Bosnians

- Cultural profile -
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01. Introduction

This cultural profile contains information about some basic characteristics of the Bosnian culture, primarily those stemming from tradition, and their manifestations both in contemporary Bosnian culture and the life of Bosnian population in Croatia. Its goal is to help various service providers (in health care, education, social work...) in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), or countries of the European Union, to understand better the Bosnian culture and to develop cultural competence and cultural awareness.

Although our intention was to make this cultural profile as applicable and informative as possible, we realized that it was difficult to show all of the cultural characteristics of such a heterogeneous population. Therefore we offer here what we consider the basic framework of the Bosnian culture while taking into account the traditional and historical context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina and its residents are not excluded from the process of globalization, the emphasis in this publication is put on the characteristics which originate from the traditional specificities in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina. So, one should not forget that there is much more similarity between the population of B&H and the populations of neighboring countries as well as those of some European countries, than there is difference.

In this publication we use the terms Bosnia, Bosnian and Bosniak.

The term **Bosnia** is an old geographical name of the land, which is still used today as a short name for Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H). It is used throughout the text as such, denoting the entire state and legal entity, without any attempt to add emotional undertones or other qualifications to it.

By the term **Bosnian** we refer to persons born in Bosnia and Herzegovina which share a Bosnian native identity. So Bosnians can belong to different nationalities living in Bosnia like Serbs, Bosniaks, Croats and others, while in a religious sense they can be Catholics, Muslims, Jews, members of Serbian Orthodox church or atheists in various combinations with their nationalities. Herzegovinians are also covered within this context by this term. The term itself is used by people outside B&H to denote all the residents of B&H, and often bears many stereotypes and prejudices.
The term **Bosniak** denotes a member of the Bosniak nation. The majority of Bosniaks are also religious Muslims. Religious affiliation to Islam is manifested in different ways, from Islam as a part of Bosniak tradition which influences the choice of personal names, diet, or living habits to strict abiding by religious rules.

Linguistically speaking, the term itself was transformed through centuries by usage in different languages. Thus, there are different forms such as: *Bošnjan(in) /slav./, Bošnjak /turc./, al-Bosnawi /ar./, Bosnak, Bosanac /germ./, Bosnian, Bosniak /eng./. There exists a hundred year old debate about the true meaning of the term but in all of its forms it carries the meaning of a “man from Bosnia”.

Bosnians identify themselves as a blood community (family, relatives), land community (Bosnian native and family heritage) and a religious community (religious affiliation is very ethnically colored)

**Bosnians in Croatia** are considered as a group which shares a lot of cultural characteristics with their homeland. However, since they do live in another country whose culture differs from their native culture, through the acculturation process they have absorbed some of the cultural traits, customs and norms which pull them towards the majority culture of the country in which they are living, while pulling them away from their country of origin.

We have decided to use the term Bosnian because, despite religious differences (Muslims, Catholics, Serbian Orthodoxy), and the tendency to differentiate religious groups into separate ethnic and national cultures (Bosniak, Croat, Serb), research conducted on the adolescent population of Bosnians in Croatia has shown that immigrants from B&H despite their religious difference (Catholics, Muslims) often share a common identity (Bosnians) which separates them from the dominant culture (Croats). In addition to religious associations, that identity is for example nurtured also through community centers and clubs, or folklore societies.

One of the goals of this publication is to give an insight into the basic components of this identity.
02. Bosnians in Croatia

Historic events intensified the migrations of Bosnian ethnic communities, Bosniaks and Croats from Bosnia and Herzegovina into Croatia. The migrations started at the end of the 19th century as a result of the Austro-Hungarian occupation and annexation of B&H, and continued in the first and second Yugoslavia all the way to the period of modern and independent Republic of Croatia (1991) and Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992).

Modern migrations to Croatia that began after the Austro-Hungarian occupation of B&H in 1878, included Bosnian migrants mostly of Catholic and Muslim religion, while those of Serbian Orthodox faith were more oriented toward Serbia. As the basic characteristic that divides Bosnians is religious affiliation, we can differentiate two Bosnian communities in Croatia. The first one includes Bosnian Croats that gather around the Catholic Church, Bosnian and Herzegovinian parishes in which Bosnian Catholics are majority, and where often Bosnian Franciscans serve as priests. Bosnian Muslims gather around the Islam community.

While Bosnian Croats migrate into Croatia and further west for centuries (examples of such migration groups are rebels (uskoci) from Senj and Croats in Burgenland), the migrations of Bosnian Muslims into Croatia were recorded since 1878/79. when the first Muslim, Osman, a tailor form Banja Luka died during his visit to Zagreb and was buried on the cemetery Mirogoj in Zagreb.

The Croatian parliament recognized Islam as an equal religion in 1916. It was a small Muslim community, which was formed in Zagreb, Dubrovnik and Osijek mainly on the basis of family gatherings. The Muslim population in Croatia grew during the Second World War because of a great number of Bosniak refugees from Bosnia. After the war, during the socialist regime, the number of Muslims in Croatia grew because of increased demand for work labor, better wages, no state borders and the similarity of languages, which are all facts that make migrations easier. These are mostly work oriented migrations and of relatively short duration. Most migrants were male and when their families or spouse came or when they married into the local population the migrations became permanent.

In the modern era there are two basic reasons for migrations of Bosnians into Croatia: economic migrations and migrations due to war.

Bosnians settle mostly in urban areas because there they have a greater chance of finding employment. These areas are also more open towards immigrants than rural areas. As economic migrants, Bosnians are often found in large concentrations in industrial centers such as Zagreb and cities that have large harbors like Rijeka, Pula and Split. Sisak and Karlovac as old industrial cities geographically close to Bosnia also have a larger concentration of Bosnians.

According to 2001 Census 600,122 immigrants live in the Republic of Croatia, out of which 454,580 (75.76%) are originally from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 86,830 (14.5%) from Serbia and Montenegro (CBS, 2001). Figure 1. represents migrational flows in the Republic of Croatia from 1991 to 2001. As shown in the graph, external immigration in the mentioned period hit the roof in 1992, which coincides with the beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly when one takes into consideration that the majority of immigrants that and subsequent years came precisely from there. The following two to three years the rate of migration was halved and from 1994 to 1998 again reached over 50,000,
immigrants yearly. In 1998 immigration from Serbia and Montenegro was most intense due to armed conflicts in Kosovo, although the total number of immigrants from Kosovo not even then surpassed 5,000, which is ten times less compared to the number of immigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina that year. In any case, it seems that 1998 was marked by the last significant wave of immigration from abroad in the period under examination. The share of older population (aged 40-59) is somewhat lower, whereas the share of the target age group, i.e. children and adolescents, quite high in the total population of migrants. Such a situation indicates that the majority of migrant population was made up of young families with children, while the share of an older age group was very low, especially in internal migrations, particularly if one takes into consideration that the range of this age group is much comprehensive than in other age groups. As to gender distribution, the share of men was higher till 1998, after which the share of women exceeded that of men. As a result of recent migrations the present Bosnian-Muslim community is the second largest ethnic community in Croatia (Čičak-Chand, 1999), although its percentage is less than 1% (DZS, 2004). However, Mašović claims that censuses do not give the real number of Muslims as they may belong to different nationalities (Mašović, 1997). According to the unofficial records of the Croatian Islamic community there are around 100,000 Muslims living in Croatia, which is about 2% of the country’s total population (Omerbašić, 2001).

According to the 1991 census 43,469 citizens were of Muslim nationality, which was 0.9% of the total population (Crkvenjić-Bojić, 2001:96), while at the same time 56,777 citizens declared themselves as religious Muslims.

Estimations about the real number of Muslims in Croatia vary. According to both official statistics and unofficial data of the Croatian Islamic...
community the number of religious Muslims is higher than the number of ethnic “Muslims” (Bosniaks). The consequence of this difference is the existence of other ethnic communities (Albanians, Croats, Roma and Turks), diplomatic offices and people employed in Croatia which are religious Muslims, but are not necessarily ethnic Bosniaks.

The religious community serves as the last stronghold of Muslim religious identity. For Bosnian Muslims it was the stronghold of the formation of Bosniak nationality because for a long period of time it was the only institution which had an exclusively national character.

In Croatia we can identify the third and the fourth generation of Muslims originating from Bosnia, born and permanently living in Croatia, who can be considered as an indigenous population. However, the Bosniak population consists also of a large number of recent immigrants. Some sources say that the number of Muslims born in Croatia has reached 50% as compared to the number of recent immigrants, but there are no concrete statistical data to verify this figure.

The Mosque in Zagreb
Geographic position

Bosnia and Herzegovina is located in the Southeast Europe, on the Balkan Peninsula. Its surface is 51,129 km². The state borders follow the flows of the rivers – Drina in the east (border with the Republic of Serbia), Sava in the north and Una in the west (border with the Republic of Croatia). In the south and the southwest the border is defined by mountain chains, while the border with the Republic of Montenegro, in the southeast does not follow clear natural relief boundaries. B&H has 26 km of the coastline on the Adriatic Sea (Neum). Geographical positioning of Bosnia has conditioned its connection with the Near East and the Mediterranean throughout history. It is connected through the river flow Sava–Dunav–Black Sea and the Drina flow (Bihać-Travnik-Sarajevo-Novi Pazar-Skopje-Istanbul). The connection with the Mediterranean goes through the river flow of Neretva.

Natural geographic characteristics

B&H is predominantly a mountain country. The geographical regions include Northern Bosnia (Una region, Banja Luka - Doboj area, Northeast Bosnia), Middle Bosnia (Upper Vrbas region, Sarajevo-Zenica kotlina, Upper Drina region) and the karst regions (Western Bosnia, High (mountain) Herzegovina, and Low (flat) Herzegovina).

Cultivable land is mostly found in the valleys of the rivers and lakes. The larger cities (Bihać, Sanski Most, Bosanski Brod, Brčko, Zenica, Mostar, Zvornik) are situated near the bigger rivers (Una, Sana, Sava, Bosna, Neretva, Drina).

The middle of the country is the large valley where we can find Sarajevo (urban, cultural, political and economical center) as well as Zenica, the largest industrial town. This Sarajevo- Zenica valley (diameter of 80 km) has always been the center of the Bosnian statehood for centuries. Thus, Bosnia has a geographically very stable state tradition because its center has not moved in about 1 000 years.

Bosnia covers roughly about three quarters of B&H, while Herzegovina has an approximately one quarter. Bosnia is separated from Herzegovina in the north by a mountain chain (mountain Ivan) and in the southwest by the karst area of the Livno - Duvno valley.
Climate

The continental climate is dominant in B&H. The south parts of B&H are under the influence of the Mediterranean climate which has hot summers and dry, windy winters. The mountain parts of the country have a mix of continental and mountain climate with long, cold winters and short summers.

Demographic characteristics

According to the statistical data form 1991, B&H had a population of 4, 2 million people. There were three dominant ethnic communities: Bosniaks, previously called “Muslims” (42%), Serbs (33%) and Croats (18%). About 8% went under the category of “Others” which mainly consisted of people declaring themselves as Yugoslavs. It can be assumed that they were members of ethnically mixed families, Yugoslav state administration employees and members of the ruling Communist party of B&H.

The statistical data from 2001, show that the population in ten years decreased radically. The total population counts 3.9 million people, out of which 48% are Bosniaks, 37% are Serbs and 14% are Croats (Šimić, 2004). As a result of the war, B&H has permanent and temporary demographic loss of about 1 – 1.5 million people. It is estimated that 250 thousand people were killed (140.000 Bosniaks, 90.000 Serbs, and 20.000 Croats) and about 1 million people or every fourth person had a refugee status during and after the war. There are no exact data about how many returned to B&H and how many settled permanently abroad.

Brief historical overview

As a separate political entity Bosnia was first mentioned in De administrando imperio which was written by the Byzantium emperor Konstantin Porfirogenet in the 10th century. The first known Bosnian ruler was Viceroy (Ban) Borić who ruled in the first half of the 12th century.

The first independent ruler was Viceroy Kulin (1189 - 1203). Between 1189 and 1463 Bosnia was an independent country, first as Ban’s Province (banat) and later as a kingdom ruled by local rulers. After the king Tvrtko I was crowned in 1376 Bosnia became a kingdom and kept its status until it was conquered by the Ottoman Empire.
By conquering Bosnia in 1463, Sultan Mehmed II Fatih abolished Bosnia's sovereignty and included it in the Ottoman Empire. Not only that Bosnia lost its sovereignty but it also replaced its European and Christian civilization circle with the Near East and Islamic civilization circle which permanently marked Bosnia's identity. A part of Bosnians, mostly those affiliated with the Bosnian Church, accepted this transition fully, participating equally in all political, cultural and religious affairs of the Ottoman Empire and climbing their way up to the highest administrative positions.

Oriental Islamic civilization brought a higher living standard which was visible in urbanization, architecture, interior design, clothes, cuisine... It was a civilization which was adjusted to the needs of men; it introduced new consumer needs, brought habits of easy living (rahatliuk) and developed new esthetic sensations especially in its relationship to nature (flowers, greenness, the cult of water).

The Austro-Hungarian occupation in 1878 caused another civilization change after four centuries. By inclusion into the Austro-Hungarian Empire Bosnia entered the European and Christian cultural circle becoming a part of the modern European political system. Modern Bosnian and Herzegovinian nations developed from the religious communities defined in the millet system of the Ottoman Empire.

After the First World War (1918) Bosnia becomes a part of The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians which was later called Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

In 1941 Bosnia was occupied by Germany and it became a part of the so-called Independent State of Croatia. Bosnia reclaims its statehood in 1943 at the First meeting of the B&H Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation (ZAVNOB&H) in Mrkonjić Grad. In 1945 Bosnia enters the Federative Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia, and Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia since 1963).

After the referendum on its independence in 1992 Bosnia proclaims its state independence as the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2005 the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina is defined by the Dayton peace treaty and the Constitution which came from it.
The culture and identity of any ethnic group including Bosniaks or Bosnian Croats should be viewed through the context of specific historical changes, events and influences. The common Bosnian and Croatian cultural features in Croatia grow out from the common historical development and experience which is based on the Slavic ethnic heritage and the influence of the Germanic cultural circle.

However, the crucial influence on the Bosnian culture was exerted by the oriental culture of the Ottoman Empire which left its mark throughout several centuries of Islamization (many people converted to Islam) and also had an indirect influence on the development of art, culture and language.

Considering that Bosnians have been present in Croatia for several generations, it is very interesting that the Bosnian identity remains strong and resilient with Bosnian Catholics and Muslims alike. The war and immigration of numerous refugees contributed to this, but even in times of peace, the identity stays strong as a result of geographic closeness to B&H and family connections.

The cultural heritage of Bosnia, cultural convictions and social practices are based on a pluralistic, multi-confessional but integrated cultural tradition in which various religions and ethnicities are culturally interdependent. Tone Brina, author of Being Muslim the Bosnian Way, writes, “Neither Bosniak, nor Croat, nor Serb identities can be fully understood with reference only to Islam or Christianity respectively but have to be considered in a specific Bosnian context that has resulted in a shared history and locality among Bosnians of Islamic as well as Christian backgrounds” (Brina; 1995).

Peoples that inhabit today’s territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina have a rich native culture and tradition which includes folk and oral literature, music, dances, art, clothing, folk life... Their different regional forms are a consequence of co-existence and intermingling of various cultural influences of the Slavic, Mediterranean, Balkan, Oriental and Middle-European cultural circles.

As patriarchal type of culture is traditional in B&H, all of the ethnic communities share its basic norms, filtered through the prism of religion. In this traditional culture, most likely because of the border position of Bosnia in the Ottoman Empire, a tradition of heroism and courage was nurtured as a desirable ideal and a role model for young people. Gazija (knight, hero) was a title given to...
people who stood out thanks to their extraordinary bravery in battles, conduct, and moral integrity, which included protection of the needy: women, children and old people. In epic folk poetry such an ideal was articulated through the janissary brothers Mujo and Halil Hrnjic. While Mujo is distinguished as the greatest warrior and army leader, while Halil is respected as protector of the weak.

As a military border with the Christian world Bosnia had a special place in the Ottoman Empire. Wars and poverty were constancy in Bosnian history. To use folk epics again, the character of a Bosniak is perhaps best depicted by the story of Budalina Tale (Tale the Fool) with his trusty horse Kulaš, a warrior and border man who is always in rags, with poor battle equipment, but who is the bravest Bosniak hero, always on the front lines. Another ideal character in literature is a mythic hero Derzelez Alija.

Heroes are not specific only for Muslims. In Catholic and Serbian Orthodox folk epic tradition a character of an outlaw (hajduk) presented as a Bosnian “Robin Hood”, a hero and a fighter against injustice and violence is popular. Such heroes include Ivo Karlović, Viceroyos Deročin and Zrinjanin, Mijat Tomić, Starina Novak, Marko Kraljević, Janko Sibinjanin, and others.

Poverty can cause apathy, but the rough living conditions can also inspire ingenuity and intelligence. The Bosnian spirit of ingenuity and smartness in folk epics is best described by the character of Nasrudin hodža, as a poor but a witty and resourceful man who can, thanks to his traits, manage everyday and unusual situations. Although he originates from the Arab and Turkish folk literature, Bosnians have assimilated him and use him as a native hero in folk tales.

Folk and traditional music and costumes of Bosnia and Herzegovina give evidence about the interrelationship of ethnicities living on these lands. Except for strictly religious contexts, all forms of this music (dancing, singing and playing music) coexist and share common traits in different ethnic groups living in the same geographic region.

In addition to folk songs about border heroes, there were also lyric songs which were sung to the accompaniment of the Šargija (a string instrument similar to the guitar). Guslars (fiddlers) were folk singers from the mountain chain of Dinara, who played the gusle (one-stringed folk fiddle) and sang about actual political and historical events. Ganga and rera are characteristic folk songs with a humoristic theme.

According to the main characteristics, folk costumes of the rural population can be divided into three regional groups: Dinara costumes (Western Bosnia and Herzegovina), Middle Bosnian costumes including
Eastern Bosnia and the third type—costumes of Posavina (Northern Bosnia). The variants of these costumes in different ethnic groups living in the same region were expressed through small details, colors or the way they were worn, but they kept its basic type traits. In the lowlands the costumes were made from hemp and flax and in the Dinara region from wool, while the Muslim costume was made from all these fabrics, but also from silk. In the northern regions costumes have brighter and richer colors, especially red, and in the south they are mostly black and white, while those of Muslims are predominantly green and blue.

In addition to border-heroic culture, Bosnian towns were centers of urban-mercantile culture, which was under a strong oriental influence as manifested by values oriented toward enjoyment of life, as well as by music and other forms of art.

As opposed to rural costumes, the urban dress was the same on the entire territory of Bosnia, and its ethnic variants did not affect significantly its basic style, as it emphasized more class or esnaf membership than religious or national affiliation. The costume of a high dignitary Beg was made of bright red, green or blue stout cloth, decorated with native silver. Merchants and craftsmen wore a suit made of dark stout cloth with black braid. Serbian Orthodox believers wore red belts, Catholics wore purple belts, while those of Muslims, called trabolose and mukadem, were made of multicolored silk. Members of different ethnicities could be also differentiated by the color of their caps (fes)

Croatian and Serbian women wore mostly black satin or atlas dimije (Turkish wide trousers), while Bosniak women wore dimije of light pastel colors, and the wives of Begs had expensive silk dimije decorated with gold (Pašalić, 2005).

Sevdalinke, sad love songs of oriental atmosphere, were widespread in the cities, and they kept their popularity up to the present day. The analyses have shown that sevdalinka (tur. sevda, love) is not a copy of the Turkish love song, but a very different special sort of art tradition, incorporating both Western and Eastern elements, resulting from Slavic and Oriental emotional mixture. The song in all likelihood came from the Sephardic Jews that settled in Bosnia after being exiled from Spain in 1492.

The cities develop characteristic filigree, goldsmith and brass-working tradition which made B&H internationally recognized. In Bosnia and Herzegovina and in other countries there are many cultural clubs and folklore societies that nurture traditional Bosnian cultural heritage.
Religion, beliefs and values

The biggest religious community in BiH is the Muslim community, next is Serbian Orthodox, then Roman Catholic and the smallest is Jewish community. The immigrants in Croatia from BiH are predominantly Catholics, including a significant number of Muslims, while the number of those of Serbian Orthodox faith and Jews is rather low.

In comparison to other world religions, the differences between Judaism, Christianity and Islam look insignificant, while similarities prevail. These three religions share historic and geographic aspects, and are theologically related.

Ethnographically, compared to the host population in Croatia, Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina are characterized by specificities in religion, language, dialect, nutrition and other aspects of everyday life. Religion as a very recognizable cultural aspect is the most conspicuous and the most important cultural difference. Bosnian Croats are Catholics same as Croats in Croatia, and although some cultural differences do exist compared to majority population in Croatia, they are rather insignificant compared to those between that religious group and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both Christianity and Islam are revealed religions, which are characterized by a range of similarities manifested mostly through an attentive care to spiritual life and growth by living a conscientious and irreproachable life, regular prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and asking for forgiveness of sins. Besides, active participation in the community life, care for others, voluntary financial assistance of the community and the poor are present in both religions.

One of the main commandments to both groups of believers refers to love, respect and obedience to parents and the parental duty to monitor and direct their children to the right path in life. There is still a whole array of similar principles referring to other spheres of life, which may however be presented and realized differently in everyday life of the two communities. Christianity, for instance, stresses inner growth thus leaving full-fledged freedom to believers in how they will deal concretely with everyday activities, while in Islam such activities are proscribed by the Qur'an and the Hadith to minutest details both on the level of physical and spiritual (e.g. obligatory body movements during ceremonial washing, the use of certain part of the body in performing certain actions, behavior while yawning and sneezing, and many others). However, within the present context it is important to emphasize only some of these differences, particularly those that potentially influence an individual's physical and mental health and refer to relationships in family and community.
Islam (ar. = peace, submission) was revealed over 1400 years ago in Mecca, Arabia.

Muslims believe that there is only One God.

Allah is the Arabic word for God. (Allah = to whom prayers are directed).

According to Muslims, God sent a number of prophets to mankind to teach them how to live according to His law.

Jesu (Jesus), Musa (Moses) and Abraham are respected as prophets of God.

According to Muslims, the final Prophet was Muhammad.

Muslims base their laws on their holy book the Qur'an, and the Sunnah which is the practical example of Prophet Muhammad how to practice faith.

Lewis (1998:120) says that since its beginnings Islam has acknowledged other religions as evidenced by legal and theological texts. Pluralism is a part of the holy law of Islam which unlike Christianity and Judaism confronted the problem of religious tolerance early on in the Islamic history. The tolerance of other religions is not the matter of opinion or choice, interpretation or judgment depending on the circumstances, but it is based on dogmatic and religious texts and for Muslims it is a part of the written holy law.

The Muslims in B&H practice orthodox Sunni branch of Islam of hanefize mezheba (legal school). The Islamic community in B&H is of traditional type and it was founded in 1463 at the time of the Turkish conquest. The Bosnian Islam is of ethnic character in a sense that it is mononational. Thanks to the intense communication with the center of sunni Islam, developed theological schools, network of religious institutions and education of Bosniaks in the Islamic education centers of the world, the Bosnian Muslims are synchronized with the modern flows of Islam.

Islam is the youngest of the Abraham religions. The year of revelation is 610 when the prophet Mohammad received the first passages of the Qur'an from a messenger of God, angel Gabriel. The credo: "There is only one God. Mohammad is a messenger from God" manifests absolute monotheism in Islam and belief in one and only God. Mohammad’s task is to restore faith in the only true God and he is believed to be the last prophet before the Judgment day.

Like in Albania, the Dervish order as the most common form of folk Islam is also present in B&H, but it did not play such an important role in the expansion of Islam as the orthodox ulema did.

In B&H many local customs affirm the influence of preislamic cultural customs, mostly deriving from the Bosnian Church of the Middle Age, on Bosnian Islam. They include outdoor places for prayers (dovišta), the most famous of which is Ajvatovica (Little Mecca). They are mostly in the open near the graves of holy people or in other specially selected places. Prayers in the open were practiced by the Bosnian Christians before Islam, and they should not to be confused with mass Muslim prayers held in the open which are a result of the modern era.

Islam is more than a religion, it is a way of life which is regulated by the Sharia (tur.law) law that is compilation of religious, penal and family laws, based on the Qur'an, as opposed to Adet (tur. custom) that is based on unwritten law. The Sharia regulates all human actions and puts them into five categories: obligatory, recommended, permitted, disliked or forbidden. It also sets out rules for conduct of men and women, laws
relating to personal acts of worship, laws relating to commercial dealings, laws relating to marriage and divorce, and penal laws.

It is considered that the majority of members of the Serbian Orthodox religion came into Bosnia in greater numbers after the Ottoman conquest. They were mostly nomads with developed cattle breeding and inhabited mountain areas of B&H. However, as the center of the Serbian Orthodox Church (Peć Patriarchy) was in the Ottoman Empire, it had somewhat more favorable position, than the Catholic Church, the center of which was outside its borders.

In the nineteenth and twentieth century, the Serbian Orthodox Church in B&H shared the destiny of its people which suffered tremendous casualties during the Second World War, but it played a more ambivalent role during the Serbian aggression on B&H.

The Roman Catholic Church has the longest tradition in B&H, since the times of the medieval Bosnian state. The official Roman Curia represented by Dominicans did not succeed in imposing Roman Catholicism as the official religion in B&H, and after the expulsion of the Dominicans the medieval Bosnian Church (which was considered heretic by the Roman Catholic Church) dominated between 12 and 14 century until the Turkish invasion.

In the fifteenth century the Roman Curia, which would probably be the number one religion in Bosnia if it were not for the Ottoman Empire, gradually returns to B&H. After that time the most prominent role was played by the missionary Franciscans who through the Franciscan province of Bosna Srebrena kept Catholicism alive until the Austro-Hungarian occupation in 1878. After the occupation, the Catholic Church in Bosnia becomes a part of the Roman Catholic Church. B&H has a cardinal who is the supreme catholic priest on its territory.

The specificity of B&H is the folk Catholicism. The Franciscan order has been present there for the long time and the catholic population developed a special relationship with it, so that Franciscans are frequently called "uncles". The cult of Holy Mary is very developed in Bosnia and its most famous manifestation is Međugorje, the place where Mary appeared, which attracts millions of believers every year, although it has not been acknowledged by the official Catholic Church.

The Jewish community in B&H descends from the immigration of Sephardic Jews from Spain after the fall of Granada in 1492. In spite of being numerically small and of urban character, it left many traces in Bosnian culture and history. The most significant exhibit of the National Museum in Sarajevo is Hagada, holy scripture brought by the Jews upon their exile from Spain.
Language and communication

There are three official languages in B&H: Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian which are all used in official communication. There are two official alphabets: Cyrillic and Latin script, which dominates in everyday use.

The Bosnian language today exists as a standard language based like Croatian on the Štokavian -ijekavian variety which is very similar to the Croatian language, but with certain phonetic, lexical and stylistic particularities. As compared to Croatian, the Bosnian language is rather linguistically homogenous and not divided into so many dialects (kajkavian, štokavian, čakavian, dialect) between which differences are greater than between the two standard languages.

The spoken Bosnian language differs from spoken Croatian mostly in accentuation and some specific lexical items including many orientalisms. As opposed to Croatian, the Bosnian language keeps a clear distinction between rising and falling accents. A distinct characteristic of Bosnian dialects is also a stress shift to enclitics (e.g. phrase u Bosni (in Bosnia) will be pronounced /ubosni/ instead of /ubōsni/ as in the Croatian štokavian dialects). Bosnian also often keeps the sounds h and f in some positions, which are missing in the same words of the Croatian language (lahko/lako, mehko/meko). The Bosnian language is open and multicultural and has a large and increasing number of loans from other languages, particularly Arabic, Turkish, and Persian. As it is more open to loan words it frequently allows both varieties characteristic for Croatian and Serbian language respectively.

The spoken language and a way of speaking disclose “a man from Bosnia”, regardless of his/her nationality. Sometimes, members of Serbian and Croatian communities in B&H tend to use Serbian and Croatian languages, respectively, as a form of distinguishing themselves apart from each other, but their accent reveals their Bosnian affiliation.

In nonverbal communication handshake represents the introductory part. Men shake hands at the beginning and the end of each encounter. In Muslim families handshaking is permitted amongst men, but a woman cannot have any physical contact with a man that is not her husband. If the woman offers her hand first it is permitted to accept it, but a man must not offer it first. This social rule derives from vahabism, which is an Islamic reform movement from the eighteenth century that interprets Islam in a puritan fashion. Neovahabism reappeared in the seventies of the twentieth century.

In verbal communication participants in a conversation often do not look each other, but they look aside. In that

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some language differences</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnian</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kahva/kafa/kava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tačka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>planet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šta je rekao?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko ide?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivanu treba novac.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treba da radim.</td>
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<tr>
<td>hiljada</td>
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<tr>
<td>januar/siječanj</td>
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<tr>
<td>sto/hastal</td>
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<tr>
<td>hefta/sedmica</td>
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<tr>
<td>nogomet/fudbal</td>
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<td>voz</td>
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<td>tanjir</td>
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way instead of a dialog they have what we might call a “double monologue”. Because in the standard European communication direct looking in the eyes during conversation is the norm it may appear that the Bosnian is trying to hide something, but it is actually a way of verbal communication that enables him to concentrate better at the theme at hand (“talking under the eyelids”). When meeting someone for the first time, after the initial restrain, a Bosnian very quickly passes to a more informal way of communication using more intimate form of you “ti”. This transition can be quite confusing if the person you are talking to is unknown to you. Equally confusing for a Bosnian can be the usual Croatian usage of polite form “vi” (you/plural out of respect) when somebody talks to him/her and then he/she often replies also with plural “mi” (we) – for example, when somebody asks “How are you (polite plural)?” and he/she responds “Thank you we are fine”, instead of the usual Croatian “Thank you, I am fine”.

In verbal communication Bosnians often use words from the Turkish language which can be very confusing for the people that do not know their meaning. For instance, when entering a Bosnian house the person that greets the newcomers says: “bujrum”, which is a hello that means welcome. When somebody comes into a house unexpected he says: “Is there a bujrum?” which means: “Am I welcome?”

One can often hear terms inshalah (if God permits) and mashalah (Excellent! Great! God giveth.). The word muštuluk means “great news”. When somebody says muštuluk, it means he/she brings some good news. As a gift is owed to any bringer of good news, the custom is to treat that person with food and drinks. Ćeif or Čef (will or mood) is very often used with the meaning of “being in a mood to do something”.

“If a man does something and somebody asks him why he did it he’ll reply: “It was my Ćeif”. (Hangi, 1906). In the same way, if you ask him why he did not do something he will reply: “It was not my Ćeif”. In a narrower sense Ćeif represents a meditative mood accompanied by a total calmness of spirit and body. “Ćeif is when you ascend into a careless empire, not knowing even that you are breathing, drinking coffee or chewing tobacco (Hangi, 1906.).

In addition to standard greetings that are also common in Croatia, Muslims say hello to each other with merhaba (welcome, I greet you as a friend) and selam-alejkum (peace be with you). Hangi (1906) describes the Muslim greeting like this: “Our Muslim greeting is very nice. When two friends meet in the street, they say hello by touching his or her chest, mouth and forehead with their right hand. With this they want to say: “I greet you from my

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard Croatian</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>čarapa, čizma, duhan, džep, čevap,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jastuk, karavan, kat, kava, kavez,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lepeza, sanduk, sandala, pamuk,</td>
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<tr>
<td>papuća, zenit, kajgana</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Used more frequently than alternative forms:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>čekić, fitilj, kalup, kat, marama, mana,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pekmez, jarak, dućan, sat, šećer, tava, tavan</td>
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heart, I say it with my mouth and I honor you with my mind.”

Hangi says that Muslims greet also members of other religions in this way and that they reply in the same manner. He also says that Bosnians regardless of their religion always ask after a greeting: “How are you?” or “How are you, sir?” and the customary answer is: “To thank God, very well. And you?”

Traditionally, and even today in some rural parts, life in Bosnia was based on the extended family with more than ten members which were all close relatives either by birth or marriage. Every one of them had to be recognized and named as a particular family member, so that an elaborate system of kinship terms was in use. In spite of the changes in the form of family, they are still very much in use in all ethnic groups in Bosnia, while in Croatia these kinship terms are no longer common.

Muslim names in Bosnia appeared with the Ottoman Empire, which inherited Islam from Arabs and Persians, so that most of their names come from Arab, then Persian and the least from the Turkish language. Bosniaks have adapted these names to their language, often not knowing their real meanings, so they made modifications, shortened the names or using diminutives thus creating unique Bosniak names. All Muslim names have a meaning (Hasan means "beautiful man", Muratiff signifies "friend", Alija means "exalted one", Tarik bears the meaning "North star", Meliha "beautiful girl"… Most Muslim last names in B&H are patronymics which end with the Slavic suffix –ić or –ović. Some Bosniak last names contain father’s name and/or a name of a profession or a title (Izetbegović – son of beg Izet; Hadžihafizbegović – son of beg who was a hadžija and a hafiz- he knows the whole Koran by heart; Osmanović - son of Osman; Imamović - son of Imam; Kujundžić – son of a craftsman). With secular Bosniaks Slavic names are also popular (Zlatan, Tvrtko, Jasna…).
Andrić whose novel “A Bridge on Drina” was rewarded with the Nobel Prize for literature in 1961. The youngest group of writers like Miljenko Jergović and Semezdin Mehmedinović has been marked by the trauma of the last Bosnian war which is a common theme in their literature.

Bosnia is one of the first countries of alternative and urban culture in the region. It has had a number of successful pop and rock bands, popular throughout ex-Yugoslavia, like "Indexi", "Bijelo dugme", "Ambasadori", "Teška industrija", "Vatreli poljubac ", "Plavi orkestar", "Crvena jabuka", "Zabranjeno pušenje", "Merlin", "Hari Mata Hari". The leaders of the Bosnian alternative movement are: the band SCH and an acclaimed hip-hop singer Edin Osmić also known as Edo Majka. There is also an annual music festival at which the best actual music achievements of pop and rock production are awarded.

Folk and traditional music, colored with various Balkan and oriental motives makes the Bosnian music scene as diversified as unique.

The stars of the Bosnian new folk movement, like Halid Bešlić, Haris Džinović, Hanka Paldum, and others are very popular throughout the Balkan region.

The same applies to famous singers of old lyric songs sevdalinike

A special part of the cultural production of Bosnia and Herzegovina belongs to film industry. Movies from the first two decades after the Second World War portrayed themes from the national revolution, the Second World Wa and famous partisan battles (Films "Kozara" and “Battle on Neretva” by Veljko Bulajić, “Valter defends Sarajevo” and "Bridge" by Hajrudin Šiba Krvavac).

The first real success came in the late seventies and the eighties. The most famous ones are "Do you remember Doli Bel" and "Father on a business trip" by Emir Kusturica that were scripted by Abdulah Sidran. Other film author is Ademir Kenović whose film "Kuduz", written by Abdulah Sidran, vividly depicts the little man in conflict with injustice of the powerful.

After the war, during which no or very little movies were made, Denis Tanović wins an Oscar for the movie “No man’s land” in the category for best foreign picture.

In short picture category one must mention "10 minutes" by Ahmed Imamović, which won the “Prize for best European short film” in 2002.
When it was included in the Ottoman Empire, the Bosnian state was organized politically as other parts of the Empire. The system of religious communities (millet) that had a very large autonomy (including the judicial system) formed the foundation on which today’s Bosnian nationalities developed. They can be viewed primarily as religious nationalities because of their ethnic and linguistic relatedness. As they share the same language (with some dialectal differences) the largest ethnic groups in Bosnia are distinguished by religion which is the main marker of group distinctiveness, and for most of them the significance of religious adherence as a symbol of ethnicity outweighs the importance of religious belief and dogma. Since the middle of the nineteenth century national mass movements found their roots in binding together national and religious affiliation. Nationalities today are a reality for B&H and they form the foundation of Bosnian diversity. However, in spite of their connections to their respective “homelands”, both Serbs and Croats share with Bosniaks a strong feeling of belonging to the local identity.

In B&H there is a well developed institution of komšiluk (neighborhood) through which neighbors help and protect each other, sharing both good and bad things throughout their life. For instance, it is customary to go to neighbors houses to mourn or to celebrate events. Despite different religions, it is common for Muslims to visit Christians for Christmas as for Christian neighbors to visit Muslims for Bajram.

Rough living conditions (both natural and social) have contributed to the feeling of solidarity amongst Bosnians, regardless of ethnicity, greatly affected the development of the local community.

Bosnians are known as sociable and hospitable people. They enjoy in entertaining guests and visiting friends. It is a custom to bring a small gift when visiting someone (e.g. coffee, candy…) and hosts always serve coffee, sweets and drinks. Usually they offer three coffees. The first one is called dočekuša (greeting coffee), the second one is razgovoruša or brbljavuša (talking coffee), and after the third coffee which is known as kandžija (tur. whip), or sikteruša (tur. Go away! Go home!) the guests are expected to leave.

A part of the social tradition are sijelo and akšamluk (tur. akšam =evening) which are evening social events including light conversations and singing along with meze (tur. snacks) and rakija (homemade brandy). Especially popular are outdoor picnics that are called teferići when a group of friends takes coffee pots, coffee and some food...
(pies or a Bosnian pot) and goes to a popular resort by a stream, river or pond. Bosnians are known for their sense of humor, so these outings always include a lot of šega (tur. joke) as an obligatory element.

In the cities, especially in the evening, it is the time for the korzo, or walking up and down the main street, and socializing with peers in numerous coffee shops. The term raja (tur. poor people) today bears a meaning of group of friends, crowd or bunch, and is a vital part of the Bosnian life and worldview.

For Bosnian emigrants in other countries, like Croatia, this need for socializing is often limited and less intense due to a different way of life, work and family priorities, which is often very hard for some of them to bear.

Celebrations, family gatherings

Significant events and dates from the family, national or religious past are often used as an excuse for family gatherings. When holidays are concerned Muslims orient themselves by the Islamic calendar and for them the bajrams (Ramadan bajram and Kurban Hadji bajram) are the most important holiday. Ramazan bajram comes at the end of Ramadan, a month of fasting and personal sacrifice. The celebration lasts for three days. It is customary to give presents for Ramadan bajram and to have festive lunches and dinners. Bajram-namaz (prayer) is preformed in all the mosques on the first day of Bajram, and the families go to the mezar (cemeteries), welcome guests after at their house, and in the next few days they visit their family and friends. The children who come to visit get bajramluk, a gift in money according to the possibilities of the giver. It is believed that this given money will return tenfold to the one who gives it. The Ramadan dinner during fasting is called iftar, and sofra (table) includes various traditional meals like baklava.

The Kurban Hajj bajram comes two months after the Ramadan bajram. It is a time for performing haj (pilgrimage) as a basic religious duty. The Muslim that performs hadj becomes the hadjia and earns respect in the community.

Kurban (sacrifice) is the traditional slaughter of the kurban (usually sheep). The festival remembers the prophet Ibrahim’s willingness to sacrifice his son when God ordered him to. Kurban bajram is a holiday of the community as the meat and tof the sheep is distributed among family, neighbors and friends.

Catholics celebrate Christmas and Easter with the traditional marking of the important days of saints and martyrs. The main parts of the church year are Lent and Advent. Lent is the period of forty days which comes before Easter, traditionally a time of fasting and reflection,

THE SARAJEVO IFTAR

The order in which the meals are served is special: after a hot meal comes a cold one and vice versa, after a sweet dish comes a salty one. The introduction to the iftar is ice sherbet (juice from honey and red rose with ice).

1. Entrée: Various recelji (sweets from cherries, oranges, and roses), cheese from Travnik, bosman and almond cakes.

MEALS:

2. Čorba (soup)
3. Čimbur (warm salty dish - egg meal)
4. Dunlari (cold sweet dish)
5. Barmja (okra)
6. Nice čevab with quince (sweet cold dish)
7. Zeljanica (warm salty dish - spinach pie)
8. Kadayf (cold sweet dish)
9. Šarena dolma (salty warm dish - stuffed vegetables)
10. Krti rutavci (cold sweet dish)
11. Studena jelandži dolma (cold salty dish)
12. Baklava (sweet pie dish with walnuts)
13. Bijeli pilav (warm salty dish – rice with chicken meat)
14. Rumeni hošaf (stewed sour cherries with ice)
15. Kahva (Coffee)

http://www.cyberbulevar.com/kuhar/
and its main characteristics are: personal sacrifice, caring for others and questioning one’s own faith. Other important holy days are Pentecost, All Saints’ Day, and those dedicated to Virgin Mary, like Feast of the Assumption and Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Eastern Orthodox Christians also celebrate Christmas and Easter, but their Christmas is celebrated by the Julian calendar so it falls on the seventh of January. The eastern orthodox New Year is on the fourteenth of January. They also celebrate numerous *slavas*, days of the family patron saints. The presence at the liturgies is not as mandatory as with Catholics.

The Jewish community celebrates their holy days according to Torah. They include sacred days, such as Yom Kippur (The Day Of Atonement), Rosh Hashanah (New Year), Hanukah (Festival of Lights) and other holy days that commemorate important events from Jewish history (Purim, Sukkoth, Passover, Shavuot). They are celebrated according to Jewish calendar (Christian year 2006 is Jewish year 5767).

In Bosnia, particularly in the cities where mixed marriages are more common, many families celebrate Eastern Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim holy days.

**Clothing and dressing codes**

There are no specific costumes defined by ethnicity or religion in Bosnia. Adolescents, as well as other age groups follow modern fashion trends dictated by the industry. Older Bosniak women distinguish themselves by wearing slippers and wider, more comfortable clothes. During feasts and celebrations Bosniak women tend to wear a lot of jewelry, probably so they can show off their fortune.

It is interesting that in some parts of Bosnia Croat women still tattoo their hands and other visible parts of their body with Christian symbols. This very old tradition had a special meaning during the time of the Turkish rule as remembrance of the last Christian queen Jelena, and a sign of resistance against islamization.

Head covering with a head scarf is practiced by women of all religious affiliations in rural areas. Traditionally veils are worn by older, moral, god fearing and respect worthy women, and serve as a kind of their additional protection.

The vahabist fashion that some younger Muslim women practice to express their identity represents a modern trend which is present in B&H since the war.

In Bosnian families it is customary to take off your shoes upon entering the house, where one walks with slippers or barefoot.
Sexuality

In all Bosnian communities, regardless of ethnicity or religion, the desirable sexual conduct is heterosexual and monogamous.

Islam, as opposed to the Catholic dogma, does not treat sex as a sin to be practiced only for reproduction. For Muslims sex is *ibadet* (a gift from god). Therefore heterosexual sexual practice is even encouraged, but exclusively for married couples. This attitude has contributed to the concept of marrying at a young age as a way to channel sexuality into socially acceptable forms. On the other hand, adultery is considered to be one of the most serious offences. We may assume that the main reason for this is that it destabilizes the community, the survival of which is of the utmost importance in Islam and that is why it should be protected by harsh punishments for the offenders.

Traditionally, in accordance with social norms, most Bosnian girls and boys, especially Muslim, did not have a lot of opportunities to socialize with the opposite sex before marriage, while sexual activity was forbidden before marriage. In that sense they were protected from premature sexual relations, inappropriate relationships and possible tragic consequences. They married quite young, girls as soon as they turned 16.

The war and the era of socialism have most definitely weakened the traditional social norms related to sexuality, especially in the cities. People enter into a marriage later, and prenuptial sex has become common, as well as birth control, despite the religious prohibitions.

But public display of one’s sexuality is still viewed upon as something tasteless and unacceptable. Different sexualities and their manifestations like *Gay pride* would not come across fertile ground with the local population. This doesn’t say that this kind of sexuality does not exist; it is just not very public. There are records about different sexual conduct throughout Bosnian history, and the term *lutija* (levat) depicts a homosexual. During the Ottoman period homosexuality was tolerated, but certainly not encouraged. Homosexuality is contrary to religion and harmful to community because homosexuals do not have children. Due to a widespread ideal of *macho* men, accusing someone for being homosexual is a great insult, and it is very important to Bosnians, “not to be gay”. Interestingly, some deviant male social roles (murderer, criminal) the community seems to accept more easily than homosexuality (he can be anything but gay). Therefore, homosexuals tend to migrate mostly toward big cities like Zagreb, Ljubljana, Belgrade, Istanbul, and other cities of Western Europe.
Violence

Violence does not represent a desirable form of social conduct in the Bosnian community. Although Bosnia was exposed to various acts of violence (wars, occupations, riots, risings...) in peaceful periods individual violence is not frequent. When it happens, Bosnians have a tendency to use a knife (čakija) in resolving the conflicts. Usually it starts as a consequence of overuse of alcohol and singing in local pubs.

As a result of the recent war, the Bosnian population came into possession of all kinds of weapons so the čakija is often replaced with firearms and explosives which are used in political and criminal conflicts. As in most patriarchal societies, strength and physical fitness are highly appreciated among the Bosnians.

Death and funeral activities

Death is an integral part of life. A quick and painless death is greatly appreciated (He/she did not suffer). Funerals are usually performed according to religious rules, but atheist (secular) funerals are also common. Cremation is very rare.

What distinguishes Muslims from other denominations is the way the funeral rites are performed. The body of the deceased is ritually washed (gusul). Then it is wrapped up in a cloth (ćefini) and put in a shallow coffin (tabut). The tabut is used to carry the body to the grave (mezar). The body in the grave is covered by boards aligned in an angle of 45° on which the earth is thrown. The burial ceremony (dženaza – namaz) has two parts. The first one is performed in front of the mosque and afterwards the body of the deceased is carried to the cemetery. If the cemetery is near the mosque, tabut is carried by family members and friends and if it is far away, motorized transport is used.

Traditionally, only Muslim men attend funerals, while women stay at home. Today even women go to funerals, but they do not participate, only observe it on the side. After the deceased has been lowered into the grave, the Muslims bury him. Each participant throws a couple of shovels of dirt and afterwards lets the shovel fall to the ground so that the next one can pick it up. When the casket is buried everybody prays for the soul of the deceased.

Most activities around the funeral happen in the house of the deceased. Neighbors, relatives, friends and acquaintances bring coffee, food and beverages for the guests so that the family can mourn in peace.
06. Family

Family structure

The family is the base of a Bosnian community. The average size of a Bosnian family exceeds the nuclear family with two children. Although the average birth-rate is decreasing the desirable norm is three or more children in a nuclear family.

The people that eat at the same table make a household. The social network of the extended family is still very much present and elaborated, but nowadays two or more nuclear families rarely share one kitchen, and each married woman should have her own kitchen. This trend is primarily present in the cities, but it is becoming popular in rural parts as well. The census from 2001 shows that the percentage of urban population in B&H is 43% and the percentage of rural population is 57%. Similarly, in Croatia urban population amounts to 58%, as opposed to 42% of rural population. The wider nuclear family includes older members, often also those who lost their spouse or never married.

The Bosnian war (1992 – 1995) encouraged social solidarity within ethnic communities and slowed down the process of fragmentation of extended families, but the trend continued after the war. It is difficult to assess its intensity because of the lack of statistical data, but with considerable certainty it can be said that the extended nuclear family is still the prevailing family form in B&H.

Organizationally, the family has a “head of the household”. Due to the patriarchal social structure it is customary that this role is played by a man. In Islamic culture the man represents the family outside the house, in the public space and the woman cares for the private sphere – the house and family.

It is not uncommon, however, that the wife is the real “ruler of the house”. In the families that live in the area between the Bosnian krajina and Sandžak, women run the household businesses while men are only formally “heads of the household”.

Marriage, birth and child care

Christianity and Islam put special emphasis on the need to be married as the best model for living together and the family is viewed upon as the basic structure which contributes to social bliss. In Christian law, marriage is a sacred institution. The Catholic Church has strict
guidelines on divorce. The Church considers the bond of marriage to be a sacred bond, one that is based on lifelong love, fidelity and family. Marriage is both a legal bond on earth and spiritual bond which God has witnessed. The latter cannot be broken using temporal laws (although some Christian denominations tolerate divorce). Islam tolerates divorce, but considers it to be “the most disliked of the things permitted by God” (Hamidullah, 1993). As opposed to Catholicism in Islam marriage is not a holy sacrament and a gift of God, but a contract which brings rights and obligations to both parties, and can only be successful when these are mutually respected and cherished.

Most Bosnians today are in fact highly secularized, and about a third of all urban marriages in Bosnia in recent decades have been between partners from different religious/ethnic backgrounds.

While in earlier times arranged marriages were a social norm, today, marriage is a result of romantic love of two people who marry by their own free feel. But even earlier this old tradition was not obligatory as in other regions of the world, e.g. the Indian subcontinent.

Another custom that was still practiced in the first half of the 20th century was the abduction of the bride, usually with the consent of both families involved, to free a family with a large number of female children from paying the dowry. The custom of ašikovanje (courting) has been practiced in Bosnia for ages. Girls would stand at the window and young men would court them.

Pregnancy and the birth of a child are sacred events in the Bosnian family. It enables the continuity of the species and the lineage and is extremely important for the preservation of the community. The woman takes on the role of the mother after birth. She gets social reputation and the respect of male and older members of the family and the community. The pregnancy of a woman is a proof of the biological abilities (to reproduce) of the man, so his social reputation grows too.

A family with more children is considered to be both happier and richer. That is why a higher-birth rate was encouraged and was high for centuries in B&H in all communities, regardless of religion. The fertility of a woman is an appreciated quality, while a family with no children is a great sorrow. The unwed woman is called usidjelica (spinster), and the one without children inoča and bezditka (barren woman). A mistress is called priležnica.

Newborn babies receive all necessary care provided by the family members. After a period of 40 days (babinje) the mother and the newborn receive visitors.

Muslims have three types of godfathers: circumcision, marriage and shearing (striženi) godfather.

“Shearing” godfather is considered in some parts of Bosnia as the most important one. Both Muslims and Christians could be godfathers:

“The godfather takes the makaze (scissors) and cuts off a piece of hair hanging over the forehead of the child and becomes his/her striženi godfather. It is believed that a child who has this godfather will heal if it is ill or die peacefully and quickly if it is dying...“ (Hangi, 1906).
The primary socialization (raising and caring for the child) in the preschool age is the task of the family, primarily of the parents and then of the wider family. The school takes over the role of secondary socialization, and there children acquire both religious and secular knowledge.

The **circumcision** (*sunećenje*) of male children is a Muslim custom that introduces children to the world of Islam. It is usually performed during the preschool age and represents a significant event for the family. Traditionally, this procedure was performed by barbers, but today it is done in medical institutions. The circumcision is a sacred event in the life of the boy and his family. The boy receives presents from relatives and is initiated into the world of men.

Circumcision is not obligatory, but it is recommended not only as a religious rite, but also for hygienic reasons, as a preventive measure against infections and illnesses.

The arrival of a female child does not trigger special joy in the family, because men are considered to be the carriers of the family name. Traditionally, boys had more freedom, while girls were raised strictly, getting used early to work and obedience. In front of their grandfather, father, uncle and even older brothers they had to keep quiet and be docile. By the age of ten girls did house works and learned how to saw and knit. ([http://www.bosanskaposavina.com/](http://www.bosanskaposavina.com/)). Most of them got married between 16 and 19 years.

Puberty and adolescence are viewed upon as a transition period between childhood and adulthood and as an entry into the world of adults. While adolescence period tends to become longer in the West, where a large number of “big children” (following the syndrome of Peter Pan) refuse to grow up even when they reach 40, in B&H young people mature early and begin to take over adult roles and responsibilities.

There are big differences in the education of children between rural and urban areas. There are considerable differences, particularly in primary socialization process. In rural areas, the patrilocal extended household is still the basic social unit and the most significant means of social support, while the traditional socialization process of children involves the authoritarian and strict parenting style with early emphasis on different gender roles. In urban areas emphasis nowadays is on the nuclear family, with both parents working and spending less time with their children, and the more permissive parenting style, while the younger generation has a lifestyle and aspirations similar to their western European counterparts.
Divorce

Even divorce represents a part of life. Although divorce is allowed, the ideal is to settle down with a life-partner, and of all the things God does permit, divorce is said to be the thing He likes least. Islam is more realistic, and aware that many marriages go wrong and break down for all sorts of reasons, so It is not assumed that a couple will remain together 'till death them part'. If and when a marriage is broken, either party is entitled to seek divorce and a share of the properties. However, most marriages commence with the best of intentions, and the state of marriage is regarded as the ideal way for Muslims to live, while celibacy is not desirable because it can lead to various psychological and physical problems.

In Roman Catholicism, traditional religious dogma of sacredness and inviolability of marriage makes divorce more difficult. Sexual intimacy outside marriage is forbidden by both religions.

Intergenerational relations

Bosnians as other traditional societies, respect their elders because age brings authority, knowledge and faith in their right judgment. In the modern society full of changes, this authority is shaken, as older people “have problems understanding new things”, but this type of intergenerational conflict or generation gap is present in all generations and populations.

Because of the great losses of the older population, the war and the post-war period brought the young generation to the social scene and gave them great social power.

Also many families lost their fathers in the war, mothers had to take over the role of the head of the family.

Caring for one another has traditionally been a part of the Bosnian society. With the Christian and Islam base alike that prescribe care for parents, elders and the sick, there is also an economic motive. Often older people retain their right to properties which gives them additional power over the younger members of the family.

Education and employment

A decade after the end of the war in Bosnia (1992 – 1995), over 40% of the population in B&H is still unemployed and living at the edge of existence. In such circumstances, when “every paying job is a good job it is difficult to talk about employment attitudes. Still, the ideal is a steady job with a regular paycheck. Permanent
employment and decent living accommodation are considered as a sign of competence and prosperity.

Usually, Bosnians find work at a very young age, after finishing their apprenticeship or high school. Children help around the house and learn work habits. In working class families it is expected of the children to find work after high school, and if they go on to college they are perceived as slackers (“When are you going to finish school so you can start working? He is studying so that he doesn’t have to work.”). In families with a tradition of higher education, college represents an investment in the future and the potential of university education is fully appreciated.

A research of Bosnian adolescents in Croatia has shown that they aspire towards higher education, but they are aware that their economical situation can prevent them to achieve that.

There is no institutional obstacle for women to attain the same level of education as men, yet it is common for men to have a higher education than women.

Today in B&H, a developed structure of educational institutions exists, from preschool education to college institutions. However, education is not unified on the whole territory of B&H, but there are different national programs of the main nationalities that insist on national interpretation of history and the learning of the particular language as a national language.

The Zagreb Islamic school, “Dr. Ahmed Smajlović” was founded in 1992 at the Islamic center. Medresa (ar. school) is the name for a traditional type of school, which through long Islamic tradition signified a place where all relevant sciences were taught (religion, applied geometry, rhetoric and literature).

In 2000, Medresa was included in the Croatian high school system as a private school with public rights. There students are taught for the service in the Islamic community, but its curriculum enables them to continue their education in colleges and universities in Croatia and abroad. The education goal is to enable full integration of students in all fields of social life in Croatia.
In Islam health is considered the greatest of God’s blessings and therefore it should be taken good care of. The Qur’an and the Hadith contain instructions how to take care of the body. Special consideration is made about hygiene and everyday cleaning of ears, eyes, nose, hair and sexual organs, while the basic principle is to wash one’s hands before eating. In addition to spiritual reasons, the Ramadan fast works as a cleaning mechanism of the organism. The concept of health in Islam unifies mental, physical and social health, and is an integral part of religion and commitment to God. A weak and sick person cannot perform their duties towards God, family and community, as a healthy and strong person can. This holistic approach towards health is related to the right diet that enables the equilibrium of the organism, preventive methods and avoidance of harmful substances and behavior.

The usage of natural drugs and plants has a long tradition in Bosnia, even today when colds and a sore throat are concerned. Hangi (1906) says: “Our Muslims wash at least five times a day with fresh water from the stream, they take bath frequently and live a simple and moderate life, and if they get ill they first use a cold compress, then mint, plantain, marsh, nettle and other plants... Besides that, they make various balms (mehlem) that are used to cure wounds and various internal illnesses”. Even today the base for alternative medicine in Bosnia is herbal medicine, and herbalists who work as healers and therapists by collecting and distributing plants. Their products serve as sedatives and healing potions. In some areas, there are also kostolomci (bone-breakers) who set broken bones.

The use of rakija (brandy) as a cure for injuries, fractures, swellings, high temperature, and bone aches is widespread. The universal use of rakija in both positive and negative forms is well illustrated by the saying: “Rakija, mother and stepmother”. In addition to rakija, apple vinegar and especially honey are considered to have healing properties for many problems. Popular cures for the respiratory organs include pine juice, which is made from pine shoots in the spring, and for the kidneys brine juice that is made from spruce.

Magic rituals are also a part of the alternative medicine and they are applied as a supplement to herbal treatment or as an independent healing procedure. The most famous one is called “hodžin zapis”. It is an amulet which contains a quotation from the Qur’an or a prayer (dova) inscribed on it. The hodža (Muslim priest) gives it to people on demand. Magic rituals are present in all three

During the 29/30 days of Ramadan all adult Muslims must give up the following things during the hours of daylight:

- Food or drink of any sort
- Smoking, including passive smoking
- Sexual activity

Muslims who are physically or mentally unwell may be excused some of these, as may those who are under twelve years old, the very old, those who are pregnant, breast-feeding, menstruating, or travelling.
Religions and it is common to use rituals from different religions. Among common magic rituals, there is also *salijevanje strave*, when melted lead is poured into a canister with water in order to scare the illness away.

**Mental health.** The relationship toward mental health is complex. Mental patients do not carry such a stigma as in western countries. The curing of mental illnesses follows the general trend of disease treatment. More and more mental patients are treated in medical institutions or under the supervision of a doctor. As they do not carry a large stigma it is possible to see them in the social environment, particularly in villages, working, and being a part of the family and community.

As a consequence of the recent war, mental health problems related to war experiences, are quite common, including risk for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), combat stress disorder (CSR), depression, or alcoholism, despite Islamic prohibitions against alcohol.

Considering the attitudes toward contraception, Islam allows it only in marriage, as sex outside marriage is forbidden. In practice most Muslim authorities permit contraception to preserve the health of the mother or the well-being of the family. Contraception with the aim of having a permanently child-free marriage is not accepted. So sterilisation is wrong - partly because it prevents children permanently and partly because of a text forbidding men to castrate themselves.

All religions disapprove of abortion. Islam, however, allows abortion to save the life of the mother because it sees this as the 'lesser of two evils', and there is a general principle in Sharia (Muslim law) of choosing the lesser of two evils. Abortion within the first 120 days would be permitted if a child would be born with such physical and mental deformity as would deprive the child of a normal life.

The Catholic Church considers contraception unacceptable no matter what the consequences are, and allows only natural birth control methods (abstinence). The Roman Catholic Church says that deliberately causing an abortion is a grave moral wrong.

Christianity and Islam have similar attitudes about *euthanasia* and *suicide*. Life is sacred and only God determines how long will somebody live and people should not interfere.

Of course, in practice there exists a gradation of individual attitudes about these questions, especially when secular believers, Muslims or Catholics are concerned.

In general, Muslims are allowed to consume all foods (e.g. grains, vegetables, fish and meat), except those that are explicitly prohibited (*haram*) in Islam. Prohibited foods are very few but include:

- Alcoholic drinks such as beer and wine.
- Pig meat (e.g. ham, pork, bacon) and by-products of the pig such as pig fat.
- Meat of an animal that has died of natural causes, or as a result of strangling or beating.
- Blood that is in liquid (‘drinkable’) form.
Food

The Bosnian diet is clearly colored by the Ottoman heritage and Islam. However, the fact is that many dishes in Bosnia that have an oriental origin differ from the original meals in other eastern countries, because they have a special seal characteristic for Bosnia (Lakišić, 1988). The Bosnian cuisine represents an amalgam of the culinary traditions of all the nations of B&H, built on the integrated Bosnian and Herzegovinian culture in which east meets west, and where meals originating even from neighboring countries have been so modified that they can be called Bosnian dishes.

Bosnian dishes are mostly light, because they are cooked or sautéed with little water, usually with a soup stock, so that they have natural flavor which has no browned flour in it. Oriental spices are added in small quantities, and are mostly standard (pepper, paprika, aleva) so that they do not diminish the taste of the meat or change the experience of the meal completely (Lakišić, 1988). Bosnian cuisine is consistent with modern demands of medicine and healthy food because it is very natural with a lot of vegetables, fruit, milk and dairy products. Meat is eaten either cooked or roasted, mostly lamb, veal and chicken.

Typical regional specialties are dolma, (paprikas and other vegetables stuffed with meat), kalja (cooked meat and cabbage) and bosanski lonac (a Bosnian hotpot stew, a slow-cooked– mixture of layers of meat and vegetables.

Pitas (pies) are the most famous dishes of Bosnian cuisine, just like pizzas in Italy. Dough is transformed into thin layers (jufke) that are filled with cheese (sirnica), meat (burek), spinach (zeljanica), potatoes (krompiruša, kumpiruša), pumpkin (misirača, misirač-pita), eggs (jajuša), walnuts and honey (baklava) etc. It is interesting that the meat pie (burek) is considered to be a male pie, while all the other variants are female.

In the new surroundings, Bosnian immigrants preserve their old eating habits, and prepare pies and other Bosnian dishes frequently. A lot of Bosnian dishes have become standard in Croatia, like sarma, sataraš, filled paprika, musaka, burek, ajvar, duveč, čevapčići, baklava, kajgana, kajmak…

The daily routine includes breakfast as a light morning meal, lunch that is the main daily meal and dinner. Everyday lunch contains stews and meals that are eaten with a spoon. It is distinguished from the festive lunch, which is a chance for a hostess to show off culinary abilities and includes multiple courses. It starts usually

**BEG’S SOUP (BEGOVA ĆORBA)**

**Ingredients:**
- 1/2 kg chicken meat
- 20 dg carrots
- roots of celery and parsley
- 50 g bamia
- 20 g rice
- 2 dl pavlaka (cream)
- 3 egg jokes
- lemon juice
- salt

**Preparation:**

Put the meat and vegetables in water, salt and cook. When it is done filter the soup from meat and vegetables. Cut them into cubes and put them back into the soup. Return the soup on the fire and add cooked rice and bamia. Add lemon, cream and egg jokes before serving.
with cold meats and cheese, the pies follow, and then roasted meat and dolmas, with sweets served at the end. The festive lunch is a social event which gives an opportunity to the hostess to acquire social reputation in the family and community. For a festive Muslim meal, zijafet, the exchange of sweet, salty, hot and cold dishes is characteristic. At the end, kahva (coffee) is served and it is not cooked but roasted in a pot called džezva and is served in fildžans (small cups) with sugar cubes aside. “Kahva can be consumed on any occasion as it cools in the summer, warms in the winter, refreshes in the morning and strengthens in the evening (Hangi, 1906).

Alcohol

The most popular Bosnian alcoholic drink is rakija, a homemade plum brandy. It can be served on any occasion by members of all ethnic/religious groups. As to Bosniaks, their relationship toward alcohol is ambivalent. Although alcohol is strictly forbidden by Islam Bosniaks still consume it. There are also chronic alcoholics (treated or untreated) among them. However, as opposed to Croatians who view alcohol consumption as part of everyday diet (mainly beer and wine), in the Bosniak family alcohol is mostly consumed by men during meals or on special occasions. It is unknown how much do Bosnian immigrant adolescents in Croatia copy the custom of collective youth drinking or binge drinking practiced by their Croatian peers, but it is probably present to a lesser extent. In Bosnian culture, particularly with Muslims, children are taught very early to reject alcohol, so that adolescent drinking represents a form of rebellion against the family norms, than the continuation of a habit learned within the family.

Čevapčići (grilled, sausage-like meat on thick bread with onion).
Foto: Branislav Praljak, Mladina

TUFAHIJE (apple cake)
5 jabuka (delišes)
500 g vanilin šećera
0,5 l vode
0,25 l skorupa ili slatkog kajmaka
150 g šećera
100 g oraha
50 g badema
1 limunova kora
There are many stereotypes and prejudices about Bosnians in Croatia. They are assumed to tell jokes frequently (wit and charm in communication), to carry a knife (čakiju, škljocu), to swear often, to get into fights, to drink alcohol, to perform manual work and are seen as uneducated and stupid. The ascribing of a lower cultural level (primitivism) to Bosnians goes together with a stereotype about their explicit sexuality.

Prejudices, as always, are based on impressions made in contact with individuals that share characteristics in certain groups, but they are actually taken from a totally heterogeneous population. Thus Bosnians usually come to work in Croatia as soldiers and manual workers, particularly for physically demanding jobs. They are mostly young men, of modest education for whom the presence of force, weapons, swearing and explicit sexuality is “normal” and a sign of masculinity.

These prejudices are clearly expressed in the modern folk heroes of jokes about Bosnians. Typically, characters names like Mujo, Haso, Suljo are used, but although Muslim name, they represent the humoristic typing of Bosnians in general. These characters are first and foremost marked with the rural social background, poverty, primitivism and the marginal roles they play in society’s urban conditions or by their lower status as a result of being temporary workers in western countries. This humor is based on the simplicity of the protagonists, but also on their great desire to overcome the hard marginal living conditions. Their stupidity ranges from lack of education, narrow-mindedness, obstinacy (the Bosnian head is always “the hardest”) all the way to naivety, imbecility and absolute absurdity. Male-female relationships are a very common subject in many jokes, where a female character of low moral, Fata, appears. Homosexuality of the leading characters is a popular theme. A great deal of the effects of these jokes is based on language details and potentials of the Bosnian speech, accent and vocabulary.

Because of the recent war, the regular stereotypes about Bosnians have been replaced by stereotypes about “Muslims” as hypocrites, thieves, dishonest, unreliable and as sunflowers which “turn around” according to the circumstances. The basis of these jokes is mainly of economical and political nature.
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