



### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### THE ROLE OF ISLAM IN SOCIO-CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE BALKAN SOCIETY, 1354-1450

Ammalina Dalillah Mohd Isa<sup>1</sup>, Napisah Karimah Ismail<sup>1</sup>, Firuz Akhtar Mohamad Bohari<sup>1</sup>, Lily Hanefarezan Asbulah<sup>1</sup>, Nor Syamimi Mohd<sup>2</sup>, Nur Ainul Basyirah Alias<sup>3</sup>, Nurliyana Mohd Talib<sup>4</sup> and Afeez Nawfal Mohd Isa<sup>5</sup>

1. Research Centre for Arabic Language and Islamic Civilization, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.
2. Research Centre for Quran and Sunnah, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.
3. Faculty of Human Sciences, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tanjung Malim, Perak, Malaysia.
4. Philosophy and Civilization Section, School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia.
5. Faculty of Art, Sustainability and Creative Industry, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tanjung Malim, Perak, Malaysia.

#### Manuscript Info

##### Manuscript History

Received: 05 July 2023

Final Accepted: 09 August 2023

Published: September 2023

##### Key words:-

Socio-cultural Change, Islam and Social Change, Ottoman History, Ottoman Administration, Balkan Society, Balkan Medieval History

#### Abstract

The entrance of the Ottomans in the Balkans in the 14th century brought about significant changes in European history. The Balkans, which had been administered by the Byzantine Roman Empire with Christian church influence, were now conquered by the Ottoman Empire, which introduced new administrative structures and organisations with Islamic influences. This has influenced the socio-cultural makeup of the community, particularly at the conclusion of Sultan Murad II's reign. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of Islam in the socio-cultural transformations of Balkan society from the early years of Ottoman rule until the end of Sultan Murad II reign. This study employs a qualitative research method through content analysis, as well as descriptive and deductive analysis. According to the findings of this study, Islam played an active part in influencing the socio-culture of Balkan society during Ottoman rule in a multitude of ways. The first is to lay the groundwork for the Ottoman government's administrative and legal systems. The second is to prioritise the provision of Islamic infrastructure and facilities and waqf institutions in order to promote the Muslim community and the Balkan region. Third, assigning the obligation of preaching and spreading Islam to all Muslims, and last, promoting a better lifestyle change in accordance with Islamic principles, among Balkans who have recently adopted Islam.

Copy Right, IJAR, 2023,. All rights reserved.

#### Introduction:-

Change is a natural and universal occurrence in life. As stated by Sumaya and Shadiya (2011), "Generally change is a universal, unavoidable, irreversible and is a necessary phenomenon. Change is everywhere and happens all the

**Corresponding Author:- Ammalina Dalillah Mohd Isa**

**Address:-** Research Centre for Arabic Language and Islamic Civilization, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.

time.” Similarly, social change are natural processes that occur in every civilization throughout the ages. Okumus (2020) expressed that, “a society that does not change or in which change does not occur cannot be imagined.” Socio-cultural transformations refer to social and cultural changes that occur in a society. Social change can be defined as “the alteration, modification, or transformation of public policy, culture, or social institutions over time.” (Kendall 2012). Landis (1935) explain further that, social change is “changes in group composition (age, sex, vitality mobility, etc.) and changes in the interaction patterns (conflict, co-operation, domination, subordination, etc.) that characterize inter- and intra-group relations.” While cultural change define as “Changes in ideas, norms, and behaviors of a group of people (or changes in the contents or themes of their products reflecting such changes), over time, typically on the scale of decades or centuries.” (Varnum & Grossmann 2017). Landis (1935) elaborate cultural change as “changes in the man-made tools, mores, and folkways.” In addition, Landis (1935) further explain, “Social change is in most cases the forerunner of cultural change and frequently induces the cultural change.” Thus, this socio-cultural transformation can also be interpreted as a cultural change that occurs because of social change. Socio-cultural transformation is a component of the discussion of social change.

The Balkan society is one of the most dynamic, with ongoing socio-cultural transformations. This is due to the region's long history of human occupancy. Beginning with the Neolithic period, migration and conquest of the region occurred one after the other. Various civilizations formed and dominated the region. The Greek, Roman, and Byzantine civilizations are examples of well-known civilizations. Migration of people of various ethnicities to the region changed the social and cultural mix of the community. According to Schmitt (2016), a huge and significant transformation in European history happened when the Ottoman Empire acquired control of the region. The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans had a significant impact on the region's social and political changes (Urea 2019). This occurred as a result of the Ottoman Empire introducing new administrative and judicial systems and policies that altered the previous social and political administration in the Balkans. These social and political developments resulted in cultural changes that were abundantly noticeable at the conclusion of Sultan Murad II's (1421-1451) reign as stated by Kiel (2009) that, “By 1450 the south-eastern Balkans had become fully integrated in Ottoman culture, becoming a part of the Turkish world.”

Through the study of Ottoman history, average Ottoman scholars debated those changes in Balkan society occurred as a result of the administrative and legal systems and policies implemented by the Ottoman government, particularly the resettlement policy, the administrative system, and the Ottoman military system. These, however, are not the only elements causing socio-cultural changes in Balkan society. This is because, as Miljkovic (2009) explains, the Ottoman Empire, as an Islamic administration, incorporated Islamic values into its rule. Miljkovic (2009) stated that, “The Ottomans, who had defined their state with two basic attributes: Islamic and military, had brought along the new administrative order, based primarily on the Islamic law, the sharia, along with recognition of the traditions of the previously existed Islamic states (primarily the Abbassid Caliphate).” Sumaya and Shadiya (2011) proclaimed that, Islam has the ability to alter a society's social life. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how Islam has influenced Balkan society's socio-cultural transformations, in particular during Sultan Murad II's rule.

#### **Islam and Socio-cultural Transformation:-**

Religion, in general, has a relationship with social change. In accordance with Luckmann (1977), religion has the ability to either promote, obstruct, or prevent transformation. This can be found in religious teachings that provide new ideas that persuade its followers to behave or conduct new practises, renounce current practises, and prevent its followers from engaging in actions that contravene religious teachings. Okumus (2020) adds to the reality of the relationship between religion and social change by explaining that in general, religion can be a factor in social change (religion-social change) and religion is affected by social change that occurs (social change-religion). What he tried to convey about the link where religion is affected by social development is when the practise of a given religion tends to follow the present social conditions of society rather than the original teachings. This condition can be observed in societies that embrace and practise secularism. According to Beyers (2017), this might occur when a community perceives religion as part of the concept of culture and does not distinguish religion from the concept of true religion. However, when discussing Islam and social change, the relationship between the two falls back on the reality of the first relationship, which is religion as a role in social and cultural change. This is because the religion of Islam is based on the teaching of Quran which its content will never change and remain forever. Islam has sparked social change without impeding societal growth. In order to comprehend this relationship, the essence, concepts, and principles of Islam are thoroughly examined.

The word Islam is derived from two root words, salima and aslama, which indicate peace and submission, respectively. According to Ibn Manzur in *Lisan al-Arab*, Islam means submission and obedience. According to Sharia, Islam is submitting to Allah, implementing Sharia, and expressing allegiance to the teachings conveyed by the Messenger of Allah (Ibn Manzur 1985). According to Baharuddin et al.'s (2020) research, "Islam according to the Quran is viewed as a religious religion that is a religion that conforms to the human code in giving guidance to humans to submit to Allah SWT and to do good to others." The explanation of the meaning of Islam in terms of language and terminology demonstrates that the essence of Islam is founded on the relationship between man and God, as well as the relationship between man and man.

The Quran and Sunnah are the foundational texts of Islam. The Quran is Allah's message that was revealed to the Prophet of Allah by Gabriel to guide mankind in knowing Him and guiding them in life to reach the main objective of serving Him and living in His pleasure. While al-Sunnah is a source that elaborates on the explanations given in the Quran, it also serves as proof of the truth of the Prophet's teachings, which were recorded in the form of hadith. Through the Prophet's hadith, he translated the teachings of the Quran and showed people the way and provided recommendations and explanations in a practical form for practising Islam in daily life (Aminudin et al. 2006). Aminudin et al. (2006) added, through His Messenger, al-Sunnah was able to demonstrate that the principles of Islam contained in the Quran are applicable in all systems of human existence throughout the ages.

It is undeniable that Islam supports change in both people's individual lives and society as a whole based on the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. This is because the Quranic verses outline comprehensive teachings that touch on social systems like the family system, economy, justice and legislation, politics and statehood, education, morals and virtue. They also address matters of worship, which is to maintain a relationship with God. These teachings also address and regulate relationships between fellow humans. The Hadith of the Prophet provided detailed explanations of the teachings by using instances drawn from social life. Hence, Sumaya dan Shadiya (2011) stressed that "Islam has never ignored social change, and has always been concerned with it from the first day it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. It has changed people's lives from being non-believers to believers, and from being scattered in different places to one Ummah under one law that is the Islamic Sharia and into believers in one God Who is Absolute." They added that the teachings of Islam delivered by Rasulullah "...has transformed their social, political, and economic life as well as their morality and ethics. It has been revealed to reform humanity to succeed in both, this world and the Hereafter, because human beings (al-nās) are the fundamental factor in social change and development."

In the process of social and socio-cultural change caused by Islamic factors, these changes occur not only through the teachings of Quran and Sunnah, but also through actors who play a part in presenting and disseminating the teachings of Islam. This is because if the revealed Islam's teachings are not spread, they will remain as the lessons contained in the words of the Quran. As a result, when Islam was revealed to the Prophet of Allah through the Quran, there was a verse that instructed him to spread the teachings. Okumus (2020) concludes, "Muhammad (PBUH) is the main actor in the occurrence of great social, legal, political, religious, economic and cultural changes in the history of humanity with his exemplary humanitarian-prophetic model personality, model of change, man of action, and impressive guidance and leadership in his society, where he served as a prophet and became the subject." This social and cultural transformation cannot occur without the actor's involvement in carrying out the transmission of Islam.

There are many ways to disseminate Islam, but one popular strategy that has a significant impact on the neighborhood's social and cultural transformations is openly preaching to the people there. This can be seen to have occurred since the time of the Prophet, who was given a revelation to preach Islam openly. When the Prophet made this call, many people responded and accepted Islam. They then renounced the ideals and culture of Jahiliyyah life and adopted the Islamic lifestyle prescribed by the Quran and the Prophet's Sunnah. Islam's primary strategy for bringing about social and sociocultural transformation in a society is through open preaching. In addition to overt preaching, Okumus (2020) mentions preaching through the demonstration of good behaviour as recommended by the Quran and the Prophet's Sunnah, namely, "to value people, to treat people softly, to approach with the right personality, to be confident in society, to speak and act in a gentle, nice, civilized style, to be an exemplary person, to be nice family members, spouses, children, parents, relatives, neighbours, in short, to be nice everyone, being straightforward and honest are indispensable criteria of Islam's language and approach to social change." This is because this type of behaviour is an indirect preaching approach that can grab the interests of members of the community in approaching the Muslim community while also understanding the Islamic beliefs which inspire these

behaviours. Individuals in the community will indirectly better comprehend and appreciate Islamic values, which may even be the reason for the community's acceptance of the system of behaviour or the religion of Islam itself. This results in social and sociocultural changes.

In addition to continual preaching and preaching via good behaviour, the practise of Sharia law and Islamic social institutions are factors in a society's social and socio-cultural transformation. For example, towards the start of its fall, Islam created the concept of social fairness by not differentiating people based on their social station. This both delivers justice to the weak and enslaved while also attracting them to adopt Islam, as Bilal did during Islam's early fall. Furthermore, Islam provides social justice to women who previously had no place in society during the *jahiliyyah* era by elevating their dignity and position. As a result, women's position and wellbeing are preserved. Waqf institutions, for example, are social institutions established by Shariah legislation that bring about social and socio-cultural changes in a society. This is due to the establishment's implementation, which allows poor and needy citizens to get welfare aid (Muhammad Zubair 2012).

In fact, during the Prophet's time, this waqf institution was a driving force for the Islamic government of Madinah in the form of financial aid channelled into the Islamic government of Madinah's defence sector, as well as contributing to the development of infrastructure in the city of Madinah, as always contributed by Uthman ibn 'Affan. This protects both the Muslim and non-Muslim communities' welfare. As a result, the establishment of shariah-based institutions demonstrates Islam's interest in the social development of society. It is possible to influence the social and socio-cultural environment of the local community by establishing Islamic institutions based on Sharia.

Since the revelation, spread, and adoption of its teachings in society during the Prophet's era in Mecca and Medina, Islam has been a factor in social and socio-cultural changes in society. In reality, it remains the primary driver of social change within society that can be witnessed after the death of the Prophet of Allah and outside of Mecca and Medina. This occurs because Islamic principles transcend time. It may be implemented and modified to the current context without needing to reduce and distort the teachings. Furthermore, following the Prophet's death, the practise and growth of Islam persisted. According to Okumus (2020), the Islamic society founded by Allah's Messenger "try to establish the belief of tawhid and the Islamic life system in the society, based on the wahy of the Quran and the Sunnah of Muhammad(PBUH)". This retains the concept of Islamic society. Okumus (2020) explained. "Islamic societies have encountered other societies, the cultures of new social circles, whether Muslim or not. In this process, Islam showed itself as an important factor of social change for different societies." This may be observed throughout the history of Islamic civilisation from the Prophet's time till now. Wherever Islam is introduced, whether through territorial expansion, trade, or the exchange of Islamic ambassadors, Islam is always a factor of social and socio-cultural change that affects any community that interacts with it.

#### **Socio-cultural Transformation of the Balkan Society under Ottoman until 1450:-**

The Ottoman Empire crossed the Dardanelle Strait to the Balkan Peninsula for the first time in 1345, when they got an offer from John Kantakouzenus as a mercenary in winning the Byzantine throne and dealing with the situation of the Byzantine Empire throughout its reign. John Kantakouzenus married his daughter to Sultan Orhan that year in order to establish a strong relationship with the Ottoman Empire. Nonetheless, Islam has not yet taken root in the Balkans. This is because, after completing their duties as mercenaries for John Kantakouzenus, they would return to Anatolia until John Kantakouzenus granted them a castle in Tzympe in 1352 to be used as a base for the Ottoman army to make it easier for him to obtain their assistance. However, the Ottoman Empire gained a foothold in the Balkans in 1354 when it took the Byzantine Empire's Gallipoli peninsula, which had recently been devastated by a severe earthquake. The Ottoman Empire was founded in the Balkan Peninsula from that point forward. Following that, the Ottoman government ruled nearly the entire peninsula through territorial expansion until 1450 AD.

Scholars argue that the Ottoman Empire did not provide any change or progress to Balkan society throughout its reign in the Balkans, as stated by Vucinich (1962). This is due to the nature of the Ottoman government, which is a predatory confederation; especially during the early era of his rule in the Balkans, when he did not force the Balkan people to embrace Islam or accept the Ottoman culture, but simply asked them to certify obedience to the Ottoman government and contribute their energy to achieving the Ottoman government's vision and mission. The Ottoman Empire's rule, however, had considerable impact on the Balkan community. Various changes occurred throughout the Ottoman government's dominance over the Balkan region until 1450 AD, particularly in the socio-cultural components of the Balkan community. This is due to the Ottoman government's introduction of the Ottoman

administrative system, legislation, and culture into the Balkans, which altered the structure and social function of Balkan society. As a result, their cultural values shift.

Significant changes in the Balkan people's socio-culture can be seen from two perspectives: changes in their belief system or religion, and changes in the Balkan people's geo-landscape. This is as stated by Miljkovic (2020), "The majority of cities and towns in the South-Eastern Europe had gone, through the Ottoman times many significant changes, which could be seen not only in the visualization of the town, but also its ethnic and confessional structure, as well as in the changing of the cultural development of certain settlement." The conquest of the Ottoman Empire and the installation of its administrative system there influenced the shift of their religious system, with some of them converting from Orthodox Christianity to Islam. Although no coercion was used by the Ottoman administration, according to Urea (2019), "The Christian population of the Balkans was encouraged to convert to Islam." Religious conversions persisted, especially among the elite (Lopasic 1994). Additionally, according to Minkov (2004), religious conversions take place not only among the elite but also in rural areas. Lopasic (1994) asserts that elite religious conversion is typically motivated by a desire to preserve status and riches. The dervish organisations, which also relocated from Anatolia to the Balkans through the resettlement scheme and introduced mystical elements in their teachings, had an impact on the lower classes, particularly in the interior areas, leading many to adopt Islam (Minkov 2004). The socioculture of Balkan society was altered by the Ottoman invasion, which carried with it their religious beliefs. Urea (2019) increases "That popular freedom in choosing religion can be one of the explanations why the Balkans remained under Ottoman rule for over 400 years."

The arrival of the Ottoman Muslim community from Anatolia to the Balkans by policy accommodation or policy resettlement has altered the Balkan community's geo-landscape. Consequently, many new structures and infrastructures were built. This occurred through the construction of mosques and other amenities for Muslims living in the Balkans. To make it faster for Muslims to worship, the Ottomans either converted the local community church to a mosque or built a new mosque at the beginning of their acquisition and entry into the Balkans. Aside from mosques, other amenities such as *tekke* and *zaviye*, also known as dervish lodges, *minaret* or soup kitchen, and *hamam* or public baths, have been developed (Antov 2017). This has influenced the Balkan people's socio-culture, as they are unfamiliar with Ottoman buildings and infrastructure characteristics that serve various functions in their region. The building of this facility increased during the reign of Sultan Murad II as a result of the development in waqf institutions as well as the Ottoman government's considerable financial resources at the time. As a result, by the end of Ottoman rule, the Balkan region had physically assimilated into Ottoman culture (Kiel 2009). In addition to facilities for the Muslim population, basic infrastructure such as bridges, forts, and caravanserai were created for the ease of travellers. The Ottoman government's authority made changes to the Balkan society's geo-landscape.

Other socio-cultural transformations within Balkan society occurred as a result of the Ottoman government's dominance in the Balkan region until 1450. For example, the Ottoman Empire altered the structure or regulations of the Balkan region's feudal administration with its own pattern. According to Fisher (1952), "Ottoman feudalism evolved from the Seljuk form, which, in turn, was an amalgamation of Byzantine, Persian, and Arab feudal arrangements." *Timar* holders, or *timariots*, were tightly supervised in the Ottoman feudal system to prevent misuse of authority (Stavrianos 2000). This consequently ensures the survival of the farmers who work for the timar holder. Furthermore, the Ottoman administration implemented Sharia law across the Balkans. The application of this legislation has altered the Balkan community's original legislation. For example, in terms of taxation law, the Balkan community's taxes, such as *ispence*, *rusum*, and *cizye* taxes, are based on Islamic law. Taxes were lower than they had been during Byzantine rule. As a result, the Balkan community can pay it more consistently (Urea 2019). In terms of social institutions, the Ottoman government's authority changed the institution of marriage in the Balkan community. The arrival of Ottomans in the Balkans resulted in intermarried Ottomans and Balkans. This is demonstrated by Delilbasi (2012)'s research on Sultan Murad II's approach towards the people of Epirus in 1430 in order to seize the province. According to him, "The Turks who came to the city, built houses and settled in an area called the Turkopalukon. The chronicle also states that within a month the Turks had taken Greek girls as wives." According to the chronicle, the Turks took Greek girls as brides within a month. This occurs not only at the lower levels, but even among Ottoman sultans and nobles. Sultan Bayazid I and Sultan Murad II, for example, married princesses from Balkan nations. According to Urea (2019), "The Ottomans practiced religious toleration and encouraged mixed marriages without forcing the population to convert." This indirectly fosters intermarriage while modifying the institution of marriage in Balkan civilization.

Next, the Ottoman government's rule had an impact on Balkan cuisine culture. Miljkovic (2020) claims that the Ottomans introduced rice into the Balkan people's diet. According to Minkov (2004), they also introduced rice plants and cultivated them in the Balkan region, which he describes as "...was a plant unknown in the Balkans before the Ottomans". This is also demonstrated by the journey records of Bertrandon de la Broquiere, who returned by land from the Jerusalem pilgrimage to his homeland, the Kingdom of Burgundy, in 1432 and 1433. When he travelled through the Ottoman Empire under the reign of Sultan Murad II, and passed through Nis, a city once under the jurisdiction of the Serbian kingdom, he discovered "the situation is in a delightful country, abounding with rice," just five years after the province was conquered by the Ottoman Empire (de la Broquiere 1807). Furthermore, the Ottoman authority introduced Baklava sweets, which have since become the national sweets of Southeast European countries (Miljkovic 2020). This demonstrates that the Ottoman government established a new food culture and agricultural varieties throughout the Balkans.

Furthermore, the arrival and authority of the Ottoman Empire altered their everyday language. Blount and Sanches (1977) emphasise that "Languages in contact provide dramatic instances of changes in language structure and use." Although the Ottomans are a minority community in the Balkans, their language culture continues to influence the local community. Miljkovic (2020) commented about the interplay of the Ottoman Turkish language with the Balkan community's language by stating, "All Balkan languages (Serbian, Greek, Bulgarian, Albanian, in lesser extent Croatian, and most obviously Bosniak has a lot of word coming from the Oriental languages (Arabic, Persian and Turk) but in their Turkish i.e. Ottoman form since they reach these regions with the Ottomans." Additionally, the implementation of the devshirme system, which dispatches Balkan Christian children to be trained as officers or soldiers, has improved the language skills of the Balkan community where they are taught, allowing them to master the Turkish language while maintaining their native language. This, in turn, created a shift in language culture in Balkan society.

The aforementioned changes are part of the socio-cultural transformations of Balkan society documented by Ottoman and Balkan scholars during the early years up to 1450. According to Ocak (2009), the intricacies of the Balkan society's socio-cultural shifts are difficult to detect as he stated that, "It is no easy task to write the social, cultural and intellectual history of Turkey between 1071 and 1453. Although the period is a long one, the material in the official chronicles is relatively limited. While we do possess information for the political history, the same unfortunately cannot be said for the social, cultural and intellectual life of the period since most of the sources we do have, the majority of which have been translated into western languages, deal with political history."

#### **The Role of Islam in Transforming the Socio-cultural life of the Balkan Society:-**

According to the discussion of socio-cultural changes in the Balkans until 1450, although the socio-cultural transformation in the Balkans appears to be the result of changes in the level of government and the implementation of Ottoman laws and policies in the Balkans, it cannot be denied that Islam also plays a role in the socio-cultural transformation in the Balkans. This is due to the Ottoman government's Islamic nature, as noted by Vucinich (1962), "Muslim influence represented the most basic element of Ottoman society." Okumus (2020) stated, "Islamic societies have encountered other societies, the cultures of new social circles, whether Muslim or not. Islam showed itself as an important factor of social change for different societies". According to Okumus (2020), as an Islamic government, the Ottoman authority's socio-cultural changes in the Balkans must be related to the Islamic religion.

Based on Islam's role as an agent of social change and socio-cultural change in Balkan society under Ottoman rule until 1450 AD leads to the conclusion that Islam plays a role in the Balkan society's socio-cultural transformation in various ways. The first is that Islam played a role in the Ottoman government's administrative and legal systems. This can be observed in the administration and legislation that maintains the principle of justice and the right to freedom. The Ottoman ruler implemented this idea in the Ottoman Empire by offering religious freedom to Balkan peoples who practised Orthodox Christianity.

The Ottoman authority urged them to join Islam, but there was no coercion. This has changed the Balkans' opinion of the Islamic government to the point where they are more eager to be subject to the Ottoman authority's Islamic governance. Similarly, the Ottoman administration used the Islamic taxation system. As previously stated, *ispence*, *rusum*, and *cizye* are among the taxes levied. *Ispence* is a land tax based on *kharaj*, an Islamic agricultural land tax, while *rusum* is based on *'ushur*, an Islamic agricultural land tax, and *cizye* is a *jizyah* tax placed on ahl-dhimmi. As a result, according to Nicolle (2010), "The peasantry in particular appreciated the generally less-oppressive

administration which characterized their new Turkish Muslim rulers. Certainly, the Ottomans demanded fewer taxes than previous Byzantine, Bulgarian, Serbian and other ruling classes had done.”

Second, Islam prioritises the establishment of Islamic infrastructure and institutions in revitalising the Islamic social system to facilitate Muslim concerns. This may be seen in the development of Islamic facilities, particularly mosques, in the Balkan region, which has altered the geo-landscape of the Balkan community. The mosque is both a significant symbol of Islam and the centre of the Islamic social system. The Prophet erected a mosque as soon as he arrived in Medina, a territory that had just accepted Islam (Al-Krenawi 2016). Muslims are not only able to worship peacefully with the construction of mosques, but the Islamic social system can be restored, as mentioned by Al-Krenawi (2016), which is mosques, “...served as the starting point for the establishment of Islam within both the state and the society”. When the Ottoman Muslim community was resettled, this institution expanded along with the development of other Islamic social facilities. All of these facilities and infrastructure are being developed through waqf institutions established by Muslims in the area. Indirectly, the growth of these infrastructures and institutions has had an impact on the Balkan community in that it has affected the cultural geo-landscape of the Balkan community as well as their lifestyle. As a result, with the construction of Islamic facility buildings and the establishment of waqf organisations that develop the infrastructure of local communities in the Balkans, Islam has played a part in the socio-cultural changes of the Balkan community.

Third, Islam played a part in influencing the socio-culture of Balkan society during the Ottoman government’s authority by issuing instructions that made it the duty of Muslims to spread Islam. As previously said, after the Prophet’s death, the responsibility of spreading Islam was passed on to the next Muslim. It has succeeded in capturing the interest of non-Muslims to adopt Islam through the implementation of this social obligation. This may be observed in the history of the Ottoman Empire up to 1450, when dervish groups in the interior urged the local people to participate in their activities. As a result, many people in the Balkans’ interior were drawn to Islam and later adopted it. Furthermore, the recommendation to propagate Islam was implemented by the Ottoman sultans through the opening of the Balkan territories to Ottoman control and later to Islam itself. *Gaza*, or this jihad, is one of the Ottoman government’s keys to territorial expansion and the promotion of Islam in the Balkan region (Hupchick 2004).

The final role indicated as being performed by Islam in changing the socio-cultural society of the Balkans under the rule of the Ottoman Empire was none other than putting the obligation on every one of its people to practise an Islamic way of life. This occurred when the Balkans accepted Islam. Sumaya and Shadiya (2011) state that In the case of individuals, Islam emphasizes to change their inner beings; their awareness and consciousness, their attitudes, beliefs, motivations and morality and spirituality. As a result of this inner change, society will also change from one stage of perfection to another, both materially and non-materially.” As a result, by accepting Islam as their religion, individuals are implicitly taught and practise the Islamic way of life. The advice of Islamic teachings in changing people to become pious people as well as changing the socio-culture of the Muslim Balkan population.

### **Conclusion:-**

The arrival of the Ottomans in the Balkans and their subsequent territorial expansion until 1450 profoundly altered the Balkan people’s socio-culture. These changes can be seen in the Balkan people’s diverse cultures, such as their belief system, infrastructure and geo-landscape, norms and regulations, marital structures, food culture and agriculture, and language. Although the socio-cultural changes in Balkan society appear to be the product of changes in power and politics, the administrative system, legislation, and government policies of the Ottoman government, it cannot be denied that Islam, as an Islamic government, plays a role in these developments. Among the roles of Islam that can be identified in changing the socio-cultural transformation of the Balkan society under the Ottoman government are establishing the Ottoman government’s administrative and legal system, prioritising the development of Islamic infrastructure and facilities as well as waqf institutions, assigning the responsibility of preaching and spreading Islam to non-Muslims and advocating a better lifestyle change according to Islamic teachings, particularly for the new convert.

### **Acknowledgement:-**

This study was financed by Dana Insentif Penerbitan 2023, Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

**References:-**

1. Al-Krenawi, A. (2016). The role of the mosque and its relevance to social work. *International Social Work* 59(3): 359-367.
2. Aminudin Basir @ Ahmad, Mohd Radzi Othman & Nik Yusri Musa. (2006). Konsep al-Sunnah menurut ahli hadith. *MALIM: Jurnal Pengajian Umum Asia Tenggara* 7(8): 1-22.
3. Antov, N. (2017). *The Ottoman 'Wild West'*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
4. Baharuddin Husin, Supriyatin, SY, Zaimudin & Imron Zabidi. 2020. The meaning and characteristics of Islam in The Qur'an. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation* 24(1): 5351-5362.
5. Beyers, J. (2017). Religion and culture: Revisiting a close relative. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73(1): a3864. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i1.3864> [5 January, 2023].
6. Blount, B.G. & Sanchess, M. (1977). Introduction: Sociocultural dimensions of language change. In *Sociocultural Dimensions of Language Change*. New York: Academic Press.
7. Delilbaşı, M. (2012). A contribution to the history of Epirus (XVth-XVIth centuries): Special reference to the privileges granted to the people of Epirus by Sultan Murad II. *GAMER* 1(1): 37-60.
8. Fisher, S.N. (1952). Ottoman feudalism and its influence upon the Balkans. *The Historian* 15(1): 3-22.
9. Fleet, K. (2009). The Turkish economy, 1071-1453. In Fleet, K. (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Turkey Vol. 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
10. Hupchick, D.P. (2004). *The Balkan: From Constantinople to Communis*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
11. Ibn Manzur, Muhammad ibn Mukarram. (1985). *Lisan al-'Arab*. Vol. 12. Qom: Nashru Adab al-Hawzah.
12. de la Brocquiere, B. (1807). *The Travels of Bertrandon de La Brocquiere, Counsellor & First Esquire-Carver to Philippe Le Bon, Duke of Burgundy, to Palestine, and His Return from Jerusalem Overland to France, during the Years 1432 & 1433*. Trans., Johnes, T. Wales: Hafod Press, James Henderson.
13. Kendall, D. (2012). *Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. California: Wadsworth.
14. Kiel, M. (2009). The incorporation of the Balkans into the Ottoman Empire, 1353-1453. In Fleet, K. (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Turkey Vol. 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
15. Landis, P.H. (1935). Social change and social interaction as factors in culture change. *American Journal of Sociology* 41(1, Jul.): 52-58.
16. Lopasic, A. (1994). Islamization of the Balkans with special reference to Bosnia. *Journal of Islamic Studies* 5(2, July): 163-186.
17. Luckmann, T. (2022). Theories of religion and social change. In *Towards Theology in an Australian Context*. Australian Association for the Study of Religions Book Series. <https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/AASR/article/view/16957> [23 May, 2023].
18. Miljkovic, E. (2009). Ottoman heritage in the Balkans: The Ottoman Empire in Serbia, Serbia in the Ottoman Empire. *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*(2): 129-137.
19. Miljkovic, E. (2020). Everyday life in the Sanjak of Smederevo during the first century of the Ottoman administration: Urban vs. rural. *The Balkans: Everyday Life and Culture*. Lyon: Livre de Lyon.
20. Minkov, A. (2004). *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans*. Leiden: Brill.
21. Muhammad Zubai Abbasi. (2012). The classical Islamic law of waqf: A concise introduction. *Arab Law Quarterly* 26(2): 121-153.
22. Nicolle, D. (2010). *Cross and Crescen in the Balkans*. Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military Ltd.
23. Ocak, A.Y. (2009). Social, cultural and intellectual life, 1071-1453. In Fleet, K. (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Turkey Vol. 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
24. Okumus, E. (2020). Islam, Muslims, and social change. *Tevilat* 1(2): 479-506.
25. Schmitt, O.J. (2016). *The Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans: Interpretations and Research Debates*. Budapest: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press.
26. Stavrianos, L.S. (2000). *The Balkans since 1453*. London: Hurst & Company.
27. Sumaya Mohamed & Shadiya Baqutayan. (2011). Toward social change in Islam. *International Journal of Basic & Applied Sciences* 11(2): 23-33.
28. Urea, T. (2019). The Ottomans in The Balkans. *Studium* 12: 5-13.
29. Varnum, M.E.W. & Grossmann, I. (2017). Cultural change: The how and the why. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 12(6): 956-972.
30. Vucinich, W.S. (1962). The nature of Balkan society under Ottoman rule. *Slavic Review* 21(4, Dec.): 597-616.