

# The Everyday of Religion and Politics in the Balkans

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► **To cite this version:**

Albert Doja. The Everyday of Religion and Politics in the Balkans. David Montgomery. Everyday Life in the Balkans, Indiana University Press, pp.321-335, 2019, 978-0-253-02617-0. 10.2307/j.ctv80cbk7.36 . halshs-01931741

**HAL Id: halshs-01931741**

**<https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01931741>**

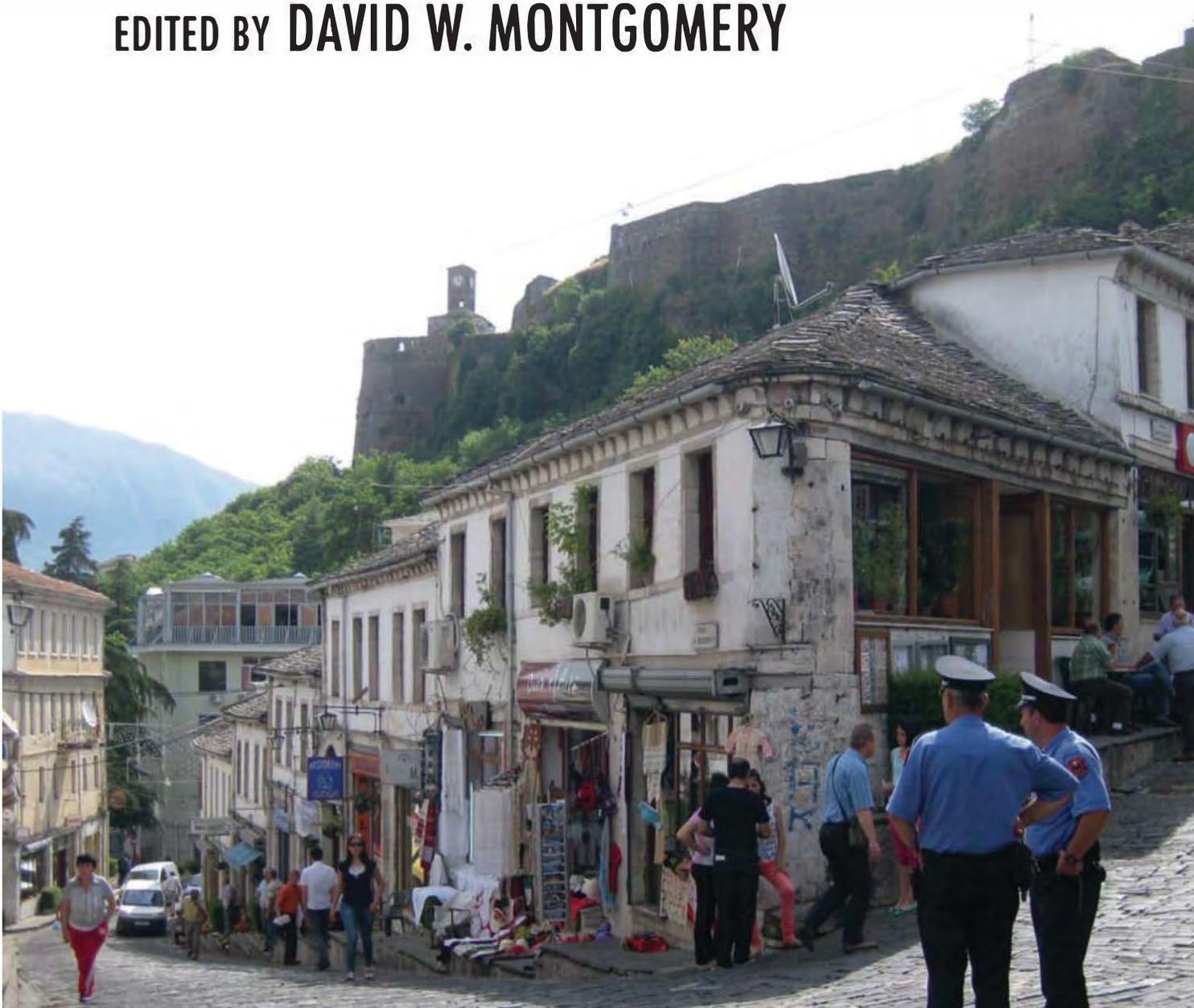
Submitted on 12 Jan 2021

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# EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE BALKANS

EDITED BY DAVID W. MONTGOMERY



# 30 The Everyday of Religion and Politics in the Balkans

Albert Doja

The deeply social and political significance of religion becomes apparent when looking at how different religious traditions can challenge coexistence and tolerance in everyday life.<sup>1</sup> Ideology—expressed in discourse and doctrine,<sup>2</sup> religious meaning, and moral values<sup>3</sup>—undergirds identity politics. As such, it is important to understand the place of religion in the social organization and transformation of a given society.<sup>4</sup> Above all, discriminatory and stereotyping ideologies behind the categorizing processes of religious affiliations are inherent to any context, whether local, regional, or international.<sup>5</sup> Southeast Europe provides a colorful display of the relationship between religion and politics at the level of religious leaders, state actors, intellectual elites, and ordinary people in everyday interactions. The importance of native language in religious offices and the passion for historical incursions in the everyday life of public discussions—in print media and online networks—shows the intricate interconnectedness of religion and politics. In everyday conversation, people commonly raid history to their own end, convinced that religious movements and political movements have something in common.

## Historical Incursions in Everyday Life

People often repurpose history to legitimate their view of how the world was, is, and should be. Though such forays into history may seem innocent, often their impact on political and everyday life is not. In February 2012, the Vatican organized a world conference to commemorate the 1,700th anniversary of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (October 28, 312) and the legacy of Emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity. In October 2013, the Serbian Orthodox Church also organized in Nish, the birthplace of Constantine, an even larger world conference to commemorate the importance of the Edict of Milan, in which Constantine established the Christian movement as another official religion of the Roman Empire. The story of Constantine's acceptance of Christianity became important both to the growth of early Christianity and to the growth of Constantine's power, but it also embedded a narrative of providence within a

political act that would later serve as a foundation for contemporary claims to the Balkan peoples being foundational to Christendom.

Such moves are neither neutral nor unilateral. Ordinary Albanians are quick to remember June 28, 1989, when Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic used the six-hundredth-anniversary commemoration of the Kosovo Battle of 1389 to strengthen his power by exploiting the myth of the battle,<sup>6</sup> probably not unlike Constantine did with the myth of his own dream. The narrative of a “Muslim” victory—despite both sides suffering heavy losses—is reinterpreted by Serbian nationalist politics, from the nineteenth century until today, as the emblematic Christian Serbian sacrifice at the hands of Ottoman armies. Gatherings to commemorate this myth served to justify the boundaries of Serbian holdings and any means needed to enforce them. Not surprisingly, they also glorified and sanctified the ethno-homicidal criminals who best served Serbian identity politics.<sup>7</sup>

Such celebrations point to the mutually reinforcing—and locally contextualized—nature of religion and politics and the ease with which nationalist tropes emerge as ordained and legitimate. Routinely, one hears support for the blending of religion and politics: ordinary Albanians may recall some imam in Prishtina running for president,<sup>8</sup> or some Kosovar politicians may advocate women wearing Muslim headscarves to gain support among certain voters.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the Serbian patriarch stated that “Kosovo is the sacred land of Serbia” on Albanian national TV, on June 1, 2014, after the inauguration of the Orthodox Cathedral in Tirana,<sup>10</sup> where the Serbian flag was also briefly displayed.<sup>11</sup> Many ordinary Albanians characterized this as a “brutal and unscrupulous provocation.”<sup>12</sup> The Albanian prime minister was outraged and offended, and at his meeting with the patriarchs and primates of world Christian Orthodoxy, he demonstrably pointed his finger to the Serbian patriarch: “Your colleague abused our hospitality, he derogated our religious celebration day and he changed the evidence of our religious coexistence into an outdated political issue.”<sup>13</sup>

Regardless of how outdated such moves may seem, incursions into history hold political clout to the extent they make the present seem purposeful. Histories, however, are not without bias. Serbs can look to the churches and monasteries built by the Nemanic dynasty to claim a territorial holding,<sup>14</sup> just as they look to the Kosovo myth to speak of a Serbian sacrifice.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Albanians look to the efforts of the Greek Orthodox Church during the mid-nineteenth century in squelching the use of Albanian language as an example of systematic oppression.<sup>16</sup> There is an interconnectedness between religion and politics that represents both the imagined and the real state of everyday life.

## Religious Realpolitik

On the Easter Saturday 2015 (April 11), when Orthodox Christians celebrated the resurrection of Christ in the Cathedral of Tirana, a prominent Albanian politician expressed his regret in the national press because the Greek archbishop of the Albanian Orthodox Church, Anastasios Yanoulatos, officiated not in Albanian but in Greek.<sup>17</sup> Many deacons rose to the archbishop’s defense



Figure 30.1. The Resurrection Cathedral in Tirana, as construction nears completion, 2013. Photograph by David W. Montgomery.

by attesting to the archbishop's theological credentials,<sup>18</sup> but the issue was less about religion than it was about language. To some, the archbishop opting to celebrate Easter in Greek is seen as part and parcel of the Greek Orthodox Church's dismissiveness of the Albanian language and identity. This is well understood especially in the context of the everyday exchanges of Albanian immigrants in Greece, who have adopted Greek language and converted to Greek Orthodoxy. These acts obviously aid integration into Greek society, but if Orthodox Albanians are acquiring more and more Greek at the expense of their native language, something political is at stake.

Such debate about the politics of language behind the religious service is not without historical context. On September 9, 1906, an armed band of Orthodox Albanians fighting for independence from Ottoman rule killed the Greek Metropolitan bishop of Korca, Photios Kalpidhis, on the grounds that one year before he had ordered the murder of an Albanian priest, Papa Kristo Negovani, who officiated in Albanian and taught his believers to read and write Albanian. This

unusual event of religious believers killing their own religious leader is still subject to everyday discussions and debates in Albanian public opinion.<sup>19</sup> If Greek clerics exerted ruthless pressure supporting the grecization of Orthodox Albanians, the latter struggled to escape this influence through the arduous path to autonomy and autocephaly of the Albanian Orthodox Church—work led by Theofan (Fan) S. Noli, an Albanian cleric who in 1908 dissociated the Albanian Orthodox liturgy from the Greek Church. This move became important not only to the establishment of the Albanian Orthodox Church but also to advancing the legitimacy of the Albanian language and, in time, the Albanian state.

Another iteration of political-religious entanglement came in 1945, when the communist regime succeeded to enlist the leadership of Orthodox Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Bektashi Albanians in service to the state. Enver Hoxha also called the Albanian Catholic archbishop Vinçenc Prenushi to ask him for the secession of the Albanian Catholic Church from the Roman Papacy. The rejection of the Catholic Albanian leadership resulted in ruthless violence being unleashed in the 1960s on the religious people of all faiths—Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and Muslims alike—which still captivates everyday discussions and debates. The context of this allegiance to Rome is sometimes understood to prove the threat the Catholics posed to the state, as well as their divided loyalty to the nation. Regardless of the fact that the archbishop “was a very good man and great writer, the Dictator was right to separate the Albanian Church from the Papacy. Muslims were independent and Fan Noli founded the Albanian Orthodox Church. Only the Catholics would not be separated from the Papacy! That is why the atheist Communists found an excuse in the attitude of Albanian Catholic leadership and they massacred all religions in Albania.”<sup>20</sup>

Undoubtedly, the act of the Albanian Catholic Archbishop, a rightful martyr of the Roman Catholic Church, was a profoundly political, religious, and anti-communist act. Surely, Albanian Catholics could not separate from the Roman Church and remain in communion with Catholicism. What Hoxha characterized as representing an external political threat from Rome, Archbishop Prenushi would have characterized as central to maintaining the religious integrity of his flock. The implications of the political tensions over religion were catastrophic. Nevertheless, compared to the activity of Bishop Fan Noli and other Orthodox Albanians to secede from the Greek Orthodox Church, the rejection of secession from the Roman Catholic Church by Albanian Catholics—despite contemporary religious propaganda and politically motivated endorsements—may still be regarded by some as a political antinational act. In any case, acts of reformation or opposition to religious secession from external religious authorities are always acts of religious politics.

### Antinational Identity Politics

Given the tumultuous past, it is no wonder that in the case of the current Greek archbishop of the Albanian Orthodox Church, there are many who question whether his religious politics is related to the political interests

of the Albanian Orthodox Christian community or those of the Greeks. To many Albanians, the concern is less about religious credentials than political implication—a concern that his work is not national or nationalistic politics but rather anti-Albanian politics. According to the late Kristo Frasheri, a leading historian and an Orthodox who was active both in church history and in church affairs, the Greek archbishop was not elected by a Saint Synod of the Albanian Orthodox Church, which did not exist at that time. Rather, Anastasios Yanoulatos was appointed by the patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church with the support of the Greek government at a time when the Albanian government was in a position of no choice but to accept the nomination.<sup>21</sup> The appointment was meant to be a temporary mission to assist the reconstruction of the Albanian Church and some Orthodox clearly supported it. But to the mind of other Orthodox Albanians, these were only Greek-minded Orthodox who took over the Albanian Orthodox Church. Many protesting Orthodox Albanians even opposed massively his enthronement ceremony on August 2, 1992, by shouting nationalist slogans and proclaiming the names of Kristo Negovani and Fan Noli.<sup>22</sup> Because of protests, the so-called enthronement ceremony was forced to move from the church to conclude in a hall at the Hotel Tirana International. For many Orthodox Albanians, and according to church canons, the fact that the ceremony took place outside of a church made the enthronement of the Greek archbishop at the See of the Albanian Orthodox Church illegitimate.

On August 29, 1992, according to Kristo Frasheri, who participated in the event, “a large meeting of Orthodox Christians, attended by representatives of Tirana and delegates of other districts, was held to re-examine the intolerable situation created by the violation of the Orthodox Church canons that enthroned the Greek Archbishop Anastasios Janullatos.”<sup>23</sup> The meeting expressed forcefully the general determination that the church must be recovered on the basis of its sacred Albanian and Orthodox traditions. As a result, a sort of schism can be observed among the Orthodox Albanians led by Father Nikolla Marku, of St. Mary Church of Elbasan.<sup>24</sup> The faction led by Father Marku opposes the authority of the Greek archbishop and denounces the usurpation of the Albanian Church by the Greeks. In turn, the official church does not recognize the breakaway faction, simply because Father Marku is ordained by the Macedonian Orthodox Church, which is reminiscent of Fan Noli being ordained by the Russian Orthodox Church before he founded the Albanian Church independent from the Greek Church.

Many Albanians claim that the reconstruction of Orthodox churches advanced by the Greek archbishop of the Albanian Church is an act of religious politics aimed at preserving Greek influence over Orthodox Albanians. Despite the publicly endorsed intentions of Anastasios, the actual actions of the church suggest to many that it is interested less in religious objectives than in political ones. Some claim the reconstruction activism tries deliberately to Grecize the external appearance and architectural style of worship buildings in Albania,<sup>25</sup> and it is reminiscent of the activity of the early Greek Church in Albania. There are similarities here with the ideological education of the so-called new man and the

creation of the “new people’s culture” or “new folklore” movement during the communist regime.<sup>26</sup> And parallels to this “ideological education” can be found within the militant fundamentalism advocated for by a small minority of Albanian Muslims in Kosovo and Macedonia.<sup>27</sup>

Political tensions between Greece and Albania continue to play out in an overtly religious context, seen in a conflict culminating on August 26, 2015, after much debate between government and Orthodox authorities, with the demolition of an illegal building on the foundations of an old church in Dhermi, in southwest Albania. The same day, the Greek archbishop of the Albanian Orthodox Church had a meeting with the Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras. Even though “the meeting was planned in advance,”<sup>28</sup> Anastasios was portrayed by the Greek media as having complained about an interference of the Albanian state into the affairs of the Albanian Orthodox Church.<sup>29</sup> Not only did Greek media heap scornful abuse upon Albania and the Albanians but the Greek government also took a tougher stance toward Albanian authorities. The Greek newspaper *Kathimerini* wrote that Athens was expected to lodge an official complaint with Albanian authorities and the international community.<sup>30</sup> Greek Foreign Ministry spokesperson Konstantinos Koutras equated Albanian authorities with jihadists: “The destruction of holy sites and objects of worship took place, at least until recently, in the wider region of the Middle East and North Africa, at the hands of jihadists, but today we also saw such an act carried out in our neighboring country, Albania.”<sup>31</sup>

On his part, the Albanian prime minister Edi Rama considered it unacceptable that the senior cleric of the Albanian Church could complain to the prime minister of a foreign country and not to the prime minister of the country whose church leader he is. In a long Facebook posting, extensively reprinted in Albanian media, Rama wrote that Greece

must be aware that any issue or problem of the Albanian Orthodox Church or the Orthodox Albanians has no connection with Greece. Orthodox Albanians are Albanian citizens who have their own state and the space where they practice their faith is not a protectorate of any other state. Any problem that the Albanian Orthodox Church might have had, might still have, or will have with the state is handled and will be handled with the Albanian state and its institutions. Any intervention in this context is an unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of Albania. Albania is the country where the Orthodox Church is at home and not at the neighbor’s home.<sup>32</sup>

The ground on which the shapeless building was demolished in Dhermi is said to have been an early seventeenth-century Uniate church built by Basilian monks and the tomb of an important Roman Catholic missionary who was the archbishop of Durres in 1693. Albanian authorities have expressed a commitment to restoring the site,<sup>33</sup> but the argument in everyday discussions among Albanians remains unchanged, seemingly refighting the same century-old political battles between the Greek-Byzantine Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. While the Roman Catholic Church is believed by some to have instigated the emergence of an Albanian identity,<sup>34</sup> some interpret the Greek

Orthodox influence as a threat to Albanian identity.<sup>35</sup> The claim here is that through the soft power of cultural and religious influence, by means of building Orthodox churches and imagined cemeteries, Greece is trying to nurture its own legitimacy—both in history and in identity—to nationalist claims to a greater Northern Epirus that includes much of the Albanian south as belonging to Greece and its sphere of influence.<sup>36</sup>

### Everyday Balkan Politics

Questions about the primacy of different churches and cultural heritages are often answered with political ends in mind. This brings us back to the 1,700th anniversary of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge and the legacy of Emperor Constantine to Christianity. In May 2012, the first international conference on faiths in Kosovo was organized by the American University in Kosovo to celebrate these events.<sup>37</sup> Beyond the old story of the mutual consolidation of imperial power and church authority in the fourth century, one must question why such a conference was organized in Kosovo. Of course, Constantine was of Balkan origin and Dardanian descent, being born in Naissus (modern Nish in present-day Serbia), located within the Illyrian province of Dardania, which corresponds approximately to present-day Kosovo. In fact, this reason was stated very clearly during the conference. Similar events were also organized the following year in Tirana and again in Prishtina, receiving great acclaim in Albanian and Kosovar local media and public opinion.

On April 27, 2013, a symposium titled “Constantine: 1700th Anniversary of the Edict of Milan and the Religious Freedom” was organized in Tirana at the initiative of the Catholic Church in Albania. In his address to the symposium, the Albanian prime minister Sali Berisha acclaimed of Constantine the Great: “Illyrian in origin, Dardanian in descent, in this anniversary, he makes every Albanian proud.”<sup>38</sup> Another three-day symposium on Constantine and the Edict of Milan was organized in Prishtina for September 3–5, 2013, again at the initiative of the Catholic Church in Kosovo. The explicit aim was to show that “the historical legacy of Constantine the Great and the Edict of Milan are relevant to the historical memory of Kosovo and its European identity.” In his address to the symposium, Kosovo foreign minister Enver Hoxhaj stressed the fact that Constantine was a native of Illyrian Dardania: “Given the Western scientific conviction about *our* Illyrian origin, as one of the oldest nations in Europe, Constantine the Great is part of the historical consciousness of the citizens of Kosovo and the Albanians wherever they live.” Many other participants made similar declarations, emphasizing that Constantine is “the symbol of *our* European roots” and that his legacy “is very precious for *our* Illyrian-Albanian world.”<sup>39</sup>

During the conference lunch in Prishtina, the Serbian translator, who was from Nish, the birthplace of Constantine in present-day Serbia, told me that people in Nish know where the palace of Constantine is located and some want to dig it out to rebuild a new monument, but they do not have yet the necessary funding. It could be argued that today’s Serbs in Nish have nothing to do with

Constantine, as he was an Illyrian and in Illyrian Dardania, there were not yet any Slavic people. In terms of identity, the people of Constantine's era are not the people of today, and it is historically naive to think otherwise. Yet, nothing prevents Serbs or Albanians from trying to recover a glorious past that connects them to times and figures of greatness, like Constantine. Everyday talk among ordinary Albanians, written press, social media, and blogging is constantly full of that. Likewise, Serbian fiction is instrumental to this aim; for example, Dejan Stojiljkovic's novel *Kostandinovo raskršće* (Constantine's crossing),<sup>40</sup> about the quest of Constantine's sword in Nish, remains one of the most widely read books in Serbian public libraries.<sup>41</sup> Even scientific events become a good opportunity to remind others of Constantine's greatness in Serbian land.<sup>42</sup> Greeks and Macedonians do exactly the same in their political claims to Alexander the Great.

Underlying conferences and debates such as those in Prishtina and Tirana are often political agendas hoping to find legitimacy in religious history. For example, the first conference on faiths in Kosovo forwarded the claim that Kosovo and the Albanians are the land and the people who cultivate religious tolerance, given that theirs is the story of Constantine and that the Edict of Milan is ultimately a story of religious tolerance. In his address to the 2013 Tirana symposium on Constantine and religious freedom, Albanian prime minister Berisha proclaimed: "If Constantine was alive today, he would have been among us, not so much because of his Dardan-Illyrian origin, but because this country and this nation has embodied better than anyone else the respect for the other's faith. He could have found the core of his Edict, here in Albania, much better than anywhere else, embodied as it is in the morals of the citizens of this country with different religious faiths and with a perfect respect for religious tolerance."<sup>43</sup> These are not merely neutral characterizations of the past but rather political claims to the moral superiority of one group over another, claims made by all, whether Albanians, Serbs, Greeks, or Macedonians.

### Everyday Religious Politics

When we talk about religion, we are dealing with some very different things. We are dealing with religious leaders and religious institutions that are like politicians and patrons of power and authority. The politics of religion can be felt most profoundly at the level of everyday interactions. In 2009, I visited the new St. George Cathedral in Korca and was greeted by a deacon who said, "Kalimera" ("Good morning" in Greek). I asked why he did not greet me in Albanian—*Mirëdita*—to which he replied that he too was Albanian but that here people like speaking Greek more. This is not true, I replied, unless Korca has been made part of Greece. I was born and grew up here as an Orthodox, but I have never seen and heard someone speaking Greek. "You must not have seen very well," he retorted angrily, "but the more you come to church the more you will see, you too!"

Similar arguments that revolve largely around a belief that the church is increasingly a place for Greek influence can be seen in the relationship between

identity politics and religious entrepreneurship, for instance, in the situation of the Orthodox Church and the Unity for Human Rights Party (Partia Bashkimi për të Drejtat e Njeriut, PBDNJ), a political party claiming to represent Albania's ethnic Greek minority. The fact that PBDNJ played a major role in the Albanian political scene has been largely due to both financial and political support from Greece, which enlarged the footing of both Orthodox followers and PBDNJ voters. In a process of "homogenization" with Greek ethnicity,<sup>44</sup> any Albanian of Orthodox Christian origin can receive a full pension and medical insurance from the Greek government. One simply needs to show a birth certificate—easily fabricated in many cases—as a proof of origin or descent in the south Albanian areas claimed to be Greek by the extreme nationalist ideology of Megali Idea. To prove one's "Greekness," individuals also need to affirm their profession of the Orthodox Christian faith, just as a Muslim must accept and affirm the shahada.<sup>45</sup> The effect of this Greek policy was a dramatic increase both in the ethnic Greek minority and in followers of the Orthodox Church. Indeed, according to independent surveys censusing religious identification, stated affiliation changed dramatically in the 2000s from the traditionally-given distribution of about 70 percent Muslims, 20 percent Orthodox Christians, and 10 percent Catholics, to 38 percent Muslims, 35 percent Orthodox Christians, and the remaining 27 percent being Catholics and non-affiliated others.<sup>46</sup> At the same time, PBDNJ secured an increasing number of seats in the Albanian Parliament.

Greek homogenization was a great opportunity for supplemental income for many Albanians in the harsh days of postcommunist life and came at a time when the Greek government could afford an aggressive nationalist policy, partially thanks to the generous European and international loans. The financial crisis that befell Greece, however, could no longer support a nationalist policy of the Greek homogenization of Albanians. As a result, the numbers of Orthodox followers and PBDNJ voters in Albania declined dramatically. For the first time, the 2011 census asked for religious and ethnic affiliations, but a huge proportion (70 percent) of Albanians refused to declare their religious faith,<sup>47</sup> and only 0.87 percent Greek minority and 6.75 percent Orthodox Christians were found in the Albanian population.<sup>48</sup> PBDNJ and the Orthodox Church,<sup>49</sup> but also the Greek government, officially protested against the census results, which they claimed were manipulated because of such an "impossible" proportion.<sup>50</sup> In the following elections, PBDNJ also lost all seats in the Albanian Parliament. During the summer of 2015, I was watching a TV program on the southwest Albanian coast, which is not only a hotly contested area of Greek politics but also one of the most beautiful holiday places in Albania. A journalist reported that this year people were speaking increasingly in Albanian rather than in Greek, as had been the case a few years before.

This story of the opportunistic and pragmatic relationship between religion and politics is not unique to Orthodoxy but can be seen as well in the recent intensification of Islam in Albania, especially in the increase of Muslim worship buildings throughout the Albanian landscape and in the increasing display of conspicuous religious insignia like the Muslim scarves worn in many Albanian towns. It is



Figure 30.2. “The Albanians” mosaic at the entrance to the National Historical Museum in Tirana tells a story of resistance to invasion and occupation throughout the country’s history. Such presentations of the past are among the material ways history incurs upon everyday life, often to political and religious ends, 2006. Photograph by David W. Montgomery.

believed that foreign financial donations support Islamic proselytism in Albania. In particular, Turkish funding from the Gulen philanthropic agencies has been very instrumental in building religious and educational institutions. It is believed by many that they also provide individual pensions for new converts to Islam.<sup>51</sup> Curiously, during a short visit in Albania in the summer of 2015, I could barely notice any women covered with a headscarf in Tirana. There might be many reasons for the observable decline in the display of headscarves, one being that if there is no longer funding provided to support Muslims in Albania, there is no longer reason for some to display Muslim belonging, which the scarf is seen to index.<sup>52</sup>

To better understand the debates at issue, among Muslim Albanians after independence in 1912, the Muslim veil was seldom worn by women in the towns—though it was more widely worn by women in rural Kosovo than in Albania. It is only since the 1990s and the turbulent changes of the postcommunist transition that there has been a rebirth of religion in Albania, including the following of Islam and the return of the veil, in particular among some young women. Interestingly, as I have argued elsewhere, in vernacular Albanian there is no Muslim term for the veil; while the word *havale* is etymologically related to “veil,” it is not perceived as a religious Islamic obligation but used more in the sense of “embarrassment” and “discomfort.”<sup>53</sup> The distinction is important in

the expression *nuk kam havale*, literally “I can’t wear the veil,” which means the rejection of the “social veil” that confined women to the shelter of the house and courtyard,<sup>54</sup> a seclusion that has been expected from ordinary housewives until recently, despite changes in the position of women. Actually, the expression is often used rather demonstratively by younger women—both Christian and Muslim in Kosovo and Albania—as the unofficial declaration of women’s liberation from cultural and religious constraints.

But as we see, both historical incursions and everyday public discussions are windows into the relationship between identity politics and religious entrepreneurs. Throughout the region, there are stories of Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Muslims, and others who claim both religious and moral heritage by selectively drawing on history and politics to infuse everyday life with claims of legitimacy and belonging. How these stories get told significantly affects the everyday of both politics and religion.

## Notes

1. The significance of religion balances the rest of social life. See Doja 2000b.
2. Doja 2006a, 2006b, 2006c.
3. Doja 2011.
4. Doja 2000c.
5. Doja 2008.
6. Edwards 2015.
7. Bieber 2002.
8. “Imami i Prishtinës Krasniqi: Do të kandidoj për President i Kosovës,” *Shqiptarja*, January 18, 2014, accessed July 22, 2018, <http://shqiptarja.com/kosova/2727/imami-i-prishtines-krasniqi-do-te-kandidoj-per-president-i-kosoves-196466.html#sthash.4vM923Fp.dpuf>.
9. In April 2012, Kosovo president Atifete Jahjaga refused to decree the appointment of MP Amir Ahmeti as ambassador because of “his religious offences, especially those expressed publicly last year in favor of religious courses and the wearing of Muslim headscarves” in primary and secondary schools. See “Ngarkesat religjioze lënë pa status diplomatit Amir Ahmeti,” *Koha Ditore*, April 27, 2012, accessed July 22, 2018, <http://kohane.net/?id=8&arkiva=1&1-97254>.
10. “Irinej: Kosova, e shenjtë për Serbinë,” *Top Channel TV*, June 1, 2014, accessed July 22, 2018, <http://top-channel.tv/lajme/artikull.php?id=278998>.
11. “Shenjtërimi i Katedrales ‘Ngjallja e Krishtit’ shoqërohet me incidente,” *Dita*, June 1, 2014, accessed July 22, 2018, <http://www.gazetadita.al/shenjtërimi-i-kishes-ngjallja-e-krishtit-ne-ceremoni-kreret-e-ortodoksise-boterore/>.
12. “Tirana dhe Prishtina në këmbë kundër kryepeshkopit serb, Berisha e shpall armik, Rama e sulmon ashpër, tension në Kosovë,” *Gazeta Express*, June 3, 2014, accessed February 27, 2017, <http://www.gazetaexpress.com/lajme/tirana-dhe-prishtina-ne-kembe-kunder-kryepeshkopit-serb-berisha-e-shpall-armik-rama-e-sulmon-ashper-tension-ne-kosove-18533/>.
13. “Rama kritikon patriarkun serb: Shpërfille besimin, na ke fyer!,” *A1Report-Shqiptarja*, June 2, 2014, accessed February 27, 2017, <http://shqiptarja.com/news.php?IDNotizia=217677&NomeCategoria=home&Titolo=rama-kritikon-patriarkun-serb-shpërfille-besimin-na-ke-fyer&IDCategoria=1&reply=384881&page=1>.

14. Judah 1997.
15. Anzulovic 1999.
16. Doja 1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2000c.
17. “Mesha në greqisht natën e Pashkës, Blushi: Kur do flasë shqip Anastasi?” (Easter office in Greek language, Blushi: When the Archbishop will speak Albanian?), *Panorama*, April 14, 2015, accessed February 27, 2017, <http://www.panorama.com.al/mesha-ne-greqisht-naten-e-pashkes-blushi-kur-do-flase-anastasi-shqip/>.
18. “Prifti ortodoks akuzon Blushin se ngriti gishtin kundër Zotit: Jo krim që s’është shqiptar” (The Orthodox priest accuses Blushi to raise the finger to God: There is no crime not being an Albanian) *Panorama*, April 14, 2015, accessed February 27, 2017, <http://www.panorama.com.al/prifti-ortodoks-akuzon-blushin-se-i-ngriti-gishtin-zotit-per-janullatosin-jo-krim-qe-seshte-shqiptar/>.
19. “Kush e vrau Mitropolitin e Korçës?,” *E Vërteta*, September 14, 2014, accessed February 27, 2017, <http://everteta.al/kush-e-vrau-mitropolitin-e-korces/>; “Mitropolitin e Korçës Fotis Kallpidhis e vrau Spiro Kosturi,” *Shqiptarja*, October 12, 2014, accessed February 27, 2017, <http://shqiptarja.com/m/home/mitropolitin-e-kor--s-fotis-kallpidhis-e-vrau-spiro-kosturi-245374.html>.
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21. See Kristo Frashëri, “Tri të vërtetat për të cilat gënjen Janullatosi,” *Gazeta Shqiptare*, October 11, 2010.
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51. In his official visit to Albania in May 2015, Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan denounced Gülen philanthropic agencies as a “terrorist parallel state”

(“Erdogan: Bllokoni aktivitetin e Gulen, ‘shteti paralel’ terrorist,” May 14, 2015, <http://shqiptarja.com/news.php?IDNotizia=292203#sthash.ROvGttdB.dpuf>). In the aftermath of the July 15, 2016, attempted coup d’état in Turkey, any supposed link to Gülen funding is under scrutiny in Albania.

52. For many, the motivation behind wearing the scarf is seen as financially instrumental. At the UN refugee summit of September 20, 2016, for example, the Austrian foreign minister gave a statement urging countries to stop increasing Islamic radicalism in Bosnia and Kosovo or Albania, where “a strong religious and ideological influence is noticeably characterized by women being paid to walk fully veiled in the streets” (“Kurz: Alle Staaten tragen Verantwortung, [http://www.kleinezeitung.at/politik/aussenpolitik/5087606/UNFluchtlingstreffen\\_Kurz\\_Alle-Staaten-tragen-Verantwortung](http://www.kleinezeitung.at/politik/aussenpolitik/5087606/UNFluchtlingstreffen_Kurz_Alle-Staaten-tragen-Verantwortung)). Such sentiments are shared and widely discussed in Albanian-speaking print and social media (“Ministri austriak: Në Shqipëri, femrat paguhen që të mbulohen,” <http://opinion.al/ministri-austriak-ne-shqipëri-femrat-paguhen-qe-te-mbulohen>).

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This book is a publication of

Indiana University Press  
Office of Scholarly Publishing  
Herman B Wells Library 350  
1320 East 10th Street  
Bloomington, Indiana 47405 USA

[iupress.indiana.edu](http://iupress.indiana.edu)

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Manufactured in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Montgomery, David W., 1968- editor.

Title: Everyday life in the Balkans / [Thirty-five authors] ; Edited by David W. Montgomery.

Description: Bloomington, IN : Indiana University Press, c2018. | Includes bibliographical references and index

Identifiers: LCCN 2018048030 (print) | LCCN 2018049206 (ebook) | ISBN 9780253038203 (web PDF) | ISBN 9780253026170 (hardback : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780253038173 (pbk. : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780253038197 (ebook epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Balkan Peninsula—Social life and customs.

Classification: LCC DR23 (ebook) | LCC DR23 .E94 2018 (print) | DDC 949.6—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2018048030>

1 2 3 4 5 23 22 21 20 19 18