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Cultures of Crisis in Southeast Europe
Part 1

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Religion, and Labour

edited by

Klaus Roth and Asker Kartari

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A Bulgarian woman selling home-grown produce in the town of Ceadâr-Lunga, Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia, Republic of Moldova; in the background a Gagauz woman selling her produce. Photo taken in 2009 by Elka Mincheva in the project "The Bessarabian Bulgarians in the Post-Soviet Space. Culture, Policy and Identity", directed by Zhenya Pimpireva, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (see Yana Yancheva's article on p. 173-189).

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Unifying the Other The Case of the March Violence in Kosovo and the Mosque Burning in Belgrade¹

Marija Mandić, Belgrade

Abstract

The paper analyses the socio-political context and public discourse related to the ethnic and religiously motivated violence which initially occurred in Kosovo in March 2004 and subsequently spread to Serbia. The introductory section sheds light on the history of the Bajrakli mosque, which is one of the oldest religious and cultural monuments preserved in Belgrade up to the present time. The paper further reveals historical and demographic data on the Muslim population in Serbia and Belgrade. Finally, it focusses on the events and discourses in Kosovo and Serbia which eventually led to setting the only Belgrade mosque ablaze. By applying methods of critical discourse analysis and media analysis, the Serbian public discourse related to the March riots and the mosque arson is analysed. In this paper, I argue that the strategy of unifying the Other appeared to be a very effective means of mobilizing people *en masse* in both Kosovo and Serbia.

Introduction: history and present situation of the mosque

Belgrade was ruled by the Ottoman Empire for more than three hundred years with short breaks, in the period from 1521 to 1867. The first half of this period passed peacefully, while in the course of the following hundred and fifty years the city was changing hands three times between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs (Đurić-Zamolo 1977: 6). Under Ottoman rule, Belgrade represented an important political, cultural, and economic Muslim centre, wherein many Christian churches were converted into mosques and numerous large and representative mosques were built. The sources from this period are rather scarce, however, according to Fotić: “By 1560, there were 16 mosques and *mescids* registered, in 1572 there were as many as 24 and at the end of the century, at least 29. In the seventeenth century, at least 29 mosques and 12 *mescids* were built, which would make about 70 mosques and *mescids* in all. Evliya Celebi

¹ This paper is part of the *Language, Folklore, Migrations in the Balkans* project (no. 148011) that is carried out at the SASA Institute for Balkan Studies in Belgrade and financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

claims that there were 270 *mihrab*s (houses of worship) and as many *mektebs*, 33 mosques and 19 *mescids* included. The total number is undoubtedly exaggerated. According to Šabanović, in Evliya's time (1660) or later there could not have been more than 80 mosques and *mescids*" (Čelebi 1967, Šabanović 1970 cited in Fotić 2005: 61).²

In addition, there were several churches, both Orthodox and Catholic, and some synagogues in Belgrade during Ottoman rule (Fotić 2005: 65, 72). In 1660, Evliya Celebi mentions nine Orthodox (Greek, Armenian, Serbian, and Bulgarian) and Jewish "houses of worship" (Čelebi 1967: 90). However, Celebi was not well informed about the Orthodox institutional organization and about divisions among Christians, so one should take these figures with reserve.

At the time when the Habsburg army controlled Belgrade in the 17th (1688–1690) and 18th century (1717–1739, 1789–1791), the city's landscape changed drastically. As Fotić (2008: 89) explains, "heavy bombardments during numerous sieges, from both sides, damaged the city to such an extent that it took decades to rebuild". In 1688, Belgrade was wrested from the Ottomans for the first time. After this takeover, only 15 mosques remained in Belgrade (Đurić-Zamolo 1977: 59). During the second Habsburg rule in Belgrade (1717–1739), there was an effort to erase all Muslim symbols: "hammams, mosques and *mektebs* were used mainly as warehouses. Some mosques were converted into Roman-Catholic churches, and one mosque was even used as a comedy theatre" (Tričković 1995: 124 [transl. by author]). Then again, when the Ottomans recaptured the city, they repaired the mosques, destroying the newly erected churches on the occasion or converting them into mosques (Tričković 2013: 445).

During the First Serbian Uprising against the Ottoman Empire (1804–1813), Belgrade was captured in 1806 by Karadorđe, the leader of the Uprising, and his followers, wherein many mosques and other objects typical of Islamic traditional culture were destroyed. In 1813, the Ottomans quashed the Uprising, regained control over the city and repaired many mosques. After the Second Serbian Uprising in 1815, Serbia reached semi-independence and Belgrade became the Serbian capital. In the inventory made by the Serbian authorities in 1836, there were 16 mosques in Belgrade. Fotić (2008: 89) describes this transitory period in the following manner: "During the first half of the century, the city had a joint Serbian and Ottoman civil government, with an Ottoman garrison in the fortress. After another Ottoman-Serbian conflict in 1862, and following intense diplomatic efforts, the last Ottoman garrison left Belgrade in 1867. Fearing that

² *Mihrab* – semicircular niche in the wall of a mosque indicating the direction of the Kabba in Mecca which Muslims are turned to when praying; *mescid* – small mosque; *mekteb* – Islamic elementary school.

they would be without protection in a Christian-controlled Serbia, the remaining Muslim population of Belgrade also left with the Ottoman army.”

The moving out of the Turks, Slavic Muslims and other Balkan Muslims from Belgrade in 1867 led to the destruction of almost all the remaining Belgrade mosques. By the end of the 19th century, the only remaining mosque was the Bajrakli Mosque. Serbian noblemen chose to protect this particular mosque as the only place of Muslim worship in Belgrade because of its good condition (cf. Hadžić 1957). This should have proved that the new Serbian political elite harbored no hostility towards Muslim citizens.

The Bajrakli Mosque is located at no. 11 Gospodar Jevremova Street in Dorćol, one of the oldest parts of central Belgrade. It represents the Ottoman architectural style and consists of a single dome. The Bajrakli Mosque kept the time for all other mosques in Belgrade, as one of the largest and oldest mosques. It gave the time according to the Islamic or Hijri calendar (it began in AD 622 when the Prophet Muhammad migrated from Mecca to Medina, which is known as Hijra); the mosque had a clock and the flag (Turk. *bayrak*) which marked the prayer time for all other mosques in Belgrade (cf. Đurić-Zamolo 1977, Hadžić 1957). The mosque had the good fortune of avoiding the destruction and plunder of the two world wars. During the 1990s and the violent ethnic conflicts in former Yugoslavia, the mosque and its worshippers managed more or less to avoid conflict situations. Until the March riots in Kosovo in 2004, the religious and social life in the mosque continued in its quiet and almost hidden manner.

Nowadays, it is the only practising mosque with a minaret in Belgrade. Inside the mosque court, there is a *madrasah* with a dormitory for pupils, the recently founded Faculty of Islamic Studies, and the centre for information and cultural events related to the Muslim community of Belgrade. In addition, there is the administrative centre of the Islamic Community of Serbia (Serb. *Islamska zajednica Srbije*), which is one of two parallel Serbian Islamic communities.³ The Muslims in Belgrade also gather in more than 15 *mescids* all over Belgrade, e. g. Borča, Zemun, Novi Beograd, Palilula, Čukarica, Vračar, Savski Venac,

³ The other one is named the Islamic Community in Serbia (Serb. *Islamska zajednica u Srbiji*) with its seat in Novi Pazar, a town located in the southwest region of Serbia. At the moment, two communities are embroiled in a harsh dispute over primacy. The dispute arose in 2006 and 2007 and ever since has been highly politicized, with many different political interests, actors and views involved. The current state of affairs can be described as a frozen conflict which escalates from time to time. It is noteworthy to mention that the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Turkish religious leader have recently put effort into reconciling the two fractions: *Peščanik* website: <http://pescanik.net/izs-vs-izus-retrospektiva>; the *Blic* daily: <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Drustvo/476453/Turska-ne-odus-taje-od-pomirenja-dve-islamske-zajednice-u-Srbiji/komentari/12697131/komentar-odgovor> (visited on 23. 1. 2015).

Mladenovac, etc. In 2014, a *mescid* was also established in the Serbian Army headquarters in order to meet the religious needs of the Muslim soldiers.⁴ Since the worshippers are of different ethnic origin, the next section briefly presents the demographic picture of the Muslim population in Serbia.

Belgrade Muslims: demographics and censuses of population

This section presents the demographic data collected via state censuses. It aims to illustrate ethnic heterogeneity and regional dispersion of the Muslim population in Serbia. The question on religion was asked in the Censuses of 1953, 1991, 2002 and 2011. In the 1953 Census, the question was formulated as the “Affiliation with religion”, whereby the person with certain religious conviction ought to have written down the religion she/he confesses, while the person who had no religious conviction ought to have filled in: *without religion*. In the period between 1953 and 1991, this question was omitted in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) for ideological reasons. Since 1991, there has been a question on religion but the respondent has not been under obligation to declare him/herself (cf. the 2011 census). In contemporary Serbia, religious life and freedom of religious conviction are guaranteed and regulated by the Serbian Constitution (CONST 2006) and the Law on Churches and Religious Communities (Law 2006).⁵ In the 2011 Census, three “identity questions” were asked, formulated as open-type questions: (1) national affiliation, (2) religion, (3) mother tongue.⁶

According to the last, 2011 Census, Serbia’s total population was 7 186 862 inhabitants, out of whom 6 079 396 (84.59 % of the total population) declared

⁴ Website of Mešihat islamske zajednice Sanžaka: <http://www.mesihatsandzaka.rs/vijesti/941-otvoren-mesdzid-u-generalstabu-vojske-srbije.html> (visited on 23. 1. 2015).

⁵ The Law on Churches and Religious Communities (Law 2006), however, was criticized for giving privileges to the traditional religious communities (Serbian Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Church, Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, Protestant Christian Church, Evangelical Christian Church, Jewish Community, Islamic Community), while discriminating against non-traditional and small religious communities; see: <http://pescanik.net/diskriminacija-s-predumisljajem>; Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe: <http://www.osce.org/serbia/47280> (visited on 23. 1. 2015).

⁶ The legal instructions given to the enumerators said that, according to the Serbian Constitution (CONST 2006), citizens were not obliged to declare themselves in terms of their religion or ethnicity. The 2011 Census allowed responses with double declaration of the ethnicity (Serb-Montenegrin, Macedonian-Serb, etc.) for the first time. As regards religion, it is not clear whether it refers to active or traditional believers, that is, the religion their parents or the family belonged to through generations (Census 2011: 12).

themselves as Orthodox Christians, as Roman Catholics 356 957 (4.97 %), as Protestants 71 284 (0.99 %), as Muslims 222 828 (3.1 %), as belonging to Judaism 578 (0.01 %), and almost five percent either did not wish to answer this question or declared a religious conviction which could not be identified, etc. In Belgrade, the total population was 1 659 440, out of whom there were Orthodox Christians 1 475 168 (88.9 %), Roman Catholics 13 720 (0.83 %), Protestants 3 128 (0.19 %), Muslims 31 914 (1.92 %), belonging to Judaism 295 (0.02 %); almost five percent of the respondents did not declare their religious conviction or declared one which could not be identified, etc. (2011 Census). As Susan Gal argues (1993: 338), the census-taking practice always prompts debates about the classifications adopted or discarded and the relationship between political, ethnic, religious, or linguistic categories established via censuses by governing elites. It is, as Foucault (1994) would name it, a “technology of power” that not only records but also contributes to creating identities by providing categories for enumeration. The census-taking practice is even more disputable in societies traumatized by wars and ethnic conflicts. That is how one can understand that the number of Belgrade Muslims is estimated as six or seven times larger than the censuses show. In an interview in 2007, Belgrade mufti Muhamed Jusufspahić estimated the number of Belgrade Muslims at between 180 000 and 200 000.⁷

The respondents who declared Muslim religion are very diverse by nationality. The most numerous group are Bosniaks, who make up 64.9 % of the Muslim population, 16.4 % are Roma, 9.3 % are Muslims (as “national” or “ethnic” affiliation), 3.2 % Gorani, 1.9 % Albanians, 1.2 % Serbs, 0.8 % Egyptians, 2.4 % other (Đurić et al. 2014: 188). There is almost an absolute correspondence between ethnic and religious identification among Bosniaks (99.51 %) and Muslims (as “national” affiliation) (93 %), while 71 % of Albanians and 25 % of Roma declared themselves as Muslims (Đurić et al. 2014: 188–193).⁸

The issue of Muslim nationality was particularly politicized in the former Yugoslavia. In the 1948 Census, it was proposed that Muslims of Yugoslav origin ought to have given one of the following answers: “Serb-Muslim”, “Croat-Muslim” etc. or “undeclared-Muslim”; in the 1953 Census, they were classified as “Yugoslavs undeclared”, alongside with other persons of Yugoslav origin who did not declare themselves; since the 1961 Census, a new modality has been introduced – “Muslims (national or ethnic affiliation)”; in the 2002 Census, an

⁷ The Radio Television of Serbia website: <http://www.rts.rs//page/stories/sr/story/125/Dru%C5%A1tvo/26578/Muslimani+u+Beogradu+traže+svoje+groblje.html> (visit 28. 1. 2015).

⁸ For more about the Muslim believers in Serbia see e. g.: Mušović 1996; Bašić 2002; Bašić, Jakšić 2005; *Albanci* 2003; Živković 2007; Džudžević 2007; Đorđević 2007; Ahmetović 2000.

additional modality was added, namely – Bosniak. Consequently, the Muslims of Yugoslav origin mainly declared their ethnicity either as Bosniak or Muslim (national or ethnic affiliation) in the 2011 Census.

National minorities in Serbia are regionally distributed: Bosniaks and Muslims (national or ethnic affiliation) are concentrated in South-Western Serbia, in the region historically known as Sandžak.⁹ Albanians are concentrated in the South of Serbia, in the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa. One fifth of the Serbian Roma live in the Belgrade area, and they are predominantly Muslim (57 %) (Đurić et al. 2014: 192–193). In one of the interviews, the Belgrade mufti Muhamed Jusufspahić highlighted that one of the obstacles to Muslim unity in Serbia could be seen in the attempts of regional Muslim centres to achieve religious unity on the basis of common ethnic identity. In contrast to that, the Belgrade Muslim centre is a multi-ethnic one and none of the ethnic groups is dominant (*Nedeljni telegraf*, 11. 4. 2007).

The March violence in Kosovo

The following section presents the events which occurred in Kosovo in March 2004. It shows how the media – Serbian, Albanian and global news media like CNN – contributed to the spread of violence by circulating unconfirmed or even false news in which the blame for the accidents was put on the criminalized Other. The unrest in Kosovo broke out on 17 March 2004, being the worst outbreak of violence in the province since the Kosovo War of 1998–99 and the NATO intervention. It initially began on 15 March 2004, when an 18-year-old Serb was critically wounded in the drive-by shooting carried out allegedly by Albanians in the village of Čaglavica, on the outskirts of Priština, central Kosovo. On the same day, the boy's co-villagers and the Serbian people from the surrounding villages organized protests (Gračanica, Sušica, Laplje Selo, Preoce). KFOR attempted to quell the Serbian rioting by raiding the rebelling villages; in response, the protesters blocked the main roads to Skopje and Gnjilane. The Serbian press wrote that “Albanian extremists were shooting from firearms

⁹ The name Sandžak derives from the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, a former Ottoman administrative district. However, this region was a centre of the Medieval Serb Kingdom the capital of which was once the city of Ras. Therefore, the other historical name used when referring to this region is Raška. Sanjak is more usual among both Muslim and Orthodox population, while Raška is mostly used by the Orthodox population (cf. King Savić 2012, Merdjanova 2013).

with suppressors” (Politika, 16. 3. 2004).¹⁰ However, who actually attacked the 18-years old boy has remained unsolved until this day.

On 16 March, two Albanian children drowned in the Ibar River in the village of Čabar, close to the Serbian municipality of Zubin Potok. CNN was among the first to broadcast the story about “Serbs who, with their dogs, pursued the Albanian boys”, although CNN had received a statement from the UN Mission in Kosovo that the deaths of Albanian boys were most probably a result of an accident.¹¹ The Albanian news agencies in Kosovo reported that the children were chased into the river by “Serbian bandits” with a dog who sought revenge for the Serbian boy who had been wounded on the previous day. Although the claim about the involvement of the Serbs in the incident was not proven, it sparked Albanian riots all over the province. By portraying the incident as a brutal and ethnically motivated crime, the Albanian-language media provoked furious and violent reactions among the local Albanian population (HRW; OSCE Report 2004).¹² In the OSCE Media Analysis 2004, it was explicitly stated: “In particular, TV journalists and their editors failed to behave according to the ethics of their profession, acted emotionally and put their ‘patriotic’ duty, as they saw it, first.”¹³

All violent incidents which followed occurred in less than 72 hours. During the days to come, large Albanian crowds attacked Serb and other non-Albanian communities, whereby 19 people were killed (eleven Kosovo Albanians, eight Kosovo Serbs), more than 900 persons were injured (including 65 international police officers and 58 Kosovo police officers), and more than 800 buildings destroyed or damaged (including 29 churches or monasteries). By one estimate, more than 50000 people participated in the riots. The March violent unrest also led to the expulsion or displacement of 4100 Serbs, Roma, Ashkali (Albanian-speaking Roma), and other non-Albanians from their homes (cf. OSCE Report 2005; CRDP).¹⁴ As concluded in the Human Rights Watch Report: “The failure – almost collapse – of the security institutions in Kosovo during the March

¹⁰ In the Serbian original: headline “Teško povredjen Jovica Ivić”, lead “Albanski esktrermisti pucali iz vatrenog oružja sa prigušvačem” (Politika, 17. 3. 2004, p. A8).

¹¹ Portal Free Republic: <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1102177/posts> (visited on 10. 6. 2015).

¹² Human Rights Watch Report: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/kosovo0704/5.htm>, <http://www.osce.org/fom/30265?download=true> (visited on 27. 1. 2015).

¹³ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe: <http://www.osce.org/fom/30265?download=true> (p. 15) (visited on 27. 1. 2015).

¹⁴ OSCE: <http://www.osce.org/kosovo/32700>; Centre for Research, Documentation and Publication (CRDP): <http://crdp-ks.org/en/programs/dealing-with-the-past> (visited 23. 1. 2015), Human Rights Watch: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/kosovo0704/3.htm>, Calic 2005: <https://ip-journal.dgap.org/en/article/getFullPDF/21929> (visited on 23. 1. 2015).

violence is beyond dispute” (HRW).¹⁵ The media and expert reports depicted this violent outbreak as “ethnic cleansing” (BBC), “Anti-Minority” and “Anti-Serb violence” (Washington Times; HRW).¹⁶

International officials claimed that the violence was not so spontaneous, but that there were some extremist organizations behind it with a ready-made plan to act. Moreover, the highest-ranking world and European politicians, officers and institutions – like Javier Solana, the European Union foreign policy representative, Admiral Gregory Johnson, Commander of NATO forces for Southern Europe, UN Security Council, and Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, issued statements in which they described the violence as an organized and targeted campaign by some radical members of Albanian parties and the paramilitary forces. A careful analysis shows, though, that this violence was both spontaneous and organized. Namely, it revealed deep frustrations of young Albanians facing crippling corruption, stagnating economy, and criminalization of the Kosovo society (HRW).¹⁷

Setting mosque on fire as “act of revenge”?

In response to the Kosovo riots, thousands of people protested in several Serbian cities in the night between 17 and 18 March, wherein mosques in Belgrade, Niš and Zvornik (eastern Bosnia) were set on fire and the windows of the Islamic Community headquarters in Novi Sad were smashed. In addition, small shops and grocery stores belonging to Belgrade Muslims were demolished, along with McDonald’s restaurants and UN vehicles parked in central Belgrade.

Large crowds of people gathered around the Belgrade mosque on March 17, as young extremists – many of them with criminal records – set it on fire. The policemen claimed that they had tried to protect the mosque but it had not been possible because of the large crowd that had flocked to the area. Amfilohije Radović, Metropolitan of the Serbian Orthodox Church, was seen on the spot trying to prevent rioters from demolishing the mosque. It was discovered later that the police received an order all of a sudden to withdraw from the place. The Bajrakli Mosque was severely damaged; a library with more than 7 000 inval-

¹⁵ Human Rights Watch Report: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/kosovo0704/6.htm> (visited on 27. 1. 2015).

¹⁶ BBC News: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3551571.stm>; *Washington Times*: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2005/apr/9/20050409-102733-9741r/>; Human Rights Watch Report 2004: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/kosovo0704/2.htm> (visited on 26. 1. 2015).

¹⁷ Human Rights Watch Report 2004: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/kosovo0704/7.htm> (visited on 27. 1. 2015).

able books and a documentation centre were devoured by fire. In the very same night, the Islam-Aga Mosque in Niš was set on fire. The mosque was built in 1720 and was protected as cultural heritage since 1954. Overall, 178 people were arrested in Serbia during the riots. The police chiefs in Belgrade and Niš were dismissed over accusations of failure to protect the mosques. Since then, the Bajrakli Mosque has been protected by the police day and night. The mosques in Belgrade and Niš were subsequently restored with the aid of donations by the Government of Serbia and the City of Belgrade, the USAID, and the Government of Azerbaijan. The day of the mosque burning was proclaimed Day of the Mosques by the Islamic Community of Serbia, and since 2007 was celebrated on March 18. The Serbian authorities, on the other hand, declared the Day of Mourning on March 21 to mark “the pogrom against ethnic Serbs, the burning of the Serbian churches and homes in Kosovo and Metohija” (*Blic*, 21. 3. 2004).¹⁸

The Serbian public discourse

In the following sections I will focus on the Serbian public discourse about the March riots. My understanding of discourse is derived from Foucault (1972: 38), who takes the rules of discourse formation so as to explain the ways of constituting forms of subjectivity, knowledge, social practices, institutions and power relations. In line with this, critical discourse analysts consider discourse and society as constituting one another, and investigate social inequality which is constructed and legitimized via discourse (van Dijk 2001; Fairclough 2001; Fairclough, Wodak 1997). The concept of discursive strategy, also employed in the paper, generally denotes a more or less accurate plan adopted to achieve a certain political, psychological or other kind of objective (Wodak et al. 2009: 31). The most salient strategies used by Serbian media were victimization and justification of “us”, on the one hand, and criminalization and unification of different “other” groups, on the other hand. The unification of different “other” groups is based on a minimal set of distinctive markers (cf. Belova 2003: 162).¹⁹ In this case, different ethnic groups are united on the basis of their religion, Islam.

In most European states Muslims are either immigrants or have immigrant backgrounds, while in Southeast Europe there are many indigenous ethnic

¹⁸ In Serbian original: headline “Danas Dan žalosti”, article “Vlada Republike Srbije, zbog najnovijeg pogroma Srba i spaljivanja srpskih svetinja i domova na Kosovu i Metohiji, proglasila je 21. mart 2004. godine za dan žalosti” (*Blic*, 21. 3. 2004, p. 3).

¹⁹ In this way, in the discourse of Russian peasants, it was possible to equate Turks, Tartars and Jews with each other on the basis of just one distinctive feature – the removal of pork from their diets (cf. Belova 2005: 162).

groups whose confession is Islam (Voss, Telbizova-Sack 2010). Namely, Islam spread in this part of Europe when it was under the Ottoman control from the 14th to the 19th century. Today, the unification of different ethnic groups on the basis of their Islamic faith, however, is typical for Western policy and media. Triandafylidou (2010: 5) remarks that in the European Union “in particular, Islam has become a politically, culturally and symbolically important dimension of difference that it often overshadows ethnicity”. She also notes that “the presence of Muslimophobia and Islamophobia in the various national cases [...] suggests that the internal diversity and richness of Muslim communities have become obscured by such generalizing discourses and blanket policies” (ibid., 15; cf. Erdenir 2010). Moreover, since 9/11, Western media have tended to stereotype Muslims within the War on Terrorism frame which had replaced the older Cold War frame in American foreign policy (Kern et al. 2003: 296). As Norris et al. (2003: 15) put it, “the use of the terrorism frame serves several functions both cognitive, by linking together disparate facts, events, and leaders, and also evaluative, by naming perpetrators, identifying victims, and attributing blame. It allows political leaders to communicate a coherent, simple message to the public, while also reshaping perceptions of ‘friends’ and ‘enemies’”.

The War on Terrorism frame was exactly the card the Serbian authorities and media tried to play when portraying the March violence in Kosovo as acts of terrorism. However, the Serbian public sphere was not united with regard to these events. Namely, three “voices”, i. e., ideological positions, in the Serbian public can be distinguished between: resistance, silence, and commemoration.

The media on the March riots

Critical media analysis tends to reveal societal power operations and calls for social responsibility (Cotter 2003: 417). In particular, I tend to critically analyze headlines from the largest circulated national dailies in Serbia – *Večernje novosti* (VN), *Politika* (P), *Blic* (B), *Kurir* (K), and *Danas* (D). By doing so, I would like to call for social responsibility of the Serbian authorities and media for the emergence of violence in the Serbian streets and burning of the mosques after the violence in Kosovo occurred.

The mentioned dailies (re)produce national agenda and, at the same time, function as a record for society (Cotter 2003: 416). According to Fairclough (2001), mass media discourse recreates societal power relations which are reflected in the way they construct the reader, subject, select information, make sourcing, lexical choices, and evaluation. Access to news media is available mostly to privileged and powerful social groups. Thus, media are used to mobilize the public to support the social interests of the elite or whoever stands be-

hind the media industry (Pasha 2011: 64, 2015). In the Serbian media sphere, *Politika* is considered to be the most respected and credible newspaper in the country; the evening newspaper *Večernje novosti* belongs to the newspapers with the highest circulation in the country; *Blic* is also one of the most popular newspapers, more or less profiled as a tabloid; *Kurir* is a tabloid newspaper with a very high circulation. All mentioned dailies are mainly expressing and advocating the views of the ruling establishment. On the other hand, *Danas* is a left-wing oriented daily and the only newspaper among the mentioned with a critical editorial policy towards the ruling regime. Since the analytical focus in this paper is set upon headlines, I will draw attention to some underlying characteristics of headlines. Namely, headlines enjoy a privileged position reflected in a distinct layout and typography, they are syntactically impoverished, and often ambiguous, but they frame the news in a very specific way (Metila 2013: 72–73, Perfetti et al. 1987: 692). Headlines not only summarize the news, rather they highlight some specific aspects of the story in order to attract readers or to trigger frames and belief systems in the reader's mind (Bell 1991: 187–189, Dor 2003: 697–717). It is noteworthy to mention that headlines have a very high impact on the audience, since most readers rather scan the headlines and leads than read the whole stories; thus, the only information that readers often get about a story comes through its headline.

The violence against the Serbs in Kosovo was also almost the only topic on March 18 and 19, i. e., the entire issues – from the cover to the last page, reported almost exclusively about those incidents. In this paper, I quote the selected headlines from March 17 to 26. The special emphasis is placed on March 17, 18 and 19, which are presented in Table 1; the Serbian original headlines are provided in the Appendix at the end of the paper. Along with deeply disturbing stories about killed and expelled Serbian civilians and burned churches, there were also articles about riots all over Serbia and burned mosques, but they were placed on the back pages and thus marginalised. Moreover, from the first day, the strategy of the government-controlled media was to establish a direct link between the violence in Kosovo and global “Islamic” terrorism.

On March 18, the cover pages were reserved for the violence against Serbs in Kosovo. The participants were generalized and ethnically categorized. Serbs were construed as a unified passive subject suffering violence and terror. Besides, “everything Serbian” and Kosovo as a region were victimized. Albanians were constructed as a unified violent and criminal Other. The events in Kosovo were labelled as acts of terrorism or depicted in metaphors of blood and war (e. g. *Albanians Attacking Serbs: Kosmet Soaked in Blood*, VN; *Onslaught Against Everything Serbian*, VN; *Terror Against Serbs*, B; *Terrorism by Kosovo Albanians in Kosmet*, B; *WAR: In Organized Attacks of Albanians Against Serbs Across Kosovo*, K). In *Politika*, however, the headline tended to avoid ethnic cat-

egorization, criminalization, and evaluation (e. g. *Seven People Killed in Clashes*). But only *Danas* put a report on the events both in Kosovo and Serbia on the cover page (e. g. *Bloody Clashes Across Kosovo, Violence in Streets of Belgrade*, D); Moreover, *Danas* prioritized events in Serbia by publishing a photo of the burning Belgrade mosque on the cover.

Although the main Serbian newspapers reported about the events both in Kosovo and in Serbia, the violence in the Serbian streets was marginalised. On March 18, *Večernje novosti* published, in the middle of the issue, the article *Belgrade Still Sleeps*, in which the fact that not many Belgrade citizens had rioted the previous night was criticized: “only a few thousand people in the streets of Belgrade”. On the same page, there were two reports on the arson of the Belgrade mosque with a statement by Belgrade Mayor Radmila Hrustanović, who strongly condemned the incident and stressed that it happened because the police did not want to break up the riots forcefully. A few pages after that, there was also a report about the events in Niš, with an explanation that the Niš mosque was burned by “outraged citizens of Niš” (VN). The headlines of the *Večernje novosti* were de-agentivized by means of impersonal or passive constructions (e. g. *Mosque Set on Fire in Belgrade Riots; Mosque is Burned, Eight Policemen Wounded*, VN). The headlines with no explicated agent serve the strategy of diminishing the real responsibility. In *Blic*, the stories about the riots in Belgrade and Niš were placed on page 12 within the article: *Solidarity with Persecuted*, and the small framed text on the same page with the headline: *Bajrakli Mosque’s Burning*, which obviously lacked agency. In the middle of the issue, a new series of articles on the global Islamic terrorism was initiated (B, 18 March). However, only *Danas* gave parallel articles about the events in Kosovo and the events in Serbia throughout the whole issue, with particular emphasis on the burned mosques (D, 18 March).

On 19 March, the covers were dedicated to the Serbian suffering and victims (e. g. *Kosovo is not Surrendering*, VN; *Everything Serbian Burning, They Killed, Burned and Beat, Ethnic Cleansing, They Burned All Houses, Serbs in Refuge*, B). However, the *Kurir* had the most disturbing and alarming headline labelling the actions against the Serbs as *slaughter* and using the imperative verb form to address the public and call it to go out and react (e.g. *Slaughter of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija: Stand Up Serbia!*, K). On page 5, the *Kurir* delivered articles with headlines quoting Vuk Drašković, Foreign Minister of Serbia and Montenegro: *Send Army to Kosovo*, and Army General Vladimir Lazarević: *Fight Fire with Fire*. These headlines and related articles advocated a Serbian military campaign against the Kosovo Albanians. The cover of *Politika* appeared with the headline: *Serbs in Anxiety and Fear*, while a headline on page 6 read: *Crystal Night in Kosovo and Metohija*, associating the violence against the Serbs with the Nazi atrocities against the Jews in 1938.

On the same day, the reports on the mosques set on fire were again published on the back pages and marginalised. In *Večernje novosti*, page 10 had articles entitled: *Passions Burned Mosque*, and: *Those Accountable Must Be Found*. The agents were either abstract – *passions* – or generalized – *those accountable*. In the middle of *Blic*, however, there were reports on the mosques and the Muslim shops incidents in Serbia, with titles: *Vandals Only Harm Serbia*, and also: *Government of Serbia to Repair Bajrakli Mosque*. In *Kurir*, page 6 was dedicated to the events in Belgrade, i. e., there was an interview with the Mufti of Belgrade, Hamdija Jusufspahić: “Protect Muslims: We are not to blame for what is happening to Serbs; we are good citizens.” *Politika* published an article on page 6 entitled: *Bajrakli Flame* with an article stating that an act like this could have been expected bearing in mind what had happened in Kosovo, whereas on page 9, *Politika* published an article: *Islam-Aga Mosque Burned Down*. “Many displaced persons from Kosmet went out on the streets of Niš”, the lead of which implied that the burning had been carried out by the Serbs displaced from Kosovo, and thus justified it.

Table 1. Headlines in Serbian dailies on March 17, 18, and 19 referring to the March riots in Kosovo and the burning of mosques in Belgrade and Niš.

Večernje novosti

March 17: *Cover*: GUNFIRE AGAINST PROTEST; *Middle* (p. 14): THEY SHOOT AT CHILDREN AGAIN.

March 18: *Cover*: SERBIA ON ITS FEET; Albanians are after Serbs in Kosovska Mitrovica and Other Serbian Enclaves; KOSMET SOAKED IN BLOOD; (*Cover*, upper right-hand corner with a small photo) Bajrakli Mosque Set on Fire in Belgrade Protests. *Middle* (p. 21–25): Hooligans on Streets, Too (p. 21); Bajrakli Mosque Set on Fire (p. 21); Onslaught Against Everything Serbian (p. 24–25). Special edition of VN: *Cover*: SERBIA IS RISING. *Middle* (p. 6–11): Serbian Homes on Fire (p. 6); Kosovska Mitrovica: WHOLE CITY ON ITS FEET (p. 8–9); BELGRADE STILL SLEEPS (p. 11); Mosque Set on Fire in Belgrade: MOSQUE ON FIRE (p. 12); In Centre of Niš, due to KOSOVO EVENTS: MOSQUE BURNED (p. 15).

March 19: *Cover*: KOSOVO IS NOT SURRENDERING; *Middle* (p. 10): Those Accountable Must be Found (p. 10), Passions Burned Mosque (p. 10).

Blic

March 17: *Middle* (p. 10): Thousands of Serbs Protesting.

March 18: *Cover*: Terror against Serbs. Terrorism by Albanians in Kosmet. *First part* (p. 4–5): Days of Blood in Kosovo. *Middle* (p. 12): Solidarity with Persecuted: (small boxed text) Bajrakli Mosque Was Burning.

March 19: *Cover*: BURNING Everything Serbian. *First part* (p. 2–7): They Killed, Burned and Beat (p. 2–3); Ethnic Cleansing (p. 5); They Burned all Houses, Serbs in Refuge (p. 6). *Middle* (p. 9): Bajrakli Mosque Demolished and Burned. Vandals Only Harm Serbia; Government of Serbia to Repair Bajrakli Mosque.

Kurir

March 17: *Middle* (p. 7): *Clay Pigeons*.

March 18: *Cover*: WAR: More than Ten Killed, and Almost 300 Wounded in Organized Attacks of Albanians against Serbs across Kosovo.

March 19: *Cover*: Slaughter of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija. STAND UP SERBIA! *First half* (p. 2–8): IT'S ENOUGH! (p. 2); POGROM OF SERBS! (p. 3); Vuk Drašković: Send Army to Kosovo! (p. 5); Lazarević: Fight Fire with Fire (p. 5). Interview with Mufti of Belgrade, Hamdija Jusufspahić (p. 6); Mufti: Protect Muslims. We are not to blame for what is happening to Serbs, we are good citizens (p. 6); Obradović: Police is to blame for mosque burning (p. 8). *Middle* (p. 12–13): GENOCIDE! Serbian Public Revolted Because of Lynch in Kosmet, but Also Condemns Burning of Muslim Temples.

Politika

March 17: *Middle* (p. A8): Jovica Nikolić heavily injured. Albanian extremists were shooting from firearms with suppressors.

March 18: *Cover*: Seven People Killed in Clashes. *Middle* (p. A8): Violence Planned in Advance. Albanian Extremists not in Favor of Negotiations. Last page: Several Thousand Citizens Protested in front of Serbian Government Building. Solidarity with Serbs in Kosmet. (small article): Dozen Policemen Injured, Mosque Burned.

March 19: *Cover*: Day after Worst Outbreak of Violence in Post-War Kosmet. Serbs in Anxiety and Fear. *Middle* (p. A6): Crystal Night in Kosovo and Metohija. Spring of Serbian Despair; Bajrakli Flame. Back (p. A9): Islam-Aga Mosque Burned Down. Many displaced persons from Kosmet went out on streets of Niš.

Danas

March 17: *Cover*: Jovica Ivić Still in Critical Condition Despite Operation.

March 18: *Cover*: (with a photo of the burned mosque) Bloody Clashes across Kosovo, Violence in Serbian Cities. *Front part*: Bloody Clashes Across Kosovo (p. 3); Mosque in Jevremova Street Burned (p. 4); Mosque Burned in Center of Niš, Too (p. 4).

March 19: *Cover*: Admiral Johnson: Violence in Kosovo Organized and Orchestrated; Goran Svilanović: Ethnic Cleansing of Serbs Prepared; Drive of Albanian Violence against Kosovo Serbs Continued Yesterday; Throwing Stones at

Novi Sad Theater, and Islamic Community. *Middle*: Ministry of Culture of Serbia on Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Kosovo, Belgrade and Niš: Temple is Temple, no Matter to Whom It Belongs (p. 5); Police Accepts Responsibility for Mosque Burning (p. 5); Zukorlić: State Authorities Did Not Do Everything to Counter Vandalism; Protests All Around Serbia Last Night Also: Throwing Stones at Novi Sad Theatre, and Islamic Community (p. 5).

The newspapers continue to report in the days to come, e. g. *Last Night Serbian Houses Burned across Kosmet*: KOSOVO POLJE BURNED DOWN (VN, March 20, cover), IN FRONT OF US POGROM, BEHIND US HELL (VN, March 20, p. 24–25), *Hour by Hour Horror of Genocidal Pogrom of Serbs by Albanians which Started on 17 March Becomes Clearer*: ERADICATE EVERYTHING SERBIAN (VN, March 21, cover), SERBS BURNED ALIVE (VN, March 21, p. 7), HOW LONG? *Albanians Still Mercilessly Attacking Serbs* (K, March 20, cover), *TRAGEDY: In Five Days Albanians Ethnically Cleansed Ten Towns and Twenty Villages in Kosmet, Serbian State Helpless* (K, March 22, cover), *Dramatic Confessions of Kosovo Serbs: HORROR AND TERROR!* (K, March 23, cover), ALBANIANS WILL ATTACK BELGRADE (K, March 25, cover), *POLICE DO NOT OBEY JOČIĆ!!! Mosque was Burned after Milan Obradović and Some Policemen Refused to Obey Orders* (K, March 26, cover).

On March 20, the covers of *Večernje novosti* and *Blic* published photos of a student protest held in central Belgrade, during which protesters carried a huge slogan reading: *New York – Madrid – Kosovo*; the comment below the photo was: “MESSAGE: Belgrade students in yesterday’s protest with a slogan that was clearly informing the world that terrorism was also operating in Kosovo” (VN). Below this, on the cover of the same issue, it was announced that from that day on the paper will publish a new series of articles entitled: *Terrorism – War without Warning* (Serb.: *Terorizam – rat bez objave*). In *Blic*, an article on global terrorism was published on March 18 with the headline: “Who’s Next?” (p. 6). In the following days, *Večernje novosti* published articles about Osama bin Laden, Chechnya, Afghanistan, etc., thus directly linking the global terrorist network with Kosovo and the Balkan Islamic network support. In that way, the violence in Kosovo acquired a new indexical meaning: it should not be looked upon just as ethnically motivated violence against Serbs but also as an act of global terrorism. In that discursive order, the Muslim Other was represented as a unified, criminalized, and threatening one.

By analysing this kind of rhetoric, one can notice that the rioters who attacked Serbian civilians and churches in Kosovo were labelled as *they* and *Albanians, Albanian extremists*. On the whole, these acts were ethnically framed as “Albanian aggression against Serbs”. Moreover, they were connected to the global “Islamic” terrorists. This is a strategy of unification of the Other – a

distinctive marker that unites and homogenizes all different out-groups is their Muslim faith indirectly or directly associated with terrorism. The terms used to label the events in Kosovo were: *pogrom*, *Crystal Night*, *ethnic cleansing*, *slaughter*, *terror*, *genocide*, *horror*, *hell*, *war*; the most frequent labelling, however, was: *pogrom*. Thus, the news framed the events as acts of terrorism (*war*, *terrorism*, in a series of articles), crimes against humanity (*ethnic cleansing*, *genocide*, *slaughter*), and the events resembling the Second World War crimes (*Crystal Night*, *pogrom*).

The violent incidents in Serbia directed against Muslims and mosques were mainly depicted as a spontaneous revolt of *outraged citizens*, *football hooligans*, *vandals* or *persons displaced from Kosovo* whom the police failed to control. It is evident that these acts of Serbian violence were not ethnically framed as is the case with the Albanian violence against Serbs in Kosovo. By assigning the violent acts to the social subgroups (*football hooligans*, *vandals*), who have a reputation for violent behaviour, or to disadvantaged groups (*displaced persons*), the media actually used the strategy of legitimizing (face-saving) “us”. The burning of the mosques and other objects was either referred to by de-agentivized or generic constructions or ascribed to an abstract agent such as *passions*.

Public sphere: resistance, silence, commemoration

Susan Gal (1995) defines the public sphere as a kind of legitimation of political power. Following Bakhtin (1981) and Tsitstipis (1997), I take a “voice” to be a semantic and ideological position on the world, or so to say an interested position. As regards the public sphere, I distinguish between the “voice” of resistance to the main policy, silence and commemorative practices. The burning was publicly condemned by politicians and church leaders, while the government promised to restore the mosques. Still, the media and public figures clearly underlined that this event was marginal, compared to the violence against the Serbs and the Orthodox religious facilities in Kosovo.

Notwithstanding, there were also “voices” which emphasized that the brutal violence in Kosovo should not have been an excuse for the violence in Serbia. A theatre director, Gorčin Stojanović, wrote a column in *Blic* on March 19 *Objects of Hate, Subjects of Violence* (Serb. *Objekti mržnje, subjekti nasilja*) saying that there was no excuse for the violence against civilians of Albanian ethnicity or Muslim religion, or against Muslim religious facilities in Serbia, although Serbian churches in Kosovo were burned and Serbian civilians were expelled or killed (B, 19 March). In addition, some members of non-governmental organizations condemned the incidents in Serbia, stressing that the crimes against the Serbs in Kosovo may be overshadowed by the violence which happened in Bel-

grade, pointing at the persons close to the former Milošević regime who were still active (the *Danas*, March 23). Moreover, Vuk Drašković, once the opposition leader engaged against Milošević and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2004, stated in an interview that the burning of the Bajrakli Mosque was not a spontaneous act but an action organized by the veiled security structures, which were still connected to the defeated Milošević regime (“Mosque Burned by State Security Hand” B, March 26, p. 2–3).²⁰ It was in accordance with the statements given by eyewitnesses who claimed that in the night of the arson there was a man dressed in civilian clothes who issued orders to the protesters, like: “Attack, but do not burn” (VN, March 19, p. 10).

The silence that surrounds the arson attacks against the mosques was reflected in the lack of public and political interest in completing the restoration of the mosques and in sentencing the accused, as the trial lasted for almost a decade. Indeed, when certain phenomena such as linguistic structures, cultural products, social groups, sociolinguistic varieties are made invisible, there is the ideological strategy of erasure at work (Gal, Irvin 1995); the processes that index this erasure are fragmentation, marginalization, sublimation, and repression (Tsitipis 2003: 548). The stories of Belgrade and Niš mosques, their demolition and restoration rarely appear in the Serbian press and if they do, they are marginalised and fragmented. The story about the Bajrakli mosque emerges only sporadically and generally each March 18, when the destructive events are commemorated. It also emerged in the reports on the trial of the accused for the arson, which was constantly delayed.

The trial of the 20 member group accused of participating in the riots in which the Bajrakli Mosque was set on fire began no sooner than five years after the events of 2004. However, it was immediately delayed, due to some technical and procedural problems.²¹ The key arguments of the prosecuting counsel were that the state authorities were responsible for the riots. The prosecution claimed that it had not been a spontaneous revolt and that it had been supported and guided by some veiled state structures in order to provoke interethnic and religious hatred.²² The attorney of the Islamic community of Serbia, Rajko Danilović, stated that the scenario of the mosque arson was similar to what happened during the violent riots following the Kosovo Albanian Government’s unilateral declaration of independence from Serbia in 2008, when more than 500000 protesters gathered in the streets of Belgrade, and when small groups

²⁰ In Serbian original: “Džamiju palili prsti DB”.

²¹ Portal B92: see http://www6.b92.net/eng/news/crimes-article.php?yyyy=2010&mm=06&dd=11&nav_id=67745 (visited on 9.2.2015).

²² Diwan Magazine website: <http://diwan-magazine.com/rajko-danilovic-ugledni-advokat-iz-beograda-dzamije-i-ambasade-je-palila-kostunicina-vlast/> (visited on 9.2.2015).

of “football hooligans” attacked the embassies of the United States, Croatia, the United Kingdom, and Turkey as well as McDonald’s restaurants; the US embassy was set on fire, while it took the police 45 minutes to arrive at the spot, and the fire was put out only then. During these protests, there were 30 injured, half of whom were policemen.²³ On July 17, 2013 seven persons out of 11 accused for the mosque arson were found not guilty due to lack of evidence. The other three accused were found guilty for the violent behaviour during the riots, but not for setting the mosque alight. Thus, in the end of the process which lasted nine years, no one was found guilty for the arson of the Bajrakli Mosque. The Islamic community of Serbia and its attorney announced that they would lodge an appeal.²⁴ As regards the mosque in Niš, one person was sentenced to five months in prison for the torching of the mosque, seven received three-month sentences, while two were freed of all charges.²⁵ The state (not-)acting in the legal sphere could thus be identified as a strategy of erasure.

In the years that followed, the March violence acquired a special place in the official Serbian memory. It has been called the March Pogrom and the Crystal Night of Kosovo; both references making an explicit association between the Nazi persecutions against the Jews and the Albanian violence against the Serbs. The anniversary of the March violence in Kosovo has been regularly marked in the Serbian public and schools under the official term *pogrom*.²⁶ Nevertheless, the commemoration of the mosque burning, which is marked each March 18 in Belgrade, is another “voice” to be heard. The initiator is the Islamic community of Serbia which tries to reconcile two poles of victimization. On the Day of the Mosques, the commemorative walk takes place in the streets of central Belgrade and ends in the courtyard of the Bajrakli Mosque. The walk is joined by religious leaders – Muslim, Christian, and Jewish, as well as by Belgrade citizens who wish to participate. It serves to evoke both March riots in Kosovo which dozens of Orthodox churches being destroyed and the arson of the mosques in

²³ BBC News: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7259327.stm> (visited on 9. 2. 2015).

²⁴ Radio Slobodna Evropa website: <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/archive/news/20130717/500/500.html?id=25049102>; Kontrapress website: <http://www.kontrapress.com/clanak.php?rub=Politika&url=Presuda-za-Bajrakli-dzamiju-vetar-u-ledja-huliganima> (visited on 9. 2. 2015).

²⁵ Portal B92: <http://www.b92.net/eng/news/society.php?yyyy=2009&mm=03&dd=16&navid=57871> (visited on 9. 2. 2015).

²⁶ Cf. Radio Television of Serbia website: <http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/125/Dru%C5%A1tvo/1860903/%C5%A0kolski+%C4%8Das+posve%C4%87en+martovskom+po-gromu.html>; <http://www.time.rs/c/44a7ed77ca/ne-zaceljuju-martovske-rane.html> (visited 23. 1. 2015).

Belgrade, Niš and Zvornik. Sometimes, it is followed by exhibitions and lectures in museums promoting religious tolerance.²⁷

Conclusion

The paper analyzed the social context, the events, and the discourse related to the Albanian March violence against Serbs and other non-Albanian minorities in Kosovo in 2004, and the subsequent Serbian riots in Belgrade. The special emphasis was laid upon the events and the discourse which led to the burning of the only Belgrade mosque – Bajrakli Mosque. It was argued that the media provoked the spread of violence all over Serbia in a way similar to which the Albanian media provoked the March violence in Kosovo. The rioters who attacked Serbs and their churches in Kosovo were generalized as *they, Albanians*; the attacked were framed as victims and labelled: *Serbs, everything Serbian, Kosovo*, with an emphasis on women and children. On the other hand, the rioters who demolished the mosques in Belgrade and Niš were dubbed *football hooligans* or *vandals* or else the incidents were described in impersonal and de-agentivised constructions. The destructive acts against the mosques were condemned, but they were rendered marginal in comparison to the violence in Kosovo. In addition, the media established a direct link between the events in Kosovo and the global “Islamic” terrorism. Therefore I argued that the media employed the strategy of unification of the (Muslim) Other. The Serbian media and politicians therefore tried to join the Western narrative of the War against Terrorism, in which the Muslim population is stereotyped and to some extent criminalized. In this manner, the ethnically motivated violence in Kosovo was supposed to acquire a new indexical meaning as an act of global terrorism. However, in the times of crisis, the unification of Other happens to be a very effective means in mobilizing people for violent actions. It was also at work recently, after the incidents at the football match between Serbia and Albania on October 16, 2014 when a series of attacks were launched against Albanian civilians in Serbia, and a series of attacks against the Orthodox population in Albania.

By analyzing the public sphere with regard to the March violence, I distinguished between the resistance against the dominating policy, silence and commemorative practices. The “voices” which opposed the state policy insisted upon the responsibility of the Serbian authorities for the violent acts against the mosques and other Muslim facilities in Serbia. Otherwise, silence surrounded

²⁷ *Blic*: <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Beograd/242457/Kad-hramovi-gore-to-je-zajednicka-tragedija> (visited on 23. 1. 2015).

the mosque arson; it was reflected in the lack of public, media and political interest in completing the mosque restoration and in sentencing the accused. The trial lasted for almost a decade and resulted in the release of all the accused for the Belgrade mosque arson and the sentencing of one person for the Niš mosque arson. Obviously, there was a lack of political will on the part of Serbian authorities to investigate and prosecute the responsible for the arson attacks against the mosques. As regards the commemoration, two commemorative practices have developed: the commemoration of the 'March Pogrom', organized by the Serbian authorities and marked in the Serbian public and schools each 17th of March and the Day of the Mosques which is organized by the Islamic community of Serbia each 18th of March in the form of a commemorative walk through central Belgrade. These new commemorative practices emphasize even more the need to comparatively analyze the crisis management and the policy of commemoration of all parties involved in an ethnopolitical conflict as this one.

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Appendix

The Serbian originals of the headlines cited in Table 1

Večernje novosti

(March 17) PUCNJAVOM NA PROTEST (cover), OPET PUCAJU NA DECU (p. 14); (March 18) SRBIJA NA NOGAMA (cover), Albanci krenuli na Srbe u Kosovskoj Mitrovici i drugim srpskim enklavama (cover), KOSMET U KRVI (cover), U protestima u Beogradu zapaljena džamija (below the small photo in the upper right corner on the cover), Na ulicama i huligani (p. 21). Zapaljena Bajrakli džamija (p. 21), JURIŠ NA SVE SRPSKO (p. 24–25); (Special issue VN, March 18) SRBIJA USTAJE (cover), Srpska ognjišta u plamenu (p. 6), Kosovska Mitrovica: CEO GRAD NA NOGAMA (p. 8–9), BEOGRAD JOŠ SPAVA (p. 11), U Beogradu zapaljena džamija: DŽAMIJA U PLAMENU (p. 12), U centru Niša, zbog događaja na Kosovu: ZAPALILI DŽAMIJU (p. 15); (March 19) KOSOVO SE NE DA (cover), KRIVCI SE MORAJU NAĆI (p. 10), Strasti zapalile džamiju (p. 10); (March 20) Protekle noći gorele srpske kuće širom Kosmeta: SPALJENO KOSOVO POLJE (cover), ISPRED POGROM, IZA PAKAO (p. 24–25); (March 21) Svakog sata sve jasnija slika strahota genocidnog pogroma Albanaca nad Srbima, započetog 17. marta: ZATRTI SVE SRPSKO (cover), SRBE ŽIVE SPALJIVALI (p. 7).

Blic

(March 17) Hiljade Srba u potestu (p. 10); (March 18) TEROR nad Srbima. Terorizam Albanaca na Kosmetu; KRVAVI DAN NA KOSOVU (p. 4–5); Solidarnost sa progonjenima (p. 12), Gorela Bajrakli džamija (p. 12); (March 19) GORI sve srpsko (cover), Ubijali, palili, tukli ... (p. 2–3); Etničko čišćenje (p. 5), Spalili sve kuće, Srbi u zbegovima (p. 6–7), Demolirana i zapaljena Bajrakli džamija. Vandali štete samo Srbiji (p. 9), Vlada Srbije obnavlja Bajrakli džamiju (p. 9).

Kurir

(March 17) Glineni golubovi (p. 7); (March 18) RAT: U organizovanim napadima Albanaca na Srbe širom Kosova poginulo više od deset, a ranjeno skoro 300 ljudi (cover); (March 18) Pokolj Srba na Kosovu i Metohiji. USTANI SRBIJO! (cover); DOSTA JE! (p. 2), POGROM SRBA! (p. 3), Vuk Drašković: VOJSKU NA KOSOVO! (p. 5), Lazarević: Oružjem na oružje (p. 5), Muftija: Zaštitite

Muslimane. Nismo mi krivi za ono što se događa Srbima, mi smo dobri građani (p. 6), Obradović: Policija kriva za paljenje Bajrakli džamije (p. 8), GENOCID! Srpka javnost ogorčena zbog linča na Kosmetu, ali listom osuđuje i paljenje islamskih svetinja (p. 12–13); (March 20–21) DOKLE? Albanci i dalje besomučno napadaju Srbe (cover); (March 22) TRAGEDIJA: Albanci za pet dana etnički očistili deset gradova i dvadeset sela na Kosmetu, srpska država nemoćna (cover); (March 23) Dramatična ispovest Srba sa Kosova: STRAVA I UŽAS! (cover); (March 25) ALBANCI KREĆU NA BEOGRAD (cover); (March 26) POLICIJA NE SLUŠA JOČIČA!!! Džamija zapaljena pošto su Milan Obradović i deo policije odbili poslušnost (cover).

Politika

(March 17) Teško povređen Jovica Ivić, lead: Albanski ekstremisti pucali iz vatrenog oružja sa prigušvačem (p. A8); (March 18) U sukobima sedmoro poginulih (cover), Nasilje pripremljeno. Albanskim ekstremistima ne odgovaraju pregovori (p. A8), Nekoliko hiljada građana protestovalo ispred zgrade Vlade Srbije. Soldarnost sa Srbima na Kosmetu (last page), Povređeno desetak policajaca, zapaljena džamija (last page); (March 19) Dan posle najvećeg nasilja na posleratnom Kosmetu. Srbi u zebnji i strahu (cover), Kristalna noć na Kosovu i Metohiji. Proleće srpskog očaja (p. A6), Bajrakli plamen (p. A6), Izgorela Islam-agina džamija. Veliki broj raseljenih sa Kosmeta izašao na ulice Niša (p. A9).

Danas

(March 17) Jovica Ivić u teškom stanju uprkos operaciji (cover); (March 18) Krvavi sukobi na Kosovu, nasilje u gradovima Srbije (cover); (March 18) Krvavi sukobi na Kosovu, nasilje u gradovima Srbije (cover), Krvavi sukobi na Kosovu (p. 3), Zapaljena džamija u Jevremovoj (p. 4), Zapaljena džamija i u centru Niša (p. 4); (March 19) Admiral Džonson: Nasilje na Kosovu organizovano i orekstrirano (cover), Goran Svilanović: Pripremano etničko čišćenje Srba (cover), Juče nastavljen talas albanskog nasilja nad kosovskim Srbima (cover), Kamenovani Novosadsko pozorište i Islamska zajednica (cover), Ministarstvo kulture povodom uništavanja kulturne baštine na Kosovu, u Beogradu i Nišu: Svetinja je svetinja, ma čija bila (p. 5), Policija prihvata odgovornost za paljenje džamije (p. 5), Zukorlić: Državni organi nisu učinili sve protiv vandalizma (p. 5), Širom Srbije i snoć protesti, i hapšenja, najveći neredi u Novom Sadu: Kamenovani Novosadsko pozorište i Islamska zajednica (p. 5).