialogue].

Starting from the first sentence of this answer, Participant 14 has generally negative and pessimistic attitudes toward dialogue between Muslims and Christians. Although dialogue is not the subject of the first question, the way Participant 14 brings up this issue in the context of personal knowledge on Muslims is quite thought provoking. He does not cease mentioning dialogue, directly linking these two issues, even when reminded that the question is about another issue. Hoping to grasp why he resolutely refuses to speak about his personal relations with Muslims and to explore what kinds of personal relationships with Muslims and other contemporaries he has, we will make a small digression and analyze the context of his generally pessimistic attitude toward dialogue with Muslims.

It is believed that the reason for his generally pessimistic attitude toward dialogue should be sought in the process of acquiring the necessary knowledge for the priesthood, that is, theological studies. During these studies, Participant 14 had to familiarize himself with Catholic doctrines, teachings, interpretations, and all other information that must be acquired before priestly ordination. This period allowed little room for personal opinion and reflection, including with the objects studied. Today, generally only theologians take part in theological discussions. In the past, theological discussions were the privilege of clergymen because few other educated persons could take part in such conversations. Today, however, the lack of inclusion of other people in theological discourse results not from privilege but an insurmountable gap between theologians and their contemporaries. Non-theologians generally are excluded from these discussions because theologians tend to isolate themselves from society, keeping their discussions hidden from the public and its judgment. At the same time, non-theologians consciously exclude themselves from such discussions because they either must have basic theological knowledge and unquestioning faith in that knowledge or simply find these topics boring and obsolete, devoid of vivacity and relevance. Consequently, theological discussions take place in a nearly isolated world with little contact with other people and generally do not aspire to acquire “the knowledge of good and evil” about the objects studied but to facilitate learning of transmitted knowledge. Still, a theologian can preach about doctrine to devoted Catholics without involving them in these discussions but cannot apply the same approach in encounters with members of other religions. Participant 14, therefore, correctly claims that discussions with Muslims or, more specifically, theological

discussions between Muslim and Catholic experts on transmitted knowledge on Islam and Christianity and their incompatible doctrines, teachings, and arguments is impossible. If both take transmitted knowledge as a starting point for their encounters, they indeed inhabit worlds parallel to not only each other but also the contemporary secular world. In this context, knowledge transmitted through theological studies becomes a physical barrier between neighboring religious groups and a loophole for avoiding as much contact between them as possible.

Participant 14 honestly acknowledges that when a person stands face to face with another person both respect the other's differences. Moreover, he believes that in personal encounters, differences are irrelevant and usually not the topic of conversation. In other words, when two person encounters one another, they are both only individuals stripped of their learned transmitted knowledge and societal narratives. A person standing with another person is only a person and not a corpus of the doctrines and attributes of another societal group. Nevertheless, for that very reason, personal encounters, in the opinion of Participant 14, are not worth mentioning and should not be considered to be dialogue. Dialogue, according to him, is an intellectual and metaphysical activity that should help us understand reality. In other words, dialogue is an encounter of ideas and ideologies, not persons. However, ideas cannot negotiate between themselves, so the persons working on dialogue should be nexuses capable of correctly interpreting ideas while denying their personality and individuality.

Although Participant 14 mentions the Muslim name of a friend or acquaintance, it cannot be concluded that he has much personal knowledge on Muslims. Generally, it can be said that he does not seek contacts with Muslims and shows no interest in mediated knowledge on them. An ideal model of Muslim–Christian relationships that can be drawn from his answer is two coexisting, parallel worlds travelling on paths that never intersect. He does not mention any physical barrier between these two groups, but nevertheless, the intangible virtual barrier of their collected doctrines and worldviews inherited from previous generations seems to be insurmountable. One feature of this virtual barrier is that it prevents possible contacts and conflicts. Consequently, when personal encounters between individuals of these two groups happen, they are ignored as worthless.

In this societal subgroup, the accumulation of transmitted knowledge is a highly important condition for achieving the wished goal, while personal reflections on the

studied object and personal relations with it are neglected. It then is no wonder that even those claiming to have accumulated much personal knowledge on relationships with their Muslim neighbors observe Muslims differently after they have acquired mediated knowledge in theological studies.

I grew up with Muslims. My best friends are Muslims. My knowledge of Islam is primarily based on personal interactions with persons [Muslims] who are believers, but it didn't prevent me from becoming a Catholic priest. My encounter with Islam through persons is a positive experience. However, since I started studying [theology], I have begun to think beyond my personal experiences. I have realized things that are not logical: [For example, the Muslim] religious leader [the grand mufti] is saying one thing and doing something else. (Participant 1)

Unlike the other clergy interviewed in this study, Participant 1 has close, enduring relationships with Muslims. He lives in a Muslim-majority environment as a Catholic cleric who can communicate with his Muslim neighbors if he wants or avoid all most encounters with them if he wishes to. Participant 1 was born in a Muslim neighborhood and grew up with his Muslim peers. There are not many Catholic priests in Bosnia-Herzegovina who might say that their Muslim childhood and school peers remain their best friends. Regularly encountering his Muslim friends, Participant 1 has close personal relationships with his best friends and their faith, tradition, customs, and rituals.

However, after describing his exceptional personal experience with his best friends Participant 1 states, “but it [his friendships with Muslims] did not prevent me from becoming a Catholic priest.” Probably assuming that it must be obvious to all, he does not explain why friendships with members of other religions are an obstacle to becoming a priest. At the same time, although his personal knowledge on Muslims can be described as exceptional, it cannot be claimed that he has general knowledge on Islam and the Muslim community in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In other words, his knowledge on Muslims is based on his personal relationships with his Muslim peers who are ordinary citizens and believers, not Muslim theologians, and he generally shows little interest in learning more about Islam. At the same time, his knowledge on Christianity is generally based on mediated knowledge acquired in theological studies, while his personal relationships with Christians might be qualified as insufficient. In this context, we take with reserve his statement that he began to think differently about Muslims, that is, beyond his personal experience, after starting theological studies.

As an example, he expresses criticism of Muslim leaders and Cerić, then-grand mufti in Bosnia-Herzegovina, who, according to him, “says one thing and does something else.” Here, we do not evaluate whether his criticism of Muslim religious leaders is justified but whether he would express such disappointment with the grand mufti also if were not studying theology. For example, the majority of the study participant, clergy and non-clergy, express consternation at the grand mufti, and some state they were dumbfounded hearing some of his public speeches that, as Participant 8 concludes, “have very little to do with religion.” Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina also commonly do not approve of Cerić’s attitude. After his second term as grand mufti ended, he was barred from seeking re-election by the constitutional term limits of the Islamic community in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and he entered politics, running as an independent candidate for the Bosniak member of the presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although well known, he failed to get the support of his fellow Muslim citizens; only 4.5% voted to him. That indicates that Cerić has very limited support and that the vast majority of Muslims did not approve of his troublesome public addresses as a religious leader. Thus, with no doubt, most citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina, including Muslims, understood that the grand mufti, regardless of his UNESCO Peace Prize, other international awards, and visits to many government and international NGOs, is not a person deserving of their support.

Knowing all this, it is not easy to understand why Participant 1 states that he recognized that Cerić gave troublesome public addresses only after studying theology. It seems that in the case of Participant 1, similar to the previous two examples, theological studies did not help him open his eyes to the societal reality but, to the contrary, made him incapable of recognizing the motions and feelings of those in his own society. Of course, Cerić’s honey-tongued speeches abroad and his dangerous, provocative preaches at home were irritating, especially because such words came from the highest representative of Muslim hierarchy in the country. However, Participant 1, despite his many Muslim friends and general positive opinion on Muslims, failed to recognize that most Muslims, regardless of their education, did not share the same opinions as their then-religious leader and did not support him. In other words, the transmitted knowledge Participant 1 accumulated in theological studies became for him a virtual barrier to understanding the social reality within which he lives and works.

The Balkan Architects of the Societal Multitude Based on the Social Interactions of its Members

The three examples discussed in this section are the answers of laypersons. As we see, their deliberations on the first question are essentially different from those of the clergy. Such attitudes, as discussed in the previous two sections, align with their positions and roles as non-clerical opinion-makers in a society that does not allow them to isolate themselves from the rest of society. To the contrary, to succeed in their professions and enjoy social recognition as reliable leaders, they cannot limit their communication to the people and groups to which they belong.

The first part of this section presents two so-called rebel clergy who avoid narrating their personal opinions and experiences with their Muslims neighbors. They are not the only ones who do so. For example, Participant 11 does not discuss such experiences, although they must be very important for him. Unlike a cleric, he cannot afford to work and live isolated from his Muslim neighbors. He shares the same office as Muslim colleagues. He must work and cooperate with many Muslim colleagues in his agency. He and his family live in a building with all Muslim neighbors. Many of their friends and acquaintances are Muslims. Why then does Participant 11 avoid narrating his experiences?

Most of my personal encounters with them are okay. ... Yet there is something that bothers me in their mentality. It is a dose of fatalism. All people in this region have a similar mentality, but among them [Muslims], it is most prominent. There is always someone else to blame for everything that happens. They see a conspiracy in everything. It is difficult to convince them to realize that sometimes the source of the problem is in them. (Participant 11)

He too directly answers the question only in the first sentence. However, in this sentence, he does not say “my personal experiences with Muslims are,” which would answer the question, but, instead, “my personal encounters with them are.” Based on this formulation, it can be assumed that he is not excited about the question, probably because in his opinion, the answer touches upon generally uninteresting narrations from everyday life. He encounters and talks to many Muslims every day. Experiences of such encounters are nothing unusual; for him, there is nothing exotic in them. His answer that his encounters with Muslims are “okay,” therefore, means simply that these encounters are as good as most adults in the world would describe their relationship with acquaintances, clients, colleagues, and close neighbors, whether Muslims, Christians, or another religious group. Some encounters are friendly and nice, others less pleasant, and yet

others better left forgotten. Participant 11 does not mention any negative experiences either, suggesting that he is generally happy with his relationships. That is, his relationship with Muslims are what the relationship between friends and acquaintances should be, with ups and downs and unimpeded by adherence to a certain religion.

In the second part of his answer, he goes deeper into the topic, revealing that his relationship with Muslims are not superficial every-day routines. In this statement, he does not express compassion for Muslims, nor does he say that he generally has positive experience of relationships with them. However, the absence of such phrases does not mean that he does not have these sentiments. Without analyzing the accuracy of his claim about the “dose of fatalism” in the mentality of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims, it is important to note that he compares them with other people in the region he could know personally—other non-Muslim groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina or other ethnoreligious groups in the Balkans—not other Muslims living elsewhere in the world he could know only through transmitted knowledge. We, therefore, can claim that his restraint in speaking about his personal experiences with Muslims is because he knows them personally and not because his knowledge on them is from only the interpretations of intermediaries.

Answering the first interview question asking him to describe his personal opinions on his Muslim neighbors, Participant 10 starts with the recent past. He describes how, about two decades ago, he and his peers reacted to knowledge on their own group and their neighbors mediated by the elders and representatives of their ethnoreligious group. This knowledge became obsolete about ten years later, when he had opportunities to encounter his Muslim colleagues (again after the armed conflict), work with them, and know them better. Today, he has Muslim friends and claims that he, his peers, and his whole ethnoreligious group were the victims of the poor politics of their own political representatives.

Ten years ago, my opinion on Muslims was totally different. I would say it was radically different. It was probably in accordance with the political circumstances and the war. Then they were for me enemies who wanted to evict us from central Bosnia and our homes. Today I think that we were victims of one very bad politics that influenced me, younger generations, and the majority of Croats. Then, we were ready for anything. ... Today it is different; maybe we are older and wiser. Since I entered into politics and cooperate with Muslim colleagues, my opinion on Muslims has been completely changed. Through these persons, I have realized that they are normal people. Today I have Muslim friends. Honestly, only ten years ago, it was unthinkable. (Participant 10)

The first part of his answer is related to the past, approximately the years between 1990 and 2000. For Croats and Catholics in central Bosnia-Herzegovina, this period of their history saw major societal earthquakes and uncertainty, including the armed conflict between the Croat-Catholic and Bosniak-Muslim ethnoreligious groups and the post-war period. According to Participant 10's statement, Muslims were then in his eyes enemies who threatened the existence of his ethnoreligious group. An enemy that threatens the existence of one group is a legitimate target of defense. Participant 10 confirms that he and his peers were ready to do anything that might harm their enemy.

For more than a year, Muslim armed forces besieged about 70,000 Croats in a small enclave in central Bosnia-Herzegovina. In this conflict, many people lost their lives and homes, and many who survived never recovered completely. However, Participant 10 states that his opinion on Muslims is radically different today than in those times of conflict and the post-war period. He does not consider Muslims to be enemies anymore or blame them for the conflict and losses. What has happened to change his view?

First, he entered politics and from an ordinary citizen became an opinion-maker, responsible for being actively involved in the creation of local politics and collective knowledge. Second, through his new profession, he encountered many Muslim colleagues, got to know them, and talked about their personal experiences. Through such conversations, Participant 10 realized that none of them enjoyed, needed, or became winners in conflict. His Muslim peers in the trenches were scared as their Croat peers in the trenches on the other side; many Muslims were killed and lost their loved ones and homes. Participant 10 has had great opportunities to hear those stories. Perceiving his own destiny and the destiny of thousands on both sides of the conflict in the narrations of his interlocutors, he realized that all were victims. However, they were not the victims of others but of their own inherited and transmitted knowledge labelling others as enemies. In other words, he concludes that the armed conflict might never have happened if the groups' elders and representatives had more political prudence, questioned the collective knowledge they inherited, and had sought personal knowledge on their imagined enemies through personal encounters with them.

The last example in this section is a statement by Participant 12 that is in many ways different than the other answers presented in this research. It is safe to say that this last example is a unique description of what Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation *Amoris*

Leatitia describes as “a privileged place for interreligious dialogue in everyday life,”⁴⁵¹ that is, a family that involves disparate cults. In another word, in answer the first interview question, Participant 12, a devout Catholic layperson, describes his privileged personal relations with Muslims. This uniqueness of his relationship with Muslims is evident in the first sentence of his answer:

Half of my family is Christian, and the other half is Muslim. My father is a Muslim; my mother is a Christian. I am a Christian; my sister is a Muslim. She also wears a hijab. I live with them [Muslims members of my family] every day. All the members of the extended family, dad’s side, are Muslims. (Participant 12)

Before continuing to analyze the second part his answer, let us first give short summary of his interview and brief insight into his personal context.

Participant 12 is a journalist. Half of his immediate family is Catholic, and the other half is Muslim. He decided to become Catholic by himself. Some of his relatives were not happy with his decision but later accepted it. He can talk openly with anybody on any topic related to both religions. He insists that it is very wrong to form an opinion on Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina based on the public addresses of their religious leaders. He believes that religious leaders might say what they want, but real life is often different. He knows many Muslims who do not agree with the representatives of the Muslim community. They are not lesser believers due to it; they accept all the pillars of the faith, but they do not have to agree with the positions of the current religious leaders. In his opinion, Bosnian Muslims are open to new things and personal relations with everybody. Christians must also be open to dialogue with everybody, as Jesus was ready to talk with anyone. In his opinion, the interreligious dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina is excellent but only at a high institutional level. Leaders and experts meet regularly, act together on issues important for all religious institutions, and condemn attacks on any religious institutions but do not care much about the everyday life of their followers. Also, they give no sign of willingness to involve all members of their groups in interreligious dialogue. Dialogue between lower-level clergy and believers is almost non-existent, not because they are not willing to enter into dialogue, but because they do not know how to do it.

Participant 12

Participant 12 is not only related to Muslims through his family. He was born in a Muslim-majority micro-region, grew up in a Muslim neighborhood with Muslim peers, and most of his best friends are Muslims. His parents, although both religious, let their children freely decide which religion to follow. Participant 12 decided to become Catholic and his sister Muslim.

⁴⁵¹ Francis, *Amoris Laetitia: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016), accessed March 25, 2016, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html

It can be assumed that, because he became Catholic as an adult, he accumulated more transmitted and personal knowledge on Christianity and the Catholic Church than most Catholics baptized as infants. As well, many of his relatives are Muslims, so he must also have accumulated much personal and transmitted knowledge on Islam and Muslims. Both sets of knowledge are exceptionally important for him and his immediate family because otherwise their family life would be impossible. Whenever a political or religious tension between Croat-Catholic and Bosniak-Muslim groups pops up, they must use their own internal communication techniques to defend their family from negative external impacts. Here is the rest of his answer explaining his deliberations on this issue:

All members of the extended family, dad's side, are Muslims. I know how they live, and I know their lifestyle. Islam is not foreign to me. I can discuss with them all issues. I do not impose my opinion on them, nor do they impose their opinion on me. My immediate family accepted my decision [to become Catholic], while some members of the extended family protested. However, it didn't bother me. I continued with my life. It is very important to talk [with them] and not to create an opinion on Muslims based on the public addresses of their religious leaders. Life is radically different. I know it from my own experience. Not everyone agrees with all the fatwas and other decisions of religious leaders. This means that people are willing to think with their own heads, regardless of what the leaders or an institution say. The religious doctrines and precepts are one thing, and living the faith in daily life in which we meet different people is another thing. Doctrines must be respected. However, if my bishop says something on an issue, I will respect him, but that does not mean that I will follow his advice [blindly] if I think and live differently [that is, if I know that issue from other perspectives]. (Participant 12)

After describing his privileged relationship with Muslims, Participant 12 names several important things that make his relationship with Muslims constructive and valuable. First is personal knowledge on his Muslim relatives' lifestyle, including what they believe and fear, what makes them happy and sad, how they deliberate, and what customs and rituals they perform. With his personal knowledge on the lifestyle of his Muslim family, he knows no boundaries for discussions with all Muslims on any issue. Second, however, he immediately adds a golden rule for such talks: "I do not impose my opinion on them, nor do they impose their opinion on me." This rule makes modern pluralistic society possible. The third point he emphasizes is also very important for a pluralistic society. A general opinion on a group should not be based on the public addresses of their representatives, especially if those representatives happen to be eccentric. In this statement, it can be assumed that Participant 12 refers to the troublesome public speeches of Cerić, then the grand mufti in Bosnia-Herzegovina and representative of the group. This rule should not be limited to the public addresses of official representatives but may be extended to the

addresses and acts of any individual representative of any subgroup. This is possible because, as Participant 12 claims, the public speech of an official representative does not necessarily reflect the opinions of all group members. Consequently, individuals who do not recognize themselves in such addresses and whose life and personal knowledge contradict such speeches or deeds, are not ready to accept or implement them. This is not anarchy but a prudent way to make the lives of individuals possible in a societal multitude. Participant 12 emphasizes that he respects his bishop even if he says something unacceptable to his conscience.

It is hard to imagine how Participant 12's relationships with his father, sister, and all the members of his Muslim extended family could be possible without the rules he mentions. However, those rules should not be considered detached from society and, therefore, exceptional. Such rules must be norms in every pluralistic society. Otherwise, a society would not be pluralistic, and groups could not cohabit and interact.

General Conclusions

This section analyzes the participants' perceptions of their personal relationship with their Muslim neighbors. To capture a general picture of Catholic-Muslim relationships in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the participants were asked to describe their personal opinions, experiences, and emotions, that is, to interpret their own personal knowledge on their Muslim neighbors. The participants were explicitly requested to avoid discussing their group's or subgroup's transmitted socially constructed interpretations of reality, history, political events, religious beliefs, and interpretation of doctrines and documents.

Some participants readily narrated the personal knowledge they learned in relationships with Muslim colleagues and neighbors. Other answered as if the topic were a huge challenge for them, or they considered it for the first time in their lives. Others partly or completely ignored the instructions and, instead of offering their personal testimonials and convictions, presented the socially constructed narrations of their subgroups. It cannot be argued that the last group did so intentionally, deliberately ignoring instructions, or did not have personal opinions on the issue in question. However, it can be argued that they presented transmitted knowledge learned in through their education as if were their personal knowledge.

The participants' approaches to their personal knowledge on Muslims reveal three groups: progressive theologians, traditional theologians, and non-theologians. Although the first two groups, both clergy, have different approaches to this issue, it is safe to say that they both generally have very limited personal knowledge on Muslims and superficial relationships with their Muslim neighbors. In contrast, the third group of non-clerical participants has heterogeneous approaches to this issue. This is not surprising given their backgrounds, education, professions, and family status that determine their experiences of relationships with Muslim neighbors, friends, and colleagues. Nevertheless, it can generally be concluded that these participants generally have much more experience of personal relationships with Muslim neighbors and more knowledge on their Muslim neighbors than the clerical groups. We present three general conclusions, one related to the clergy and two to the non-clergy.

Compared to laypersons, Catholic clergy, both so-called progressive clerics and traditional priests, have significantly less personal knowledge on Muslims in their society and little interest in increasing it or improving their personal relationship with their Muslim neighbors.

With good reason, Catholic priests, who should spread the good news to all people, are expected to strive to detect and understand the features, conditions, and differences of the society in which they work. They should be ready to encounter all people in the local community, including those whose beliefs and worldviews they do not share. In other words, Catholic clergymen are generally expected to behave, as much as possible, as good shepherds, leaders, and models. Certainly, most priests behave accordingly but nevertheless, it sometimes comes out that some clergy, today or in the past, have behaved contrary to these norms.

This study shows that most Catholic priests in Bosnia-Herzegovina consciously or unconsciously ignore present-day societal norms and isolate themselves from the societal multitude in which they live and work. The most striking consequence of this self-isolation, which is generally manifested in a lack of personal knowledge on close neighbors, is clerics' few encounters with people whose beliefs and worldviews they do not share. Concretely, this means that clergy in Bosnia-Herzegovina generally isolate themselves from both their Muslim neighbors whose faith they do not share and their fellow believers and colleagues whose worldview they do not share. Clergy's preference

for self-isolation and insufficient personal knowledge on Bosnian-Herzegovinian society and people is a clear indicator of their readiness and openness for inter- and intrareligious dialogue: they are not ready or maybe they do not know how to enter into personal relationships and dialogue with the society in which they live and with the people with whom they share a *lebensraum*. Nevertheless, holding an important social role as moral opinion-makers, clergy doubtlessly transmit their skepticism toward dialog with others to their fellow believers.

Lay opinion-makers generally demonstrate high personal knowledge on their Muslim neighbors and the broader society in which they live. They decisively refuse any form of self-isolation, either personal or group. They are aware that personal self-isolation would also mean retirement, while group self-isolation would be the end of the world they know and the beginning of a new anti-multitude conflict.

Non-clerical opinion-makers doubtless face the same temptation as clergy to believe that closed, isolated groups can guarantee group survival and preserve their cultural and religious inheritance amid an uncertain ocean of diversity. Nevertheless, a society that isolates itself, instead of exchanging of goods and ideas with other groups and societies, usually wages multiple wars: against all neighbors or other societies that allegedly or actually endanger it; against all individuals within the group who might be perceived as a threat for any reason in periods of collective hysteria; and against itself, its own culture and peaceful past that must be reinterpreted to maintain self-isolation and continue multiple wars. In other words, a radical politics of group self-isolation endangers everything it is presumed to safeguard.

However, the non-clergymen opinion-makers are not only tempted by the populist ideology of self-isolation but also played, voluntarily or compulsorily, active roles in self-isolationist group politics in the recent Bosnian-Herzegovinian past. Unlike clergy, they were not exempt from compulsory military service and other activities in the wars waged to create and maintain self-isolated communities. In these wars, they were compelled to take difficult decisions no one makes in peacetime. They personally learned the devastating consequences of isolationist group politics, and from their own experiences, some can courageously claim that not only the other should be blamed for the conflict and all misery it caused. The study participants do not claim that the others are without guilt, but their own leaders whose politics brought their people into this situation bear the most

blame. Thus, non-clerical opinion-makers, having accumulated personal knowledge on self-isolationist politics and later (again) cooperating with their Muslim colleagues, neighbors, and broader society, fearlessly take part in the societal multitude.

Those born and living in families with members who belong to different religions have the most knowledge on Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, making these families privileged sites for interreligious dialogue in everyday life.

The members of such families who practice their faith, whether laypersons or clergy, could be the best example of best practices in interreligious dialogue. They have unimpeded access to transmitted knowledge on both religious traditions and, most importantly, to the accumulated personal knowledge on family members who belong to both religious traditions. In other words, their personal knowledge from strong family bonds, that is, knowledge on good and evil, does not make them into so-called experts on interreligious dialogue but, instead, renders their whole lives an interreligious dialogue.

Conclusion

The journey leading to the completion of this thesis was quite long, complex, and full of hard labor. This publication is a selection of several hundred pages of text with ideas, deliberations, assumptions, doubts, conclusions, and puzzling and inconsistent results thought out, processed, rewritten, and forgotten in numerous files. The final text is the result of a personal relationship with the interview data, other selected texts, and general guidelines on how to use, classify, analyze, and interpret data in qualitative research and to shed light on the socio-cultural and historical contexts influencing the origins, collection, and evaluation of data. However, there is no intention—nor is it scientifically honest—to claim that this research and its conclusions have been produced by an objective, unbiased observer. Qualitative research does not lend itself to such objectivity, but it does lead to grounded theory, newly elaborated questions, and original dimensions for further research in the field.

This means that in this study, the signposts for understanding the obtained data were not found in a vacuum or a laboratory but in personal relationships with many people playing varied roles in many societies and societal sub-groups I had the privilege to encounter. Additionally, the study encompasses the geographical region and the ethnocultural socio-political and religious communities in which I was born, grew up, and acquired my first personal contacts with society and individuals, mediated knowledge, and societal norms. My first personal relationships occurred amid societal tensions among the atheistic secular ideology promoted in the public square, the religious world-view preached by the clergy relegated to the societal margins, and the honest, uncorrupted, often child-like, naïve religiosity and world-view of my extended family and immediate neighbors, who adhered to different religions, ethnic groups, and political ideologies. Furthermore, this research involves an ethnoreligious clerical sub-group and its associated clerical plausibility structure, a system of thoughts, beliefs, and convictions that only exists because it is uncritically accepted and transmitted to new generations. In this environment, I completed my high school and theological studies.

All the constructed societal norms of sub-groups in this society sedimented over long periods of time and, although many are conflicting, have two common features. First, these sedimented norms are promoted and presented as good, and their proponents believe they are intrinsically good. Undoubtedly, the followers of constructed norms aspire to be good people, but it must be noted that the model of good discussed here is not necessarily the universal good. Instead, it may be a value interpreted and understood as good and, as such, further mediated to satisfy the needs and wishes of individuals or groups. In other words, the desired good might be mistaken for the good, while the universal good might be understood as the not-good and thus the not-desired. The mediated and adopted socially constructed model of good, therefore, might lead whole groups and individuals to act against the universal good or even in evil ways without realizing it.

Second, all these societal constructions demand the integration of individuals through absorption of transmitted knowledge. None seek a close personal relationship in which the subject learns of their good but also their not-good sides. Consequently, society imploded once the societal tensions exploded, and the big brother of this society—the communistic policing system—disappeared. The end of socialistic society brought not only the end of socialism and communism but also attempts to end the societal multitude due to the patriotic duty to do good for one's own ethnoreligious sub-group by doing not-good or evil to others.

This study revealed also two findings considered to be interrelated. The first finding from the analysis of the sample data is the unexpectedly high education level of opinion makers in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The second finding from the analysis of interview data is Catholic clergy's general lack of personal experience in dialogue, particularly with Muslims, and, moreover, their general lack of readiness or interest in entering in personal dialogue with any person, group, or phenomenon.

The sample obtained through the framework of purposive critical case sampling methodology combined with snowball sampling conducted in two stages reveals two anomalies in the age and education level of the participating opinion-makers. Additional research partly confirms the first anomaly as valid in Bosnian-Herzegovinian society. In the societal sub-group of opinion-makers, similar to the study sample, those younger than 30 years old are not represented at all, while the fifth cohort is underrepresented.

Concerning the second anomaly, the education level of the participants is almost identical to that of opinion-makers in this society, and it is confirmed that that an absolute majority of Bosnia-Herzegovina's opinion-makers have college, university, or higher degrees.

Based on these findings, the data analysis, and the context of Bosnian-Herzegovinian society's turbulent past, troublesome present, and uncertain future, it is argued that the more homogenous and higher education level of the opinion-makers in a society is, the more unsolvable abstract problems there are as the highly educated are less willing to enter dialogue with other social sub-groups. Instead of heading toward a smart society, therefore, a society with a higher than average number of highly educated opinion-makers heads toward internal tensions and an overreaching self-isolation. As well, the absence of younger generations among opinion-makers is characterized as a relic of a pre-modern society that excluded younger generations from active participation in important social roles. The underrepresentation of the fifth cohort is directly related to the role of these generations in the armed conflict in the early 1990s. Although Bosnian-Herzegovinian society's high level of educated opinion-makers likely is unique among states in the world, it is not the only society in which all opinion-makers have high-level education: the majority of opinion-makers in the Catholic Church, both clergy and lay theologians, hold university degrees. Nevertheless, according to this study, clergy are much more closed to dialogue than non-cleric opinion-makers.

Generally, it was more challenging to secure clergy's participation in this research than non-clerical opinion-makers. While most interviews were held in public places, some clergy preferred places free of outside disturbances and, in one case, also free of direct, synchronized communication. Clergy were more distrustful of the study and research methodology. They were surprised that interviews were conducted with so-called non-experts on the issue, that is, persons not trained to answer questions on the topic of study. Also, although this study focused on a religious subject, clergy felt more uncomfortable talking about it and provided less precise answers than non-clergy.

General logical conclusions are derived from the data analysis. They are presented in more detail in Chapter 9 and briefly summarized here. This study shows that Catholic clerics generally neglect any form of interreligious dialogue with Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, disregard and even scorn colleagues who have personal relations with Muslim neighbors and friends, and seek to minimize all avoidable encounters with

Muslims. In this regard, it is unsurprising that, compared to non-clergy opinion-makers, Catholic clergy have significantly less personal knowledge on Muslims in their society and little interest in increasing or improving their personal relationships with their Muslim neighbors. Concerning internal ethnoreligious relations, that is, intragroup dialogue, it may be claimed that clergy use all available communicational channels (e.g., sermons and other encounters with believers) to promote their political solutions for their ethnoreligious collectives. Their political solutions generally promote mainstream populist resentment, aversion, and distrust in democracy as they involve themselves in political processes to weaken and restrict democratic developments. Clergy, therefore, are trying not to engage in intragroup dialogue but to advocate implementing their programs and solutions for societal problems.

Moreover, laypersons generally do not participate in interreligious dialogue with Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina because infrastructure for interreligious dialogue between ordinary citizens does not exist. Nevertheless, personal contacts occur within the existing societal secular infrastructure. Politicians, businesspeople, officials, and other opinion-makers regularly encounter their Muslim counterparts, colleagues, neighbors, and friends, and some ordinary Catholics have personal relations with Muslim neighbors, friends, and colleagues. Additionally, opinion-makers keep themselves informed about the major events and developments within the Islamic religious and Bosniak ethnic communities and generally demonstrate deep personal knowledge on their Muslim neighbors and the entire society in which they live. Aware that any form of self-isolation, either personal or group, would end the world they know and start a new anti-multitude conflict, they decisively reject it. They, therefore, generally perceive clergy's involvement in political processes to promote clerical political solutions for ethnoreligious groups as a stumbling block to interethnic cooperation and the political transformation of groups and society. Persons born and living in families with members belonging to different religions have the most knowledge on Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, making these families privileged sites for interreligious dialogue in everyday life. Based on these general conclusions, it is safe to claim that, except for Catholic clergy, Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina generally appreciate and respect the Balkans societal multitude, cherishing relationships with neighbors of other religions and ethnicity.

The findings from interview data analysis presented in the third part of this thesis were, stated directly, unexpected. Although it was presumed that clergy would have lukewarm

feelings toward dialogue, their general lack of personal experience in dialogue was not expected. These two unexpected findings necessitated more in-depth contextual explanations and rewriting the first two parts of this thesis. The first part of this thesis gives a general overview of the introduction of intra- and inter-religious dialogue into Church teachings, doctrine, and pastoral practices. It is argued that the Second Vatican Council never would have made a doctrinal turn on this issue, and the outcome of the Council would have been radically different without exceptional persons whose deep personal knowledge convinced them that radical changes were vital for the Church, Christianity, and the world. Nevertheless, in the former Yugoslavia and likely all post-communistic countries in Eastern Europe, the pre-Second Vatican Council mentality and clerical plausibility structure persisted in local churches, which continued business as usual.

The ethnic-clerical plausibility structure of the local church in Bosnia-Herzegovina is presented and discussed in the second part of this thesis. During communism Churches were visited regularly, and seminaries had many priest candidates, so deviations from doctrinal teachings and pastoral practices by clergy in this local church were ignored. However, today, around three decades after the fall of communism, the number of priest candidates and churchgoers has fallen, while the clerical plausibility structure transmitted through theological education has become a burden for society, the societal multitude, and social development. In short, most Catholic clergy in this local church are good, pious, kind persons, but their education based on mediated, transmitted knowledge from previous generations and their lack of personal dialogue and knowledge of society render them unable to respond to contemporary challenges.

In the following, four possible measures to change this lack of personal dialogue by local clergy are proposed. These proposals are applicable to the whole Church instead of this particular local church for two reasons. First, it is believed that clergy's lack of personal dialogue and knowledge of society is not only a problem in only one local church but is widespread because clerical education is based almost exclusively on transmitted, mediated knowledge. Knowledge individually acquired through unmediated personal experience and close personal relationships with the objects studied are generally the exception in preparation for the priesthood and theological education because such learning demands much effort, time, and the willingness, prudence, and courage to question inherited knowledge and enter unencumbered dialogue with the studied objects.

Second, the ethnic-clerical plausibility structures in which local churches are immersed are often misidentified as essential to ethnoreligious identities that have life-or-death importance. Under such plausibility structures, it is extremely difficult for a local church to recognize the most obvious, important realities, its own mistakes, and the non-good it has committed without external help. In other words, applying these measures to only one local church might never bring about the desired results.

Proposed Measures for the Development of Personal Dialogue in the Church

1. Theologians' Mobility

Following the example of Pope Saint John XXIII, theologians, both clergy and lay, should be sent to other Catholic communities in the world with a more or equally complex pastoral and general socio-political situation as their local church of origin. This theologian exchange program of multi-year duration should be compulsory for all future bishops, teacher candidates, and senior positions in the Church. It is believed this mobility program, in which theologians temporarily work in other communities with objectively more difficult situation than their communities of origins, will have multiple benefits for them and their communities. It is assumed that when moving to a new environment, theologians can carry out their pastoral service free of the plausibility structure of their home community and the emotions intrinsic to the transmitted knowledge in their host communities—that is, free of feelings that are part of interpretations of the past and relations with other non-Catholics. Freed from these two influences, theologians might more easily distinguish between real and imaginary problems in their host communities, which their hosts, loaded with local plausibility structures, cannot see.

Nevertheless, the purpose of mobility program should in no case be for guest theologians to intervene in the plausibility structures and pastoral practices of their host communities. Guest theologians should primarily, based on their experience in host community, compare and identify problems in their communities of origin and eventually work on improving them.

2. Common language

Spoken and written language is an essential tool for societal interaction and the comprehensive development of individuals and the whole society. However, a language used only as jargon by a specific profession within a relatively small, confined

geographical region and linguistic group could lead to isolation of that sub-group. In other words, a societal sub-group (e.g., theologians) in a small linguistic group develops its own technical vocabulary, syntax, and plausibility structure philosophy in a vernacular over time and isolates itself from speakers of the same vernacular who do not use their jargon and from peers who do not use that vernacular. In this case, language is no longer a tool for societal interaction but for isolation that eventually later leads to the group's deviation.

The Second Vatican Council, among other changes, revised the liturgy to encourage celebrating Mass in vernaculars instead of Latin. Intended to improve lay participation, this measure has generated unintended consequences that have complicated progress and societal interactions in some parts of the world. Latin has remained the official language of the Church and the administration of the Holy See but is optional in the liturgy, and the vernacular has replaced it in educational institutions and all forms of communication and exchange of theological thinking. Consequently, the Church thus has lost its centuries-long common language and has never tried to introduce another common language. On higher levels, the lack of a common language is compensated for by the use of either other globally common languages or translations. However, most theologians do not actively use a second language nor can they afford translation services for reading and discussing theological topics. This is especially a disadvantage for local churches belonging to small linguistic groups. Undesirable consequences of this situation, as mentioned, are a general tendency to self-isolation and complications in societal interaction.

Introduction of a (new) compulsory common language for all theologians in the world would represent a significant step forward. It would allow all theologians, regardless of their mother tongue, to read, write, communicate, and discuss topics outside the local plausibility structures that generally dictate theological thinking in small national territories and linguistic groups. More theological publications than a few vernacular authors and translations of selected works would be available. Authors from small linguistic groups would have opportunities to gain worldwide readership and get feedback from peers to whom the plausibility structure and social arrangements of their local clergy group might appear not in accordance with the rules and methodologies of modern theology expected in the 21st century.

A compulsory common language would facilitate the theologian mobility program and the exchange of teacher and students. Overall, the introduction of a compulsory common language for theologians, combined with today's means of communication, would make possible dialogue between theologians worldwide on an unimaginable scale. This doubtlessly improve the quality of theological studies, publications, and, most importantly, pastoral practices and the Church's universal mission, including interreligious dialogue. There will be always eccentric clergy groups that, inspired by populist, radical, and religious-nationalistic ideologies, tend to sectarianism or otherwise rarely rely on the Catholic Church and its teachings. Nevertheless, these groups would be easily identifiable—as it is relatively easy to identify such groups in English, Spanish, German, and other relatively large linguistic groups today—because they act in ways to attract public attention. However, it will be not possible to hide entire Church provinces that behave eccentrically behind the barriers of relatively small linguistic groups and their own plausibility structures of social arrangements.

3. Reorganization of Higher Education

This third proposal refers to the practical organization of theological studies. It is worthwhile to rethink whether many dioceses and religious provinces should continue running their own theological faculties or seek more sustainable solutions. Many theological faculties have few students and teachers, and these small faculties enjoy a family atmosphere where each professor knows each student. However, students grow fewer each year, especially in Western and Eastern Europe, so it is questionable whether these small institutions are sustainable. In addition to the costs, they rarely employ all qualified teaching staff, and lecturers have relatively few weekly lessons and usually take on additional demanding obligations in the local church, neglecting their further academic development. Last but not least, teachers typically remain at small theological faculties for their entire lives, resulting in a collective of teachers that has established its own comfort zone and plausibility structure, which is not the best environment for scientific progress. All these features indicate that education at small theological faculties can be enjoyable due to the family atmosphere, but these institutions are nurseries for local plausibility structures and low-quality education.

It, therefore, would be worth considering founding large inter-diocesan and possibly international centers for higher education and training. In addition to theological studies,

these institutions should offer all kinds of higher education and training for employees in local churches. The primary advantage of large educational centers with significantly more teachers and students, along with lower financial costs, is higher-quality education. Such centers can facilitate an exchange of ideas and experiences between teachers and students from varied cultural contexts instead of promoting a uniform local plausibility structure. Furthermore, instead of taking over other non-teaching related duties, teachers could devote all their time to instruction, research, personal development, and active supervision of students. However, to ensure high standards of education, it will be essential to ensure continuous academic mobility, exchanging both teachers and the students.

The prosperity of a society strongly depends on its internal dialogue, which should not rely solely on inherited, mediated knowledge but demand new, fresh knowledge from each person in society. The another proposal for higher education, therefore, calls for reorganizing study programs so that in addition to transmitted knowledge, students acquire personal knowledge through unmediated personal experiences and close personal relationships with the objects studied. For this purpose, it will be necessary to divide the existing (or, if necessary, modified) curriculum into multiple modules corresponding to specific areas of the Church's mission. Modules should consist of a theoretical part (e.g. classroom lectures and exams), training and paid practical work in the local church, that should meet a prescribed minimum amount of time and be prolonged as the candidates prefer, and the local church is satisfied with their services. Students should be allowed to continue their studies in the next module only if previous module is completed. Each module corresponds to a specific mission of the Church, so completion of each gives students new qualifications for professional work in the local church. In other words, unless students aim for the priestly or academic professions, they should not be obliged to complete all modules. Nevertheless, preparation for ministry and university vocation would last much longer than currently.

Such organization of theological studies has many advantages. Candidates for priesthood and academic careers would realize their goals only after they have acquired mediated knowledge in the classroom and personal knowledge through contacts with people and after many people—their senior colleagues, peers, and those with whom they have come in contact—have acquired personal knowledge on them, too. Moreover, candidates with particular goals or volunteer or professional missions in the Church would not have to

complete the full study program to take on tasks, but they might continue their studies later. In other words, in a relatively short time, a greater number of laypersons might be educated and trained for many missions in the Church, alleviating the shortage of clergy. This educational system might also result in fewer persons straying into the priesthood, teaching, and senior positions.

4. Independent News Media Coverage of the Catholic Church and Religions in General

It is exceptionally naïve to expect that any of these proposals might be introduced in Church practice in the near future unless a future pope has a similar professional career as Pope Saint John XXIII. He never aspired to become a career diplomat and bureaucrat within the Church; instead, he used modesty and gentleness to understand his interlocutors and their contexts. Clergy educated to parrot Church teachings to obedient churchgoers cannot be expected to perceive the most obvious, essential realities in *nostra aetate* and to identify their own mistakes and committed non-goods and evils and try to repair them. An example is presented in chapter 1: the preparatory commission for the Second Vatican Council drafted documents in conformity with mediated knowledge on doctrinal issues, Church teachings and doctrines, and long-standing, historically sedimented societal norms and moral teachings and was entirely convinced these documents pass smoothly in the first session. However, those documents offered nothing new, no response to contemporary challenges.

Other Church activities organized by laypersons and clergymen, like protests and petitions in all democratic societies, demand much energy but almost never achieve their goals. The only mode of action that has successfully initiated some shifts in the Church in recent past has been independent investigative journalism. This fourth proposal, therefore, concerns journalism that meets the professional standards of secular news reporting. Unlike all previous proposals, this one must not be conducted by the theologians, although they might be involved. This proposal calls for establishing a network of independent national presses focusing on Catholic Church affairs, as well as the promotion and support of similar activities in all other world religions. It is believed that this activity might help detect and prevent most deviations that might occur within any religious community, including but not limited to radicalization and hostility toward followers of other religions.

A pluralistic democracy is inconceivable without an independent press. Although many mass media incline toward sensationalism, populism, and superficiality, the press is still an irreplaceable, inherent part of the foundation of democracy. It is a platform for public discussion and debate, a guardian of the public interest, a channel of communication between decision-makers and the governed, and a watchdog for justice, public morality, human rights, and freedom. In repressive, non-democratic, and autocratic societies, the ruling structures exclusively own and control the press. It produces propaganda for the ruling powers, hides the news citizens need and deserve to know, and distributes news to keep them happy with their rulers' politics and loyal to the system and hierarchical structure. In other words, authoritative regimes deliberately infantilize people as the potentate decides on behalf of the people what is appropriate for them to learn and what might harm them and, therefore, must remain hidden.

The Church certainly is not a state, and pluralistic democracy is indeed not its governance style, at least not in our times. However, the Church is present in almost all countries of the world, where democracy might be a longstanding tradition, sham, or a swearword. Without entering the discussion on what democracy means to clergy, it is astonishing how many, including in traditional democracies, ignore the power and benefits of the independent press, as well as the reactions of Church leaders to secular investigative journalist reports on clerical wrongdoings. Instead, we should be thankful for the journalists who have investigated clergy misconducts and brought their findings to public discussions. Otherwise, the irreparable damage caused by some priests' crimes and the inexplicable cover-up of the perpetrators and misconduct that have been revealed would still be happening. The leadership would not have the opportunity to apologize, and new guidelines and practices that might prevent similar misbehaviors would not have been introduced.

Today, almost all publications reporting principally on Church affairs are owned by the Church and operate under the authority of the clergy. If the same were true for all media reporting on state affairs—that is, owned by the state—citizens would never learn what they should about their government. To create a platform for public discussion and dialogue, therefore, we need independent journalism on issues of religious affairs. Independent journalism should reveal for all of us critical realities we are not able to see and do not talk about. It should admonish us that all our relationships, personal

knowledge, and personal dialogue with any object are the water of life: *conditions sine qua non* no action would be ever taken.

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