

## **Social Changes of the Muslim Communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Bulgaria in the Second Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Comparative Studies**

Nationalism and modernization in the Balkans in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. were linked to attempts to reform the Ottoman Empire and later to the collapse of the Ottoman rule. These phenomena were strongly visible in two territories: Bulgaria and Bosnia-Herzegovina, whose histories were parallel in some aspects. For a long time, both provinces played the role of the Ottoman borderlands, which led to the emergence of numerous Muslim communities with wealthy and influential elites. In the 1860s, intensive reforms were implemented – in Bosnia-Herzegovina, crucial changes were introduced by Topal Šerif Osman; the North-Bulgarian lands were organized into the Danube Vilayet, whose administrator, Midhat Pasha, implemented a program of overall economic and social transformation. The economic modernization linked to the building of new roads, telegraph lines, railroads, schools, and the reconstruction of cities was accompanied by new social circumstances: the Christians started to participate in the administration, the press was becoming more and more popular, new methods of education in schools were implemented. However, the devastating period of the “Great Eastern Crisis” (1875–1878) stopped these processes: it was a time of violence and chaos for the whole Ottoman Balkans. Peace was brought by Austria-Hungary in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Bulgaria by the Russian intervention. According to the Berlin Treaty of 1878, new administrations were implemented in these territories: the Bulgarian lands were divided into the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia (which were dependent of the Ottoman Empire); however, they united in 1885 and functioned as one Bulgarian national state. Bosnia-Herzegovina found itself under the Austrian-Hungarian occupation which was supposed to last until 1908, when the province was to be given back to the Sublime Porte – this did not happen and Vienna announced its annexation. The government in Sofia used that moment to declare Bulgarian independence. Until the end of the “Great Eastern Crisis”, the new authorities on both territories continued the reforms introduced in the 1860s, which clearly accelerated in many economic and social aspects – Europeanization was noticeable at every step: in architecture, social diversity, the growth of bureaucracy, everyday life and fashion, agriculture, education. The new reality had many disadvantages as well – not only the old sins of the post-Ottoman public life, but also new ones: in Bulgaria linked to the project of building the national state, in Bosnia-Herzegovina related to foreign occupation. The reforms had affected all people of these lands, also Muslims whose number was declining: in the 1860s–1914, in the Bulgarian lands, their percentage decreased from 40 to 14%, in Bosnia, from 50 to 36%.

The **aim** of this project is to research the social changes of the Balkan Muslims in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. based on the cases of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Bulgarian lands using the comparative method. The objective is to analyze the processes of modernization and nationalization among the Muslims and to define the characteristics of the social changes which took place in general among the Balkan Muslims (by pointing out the similarities) and the ones typical of only the community in Bosnia-Herzegovina or in Bulgaria (by showing the differences between them). Before conducting this analysis, we will need to prepare a balance sheet of Balkan, Turkish, and Western historiographies on this topic. We expect that the project will give a new impulse to research on the Balkan Muslims, or at least will stimulate a discussion on this topic.

More in-depth **researches** on the Balkan Muslim society in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. will enable us to confront the achievements of historiography with the primary sources and initiate studies on topics which have so far been neglected. Therefore, they require conducting a new archive query and considerably expanding the source database, which means that one of the research objectives will be to search for and use new sources.

Explaining the **reason** for undertaking research, it should be emphasized that at a time when Europe is struggling with the problem of emigration, often from Muslim countries, it seems interesting to trace how the Sunni Islamic community adopted the technological and social innovations that they encountered thanks to Christians. The two Balkan countries in question had diametrically different policies towards their Muslim inhabitants. Another problem is the attitude of the Muslims themselves, who in Bosnia and Herzegovina generally welcomed the Habsburg monarchy, unlike in Bulgaria, where the Muslim elite rejected proposals to cooperate with a government that was initially hostile to them.

The **effects** of our research will bring pioneering results, because so far Yugoslav and Bulgarian, as well as Turkish and Western, historiographies have never undertaken to compare Muslims from the Balkan countries in the context of the above-mentioned modernization and nationalization at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> c. A comparison of the social changes will give us a better understanding of how Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Bulgarian Muslims reacted to the changing political and social reality. The project will involve extensive studies on this subject, which will be published in English in a monograph and articles.