A Failure of Norm Diffusion

An Analysis of Saudi Export of Salafist Norms to Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

Saudi Arabia has been exporting Salafism, a fundamentalist version of Islam, to Bosnia and Herzegovina since the 1992-95 Yugoslav secession war. However, Salafism has been mostly rejected, even though one might expect Bosnian society to be susceptible to radicalism. The purpose of this paper is to make empirical and theoretical contributions to norm diffusion theory, by closely mapping the reasons the Salafist norms have not succeeded in diffusing to Bosnian society. I use process tracing on a case study of Bosnia and Herzegovina, looking at two main variables: elite structure and cultural match. I develop a typology of elite structure with two ideal types: anarchistic and monopolistic structure. I find that the monopolistic position of the Islamic Community in conjunction with the low cultural match has hindered Salafist norm diffusion. The paper is based on official communication from the Islamic Community, newspapers articles, interview studies, and broad second-hand literature.

Key words: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Salafism, Norm Diffusion, Elite structure, Islamic Community
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Table of contents

1 Introduction

Saudi Arabia has in recent years massively increased their presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The Saudis, however, do not only bring investment, but also their own version of Islam: Salafism. Given the vulnerable situation of Bosnian Muslims – a hostile political climate and a weak socio-economic situation – one might expect the Saudi strand to displace Bosnian Islam. Yet Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) have overwhelmingly rejected the Saudi version, called Salafism. Why?

On the first page of the website of the newspaper of the Islamic Community (*Islamska Zajednica,* IZ) one could read the heading "Prohibition of education for women – the darkness of civilisation" (Spahić-Šiljak, 2023). Why would a large religious organisation agitate for female education in a post-communist country where female emancipation has been accepted and normalised since the Second World War? Apparent before us is a normative struggle between the traditional Bosnian Islam, pluralistic and tolerant, and Salafism, conservative and radical.

In usual circumstances, the unsuccessful diffusion of Salafism would perhaps not be noteworthy. However, the puzzle emerges when we consider the precarious situation of BiH. The country is still suffering from the devastating effects of the Yugoslavian secession wars in the 1990's. The economy is struggling badly – average youth unemployment since 2000 has been over 50% (ILO, 2023) – and the political system is frozen alongst ethnic lines (Turčalo & Veljan, 2018, p.22). We might therefore expect radicalism to have more of an impact.

In this case study I will study the normative conflict in BiH as a case of unsuccessful norm diffusion. I will examine the different causes for why Bosniak society has resisted Saudi norm export and how norm diffusion works in the local context.

To study norms, I have elected to use interpretative process tracing as my method. Such a method emphasises processes and change, and incorporates both structural and constitutive causes, a natural fit with my theory. My material selection uses both primary (primarily newspapers) and secondary sources. It has the broad aim of creating an archive of sources that can be used for further research. The most important sources are collected in the appendix.

The norm diffusion literature has so far been far too focused on "good" norms like liberal democracy. This skewness is a symptom of IR having been an "American social science" (Hoffman, 1977). Of course, norms diffuse from other actors than the EU and US. Thus, IR scholars should investigate the diffusion of

other norms by non-western actors. Understanding the similarities and differences is of crucial importance to understand the new multipolar world. There is thus large intra- and extradisciplinary relevance. To that end, BiH is an excellent choice of case study, due to the diffusion of Salafist norms, and their conflict with more liberal and western norms. Moreover, the norm diffusion literature has been very theoretical up to this point, and empirical evidence of how diffusion works in the local context has been requested (Björkdahl, 2012).

The purpose of this paper is not to isolate a single explanatory variable – case studies are poorly suited to that end – but rather to make empirical progress on norm diffusion in a context that has not been extensively studied and to do abductive theory development.

To explain the current outcome of rejection in BiH, I examine two main aspects: elite structure and cultural match. I study the structure of political and normative elites. I construct two ideal types of elite structure: **anarchic and monopolistic structure**. An anarchic structure is easy to access, but difficult to change, while a monopolistic structure is difficult to access, but the monopolist has control over norms, making change easy. **I find that the structure of Bosniak political elites is anarchic, although the effect of the structure on the diffusion of Salafism is inconclusive. The normative elite is dominated by the IZ, creating a monopolistic structure. Its position gives it immense power to control the diffusion of norms, making the IZ pivotal in answering the research question.** I then examine the cultural match between Salafism and Bosnian Islam using constructivist thought. **I find that it is very low, making Bosniak actors in general have a negative view of Salafism.** Elite structure constructs the maze of possibility within which actors act, while cultural match constitutes their interest and informs their decisions to take the observed path through the maze of possibility.

The paper is structured as follows: I begin with some background on BiH. I then move on to the theory on norm diffusion, developing theory on elite structure and examining cultural match. The method of process tracing will then be explored. Then, I will analyse the empirical material and investigate whether it is aptly explained by the theory. The paper concludes with a discussion on the result, primarily its generalisability and implications for further research.

1.1   Background: The Cross-roads of Europe

An understanding of the history and socio-economic situation of BiH is necessary for the uninformed reader, even though it is not directly related to the thesis.

BiH is often described as 'the cross-roads of Europe'. It has been part of the Ottoman, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian spheres and exhibits cultural influences

from the Islamic, Slavic, and Christian civilisations. Bosnia encountered Islam through the Ottomans in the early sixteenth century. As Ottoman power waned, the territory of Bosnia was granted to the Austro-Hungarian empire in 1878. Much like the previous rulers, the Austro-Hungarian empire was multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and tolerant (Malcolm, 1996). Under communism religion was supressed, and public displays of Islam were disincentivised. Religion came back in full force during the Bosnian civil war. Bosniaks were the most persecuted group (Turčalo & Veljan, 2018, p.22) and suffered genocide in Srebrenica. Many began actively practicing again (Karčić, 2022, p.275). The war ended with the Dayton Accords. The peace agreement institutionalised the grievances of war by creating a political system divided alongst ethnic lines (Turčalo & Veljan, 2018, p.22). Today, Bosniaks make up the largest group in BiH.

The socio-economic situation of all ethnic groups in BiH is precarious. Youth unemployment is extremely high, averaging 52,6% between 2000 and 2021 (ILO, 2023). Employment rate in many groups is very low, only reaching 37% for women. Brain drain and youth emigration is large and coupled with an aging population, creating long-term worries (ILO, 2022). Corruption is high, the 70th highest corruption in the world (Transparency International, 2022). Corruption and a dysfunctional political system has led to the least amount of trust in government (23%) in the western Balkans (OECD, 2020).

Given this background, it would not be unreasonable for a strict and radical ideology to take root, especially when backed by an outside power like Saudi Arabia. Why not? To begin answering that question, we must first turn to theory.

2 Theory

The puzzle, as has been stated, is that one would expect Bosnian Islam to be susceptible to Salafism. Instead, Salafism has barely taken root. Why? An answer requires a theoretical exposition of causality in norm diffusion. I use filter theory, which states the different conditions through which a norm must filter down to be diffused (Moskovko, 2012). I look at elite structure and cultural match as my two filters. Elite structure is a highly underdeveloped concept in the norm diffusion literature. I therefore attempt to develop a new typology which uses two ideal types – anarchic and monopolistic structures – to formalise the impact of elite structure on norm diffusion.

To find out what the outcome will be of the dependent variable (norm impact), we must answer two questions: how and why? Why do international norms diffuse? Under what conditions does a state accept a foreign norm? Second, how do norms diffuse? Through which institutions does the norm filter down through to the society? These two questions are closely connected (Schimmelfenning, 2002, p.11). An answer to the how-question, say "through elites" gives a partial answer to the why-question: "the norm did not diffuse because there were strong elites in opposition". Yet, the why requires us to look at the interest of the relevant actors, not only the structures through which norms diffuse. The how will primarily be answered through looking at elite structure, while the why is primarily answered through looking at cultural match.

This chapter starts with the most abstract topics and progresses towards the more concrete. I begin with the basic building blocks – constructivism and definitions. I then move on to filter theory, where I first discuss the need and merit of my own developed typology of elite structure, and then discuss how we should think about cultural match.

2.1 The Basics of Norm Diffusion Theory

To begin with, there are some basic building blocks that need to be defined. These assumptions and concepts are ubiquitous in norm diffusion research and form the basis of the subject.

2.1.1 *Constructivism*

All theories start from some fundamental assumptions about the world. The world, as regarded by constructivism, is socially constructed. That is, perception and experience of the world is dependent on the language and mind of the subject. It does not deny that there is an external reality, rather it tells us that the world is more than solely the material factors in it (Björkdahl, 2012). Such ontology does not mean that the material world is irrelevant. Rather, the interest and actions of actors are determined *both* by the intersubjective knowledge, and the material facts of the world (Adler, 2012, p.123). One of the most important types of intersubjective knowledge is norms, which this essay concerns.

2.1.2 *Definitions*

A norm is "a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p.891). A norm can be regulative, constraining behaviour; constitutive, creating identity by assigning meaning to objects; and prescriptive, telling actors what ought to be done. The three aspects are very difficult to separate. The 'oughtness'-quality, however, is the most defining aspect and differentiates norms from other rules. A norm is not about what a given identity *can't* do (say, a Muslim cannot pray to Buddha) but rather what it *should* do (a good Muslim should pray five times a day) (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

Norm diffusion is, in its broadest form, defined as the process through which norms in one space are "systematically conditioned" by prior norms in another space (Gilardi, 2012, p.454). Diffusion thus occurs when a norm that is present internationally, such as women's suffrage, is spread to another country. It is important to emphasise that diffusion is the process, not the outcome (Gilardi, 2012). The case being studied is not whether Bosnia and Saudi Arabia have the same norm, but rather the process through which Salafi norms are being spread to Bosnia. Convergence of norms might, but need not, result from diffusion. The actor who spreads the norm is called a 'norm entrepreneur' (Finnermore & Sikkink, 1998).

2.1.3 *Religion Conceptualised as Norms*

Religion is one of the most norm-heavy aspects of human life. There are both within-religion norms for how one should worship (fast during Ramadan), and outside-religion norms for how one should act in the day-to-day. These norms both assign meaning to objects (a long beard, for a Salafist, is pious) as well as regulate and prescribe behaviour.

It is somewhat surprising, then, that most research on norm diffusion has been done on non-religious norms. There is nothing particular about religious behaviour

which differentiates it from regular norms. Consider the different interpretation of *hijab*, which sets the standard for how a Muslim woman should cover her head. Some versions of Islam only require a shawl, while other versions consider a *niqab* the appropriate clothes. The evolution of this religious behaviour can clearly be fruitfully analysed as a case of norm diffusion.

2.2   Filter Theory

Norm diffusion theory is often criticised for not being able to tell which norms will get diffused (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p.908). Arguably, this is the most important aspect of norm diffusion. Social scientists are not only concerned with describing the process of how norms get diffused, but also wish to make predictions.

Filter theory attempts to remedy this problem. It brings attention to the fact that when a norm is introduced to a country by a norm entrepreneur it must "filter down" through certain particularities in the recipient environment (Moskovko, 2012). The composition of these filters matters greatly for the success rate of norm diffusion. The filters answer the 'how' and 'why' questions posed in the beginning of this chapter. Filter theory is quite underdeveloped, which is why I attempt to develop my own theory.

I use the two most common filters in the literature: domestic structure and cultural match (Schimmelfenning, 2002, p.14). Domestic structure "refers to the structure of the state and state-society relations" (Schimmelfenning, 2002, p.15). This is a broad categorisation. I conceptualise this filter as **elite structure.** I then construct two ideal types of elite structure: monopolistic and anarchic structure. In this paper, I focus on political and normative elites, but the ideal types can be extended to other types of elites as well. Cultural match looks at how well the international norm fits with the culture of the recipient society. The better the fit, the easier will it be for the norm to diffuse (Schimmelfenning, 2002).

2.2.1   *Elite Structure: Political and Normative Elites, Anarchic and Monopolistic Structures*

Elite structure builds on the idea that norms "do not float freely" (Risse-Kappen, 1994), but are instead picked up by **domestic elites**. I focus on political and normative elites. An analysis of both the 'how' and the 'why' (Schimmelfenning, 2002) must therefore incorporate an analysis of elite structure, for it is through them that diffusion flows after it has been introduced by norm entrepreneurs. I develop my own ideal-type typology of **elite structure** which focus on the distribution of power amongst elites, building on Risse-Kappen, traditional IR, and microeconomic theory. The two ideal types that I propose are monopolistic and anarchic structures. In monopolistic structures it is extremely hard to diffuse norms

without the monopolist's approval. But when approval is gained, change is possible. In anarchic structures, it is easy for a norm entrepreneur to get their foot in the door, while changing norms is difficult. Elite structure shapes the process of norm diffusion (the "how") but does not fully determine the outcome.

To create the typology, we first must begin with the units within it: the elites. An elite is a weaker version of a veto player, i.e. an actor "whose agreement is required for a change from the status quo" (Tsebelis, 1995, p.1) and can be analysed along the same lines. In the context of norm diffusion, the two most important types of elites are political elites and normative elites.

Some elites are political elites. They might have *de jure* power from the constitution (like a president) or *de facto* power from controlling the legislature by virtue of, for example, party size (Tsebelis, 2002, p.2). Political elites affect norm diffusion primarily through legislation. It is they, ultimately, who decide whether to institutionalise women's suffrage or Salafism. Earlier in the process, political elites also affect diffusion by facilitating or impeding the norm, say through restrictions on public displays.

Other actors derive their elite position in the diffusion of norms from their normative, rather than political, power. These are called normative elites. Their position is created partly by their institutional position and advantages (consider the normative sway of the actor in control of education). But institutional position is not enough – they must also be trusted. A normative elite holds deep esteem and can influence the "hearts and minds" of the population. The catholic church's opposition to abortion is an excellent example. The sources of normative power are many, but do not matter in this framework. I do not require an elite, political or normative, to have an *actual* veto, but simply enough power to "require their agreement for a change from the status quo" (paraphrase of Tsebelis, 1995, p.1).

Now, as Tsebelis (2002, p.12) has shown, a political structure with many veto players is very stable, while if there is only one veto player, the structure might be flexible or stable. The same mechanisms are at work in norm diffusion. If a structure is dominated by very few actors, they can choose to diffuse their norms of choice. Such was the case in the USSR, where only the top echelon of the communist party needed to become convinced of liberal ideas on security to change the whole foreign policy (Risse-Kappen, 1994). If there are many actors that need to be convinced, the structure becomes harder to change.

If we wish to generalise the insights of Risse-Kappen on US and Soviet foreign policy, they must be formalised. Across the literature, many people point to the composition and characteristics of elites as an important filter (Risse-Kappen, 1994; Moskovko, 2012; Schimmelfenning 2002; Jönsson, 2002; Zimmerman, 2016). Yet, nothing except a rough outline of elite composition has been offered. Authors point to history, strength, institutions, etc. (Moskovko, 2012). I believe that for this subject to evolve there is a need for strict, simplified models which are easily

falsifiable. I therefore attempt to create two ideal types of the power balance within the elite. The model is inspired by the Bosnian case, which is particular in that it has a very complicated and messy political system but has a single powerful normative actor: the IZ. I believe that the theory development presented can help us understand the Bosnian case, but also be extended to other norm diffusion processes.

We can conceive elite structure as a spectrum between two ideal types: a monopolistic structure and an anarchic structure. A monopolistic structure has a single powerful actor. In such a structure, much like a real monopoly, the actor has "market power" in that they can decide which norms get diffused. If there is only one actor that decides which norms get diffused, then that actor has discretionary power. In such a structure, change comes top-to-bottom. From the perspective of a norm entrepreneur, the difficult part is getting access to the monopolist. Once access has been achieved, change is possible (Risse-Kappen, 1994). Of course, this is an ideal type, and no real structure is fully monopolistic, except for Orwell's Oceania.

An anarchic structure, on the other hand, has no actors powerful enough that they can issue a veto. When no single actor has market power, it is the individuals, the demand side, that determines which norms get diffused. The elites do not possess enough power to control which norms get diffused. If one group of elites refuses a norm, another will simply step in. Thus, access is easy. The hard part is gaining support from a large enough share of the relevant population to initiate change. A modern democracy with many interest groups and no dominant parties could be characterised alongside these lines. It will not be hard to diffuse a norm in some part of the population, but to convince everyone in a norm cascade (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998) is much harder. Risse-Kappen exemplifies with the US, where several liberal foreign policy interest groups had access to the corridors of power, but never succeeded in changing the actual foreign policy (Risse-Kappen, 1994).

	Anarchic Structure	Monopolistic structure
Political Elites	Anarchic Structure of Political Elites	Monopolistic Structure of Political elites
Normative Elites	Anarchic Structure of Normative Elites	Monopolistic Structure of Normative Elites

Diagram 1. The typology in its simplest form. The box can be extended downwards to include other types of elites, such as economic elites.

The attentive reader will notice that my framework of elite structure does not tell us whether a norm will diffuse (the 'why'), but rather distinguishes the implications for diffusion given different elite structures (the 'how'). As stated above, the 'how' can often provide partial answers to the 'why', but not complete

ones. This is because the interests of actors are not shaped by the structures, but rather by their norms and ideas (Katzenstein & Okanwara, 1993, p.116) – the elite structure is what actors make out of it (paraphrase of Wendt, 1992). To figure out the interest of the actors, we must go on to examine the content of the norm and the congruence with existing norms in the recipient country, i.e. the cultural match.

2.2.2 *Cultural Match*

The starting point of the concept of cultural match is that for a norm to be diffused, it must filter through individuals. Are they able to reconcile the new norm with their old ones? If not, norm diffusion will not succeed. The cultural match then attempts to look at the degree of congruence between the old and new beliefs of individuals (Zimmerman, 2016, p.100)

When conceptualising cultural match, there are two pitfalls. First, cultural match is often criticised for being essentialist (Zimmerman, 2016), treating culture as monolithic. This is understandable given that most of the time, researchers simply assert that the norms match or do not match (Schimmelfenning, 2002), falling victim to their own preconceptions. However, we can get around this problem by thinking about cultural match as the average of individual beliefs, not essential to all individuals. Second, equating cultural match with behaviour is a tautology, and must be avoided (Cortell & Davis, 2000, pp.67-70). We must be able to tell if there is a cultural match before adoption.

A cultural match means that there is a pre-existing congruence between the set of norms of the recipient individuals and the diffused norm (Baltag & Burmester, 2022, p.491) It builds on the assumption that the set of norms that a culture consists of has an internal logic. They are not haphazardly assembled, but a product of historical and ideological circumstance. If the diffused norm fits inside this internal logic – whether that logic be liberal, socialist, or Islamic– then diffusion will be easier. When there is a cultural match, the logic of appropriateness takes over. Actors no longer act because of the consequences of their actions, but rather because that is the appropriate behaviour for their given identity (Gilardi, 2012, p.466). Cultural match, importantly, is not a binary variable but lies on a continuous spectrum. A low cultural match does not preclude diffusion. The soviet legacy in Eastern Europe meant that it was harder for EU norms to diffuse due to the lower cultural match (Baltag & Burmester, 2022, p.491). But in some countries, like the Baltics, other factors counteracted the Soviet legacy and today EU-associated norms dominate.

The cultural match then emphasises the content of the norm. Diffusion not only depends on structure, but also the norm in itself. Reiterating the constructivist standpoint, the interests of actors are shaped by their norms and ideas (Wendt, 1992), and it is ultimately this which determines the 'why'.

3 Method

In this chapter I present my methodology. Methodology ensures that the results are not just haphazard, but rather products of an intersubjectively verifiable process. I use interpretative process tracing to find casual process observations (CPOs), which are a distinct type of qualitative observations. The use of process tracing and CPOs are extremely useful when studying a case in-depth. I then discuss my broad material selection, which has aimed at creating a complex picture and to build an archive of primary sources for future research, presented in the appendix. The validity and reliability of the paper is then examined. Finally, I discuss the operationalisations of my concepts.

3.1 Interpretive Process Tracing

Process tracing is a common method in qualitative case studies. As the name suggest, process tracing aims to examine the whole causal process, thus identifying how and why different independent variables caused the outcome. The method does in-depth scrutinising of an event over a period of time. It thus differs from counterfactual methods which need both an event and non-event. The method is distinctive in its emphasis on *change* (Beach & Pedersen, 2019, p.1). It may not be able to identify a single causal factor, which almost never exists, but can narrow down the possibilities (Anguko, 2019). Given that my theory focuses on the *process* of norm diffusion, process tracing is a natural choice.

Process tracing has been criticised for using a very narrow and stringent definition of causes and mechanisms (cf. Beach & Pedersen, 2019), excluding interpretative scholarship. To remedy this problem, interpretative process tracing has been developed. This method focuses on both "regular" causal analysis and constitutive explanations. It not only looks at the direct causes, but also the broader social context which constitutes the identities of actors and thus inform their interests (Norman, 2021). Such dual emphasis is an excellent match with my theory, given how the theory focuses on the mechanical effects of elite structure, and the constitutive effects of culture.

The quantitative-inspired criticism of process tracing was that it often added more variables than observation, thus decreasing the degrees of freedom which makes the causal claim weaker (Mahoney, 2010, p.). This critique can be met by distinguishing data-set observations and causal-process observations (CPO). A data-set observation is what is normally considered an observation: the value of a

given variable. A CPO, on the other hand, is an "an insight or piece of data that provides information about context, process, or mechanism, and that contributes distinctive leverage in causal inference" (Collier, Brady, & Seawright, 2010, p. 277). CPOs are often compared to a "smoking gun", a piece of information which can say a lot with very little. They offer a distinctly qualitative way of gaining information about the world (Mahoney, 2010, p.122).

I thus aim in this paper to identify the causal chain which lead from the introduction of Saudi influence 90s to the rejection of salafism today. I will attempt to find CPOs as evidence. Although the delineation between descriptive, theory-testing, and theory-developing is not as strict in case-studies (Esaiasson et. al., 2017, p.113), this study primarily does abductive theory development. Abductive theory-development is, one might say, the pragmatist middle-ground, where the material generates theory, and theory generates material. The two parts are in dialogue, as opposed to pure deduction or induction (Mitchell, 2018)

3.1.1 *Material Selection*

Material selection in my study has the aim of painting a broad picture of Salafi diffusion. Finding material has been the most difficult part of this study. Few academic sources exist. The bureaucracy and government of BiH are difficult to navigate and communication is poor. The Saudi Arabian government is secretive. Due to the dearth of evidence as well as the investigative nature of process tracing, I have used a multitude of sources to paint as complex a picture as possible. The different types of sources and the reason for consulting them can be found in the below table. The most important sources are collected in the appendix. To make certain that my own translations of Bosnian material are correct, I have used ChatGPT as a translation tool.

The material selection has combined first- and second-hand sources, all in order with the aim of building an archive which can provide a complex picture of BiH. For the second-hand sources, I have made some initial searches combining the search words "Wahhabism", "Islamism", "Salafism", "Bosnia and Herzegovina", and "Saudi Arabia" in academic databases, after which I used the snowball method. A large part of the analysis has been based on in-depth interview studies (particulary Bećirević, 2016, and Turčalo & Veljan, 2018). These provide a unique insight into the workings of these unstudied institutions, which a textual analysis cannot provide. An imam in the IZ knows where, how, and why Salafism is strong, what the internal IZ discussion is, and what the reaction of the IZ is. For first-hand sources, I have searched the databases of three major newspapers in BiH: Preporod (the official newspaper of the IZ), Oslobođenje, traditionally social democratic, and Dnevni Avaz, traditionally conservative, using the search words "vehabija" (Wahhabi), "selefija" (salafist), and "Saudiska Arabija" (Saudi Arabia) with their respective derivatives. Some other first-hand material has also been found through snowballing the second-hand sources, complementing each other. Preporod is

incredibly useful in tracing the official position of the IZ, as it is their main communication channel. The two other newspapers are useful in tracing Salafist events and by providing analysis of the political and normative structures.

Given my somewhat unsystematic search, there is a definitive risk that I have missed important sources. I do not thus purport to make a literature review or to provide a complete picture.

Type of Material	Primary reason for consulting
First hand Sources	
Preporod (Official IZ newspaper	To understand the views of the IZ on Salafism and how it has changed.
Local Newspapers (Oslobođenje and Dnevni Avaz)	To follow the timeline.
Second Hand Sources	
Literature	To complement my own research and understand the broader picture
Interview studies with IZ imams	To understand the workings of the IZ as a normative monopolist.
Interview studies with regular Bosnian	To understand the cultural match.

3.1.2 *Validity and Reliability*

Process tracing methods have strong within-case validity. However, there are some pragmatic and cultural factors which weaken the validity of the paper. Pragmatically, the validity could be increased with more time and resources. Time on the ground in BiH could be incredibly useful for raising validity. Moreover, in the demarcation of the essay, the Saudi Arabian part of the equation has to a large extent been left out. The reasons are time and space, as well as a dearth of sources. Nonetheless, norm diffusion is a dialogical process, and a sole focus on the recipient lessens validity. The cultural factors emerge from the fact that theory posits "cultural match" as a relevant variable. To understand cultural match, one must know the culture. Although my Bosnian background helps, I am by no means a native. A more knowledgeable person would be able to interpret the cultural match with stronger validity.

As for reliability, qualitative methods are often accused of having low intersubjectivity and reproducibility, weakening reliability. I have attempted to remedy this problem through being very clear with my sources and using a well-developed methodology. But given that some parts of my paper rely on interpretation, there is a risk that someone else would not reach the same results even under the same conditions. Moreover, another researcher might have developed a slightly different theory. I do not consider this risk too large however, since interpretation is not a large part of the essay, and the purpose of a theory-

developing paper is not that everyone should develop the exact same theory. The addition of the appendix also raises reliability through spelling out the most important sources.

3.2   Operationalisation

Operationalisation transforms the abstract concepts of theory to measurable indicators. The wide material, the complex concepts, and the method means that using a single indicator as operationalisation would be a poor fit. Rather, I operationalise through clusters of closely related questions. For each of the three concepts – political elite structure, normative elite structure, and cultural match – a cluster of questions will be asked of the material, which creates a thicker and more complex analysis. Using these clusters of questions, I can then provide answers to whether the elite structure is more anarchic or more monopolistic, and whether there is a cultural match.

3.2.1   *Clusters of Questions for Elite Structure*

Since there is no clear indicator on elite structure there is a need to ask broad questions about the number, relative strength, and relationships of political and normative elites.

The first cluster for the structure of normative elites is the *institutional landscape*. It consists of questions like: are there any dominant parties? Do individuals have a lot of sway? Are there coalitions? How large are the parties? How many are there? Are there any institutional veto players, like a presidential veto? Do the parties frequently change sides, or are the sides set in place? Is there a high barrier to entry to the political elite? These questions give us information on the number and relative strength of political elites. With that information, we can then examine whether it is closer to a monopolistic or anarchic structure.

Likewise, the structure of normative elites can also be figured out to some extent through the *institutional landscape*. Here, I ask questions like: How many actors do people consult for spiritual and normative questions? Does any actor have an institutional advantage, say for example through control of education, that will give them normative sway? Who appoints the normative and religious officials? What are the barriers of entry to become a normative official? Once again, I try to figure out the number and relative strength of normative elites.

Both political and normative elites face a cluster of questions related to *trust*. Given that we are dealing with norms, institutional power is not enough. For an actor to have power over norms, people must trust your judgement in normative matters. The cluster then asks: how much do people trust the actors, in surveys or

in through donations? Can we find CPOs which show that people listen to the actor in normative discussion? Are there any confrontations over normative matters which the actor wins or loses?

3.2.2 *Clusters of Questions for Cultural Match*

When it comes to cultural match, the clearest indicator is the beliefs of the actors themselves. The cluster is small and asks: what do Bosniaks think of Salafism? Do they think Salafism works in the Bosniak context? If interviewees say that the norm is not congruent with their own normative complex, then it is not congruent (given a well-done interview). Thus, I will look at different types of statements from Bosniaks. I also ask the cluster to the writings of the IZ on Salafism, to examine the official position on the cultural match.

To complete the picture, I ask a cluster of theological questions about the two versions. I ask what relative weight the two theologies give to *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *sunnah* (the sayings and deeds of Muhammed) in guiding how to lead a pious life, how strict religious rules, what the religious tabus are, and how willing they are to accept other beliefs. The cluster is important to avoid the tautology of equating behaviour with congruence (Cortell & Davis, 2000, pp.67-70).

4 Analysis of Empirical Material

I now turn to the analysis of my empirical material. Here, it is useful to reiterate the research question: Why has the diffusion of Salafist norms been unsuccessful? I begin by quickly explaining the beginnings of the relationship and establish the fact that Saudi Arabia is attempting to export salafism to BiH, as well as the limited impact of the norm. I then create a timeline of important events which can act as CPOs. With the timeline in hand, I attempt to analyse the political and normative elites in Bosnia as well as the cultural match.

4.1 Laying the Base: First Contact and Avenues of Influence

In this section, I describe the relationship between Saudi Arabia and BiH. I look at the first contact and through which channels Salafism is being exported. It must be noted that speaking about the "Salafist Movement" is incorrect, since there are several different competing movements. (Babić, 2017). When considering the Salafist influence of Saudi Arabia today, the emphasis is not on the most extreme groups. These groups have other influences and causes and should be analysed with other frameworks. Moreover, although the state religion of Saudi Arabia is technically Wahhabism (a version of Salafism), Saudi Arabia is the only major Salafist actor, and the foremost diffuser of Salafist norms (Nagi, 2022). The two versions can thus be equated. Since the state is also a centralised dictatorship, we can assume that most, if not all, investment and Salafist diffusion has the implicit approval of the Saudi state. This is a simplification, but necessary for the analysis.

4.1.1 *First Contact*

The first definitive contact between the two countries occurred when the Faculty of Islamic Theology was set up in Sarajevo in 1977 with Saudi funds (Malcom, 1996, p.201). Salafism was properly introduced to BiH with volunteers to the Bosnian army during the 90's. Some of these volunteers, called mujahedin, stayed after the war and preached Salafism. They were organised in the Saudi-backed Active Muslim Youth (*Aktivna islamska omladina* - AIO). Salafism also spread through aid, both humanitarian and grants for scholarships, which was given on the condition that recipients attend Salafist schools (Turčalo & Veljan, 2018, p.16).

After 9/11, Saudi-funded NGOs were heavily scrutinised and AIO were forced to close in 2006 (Azinović, Bassuener & Weber, 2011, p.67). The Salafist movement moved to isolated villages and later online. In this later period, one of the most important leaders have been Jusuf Barčić, who was educated in Saudi Arabia during the Bosnian War (Bećirević, 2016).

4.1.2 *The influence of Saudi Arabia and Salafism today*

Today, the influence of Saudi Arabia primarily flows through economic channels. Although not the largest investor in BiH, Saudi Arabia has been involved in several high-profile investments. Saudi-affiliated companies and organisations have built SCC and BBI, two of the largest shopping centres in all of Sarajevo; have donated a large amount to a new library for the University of Sarajevo (Toè, 2016); and are building a 500 000 m^2 real estate project (the largest in BiH) (Zawya, 2022). BBI, for example, is the only shopping centre in BiH that doesn't serve pork or alcohol (Lebl, 2014, p.18), which is atypical. These high-profile investments create legitimacy for the Saudi way of life.

Perhaps the most important Saudi-funded project is the King Fahd Mosque in Sarajevo, the largest mosque in BiH. Although nominally under the control of the IZ, it is well-known as a hub of Salafism (Karčić, 2022, p.282) More than 18,000 people attended these courses in 2016 (Turčalo & Veljan, 2018, p.11). It appears to be the main organising channel for Saudi influence. For example, it is suspected that the Saudi ministry of Islamic Affairs pays imams that convert to Salafism under the table (Bećirević, 2016). There are other cases as well of Saudi Arabia financing the reconstruction of mosques across the country (Turčalo & Veljan, 2018, p.11). Finally, the kingdom also exerts influence through scholarships for higher education to Saudi Islamic universities (Karčić, 2010a)

But the impact of salafism has been limited. There are only a few isolated villages outside of the influence of the IZ that preach Salafism, and very few Bosniaks attend Salafist prayer circles. There were 38 in the country before the IZ issued the ultimatum of inclusion (Turčalo & Veljan, 2018, p.5), which will be examined below. A study in 2018 found that only 10% of Bosniaks had a positive view of Saudi Arabia, and 27% had a negative perception (Lefevbre, 2019).

4.2 Timeline of Important Events

In accordance with my method of process tracing, I present a timeline of important events which I will discuss. Having a clear idea of the order of events is important in general, but especially important within the process tracing framework. All the events will be explained, the timeline is only for reference.

Timeline of important events

1995

Dayton Accords bring an end to the Bosnian War.

1996-2004

Active Islamic Youth, a Saudi-sponsored organisation, and remaining Mujahedin are active.

2000

Opening of the King Fahd Mosque.

2006

Dr. Hafizović warns of Salafi influence in the polemic text "They are coming for your children". As a result, he is strongly condemned by the then Rais-ul-Ulama Cerić.

2012

Cerić steps down and Kavazović takes over.

2012

The IZ mobilises the population against proposed changes in religious education in schools, forcing the proposal to be rescinded.

2015

Two terrorist attacks by individuals associated with Salafism bring attention to the diffusion of Salafist norms.

Dec 4th 2015

SDA & IZ meeting leads to the Joint Statement on Terrorism and Violent Extremism.

Dec 14th 2015

Kavazović calls for the closure of para-*jamaats*, i.e. small mosques outside the jurisdiction of the IZ.

4.3 The Structure of Political and Normative elites

I now begin my analysis of the structure of the political and normative elites in BiH. I begin by analysing the intra-Bosniak elite structure (as opposed to the whole of BiH). I find that the **structure of political elites is anarchic**, but it is inconclusive whether it is a contributing factor to the unsuccessful diffusion. **The structure of normative elites,** with the Islamic Community (IZ) as a dominant actor, **is highly monopolistic.** This means that the monopolist has large power over which norms get diffused and which do not and has strongly impacted the diffusion of Salafist norms.

4.3.1 *The Anarchic Structure of the Bosniak political elite*

The structure of Bosniak political elites closely resembles the anarchic ideal type. The empirical evidence somewhat confirms the theory, which states that access to anarchic structures is easy, but changing them is hard. However, Salafism does not have enough adherents in BiH for a party to form, and for the structure of political elites to seriously impact the diffusion.

The SDA (Party of Democratic Action) is, historically speaking, the most important Bosniak political party. It was formed by Alija Izetbegovic and later leader of the IZ Mustafa Cerić in 1990 and was intertwined with the IZ during the war and onwards (ICG, 2013). The SDA has held the Bosniak part of the tripartite presidency for most of the time. Bakir Izetbegovic (son of Alija) has represented SDA in the presidency two times. The party polled 37.92% in the first general Bosnian election in 1996 but has since hovered around 18% until today.

The power of the SDA has waned since the war. Today the political system is filled with multiple parties, like the Social Democratic Party (SDP) who won the latest election for the Bosniak presidency. The relations between the parties are constantly in flux with no set alliances and backstabbing as the rule, not the exception (ICG, 2013, BIRN 2012). There is a total of 10 Bosniak or multi-ethnic parties that won seats in the assembly of the federation of BiH (i.e. the non-Serb parts of the state of BiH). The two largest, the SDA and the SDP, collectively got only 37% in the election within the Federation. Parties in general enjoy low levels of trust, only 15.8% in 2012 (ICG, 2013) which is unsurprising given the deadlock of politics in BiH. The parties have extensive patronage networks, and corruption, as has been stated, is rife (Freedom House, 2023). The intra-Bosniak political structure might then be classified as an anarchic structure. There are few to none veto players and, in any case, trust is so low, and alliances change so often that the veto power of a single actor would quickly get circumvented.

Empirical evidence of SDA-Saudi connections thus confirms the theory of access being easy, but change is hard in anarchic structures. Salafism is coming into

important actors, but that's not enough to create change. It appears that Saudi money is finding its way into SDA hands, like when the Saudis got permission to construct the King Fahd Mosque in Sarajevo by Bakir Izetbegovic, then director of the Construction Bureau of Sarajevo Canton (Lebl, 2014). People associated with the SDA were unusually accepting of Salafis when interviewed (Bećirević, 2016). However, that has not produced change: the only outspoken Islamist party in BiH, Partija Pravog Puta, was able to stand in the 2010 election, but did not breach 0.5% of the vote (BIRN, 2010).

The structure produces the effects that are expected of the theory. It would appear, given some weak empirical evidence, that the anarchic structure has made it easier for the Saudis to exploit differences and get a foothold in the country, for example in the King Fahd Mosque. However, even though they have access, diffusing norms in an anarchic structure is difficult due to the need of broad consensus. It thus informs us, to some extent, on how diffusion within politics functions, providing some complexity in understanding. Nonetheless, it does also appear that Salafism does not have enough adherents in BiH to create a real political force; the 0.5% vote share of Partija Pravog Puta is inconsequential. The Salafist-associated terrorist attacks in 2015 and ISIS recruitment of Bosniaks has created a situation where all parties are against Salafism. Thus, there is not really a political conflict over Salafism. Restating the research question of "why has not Salafism diffused to BiH?", the structure of the political elites provides inconclusive answers.

4.3.2 *The Monopolistic Structure of the Islamic Normative Elite*

In this subsection I will examine the normative strength of the Islamic Community in BiH and attempt to answer the two clusters stated in the operationalisation. I ask whether the organisation can be considered a normative monopolist, and how that position has impacted the diffusion of Salafism.

The Islamic Community, (IZ), is the Islamic religious authority in BiH. The basic organisational unit is called a *jamaat* and includes one mosque. The head is called the Rais-ul-ulama (IZ, 2012). Since the war, there have been two Rais-ul-ulamas: Grand Mufti Cerić and Grand Mufti Kavazović.

Both institutional position and normative confidence are important factors. The IZ is the only organisation in BiH that is allowed to interpret Islam by law (Bećirević, 2016). It appoints the imams for the ca. 1700 mosques in the country, and provides religious education in schools (Cetin, 2008). The trust in the IZ is far larger than any politicians. In 2012, trust in government and political parties was 18.9% and 15.8% respectively, while trust in religious communities was 61.7% (ICG, 2013). Another indicator is the amount donated during Ramadan, *zakat*, which amongst non-Salafi Bosniaks was very high, and increased from 2012-2016 (Turčalo & Veljan, 2018, p.13). Given the institutional position and strong trust the IZ enjoys, we can safely consider it a normative elite. Its position can be directly

observed in the conflict over religious education in schools. When the SDP proposed that religious education (which the IZ controls) should no longer be part of the final grade of high-school students, the IZ mobilised a counter-campaign. The campaign led to huge protest in the streets of Sarajevo and culminated in the education minister resigning (Radio Free Europe, 2012). The normative sway of the IZ is immense. There is also a lack of other large actors – non-IZ Islamic preachers are forced underground or online. The elite structure might then be characterised laying on the monopolistic end of the spectrum. The conflict over education is a strong example of a CPO: it tells us a lot about the IZs position, with very little.

Having established the monopolistic position of the IZ, I will now examine its position on Salafism and whether the low impact of Salafism can be attributed to the IZ as a normative elite.

The position of the IZ regarding Salafism was for the first decade or so somewhat ambiguous, or even negligent. Rais-ul-ulama Cerić called discussions on Salafist influence "Islamophobic" after Salafist protests had forced the Queer festival in Sarajevo to close (Radio Free Europe, 2009). In 2006, the prominent Islamic scholar dr. Hafizovic warned of Salafi influence in the polemic text "They are coming for our children". He was strongly condemned by Cerić as an "extremist seeking revenge" (Selimbegović, 2015). The unwillingness for many years to condemn Salafism is attributed to the large financial donations of Saudi Arabia to BiH (Bećirević, 2016, p.22) and the corresponding close ties that the IZ wishes to cultivate with the larger Islamic world (Karčić, 2010a). Even today, the IZ often publishes texts which emphasizes the similarities, not differences, of all Muslims: "Fortunately, the Islamic Community (IZ) is not a community of uniformity and dictatorship, but an open community that upholds and nurtures Islamic pluralism. […] In addition, purges [of Salafists] are a Kharijite-Mu'tazilite, not Sunni, practice. Sunnism has always been inclusive." (Alibašić, 2015, see Bajić, 2016 and Subašić, 2019 for other examples).

Two terrorist attack by people associated with Salafism in 2015 appear to have changed the position of the IZ. In the aftermaths of the attacks, the IZ issued a "Joint Statement on Terrorism and Violent Extremism" together with leading Bosniak figures like the SDA leadership (Bećirević, 2016). The statement emphasis the tolerance that signifies Bosnian Islam and the threat of radicalism, as well as implores other Muslims country to respect the traditions of Bosnia (Preporod, 2015). Only 10 days later did Rais-ul-ulama Kavazović call for the closing of para-*jamaats*, i.e., unofficial 'mosques' outside the jurisdiction of the IZ, usually inside a living room. All para-*jamaats* that refused would be closed by the security forces (Karčić, 2022, p.284). The power of a monopolistic normative elite is apparent in this decision. The para-*jamaats* in small isolated Bosnian villages were the main hotbeds of Salafism. By delegitimising them, the IZ clearly impeded the diffusion of the norm. The ability to delegitimise and close them is given by the IZs monopolistic position. After the decision, most Salafis have been integrated into the IZ (Bećirević, 2016, p.40), giving the IZ input on preaching and the distributed

literature. In 2016, Preporod republished an article from 2004, which stated that "Terrorists are responsible for terrorism, but […] for the spread of their "light" ideology and theology through mosques, internet portals, literature, etc., the reises, sheiks, muftis, and imams are to blame!" (Preporod, 2016), clearly attacking Salafist preachers (sheiks are not a feature of Bosnian Islam). This meeting was a turning point for the IZs position, which is also stated in another article from 2015: "If someone wonders why [measures to combat extremism] was not done so clearly much earlier, we will remind them that many things were not as differentiated and clear as they are today." (Alibašić, 2015).

The IZ has also started a "vetting system" (Karčić, 2022, p.284) for imams. Degrees in Islamic studies, which are required to become an imam, taken at foreign universities must be approved by the Faculty of Islamic Studies. The faculty, closely connected with the IZ, decides which degrees to approve discretionally. Also, education at Bosnian Islamic institutions is required, which is considered a moderating influence (Karčić, 2022). The IZ themselves emphasise the importance of education in Bosnian madrasas to combat extremism (Alibašić, 2015).

The monopolistic position of the IZ on Islamic normative matters gives them great control over the diffusion of norms. Since the IZ has an initial scepticism of Salafism, stemming from the low cultural fit, it has in recent years acted as a roadblock to the diffusion of Salafist norms. Instead, most of Salafi proselytising has moved online.

4.4   Cultural Match

I now turn to the cultural match of Salafist norms in Bosnian society. As stated above, I operationalise through two clusters: one asking for subjective views, and another comprised of theological questions. The low cultural match of Salafism in BiH can clearly be seen through the views of Bosniaks, both religious and secular, the theological differences, and the official documents of the IZ.

The excellent interview studies by Bećirević (2016) shows the opinions of regular Bosniaks on the Salafist issue. Non-Salafi Bosniaks, in general, held Salafis in very low regard, and considered their lifestyle to be incompatible with Bosnian society. "|T]here is no way Salafis can ever fit into [Bosnian] society with their way of life" said one man, "Those women with the niqab treat us as if we are lesser human beings. Their judgment about our way of life is so apparent that it is very difficult to communicate with them", said one woman (Bećirević, 2016, p.89-90). The views of Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs are very negative as well. One of the main points of contention was the insistent proselytising of Salafis. Bosniaks also have a negative perception of Saudi Arabia in general, as stated above: only 10% have a positive view of the kingdom (Lefevbre, 2019).

These views are unsurprising given knowledge of the differences between Bosnian Islam and Salafism. I now turn to an analysis of the content of the Salafist norm, which supports the low cultural fit. Even a shallow analysis reveals that Salafism and Bosnian Islam are opposed in almost every area of note.

BiH has been distinctively shaped by its experiences at the 'cross-roads' of Europe and the resulting multicultural environment. It is known for its tolerance of religious differences and its emphasis on individual religiosity, thus entailing a separation of mosque and state (Bećirević, 2016, p.8). Preporod often emphasises this distinctive feature of Bosnian Islam: "Bosnian Imams […] call for ascetism, modesty, and Sharia, but also for […] creating and accepting the best functional social order that corresponds to a pluralistic society" (Subašić, 2017) and calls Wahhabism fundamentalist (Rahman, 2016). As formulated by the IZ, Bosnian Islam emphasises *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) developed in Islamic universities, instead of the *sunnah* (the deeds and sayings of Muhammed) (Karčić, 2010b). Finally, it has a far more liberal view of women, as emphasised in the text "Prohibition of education for women – the darkness of civilisation" (Spahić-Šiljak, 2023).

This is in stark contrast with the Salafi interpretation of Islam, which is characterised by literalism, not accepting a secular state, and little regard for religious differences (Bećirević, 2016, p.8). The meaning of the word Salafism comes from *Salaf*, which refers to the first three generations of Muslims. Salafism regards the Islam practiced by Muhammed and his immediate successors to be the only correct version of Islam. The extreme conservatism and purism mean it has been criticised for oversimplification (Bećirević, 2016). The piety assigned to proselytising is one of the major theological differences between Bosnian Islam and Salafism. "[Bosniaks] complained that Salafis they encounter try to change their minds 'and they do so aggressively'" (Bećirević, 2016, p.92). Many Salafis also practice *takfir* (accusing another Muslim of apostasy). Declaring *takfir* is an extreme action for many Muslims. To some, the use of *takfir* is the defining aspect of Salafism, as it carries with it heavy consequences and in some circles legitimises violence. *Takfir,* and the potential for violence is strongly opposed by the IZ (Alibašić, 2015). Salafism, in stark contrast to the societally institutionalised Bosnian Islam, calls for Muslims that live in an apostate society to withdraw from society, in essence becoming hermits (Azinović, Bassuener & Weber, 2011, p.67). Salafists are opposed to an institutionalisation and systemic organisation of religion, thus putting them in direct opposition to the IZ (Alibašić, 2015). Women are also far more controlled, with *niqab* or *burqa* being the norm (as opposed to *hijab* which is often used by Bosniak women), and female education not being allowed.

There is thus a low amount of congruence between the two versions of Islam. Given the assumption that actors are unwilling to adopt a norm which does not fit with the rest of their beliefs, the low cultural match means that it is difficult for Salafism to diffuse. The interest of the IZ, furthermore, is shaped by its beliefs (Wendt, 1992), and is opposed to Salafism due to the low congruence, as well as

due to Salafist beliefs – *takfir*, anti-institutionalism - which are directly opposed to the IZ. Therefore, the IZ uses its monopolistic position against Salafism, strongly impeding the norm diffusion.

4.5   Summary and Conclusion of Analysis

I have analysed three aspects of the unsuccessful diffusion of the Salafist norm: the structure of political elites, the structure of normative elites, and the cultural match.

The anarchic Bosniak political elite structure is more susceptible to outside influences. The system is easy to access, which can be observed in the empirical evidence. However, the results of the analysis of the structure of political elites are inconclusive and does not provide answers to the research questions.

The structure of normative elites, on the other hand, is clearly monopolistic, shown in its control of education, of imam appointments, and closing of para-*jamaats*. The powerful position of the IZ in BiH gives it robust control over normative matters. It can block, to a very large extent, norm diffusion that it does not agree with.

Finally, the cultural match of Salafism in Bosnian society appears to be very low. The opinions of Bosniaks, of the IZ, and the rest of Bosnian society on Salafism is highly negative. An analysis of the two varieties of Islam also shows that the two normative matrices are far apart and oppositional on many important issues. The very low cultural match constructs the interests of the IZ and makes it block Salafist diffusion – explaining why the IZ has chosen to use its monopolistic power to deter Salafism instead of enabling it.

These three points paint a picture of the reasons for why the diffusion of Salafism has been unsuccessful. Even though the BiH appears fertile at first glance for Salafism, the monopolistic structure of normative elites and low cultural match has blocked the diffusion. This paper has made an in-depth case study of norm diffusion and has developed theory on elite structure to help us understand the situation in BiH. The results of the paper are clear. I now turn to a more general discussion of the results.

5   Discussion

The purpose of this discussion is the widen the scope of the research. I look at the broader theoretical landscape, the merits and problems of the paper, and further research.

5.1   A Bird's Eye View

This paper, which has studied diffusion of Salafist norms, is grounded in two schools of theory. On the one hand, elite structure has been examined through a primarily institutionalist lens. It helps us examine the structures which construct the maze of possibilities, where actors act according to the rational consequences of their actions (Schimmelfenning, 2002). It principally answers the question of 'how', and thus informing and shaping the 'why', but not determining it. The path that actors take through this maze, why they arrived at the given point, is instead given by their identities and beliefs. Here the constructivist school of thought leads the way, pointing at the identity formation of Bosnian Muslims in the 'cross-roads of Europe'. In this school of thought, the actors act according to what is appropriate for their given identity. The method mirrors the two schools of thought, adding constructivist interpretation to primarily institutionalist process tracing.

Given that this is a case study, the results are not as easily generalisable as in other studies. However, the merit of a case study is often the theory-developing capabilities. The main contribution of this study to the wider field of norm diffusion is its new typology of elite structure. The typology helps us understand how the structure of elites affect the 'how' of norm diffusion. The structure enables some actions and stops others. Depending on the ideal type, the process differs. The results on cultural match are highly case-specific, and do not offer the same sort of generalisable insights into the process of norm diffusion.

Theoretically, one of the weaknesses is that I treat the IZ as a single actor. Although such abstraction is certainly justified – both pragmatically and theoretically – it does potentially miss regional and/or hierarchical differences within the organisation. The IZ is a decentralised organisation, and as such there is a possibility that individual and regional complexity is missed (see Alibašić, 2015 for examples) Such differences are highlighted in the excellent study by Turčalo & Veljan (2018) and can thus complement the essay.

5.2   Further Research

The question of financial incentives has resurfaced again and again in my research and can be noticed across the paper (see sections 4.1.2 and 4.3.1). I am unable to properly explore the question, as it would require extended ethnographic research, but I consider it too interesting to ignore. There is potentially a connection between the spread of Salafism, and the influx of Saudi money. It is not outlandish to suggest that Bosnian officials are implicitly approving the spread of Salafism in exchange for financial investments. Research on financial incentives has been somewhat explored in literature on EU-expansion, but norm diffusion scholars have often been hesitant to look at economics as a driver of norm diffusion (Björkdahl, 2012). However, I believe such research could provide insights into how financial incentives affect the individual level in norm diffusion.

Such research could also expand its scope by incorporating the actions of the exporting country, Saudi Arabia, which this essay has mostly ignored. Although not a weakness – any study must demarcate its topic – it does point us in the direction of a fuller explanation. The reasons for the unsuccessful norm diffusion presumably lie in both the actions of the recipient and the exporter.

The typology should be researched further and extended to different types of elites in other contexts. Do the same results hold for economic elites? Does a monopolistic economic elite mean that diffusion of economic policies is easier with sufficient access to the elite? Another point of interest is whether a normative elite is intrinsically monopolistic. Is there something particular about norms and normative elites which make it easier to consolidate power? The mutual exclusivity of different norms might point us in this direction.

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7 Appendix: Building an Archive of Primary Sources.

Here, I collect my most important primary sources. As stated, the aim is to initiate an archive of sources which can be used for further research. Not all my sources are included in the appendix, only the ones that I believe provide the most information and which I have used the most. Below can be found the academic reference, together with an explanation of the source and its merits. The sources are not ordered alphabetically, but rather in order of their importance.

Preporod, (2015). "ZAJEDNIČKA IZJAVA o nasilnom ekstremizmu", (eng. Joint Statement on Terrorism and Violent Extremism), *Preporod*, 4th of December. Available at: https://www.preporod.com/index.php/sve-vijesti/drustvo/aktuelno/item/2188-zajednicka-izjava-o-nasilnom-ekstremizmu. This statement is the product of the joint meeting between the IZ and other Bosniak leaders, primarily the SDA, which was held as a response to the two Salafist-associated terrorist attacks of 2015. The document can be seen as a watershed moment in the position of the IZ towards Salafism, and acts as the community's recognition and admittance of the Salafist moment. See Selimbegović (2015) for an analysis of the meeting.

Alibašić, A., (2015). "Militantni ekstremisti: haridžije našeg doba", (eng. Militant Extremists: Heretics of Our Time) *Preporod.* 14th of August. Available at: https://www.preporod.com/index.php/sve-vijesti/drustvo/globus-vijesti-iz-svijeta/item/4047-militantni-ekstremisti-haridzije-naseg-doba. Accessed 11th of May 2023. This source discusses in detail the problem of militant extremism and Salafism. It critiques their beliefs, but nonetheless emphasis that the IZ should be an inclusive community, and that all Muslims should be welcome. It was written about half a year before the joint meeting and could thus be seen as an indicator of the IZs slowly changing position.

Subašić, E., (2017). "Šejh, šejh, efendija", (eng. Sheik, Sheik, master) *Preporod*, 28th of February. Available at: https://www.preporod.com/index.php/sve-vijesti/drustvo/teme/item/6566-sejh-sejh-efendi. This text criticises the Salafist view of change, saying "Although [Salafist] aim to initiate a general social reform in our country, their potential reform remains within the realm of ritual and customary traditions of Muslims and is actually a change rather than a true reform. Reform should imply progressiveness and orientation towards the future, while change can remain at the level of formal

change, often based on the past, as has been evident among Muslims worldwide.".
It illuminates the different emphasis that the two strands put on past and future.

Subašić, E., (2019). "Šta bi Poslanik, a.s. kazao 'vehabijama' i 'dervišima'", (eng. What would the Prophet, peace be upon him, say to 'Wahhabis' and 'Dervishes'?) *Preporod,* 7th of November. Available at: https://www.preporod.com/index.php/misljenja/item/11200-sta-bi-poslanik-a-s-kazao-vehabijama-i-dervisima. This is recently written text which emphasises that even though there might be large differences between Salafists and followers of Bosnian Islam, all Muslims ultimately worship Allah and act in accordance with what they think is the best way to praise him. Ironically, the text is symptomatic of the Bosnian Islamic position of tolerance of religious difference.

Spahić-Šiljak, Z., (2023). "Zabrana obrazovanja za žene – mrak civilizacije.", (eng. Ban on Education for Women – Darkness of Civilisation) *Preporod,* 13th of February. https://www.preporod.com/index.php/sve-vijesti/drustvo/item/11951-zabrana-obrazovanja-za-zene-mrak-civilizacije. This source talks of the importance of education for all human beings. Although the text is criticising the Taliban government in Afghanistan, the similarities with Salafism are obvious.

Preporod, (2016). "Iskrivljena teologija: Asasini, fedaini, ekstremizmi i mi", (eng. Distorted Theology: Assassins, Fedayeen, Extremism, and Us) *Preporod*, 12th of August. Available at: https://www.preporod.com/index.php/sve-vijesti/drustvo/kultura-i-nauka/item/4616-iskrivljena-teologija-asasini-fedaini-ekstremizmi-i-mi. This article strongly criticises violence as a means and Islamic militancy.