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The Muslim woman question in Bosnia and Herzegovina: between Islamic tradition and global modernity

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The Muslim Woman Question in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Between Islamic Tradition and Global Modernity

Marija Šerić

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Marija Šerić

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The Muslim Woman Question in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Between Islamic Tradition and Global Modernity

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Note on Transcription

In this thesis, personal names and terms from a variety of languages and cultural contexts are used. To maintain consistency while ensuring readability, the following rules have been followed:

For Arabic personal names and terms well known in their Arabic form, the Brill's *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Third Edition) transliteration system has been used. South Asian Muslim names are also written in accordance with the conventions used in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Third Edition).

To ensure readability and convenience, I have chosen to use the modern Turkish orthography for Ottoman-Turkish personal names. The names of individuals from Turkic-speaking regions (e.g., Crimean Tatars) are also written using the modern Turkish orthography.

Furthermore, Bosnian personal names and terms are presented in their original form as they are commonly used in Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian, the official languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina, thus respecting the local linguistic context. Some Bosnian terms are presented also in the modern Turkish form between brackets, when they are commonly known in this form in English language.

To ensure consistency, works originally written in Cyrillic script (in Bosnian or Serbian) have been transliterated into Latin script.

For the sake of clarity, terms and names commonly used in English are used in their English forms.

Plural forms of non-English terms are created by adding "-s" to the singular word, simplifying the often-complex rules from the original languages.

CHAPTER 1

1. Introduction

Since the late 19th century, public debates about women in Muslim societies have been part of general discussions regarding the relationship between Islam and the West, tradition and modernity, and the role of religion in society. It was during this period that a profound interest was sparked in the conditions of Muslim women, which became an issue of concern both within Islamic and within Western discourses. Recent studies argue that Western criticism of different practices related to women in Muslim societies formed an integral part of justification for colonial interventions and corroborated the Western viewpoint that the Muslim world was in need of thorough socio-cultural transformation according to the Western model.[1] The position of Muslim women was one of the core European arguments in justifying the superiority of Western civilization and this, in turn, had a very clear effect on the development and character of intra-Muslim debates on a set of contested issues related to the roles, status, rights, duties, and visibility of Muslim women. Rather than reflecting the lived experiences of Muslim women, these debates—over what came to be known as "the Muslim woman question"—constructed an essentialized and symbolically charged figure of the Muslim woman through which broader socio-religious anxieties were articulated and contested.[2]

In the late 19th century, the Muslim woman question emerged as the focal point of Western as well as intra-Muslim debates that involved questions about the principles and values of Islam, the right to interpret Islamic teachings, and the place of Islam in modern world. To this day, the woman question has remained one of the most frequently discussed issues within Muslim societies and is most certainly a topic at the heart of Islamic discourse on tradition, modernity, authenticity, and interpretive authority.[3]

There is a substantial body of Western academic literature on the Muslim woman question in the Ottoman Empire, the Middle East, and South Asia; however, the discourses on the Muslim woman question have rarely been examined in relation to Balkan Muslims, as they are commonly reduced to clichés of being more liberal and European in their lifestyles. To address this gap, I will examine public debates on the status, duties, and rights of Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the first half of the 20th century. In doing so, I intend to highlight the multivocal character of modern Islamic discourses regarding questions related to women at the cultural frontier of Europe and the Muslim world. Moreover, I will demonstrate the significance of these debates within the global debates on the re-

1 Lila Abu Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others." *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002): 783–790.

2 Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (London: Yale University Press, 1992); Alia Al-Saji, "Muslim Women and Rhetoric of Freedom," in *Constructing the Nation: A Race and Nationalism Reader,* eds. Mariana Ortega and Linda Martín Alcoff (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 65–87.

3 Juliane Hammer, *American Muslim Women, Religious Authority, and Activism: More Than a Prayer* (Austin: University of Texas, Press, 2012), 11.

evaluation of the meaning of Islamic tradition in modernity. I hold that Muslim debates on issues related to women from the late 19th century globally played a crucial role in reimagining Islamic tradition and articulating varied perspectives on modernity.

1.1. The Modern Islamic Intellectual History of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Identifying Typologies

Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina is often presented in academic and public discourse as an authentic "European Islam" and a model of tolerance and modernity. Xavier Bougarel warns that such a notion is misleading for two reasons. First, such representations of Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina implicitly contrasts this "Bosnian" and tolerant Islam with a "non-European Islam" encompassing not only those countries with a Muslim majority, but also the Muslim migrants who settled in western Europe in the second half of the twentieth century.[4] In this way, Bougarel argues, the notion of natural opposition between Islam and Europe is not deconstructed, but only silenced. Second, and more relevant to this study, is that such representations give an impression of Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a fixed and homogenous whole, thereby overlooking the fact that Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a plural and changing tradition comprising different views on a range of social, cultural and religious issues—as Islamic traditions elsewhere in the Muslim world.[5]

We will see that a critical examination of Bosnian Muslim discourses regarding the status of women during the first half of the 20th century provides a valuable insight into the diversity of intellectual positions regarding Islamic tradition and modernity.

Defining and categorizing specific intellectual positions within Bosnian Islamic discourse is a challenging task, burdened by decades of scholarly efforts to define intellectual tendencies within modern Islamic thought in general and among Bosnian Muslims in particular. These efforts are marked by the use of terms like reformism, modernism, traditionalism, conservatism, Islamism, revivalism, and fundamentalism, which not only were often defined in a unprecise manner, but are also interpreted differently by scholars.[6] My classification of Islamic intellectual trends in Bosnia and Herzegovina serves the purpose of clarification but is always subject to Kurzman's remark that various interpretations of the

4 Xavier Bougarel, "Balkan Muslim Diasporas and the Idea of a 'European Islam,' " in *Balkan Currents. Essays in Honour of Kjell Magnusson*, eds. Tomislav Dulić et al. (Uppsala: Uppsala Multiethnic Papers 49, 2005). 147–165.

5 Xavier Bougarel, "Bosnian Islam as 'European Islam': Limits and Shifts of a Concept," in *Islam in Europe. Diversity, Identity and Influence*, eds. Azīz 'Aẓmah and Effie Fokas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007), 96–97.

6 To learn more about the terms and categorizations used to describe Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina see Fikret Karčić, *Društveno-pravni aspekt islamskog reformizma: Pokret za reformu šerijatskog prava i njegov odjek u Jugoslaviji i prvoj polovini XX vijeka* (Sarajevo: Islamski teološki fakultet, 1990),199–200; Alexandre Popovic, "Muslim Intellectuals in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Twentieth Century: Continuities and Changes," in *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, Transformation, Communication*, eds. Stéphane A. Dudoignon, Hisao Komatsu, and Yasushi Kosugi (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 212.

Islamic tradition "overlap and intertwine and should not be considered mutually exclusive or internally homogenous but as heuristic devices which provide insight into the history of Islamic discourse."[7]

I identify three main intellectual positions within Bosnian Islamic thought during the period under consideration: reformism, conservatism, and revivalism, which will be discussed in more detail below. This categorization is also congruent with the global development of the Islamic intellectual thought from the late 19th century.[8]

In examining the modern intellectual currents that developed among Muslims it is also necessary to recognize secular modernism as a distinct intellectual orientation that emerged globally in the early 20th century. Secular modernism represents a radical departure from traditional Islamic thought by advocating for a separation of religious beliefs from political and social affairs. Nevertheless, secular modernism will receive little attention in this study because it was mostly the Islamic discourses that played a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual landscape of the Muslim public sphere in Bosnia. Certainly, discourses like secular modernism or nationalism played a role as well but as I will argue, Bosnian Muslim authors from the late 19th and early 20th centuries incorporated them into Islamic discourse.

In this study, I will examine how each of these three intellectual positions of reformism, conservatism, and revivalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina used the woman question to justify their perspectives on authentic Islam and to position themselves as the sole reliable interpreters of their tradition. It is important to note that, while I will analyse each viewpoint, I place particular emphasis on the reformist position as reformists not only initiated Bosnian Muslim discussions on the woman question but also, as reformists in other parts of the Muslim world, framed it within the broader issues of authenticity and authority in Islam and the place of Islam in modernity. Reformists framed their distinctive view of Muslim women's roles, rights, and duties as integral to authentic Islamic teaching, establishing themselves as the legitimate interpreters of Islam. The reformists' perspective set the stage for the Bosnian Muslim discussions, and their framing had a lasting impact on how conservatives and revivalists approached these topics. Conservative and revivalist

7 Charles Kurzman, "Introduction. Liberal Islam and its Islamic Context," *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook,* ed. Charles Kurzman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 5.

8 Given the variety of terminology and their nuanced interpretations used in scholarly discussions concerning Muslim intellectual history since the late 19th century, it presents a considerable challenge to compare diverse intellectual stances within the global Muslim intellectual community. However, a common characteristic of diverse academic approaches to modern Muslim intellectual history is that they generally identify distinct intellectual viewpoints that are religiously oriented, each with its own unique perspectives on the Islamic heritage, its foundations, and Islam's place in modernity. Additionally, scholarly research also acknowledges the presence of a separate secular intellectual movement that intentionally refrains from emphasizing the role of Islam in the social, legal, and political life of Muslims. See: William Shepard, "The Diversity of Islamic Thought: Towards a Typology," in *Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Suha Taji-Farouki and Basheer M. Nafi (London: Tauris 2004), 61–103; Simon Wood, "Modernists and their opponents: Reading Islam", in *Routledge Handbook on Early Islam*, ed. Herbert Berg (New York: Routledge, 2018), 241–257.

thinkers were compelled to respond within this framework, either by challenging reformist interpretations or by asserting their own vision of authentic Muslim womanhood. By emphasizing the reformists' initial framing, I highlight how their influence structured the terms of the discussion, allowing for a clearer analysis of conservative and revivalist responses as they engaged with or contested reformist ideas. In this way, the reformist perspective is woven throughout the discussion, not to overshadow other voices but to establish the historical and intellectual foundation for the debate.

This study will demonstrate how these three intellectual positions—reformism, conservatism, and revivalism—not only used the woman question to delineate their relationship with Europe, whether real or imagined, as well as their local political and social landscapes, but also to draw internal boundaries among Muslims.

The examination of Muslim public debates on the woman question in the early 20th century in Bosnian context allows us to see that Muslim intellectual development in this period was much more complex and multifaceted than the simplistic dichotomy of "secular versus religious" or "Western versus Oriental" suggests. In most cases, these debates cantered on the interpretation of Islamic textual foundations and tradition rather than categorical acceptance or rejection of Western values.

1.1.1. Reformism

The term reformism in this study designates the intellectual trend that characterizes Muslim authors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century who, rooted in the Islamic tradition of *ijtihād* (that is in tradition of "invoking and using individual informed judgment in interpreting the fundamental principles of Islam"[9]), as well as in the tradition of renewal (*tajdīd*) and reform (*iṣlāḥ*) of Islam, advocated reinterpretation of Islamic norms, values and institutions as well as overall sociocultural and political reforms.[10] The main characteristics of this discourse are: a critical stance towards the class of religious scholars; the advocacy of the return to true Islam as enshrined in the textual sources of Islam; a focus on reason and rational interpretation of the Islamic sources, as well as a general attitude regarding the

9 John O. Voll, "Foundations for Renewal and Reform: Islamic Movements in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in *The Oxford History of Islam,* ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 509.

10 For more on the nature of reformism see: John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: Tajdid and Islah," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 32–47; Fazlur Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," in *Cambridge History of Islam 2*B, eds. Peter M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 632–656; Samira Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009); Dietrich Jung, "Islamism, Islamic Modernism and the Search for Modern Authenticity in an Imaginary Past," *Religions* 12, no. 11 (2021); 1–13; Florian Zemmin, *Modernity in Islamic Tradition: The Concept of 'Society' in the Journal al-Manar (Cairo, 1898–1940*), (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2018).

compatibility between Islam and ideas of European modernity, often expressed through the notion of the Islamic origin of modern European ideas.[11]

In the field of Islamic intellectual history, scholars often use the terms "Islamic reformism" and "Islamic modernism" interchangeably.[12] Others, however, make a distinction between these two concepts. In such cases, the term "Islamic modernism" tends to be promoted by secular educated intellectuals that attempted to modernize their societies without complete abandonment of Islam, while the term "Islamic reformism" is promoted by religious scholars, that is to say *ʿulamāʾ*.[13]

In this study, I do not explicitly differentiate between secular (or: "modernist") and religious reformists. This study uses the term reformists to designate all authors whose advocacy of sociocultural, political, and religious reforms is situated within a discourse that aims at revitalizing the "true" Islam in order to ensure progress of Muslims in the modern world, regardless of whether such authors were members of the class of religious scholars or secular intelligentsia. The use of the term "Islamic modernism" is intentionally avoided as it often implies that it was primarily intended to establish compatibility between Islam and modernity, or to Westernize Islam, and therefore implies that it did not represent authentic Islam. I find that the term reformism more effectively describes Muslim authors who advocated socio-cultural and religious reform based on a revitalizing the essence of Islam and who had ambivalent views on Western modernity. In Bosnia, reformists, regardless of whether they belonged to the class of religious scholars or not, rooted their debates within the Islamic tradition, within which they sought answers to the questions posed by deep socio-political and cultural changes at the global and local level. Individuals with secular educational backgrounds were well-known and essential for the growth of Bosnian Islamic reformism and for the emergence of the Muslim woman question as one of the main themes that dominated Bosnian Muslim public sphere in the early 20th century. Notable examples are the Bosnian Muslim scholar, poet, and politician with a degree in Oriental languages from Vienna University Safvet-beg Bašagić (1870–1934), novelist and social activist Edhem Mulabdić (1862–1954), Muslim intellectual Osman Nuri Hadžić (1869–1937) who completed his higher education at universities in Vienna and Zagreb, journalist Dževad Sulejmanpaišić (1893–1876) who attended Vienna University, Hamdija Mulić (1881–1944), a graduate of Sarajevo's *Dar-ul-Muallimin* and the first Muslim pedagogue in Bosnia, Mehmed

11 Shireen T. Hunter, "Introduction," in *Reformist Voices of Islam: Mediating Islam and Modernity*, ed. Shireen T. Hunter (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe,2008), 3–32.

12 See Karčić, *Društveno-pravni aspekt islamskog reformizma* and Fikret Karčić, "The Reform of Shari'a Courts and Islamic Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1918–1941," in *Islam in Inter-War Europe*, eds. Nathalie Clayer and Eric Germain (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 253–270. See also works of Charles Kurzman and Omid Safi who have used the term Islamic modernism generally for modern Islamic reformist thought. Charles Kurzman, "Introduction," in *Modernist Islam: A Source Book*, ed. Charles Kurzman (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2002), 3–27; Omid Safi, "Introduction: Islamic Modernism and Challenge of Reform," in *Voices of Islam: Voices of Change,* ed. Omid Safi (London: Praeger 2007), xvii.

13 Ira Marvin Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 459; 466; 820.

Begović (1904–1990), the first *sharīʿa* law professor at the Faculty of Law of Belgrade University who received his PhD in Algeria in 1930, and Šukrija Alagić (1881–1936), a well-known Muslim author educated in Sarajevo and Vienna who was responsible for the first translation of a section of *Tafsīr al-Manār* in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among the Muslim reformists with a higher religious education background who played an important role in the mentioned issues, it is important to mention Džemaludin Čaušević (1870–1938), who graduated from the Law School (*Mekteb-i Hukuk*) in Istanbul and served as Reis-ul-ulema (the supreme Islamic religious authority in Bosnia and Herzegovina) from 1914 to 1930, Husein Đozo (1912–1982), a graduate of al-Azhar University of Cairo who played a vital role in the development of Islamic intellectual thought, and Abdulah Ajni Bušatlić (1871–1946), a graduate from the Higher Sharīʿa School established by the Habsburg authorities in 1887 in Sarajevo.

In most studies, and in particular in the Yugoslav historiography, Muslim reformists were usually presented as an enlightened element within the otherwise conservative Muslim community, and as members of the growing urban, secular, educated intelligentsia within the emerging Muslim bourgeoisie. Conversely, traditionally educated religious scholars were considered backward and ignorant, and part of the religious and feudal classes.[14] More recent research demonstrates that such assumptions are untenable in the light of the intellectual biographies of Muslim intellectuals and complex relationship within the circle of religious scholars. The biographies of prominent champions of reformist thought such as the Safvet-beg Bašagić, Osman Nuri Hadžić, and Edhem Mulabdić highlight their varied educational backgrounds. They were intellectuals who had grown up under two empires: the Ottoman and Habsburg empires. As such they incorporated different forms of traditional Muslim education at home, elements of late Ottoman primary and religious education, as well as instruction provided by new public institutions established after the Austro-Hungarian occupation of 1878.[15] This unique blend of different educational influences allowed them to gain access to both traditional Islamic knowledge and modern European thought, but also to articulate a form of identity shaped by diverse cultural and intellectual influences. Additionally, a close reading of Bosnian intra-Muslim debates from the period under the research draws attention to the diversity of viewpoints among the

14 For more about these understanding of the Muslim intellectual development in Bosnia and Herzegovina see: Leyla Amzi-Erdoğdular, "Afterlife of Empire: Muslim-Ottoman Relations in Habsburg Bosnia Herzegovina" (PhD diss, Columbia University, 2013), 216–217. The author has since published this work as a book: *Afterlife of Empire: Muslim-Ottoman Relations in Habsburg Bosnia Herzegovina* (Stanford: Standford University Press, 2023). See also: Xavier Bougarel, "Farewell to the Ottoman Legacy? Islamic Reformism and Revivalism in Inter-War Bosnia-Herzegovina," in *Islam in Inter-War Europe,* eds. Nathalie Clayer and Eric Germain (London: Hurst, 2008), 1, accessed December 1, 2022, https://shs.hal.science/file/index/docid/706274/filename/Farewell_to_the_Ottoman_Legacy.pdf

15 Dennis Dierks, "Scripting, Translating, and Narrating Reform. Making Muslim Reformism in the European Peripheries of the Muslim World at the Turn of the 20th Century," in *Knowledge on the Move in a Transottoman Perspective: Dynamics of Intellectual Exchange from the Fifteenth to the Early Twentieth Century*, eds. Evelin Dierauff *et al*. (Goettingen: V & R Unipress, 2021), 173.

class of Islamic scholars over the true nature of Islam, demonstrating that there have been various approaches to interpreting and applying Islamic teachings in the modern context.[16] Therefore, it would be inaccurate to view religious scholars as a homogeneous group that had an antagonistic relationship with the ideas of European modernity and insisted upon preserving inherited institutions.

1.1.2. Conservatism

Conservatism, which in academic scholarship is also frequently referred to as traditionalism, is the term I use for the intellectual trend which is primarily characterized by complete reliance upon classic exegetical and legal tradition of Islam and insistence on preserving inherited institutions, doctrines and practices that are deemed authentically Islamic.

An essential element of the conservative view as expounded in this study is a sceptical attitude towards any innovation in religious thought or practice, which is viewed as a "deviation" or (*bida*). This scepticism has not gone unnoticed by their reformist contemporaries, who see it as a reflection of a lack of understanding of the "true" Islamic principles, as well as a lack of knowledge about the developments in the modern world. As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, conservative scepticism and criticism of socio-cultural change and religious reforms advocated by reformists was not simply a matter of ignorance but was closely linked to a concern that reforms of traditional practices and institutions, particularly those pertaining to women, might have unintended, undesirable consequences. These included the erosion of moral values, the fragmentation of families, or the potential dilution of religious teachings.

The majority of Bosnian Muslim religious scholars espoused conservative viewpoints; however, as previously stated, they faced considerable opposition within their own ranks. For that reason, we must be careful not to use the term conservatives for the class of *ʿulamāʾ* in general.

The involvement of this intellectual trend into Bosnian public debates became apparent in the late 1920s, when conservative scholars began active dialogue and confrontations with reformist circles through the printed press. Among conservative Muslim scholars active in public discussions about socio-religious and cultural issues were Ibrahim Haki Čokić (1871–1948), Ahmed Lutfi Čokić (1878–1933), Ali Riza Karabeg (1873–1944), and Sejfullah Proho (1859–1933).[17]

16 Amzi-Erdoğdular, "Afterlife of Empire," 214–218.

17 For more on these scholars see: Šefik Kurdić, "Percepcija sunneta u bošnjačkıh tradicionalista," *Islamska misao: Godišnjak Fakulteta za islamske studije u Novom Pazaru*, no.3 (2009): 19–21; Adnan Jahić, *Hikjmet: Riječ tradicionalne uleme u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Tuzla: Bošnjačka zajednica kulture Preporod, Općinsko društvo Tuzla, 2004).

1.1.3. Revivalism

The term Islamic revivalism refers to an ideological trend that stresses the centrality of Islam in all areas of Muslim life, including family, society, economics, and politics.

Today, revivalism is used as an umbrella term, encompassing diverse trends across different periods. It includes the late 18th and early 19th puritanical movements in Islam that focused on the internal moral and religious decline on Muslims, early 20th century revivalism that was mainly focused on political, social, and moral reform in response to colonialism and secularism, and contemporary movements that emphasize personal and communal piety.[18]

Scholars offer different perspectives on the relationship between early 20th century revivalism and reformism. Some scholars view early 20th century revivalism as a Muslim response to the secularist tendencies of the interwar period and Islamic reformism. Others, however, underline that revivalism is rooted in modern Islamic reformism, with which it shares a critical attitude towards the complete adherence to Islamic classical tradition, along with an emphasis on the importance of engaging directly with Islamic texts, particularly the Qurʾān.[19]

For the purpose of this study, I set revivalists apart from reformists because of their literal interpretation of Islamic foundational texts, their clear differentiation between Islamic and modern Western values, and their belief in the self-sufficiency of Islam. In a similar fashion to conservatives, revivalists saw the penetration of Western values as the primary cause of Muslims' moral decline and saw the moral renewal of Muslims as the main goal of their mission.

Revivalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina appeared in the late 1930s and was closely associated with a group of young Muslim scholars who were educated at al–Azhar University in Cairo during the interwar period They gathered around the prolific scholar Mehmed Handžić (1906–1944), and the Sarajevo society *El-Hidaje* that was composed of young, socially-engaged Islamic scholars who were deeply concerned with the preservation of Muslim morality and identity that were perceived as being under threat due to the increasing influence of secularism and materialism.[20] This society, established in 1936, had as its goal to bring Muslims back to their faith, to combat materialism, educate young Muslims, and enhance the social and religious significance of religious institutions and scholars.[21]

18 More about early 20th century revivalism, its origin and later developments can be found in: Ira Lapidus, "Islamic Revival and Modernity: the Contemporary Movements and the Historical Paradigms," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40, 4 (1997): 444–460; Ali Rahnema, *Pioneers of Islamic Revival* (London: Zed Books, 1994); Jan A. Ali, *Islamic Revivalism Encounters the Modern World (A Study of the Tablīgh Jamāʿat)* (New Delhi: Sterling, 2012).

19 Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," 648; Karčić, *Društveno-pravni aspekt islamskog reformizma*, 103–108.

20 "Prva riječ," *El-Hidaje* 1, no. 1 (1936): 3.

21 "Prva riječ," 2–4.

Although founded by young religious scholars, it was presented as an alternative to the class of established scholars, and it became a movement to preserve Islamic religious and moral values.[22]

Some of the most prominent representatives of this trend, in addition to Handžić, were Kasim Dobrača (1910–1979), Alija Aganović (1902–1961) and Ibrahim Trebinjac (1912–1982). The society is regarded as being close to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.[23] A clear indication of this ideological inclination can be found in the texts published in the society's journal *El–Hidaje* which extensively covered the activities of the Society of the Muslim Brotherhood.[24]

1.2. Setting the Stage: Framing Debates on the Woman Question in a Time of Transformation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

During the first half of the 20th century, the woman question became a key socio-cultural and religious issue among the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The discussions on the Muslim woman's ontological status, her position in the family and in the larger community were closely related to the public debates about the cultural status of Bosnian Muslims and their identity. In order to understand these debates, some historical background is needed, whereby we must pay attention to the fact that Bosnia during the relatively short period under discussion here has experienced the succession of Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and Yugoslavian rule.

1.2.1. The Rise of Muslim Modernity in Ottoman and Habsburg Bosnia

Bosnian Muslims began reflecting on their cultural and religious situation in the late Ottoman period in the 19th century, as evidenced by the first journals that were established during this time as part of Ottoman modernization project. These discussions and

22 Xavier Bougarel , *Islam and Nationhood in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Surviving Empires* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 48–49; Emily Greble, *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 195; Enes Karić, "Izetbegović svojim mišljenjem ne pripada 'Mladim muslimanima,' " in *Islam i muslimani pred savremenim izazovima. Hrestomatija tekstova, eseja i intervjua,* ed. Enes Karić (Sarajevo: Savremeni islamski mislioci, 2009), 263. For more on *El–Hidaje*'s understanding of the role and responsibility of religious scholars, *ulamā'*, for the backwardness of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina see: Mustafa Brkić, "Uloga vođa i inteligencije," *El-Hidaje* 6, no. 12 (1943): 342–346; Kasim Dobrača, "Ulema. Njena uloga, odgovornost i mogućnost njenog rada," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 9/11 (1941): 224–233.

23 Xavier Bougarel, "The Diasporic Experience as Opportunity and Challenge for the Islamic Tradition of Bosniaks" in *Both Muslim and European: Diasporic and Migrant Identities of Bosniaks*, ed. Dževada Šuško (Leiden; Boston: Brill 2019), 59.

24 Fabio Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European: Voluntary Associations, Gender, and Islam in Post-Ottoman Bosnia and Yugoslavia (1878–1941)* (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2021), 340.

introspections continued and intensified after the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878.[25]

In the new socio-political context after 1878, and particularly after the Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908, Bosnian Muslims gradually started to consider Europe not as an external category or a threat (as they might have done from an Ottoman perspective), but rather as a political and cultural framework of which they were becoming part. This new situation compelled them to rethink their own identity and the relationship between the perceived dualism of Islamic tradition and European modernity. The Berlin Congress of 1878 that reshaped the Balkans after the Russo-Turkish War is an event that has been described in the literature in terms of crisis, shock, and loss, caused by a radical change that turned Bosnian Muslims into a minority within the Austro-Hungarian Empire that was Central European as well as Christian.[26] Yet, this shock was processed in silence in the first decades of Austro-Hungarian rule that had started in 1878.[27]

It was not until the turn of the 19th into the 20th century that there was a significant development of Muslim intellectual life and the initiation of public discussions regarding the socio-cultural, religious, and political status of Muslims and their future in the Habsburg Empire.

This intellectual development was directly linked to the emergence of Islamic reformism in Bosnia and Herzegovina that brought together a new generation of Muslim intellectuals educated at European universities and the reform-minded religious scholars. This intellectual movement played a vital role in the development of the press and the formation of a specific Muslim public sphere in the early 20th century.[28] A prominent part of this new Muslim public sphere was the public questioning of and critical reflection on Islam, its essence, and its place in the modern world. Both religious scholars and secularly educated Muslim intellectuals were involved in this process. The press became the platform where not only current political and sociocultural issues were discussed, but also questions

25 For more on discussion on the cultural status of Bosnian Muslims during the late Ottoman period see: Edin Hajdarpašić, *Whose Bosnia? Nationalism and Political Imagination in the Balkans, 1840–1914* (Ithaca, New York; London: Cornell University Press, 2015); Amzi-Erdoğdular, "Afterlife of Empire."

26 Sanjin Kodrić, "Traumatični susret s Evropom: 'Austrougarska tema' i počeci novije bošnjačke književnosti," *Slavia Meridionalis* 12 (2012): 57–58; Greble, *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe*, 23–52.

27 Enes Karić, "Aspects of Islamic Discourse in Bosnia-Hercegovina from Mid 19th till the End of the 20th Century: A Historical Review," *in Şehrayin. Die Welt der Osmanen, die Osmanen in der Welt; Wahrnehmungen, Begegnungen und Abgrenzungen. Illuminating the Ottoman World. Perceptions, Encounters and Boundaries*, ed. Yavuz Köse (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 286.

28 For discussions about the development of public sphere in Muslim world in general see: Nadir Özbek, "Defining the Public Sphere during the Late Ottoman Empire: War, Mass Mobilization and the Young Turk Regime (1908–18)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 5 (2007): 795–809; Bedross Der Matossian, "Formation of Public Sphere(s) in the Aftermath of the 1908 Revolution among Armenians, Arabs and Jews," in *"L'ivresse de la liberté": La révolution de 1908 dans l'Empire ottoman*, ed. François Georgeon (Leuvain: Peeters, 2012),189-220; Miriam Hoexter, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, and Nehemia Levtzion, eds., *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies*. (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002).

regarding the interpretation of Islamic religious and legal heritage, interpretive authority, and the relationship between Islam towards European modernity.

A part of these discussions was an intense debate about the status of Muslim women in the family and society. Among the most important factors in bringing this issue to public attention was the founding of the Muslim reformist journal *Behar* that appeared in 1900. Secular educated scholars such as Edhem Mulabdić (1862–1954) and Osman Nuri Hadžić (1869–1937), Safvet-beg Bašagić (1870–1934), and the religious scholar Džemaludin Čaušević (1870–1930) were of particular importance for the development of this journal.[29] Muslim intellectuals, who published in *Behar* actively advocated the reform of traditional customs and institutions related to women, thereby arguing for the compatibility of these reforms with Islam.[30] The journal published articles on the education of Muslim women, marriage, upbringing, and short news on the emancipation of women in other Muslim communities.[31]

The Bosnian Muslim reformists formed part of a global intellectual landscape marked by the spread of the thesis that asserted that the civilizational status of a society is directly related to the status of women in that society.[32] This thesis, developed by European Enlightenment thinkers, transcended its historical origins and gained prominence worldwide by the late 19th century. Over time, it has evolved into a powerful trend with far-reaching implications. Apart from serving Orientalist narratives asserting Western superiority, it played an important role in shaping discussions within the Muslim world about tradition, modernity, progress, and civilization.[33]

There were two significant factors that contributed to the growth of interest in the Muslim woman question in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the early 20th century, both of which facilitated the spread of the woman-civilization thesis, which asserts that the status of women in social life serves as an indicator of a society's position on the ladder of civilization.

29 Bougarel, "Farewell to the Ottoman Legacy," 4–5.

30 Karčić, *Društveno-pravni aspekt islamskog reformizma*, 199.

31 K. Nihad, "Ženski mekteb u gradu Baku," *Behar* 3, no. 15 (1902): 240; Hasan Hodžić, "Nekoliko riječi roditeljima. O narodnom uzgoju," pt. 1, *Behar* 3, no. 8 (1902): 120–122; pt. 2, *Behar* 3, no. 9 (1902): 133–135; pt. 3, *Behar* 3, no. 10 (1902): 150–151; Osman Nuri Hadžić, "Turska žena (La femme Turque)," *Behar* 3, no. 12 (1902):180–181; H. A. B, "Islamske dobrotvorke u Sarajevu," *Behar* 6, no. 7 (1905): 110; Muhamed Hilmi Hodžić, "Naobrazba muslimanskih žena (savjeti muslimanskim ženama)," pt. 1, *Behar* 1, no. 22/23 (1910): 344–350; pt. 2, *Behar* 1, no. 24 (1910): 373–377; "Feminizam u Turskoj,"*Behar* 9, no. 9 (1908): 146; Musa Ćazim Ćatić, "Znaci da se budi islamsko ženskinje," *Behar* 8, no. 5 (1907): 69–71.

32 Ann Towns, "The Status of Women as Standard of Civilization," *European Journal of International Relations* 15, no. 4 (2009): 681–706; Ann E. Towns, "Carrying the Load of Civilisation: The Status of Women and Challenged Hierarchies," *Millennium*, *42*, no.3 (2014): 595–613.

33 Ann Towns, "Civilization," in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, eds. Lisa Disch and Mary Hawkesworth (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 79–99.

First, the increasing influence of Islamic reformist ideas throughout the Muslim world— of which Bosnia was effectively part and with which Bosnians interacted actively—brought this topic to the forefront of Bosnian Muslim discussions concerning the future of Islam and Muslims in the modern world.

Second, Muslim women were an important component of the Austro-Hungarian modernization projects. The Austro-Hungarian civilizational discourse considered the Muslim woman of key importance for the socio-cultural modernization of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The typical Orientalist tropes of backwardness of Muslims, especially Muslim women, were an integral part of this discourse.[34] The Austro-Hungarian efforts in modernizing female education in Bosnia and Herzegovina contributed to the intensification of public debates on the Muslim woman question and the inclusion of a variety of actors with varying perspectives into these debates.

During the first decade of the 20th century, discussions on the status of Muslim women in family and society were primarily dominated by reformist voices. However, the attempt by Habsburg authorities in 1911 to mandate compulsory primary education for all children, regardless of gender, prompted conservative circles to publicly express their opinions. In 1911, the Sarajevo-based association of Muslim school teachers (*Muallim*) published the pamphlet *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja* (Letter in Defense of Muslim Women).[35] This pamphlet cautioned against the education of Muslim women as a path leading to secularism and immorality, highlighting the need to preserve traditional values and institutions. It was presented by *Muallim* as a reflection of their concerns regarding the effects of modern education on the moral order and identity of Bosnian Muslims.[36] However, while the criticism was prompted by Austro-Hungarian education reforms, it was directed not directly against the Austro-Hungarian authorities, but against those members of the Muslim community who advocated modern education for Muslim women.

Both the pamphlet's content and the author's background sparked political controversy among the Muslim community. The pamphlet published under the Muslim pen-name Safijja-hanum was actually written by Sofija Pletikosić, a Serb Orthodox woman who had previously published in the Bosnian-Serbian magazine *Bosanska vila* (Bosnian Fairy) articles on social effects of modern education and fashion trends.[37] Advocates of modern education

34 Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*; Fabio Giomi, "Forging Habsburg Muslim Girls," *History of Education* 44, no. 3 (2015): 274–292.; Fabio Giomi, "Daughters of Two Empires: Muslim Women and Public Writing in Habsburg Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878–1918)," *Aspasia* 9, no. 1 (2015): 1; Robin Okey, *Taming Balkan Nationalism: The Habsburg "Civilizing Mission" in Bosnia, 1878–1914* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.)

35 Safijje-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja* (Sarajevo: Izdanje uredništva Muallima u Sarajevu, 1911).

36 Giomi, "Forging Habsburg Muslim Girls," 285.

37 Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*, 86–87; Zlatiborka Popov Momčinović, Fabio Giomi and Zlatan Delić, "Uvod – Period austrougarske uprave," *Zabilježene – žene i javni život Bosne i Hercegovine u 20. vijeku*, ed. Jasmina Čaušević (Sarajevo: Sarajevski otvoreni centar & Fondacija Cure, 2014), 23; 16–38

not only objected to the views presented in the brochure but also saw the fact that the author was a non-Muslim as evidence of a hidden agenda to keep Muslims uninformed.[38]

In spite of critics' numerous allegations, there is no evidence that Sofija Pletikosić participated in any secret plot to keep Muslims ignorant. The views presented in this pamphlet were a clear continuation of her previous journalist efforts in which she expressed open disapproval of the adoption of European educational and fashion trends among Bosnian Christian Serb women. Although her views could be a critique of Westernization, it would be difficult to define them as anti-Muslim, since her criticisms were directed against the influence of modern European trends on Bosnian Christian Serbs as well as Muslims.

It seems plausible that the *Muallim* may have recruited Sofia Pletikosić for her previous journalistic contributions, as Fabio Giomi suggests, partly because conservative Muslims had limited experience with public speaking.[39] Through her involvement, conservative voices were able to engage more effectively in public discourse, aided by a text that was written by a woman who was experienced in public expression.

The discussions on the education of Muslim girls that continued throughout the first half of the 20th century and that I analyse at length in this research will provide insight into the complex perspectives of Bosnian Muslim intellectuals both towards their heritage and towards modern Europe. Islamic textual sources, legal and exegetical tradition, Islamic history, as well as modern ideas of scientific motherhood and domesticity were closely interwoven in various formulations of a desirable female education.

1.2.2. The Veiling Controversy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1918–1950

After World War I, there was the rapid growth of a Bosnian Muslim public sphere, which was characterized by the involvement of various Muslim intellectual trends in public discussions about Muslim women. In this period the issue of Muslim (un)veiling became the core issue of various debates about Islamic tradition, the nature of (Bosnian) Muslim identity, and the correct Islamic path to progress. The intensification of these discussions, in particular those about Muslim women, was closely linked with the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of the new Yugoslav state.

In 1918, after the defeat of the Habsburg Empire in World War I, several nations in the Balkans, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, were united in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, renamed in 1929 to Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The incorporation of Bosnia-Herzegovina within the Kingdom together with Serbs, Croats and Slovenes made

38 One of the strongest responses to the pamphlet came from Bosnian politician Hamdija Karamehmedović who saw it as primarily a Christian effort to impede the progress of Muslims in Bosnia. See: Hamdija Karamehmedović, *Odgovor na pisma "Safijje" hanume* (Sarajevo: Naklada Zemana, Štamparija Bos. Pošte, 1911).

39 Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*, 86–88.

it necessary for Bosnian Muslims to rethink their identity and tradition, and to define their place in the new state. Considering that women often serve as symbols of group identity and cultural distinctiveness in the age of nations, and that cultural difference is "frequently signalled through the dress and deportment of women,"[40] it is not surprising that issues related to Muslim women — especially those concerning Muslim women veiling — were employed by Bosnian Muslims as a framework through which they established their position in relation to others within the Yugoslav community.

The demise of the Ottoman Empire in the 1920s and the subsequent Kemalist reforms had also a profound impact on themes discussed in interwar Bosnian Muslim public sphere. These reforms, spanning various domains such as law, culture, social relations, and religion, intensified dialogues as well as discords among the Bosnian Muslim community regarding the reforms of traditional institutions and practices, the nature of a "true" Islam, and the relation between Islam and European modernity. One particular issue that came under scrutiny of Bosnian Muslims was the changing traditional attire of the Turkish woman.[41] This issue served as a lens through which diverse perspectives on Bosnian Ottoman heritage, as well as the political, social, and intellectual developments in Turkey were articulated.

It should be noted that the Soviet anti-veiling campaigns initiated in the 1920s also had an impact on Bosnian Muslim public discourses.[42] These campaigns were used by Bosnian conservatives during the interwar period not only to criticize communism as a direct threat to Islamic cultural traditions and religious values, but also to assert that these Soviet campaigns were deeply entrenched in the Kemalist reforms.[43] Moreover, after the end of World War II, with the establishment of a communist regime in Yugoslavia, these Soviet campaigns served as a model for Yugoslav communists to implement their own anti-veiling measures, ultimately resulting in the ban of the face veil in 1950.[44]

In this context, the Muslim woman's face veil was one of the most important issues used by Bosnian Muslim authors to express their views on what it meant to be authentically Muslim. To answer this question Bosnian Muslims not only invoked Islamic traditions and sources, but also critically reflected upon the developments in the Muslim world, modern secular ideologies, as well as upon their relationship with non-Muslims and their place, first in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and later under the communist regime after World War II.

40 Deniz Kandiyoti, "Identity and Its Discontents: Women and the Nation," *Millennium* 20, no. 3 (1991): 435.

41 For a comprehensive analysis of the anti-veiling campaigns as a site where Kemalist reforms were negotiated, challenged, and resisted by various societal actors, refer to the following book: Sevgi Adak, *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in Turkey: State, Society and Gender in the Early Republic* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022).

42 For more about these campaigns see: Douglas T. Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 69–101, Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).

43 Jahjazade, "Kemalističke vjerske reforme," *Hikjmet* 4 , no. 46 (1933): 312–314.

44 Ivan Simic, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies* (Cham.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 157–160.

Two pivotal moments in the evolution of Bosnian Muslim discussions about veiling were the publication of Dževad-beg Sulejmanpašić's book entitled *Muslimansko žensko pitanje: Jedan prilog njegovom rješenju* (The Muslim Woman Question: A Contribution to its Resolution) in 1918 and the lecture delivered by the highest-ranking Islamic dignitary in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Reis-ul-ulema, Mehmed Džemaludin Čaušević in 1927 in Sarajevo. These two positions will be elaborated in chapter 6, but a quick overview will be provided here to continue the historical background.

Sulejmanpašić's book adopted an Islamic reformist perspective, positing that the veil is a cultural tradition rather than a religious obligation. Simultaneously, he argued that the veil posed an obstacle to the integration of Muslims into the wider Yugoslav community. In his 1927 lecture, on the other hand, Džemaludin Čaušević argued that not wearing the face veil by Muslim women was in accordance with Islamic values and norms. He also made a favourable reference to the social reforms in Turkey, specifically the discouragement of the face veil, even though these reforms had a distinct secular and even anti-Islamic character. The fact that Čaučević was a theologian who held a high position in the *ʿulamāʾ* class and that his argument touched on the issue of reinterpretation of Islamic teachings and practices must have played an important role in the fact that it led to profound divisions within the *ʿulamāʾ* class.

The heated public debates between Muslim opponents and advocates of face veiling which will be later analysed in this study indicate the complexity of issues that surrounded these debates. We will see how conservative periodicals of the time accused advocates of unveiling of being apostates from the Islamic faith and of promoting the ideas of Kemalism and Bolshevism.[45] On the other hand, reformist circles considered the face veil a sign of abandoning Islam and a consequence of religious scholars' ignorance of both their own religion and the socio-political and cultural needs of Muslims. According to some reformists, the face veil was merely a remnant of tribal customs within Islam rather than a true religious obligation. In addition, some viewed it as an obstacle to the economic advancement of Muslims, while others considered it to be a cause of immorality. Besides, during the inter-war period Muslim intellectuals who promoted the national identification of Muslims, whether as Croatian, Serbian or Yugoslavian, saw the veil as a barrier to the development of national sentiments among Muslims and as a cultural and social barrier between Muslims and non-Muslims in Yugoslavia. By contrast, conservative and revivalist circles emphasized veiling as a strategy for maintaining clear distinctions between Muslims and others within Yugoslavia. It may be argued that this strategy was influenced by a deep concern about assimilation and the consequent threat of losing the Muslim identity.

45 Jahjazade, "Kemalističke vjerske reforme," 312–314.

The issue of the Islamic face veil gained significant attention following 1945, with the establishment of the communist Yugoslavia. Within the confines of communist ideology, the state launched campaigns that aimed to eliminate traditional attire worn by Bosnian Muslim women, like the *zar* or *feredža*, a long garment covering their body and their hair, and a face veil called *peča* or *jašmak*. While measures against different forms of Islamic head covering were not endorsed, the face veil was abolished by law in 1950, and the religious justifications for this ban were presented in a number of articles published throughout 1950 in the official herald of the Islamic religious community, *Glasnik Islamske vjerske zajednice* (Herald of the Islamic Religious Community) Throughout that year, the majority of the magazine's issues discussed that law and analysed the veiling of Muslim women from the cultural and religious point of view.

1.3. State of Research and Research Objective

Serious interest in the woman question in modern Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Muslim women's history in post-Ottoman Bosnia emerged only with the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Previously, research was largely confined to academic circles within Yugoslavia and mainly focused on the participation of women in the national liberation movement and in communist organizations. Books published during 1960s and 1970s were written within the ideological framework that presented the Communist Party as an exclusive emancipatory force.[46] The dominant ideology considered and publicly decried religion as backward. It deemed religion and progress as opposing concepts, and interpreted patriarchal family structures, particularly among Muslims, primarily as a result of the religious traditions or more specifically as a result of the Ottoman legacy. It did not provide fertile ground either for more serious studies of Muslim intellectual history or for the research of women's history before World War II.[47]

Celia Hawkesworth, in her study of female public writing in Serbia and Bosnia correctly observes that the women's involvement in cultural life in the region "was virtually forgotten in the aftermath of the Second World War as a result of the distorting effects of communist ideology."[48] An exception in this respect is anthropologist and psychologist Vera Stein Erlich's

46 Mila Beoković, *Žene heroji* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1967); Rasim Hurem and Jasmina Musabegović, *Žene Bosne i Hercegovine u narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi 1941–1945.godine* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1977); Jovanka Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije u radničkom pokretu i ženskim organizacijama 1918—1941* (Beograd: Narodna knjiga i Institut za savremenu istoriju 1978).

47 Chiara Bonfiglioli, "Biografije aktivistkinja AFŽ-a: Intersekcionalna analiza ženskog djelovanja," in *Izgubljena revolucija: AFŽ između mita i zaborava,* eds. Andreja Dugandžić and Tijana Okić (Sarajevo: Udruženje za kulturu i umjetnost CRVENA, 2016), 23.

48 Celia Hawkesworth*, Voices in the Shadows: Women and Verbal Art in Serbia and Bosnia* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000), 123.

Family in Transition. A Study of 300 Yugoslav Villages. It was field research conducted in the late 1930s on family customs and norms among different regions and religious groups in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, but the study was published only much later, in 1964.[49] Erlich's study provides an excellent insight into the lives of women, including Muslim women, in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia of the 1930s. While Erlich considered the Ottoman legacy in the region to have had a conservative effect on family relations in the region, Chiara Bonfiglioli underlines that Erlich's "distinction between 'old style' and 'modern' areas was in no way hierarchical or judgmental, and, interestingly, carried neither an Orientalist evaluation of the Ottoman presence in the region nor any affirmation of Western cultural superiority."[50]

After the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, there was a surge of both local and foreign scholarly attention towards Bosnian Muslims and Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Noteworthy contributions to this area were made by the Bosnian scholars Fikret Karčić and Enes Karić, who played significant roles in the development of the intellectual history of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[51] Their works on Muslim reformism in Bosnia and Herzegovina were the first serious attempts to situate Bosnian reformism within the global context and the first works to recognize the woman question as an important part of the modern intra-Muslim debates on social, cultural, and religious issues. Although they only partially addressed the Muslim woman question within Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina, their positioning of Islamic reformism in Bosnia and Herzegovina within a global context has opened up the possibility of re-examining discussions pertaining to Muslim women on a broader scale.

Since the mid-2010s, international academic circles have taken an increased interest in the intellectual, cultural, and social history of the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly during the late Ottoman and Habsburg periods. The historical works of Hannes Grandits and Edin Hajdarpašić on the late Ottoman period, and Leyla Amzi-Erdoğdular and Harun Buljina[52] on the intellectual development of Muslims during the Habsburg period are noteworthy contributions to a growing field of research. These works provide original insights into intellectual and religious development of Bosnian Muslims, and question

49 Chiara Bonfiglioli, " 'An Age Fated to Vanish' ": Vera Stein Erlich's Anthropological Records of Interwar Yugoslavia Contribution to the Web-Feature 'European History – Gender History,' " *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte*, accessed November 2, 2022, https://www.europa.clio-online.de/essay/id/fdae-1676

50 Bonfiglioli, " 'An Age Fated to Vanish.' "

51 Fikret Karčić, *Društveno-pravni aspekt islamskog reformizma*; Fikret Karčić, *The Bosniaks and Challenges of Modernity: Late Ottoman and Hapsburg Times* (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 1999); Enes Karić, "Islamski reformistički pokreti kod Bošnjaka: Pregled bosanskih muslimanskih rasprava za i protiv obnove i reforme u XX stoljeću," in *Islam u Bosni i Hercegovini i Njemačkoj*, eds. Enes Karić, Helmut Wiesmann, and Hansjörg Schmid (Sarajevo: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2008), 9–76.

52 Hannes Grandits, *The End of Ottoman Rule in Bosnia Conflicting Agencies and Imperial Appropriations* (London: Routledge, 2022); Hajdarpašić, *Whose Bosnia?*; Amzi-Erdoğdular, "Afterlife of Empire;" Leyla Amzi-Erdogdular,"Alternative Muslim Modernities: Bosnian Intellectuals in the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59, no. 4 (2017): 912–943; Harun Buljina, "Empire, Nation, and the Islamic World: Bosnian Muslim Reformists between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, 1901–1914" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2019).

previously accepted theses about a complete and rapid break between the Ottoman and Habsburg periods of Bosnian Muslim history. In her book *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe,* Emily Greble details the complex relations and negotiations between Muslims and state authorities.[53] Greble's book shows how Muslim actively participated in the development of political, ethical and legal structures of their states.[54]

Fabio Giomi and Adnan Jahić made also recent valuable contributions to modern Muslim intellectual history and Muslim women's history in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Giomi's book on women's associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and his articles on the beginnings of the education of Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the context of various modernization projects in post-Ottoman Bosnia shed light on neglected question of Muslim women's activism in modern Bosnian history and confirmed the centrality of the women's issues in various modernization projects.[55] His work is focused primarily on various forms of active participation of Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina in social, educational and cultural projects between 1878 and 1941. Giomi's studies of Muslim women's volunteer associations and women's contributions to education and cultural development in the first decades of the post-Ottoman era, which are framed in the context of contemporary theoretical debates in social and cultural history, show that Muslim women were not completely excluded from public life in the mentioned period, as Yugoslav historiography after 1945 suggested.

Regarding the woman question in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the early 20th century, the most comprehensive study is Adnan Jahić's book *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini* (The Muslim Woman Question in Bosnia and Herzegovina), which is based on the rich archival material of various Muslim local organizations and printed publications of that time. It provides valuable insights into the different initiatives and actions undertaken by Muslim individuals and organizations to redefine Muslim women's position in society.[56] Although Jahić's work also sheds light on the intellectual debates about the woman question between 1908 and 1950, there are some fundamental differences with the study I am undertaking. These differences relate to historiographical contexts, use of sources, and theoretical framework. Jahić's exploration of the discussions about the woman question

53 Greble, *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe.*

54 Notwithstanding its interesting insights, this book has received some critical reviews, mostly about its methodological approach, see: Maurits Berger, "Review of *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe* by Emily Greble," *Austrian History Yearbook* 54, (2023): 246–247; Dženita Karić, Harun Buljina, and Piro Rexhepi, " 'Feel-Good Orientalism and the Question of Dignity' | A Review Essay on Emily Greble's Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe," *The Maydan*, February 2, 2023, accessed November 11, 2023, https://themaydan.com/2023/02/feel-good-orientalism-and-the-question-of-dignity/.

55 Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*; Giomi, "Forging Habsburg Muslim Girls," 274–292.; Giomi, "Daughters of Two Empires,"1.

56 Adnan Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini: žena u intelektualnom i društvenom životu Bošnjaka od aneksije do Zakona o zabrani nošenja zara i feredže* (1908–1950) (Zagreb, Sarajevo: Bošnjačka nacionalna zajednica za Grad Zagreb i Zagrebačku županiju; Naučnoistraživački institut "Ibn Sina," 2017).

is firmly rooted in the local historical context. His book examines the various perspectives of Muslim writers on issues related to women, placing them within the political and socio-religious context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and primarily presenting these perspectives as responses to national developments. Jahić's focus on the national context of the debates obscures the ways in which different Muslim currents drew from the broader, both Muslim and European, reservoir of ideas to articulate and reinforce their own positions. In my study, on the other hand, my frame of reference is that of global intellectual history, as will be explained below. By situating the writings Bosnian Muslim debates on the woman question within a broader, global intellectual context. I aim to provide more nuanced understanding of these debates that extends beyond specific regional dynamics. This approach allows us to see how Bosnian Muslim debates contributed to and were shaped by global debates on the Muslim woman question.

When it comes to the sources used to provide insight into intellectual debates on the woman question, Jahić extensively relied on unpublished documents of Bosnian Muslim organizations, as well as the political press of Bosnian Muslims. His focus was particularly on political journals. Among these were *Bošnjak* (Bosniak) which was published from 1891 to 1910, and *Musavat* (Equality), the official herald of the *Muslim National Organization*—the first Muslim political party—published between 1906 and 1911. He devoted attention to two distinct publications titled *Muslimanska svijest* (Muslim Awareness): the first, the official herald of the *Muslim Progressive Party,* was published from 1908 to 1910, while the second, a political magazine, was published between 1936 and 1941. He also analysed publications associated with the *United Muslim Organization*, such as *Zeman* (Time) published from 1911 to 1914, and *Novi Vakat* (New Era) published in 1913. Also, he focused on *Vrijeme* (Time), the herald of the *Muslim Organization,* published in 1919, and *Pravda* (Justice), the herald of the *Yugoslav Muslim Organization*, published from 1919 to 1925, as well as from 1926 to 1941. The focus of Jahić's analysis was also on the daily newspapers *Večernja pošta* (Evening Post), which was published in Sarajevo from 1921 to 1933; *Jugoslavenski list,* which was published also in Sarajevo from 1918 to 1941, and *Politika*, published in Belgrade since 1904.

My sources, on the other hand, mostly cover the cultural and intellectual publications rather than the sources of political organizations. My research relies primarily on textual sources, articles, books, magazines, and brochures through which various images were constructed during the first half of the 20th century of what was considered a "true Muslim woman," but also of what was "authentic" Islam.

Jahić's book makes use of rich archival material to reveal a significant amount of information about the views of local Muslim organizations, scholars and intellectuals regarding the Muslim woman question, but it often remains descriptive, lacking a rigorous analysis and

a clear theoretical framework. Various socio-cultural initiatives and Muslim discourses on women are described mostly in relation to local political and socio-religious circumstances, but without a broader critical analysis of the role of the Muslim woman question in the self–definition of different Muslim groups, their understanding of Islamic tradition, Bosnian Muslim identity, and the formation of their relationships vis-a-vis the policies of the ruling governments over Bosnia and the trends of the global community of Muslims.

In contrast to the works of Jahić and Giomi, who do not explore the connection between the Muslim woman question and debates on authentic Islam, I argue that public debates on women among Bosnian Muslims were closely tied to the global process of redefining authentic Islamic religious and cultural traditions that took place within a specific context marked by the imperial and cultural domination of the Western modernity. I hold that the significant place that this question occupied in public confrontations among Muslim intellectuals over Islamic tradition and modernity clearly reveals that—to borrow Lata Mani's words—tradition was not "the ground on which the status of woman being contested. Rather, the reverse was true: women in fact became the site on which tradition was debated and reformulated."[57]

Based primarily on the analysis of Muslim Bosnian periodicals and other printed publications from the first half of the twentieth century, I focus on the ways in which Islamic tradition was redefined in public discourses by means of the Muslim women question. In doing so, I look at the ways fundamental Islamic concepts were employed and redefined within these discussions and at the strategies used to claim the right to define authentic Islamic teachings on women. Further, since I consider Bosnian Muslim debates as part of broader, global discussions on the Muslim women's question and the Islamic tradition that have emerged since the late 19th century among both Muslims and non-Muslims, I pay special attention to the global context in which they took place. Consequently, this research is theoretically and methodologically positioned primarily within the framework of global intellectual history, with a focus on intellectual connections, transfer and transformation of ideas, and their cultural appropriations within imperial and multi-national contexts.

Fabio Giomi and Adnan Jahić took as starting points for their research decisive moments in Bosnia and Herzegovina's political, social, and cultural history, that is to say, the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878 by the Habsburgs, and its subsequent annexation in 1908. As my study focuses on intra-Muslim debates in the public sphere, I chose as the starting point of my research a pivotal moment in the creation of a specifically Muslim modern public sphere, namely the emergence of the reformist magazine *Behar* (Blossom) in 1900. I consider the emergence of *Behar* as the beginning of a public discourses on topics that until then were considered to be in the exclusive domain of religious scholars. With

57 Lata Mani, "Contentious Traditions: The Debate of Sati in Colonial India," *Cultural Critique,* no.7 (1987): 153.

the emergence of *Behar*, public discussions on the cultural status of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Islamic intellectual and religious heritage, and the status of Islam in the modern world began, with the participation of both religious scholars and secularly educated Muslims. Discussions on the religious status of established practices related to Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the "true" teachings of Islam on women dominated the public life of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the first half of the twentieth century. The 1950 legal ban of the Muslim face veil marks the end of the period of this study. The new communist regime established after World War II and marginalization of religion by means of expropriation, arrests, and public campaigns, as well as passing the laws banning the *sharīʿa* courts and Muslim women dress significantly contributed to the privatization of religion and interrupted long-standing public debates on the interpretation of Islam and the woman question.

1.4. Conceptual Framework: Locating the Bosnian Muslim Woman Question in Global Muslim Intellectual History of the Early 20th Century

The study of public Muslim debates on the woman question cannot be separated from the insights of gender studies and intellectual history that affirm the close relationship between discourses on women and broader socio-cultural and religious concerns. The use of women in discourses is often "a means of representing ideas about social order and social organization,"[58] and a type of code for other concerns and conceptualizations of difference.[59] Duderija suggests that representations of Muslim women have been at the centre of debates over "cultural identity, relationships between Muslim societies and the West, tradition and authenticity, and cultural specificity and globalism."[60] Karen Offen and Ayaka Kano have drawn attention to the importance of studying public debates on the woman question and gender issues as a means of interpreting different understandings of a situation in the past, different understandings of one's own tradition, modernity and cultural norms and values.[61]

This study is informed by research that recognizes the intra-Muslim discussions on women's issues as the major constituent of various interpretations of tradition and modernity among

58 Joan Wallach Scott, " 'L'ouvrière! Mot impie, sordide . . .' Women Workers in the Discourse of French Political Economy, 1840–1860," in *Gender and the Politics of History*, ed. Joan Wallach Scottt (New York : Columbia University Press, 1999), 162.

59 Elizabeth A. Clark, "Engendering the Study of Religion," in *The Future of the Study of Religion. Proceedings of Congress 2000,* eds. Slavica Jakelić and Lori Pearson (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004), 217–242.

60 Adis Duderija and Halim Rane, *Islam and Muslims in the West: Major Issues and Debates* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 66.

61 Karen M Offen, *The Woman Question in France, 1400–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1; Ayako Kano, *Japanese Feminist Debates: A Century of Contention on Sex, Love, and Labor* (Honolulu: University Of Hawaii Press, 2016), 4–5.

Muslim intellectuals since the 19th century. Afsaneh Najmabadi, Ellen Fleichmann, Monica Ringer, Asiya Alam, and others have arguably shown that the status of the Muslim woman was used to express deeper anxieties concerning the authentic Islamic tradition which were brought about by modernization or global Western influence.[62] It is clear from these studies that one of the central notions through which Muslim intellectuals from the 19th century formed their divergent understandings of cultural and religious authenticity and sacred authority was exactly the woman question.

I view Bosnian Muslim debates as part of a global contestations over Islamic tradition and modernity, that show how Muslim women occupied the minds of both Muslim and non-Muslim intellectuals from the late 19th century. The woman question was the central medium through which both Islamic tradition and modernity were debated, (re)constructed and (re)imagined.

Since both tradition and modernity are not only diversely defined within the social sciences and humanities, but also ideologically charged terms it is important to clarify here how I use these concepts. Unlike classical modernization theories—which reduce Islam to a static religious tradition and modernity to Western secular-liberal values—this study approaches both categories as historically constructed, discursively shaped, and constantly renegotiated within various contexts.[63] It focuses on how Bosnian Muslims conceptualized these terms in a specific intellectual and historical setting of the early 20th century. Their diverse and often conflicting understandings of tradition and modernity are treated as integral to both ongoing reinterpretations of Islamic tradition and global discourses on modernity.

This approach is influenced by Talal Asad's concept of Islam as a discursive tradition. Asad understands Islam not as a closed, static inherited set of norms and values, but as an open space continuously shaped and reshaped through ongoing interpretations, debates, and practices across various historical and cultural contexts.[64] This framework enables a critical analysis of Bosnian Muslims' discursive engagements with questions of religious authority, inherited scholarly traditions, and the possibilities for reinterpreting Islamic sources as part of the ongoing redefinition of Islamic tradition. In parallel, this dissertation draws on the central idea of the rich scholarship of plural modernities, which rejects the idea of Western modernity as a universal or normative model, and instead recognizes the existence of

62 Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Veiled Discourse—Unveiled Bodies;" *Feminist Studies* 19, no. 3 (1993): 487–518; Ellen Fleischmann, *The Nation and Its "New" Women: The Palestinian Women's Movement*, 1920–1948 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Monica Ringer, "Rethinking Religion: Progress and Morality in the Early Twentieth Century Iranian Women's Press" *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 24, no. 1 (2004): 49–57; Asiya Alam, *Women, Islam and Familial Intimacy in Colonial South Asia* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2021).

63 For classical understanding of modernization see Daniel Lerner and David Riesman, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York: Free Press, 1964).

64 Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1986), 14.

multiple, and locally grounded articulations of modernity, that are integral part of global historical processes.[65] Bosnian Muslim reflections on progress, civilization, reform, gender, and Europe are approached in this work as distinct local conceptualizations of what it meant to be modern.

Within this context, it is necessary to clarify that when referring to European modernity, I do not invoke a universal or normative model. Rather, I refer to a Western European, historically specific and discursively constructed model of modernity that since 19th century gained global prominence through processes of colonial expansion, epistemic authority, and institutional diffusion.[66] This model framed a particular set of ideals—such as secularism, individual autonomy, and rationality—as self-evident, universally applicable values intrinsically tied to the notion of modernity. In this perspective, the specific Western European worldview positioned itself as the only legitimate path to modern life and progress, excluding other societies from civilizational development.[67]

Although I use the term European modernity frequently throughout this study, I do so with critical awareness of its limitations. My usage does not imply that modernity in Europe was internally homogenous or free of contradiction.[68] I employ the term heuristically to refer to a historically specific and discursively dominant articulation of modernity—one that functioned as a shared frame of reference across diverse global contexts, including South-eastern Europe. The repetition of this term in this study reflects both its historical centrality and the fact that many Bosnian Muslim intellectuals engaged with it explicitly—whether through critique, adaptation, or negotiation. Thus, I use this term as an analytical shorthand for a constellation of ideas and values that shaped the global discourses of modernity. Rather than exploring the origins or internal tensions of this European model, this dissertation focuses on Bosnian Muslim discourses on the woman question to explore how Bosnian Muslims positioned themselves within its dominant discourses.

This approach facilitates the exploration of the diverse and often competing conceptualizations of modernity and tradition articulated within Bosnian Muslim discourses

65 For scholarship advancing the concept of plural or multiple modernities from diverse intellectual perspectives, see Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, ed., Multiple *Modernities* (London: Routledge, 2017). Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, "On Alternative Modernities," *Public Culture* 11, no. 1 (1999): 1–18; Dietrich Jung, *Islamic Modernities in World Society: The Rise, Spread, and Fragmentation of a Hegemonic Idea* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2023).

66 For critical accounts of how Western European modernity was constructed as a normative and civilizational ideal through colonial and epistemic domination see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

67 For a critical approach to the presumed neutrality and universality of these ideals, particularly secularism see: Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003) and Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

68 For more on the complexity and internal diversity of European modernity, see Peter Wagner, *European Modernity: A Global Approach* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

about women. While some Bosnian Muslims framed modernity as inherently Islamic, others sow it as synonymous with the values and institutions of Western Europe; likewise, some viewed tradition as a dynamic field open to (re)interpretation, while others saw it as a fixed set of inherited norms. These divergent views cannot be reduced to simplistic acts of acceptance or rejection of the dominant European model of modernity and its narratives that have historically marginalized not only Muslim communities worldwide, but also Balkan societies more broadly, often positioning them as ambiguous, semi-European spaces between civilization and backwardness.[69] These Bosnian Muslim positions reflect complex, context-specific efforts to navigate between central Islamic concepts, global influences—both Islamic and European—and the pressures of local modernization processes. They show how Bosnian Muslims articulated locally grounded yet globally connected visions of tradition and modernity that drew from multiple sources.

A nuanced understanding of Bosnian Muslim debates on Muslim women requires an examination of the connections and entanglements between Bosnian Muslim Islamic thought, modern Islamic intellectual currents from around the world, modern European ideas and specific local discursive and socio-cultural context. By viewing the Bosnian debates through the lens of global history, which entails an acknowledgment of global interdependences, we can gain a deeper understanding of how they were shaped by a complex interplay of both local and global factors. Among these factors are the emergence of global networks of Muslim intellectuals, the ascendancy of Islamic reformism throughout the Muslim world, and the global circulation of European modernity ideas, as well as the specific local sociocultural and political conditions.

This study draws upon recent scholarship in Muslim intellectual history that utilizes historical approaches and paradigms such as entangled history, transnational history, global history, and *histoire croisée* that concentrate on the processes of exchange, interdependence and interaction in global context.[70] By contextualizing Islamic intellectual history within the globalization process emerging in the late 19th century, which was facilitated by rapid technological advances and global political shifts, this scholarship has demonstrated that ideas and concepts became increasingly intertwined across diverse geographical boundaries

69 For more on how Balkan was constructed as Europe's "Other within" see Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

70 For more about global intellectual history see: Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, eds., *Global Intellectual History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Bruce Mazlish, "An Introduction to Global History," in *Conceptualizing Global History*, eds. Bruce Mazlish and Ralph Buultjens (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 1–24; Raymond Grew, "On the Prospect of Global History" in *Conceptualizing Global History*, eds. Bruce Mazlish and Ralph Buultjens (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 227–249; Margrit Pernau, "Whither Conceptual History? From National to Entangled Histories," *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 7, no. 1 (2012): 1–11; John-Paul A Ghobrial, "Introduction: Seeing the World like a Microhistorian," *Past & Present* 242, no. Supplement_14 (2019): 1–22; Zrinka Blažević i Tihana Kušter. "Historija ispreplетanja danas: teorijska polazišta i istraživačke perspektive," *Radovi* 52, no. 1 (2020): 15–36; Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

during this period. The recent studies, using various methodological and theoretical vocabularies, have in their analysis of modern Islamic intellectual history succeeded to move away from Eurocentric approaches and opened wider perspectives for pluralistic interpretations. They shed light on the multifaceted relationship between modern Islamic and European intellectual currents, dynamic interplay between local and global trends and forces, tensions between cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity, and provide insight into the cross-cultural interactions in multiple directions. They also provide a glimpse into new ties and connections visible in the emergence of a new global sense of an interconnected Muslim world.[71]

While studies of Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bosnian Muslims traditionally have focused primarily on the issue of national identification of Muslims and their attitudes towards modern national ideologies, recent studies indicate increased interest in the development of Islamic intellectual history within a global context. The studies of Leyla Amzi-Erdogdular, Dennis Dierks, Harun Buljina, Enes Karić and Fikret Karčić have demonstrated complex connections, entanglements, translations and transfers of ideas and concepts which transcend familiar geographical boundaries. Dennies Dierks' research on Islamic intellectual history in Habsburg Bosnia indicates the development of a modern concept of Muslim globality or global Muslim connectivity among Bosnian Muslims in the first half of the 20th century.[72] He has shown how Bosnian intellectuals in Habsburg Bosnia creatively adapted and merged ideas from different sources including Ottoman history, modern Islamic reformism and Western modernity to develop their narratives of reform.[73] Leyla Amzi-Erdogdular's research views Habsburg Bosnia as a continuation of, rather than a break from, Ottoman Bosnia.[74] Harun Buljina's dissertation on the early 20th century pan-Islamist movement in Bosnia-Herzegovina emphasizes networks of collaboration that tied modern reformist scholars to both the wider Muslim world and previous generations

71 Ammeke Kateman, *Muhammad 'Abduh and his Interlocutors: Conceptualizing Religion in a Globalizing World* (Leiden; Boston: Bril, 2019); Dietrich Jung, *Orientalists, Islamists and the Global Public Sphere: A Genealogy of the Modern Essentialist Image of Islam* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2011); Götz Nordbruch and Umar Ryad, *Transnational Islam in Interwar Europe: Muslim Activists and Thinkers* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Seema Alavi, *Muslim Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Empire* (London: Harvard University Press, 2015); Faiz Ahmed, *Afghanistan Rising: Islamic Law and Statecraft between the Ottoman and British Empires* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017). For more on the emergence of the new idea of the Islamic or Muslim world see: Cemil Aydin, "Globalizing the Intellectual History of the idea of 'Muslim World,' " in *Global Intellectual History*, eds. Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 159–186; Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

72 Dennis Dierks, "Mediatising Violence and Renegotiating Commonality: Bosnian Muslim Press Reporting on the Italo-Turkish War (1911–1912)," *Diyâr* 2, no. 1 (2021): 105–133.

73 Dierks, "Scripting, Translating, and Narrating Reform;" 157–222.

74 Amzi-Erdogdular, "Alternative Muslim Modernities," 912–943.

of Bosnian scholars.[75] Fikret Karčić's and Enes Karić's studies have acknowledged the influences of global Islamic reformism on Bosnian reformists.[76]

By exploring how Bosnian Muslim intellectuals engaged in global Islamic debates during the early 20th century, I intend to deepen our understanding of the global dimensions of Bosnian Muslim intellectual thought. I do so by situating local debates on the Muslim woman question in the broader context of global debates on tradition and modernity, which allows us to observe the dynamic interplay between local perspectives and global Islamic intellectual currents. This provides insight into Bosnian Muslims' active participation in broader Muslim intellectual discourses.

1.5. Methodology: Global Intellectual Debates in Local Public Spheres in Times of Change

In order to examine the Bosnian Muslim public debates on the woman question, this study undertakes a contextual analysis of the debates in relation to the global discourses about this issue that date back to the late 19th century.

In the first place, it means that I position the Bosnian debates within a broader Muslim debate on authentic Islam and the related issues of authority and modernity that dominated Muslim world form late 19th century. I consider these global discourses about the true Islam and its place in modernity as the primary framework within which local Bosnian debates on the woman question unfolded. Recognizing that these global discourses were initiated and significantly shaped by the global reformist call for revitalization of true Islamic principles, I begin my work by outlining its main ideas and arguments. The global reformist ideas on Islamic tradition in modernity sparked a range of ideological responses across the Muslim world. An overview of the core reformist ideas will therefore be given to allow for a comprehensive understanding of the foundations that influenced the local Bosnian debates on the Muslim woman question.

Furthermore, in my analysis of the Bosnian debates about Muslim women I pay special attention to authors, journals, and central arguments from other parts of the Muslim world that Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina employed in their discursive constructions of the ideal Muslim woman. My intention is not to identify specific influences or to apply the traditional centre-periphery dichotomy to the analysis of Bosnian Islamic discourses,

75 Harun Buljina, "Empire, Nation, and the Islamic World."

76 Karčić, *The Bosniaks and Challenges of Modernity*; Karčić, *Društveno-pravni aspekt islamskog reformizma,* 197–241; Enes Karić, "Islamski reformistički pokreti kod Bošnjaka: Pregled bosanskih muslimanskih rasprava za i protiv obnove i reforme u XX stoljeću," 9–76; Enes Karić, "Islamic Thought in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 20th Century: Debates on Revival and Reform," *Islamic Studies* 41, no. 3 (2002): 391–444.

but rather to provide an insight into wider intellectual and discursive framework for Bosnian debates. This focus serves two purposes. First, it aims to demonstrate how the increasing interconnectedness of the Muslim world shaped Bosnian Muslim debates on the woman question, as evidenced in the dynamic circulation of ideas and intellectual trends among distant Muslim regions. Second, it reveals the multiple references that were made in Bosnian Muslim debates to Islamic trends, concepts, and texts from different regions. I consider these references as instrumental in the fostering and promotion of the idea of Muslim commonality among Bosnian Muslims, as well as in legitimizing diverse interpretations of Islamic tradition and diverse narratives on the authentic Islamic teaching about women. Bosnian Muslim perspectives on the broader Islamic reformist movement in the Muslim world are given special attention in this study since, as already explained, their ideas provided the conceptual framework within which Bosnian intra-Muslim discussions on the woman question were positioned. Bosnian Muslims developed their own creative processes of approving, contesting, or criticizing the main ideas of Islamic reformism within a local political, social, and cultural context marked by profound changes in politics and culture. These creative processes provided new opportunities for Bosnian Muslims to articulate their own interpretations of Islamic principles and values, as well as to negotiate their identity in a changing environment.

While the different constructions of the Muslim woman were part of the larger Muslim quest for authenticity, the role of modern Europe cannot be underestimated as an important reference point in intra-Muslim debates on the woman question. We will see in the Bosnian case that the dominant Western discourses on women played a significant role in creating a close link between the Muslim woman question, civilizational progress, and the place of Islamic tradition in the modern world in Muslim intellectual thought. On the other hand, the diverse Bosnian Muslim constructions of the ideal Muslim woman cannot be considered as a mere rejection of Western modernity or an imitation of Western concepts. My understanding of the relationship between modern Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina and European intellectual currents relies on recent concepts of cultural transfer. Unlike conventional studies of cultural transfer that have focused on the diffusion of cultural concepts from one national context to another, recent approaches emphasize that the whole process is formative for the object of transfer and its meaning, and transformative for all parties involved.[77]

77 Nikola Tomašegović, "Modernistički pokret mladih u hrvatskoj kulturi i politici na prijelomu 19. i 20. stoljeća" (PhD diss., University of Zagreb, 2022), 22. For more on cultural transfer studies see: Wolfgang Schmale, "Cultural Transfer," *European History Online* (EGO), 2012, accessed March 20, 2022, http://www.ieg-ego.eu/schmalew-2012-en; Stefanie Stockhorst, *Cultural Transfer through Translation: The Circulation of Enlightened Thought in Europe by Means of Translation* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2010); Steen Bille Jørgensen and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, "Introduction: Reframing the Cultural Transfer Approach," in *Cultural Transfer Reconsidered: Transnational Perspectives, Translation Processes, Scandinavian and Postcolonial Challenges*, eds. Steen Bille Jørgensen and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2021), 1–20.

My analysis of debates on the Muslim woman question in the Bosnian context demonstrates the creative ways in which fundamental Western concepts such as civilization, progress, and emancipation have been redefined within the Muslim discursive tradition to secure the place of Islam in the modern world and to define Muslim's place and identity, first in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and then later in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and communist Yugoslavia.

1.5.1. Analysis of Discourses

Significant for the Bosnian Muslim debates about women is the plurality of different models of the ideal Muslim woman and the related divergent understandings of Islamic tradition and modernity. In this study, I will approach this pluralism of modern Islamic thought through the lens of internal criticism. I consider the diverse discursive constructions of the "true Muslim woman" and "true Islam" as an expression of an open, on-going development and transformation of Islamic tradition. These debates on the Muslim woman question reflect efforts to find within the Islamic tradition answers to socio-political and cultural changes and to provide a place for the Islamic values and principles in the future. Drawing on the concept of the discursive tradition as outlined above, I treat these contestations not as deviations from tradition, but as integral to its ongoing redefinition.

The case of the Bosnian Muslim woman question in early 20th century shows how the general principles and teachings on women enshrined in the textual foundations of Islam have been constantly redefined in Islamic thought, and that Islamic thought itself is to a significant degree marked by multivocality.[78] To that extent, this study stands in opposition to cultural existentialism, i.e. the understanding that "cultures contain immutable and permanent characteristics which are discoverable."[79] Variant and competing narratives and concepts of the ideal Muslim woman built within the Islamic frame of reference plausibly demonstrate a clash of ideas and interpretations within modern Islam. They show that, as Peter Mandaville argues, the crucial contestations within Islam are linked to the issue of interpreting the ethical claims of Islam.[80]

1.5.2. Sources

Taking into account contemporary research from various fields that emphasizes the importance of the modern press in fragmenting religious authority, fostering global connections and the dissemination of ideas, as well as shaping the public sphere, the main

78 Muhammad Khalid Masud, "The Scope of Pluralism in Islamic Moral Traditions," in *The Many and the One Religious and Secular Perspectives on Ethical Pluralism in the Modern World*, eds. Richard Madsen and Tracy B Strong (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003.),180–191.

79 Katerina Dalacoura, *Islam, Liberalism and Human Rights: Implications for International Relations* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 5.

80 Peter G. Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 81.

source which I will use in the attempt to reconstruct the Bosnian Muslim debates are the periodicals, brochures and books printed in the first half of the twentieth century.[81]

I have particularly focused on the periodical press because the press was the main medium thorough which Muslim authors publicly confronted their often-contradictory views on women's issues. Since the illiteracy level in Bosnia and Herzegovina was very high during the period analysed here, is difficult to ascertain whether it had any impact on the broader population.[82] It can be assumed that the periodical press primarily served as a medium for exchanging ideas primarily among the small echelon of the upper middle classes of society, and had little impact on the larger public. But within this relatively small group, these exchanges provided an opportunity for readers to get involved in discussions and comment on the socio-cultural situation of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina; it made active dialogue possible and facilitated the confrontation of ideas among members of different intellectual currents present in Bosnia and Herzegovina, making the printed press the main platform on which modern intra-Muslim discussions took place. Articles published in one magazine were often commented upon, either in the same magazine or in a magazine of a different orientation, thus contributing to the development of polemical spirit in the Muslim community. Also, the journals from Bosnia and Herzegovina published news about developments in Muslim communities abroad and translated articles of Muslim authors outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and they so enable us to see how Bosnian Muslims positioned themselves in the Muslim world. I would argue that the expansion of the printed texts by means of the press and publications that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the first half of the 20th century was of the tremendous importance for the development of debates about the interpretation, authenticity, and authority of Islam.

81 Juan R. I. Cole, "Printing and Urban Islam in the Mediterranean World, 1890–1920," in *Modernity and Culture. From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean,* eds. Leila Tarazi Fawaz, Christopher Alan Bayly, and Robert Ilbert (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002),344–364; Anthony Gorman and Didier Monciaud. "Introduction," in *The Press in the Middle East and North Africa, 1850–1950: Politics, Social History and Culture*, eds. Anthony Gorman and Didier Monciaud (Edinburgh: University Press, 2018), 1–28; Göran Larsson, *Muslims and the New Media: Historical and Contemporary Debates* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011); James L. Gelvin and Nile Green "Introduction: Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print" in *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*, eds. James L. Gelvin and Nile Green (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 1–22.

82 In 1910, 87.8 percent of the Bosnian population was illiterate, including 94.6 percent of the Muslim population. See: Bougarel, *Islam and Nationhood in Bosnia-Herzegovina,* 13, 42–43; Semir Hadžimusić, "Opismenjavanje stanovništva u sjeveroistočnoj Bosni u periodu obnove," *Arhivska praksa* 2, no. 21 (2018): 92. It is important to note that these figures reflect a narrow Habsburg definition of literacy, limited to proficiency in the Latin or Cyrillic scripts. The census did not account for the religious and functional literacy among Bosnian Muslims who used the Arabic script. Nevertheless, since the periodicals examined here were printed in Latin and Cyrillic script, their readership certainly remained confined to a small, formally educated segment of the population. See: Dževada Šuško, *Faith and Loyalty: Bosniaks and the Austro-Hungarian Empire* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought IIIT, 2024), 95.

For this study, I selected cultural and religious magazines published in the period between 1900 and 1950 that represent the main intellectual currents of the period.[83] It should be noted here that the number of reformist journals analysed in this study is much higher than the number of conservative or later revivalist journals. This large number of reformist publications reflects the situation that these periodicals were the main medium for the transmission of reformist ideas in the public sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the first half of the 20th century, while conservative representatives of Islamic thought only later opted for this way of transmitting their ideas. In the 1920s, they progressively engaged in public debates. It is noteworthy that revivalist inclinations emerged in modern Bosnian Islamic intellectual thought only in the late 1930s.

Of the reformist-oriented journals I selected the following three for this study: *Behar* published from 1900 to 1911; *Novi Behar* (New Blossom) published from 1927 to 1945, and *Gajret* (Effort) published from 1907 to 1941. A distinctive trait of *Gajret* lies in its inclination towards the Serbian national affiliation of Muslims. In its articles, notably in the interwar period, there is a visible endeavour to promote the national education of Muslims. While *Gajret* clearly had a nationalist agenda, I regard it as an important journal for disseminating ideas of Islamic reformism due to its dedication to Islamic content. Analysis of its articles reveals that both Islamic and nationalist perspectives were used to discuss Muslim women. Nevertheless, I would argue that, although a nationalist element was present in its discourse, it did not overshadow the reformist aspect. I have selected *Hikjmet* (Wisdom) published from 1929 to 1936 as an illustrative example of conservative-oriented journal and *El-Hidaje* (The Guidance) as a representative of revivalist perspectives. I also included in my analysis *Đulistan* (Rose Garden), as the first Muslim journal for women which was published only in 1926. The journal *Glasnik Islamske vjerske zajednice* (Herald of the Islamic Religious Community) which was published from 1933 to 1950 was chosen as an official herald of the Islamic authorities. A first issue of this journal was published in 1933 by the Supreme Council of the Islamic Religious Community of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. It was regularly published to 1945. After a short break of five years, it was republished in 1950. From 1933 to 1950 this periodical changed its name several times in accordance with political fluctuations as well as changes in the organization of Islamic affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[84]

83 For more about Bosnian publications see: Muhsin Rizvić, *Behar-književnoistorijska monografija* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 2000); Azra Kantardžić, *Bibliografija Novog Behara (*Sarajevo: Gazi Husrev-begova biblioteka, 2007); Adnan Jahić, *Hikjmet*; Ibrahim Kemura, *Uloga Gajreta u društvenom životu Muslimana* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1986), Đermana Šeta, *Prilozi za istraživanje sociokulturnog položaja žene u BiH* (Sarajevo: Centar za edukaciju i istraživanje "Nahla", 2011).

84 It was published under the following names: G*lasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* (Herald of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Religious Community of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), *Glasnik Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* (Herald of the Islamic Religious Community of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), *Glasnik Islamske vjerske zajednice* u NDH (Herald of the Islamic Religious Community in the Independent State of Croatia) *Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva u Federativnoj Narodnoj Republici Jugoslaviji* (Herald of the Supreme Islamic Council in the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia).

In addition to periodicals, I analysed books, brochures and pamphlets that dealt with the Muslim woman question in this period. The journals and other printed sources were collected at the National Library in Zagreb and the Gazi Husrev Bey Library in Sarajevo. First, I consulted all issues of these periodicals to single out topics related to the woman question, and then I carried out the analysis of those articles that dealt with specific issues related to the woman question.

1.6. Chapter Outline

In the first part of this research, I discuss the main features of the global and local socio-cultural and intellectual milieu in which Bosnian Muslim debates on the woman question took place.

The chapter 2 ("Reformist Discourses: Foundations for Rethinking Islamic Tradition in Modernity") is mostly based on secondary literature and presents the main characteristics of the modern, global Muslim search for authenticity initiated by the Muslim reformists. that inevitably raised the question of tradition, modernity, and authority to define Islamic orthodoxy. This chapter focuses primarily on the global reformist discourse on renewal of Islam as modern reformists' redefinition of the classical Islamic concepts created a discursive framework which served not only as a reference point for Bosnian reformist, but also as a reference point for conservative and revivalist authors.

Chapter 3 ("Between the Global and Local: Islamic Discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina") concentrates on the complex local socio-intellectual context in Bosnia characterized by the profound changes in all areas of life and the presence of diverse and manifold ideologies in which the Muslim discourses about the Muslim women developed. It provides insights into the key factors that created a fertile ground for the pluralization of Islamic thought and the fragmentation of religious authority, and the chapter endeavours to shed light on this complex phenomenon. Special attention is given to the development of modern education, Muslim cultural organizations, and modern magazines, as these factors enabled the pluralization of Islamic thought and the development of polemical culture among Bosnian Muslims. Besides, it provides an overview of the main intellectual trends and topics present in modern Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to place texts related to the status of Muslim women within the wider thematic and discursive context.

Chapters 4 ("Exploring the Multifaceted Roles of the Muslim Woman Question in Global Modernity") examines the crucial significance and diverse roles of the Muslim woman's question in narratives of progress, authenticity, identity and belonging, within European and Muslim contexts, encompassing both global Muslim and Bosnian discourses. It brings

to light the crucial role that this issue played in the various interpretations of Islam and modern Europe, the understanding of one's own civilizational status, and the definition of internal boundaries within the Muslim community.

In the final part of the thesis, chapters 5 (Muslim Woman's Education, Authenticity, and Progress: Bosnian Muslim Perspectives) and 6 (Debates on Face Veiling) contain a presentation of debates on, respectively, Muslim women education and (un)veiling as the most commonly discussed women issues in modern Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since this study approaches the woman question as part of a wider global process of (re)definition of Islamic tradition and modernity, topics are critically analysed and interpreted with the following questions in mind: How do women's issues relate to the self-critical evaluation of the status of the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina? What is the role of the woman question in debates about Muslim advancement in Bosnia and Herzegovina? How is the authority to speak about and represent Muslim women and Islam constructed and defended? What strategies did Bosnian Muslim authors employ to portray varying perspectives on the appropriate role of women in both family and society as inherently Islamic? Which texts are utilized, and how are the fundamental Islamic textual sources and core concepts comprehended and expounded upon to legitimize diverse understandings of woman status? How are the Islamic legal and theological traditions interpreted, and what impact does this have on the comprehension of Muslim women's status and position? To what extent do Bosnian Muslim authors reference authors and concepts from other regions of the Muslim world to validate their contentions concerning the ideal, Islamic womanhood? To what degree do Muslim authors from Bosnia and Herzegovina invoke non-Islamic European authors and ideas, and what justifications are employed for citing such non-Islamic sources? How did Muslim authors employ the topic of Muslim women to shape their stance on European modernity, the relationship between Islam and the West, and to develop distinct visions of Islamic modernity?

Through the lens of these critical questions, I aim to demonstrate the various ways in which the woman question played a crucial role in the debate about authenticity, authority, and modernity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

PART I

Locating Bosnian Islamic Discourse within Global Muslim Intellectual Development

CHAPTER 2

2

2. Reformist Discourses: Foundations for Rethinking Islamic Tradition in Modernity

Over the course of 19th and early 20th century, Muslims across the world experienced profound socio-political, economic and cultural transformations. The imperial expansion of European powers subjected most of the Muslim world to either direct or indirect control by European states towards the end of the 19th century. Despite the differences in dynamics and modalities of socio-cultural transformations of Muslim societies, the modern development of these societies shared certain important common characteristics, such as the development of education modelled after European educational institutions; reforms of the legal system; reception of European legal institutions and codes; and the introduction of European political institutions.[85] Muslim societies faced a number of challenges: economic, military, and political superiority of Europe brought into question the political and economic autonomy of the Islamic world; modern science with its successes posed a challenge to all other world views and the Muslim world faced a challenge of how to respond to new patterns of behaviour, threatening to completely wipe out existing cultural practice and customs.[86]

In European civilizational narratives from the 19th century onwards, the Muslim world was depicted as inherently backward due to its Islamic heritage. Some of the typical arguments employed by Western scholars as well as by colonial administrators and missionaries involved in criticism of the Islamic tradition were that Islam as a religion is in conflict with reason and science, reform, and progress, and that it is an inherently backward religion that is supportive of tyranny.[87] The academic approach to Islam in the course of the 19th and early 20th century was characterised by a focus on the relation between Islam and European modernity, between the Muslim and Western worlds. This relation was primarily described through binary opposites, such as authority versus reason; religion versus secularism; spiritualism versus materialism; religiosity versus humanism.[88] The common thread of Western criticisms can be found in a general claim that religion itself belongs to the past,

85 Voll, "Foundations for Renewal and Reform," 510.
86 Kurzman, "Introduction," 9.
87 See: Mansoor Moaddel, *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism. Episode and Discourse* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), 57–59; Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *Contemporary Islam and the Challenge of History* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1982), 14.
88 Muhammad Khalid Masud and Armando Salvatore, "Western Scholars of Islam on the Issue of Modernity," in *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates*, eds. Muhammad Khalid Masud, Armando Salvatore, and Martin Van Bruinessen (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 36–37.

and that Islam is characterized by irrationality and despotism.[89] Various social practices, such as slavery, polygamy and the status of women in Muslim societies, served as arguments in favour of claims of superiority of the Western civilization, and even Christianity.[90]

The dominant narrative propagated by Western authors excluded Islam from the realms of progress and civilization, fostering a need among Muslim intellectuals to re-evaluate and redefine their own religious and cultural tradition and its relation to European modernity.[91] One of the dominant characteristics of this revaluation is the self-critical reflection on the condition of Muslim societies and the Islamic heritage. Prominent themes appearing in this period include the reflection on the situation in Muslim societies and their comparison with European societies; profound belief that Muslim societies are in crisis; search for a response to the question on reasons behind the political, economic, religious, and cultural decadence of Muslims; and an attempt to redefine Islamic orthodoxy.

In the 1950s, in his seminal work *Islam in Modern History,* Wilfred Cantwell Smith concludes that "the fundamental malaise of modern Islam is a sense that something has gone wrong with Islamic history."[92] From the 19th century the concept of decline in Islam, significantly influenced the self-perception of many Muslim authors across diverse regions that it is, as Manfred Sing posits, "nearly impossible to imagine a historiography of Arab or Muslim societies and what their self-perception would look like without the very idea of decline and decadence." [93]

While self-critical reflection on Islam was not a novelty in Islamic thought, the process of rethinking Islam at the end of the 19th century was distinctly shaped by a specific context, strongly marked by the asymmetric relation of power between the Muslim world and the Europe, and by the domination of the belief according to which European model of modernization represented a universal and sole model of social development, which should ideally be applied to all societies and cultures. As Florian Zemmin underlines, pre-modern

89 Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition*, 90.

90 See also: Maurits S. Berger, *A Brief History of Islam in Europe. Thirteen Centuries of Creed, Conflict and Coexistence*, Leiden University Press, 2014, 184–189.

91 For more on the meaning of the term civilization see: Andrew Linklater, *The Idea of Civilization and the Making of the Global Order* (Bristol: Bristol University Press 2021); Brett Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Enis Sulstarova, "Examining the meanings and Uses of 'Civilization' in Albanian History Textbooks," in *Myths and Mythical Spaces: Conditions and Challenges for History Textbooks in Albania and South-Eastern Europe*, eds. Claudia Lichnofsky, Enriketa Pandelejmoni, and Darko Stojanov (Gottingen: V&R unipress GmbH, 2017), 151–171. As an example of European narratives about Bosnia and Herzegovina and its Muslim population based on the assumption of European civilizational superiority see: Arthur John Evans, *Through Bosnia and Herzegovina on Foot during the Insurrection, August and September 1875: With an Historical Review of Bosnia, and a Glimpse at the Croats, Slavonians, and the Ancient Republic of Ragusa* (Place of publication not identified: publisher not identified, 1876).

92 Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), 41.

93 Manfred Sing, "The Decline of Islam and the Rise of inḥiṭāṭ: The Discrete Charm of Decadence in 19th and 20th Century Language Games," in *Inḥiṭāṭ – The Decline Paradigm: Its Influence and Persistence in the Writing of Arab Cultural History,* ed. Syrinx von Hees (Würzburg: Ergon-Verlag, 2017), 11.

Muslim scholars were not centrally concerned with "an external other of Islam, which was to become Europe."[94] However, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as Armina Omerika notes, Muslim debates on identity, tradition and progress began to revolve around a real or imagined Europe.[95]

In the late 19th century, Europe came to mean not the geographical West, but the West as "a religious system, a history of geopolitical rivalry, and a set of values."[96] Differing viewpoints arose concerning the values associated with Europe. Ambiguous associations were made, linking it both to negative values like hedonism, secularism, and atomism, as well as to positive values such as science, rationality, critical thinking, and material progress.

Muslims' varied understandings of Islamic tradition and its relationship to modernity were an important aspect of the self-reflection of modern Muslims in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Various Muslim attitudes towards the ideas of European modernity in Western scholarship have generally been grouped into three distinct categories: a complete adoption, characteristic of secularly educated and mainly political elites in various Muslim societies; a rejection, characteristic of what we have defined as conservative and revivalist trends; and a synthesis, primarily exemplified by reformism, which has emerged as one of the most important developments within Muslim thought since the late 19th century.[97] In Western scholarship, the trend of Islamic reformism has been commonly described as an attempt to reconcile faith and human reason, tradition, and modernity, and to prove that Islam was compatible with reason, science, technology, and democracy, when correctly interpreted.[98] This intellectual trend was a global phenomenon that emerged throughout the Muslim world from the mid-19th century onwards. It spread throughout the Arab world, Ottoman Empire, South Asia, Imperial Russia, as well as among Muslims in the Balkans. Some of the most significant figures commonly associated with this movement are journalist and political activists Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838–1897), Egyptian religious scholar Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1849–1905), Crimean Tatar writer and educator İsmail Gasprinski (1851–1914), Ottoman writer Namık Kemal (1840–1888), and Indian scholar Aḥmad Khān (1817–1898).

94 Florian Zemmin, "Secularism, Secularity and Islamic Reformism," *Multiple Secularities*, accessed December 22, 2022, https://www.academia.edu/es/40138663/Florian_Zemmin_Secularism_Secularity_and_Islamic_Reformism_

95 Armina Omerika, "Negotiating Modernity through Constructions of History in Modern Muslim Religious Thought," in *Dynamics of Islam in the Modern World: Essays in Honor of Jamal Malik*, eds. Saeed Zarrabi-Zadeh, Armina Omerika, Thomas K. Gugler, and Michael E. Asbury (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2022), 38.

96 Margaret Kohn, "Western Imperialism and Islamic Law," in *Law Without Nations*, eds. Austin Sarat, Lawrence Douglas, and Martha Merrill Umphrey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 144.

97 See the following works about the importance of reformism in Islam: Fazlur Rahman, "Islamic Modernism: Its Scope, Method and Alternatives," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 1, no. 4. (1970): 317–333, Mansoor Moaddel, "Conditions for Ideological Production: The Origins of Islamic Modernism in India, Egypt, and Iran," *Theory and Society* 30, no. 5 (2001): 669–731, Hunter, "Introduction," 14; John L. Esposito, "Introduction: Women in Islam and Islamic Societies," in *Islam, Gender and Social Change,* ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press,2023), xiv.

98 Hunter, "Introduction," 14; Kurzman, "Introduction," 4.

Islamic reformism as a form of Islamic intellectual discourse contributed to the development of a distinct Muslim public sphere in Bosnia-Hercegovina after the late 19th century, as we will see later. Bosnian reformists started discussions about authentic Islamic principles and values, interpretative authority and relationship between Islam and European modernity, bringing these topics to the centre of public debates. The ensuing debates encompassed a range of socio-political, cultural, and religious issues, including those concerning Muslim women. Reformism emerged as a central point of reference for both its proponents and critics, who developed and refined their ideas often in direct response to the core tenets of Islamic reformism, as we will see in the later chapters on Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[99]

Before proceeding to the Bosnian context, we need first to discuss the importance of Islamic reformism as a general discourse.

2.1. Islamic Reformism: A Catalyst for Islamic Intellectual Development

Scholars have engaged in in-depth discussions about the origins and characteristics of Islamic reform movements. Within Western scholarly discourse, it is possible to identify three dominant perspectives about Islamic reformism. The first perspective generally emphasizes the influence of Western ideas on the development of modern reformist thought, portraying it primarily as an apologetic response to European critiques of Islam.[100] In contrast, the second perspective claims the rootedness of modern reformist discourse in Islamic tradition, highlighting it as a reflection of the enduring aspiration for Islamic renewal, challenging earlier assumptions of mere imitation of Western concepts.[101] The third perspective can be found in the most recent studies that have highlighted the global character of Islamic reformism viewing it as an integral element of the global intellectual landscape of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It has been demonstrated in recent studies of Ammeke Kateman, Dietrich Jung, and Monika Ringer that Islamic reformism was a broad Muslim intellectual movement that, rooted in its own cultural heritage but in political and intellectual interaction with the West, engaged in global intellectual discourses about tradition, modernity, civilizational progress and religion.[102] These studies depict Muslim

99 For more about the significance of reformism for the intellectual development of Islam see: Kurzman, "Introduction," 4–5.

100 Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789–1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962); Bryan S. Turner, "Islam, capitalism and the Weber theses," in *The British journal of sociology* 61, no. s1 (2010): 157.

101 Voll, "Foundations for Renewal and Reform," 547; Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition*, 30; Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," 641–642.

102 Kateman, *Muhammad ʿAbduh and his Interlocutors*; Jung, *Orientalists, Islamists and the Global Public Sphere*; Monica M. Ringer, *Islamic Modernism and the Re-Enchantment of the Sacred in the Age of History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

reformists not as imitators of European authors, but as active participants in global discourses about shared themes or as Jung puts it in *the global public sphere.*[103]

Contrary to earlier attempts to categorize Islamic reformism as either a reflection of European ideas or an intrinsic aspect of Islamic intellectual development, the mentioned studies demonstrate that reformists' perspectives on Islam and modernity were shaped through nuanced dialogues with modern European paradigms, the Islamic tradition, and specific local contexts. Additionally, these studies shed light on how Islamic reformers infused fresh interpretations into classical Islamic concepts, sparking debates within the Muslim community over the reinterpretation of Islamic texts, scholarly tradition, and classical Islamic concepts.

Building on these recent approaches to Islamic reformism, I aim to demonstrate how a distinct reformist perspective—addressing both the causes of the crisis in the Muslim world and the solutions within the Islamic framework—along with its unique redefinition of classical Islamic concepts, has profoundly influenced the tone of Muslim discussions since the late 19th century.

Proponents of Islamic reformism believed that the challenges faced by the Muslim world were primarily due to a deviation from the original divine message, a deviation attributed to the inadequacies of Muslim scholars. Consequently, the path to Muslim progress was associated with the need for internal socio-religious reform, based on the renewal of authentic Islam, understood to be rooted in its textual sources, primarily the Qurʾān.[104]

Reformist perspectives regarding the renewal of true Islam as a solution to Muslim decline have been crucial in catalysing significant discussions and debates that remain at the core of intra-Muslim disagreements even today. The aims of the reformists have sparked intricate debates about the very essence of Islam—its core principles, values, and interpretation of its teachings. It is also important to note that these discussions extend to the issue of religious authority and the qualifications required to interpret Islamic texts and doctrines.

Since the late 19th century, the questions "What is Islam?" and "Who has the right to define it?" together with related questions regarding reinterpretation of Islamic sources and scholarly tradition have formed the basis for Muslim discussions regarding a variety of socio-religious issues, including the issue of Muslim women in particular.

103 Jung, *Orientalists, Islamists and the Global Public Sphere*, 45–46.

104 John L. Esposito, "Contemporary Islam: Reformation or Revolution?" in *The Oxford History of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 647; Jung, *Orientalists, Islamists and the Global Public Sphere*, 236–237.

I contend that the Muslim woman question has been a central arena for expressing intra-Muslim disagreements concerning the possibility of free reinterpretation of Islamic sources, the obligation to follow past authorities, and the qualifications necessary to define true Islamic positions on these issues. Muslim actors' differing positions on women, which will be discussed in the following chapters, according to my view cannot simply be viewed as mere rejections or acceptances of European values or as responses to local socioeconomic and political circumstances, but rather as expressions of differing interpretations of Islam and its place in modernity.

This view calls for contextualizing the discussion about the Muslim woman question within the broader concept of authentic Islam, given its central role in the debate over true Muslim womanhood. To do so, we need to further explore the fundamental characteristics of the global reformist demand for the rediscovery of essential Islamic principles, along with the related disagreements among Muslims. Before delving into these topics, I will first discuss the strong linkage between the debates on authenticity, tradition in modernity, and the emergence of print culture.

2.2. Historical-Sociological Development of the Public Sphere in the Muslim World

In the previous section, I highlighted how Islamic reformism significantly shaped an Islamic intellectual evolution, sparking reflections, debates, and reinterpretations of Islamic tradition. In this section, I turn my focus to the crucial role of the printing press in fostering this intellectual journey. Printing press made it possible for reformist ideas to be expressed and widely exchanged, which contributed significantly to the democratization of Islamic knowledge.

As a result of this technological development, diverse interpretations of Islam have been spread, and individuals gained a wider audience when participating in religious discourse. It not only fostered a more inclusive intellectual environment, but it also brought the debate about the true essence of Islam into the forefront of public discourse. Throughout the Muslim world, discussions regarding the Islamic tradition and modernity were intricately linked to the evolution of print culture and the establishment of a modern public sphere.

The notion of the public sphere has been closely associated with the name of Jurgen Habermas who traces the rise of a middle-class bourgeoisie public sphere as a unique realm

distinct from both; the state authority and the private sphere in 18th century Europe.[105] He defines the public sphere as a "realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body."[106] Habermas' notion of public sphere been the subject of scholarly discussions, critiques, and adaptations since 1989 when his seminal work appeared in English under the title *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Habermas drew criticism for idealizing the early bourgeois public sphere in Europe as an egalitarian place of rational discussion which obscured the extent to which the exclusions based on gender, wealth and religion were part of it, for failing to consider other, non-liberal, competing public spheres, neglecting the role of religion in the development and expansion of the public sphere in Europe, its Eurocentric nature and assumed sharp distinction between state and society.[107] Recent studies enlarged Habermas concept of the public sphere specific to European socio-historical experience to point to the emergence of analogous public spheres in other societies. In this study, I employ the term public sphere as defined by Armando Salvatore as "a sphere of power and control exercised by intellectuals over society through increasingly new ('modern') media, like the printing press."[108] Recent studies has shown that in the Muslim world, the public sphere emerged in its modern form in the 19th century, along with the opening of urban public spaces such as public squares, gardens, and cafes, as well as the establishment of voluntary organizations, theatres, and scientific and cultural societies and the modern press.[109] Feener, Gelvin, and Green indicate that rapid developments in transportation and communication technologies during the 19th century brought Muslims from around the world into new discussions and debates in which different actors sought to establish themselves as religious authorities.[110] Development of printing press played a significant role in the pluralization of the Muslim intellectual thought.

105 Nimrod Luz, *The Mamluk City in the Middle East: History, Culture, and the Urban Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.), 204; Jürgen Habermas, Sara Lennox, and Frank Lennox, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)," in *New German Critique* 1, no. 3 (1974): 49–55.

106 Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox, "The Public Sphere," 49.

107 Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text*, no. 25/26 (1990): 56–80; Dale F Eickelman, and Armando Salvatore, "The Public Sphere and Muslim Identities," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie. European Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 1 (2002): 92–115; Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Confronting Fascism in Egypt: Dictatorship Versus Democracy in the 1930s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.); Niamh Reilly, "Religion, Gender and the Public Sphere: Mapping the Terrain" in *Religion, Gender, and the Public Sphere,* eds. Niamh Reilly and Stacey Scriver (New York: Routledge, 2018), 11–17.

108 Armando Salvatore, "After the State: Islamic Reform and the 'Implosion' of the Shariʿa," in *Muslim Traditions and Modern Techniques of Power,* ed. Armando Salvatore (Münster: Lit, 2001), 124.

109 Elizabeth B. Frierson, "Gender, Consumption and Patriotism: The Emergence of an Ottoman Public Sphere," in *Public Islam and the Common Good*, eds. Dale Eickelman and Armando Salvatore (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004), 99–125.

110 Gelvin and Green "Introduction: Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print," 1–22; Michael R. Michael Feener, "New Networks and New Knowledge: Migrations, Communications and the Refiguration of the Muslim Community in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam,* ed. Robert W. Hefner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 39–68; Michael R. Feener, "Muslim Religious Authority in Modern Asia: Established Patterns and Evolving Profiles," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 42, no. 5 (2014): 501–516.

According to Feener, the printing press enabled "the emergence of modernising critiques of established models of religious, social and political leadership and energizing the responses of the *ʿulamāʾ* to recalibrate their own standing in diverse ways in societies all across Asia, Africa and the Middle East."[111] Increased transcultural communication opened a platform for conversations on Islam beyond the confines of the *ʿulamāʾ*. As Feener also states, it „effectively broke the monopoly that traditionally trained *ʿulamāʾ* had previously held over Islamic religious discourse."[112] The key role in the emergence of the Muslim public sphere across different regions had reformist-oriented Muslim intellectuals who acted not only as "writers but also as editors, publishers, and sponsors of new and largely autonomous press organs, which challenged traditional interpretative practices and authority to speak for Islam."[113]

The printing press provided an alternative means for reformist to disseminate religious knowledge, which in turn undermined the established, person-to-person transmission of religious knowledge. This technological advancement directly contested the traditional view that the connectedness to the authorities of the past, maintained primarily through the traditional system of education, was an essential prerequisite to speak for and about Islam. In Muslim societies, the class of religious scholars, *ʿulamāʾ*, held the monopoly over the religious knowledge throughout Islamic history based on their knowledge acquired through the educational system that was considered to be truly Islamic.[114] The traditional Islamic education, the hallmark of *ʿulamāʾ*, was primarily characterized by an individual type of transmission of knowledge. The authoritative transmission of knowledge was based on a close personal relationship between teacher and student, through the *ijāza* system.[115] *Ijāza*, literally authorization or licence, was "a certification that an individual had studied (in some fashion) a particular text (or in some cases a wider body of knowledge) with a particular shaykh."[116] It played an important role in defining the status of a student within a network of religious scholars. The ideal of authoritative transmission of knowledge, expressed in the well-known saying that knowledge can only properly be attained at the feet of a *shaykh*,

111 Feener "Muslim Religious Authority in Modern Asia," 509.

112 Michael R Feener, "Cross-Cultural Contexts of Modern Muslim Intellectualism," *Die Welt Des Islams* 47, no. 3/4 (2007): 276.

113 Mohammed A. Bamyeh and Armando Salvatore, "The Role of Intellectuals within Late-Colonial and Postcolonial Public Spheres," in *The Wiley Blackwell History of Islam*, eds. Armando Salvatore, Roberto Tottoli, and Babak Rahimi (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018), 562.

114 Gudrun Kramer and Sabine Schmidtke, "Introduction: Religious Authority and Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies. A Critical Overview," in *Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies,* eds. Gudrun Kramer and Sabine Schmidtke (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 5–7.

115 Francis Robinson, "Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia," *Modern Asian Studies* 42, no.2/3 (2008): 259–281; Delia Cortese, "Medieval Sapiential Knowledge and Modern Science in Islam. Some Considerations on a 'Missed Link' Based on the Thought Of Ǧamāl Al-Dīn Al-Afġānī," *Oriente Moderno. Nuova Serie* 80, no. 3 (2000): 509, Dale F. Eickelman, "The Art of Memory: Islamic Education and Its Social Reproduction." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20, no. 4 (1978): 485–516; Zainab Kabba, *Knowledge, Authority, and Islamic Education in the West: Reconfiguring Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2024).

116 Jonathan P. Berkey, *The Formation of Islam. Religion and Society in the Near East, 600–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 225.

was characterized by what Graham calls the *isnād paradigm*.[117] The traditional system of the transmission of knowledge was based on the conviction that true knowledge cannot be acquired through documents alone; the acquisition of the true knowledge about Islam required personal contact with masters recognized as persons who possess the knowledge and who have the right to teach and transfer the knowledge.[118] To understand Islam and to be recognized as a person who has the right to interpret Islam and to transfer the knowledge about it required insertion in a golden chain of authoritative masters. By the obtaining of *ijāza*, a student would become a link in a chain of recognized, trustworthy transmitters of Islamic knowledge that stretched back to the first generation of Muslims. As Graham stresses, it is precisely the golden chain of authoritative masters that "that guarantees the faithful copying, memorizing, re- citing, and understanding of texts-not only those of the Hadîth, but those of the Qurʾān and all subsequent works of Muslim piety and learning."[119]

With the development of the press, access to religious knowledge was democratized, the central role of traditional education in the construction of religious authority was challenged, and a public sphere was developed as the primary platform for religious debates.[120]

The initial response of the conservative circles towards the printing press was rejection, a response undoubtedly related to their attempt to maintain the person-to-person mode of transmission of knowledge, as well as to their general attitude towards symbolic, material and intellectual Western presence in and domination of the Islamic world.[121] Although it gradually became adopted even by conservative scholars, the press remained largely identified with reformist scholars and one the most powerful means of spreading their ideas.[122] As Bulliet notes, the press allowed people with no traditional education to spread their ideas and to reach a wide audience. The emergence of the press enabled not only the transmission of reformist ideas, but also introduced new styles of argumentation, more comprehensible also to people with no religious education.[123]

The public criticism of the monopoly of the traditional *ʿulamāʾ* over the interpretation of the religious texts certainly contributed to the democratization of religious knowledge and latter developments in Islam. It opened the space for the various actors, including those without the training of *ʿulamāʾ,* to claim their right to interpret the religious knowledge and

117 William A. Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam: An Essay in Interpretation," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23, no. 3 (1993): 501.
118 Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam," 507.
119 Graham,"Traditionalism in Islam," 507.
120 Felicitas Opwis, "Changes in Modern Islamic Theory: Reform or Reformation?" in *An Islamic Reformation?* eds. Michaelle Browers and Charles Kurzman (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2004), 46.
121 Göran Larsson, *Muslims and the New Media,* 6–9.
122 For more on the conservative scholars' adoption of the printing press, see Francis Robinson, "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print," *Modern Asian Studies* 27, no.1 (1993): 229–251.
123 Richard W. Bulliet, *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 78–86.

demand social and political reform based on independent readings of foundational texts of Islam. The development of new media technologies in the 20th and 21st centuries further contributed to the process described as "a fragmentation authority"[124] or "proliferation of religious knowledge, actors and normative statements of uncertain status."[125]

As we will see in the next chapter, the advancement of printing in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the first half of the 20th century contributed greatly to the proliferation of diverse voices within Bosnian Islamic thought as well as Bosnian Muslims' participation in broader global discussions.

2.3. Main Themes in Muslim Public Sphere: Modernity, Authenticity, and Authority

The request for reform of traditional practices through a reinterpretation of Islamic sources, which Islamic reformists positioned within the public sphere as a path to Muslim progress, had a profound impact on the development not only of the reform movement but also on Islamic intellectual discourse in general. It spurred reflection within Islamic thought on the three distinctive and interrelated themes underlying various public discourses on religious, social, and cultural issues, including women's issues. These three themes are modernity, authenticity, and interpretative authority.

I will demonstrate in the following sections how reformists, by defining true Islam as a rational and dynamic religion that not only permits, but actually endorses innovation and change, were able to provide counterarguments to both Western critics of Islam and to conservative Muslims who believed Islam and modernity were incompatible.[126] The reformists conceptualized the notion of "true Islam" as an embodiment of rational thinking and as a source and inspiration for European rationality and progress which allowed them to argue that Islam is not opposed to rational thought and critical thinking, and that modernity does not exclude religious values. It was through this understanding that they were able to translate Islamic values into modern terms as well as positive values of European modernity into Islamic terms.

Conversely, this process of double translation triggered a number of debates regarding the integrity and authenticity of such an approach within Western scholarship as well as within Muslim intellectual and religious circles, thus leading to further debates regarding

124 Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 131.
125 Kramer and Schmidtke, "Introduction," 12.
126 Ebrahim Moosa, "The Debts and Burdens of Critical Islam," in *Progressive Muslims. On Justice, Gender and Pluralism,* ed. Omid Safi (New York: Oneworld Publications, 2003), 117–118.

the relationship between Islam and European modernity as well as diverse discussions regarding authentic Islam.[127]

Moreover, by primarily identifying the Muslim conservative scholars, or rather their blind adherence to scholarly tradition, as the main factor impeding the realization of true Islamic values and therefore Islamic progress, reformists opened door to strong intra-Muslim debates over the possibility of genuine reconstruction of Islamic orthodoxy and the related matter of the interpretative authority. It is my intention to demonstrate on the following pages the evolution of intra-Muslim debates on authenticity, freedom to reinterpret Islamic sources, the obligation to follow past authorities, and qualifications necessary to interpret Islam within the context of specific reconceptualization of classical Islamic concepts such of *ijtihād* and *taqlīd.*

2.3.1. An Islamic Pathway to Modernity: Rediscovering True Islam

Reformist perspectives on the challenges facing the Muslim world, and the strategies they advocated for its advancement were intricately linked with their differentiation between true Islam and historically specific interpretations of Islam. This differentiation between true Islam, understood to be enshrined in Qurʾān and *sunna,* and its historical realization, was often justified in reformist discourse by pointing to the European Reformation, frequently mentioned in later scholarship on modern reformism as one of impulses behind the reformist discourse.[128] Pointing to the Protestant Reformation served as an argument on the need to engage in Islamic reform. Namely, just as the Protestant Reformation brought Christianity back to its essence, the Islamic reform was supposed to renew the authentic Islamic message. In works of prominent reformists such as al-Afghānī and Aḥmad Khān one found the belief that Islam needs its own Luther, whose Reformation was interpreted as one of the key reasons behind progress of the European civilization.[129] At the same time, the very principles and values of the Reformation that enabled European progress and modernity were interpreted as being originally Islamic. Thus, Muḥammad ʿAbduh wrote that the Protestant Reformation, by rejecting dogmatism, authoritarianism of religious leaders and prejudice, brought Christianity closer to the principles and values of true Islam.[130] While Islamic reformism similarly to Protestantism called for a return to the foundational texts of

127 For more on this process of double translation see: Adis Duderija, *Constructing a Religiously Ideal "Believer" and "Woman" in Islam: Neo-traditional Salafi and Progressive Muslims' Methods of Interpretation* (New York: Palgrave, 2011), 43–44.

128 Some scholars such as Francis Robinson modern Islamic reformism often label as *Protestant Islam*. See: Robinson, "Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia," 269. For diverse interpretations on the relationships between modern Islamic reform discourses and movements and the Protestant Reformation see more: Charles Kurzman and Michaelle Browers, eds., *An Islamic Reformation?* (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2004). See also: Musa Jarullah Bigi, "Why did the Muslim World Decline While the Civilized World Advanced?" in *Modernist Islam: 1840–1940. A Sourcebook*, ed. Charles Kurzman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 254–256.

129 Charles Kurzman and Michaelle Browers, "Introduction: Comparing Reformations," in *An Islamic Reformation?* eds. Michaelle Browers and Charles Kurzman (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2004), 4.

130 Kurzman and Browers, "Introduction," 3–4.

Islam and a revaluation of historical interpretations it would be inaccurate to view it as an emulation of Protestantism within Islam. Rather, reformists' understanding of the reasons behind the backwardness of the Muslim world and the differentiation between authentic Islam and its historical realization had its Islamic justification in the specific Islamic concept of corruption of time —a teaching according to which the passing of time since the moment of the Revelation inevitably leads to departure from the true Islamic message.[131] Precisely this retreat from true Islamic norms and values was interpreted as the reason behind the decadence of the Muslim world, rather than finding the cause of decadence in adherence to Islam, which is how Western critics and secular circles in the Muslim world interpreted it.

While the concept of true Islam was intricately linked to classical Muslim understanding of the time of Prophet Muḥammad and the early Muslim community as an exemplary era during which Muslims attained the highest levels of faith and made their mark on the global historical stage, its understanding and role in reformist discourse was profoundly shaped by the context in which the modern reinterpretation of Islam was unfolding.[132] In the late 19th and early 20th century this call for the revitalization of true Islam served as counterargument against the colonialist notion that modernity and progress were exclusive to the West, a belief used to legitimize the colonization of non-Western peoples to modernize them, as well as against conservative insistence upon following the models of Islamic interpreters of the past. The revitalization of true Islam was aimed to ensure prosperity of the Muslim world by transcending inherited interpretations from authorities of the past and to protect against the complete hegemony of Western culture. The notion of true Islam, as envisioned by Muslim reformers, was a central component of reformist attempt to develop authentic Islamic modernity. The true Islamic message as expressed in the Islamic foundations was depicted as encapsulating the core attributes of modernity, such as progress, rationality, and equality, perfectly.[133]

In order to show that Islam is a dynamic religion compatible with rational thought, and that therefore—if properly interpreted—it constitutes a prerequisite of genuine progress, Muslim reformists developed a specific discourse of the "Golden Age of Islam". They invoked the period of the Abbasid Caliphate as the age characterized by free and rational research, social prosperity, and openness towards other cultures, and as an example of historical realization of Islamic values and principles, of materialization of the true spirit of

131 Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam," 506.

132 For more about Muslim views on the Prophet's era as an exemplary time, and the related concept of the degeneration of the times see: Fikret Karčić, "Muslimanski pravnici i 'kvarenje vremena:' Instrumenti usklađivanja prava i stvarnosti u Fikhu," *Studije o šerijatskom pravu i institucijama,* ed. Fikret Karčić (Sarajevo: IC El Kalem, 2011), 212–216; Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam," 505–506.

133 Zemmin, *Modernity in Islamic Tradition,* 87.

Islam.[134] Monica Ringer notes that reformist scholars regarded the Abbasid Golden Age as evidence that Islam is a powerful force capable of fostering civilization and progress when properly manifested in historical context.[135] References to this magnificent period of Islamic history served to point out the actual rationality of Islamic thought, the link between modern values and Islam, and the contribution of Islam to civilizational progress.

The focus on rationality and reason in modern reformist discourses had several functions. It was used in competition to the West in order to show that the best of the Western civilization, that is to say reason and rationality, was actually a principle of Islam; it was a weapon against superstitions in Muslim societies; a means of liberating Muslims from chains of authority and a necessary means of reaching the Islamic message directly from Qurʾān.[136] Even though the theme of relation between Islam and rational thought had been scrutinized earlier in Islamic history, primarily within the circle of Muʿtazila theologians and Islamic philosophers, what is certainly a novelty in modern thought, as shown by Muslim scholar Fazlur Rahman, is the fact that the situation no longer revolved solely around the relation between Islam and rational thought, but also around the relation between Islam and the new, modern and scientific worldview and, consequently, the capacity of Islam for progress.[137] Namely, in modern European historiography, achievements in the sphere of science and technology had an important place in modern accounts of historical progress; conceived as a gradual, lineal and indefinite improvement of mankind. Achievements in the sphere of science and technology contributed to the development of division separating nations into those who are civilized and those who are backward, thus providing a potent rationale for conquest and rule over backward peoples in the name of civilizational progress.[138] Reform-oriented authors did not question the link between science and civilizational progress; instead, they aimed to point to the connection between Islam, rational thought and science, that is to say to point out that Islam itself actually represents „a great civilizing and educative force."[139] The fundamental proof for this argument was the fact that Muslims used to be an important scientific force in the past. Openness of Islam to rational, critical thought was substantiated by references to those historical periods that represented the true, historical realization of Islam from the perspective of Islamic reformism.

134 Ameer ʻAli, "The Spirit of Islam (1922)," in *Modernist Islam: 1840–1940. A Sourcebook*, ed. Charles Kurzman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 321–323. See also Fikret Karčić, "Odnos vjere i historije u modernim reformističkim pokretima u islamu," in *Studije o šerijatskom pravu i institucijama,* ed. Fikret Karčić (Sarajevo: IC El Kalem, 2011), 376.

135 Ringer, *Islamic Modernism and the Re-Enchantment of the Sacred*, 42.

136 Moosa, "The Debts and Burdens of Critical Islam," 117–118.

137 Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," 644–645. For more on reformist view on the the relation between Islam and the scientific worldview see Sayyid Ahmad Khan, "Lecture on Islam," in *Modernist Islam: 1840-1940. A Sourcebook*, ed. Charles Kurzman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 291–303.

138 Gregory Claeys, "Historiography and the Idea of Progress," in *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Thought*, ed. Gregory Claeys (London: Routledge, 2006), 273.

139 Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," 646.

The reformists' understanding of the Golden Age of Islam found its specific manifestation in debates surrounding Muslim women's status. The analysis of Bosnian Muslim discussions on the woman question in the second part of this research will demonstrate how reformists resorted to reinterpreting early Islamic history to demonstrate that during the Golden Age of Islam, when Islam was rationally interpreted, women enjoyed equal educational status and a prominent place in society as men. This approach enabled reformists to promote changes in traditional customs and the modernization of women's education as a means of rediscovering the authentic principles of Islam rather than simply adopting modern Western ideologies. Moreover, I will show how the reformist idea of the Golden Age of Islam as a period in which women were free to realize their intellectual capacities was further developed in Bosnian revivalists' narratives about Muslim womanhood to claim self-sufficiency and superiority of Islam in relation to European modernity.

The call for a revival of authentic Islam by reformists sparked a global debate among Muslims about issues of religious authenticity and the right to interpret religious teachings. The debate, which has been part of internal Muslim conversations about the causes of stagnation in the Muslim world and the need to reassess Islamic principles and religious authority, prominently featured two key concepts: *ijtihād* and *taqlīd*.

2.3.2. Authenticity and Authority: Redefining *ijtihād* and *taqlīd*

According to Rudolph Peters, the discussions on *ijtihād* versus *taqlīd* were an integral part of the debates on reform, while Zaman considers the term *ijtihād* to be one of the most invoked terms in modern intra-Muslim debates.[140] The term *ijtihād*—literally self-exerting—was primarily used as a term in the field of Islamic law. The term generally refers to exercising independent juristic reasoning to arrive at legal rulings on matters not explicitly covered in the sacred sources; Qurʾān and *sunna*.[141] The term *taqlīd* generally denotes acceptance of or submission to authority, and in the legal field it came to mean the acceptance and following of legal doctrines of past authorities of established schools of law.[142]

There has been much debate in the scholarship about when and how *taqlīd* came to dominate Islamic legal thought and whether *ijtihād* came to be completely abandoned. Joseph Schacht's long-standing thesis posited that by the tenth century, scholars reached a consensus to cease independent reasoning in law, confining future activity to

140 Rudolph Peters, "Ijtihad and Taqlid in 18th and 19th Century Islam," *Die Welt des Islams* 20, no. 3/4 (1989): 131; Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Evolving Conceptions of Ijtihād in Modern South Asia," *Islamic Studies* 49, no. 1 (2010): 5.

141 Abdullah Saeed, *Islamic Thought. An introduction* (London: Routledge, 2006), 43–59; Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation, Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 27–29.

142 Noel J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1978), 80–81.

the explanation and application of established doctrines.[143] In the 1980s, Wael Hallaq challenged this, asserting that *ijtihād* persisted until at least the sixteenth century, with no consensus on its inadmissibility.[144] In spite of the fact that contemporary scholars largely accept Hallaq's thesis that there never was a consensus on the inadmissibility of *ijtihād*, they do not deny that *taqlīd* became the dominant paradigm in the field of Islamic legal thought since 12th century.[145] Thus, Sherman Jackson points out that from the 12th century onwards not only did *taqlīd* become the dominant tendency in the legal sphere, but that the spirit of *taqlīd* came to dominate the Islamic thought in general.[146]

The modern intra-Muslim debates, strongly marked by the reformist call for the reopening of the gates of *ijtihād* and by the conservative defence of *taqlīd*, indicate that *taqlīd* for both groups was a reality and that both groups based their argumentation on the assumption that *ijtihād* had ceased.[147] But while for reformists *taqlīd* was a reality that had to be overcome through the revival of *ijtihād*, the conservative scholars saw *taqlīd* as a religious obligation, claiming that an infallible consensus on the closing of the gates of *ijtihād* had been reached and that therefore the reformist call for the revival of *ijtihād* was a kind of heresy. Reformists rejected claims of conservative scholars by either denying the existence of the alleged consensus or by denying its binding nature.[148]

Recent studies show that the terms *ijtihād* and *taqlīd* in reformist discourse acquired a set of complex meanings.[149] Generally, in reformist discourse the term *ijtihād* came to mean rational, critical thinking free of the chains of tradition, while *taqlīd* came to mean blind imitation of the authorities of the past, without the real knowledge of the sources from which their conclusions were drawn. According to Kurzman, in reformist usage *ijtihād* covered the right to reach across several legal schools in order to draw arguments from any or all of them, the return to sources of Islam, that is the Qurʾān and *sunna*, and an effort to reconcile Islam and human reason.[150] Skovgaard-Petersen notes that in reformist

143 Joseph Schacht, *Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 71.

144 Wael B. Hallaq, "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16, no. 1 (1984): 3–41.

145 For such understandings, see: Indira Falk Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism: Al-Azhar and the Evolution of Modern Sunni Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010); Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Sherman A. Jackson, *Islamic Law and the State: The Constitutional Jurisprudence of Shihāb Al-Dīn al-Qarāfī* (Boston: Brill, 1996); Ziauddin Sardar, *The Future of Muslim Civilisation* (London: Croom Helm, 1979).

146 Jackson, *Islamic Law and the State*, 73–79.

147 Opwis, "Changes in Modern Islamic Theory," 38–39.

148 Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law,* 202.

149 As examples of the different understandings of these terms, see the following representatives of reformism from various parts of the world: Syekh Ahmad Surkati, "Ijtihod and Taqlid," in *Modernist Islam: 1840–1940. A Sourcebook*, ed. Charles Kurzman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 349–354; Mahmud Shukri al-Alusi, "Ijtihad and the Refutation of Nabhani," in *Modernist Islam: 1840–1940. A Sourcebook*, ed. Charles Kurzman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 158–171; Abdullah Bubi, "Is the Period of Ijtihad Over or Not?" in *Modernist Islam: 1840–1940. A Sourcebook*, ed. Charles Kurzman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 232–237.

150 Kurzman, "Introduction," 9.

discourse *ijtihād* came to mean a "rational, authentic (and modern) way of life, as opposed to a tradition that dares not to consult the Koran and the Sunna to see how much it has degenerated."[151] Reformist authors saw as the proper domain of *ijtihād* not only the legal field, but all fields of Islamic tradition. The call for the revival of *ijtihād* and criticism of *taqlīd* was a general framework within which modern reformers criticized the existing practices in their societies and the conservative religious scholars' notions of interpretative authority and the true knowledge about Islam. Although the term *taqlīd* occupied a central position in reformist criticisms of the conservative religious scholars, the term itself was often not precisely defined. The reformists, however, used this term generally as something negative. It was seen as a blind, irrational imitation of past authorities, a mechanism which secured the authority of *ʿulamāʾ* and as the real cause of the religious and cultural stagnation of the Muslim world.[152] It was seen as standing in total opposition to *ijtihād*, conceived primarily as a critical reflection on one's own religious and cultural tradition, independent, rational interpretation of textual foundations of Islam and a mechanism indispensable for social growth.[153]

These concepts *ijtihād* and *taqlīd* were perceived as being opposites both in the reformist and in the conservative discourse. According to Indira Falk Gesink, the reformist understanding of *taqlīd* as blind imitation responsible for the rigidity not only of the Islamic legal system, but also of the Islamic thought in general, and the conservative belief that the consensus had been reached on the closing of the gates of *ijtihād*, with the corresponding belief that one has the obligation to fully adhere to doctrines of recognized schools of law, had a significant impact on the dominant attitude in modern studies on Islamic legal and intellectual tradition, which generally states that post-classical Islamic thought, and legal thought in particular, are completely rigid and unoriginal.[154] More recent studies on the historical development of the Islamic legal thought and system are aiming to overcome the link between *taqlīd*, imitation and decline on the one hand, and link between *ijtihād*, creative and innovative legal thought on the other. They are concentrating instead on the legal and social functions of these principles, pointing out the complexity of meaning and the dynamic nature of relations between these two concepts. They also point out the fact that *taqlīd* has a significantly more complex meaning than mere blind adherence to authority, and incapacity for creative legal thought. Thus, Mohammad Fadel perceives *taqlīd* as an expression of the historical development of the Islamic legal system, and he links the development of this concept with the need to ensure consistency of the legal system, given

151 Jacob Skovgaard-Petersen, *Defining Islam for the Egyptian State: Muftis and Fatwas of the Dār Al-Iftā* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 67.
152 Kurzman, "Introduction," 9.
153 Falk Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism*, 59.
154 Falk Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism,* 6–7.

that it provides uniform rules and predictability of legal outcomes.[155] However, in modern reformist discourse, the concept of *taqlīd*, devoid of its historical development, original function and strict legal meaning, denoted the world view and specific attitude towards Islam present in the circle of conservative religious scholars of the time, which, according to reformists, represented the denial of rational, critical inquiry of one's own religious tradition, and the denial of the actual original nature of Islam.

Modern Islamic reformists understood *taqlīd* primarily as rigid traditionalism that had prevented the development of Islamic thought in general, as fundamental cause behind formalism and stagnation of the Islamic thought. It is therefore not surprising that they presented *taqlīd*, that is to say the relation of *ʿulamāʾ* towards Islam, as the sort of behaviour that is strictly condemned by the Qurʾān itself linking *taqlīd* with the critical and condemning stance in the Qurʾān in regard to "those who follow (*qallada*) their forefathers' ways rather than opening themselves to the truth of Islam."[156] In the reformist discourse, *taqlīd* was understood as the mechanism that subverted the very authority of the Qurʾān, as the mechanism responsible for the fact that the authority of the Qurʾān itself became replaced by the authority of its interpreters. On the contrary *ijtihād* is identified with Qurʾānic instruction to seek the knowledge. According to Aḥmad Khān, *taqlīd* was a sign of intellectual laziness and it was a religious duty to free people from the customs of their forefathers in order to re-establish in the world the obedience only to the God, the Qurʾān, and the Prophet, which was subverted by the obedience to past scholars of Islam.[157] Similarly, Muḥammad ʿAbduh held that it is not only a right but a duty of every Muslim to go directly to the Qurʾān and teachings of the Prophet, emphasizing that the Qurʾān itself forbids Muslims to be credulous.[158] From ʿAbduh's perspective, *ijtihād* was understood as a central component of Islam, while *taqlīd* was seen as a main characteristic of pre-Islamic societies and a sign of religious degeneration.[159]

The reformist attack on *taqlīd* was a means to challenge the authority of the conservative scholars who claimed and justified their authority, their right to interpret Islam and to define religious values and norms to be followed by Muslims on the basis of *taqlīd*, adherence to a particular school of thought. In order to understand the close relationship between the *ijtihād–taqlīd* discussions and the issue of authority, it is useful to recall Sherman Jackson's statement that the concept of *taqlīd* was from its beginning related

155 Mohammad Fadel, "The Social Logic of Taqlīd and the Rise of the Mukhataṣar," *Islamic Law and Society* 3, no. 2 (1996): 193–233. On socio-legal function of *taqlīd* see also Haim Gerber, *Islamic Law and Culture, 1600–1840* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 82.

156 Indira Falk Gesink, " 'Chaos on the Earth': Subjective Truths versus Communal Unity in Islamic Law and the Rise of Militant Islam," *The American Historical Review* 108, no. 3 (2003): 719. See also the Qurʾān 2:170–171; 5:104–105; 7:70–72.

157 John L. Esposito, "Muslim Family Law Reform: Towards an Islamic Methodology," *Islamic Studies* 15, no. 1 (1976): 23; Mazheruddin Siddiqi, "General Characteristics of Islamic Modernism," *Islamic Studies* 9, no. 1 (1970): 54.

158 Siddiqi, "General Characteristics of Islamic Modernism," 54.

159 Muhammad ʿAbduh, *The Theology of Unity* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), 127.

to the issue of interpretative authority. According to Jackson, it was "an attempt to gain authority for one's interpretation by associating it with the name or doctrine of an already established authority-figure."[160] *Taqlīd* was a mechanism that assured a link with the past and this link was a central characteristic of how religious authority was constituted.[161] Drawing upon Jackson's thesis, I see the conservative defence of *taqlīd* as a means of preserving the authority over religious interpretation and knowledge. This kind of attempt to gain authority by establishing links with the past models and teachings is what Graham calls traditionalism and which he sees as the main feature of Islamic thought.[162] Zaman, commenting on Graham's concept of traditionalism, notes that it is "the recurrent effort by Muslims to articulate authority and evaluate claims to such authority by positing and reaffirming a connectedness to the past."[163] Although the appeal to tradition was the main characteristic of conservative scholars, it was also a part of the reformist discourse. This tendency to refer to the past in order to justify one's own thoughts has remained until the present day. As Kramer and Schmidke warn, it has become a common "authenticating device" or "legitimizing strategy" employed by Muslim scholars, as well as ordinary believers.[164] Even though the reformist thought sees the text of Qurʾān as the central authority and the knowledge regarding the fundamental text of Islam as prerequisite to speak for Islam, the reformist legitimacy of the request to return to Islamic textual foundations is marked by the appeal to tradition; by the appeal to those Islamic scholars, traditions and concepts that supported the right to independent, rational thinking on Islamic foundations, free of tradition. Given that fact, one can argue that the reformists perceived their efforts as part of continuously developing Islamic tradition. The attitude of reformists towards the Islamic tradition in later scholarship became subject to frequent criticisms, in terms of their selective acceptance of those interpretations of the Islamic tradition that were in accordance with their reform projects.[165] Reformist invocations of the Islamic past and tradition point out that the tradition itself in their discourse was not seen as a static concept, but rather a dynamic and fluid one, subject to debates and disagreements.

It will be examined in detail in the chapters about Bosnian discussions about the Muslim woman question how the Muslim intellectual and religious heritage was reinterpreted and referred to in order to legitimize various positions as authentically Islamic.

Debates on *ijtihād* and *taqlīd* point to different understandings of religious authenticity by reformist and conservative circles. Insistence on *ijtihād* within the reformist circles

160 Sherman A. Jackson, "Taqlid, Legal Scaffolding and the Scope of Legal Injunctions in Post-Formative Theory: Mutlaq and ʿĀmm in the Jurisprudence of Shihab al-Din al-Qarafi," *Islamic Law and Society* 3, no. 2 (1996): 169.
161 Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, 18.
162 Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam," 501.
163 Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, 3–4.
164 Kramer and Schmidtke, "Introduction," 7.
165 See as an example Albert Hourani's criticism of ʿAbduh's thought not only as selective and eclectic but also as responsible for the distortion of Islam. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age,* 142–143.

went hand in hand with the persuasion that there is a need to engage in deep socio-cultural reform of the Muslim world, and with the understanding according to which the fundamental cause of degeneration of the Islamic world lies in its separation from true Islam. The modern reformists' call for the revival of *ijtihād*—of a mechanism characteristic of the Islamic tradition—represented an integral part of argumentation on the need to engage in wider socio-cultural reforms and on religious authenticity of their reformist calls. Criticisms of existing practices, and the call to overcome them, were to a large extent situated in the discourse of religious authenticity, in which *ijtihād* played a prominent role. *Ijtihād* was the instrument that made it possible to overcome interpretations of authorities of the past, which, being human were understood to be inevitably fallible, and to approach the textual foundations of Islam directly, in order to discover the original Islamic principles and values upon which the renewal of modern society should be founded.[166]

In that sense, *ijtihād* was perceived as a tool that stands in opposition to blind following of either Islamic or Western tradition. *Ijtihād* played an important role in reformist attempt to demonstrate that values that they promoted were not European ones, as their opponents claimed, but actually the original Islamic values, enshrined in Islamic texts. Through the framework of *ijtihād* reformists presented their generally critical attitudes towards different practices and their advocacy of reforms of customs and laws, including those related to women as the return to original Islamic legal and moral norms. Thus, Amīr ʿAlī in *Spirit of Islam* writes on *ijtihād* within a discussion on the issue of polygamy, arguing from the point of view according to which permitting *ijtihād* would enable the insight into the fact that the Qurʾān itself advocates monogamy and it is Qurʾānic ideal.[167]

The close relationship between *ijtihād* and the authenticity, and not *taqlīd* as it was in conservative discourse, is visible also in the fact that that the meaning of *taqlīd* in reformist thought also expanded to blind following of the Western values and institutions.[168] *Taqlīd* thus gains the meaning of blind following, not only of Islamic, but also of Western tradition, while *ijtihād* turns into the mechanism necessary to reach authentic Islamic norms and to develop the model of authentic Islamic modernity. In addition, insistence on the revival of *ijtihād*, as the return to the fundaments of Islam, was in accordance with the perceived need to unite Muslims in the time of pervasive expansion of the West, and in accordance with the understanding of *ijtihād* as mechanism able to ensure such unity. Return to the

166 For more on the close relationship between *ijtihād* and religious and cultural authenticity in general see: Peters, "Ijtihad and Taqlid in 18th and 19th Century Islam," 132; Schirin Amir-Moazami and Armando Salvatore, "Gender, Generation, and the Reform of Tradition: From Muslim Majority Societies to Western Europe," in *Muslim Networks and Transnational Communities in and Across Europe*, eds. Stefano Allievi and Jørgen Nielsen (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 56–57.

167 Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam: A History of the Evolution and Ideals of Islam with a Life of the Prophet* (London: Christophers, 1922), 230–231.

168 Muneer Fareed, *Legal Reform in the Muslim World: The Anatomy of Scholarly Dispute in the 19th and the Early 20th Centuries on the Usage of Ijtihād as a Legal Tool* (San Francisco: Austin and Winfield,1996), 59.

original Islamic principles and norms through *ijtihād* would make it possible to overcome divisions among Muslims, divided into diverse legal traditions and schools of thought. On the other hand, conservative defence of *taqlīd*, their reliance upon historically articulated religious and legal tradition, perceived by conservatives primarily as a set of "fundamental and continuously transmitted agreements, methodological as well as substantive, among generations of scholars,"[169] went hand in hand with their understanding of authentic Islam, but also with the preservation of the dominant mode of constructing authority within the Islamic tradition.

Recent studies, such as the those of Qasim Zaman on modern conservative thought in South Asia, and by Indira Falk Gesink on modern conservative thought in Egypt, in particular her analysis of the critical attitude of conservative religious scholars towards ʿAbduh, point to the fact that *taqlīd,* in the conservative discourse, was not perceived as mere blind imitation. Conservative circles perceived *taqlīd* primarily as a mechanism ensuring the link with the first, true interpreters of Islam, thus also ensuring the preservation of orthodoxy, and they also perceived it as mechanism that guaranteed the stability of the ethical and legal system, representing a barrier against further divisions among Muslims.[170] In times of the Western domination, the penetration of European ethical and legal values, and the fragmentation of religious authority, visible in the appearance of new actors that claimed the right to interpretation of original Islamic principles, *taqlīd* was supposed to ensure the authority of *ʿulamāʾ*, but also the preservation of the moral strength of society. Such an understanding of the function of *taqlīd* is certainly not the novelty of the modern conservative discourse; but the logic underlying this concept from its foundation, which has been explained in a range of contemporary studies, as previously elaborated.

By examining discussions among Bosnian Muslims, I will demonstrate that the debates on issues pertaining to Muslim women, especially those relating to the face veil, primarily revolved around the definitions, and scope of *ijtihād* and *taqlīd*. Very illustrative is Džemaludin Čaušević's reply to conservative criticism and accusations that he is drifting away from the official viewpoints of the Ḥanafī school on the veiling, in which he states the following: "My answers on the veiling of women conform to what God is ordering in the Qurʾān, and even if I know what *sharīʿa* lawyers and commentators have said, I prefer to conform to the precepts of the Qurʾān, since it is here forever and for all times. I am required to do this by the Qurʾān, since it orders me to ponder, to learn and to investigate."[171] This statement clearly underscores the core of the reformist discourse, its emphasis on the Qurʾān over traditional interpretations.

169 Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Consensus and Religious Authority in Modern Islam," in *Speaking for Islam. Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies*, eds. Gudrun Kramer and Sabine Schmidtke (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 154–155.

170 Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*; Falk Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism*.

171 Džemaludin Čaušević "Drugi odgovor Reis-ul-uleme Džematskom medžlisu," in *Sarajevski džematski medžlis i Reisove izjave*, ed. Hadži Mujaga Merhemić (Sarajevo: Hrvatska tiskara d.d. 1928): 24–25.

CHAPTER 3

3

3. Between the Global and Local: Islamic Discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Following the late 19th century, Bosnian Muslims underwent a rapid intellectual development, which was in line with similar trends throughout the Muslim world at the time. This development can be viewed as part of a global Islamic intellectual and cultural revitalization marked by the proliferation of actors claiming the right to talk about Islam and by a plurality of approaches aimed at reforming Islamic religious and cultural identity in the face of Westernization.

The process of pluralization of Bosnian Islamic thought was initiated by the emergence of the Islamic reformist intellectual trend among Bosnian Muslims that was adopted by both secularly educated intellectuals and some *'ulamā'* class members in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the beginning of the 20th century. The advent of Islamic reformism advocating a reinterpretation of the fundamental Islamic sources provided an alternative to traditional religious discourse and opened the arena for different interpretations of Islamic teachings, encouraging debate and discussion among Muslim intelligentsia on a variety of topics.

In the early 20th century, reformist involvement in establishing print media as well as new forms of associations in Bosnia played a significant role in reshaping Bosnian intellectual life at this time. In the following sections I will demonstrate how the reform movement contributed to the emergence of a distinctive Muslim public sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which allowed the expression of various perspectives on the Islamic tradition in modern times.

During the interwar period further growth of print media, the spread of literacy, and the expansion of transnational Muslim networks contributed to the complexity of modern Islamic thought and to the expansion of public discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The late 1920s saw both; the strengthening of Islamic reformism as well as a significant increase in the participation of conservative religious scholars in public discussions about socio-cultural and religious issues, who had previously been reticent to discuss these issues in public. Furthermore, in the late 1930s, Islamic revivalism flourished among religious scholars.[172] The public debates from the period under research reveal that there were profound disagreements among Muslim scholars on nearly all of the topics being discussed, which stemmed from opposing interpretations of Islam and modernity.

172 Bougarel, "Farewell to Ottoman Legacy," 8.

3.1. Pluralization of Islamic Thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In order to understand the modern development of Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is prominently marked by the complex phenomenon of pluralization of religious authority, it is necessary to place it within the dynamic interplay between local and global developments. Thus, on the following pages I will outline some of the key factors that contributed to the creation of a climate that was conducive to the development and coexistence of diverse voices within modern Bosnian Islamic thought.

3.1.1. Interplay of Global and Local Dynamics

Muslim pluralism in Bosnia and Herzegovina has evolved as a result of the interaction of local and global dynamics.[173] The shared Muslim experience of global crisis of the Muslim world, overall European dominance, and the global strengthening of Islamic reformism all played a significant role in shaping Bosnian Muslim intellectual development. Nonetheless, specific local factors facilitated the eager adoption of global Muslim reformist ideas by Bosnian Muslim thinkers.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the impact of global European dominance and role of the global reformist movement calling for the restoration of authentic Islam as a vital factor causing both the fragmentation of religious authority among Muslims and the public debates concerning the interpretation of Islam. My purpose here is to extend my analysis to the key local factors that laid the ground for the pluralization of Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the local level it is in this context important to underline two major factors that provided fertile ground for pluralization of Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the emergence of a specific Muslim public sphere: reforms in the field of culture and education in the late Ottoman period and reforms aimed at civilizing and modernizing Bosnia and Herzegovina undertaken by the Habsburg authorities after 1878.

3.1.2. Local Context

The reforms implemented by the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century had a critical impact on the intellectual life of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the subsequent decades. When the Ottoman Empire embarked upon a course of reform under Sultan Mahmud II (1808–1839) with the purpose of increasing the power of the central government and creating a centralized Ottoman state in the manner of European states, these reforms were met with significant resistance from Bosnian notables and the military class. First, these reforms endangered their privileged status vis-à-vis the local Christians. Second, the reforms were generally considered by religious scholars to be a betrayal of

173 Dierks, "Scripting, Translating, and Narrating Reform;" Amzi-Erdoğdular, "Afterlife of Empire;" Buljina, "Empire, Nation, and the Islamic World."

Islam as they aimed at Westernization.[174] However, the governorship of Osman Topal Pasha (1860–1869) marked the end of Bosnian Muslims' active opposition to the authority of the central government and to reform efforts.[175] He made significant contribution to the cultural and intellectual development of the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina by undertaking educational reform and introducing the press. Both elements were very important for the further pluralization of Islamic thought and development of the distinctive Muslim public sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Ottoman state began reforming Bosnia and Herzegovina's educational system in the second half of the 19th century with the goal of introducing secular education. In addition to the traditional *sibjan mektebs* (*sıbyan mektebi*) and the *madrassas*, the Ottoman reforms established new, secular middle schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina open to children of all denominations, known as the *ruždije* (*rüşdiyes*) in 1864. Along with Islamic religious education and Islamic heritage languages, these schools also taught modern arts and sciences.[176] As far as the significance of the introduction of *ruždije* in Bosnian education system is concerned, later scholarship primarily emphasized that they had never been attended by substantial numbers of students due to the mistrust that Bosnian Muslims had towards Ottoman modernization efforts, as well as the general distrust of non-Muslim populations towards the central government.[177] However recent research has recognized them as important factor for Muslim intellectual development in the early 20th century. Thus, Harun Buljina has underlined that *ruždije*, which continued to operate during the Habsburg period, constituted the initial stage of the education of notable reformists, such as Safvet-beg Bašagić, Edhem Mulabdić, and Osman Nuri Hadžić.[178]

Development of the press, which occurred during the governorship of Osman Topal Pasha, was one of the most important events for the development of Bosnian Muslim intellectual thought. In this period two printing houses were established. The first printing house was established in 1860 in Sarajevo. Until 1866 it carried the name Pečatnja I.K. Sopron and from later the Vilayet Press. In 1876, following the creation of the Vilayet of Herzegovina,

174 Amzi-Erdoğdular, "Afterlife of Empire," 30–31; Ante Čuvalo, *Historical Dictionary of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2007), lxxxv–lxxxvi; Justin McCarthy, "Ottoman Bosnia 1800–1878," in *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia,* eds. Mark Pinson and Roy Mottahedeh, (Cambridge, Mas: Harvard University Press, 1996): 74–75.

175 McCarthy, "Ottoman Bosnia 1800–1878," 76–77.

176 For more on *rüşdiyes* in general see: Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839–1908: Islamization, Autocracy, and Discipline* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000).

177 Enes Karić, "Bosnian Muslims and their Educational Dilemmas in the Austro-Hungarian Period (1878–1918)," in *Balkanlarda İslam: Miadı Dolmayan Umut = Islam in the Balkans: Unexpired Hope*, ed. Muhammet Savaş Kafkasyalı (Ankara: TİKA, 2016), 37; Hajrudin Ćurić, *Muslimansko školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini do 1918* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1983), 137.

178 Harun Buljina. "Bosnia's 'Young Turks': The Bosnian Muslim Intelligentsia in its Late Ottoman Context, 1878–1914," in *The Turkish Connection: Global Intellectual Histories of the Late Ottoman Empire and Republican Turkey*, eds. Hazal Papuççular and Deniz Kuru (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 33.

a printing house was established also in Mostar.[179] During this period, several papers were published: *Bosanski vjestnik* (Bosnian Herald); the first newspaper printed in Bosnia, *Bosna* (Bosnia); an official paper of Bosnian Vilayet, *Sarajevski cvjetnik* (The Sarajevo Chronicle) as the first private Bosnian Herzegovinian journal on politics and culture, and *Neretva*, an official paper of Herzegovina Vilayet.

The provision of information from both the East and the West was a prominent element of these journals. They provided readers with information about cultural, social, and political developments in both the Ottoman Empire and Europe.[180] Hajdarpašić argues that the aims of these publication were expressed in the terms of modernization and the enlightenment. These publications presented the development of the press as both a sign of cultural progress of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and as a major instrument in promoting and achieving socio-cultural development of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[181] In that respect, the newspaper *Sarajevski cvjetnik* is particularly important. The subtext of the articles published in *Sarajevski cvjetnik* is a critique of the cultural situation of Bosnian Muslims that was accused to be marked by a high degree of ignorance and superstition. It sought to educate Bosnian Muslims by publishing educational articles on the culture and history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also to promote education as a major driver of progress for BiH as a whole.[182] Leyla Amzi-Erdoğdular rightly observes that the "Ottoman, top-down measures, particularly the establishment of a provincial printing press, educational reform, and enhanced communication systems, created the conditions for greater intellectual production that continued during the Habsburg era."[183]

Following the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878, modernization processes that started during the Tanzimat period continued, but they were framed in a considerably different context. While the occupation and later annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina evoked a deep sense of existential identity crisis it also had had a manifold effect on the spiritual and intellectual development of Muslims in the country.[184] The Habsburgs' interventions in the area of education, the spread of literacy,

179 Edina Solak, "Službeni vilajetski listovi i službena 'nominacija' jezika u bosanskom vilajetu," in *Zbornik radova Pedagoškog fakulteta u Zenici*, ed. Muhamed Arnaut (Zenica, Pedagoški fakultet u Zenici, 2012), 162–163.

180 Lejla Kodrić Zaimović "Rana bosanskohercegovačka periodika i trauma susreta orijentalnog i evropskog (na primjeru slike svijeta 'Bosne' i 'Sarajevskog Cvjetnika,' in *Muslim East in Slavic Literatures and Cultures,* eds. Artur Konopacki, Anetta Buras-Marciniak, Grzegorz Czerwiński, and Eugenia Maksimowicz (Białystok: Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, 2019), 53–54.

181 Edin Hajdarpasić, "Patriotic Publics: Rethinking Empire, Nationality, and the Popular Press in Ottoman and Habsburg Bosnia," in *Beyond Mosque, Church, and State*, ed. Theodora Dragostinova and Yana Hashamova (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2016), 86.

182 Janet Crayne, "Publishing in Bosnia and Hercegovina," *Slavic & East European Information Resources* 1, no. 2/3 (2001): 41–82.

183 Amzi-Erdogdular, "Alternative Muslim Modernities," 917. See also: Amzi-Erdoğdular, "Afterlife of Empire," 219.

184 Enes Karić, "Interpretation of the Qur'ān in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Islamic studies*, 36, no. 2/3, (1997): 284. An excellent account of the role of this "cultural trauma" in the construction of modern identity and alterity policies in Bosniak literature and culture gives Kodrić, "Traumatični susret s Evropom," 57–74.

the development of mass media, and the further development of communication systems contributed to the development of a pluralistic public sphere which allowed Bosnian Muslims' participation in global discussions about the Islamic tradition in modernity.

František Šistek and Robin Okey have shown that the Habsburgs' civilizational efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina revolved around the modernization of education, specifically through the introduction of interconfessional education."[185] Upon the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Habsburgs found an educational system fragmented along the confessional lines: Orthodox children went to schools funded by the Orthodox Church, Catholic children attended schools run by the Catholic Church and Muslim children went to *mektebs* and *madrasas*. The Austro-Hungarian authorities did not challenge the existence of confessional schools but alongside them began to establish in 1879 a network of inter-confessional public primary schools. Children between 6 and 12 years of age were taught to read and write in the Latin and Cyrillic alphabet, and they were also taught the German language.[186]

In addition to the establishment of the primary public education system and specific Muslim elementary girls' schools, state authorities were working toward the modernization and enhancement of the secondary education system. In order to create an effective public educational system, Habsburg authorities adapted their policies to meet the needs of the administrative apparatus, as well as the technical and economic sectors. During the Habsburg period, the first academically oriented secondary schools known as gymnasiums (*gimnazije*) were established, as well as the first modern vocational schools, such as technical, commercial, and craft schools.[187] The establishment of gymnasiums in Bosnia and Herzegovina marked an important milestone in the development of education and the internal pluralization of the Muslim population.[188] In 1879, Sarajevo established its first gymnasium and its graduates were the first members of the local community educated within the framework of modern European secondary education.[189] During the following years, five additional gymnasiums were established in Banja Luka, Mostar, Travnik, Tuzla and Bihać.[190] These schools had separate religious instruction for Muslim students. In addition, these students had the right to study Arabic rather than Greek.[191] The establishment of

185 František Šístek, "Introduction," in *Imagining Bosnian Muslims in Central Europe: Representations, Transfers and Exchanges*, ed. František Šístek (New York: Berghahn Books, 2021), 18; Okey, *Taming Balkan Nationalism,* 50–51; 65–70.

186 Muhamed Filipović, *Historija bosanske duhovnosti. Epoha modernizacije* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 2004.) 131; Snježana Šušnjara, "The Position of Teachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy," *History of Education & Children's Literature* 8, no. 1 (2013), 89.

187 Srećko Matko Džaja, *Bosna i Hercegovina u Austro-Ugarskom razdoblju (1878–1918*), (Mostar-Zagreb: Ziral, 2002), 78–79.

188 For more on gymnasiums in the period of the Habsburg rule see in Mitar Papić, *Školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme austrougarske okupacije: (1878–1918)* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1972), 101–120.

189 Filipović, *Historija bosanske duhovnosti,* 131.

190 Filipović, *Historija bosanske duhovnosti,* 135.

191 Karčić, *The Bosniaks and the Challenges of Modernity*, 94.

gymnasiums allowed Bosnian and Herzegovinian students to pursue further education at European universities.

The first wave of Muslim students to attend foreign higher educational institutions began in the early 20th century. Instead of establishing a university in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Habsburgs encouraged secondary school graduates to continue their education at Vienna University and Zagreb University by offering scholarships and providing dormitories. Safvet-beg Bašagić and Osman Nuri Hadžić, known as known as champions of Bosnian Muslim reformist thought, were among the most notable graduates of the first generation of Muslims educated at the universities of Vienna and Zagreb.

Fikret Karčić identifies two important consequences of the Habsburg educational policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the first place, it led to a split within the circle of Muslims with secondary education. Muslim secondary school graduates were divided into two groups: those who graduated from Islamic educational institutions and those who graduated from public schools. Graduates of a *madrassas* typically proceed to higher education in Istanbul, Cairo, and Thessaloniki. Public school graduates opted to attend Central European universities. In addition, the Austro-Hungarian intervention in the educational system led to changes in the language of instruction. In contrast to the Ottoman period when Arabic and Turkish were the languages of instruction, during the Austro-Hungarian period, the vernacular language and the Cyrillic and Latin alphabet were introduced in state schools.[192] Since the name of the language was a matter of dispute, the Austro-Hungarian administration introduced the term "language of the land" (*zemaljski jezik*). After 1907, the language spoken in Bosnia and Herzegovina was referred to as Serbo-Croat. The Arabic and Turkish language continued to be used in Muslim primary and secondary schools. Modern Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina was particularly affected by this change in the language of instruction. Reformist authors, most of whom were graduates of public schools, founded the first journals and published articles on religious topics in a vernacular language that was accessible to the broad masses. It was through public discussions and writings on religious issues in the spoken language of Bosnian Muslims that new theological terminology was developed.

Another important aspect that contributed to the development and pluralization of Islamic thought in the early 20th century was the further development of print media during this period.

In 1878, Austro-Hungarian authorities launched the newspaper *Bosanskohercegovačke novine* (Bosnian-Herzegovinian Newspapers) which was published in the Bosnian language, except for official orders, announcements and news, which were printed in German. In

192 Karčić, *The Bosniaks and the Challenges of Modernity*, 95–96.

1881 the newspaper was renamed into *Sarajevski list* (Sarajevo Gazette) and in 1910 into *Večernji sarajevski list* (Sarajevo Evening Gazette). The newspaper published articles related to political, cultural, and artistic matters. It promoted the transformation of the region into a modern and civilized one, free of its Oriental heritage. In that regard, it published articles promoting adoption of Latin script, modern European lifestyles, and public-school education.[193] During Austro-Hungarian rule of Bosnia and Hercegovina, printing continue to grow, and the number of publishers increased to forty.[194] It was a period in which journals became one of the key features of political and cultural life.[195]

Apart from the state-sponsored publications, the beginning of the 20th century saw the emergence of publications founded by diverse ethnic, political, and intellectual organizations. According to Pejanović the spread of modern education and the related stronger interest in social and political issues among population in Bosnia and Herzegovina were the main reasons behind the increase in the number of printing houses and journals.[196] However, given the fact that the number of journals in spite of the development of the public school system in Bosnia and Herzegovina still exceeded the level of education of the general population, I hold that a significant rise in the number of journals and printing houses was to a large extent a result of the development of awareness of the strong impact of print media on individuals and society.[197] Thus, since the beginning of the century different groups and communities established their own journals with the aim of transmitting its ideas to the wider population. In the following sections, I will outline the main characteristics of the development of the distinctive Muslim public sphere, which began to develop at the beginning of the 20th century.

These direct interventions in the cultural and educational life of Muslims during the Austro-Hungarian period have often been viewed not only as a major, but as a sole factor that contributed to the emergence of Islamic reformism and its representatives as members of what may be termed an Austrian-oriented cultural elite.[198] However, the most recent studies have highlighted the importance of looking at the broader context, including the global Islamic reformist movement and the late Ottoman reforms, as significant factors that

193 Amzi-Erdogdular, "Alternative Muslim Modernities," 918.
194 Crayne, "Publishing in Bosnia and Hercegovina," 44.
195 Stijn Vervaet, "Između hrvatstva, srpstva i panislamizma: književna periodika i izgradnja nacionalnog identiteta bosanskih muslimana uoči prvog svetskog rata," accessed January 29, 2022, https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/1092894/file/6745134.pdf
196 Đorđe Pejanović, *Štamparije u Bosni i Hercegovini 1529–1951*, accessed January 20, 2022, http://archive.is/Qd9y#selection-1209.318-1209.880
197 Pejanović, *Štamparije u Bosni i Hercegovini*.
198 Balázs Trencsényi et al, *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*. *Volume I: Negotiating Modernity in the 'Long Nineteenth Century'* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2016), 422–423.

contributed to the emergence of Islamic reformist ideas and pluralization of Islamic thought in Bosnia.[199]

3.2. Development of Muslim Public Sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The development of the distinct Muslim public sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina was closely linked to the cultural and social activities of Bosnian Muslim reformists in the first half of the 20th century. During this time, influential journals were launched, and civic organizations were formed. Journals and civic organizations provided a forum for greater interaction among Muslim intellectuals in Bosnia and enabled greater multi-directional movement of knowledge between Bosnian Muslims and Muslims around the world. The printed media became the main debate platform on issues concerning politics, culture, religion, and society. Several factors were critical in the establishment of Bosnia and Herzegovina's distinct Muslim public sphere. The founding of the reformist newspaper *Behar* in 1900, with the intention of promoting science, education, and reformist ideas among Bosnian Muslims, and the establishment of the Muslim cultural association *Gajret* in 1903, were two of the most significant milestones. *Gajret*'s main function was to provide scholarships to Muslim students with the primary goal of supporting the educational and cultural rebirth of Bosnian Muslims. Furthermore, the establishment of the Islamic Printing House in 1905, as well as the growth of local reading rooms throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, aided the continued development of the Muslim public sphere.

3.2.1. Civil Society Organizations

Numerous national, artistic, religious, and humanitarian organisations were founded in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Austro-Hungarian period. The emergence of these organisations, according to Bosnian historians Hadžibegović and Kamberović, was a result of both Bosnian society's internal dynamics and interactions between the native population and immigrants from across the Monarchy.[200] The immigration of officials from other Austro-Hungarian lands, predominantly Slavs, to assume administrative duties in Bosnia had an important impact on the everyday urban life of as they introduced new, modern styles

199 Dierks, "Scripting, Translating, and Narrating Reform," Amzi-Erdoğdular,"Afterlife of Empire;" Buljina, "Empire, Nation, and the Islamic World."

200 Ilijas Hadžibegović and Husnija Kamberović, "Organizacije civilnog društva u BiH - porijeklo i kontekst," *Revija slobodne misli* 99, no. 9/10 (1997): 49; Ismet Sejfija, *Povijesne predispozicije i aktuelni razvoj građanskih asocijacija u BiH* (Sarajevo, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2008), 68.

of behaviour, habitation, and new forms of associational life into Bosnia and Herzegovina's urban areas.[201]

During this period 1256 associations were established in 258 municipalities.[202] Multi-ethnic associations were exceedingly rare, and most of those were made up of immigrants from other parts of the Monarchy.[203] The strong religious and ethnic differentiation among the local population in Bosnia and Herzegovina likely explains why multi-ethnic organizations were predominantly composed of immigrants, rather than native Bosnian population.[204]

The coffee-served reading rooms called *kiraathane* were among the first institutions which served as the basis for the development of Muslim associational culture.[205] The opening of the Sarajevo reading room (*kiraathane*) in 1888 was one of the key moments in establishing Muslim public sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was established to enhance the participation of Muslims in public life as well as to familiarize them with the attitudes and activities of Austria-Hungarian authorities in the cultural sphere. The reading room had a library and more than 140 members.[206] The establishment of this reading room has generally been regarded to be the beginning of a modern process of cultural and educational consolidation among Muslims.[207] It is important to note here that reading rooms were not entirely original institutions established by the new Austro-Hungarian authorities. As a part of the wider Tanzimat reforms, they were introduced in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the late Ottoman period.[208] The magazine *Sarajevski cvjetnik* published an article in 1870 that illustrates how reading rooms were viewed as necessary elements of Muslim enlightenment in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the late Ottoman period. It states: "if it is desired for our homeland to be free of ignorance, many taverns, that are located on every corner, should be transformed into reading rooms, where existing cards will be replaced by educational books and newspapers."[209]

201 The 1910 census recorded 114, 591 people of non-domestic origin living in Bosnia and Herzegovina. See: Carl Bethke, "The Bosnische Post: A Newspaper in Sarajevo, 1884–1903," *Language Diversity in the Late Habsburg Empire,* ed. Markian Prokopovych, Carl Bethke and Tamara Scheer (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019), 89; Ivan Lovrenović, *Unutarnja zemlja* (Sarajevo: Synopsis, 2010), 197; Sarita Vujković, *U građanskom ogledalu: identiteti žena bosanskohercegovačke građanske kulture, 1878–1941* (Banja Luka: Muzej savremene umjetnosti Republike Srpske, 2009), 21.

202 Hadžibegović and Kamberović, "Organizacije civilnog društva u BiH," 49.

203 Hadžibegović and Kamberović, "Organizacije civilnog društva u BiH," 50; Sejfija*, Povijesne predispozicije i aktuelni razvoj građanskih asocijacija u BiH*, 9–10.

204 Kemura, *Uloga Gajreta,* 28.

205 Samija Sarić, "Udruženje islamske omladine u Sarajevu. Islamski klub (1905–1910)," A*nali Gazi Husrev-begove biblioteke* 13, no. 23/24 (2005): 257.

206 Rizvić, *Behar*, 158.

207 Ibrahim Kemura, "Muslimanska kulturno-prosvjetna društva," *Anali Gazi Husrev-begove biblioteke* 11, no. 19/20 (2001): 228.

208 Kremura, *Uloga Gajreta,* 17. For more about reading culture and reading rooms in Ottoman Empire see: Erol A. F. Baykal, *The Ottoman Press, 1908–1923* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 200–203; Johann Strauss, "Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th–20th centuries)?" *Middle Eastern Literatures* 6, no. 1 (2003), 39–76; Benjamin C. Fortna, *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

209 Quoted in Hana Younis, "Otvaranje i rad muslimanskih čitaonica u manjim mjestima Bosne i Hercegovine početkom 20. stoljeća," *Bosniaca* 26, no. 26 (2021): 89–90.

All Ottoman-era reading rooms ceased to exist following the Austro-Hungarian occupation in 1878. Ten years after the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Sarajevo reading room was opened, marking the beginning of a rapid proliferation of similar reading rooms. During the time of Austro-Hungarian rule, Bosnia and Herzegovina had approximately 100 reading rooms.[210] It was in these reading rooms that the more educated members of society discussed the current affairs of the day. They provided a physical space for people to come together and share their ideas and opinions, which helped to cultivate an atmosphere of collaboration and learning.[211] Nevertheless, reading rooms served a number of other purposes as well. They provided a venue for various activities, such as lectures, entertainment, and literacy classes as well as drinking coffee, tea, and smoking *shisha*.

During the early 20th century, Muslims became increasingly aware of the importance of social associations for their own personal development and for the benefit of society as a whole. The establishment of associations with a wide range of interests, from health care to education, was viewed as playing a key role in establishing a more humane and advanced society.[212]

The foundation of the Muslim cultural association *Gajret* in 1903 laid the groundwork for the establishment of several other Muslim associations in the region, which furthered the growth of Muslim intellectual and cultural life. The association sought to help Muslim students in Bosnia and Herzegovina by providing them with scholarships to pursue their educational goals. Furthermore, it aimed to foster cultural renewal among Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina by organizing cultural and educational activities and events.[213] The founders of *Gajret* advocated the integration of Islamic tradition with modern European thought and culture to bridge the perceived gap between the Bosnian Muslims and modern Europe.[214] This integration offered a means of modernizing the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina without sacrificing its religious and cultural heritage. *Gajret*'s circle of intellectuals participated actively in various discussions regarding social and religious issues. They maintained that all issues of vital importance to Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be discussed by Muslim intellectuals. Especially noteworthy was their involvement in matters previously considered to be the domain of religious authorities. By discussing these issues publicly, they opened up conversations about religious authority and made their ideas and beliefs more accessible to a broader audience.

210 Younis, "Otvaranje i rad muslimanskih čitaonica," 91–93.
211 Lamija Hadžiosmanović, *Biblioteke u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme Austro-ugarske vladavine* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1980), 36.
212 Haris: "Udruživanje. Islamskoj omladini," *Behar* 4, no. 20 (1904): 309–310.
213 Zlatko Hasanbegović, *Muslimani u Zagrebu 1878–1945. Doba utemeljenja* (Zagreb: Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar i Medžlis Islamske zajednice u Zagrebu, 2007), 87.
214 Hasanbegović, *Muslimani u Zagrebu*, 87.

For Bosnian Muslim reformists, the creation of Muslim associations constituted a means of overcoming Muslim passivity and uniting Muslims, as well as combating Muslim backwardness on a political, economic, and cultural levels.[215] In connection with the establishment of *Gajret*, the first Muslim reformist journal *Behar*, published several articles to raise awareness of the importance of associations for community development. They presented the establishment of Muslim cultural, educational, and humanitarian associations as a religious duty prescribed by Islam. They claimed that Islam, as a religion of brotherhood and love, emphasizes the importance of working together for the common good, which means that each individual should contribute to society by participating in social and charitable organizations. It was suggested that in this manner, Muslims can demonstrate their commitment to their faith and to their community.[216]

A number of civil society organizations were founded following the founding of *Gajret*. It was estimated that there were 187 Muslim associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina just before World War I and that most of these associations were situated in cities since the Muslim population resided primarily in urban areas.[217] As regards to the profile of the Muslim associations, Muslims mainly founded reading rooms, branches of *Gajret*, associations against alcohol, branches of the pan-Slavic sports association *Sokol*, and charities.[218] During the period of Austro-Hungarian rule, Muslim youth from Bosnia and Herzegovina was particularly encouraged by Muslim intellectuals to establish and to participate in the work of Muslim associations.[219] Also in this period Bosnian Muslim students established Muslim associations outside of their country. They founded in 1904 in Vienna the association *Zvijezda* (Star), which provided a forum for their discussions of Bosnian society and the role that the Muslim community plays within it. During the year 1907, a section of the student population decided to leave this association and establish a new association called *Svijest* (Awareness).[220]

Most of the associations suspended their activities after the outbreak of World War I. Following the end of World War I and the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, most of them, including the largest Muslim association, *Gajret*, resumed their activities. It should be noted that although the Constitution of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes of 1921 guaranteed the right to freedom of association provided that

215 Esad Zgodić, *Bosanska politička misao: Austrougarsko doba* (Sarajevo: DES, 2003), 104.
216 "Gajret," *Behar* 3, no. 19 (1903): 292–293; Safvet-beg Bašagić, "Gajret," *Behar* 3, no. 20 (1903): 318–319; Mirza Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 3, *Behar* 4, no. 3 (1903): 33–36; Hajrudin Bujukalić, "Naš društveni život," *Novi Behar* 1, no. 7 (1927): 98.
217 Hadžibegović and Kamberović, "Organizacije civilnog društva u BiH," 50.
218 Hadžibegović and Kamberović, "Organizacije civilnog društva u BiH," 50.
219 Sarić, "Udruženje islamske omladine u Sarajevu," 258.
220 Rizvić, *Behar*, 167; Sarić, "Udruženje islamske omladine u Sarajevu," 259.

the objectives of such associations were not prohibited by applicable law, state authorities have adopted various measures either to control or to restrict their activities.[221]

Nevertheless, the interwar period witnessed a noteworthy development with the establishment of *Narodna Uzdanica* (People's Hope), an organization that paralleled *Gajret* not only in structure but also in its closely aligned activities and objectives. This development of parallel Bosnian Muslim cultural organizations can be attributed to the specific and multifaceted position of Bosnian Muslims during this period. They were not recognized by others as a distinct ethnic group, nor had they developed a unified, widely accepted ethnic identity. As Serbo-Croatian speakers, Bosnian Muslims were considered and considered themselves as South Slavs, but they were also regarded as a religious minority, as a result of international treaties and the Constitution from 1921.[222] The new state of the Yugoslavian Kingdom did not recognize Bosnian Muslims as an ethnically distinct nation. They were considered by the state as South Slavs or more precisely as members of Serb or Croat nations; as Serb-Mohammedans or Croat-Mohammedans.[223]

While a significant portion of the Muslim population remained indifferent to national identification during this period, Muslim intellectuals actively engaged with these identity issues, adopting various national identities such as Muslim Croats or Muslim Serbs. These identities, as Greble correctly observes, were not static but rather fluid, often changing in response to political circumstances and personal agendas. It was common for elite Muslims to switch between national identities depending on the situation or the political climate in which they found themselves.[224] Such strategic affiliations, however, should not be interpreted as evidence of absence of a distinct sense of collective identity among Bosnian Muslims as such interpretation would risk a reductive reading that overlooks the complexity of their social and historical positioning. This political and ideological context gave rise to the formation of two parallel cultural organizations: *Gajret* and *Narodna uzdanica*, that reflected differing strategies for collective self-assertion in response to the lack of formal national recognition for Muslims.

In the light of the fact that *Gajret* took an open pro-Serbian stance from 1908, it is not surprising that after 1918 it became the key Muslim institution of the state regime under the protection of the Karađorđević family.[225] *Gajret* promoted the pro-Serbian nationalization

221 Sejfija*, Povijesne predispozicije i aktuelni razvoj građanskih asocijacija u BiH*, 72.
222 Fabio Giomi, "Domesticating Kemalism: Conflicting Muslim Narratives About Turkey in Interwar Yugoslavia," in *Nostalgia, Loss and Creativity in South-East Europe: Modernity, Memory and Identity in South-East Europe*, ed. Catharina Raudvere (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 154–155.
223 Božidar Jezernik, "The Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina between Millet and Nation," in *Imagining Bosnian Muslims in Central Europe: Representations, Transfers and Exchanges*, ed. František Šístek (New York: Berghahn Books, 2021), 55.
224 Greble, *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe*, 167–169.
225 Hasanbegović, *Muslimani u Zagrebu*, 87.

of Muslims and Yugoslav patriotism and espoused the loyalty to the royal dynasty of Karađorđević. Even its name was changed in 1929 to Serb Muslim Cultural Association *Gajret,* indicating its pro-Serb and pro-regime stance.[226]

In response to *Gajret'*s pro-regime orientation and ongoing contestation over national belonging among Muslim elites *Narodna uzdanica* was established in 1923.[227] Much of the scholarly literature defines *Narodna uzdanica* as a pro-Croat association primarily because of the national orientation of some of its prominent members.[228] In spite of the ideological and political divisions among modern educated Muslim intellectuals gathered around *Gajret* and *Narodna uzdanica* both associations shared similar ideas concerning the compatibility of Islam with modern European culture, as well as the belief that modern education is a prerequisite for Muslim advancement. Moreover, both organizations emphasized and advocated the preservation of Bosnian Muslims' cultural distinctiveness and shaped their public discourse on Muslim advancement, not only in terms of national advancement, but also in terms of Islamic reform.[229] The activities of these organizations contributed significantly to the intellectual development of Bosnian Muslims. These activities have included a number of scholarships for Muslim students, the organization of cultural events, the establishment of courses, and the construction of dormitories for students, all of which contributed substantially to the improvement of literacy and educational status among Muslims. Another significant and prevalent feature of *Gajret* and *Narodna uzdanica* was the promotion of Muslim women's education as part of a larger initiative aimed at revitalizing the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In order to improve Muslim women's education and promote their involvement in public life these organizations created female boarding schools, provided a variety of educational courses for women, and awarded scholarships.[230]

Programmatic compatibility between these associations, and a lack of interest in issues relating to a national identification within the wider Muslim population, made it possible for lower organs of *Gajret* and *Narodna uzdanica* to work together on the local level.[231] It should be emphasized that even after the emergence of *Narodna Uzdanica*, *Gajret*

226 Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*, 134.
227 Hadžibegović and Kamberović, "Organizacije civilnog društva u BiH," 51.
228 Hasanbegović, *Muslimani u Zagrebu,* 90.
229 Greble, *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe*, 169.
230 For more information on the activities of these societies in the field of women's emancipation, see: Ahmet Omerhodžić, "Uoči zimskih društvenih sijela," *Novi Behar* 13, no. 7/10 (1939) 77; "Gajretova ženska zadruga za unapređenje domaćeg zanatstva i radinosti u Trebinju," *Gajret* 18, no. 7/9 (1937), 139–140; Kemura, *Uloga Gajreta,* 314–319, 326–328, 354; Ibrahim Kemura, *Cultural and Educational Society of Muslims Narodna uzdanica/ National Hope/ 1923–1941* (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 1999), 54, 70, 76–77; Srećko Matko Džaja, *Politička realnost jugoslavenstva (1918–1991). S posebnim osvrtom na Bosnu i Hercegovinu* (Sarajevo; Zagreb, Svjetlo riječi, 2004), 77.
231 Kemura, *Cultural and Educational Society of Muslims Narodna uzdanica*, 78.

remained the most influential Muslim organization, both in terms of its membership and activities.

In response to to *Gajret*, which published its own magazine, *Narodna uzdanica* initially used *Pravda* (Justice), the journal of political party *Yugoslav Muslim Organization*, and then from 1927 journal *Novi Behar* in order to promote its ideas and inform Muslims of its activities. Considering that *Novi Behar* reported regularly on the activities and achievements of this association it can be viewed as a kind of organ of *Narodna Uzdanica*, whose opinions and orientations it reflected in its articles.[232]

The establishment of parallel Bosnian Muslim associations reflected not only external political pressures and internal ideological divisions but also represented a form of collective self-assertion within the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society of the time. Despite their opposing formal affiliations—*Gajret* aligning with the pro-Serbian narrative and *Narodna uzdanica* with the pro-Croatian—both served as platforms through which Muslim elites sought to shape their cultural, educational, and religious life. By organizing schools, publishing journals, and granting student scholarships they contributed to the development of communal cohesion and intellectual engagement. Through these activities the Bosnian Muslim community made its presence visible, even in the absence of official national recognition. In this sense, these efforts can be seen as part of a long historical trajectory of negotiation, adaptation, and self-definition—one that would ultimately contribute to the articulation of Bosniak national identity.

In 1919, the first association of Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina was founded under the name *Osvitanje* (Dawning). Among its primary objectives was the empowerment of Muslim women in terms of economics, culture and education. *Osvitanje* aimed to achieve this goal by promoting education for women, suppressing damaging practices such as lethargy and decadence, and organizing sewing, weaving, and embroidery courses for women. [233] Founders of this association were Muslim female teachers from Sarajevo, like Hasnija Berberović, Rasema Bisić, Almasa Iblizović, Šefika Bjelavac, Umija Vranić i Asifa Širbegović. [234] Most of its members came from wealthy and educated Muslim families in Sarajevo. In general, they were the wives of intellectuals, government officials, religious leaders, and businessmen. It was because of their social status that they were able to exert a greater impact on society and act more independently than most women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. [235]

232 Kemura, *Cultural and Educational Society of Muslims Narodna uzdanica*, 71. On the relationship between *Novi Behar* and *Narodna uzdanica* see Edhem Mulabdić, "Novi Behar," *Novi Behar* 16, no. 1 (1944), 1.
233 Nusret Kujraković, "Osvitanje – prvo udruženje muslimanki u Bosni i Hercegovini," *Prilozi,* no. *38* (2009):145 – 164.
234 Kujraković, "Osvitanje – prvo udruženje muslimanki u Bosni i Hercegovini," 149
235 Kujraković, "Osvitanje – prvo udruženje muslimanki u Bosni i Hercegovini," 156

As evidenced by the manifesto published in 1919 on the occasion of the founding of *Osvitanje*, the association's members argued that theoretical considerations were insufficient to improve the status of Muslim women. More specifically, they advocated for concrete measures to improve the status of women, particularly in the domain of education. It was explained in the manifesto that Muslim women faced a challenging situation in post-war Bosnian society due to their lack of education and deeply ingrained patriarchal traditions that prevented them from working outside the home. Low levels of education and a lack of participation in the labour force were perceived to condemn women to begging and prostitution.[236]

Within the first year of *Osvitanje*'s existence, 150 women joined the organization. During the following years, it provided sewing and literacy courses, hygiene lectures, religious courses for children, and established a library and female vocational school. In addition, the association organized cultural events, religious holidays, and Ramadan lectures for women. Lectures were delivered by prominent religious scholars such as: Šaćir Sikirić, Salih-beg Ljubunčić, Enver ef. Muftić, Ahmed-beg Ljubunčić, and Džemaludin Čaušević. The association ceased to exist in 1930/1931. Despite some attempts to revive the association in 1936, none of its activities were reactivated.[237]

Until 1949, when the communist regime outlawed all ethnic and religious organisations, Muslim civil organisations were essential to the cultural, political, and social growth of Bosnian Muslims. *Gajret* and *Narodna Uzdanica*, which merged in 1945 to form united organization *Preporod*, played a particularly important role in this regard. Their public campaigns promoting the importance of education, educational courses they offered, and financial assistance they provided facilitated Muslims to overcome financial and cultural barriers to education. As a result, larger strata of the Muslim population gained access to higher education and professional and intellectual opportunities, which in turn raised the overall educational and cultural level of the Bosnian Muslim community. Along with civil society organizations, the growth of printed media played an important role in the development of the Muslim public sphere.

3.2.2. Media

Early in the 20th century, Muslim reformists initiated the establishment of various journals promoting the reform of traditional Islamic practices and institutions, with a focus on the renewal of authentic Islamic teachings. These publications allowed Muslim intellectuals with no formal higher religious education to discuss publicly issues related to Islam as culture and religion and to claim their right to discuss the topics that had been previously considered to be the domain of religious scholars alone. The belief that the number of

236 Kujraković, "Osvitanje – prvo udruženje muslimanki u Bosni i Hercegovini," 149.
237 Kujraković, "Osvitanje – prvo udruženje muslimanki u Bosni i Hercegovini," 157–161.

journals indicates the cultural condition of a people illustrates well reformist understanding of media.[238] Namely, reformists saw modern print media as one of the key elements that contributed to the development of modern culture and as the most powerful means for the transmission of moral, religious and social ideas to masses.[239] Mahmud Konjhožić in a brief informative text on the relationship between printed media and public opinion published in *Gajret* concludes that printed media shapes public opinion stronger than anything else in society.[240]

The two significant moments for the modern development of the Muslim press in Bosnia and Herzegovina were the foundation of the journal *Behar* in 1900 and the *Islamska dionička štamparija* (the Islamic printing house) in 1905.

The establishment of the journal *Behar* in 1900 gave a strong impetus to cultural, literature and educational development of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Historians Smail Balić and Muhsin Rizvić have described the founders of *Behar* as striving to strike a balance between embracing advanced aspects of European civilization and maintaining Bosnian Muslims' distinctive cultural and religious identity.[241]

In this regard, I will later show that that *Behar's* associates understood and promoted the adoption of European forms of life as part of the broader call for the rediscovery of true Islamic principles and values. Islam served as the framework within which all social reforms were debated as well as the lens through which different manifestations of European modernity were viewed. Consequently, the adoption of European-style education was not only promoted in terms of its utilitarian value but also seen and described as a revival of the Qurʾānic value of knowledge and education.

Behar was originally conceived as a publication on cultural and educational issues, with a special focus on religious education for Muslims. According to the editorial of its first issue, *Behar*'s primary objective was to promote science and education among Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to facilitate the renewal of Islam and to enhance the educational development of Muslim community.[242]

Behar's founders believed that the launch and establishment of a journal devoted to educational, cultural, and religious issues in the vernacular language was a necessary step in facilitating Muslims' cultural and social development on the basis of Islamic values and

238 "Novinstvo u Japanu," *Behar* 5, no. 1 (1904): 14.
239 "Islamska štamparija u Sarajevu," *Behar* 4, no. 19 (1904): 301–302; "Islamska štamparija," *Behar 5*, no. 4 (1904): 59; Hasib Imamović and M. Dubravić, "Dvije izjave," *Biser* 3, no. 3/4 (1918): 55; "Akcija za osnivanje Matice Muslimanske," *Biser* 3, no. 5/6 (1918): 65–67.
240 Mahmud Konjhodžić,"Štampa," *Gajret* 14, no. 9 (1933): 152–153.
241 Rizvić, *Behar*, 12; Smail Balić, *Kultura Bošnjaka* (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske, 1994), 187.
242 "Našim čitateljima i suradnicima," *Behar* 1, no. 1 (1900), 1–3.

norms. In doing so, its initiators challenged the widespread assumption that religious issues could only be discussed in Arabic, Turkish, or Persian, that is, in languages considered to be truly Islamic.[243] Furthermore, this view that it was necessary to provide Muslim population with texts about Islam in a language they understood was linked to the larger reformist viewpoint that Muslims required a critical, rational religious education in order to comprehend the true principles of Islam. Osman Nuri Hadžić, one of the founders of *Behar*, in the article *Načela islama i naš zadatak* (Islamic principles and our task) states that it was a Muslim duty to discover again and live according to true Islamic principles and values, which were according to him fully embodied in the life of the first Muslim community.[244] In 1906, *Behar* started to publish the articles also in Turkish language what enabled its reception outside the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The same year Bulgarian, Turkish and Russian journals published articles about *Behar.* [245]

The advocacy of cooperation between Muslims educated in the field of religious sciences in Islamic centres worldwide and the younger intellectuals educated within modern European institutions was one of the defining characteristics of this journal. This characteristic became particularly prominent after the appointment of Džemaludin Čuašević as the editor of *Behar* in 1906. In 1906, the editorial board invited religious scholars to submit articles on religious and moral issues and modern educated intellectuals to submit articles about family, education, social issues and about the youth.[246] This invitation certainly was a kind of response to conservative forces who held that secularly educated intellectuals did not possess the necessary qualifications to discuss religious issues and therefore strongly opposed their involvement in religious debates.[247] The publication of *Behar* stopped in 1911 but several other publications continued its tradition.

Parallel to the establishment of *Behar* awareness about the necessity of establishing an Islamic printing house as a fundamental Islamic institution, which would enable general cultural development of Muslims, as well as publication of texts in the vernacular and oriental languages, was born.[248] When in 1905 Islamic printing house was opened in Sarajevo its establishment was generally described as a fulfilment of Muslim attempts to

243 Rizvić, *Behar*, 28; *Behar* according to Hadžiosmanović and Memija played a crucial role in the acceptance of the Latin by Bosnian Muslims See: Lamija Hadžiosmaović i Emina Memija, *Biser: Književno historijska monografija i bibliografija* (Sarajevo: Nacionalna i univerzitetska biblioteka Bosne i Hercegovine, 1998), 10.

244 Osman Nuri Hadžić, "Načela islama i naš zadatak," *Behar* 1, no. 1 (1900), 8.

245 "Terdžuman o Beharu," *Behar* 7, no. 3 (1906): 33; "Sabah," *Behar* 7, no. 3 (1906): 33; "Tuna," *Behar* 7, no. 3 (1906): 33; Osman Aziz "Na početku IX godišta," *Behar* 9, no. 1 (1908): 1–3.

246 "Čitateljima na početku sedme godine," *Behar* 7, no. 1 (1906), 1–2.

247 Muhsin Rizvić, *Književno stvaranje muslimanskih pisaca u Bosni i Hercegovini u doba austrougarske vladavine* (Sarajevo: Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, 1973), 289–291.

248 Amra Rašidbegović, "Osnivanje i rad Islamske dioničke štamparije (tiskare) u Sarajevu od 1905.–1918. godine," in *Anali Gazi Husrev-begove biblioteke* 11, no. 19/20 (2001): 221.

engage actively in modern socio-cultural developments.[249] From its establishment to 1918 Islamic printing house published more than 120 titles, out of which 100 monographs and 20 periodicals. As for the content of printed monographs, from 1905 to 1918 according to Amra Rašidbegović 62 percent of monographs were related to historical and religious issues, 31 percent were different rulebooks, while the rest of the published monographs was related to the natural sciences.[250] Regarding periodicals it mainly printed publications that advocated general social reform and religious renewal. Some of the most important periodicals printed by this printing house were: *Bošnjak* (Bosniak)*, Behar, Ogledala* (Mirrors)*, Gajret, Tarik* (Path)*, Muallim*: the official herald of the Muslim teachers' association of Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Misbah*: herald of the association of religious scholars, *ʿulamāʾ*.[251]

In 1910, it began to publish the journal *Biser* (Pearl), a magazine for dissemination of education among the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[252] *Biser*'s editors envisioned it as a journal for entertainment and education modelled after *Behar*.[253] The journal was characterized by a strong concern for the educational and material progress of Muslims, and a particular interest in developments in the wider Muslim world. It published mainly literary texts and articles on education in general, as well as articles about Islamic religious education. These articles mainly discussed the development of education in the Muslim countries, reforms in the field of religious education and the education of young people in general.[254] Due to its frequent reporting on social, cultural, and religious developments in Muslim societies throughout the world, as well as on the pan-Islamic movement, *Biser* is often referred to as an example of a pan-Islamist magazine in scholarly literature. [255]

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Muslim public sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina was characterized by a keen interest in the broader Muslim world, an aspect apparent not only in *Biser*, but also in other journals. Diverse journals demonstrate not only the influence of ideas coming from Istanbul and Cairo, which were traditionally regarded as the centres of Islamic learning, but also the dynamic exchange of ideas between Islamic peripheral regions.[256] This aspect will be further specifically problematized in the subsequent parts of this study on public debates about the Muslim woman question in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

249 Rašidbegović, "Osnivanje i rad islamske dioničke štamparije," 222. For more on the importance of the printing house from the perspective of the modern Muslim intellectuals see: Hamdija Kreševljaković, "Od Sopronove do Islamske štamparije," *Novi Behar* 4, no. 16/17 (1931): 233–235; Alija Nametak, "Islamska dionička štamparija kao kulturna ustanova," *Novi Behar* 4, no. 16 /17 (1931): 239–241, Abdurahman Mešić, "Islamska štamparija 1905–1930," *Novi Behar* 4, no. 16/17(1930): 242–247.

250 Rašidbegović, "Osnivanje i rad islamske dioničke štamparije," 223.

251 Rašidbegović, "Osnivanje i rad islamske dioničke štamparije," 225.

252 Balić, *Kultura Bošnjaka*, 187.

253 "Riječ dvije o pokrenuću Bisera," *Biser* 1, no. 1 (1912): 1–2.

254 Hadžiosmaović and Memija, *Biser*, 49.

255 Hadžiosmaović and Memija, *Biser*, 17.

256 Ismail Fuad "Pismo Uredništvu," *Behar* 4, no. 6 (1903): 84–85; "El-Menar," *Behar* 4, no. 8 (1903): 126–127; M. S. Serdarević, "El Menar i ponešto o panislamizmu," *Behar* 6, no. 8 (1905): 120–123; "El-Menar," *Behar* 4, no. 9 (1903): 142; Sabri, "Ismail-beg Gasprinsky," Biser 1, no. 6 (1912): 116 –118.

In 1907, the association *Gajret* published the first edition of the eponymous periodical that would play an important role in the development of Muslim polemical culture. Initially it started as a modest official herald of *Gajret* that published informative articles about its activities, but after 1909 it grew into a serious journal that published primarily literary texts, as well as articles related to socio-cultural, political and religious issues.[257]

Historian Ibrahim Kemura identified two distinct phases in the history of *Gajret*. As a specific characteristic of the first phase, he emphasizes the importance of social and religious issues on its pages. In the second phase, which began after 1908, he traces the development of a clear inclination towards Serbian national affiliation. Kemura states, however, that *Gajret*'s later pro-Serbian orientation never undermined its Muslim character, since it continued to emphasize Bosnian Muslims' religious and cultural distinctiveness.[258] Stijn Vervaet similarly has demonstrated that this effort to preserve the specifics of Bosnian Muslims was characteristic also of the other journals such as *Behar* and *Biser*, whose editors and authors advocated a different models of national identification.[259] *Behar'*s writers mainly declared themselves Croats, *Gajret*s's as Serbs, whereas those writing in the journal *Biser* believed Bosnian Muslims should join forces with the supranational movement of pan-Islamism. Vervaet's examination of how national identities were discursively formed in the journals *Behar*, *Gajret*, and *Biser* reveals that national identity in these publications was perceived as neither fixed nor supremely significant. Thus, he states that "the real debates among the Bosnia intellectuals of this time focused on the values of Islam and their compatibility with the modernization of society, national identification (as Serb or Croat) seems to have been to them more a matter of political orientation."[260]

In 1926, the Muslim women's magazine *Đulistan* was published to promote women's social and cultural emancipation. This magazine was published only from March to May 1926, but its publication represents a significant historical and cultural moment for Bosnian Muslim community.[261] The magazine was the first to focus exclusively on issues pertaining to Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It should be noted, however, that the bulk of its articles were written by men, as in other magazines published in the early 20th century. There were several female authors such as Jovanka Šiljak, Nira Bećirbegović Filipović, Umija Muftić who published in the magazine texts related to the position of the Muslim woman in family and society and texts promoting modern education of women. It also served as a platform for the expression of female literary thought and fostered an environment of creativity and innovation. Thus, *Đulistan* published literary texts of Muslim

257 Kemura, *Uloga Gajreta*, 124.
258 Kemura, *Uloga Gajreta,* 77.
259 Stijn Vervaet, "Između hrvatstva, srpstva i panislamizma."
260 Stijn Vervaet, "Između hrvatstva, srpstva i panislamizma."
261 Nusret Kujraković, "*Đulistan:* Književnohistorijska monografija i bibliografija," *Anali Gazi Husrevbegove biblioteke* 17, no. 31 (2010): 274.

women such as Asija Kavazović, Kajdafa Efica, Saliha Smailbegović. Apart from Muslim women, *Đulistan* associates were also women from other religious communities such as Jovanka Šiljak, Desanka Plavšić and Jelica Belović Bernadzikovska. As part of the magazine's mission, it promoted education and involvement in public life and employment as means of emancipating Muslim women. It was emphasized in the magazine that emancipation was to be based on Islamic values and principles.[262] In recognition of the negative consequences of deep divisions within the Muslim community, the magazine promoted cooperation between religious scholars and modern educated Muslims as a necessary condition for Muslim women to achieve emancipation.[263]

In 1927, *Novi Behar* was established with the aim of "bringing together moral treasure of Islam with material treasure of the Western education, represented by science and technique"[264] Harmony between Islamic moral principles and modern, European science was understood by editors of *Novi Behar* as a prerequisite for progress.[265] It was the opinion of *Novi Behar* editors that *Novi Behar* had a significant role to suppress rigid interpretations of Islam that hindered Muslim advancement, as well as to prevent superficial, negative aspects of modern culture, particularly moral dissipation, among Muslims, indicating *Novi Behar's* position was a middle ground between religious conservativism and full, uncritical adoption of European modernity.[266]

Even though Muslim reformists played a decisive role in the development of the Bosnian Muslim public sphere, it cannot be overlooked that religious scholars outside the reformist circle also played an important role in this process. In the early twentieth century the majority of religious scholars were sceptical of new printed media, but things changed significantly during the interwar period. While they generally opposed public discussion of topics that they considered to be within their area of authority, they began to recognize the importance of media as a means of conveying their message. They started to use the printed media to communicate with Muslims outside of traditional religious institutions, and to spread their teachings to a wider audience. This increased the potential for debate and discussion around Islamic doctrine and practice, thereby strengthening the modern Muslim public sphere.

During the interwar period, the conservative and revivalist publications *Hikjmet* and *El-Hidaje* were established, along with the first official herald of the Islamic Religious Community, *Glasnik Islamske vjerske zajednice*. The publication began in January 1933 and continued until 1945. The journal was relaunch ed in 1950 after a five-year pause.

262 Ahmet Ljubunčić, "Kulturno i socijalno podizanje naše žene," *Đulistan* 1, no. 1 (1926): 9–10.
263 Mustafa Bećirbegović, "Potreba zajedničkog rada inteligencije i uleme," *Đulistan* 1, no. 3 (1926): 44–45.
264 "Braćo Muslimani," *Novi Behar* 1, no. 1 (1927), 1–2.
265 "Braćo Muslimani," 2.
266 "Braćo Muslimani," 2.

Hikjmet was founded in 1929 as a journal for religious and educational matters with the primary objective of promoting Islamic values among Muslims.[267] It encouraged the gathering of religious scholars around historically articulated Islamic religious and legal traditions in order to overcome the divisions within the Muslim community. *Hikjmet* argued that the divisions within the Muslim community were caused by the reformists' tendency to interpret Islamic sources freely and arbitrarily. Therefore, *Hikjmet* viewed it as its duty to suppress reformist viewpoints on Islam in order to maintain unity and cohesion within the Muslim community.[268]

Adnan Jahic, in his comprehensive study of this journal, distinguishes between its theoretical and polemical dimensions. Aside from publishing comprehensive theoretical articles on theological, anthropological, and judicial issues, the journal also published polemical texts focused on social and religious issues. It can be described as a polemical, anti-reform theological journal.[269] The main authors gathered around *Hikjmet* were its owner and editor Ibrahim Hakki Čokić (Chameran), his brother Ahmed Lutfi, Mehmed Handžić, Muhamed Zahirović and Husein Jahić.

Although Ibrahim Čokić encouraged *Hikjmet* associates to write articles in the language familiar to the wide masses lacking higher religious education, one of the characteristics of this journal that distinguished it from reformist journals was the frequent use of Arabic technical terms.[270] Certainly, this was a consequence of the fact that most of *Hikjmet*'s associates were Islamic religious scholars educated within traditional Muslim institutions that valued Arabic and Turkish as the main cultural languages of Islam.

Jahić considers *Hikjmet* to be a kind of commentary on the views expressed in Ibrahim Čokić's book *O teset-turu* (On Veiling of a Muslim Woman).[271] This book, as well as other theoretical and polemical texts published in *Hikjmet,* focused primarily on preserving the idea of an authentic, original form of Islam and Muslim unity that were considered to be threatened by reformist attempts to reinterpret Islamic principles and values. Classical Islamic interpretations and the deeply rooted traditions of previous generations of Muslims were considered to be the true and authentic forms of Islam. [272]

The periodical *El-Hidaje*, established in 1936, whose main characteristics I have detailed in the introduction chapter, significantly influenced the development of the Muslim public sphere. It provided a platform for the public expression of revivalist ideas. *El-Hidaje* served

267 "Iz uredništva," *Hikjmet* 1, no. 2 (1929), 64.
268 Adnan Jahić, *Hikjmet,* 62–63.
269 Adnan Jahić, *Hikjmet*, 63.
270 Adnan Jahić, *Hikjmet*, 65.
271 Adnan Jahić, *Hikjmet*, 68.
272 Adnan Jahić, *Hikjmet*, 69.

as the official periodical of the same-named organization dedicated to moral, educational, and religious improvement among Muslims, led by revivalist oriented religious scholars.[273]

One of the most important matters discussed in the Bosnian press was the issue of the Muslim woman. The reformist press introduced this topic promoting female education and reforms of traditional practices related to Muslim women. These reforms were presented as inextricably linked to the progress of Muslims and renewal of true Islam. It is impossible to assess the extent to which the reformist writings on Muslim woman question exerted influence on Bosnian Muslims in general, but they triggered intense public contestations on this issue throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The reformist press provoked conservative and revivalist responses on this issue. *Hikjmet* published a number of articles that addressed the position of Muslim women whose prominent characteristic is a critical and polemical attitude towards reformist calls for a change in women's status and reform of inherited practices related to women. In the view of conservatives, these requests were primarily a result of uncritical acceptance of Western cultural values and a betrayal of Islamic tradition. According to *Hikjmet*, a woman's primary role was that of mother and wife. This role in conservative discourse was a given important, wider meaning of the guardian of innocence and morality of the entire community. To protect the women's honour and morality from the emancipation and liberalization of Western society, as well as to preserve the morality of the Muslim community, *Hikjmet* asserted the necessity of reaffirming that role.[274] Moreover, during the late 1930s revivalist circles around *El-Hidaje* took an active part in these discussions putting the issue of Muslim women status at the forefront of their efforts to preserve Muslim identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the following section, drawing from primary sources, I will present the key themes that shaped Bosnian public discourse on various religious and social issues, including the woman question. These themes are modernity, authority, and authenticity.

3.3. Tracing Modernity, Authenticity, and Authority in Bosnian Muslim Public Sphere

As early as the early 20th century, Bosnian Muslims engaged in a public discussion regarding the reasons for their perceived decline. These discussions unfolded within a context of significant socio-political and cultural changes in the Muslim world and were intertwined with local civilizational debates and modernization efforts targeting Bosnian Muslims.

273 Osman Lavić, *Bibiliografija časopisa El-Hidaje i Islamska misao* (Sarajevo: Gazi Husrev begova biblioteka i El-Kalem, 2001), 7.
274 Jahić, *Hikjmet*, 78.

In the context of local civilizational debates, it is important to remember that already during the late Ottoman era Bosnian publications started to confront the issue of Muslim backwardness, promoting various reform initiatives. The topic of Muslim decline, however, became a leading topic of public discussion during the Habsburg era in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a result of the development of the public sphere and the rise of Islamic reformism.

Recent research on the cultural policies and narratives of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878–1918) undertaken within postcolonial theoretical and analytical frameworks has been marked by the employment of specific concepts, such as frontier Orientalism, proximate colony or intra-European colonialism.[275] These concepts highlight the parallels between colonial and Orientalist tropes in general and the Habsburg narratives about Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly its Muslim population. In addition, they recognize the unique characteristics of Habsburg views towards Bosnia and Herzegovina. Habsburg narratives about Bosnia and Herzegovina were shaped by two important factors: the proximity of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the imperial centre and the Ottoman heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina embodied by its Muslim population. It was regarded as a neighbouring Orient, one that was not completely foreign like the distant Orient, but as boundary, primitive, and backward region that, due to its Ottoman legacy, needed to be modernized and civilized in order to (re)integrate to European culture.[276]

Political statements, as well as literary works and travelogues from this period clearly depicted the Habsburg endeavour in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a civilizing mission. The Habsburgs presented themselves as benevolent guardians, tasked with civilizing Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially its Muslim population, to break them free from centuries of Ottoman legacy and embark on a path of development. In 1888, Crown Prince Rudolf

275 For more about the concept of frontier Orientalism see Andre Gingrich, "Frontier Myths of Orientalism: The Muslim World in Public and Popular Cultures of Central Europe," in *Mediterranean Ethnological Summer School*, eds. Bojan Baskar and Borut Brumen (Piran: Institut za multikulturne raziskave, 1996), 99–127; Šístek, *Imagining Bosnian Muslims*. For more on the Habsburg colonialism see: Robert J. Donia, *Islam under the Double Eagle: The Muslims of Bosnia and the Herzegovina 1878–1918* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 9–36; Robert J. Donia, "The Proximate Colony. Bosnia-Herzegovina under Austro-Hungarian Rule," *Kakanien Revisited*, accessed December 22, 2022, https://www.kakanien-revisited.at/beitr/fallstudie/RDonia1.pdf
Stijn Vervaet, "Cultural Politics, Nation Building and Literary Imagery," *Kakanien Revisited*, accessed December 22, 2022, http://www.kakanien.ac.at/beitr/fallstudie/SVervaet2.pdf
Clemens Ruthner, "Habsburg's Little Orient: A Post/Colonial Reading of Austrian and German Cultural Narratives on Bosnia-Herzegovina,1878–1918,"*Kakanien Revisited*, accessed December 22, 2022, http://www.kakanien.ac.at/beitr/fallstudie/CRuthner5/.
For more on the application of postcolonial theory see Marijan Bobinac, "The Habsburg Legacy from a Postcolonial and Postimperial Perspective," *Umjetnost riječi* 59, no. 34 (2015): 239-260; Clemens Ruthner, "Central Europe Goes Post-Colonial: New Approaches to the Habsburg Empire around 1900," *Cultural Studies* 16, no. 6 (2022): 877–883.

276 See: Okey, *Taming Balkan Nationalism*, vii–viii.

stated during a visit to Sarajevo that "our mission [here] is to bring Western culture to the Orient."[277]

The poverty, illiteracy, the lack of a functioning health system, and the poor educational system in Bosnia and Herzegovina were widely mentioned by Habsburg authorities, politicians, and scholars as examples of the backwardness of this ex-Ottoman province on the edge of Europe.[278] Brigitte Fuchs argues that Muslim population in Bosnia and Herzegovina was an object of particular interest to different Austrian-Hungarian writers who considered Muslims as a raw material "from which the Austro-Hungarian authorities had to manufacture 'Europeans.'"[279] František Šistek summaries that Habsburg undertook a series of modernization efforts "with the aim of pacifying, controlling, accommodating and modernizing the Bosnian Muslim society, especially Muslim elites and institutions."[280]

After the establishment of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as other regions populated by Muslims, was widely perceived—particularly in Serbian academic circles—more backward compared to their Christian neighbours, due to their Ottoman heritage and Muslim religion.[281] An example of how Muslims were perceived in the new state can be found in the state sponsored study *Our Muslims: Study for the Orientation of Bosnian Muslims* written by Serbian author Čedomil Mitrinović from 1926. Mitrinović's representation of Muslims portrayed them as being passive, lethargic, lavish, conservative, uneducated, disinterested in intellectual pursuits, fatalistic, and possessing feeble faith.[282] He cites alcoholism among them, despite the religious prohibition against drinking, as evidence for the last assertion.[283] In the fashion of Orientalist depictions, Mitrinović characterizes them as predisposed towards sensuality and promiscuity. Additionally, he contends that Bosnian Muslims commonly exhibit homosexuality, which he attributes to their Ottoman heritage.[284] In essence, Mitrinović's research depicted Yugoslavian Muslims as embodying a range of societal problems that needed to be solved. It is evident that this study was written within larger ideological framework which saw Islamic and the Ottoman heritage of Bosnian Muslims as impediment of the modernization and national unification of Yugoslavian society."[285]

277 Diana Reynolds Cordileone, "Swords into Souvenirs: Bosnian Arts and Crafts under Habsburg Administration," in *Doing Anthropology in Wartime and War Zones*, eds. Reinhard Johler, Christian Marchetti, Monique Scheer (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2010), 172.

278 Brigitte Fuchs, "Orientalizing Disease: Austro-Hungarian Policies of Race, Gender, and Hygiene in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1874–1914," in *Health, Hygiene, and Eugenics in Southeastern Europe to 1945*, eds. Christian Promitzer, Sevasti Trubeta, and Marius Turda (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011), 58.

279 Fuchs, "Orientalizing Disease: Austro-Hungarian Policies of Race, Gender, and Hygiene in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1874–1914," 61.

280 Šístek, "Introduction," 1.

281 Greble, *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe*,106.

282 Čedomil Mitrinović, *Naši muslimani: Studija za orientaciju pitanja bosansko-hercegovačkih muslimana* (Beograd: Društvo, 1926), 77–110.

283 Mitrinović, *Naši muslimani*, 128.

284 Mitrinović, *Naši muslimani*,135.

285 Mitrinović, Naši muslimani, 168.

After the formation of the communist state Yugoslavia following World War II, official policies and academic discourses regarding Muslim religious organizations, activities, and traditional practices reflected a generally negative view of religion as a regressive element that inhibited modernization and societal progress.[286] The government's abolishment of the *sharīʿa* courts in 1946, the closure of all Muslim primary schools in 1952, ban on religious symbols from public spaces were closely linked to the perception of Islam as a type of religion that as Noel Malcolm puts "beside private beliefs interacted in public life, and secondly it was viewed as backward and Asiatic."[287] The closure of the major Muslim religious and cultural institutions during this period effectively prevented both the public expression of religious feelings and the discussion of religious matters.

In this transformative historical period where Muslims were exposed to various civilizational discourses that generally depicted Bosnian Muslims as backward and Islamic tradition as an impediment to modernization, Muslims intellectuals and religious scholars of diverse ideological orientations engaged in public self-critical reflections concerning their cultural and religious tradition and its place in modern world.

According to my analysis of public discourses of this period, these reflections were primarily rooted in a broader narrative. This narrative, which reflects trends observed throughout the Muslim world, cantered on the issues of the relationship between Islam and European modernity, as well as the issues of religious authenticity and authority.

3.3.1. Islam and Modernity

Following the Austro-Hungarian occupation in 1878 and especially after its formal annexation in 1908, it became necessary for Bosnian Muslims to establish their place within a larger European context, not only in terms of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but in terms of the European modernity. This prompted them to focus on the link between their Islamic religion and beliefs and values of the European societies around them. One of the first analysis focused on the relationship between Europe and Islam was published in 1892 by Mehmed-beg Kapetanović Ljubušak under the title *Budućnost ili napredak muhamedovaca u Bosni i Hercegovini* (The Future and Progress of Muhammadans in Bosnia and Herzegovina).[288]

286 Fikret Karcic, "Administration of Islamic Affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Islamic Studies* 38, no. 4 (1999): 543.

287 Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1994), 195. For more on government's strict control over Muslim religious institutions see: Ina Merdjanova, *Rediscovering the Umma Muslims in the Balkans Between Nationalism and Transnationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 31; Bougarel, *Islam and Nationhood in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 76.

288 Fikret Karčić, "Izazovi i bošnjački intelektualni odgovori," in *Šerijatsko pravo- reformizam i izazovi modernosti. Hrestomatija tekstova i eseja*, ed. Fikret Karčić (Sarajevo: Savremeni islamski mislioci, 2009), 158–160, accessed June 6, 2022, https://bosnamuslimmedia.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/06-dr-fikret-karcic.pdf

While Ljubušak espoused favourable views towards modern European achievements even during the Tanzimat period, this work arose within a specific historical context driven by the question of whether it was permitted for Muslims to live under a non-Muslim, Habsburg regime. He openly condemned individuals who campaigned for Muslim emigration from Bosnia and Herzegovina, claiming that loyalty to the European, Catholic Habsburg dynasty was not inconsistent with the commitment to Islam. For Ljubušak, the key to Muslims' prosperity was education in modern, state-run schools in their vernacular language. He saw the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a progressive and organized European state that provided a conducive environment for the economic and cultural development of Bosnian Muslims.[289] The comparison he makes between Austria-Hungary and Serbia in the work *Budućnost ili napredak muhamedovaca u Bosni i Hercegovini* clearly demonstrates his understanding of Europe. For him, Europe was synonymous with Western Europe and civilization.[290]

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, the question of the place of Bosnian Muslims and their religious-cultural tradition in European modernity dominated Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Reformist understanding of the relationship between Islam and modern Europe and of the place of Bosnian Muslims expressively articulates the following sentence written by Osman Nuri Hadžić: "We, as part of the East, must strive to not be destroyed by the warm and powerful rays of the West, but rather to flourish beneath them, keeping alive our distinctiveness for centuries to come."[291]

Reformist narratives stressed the interrelation between Islam and Europe, asserting that Muslim advancement could be achieved through the integration of positive aspects of Islamic tradition with the positive aspects of European modernity. A prominent editor of *Novi Behar*, Alija Nametak, epitomized this viewpoint by associating Islam primarily with piety and ethical principles, while attributing scientific progress and technological innovation to modern Europe. It was his belief that the scientific spirit that pervades Europe could counterbalance the fatalism, hedonism, and neglect prevalent among Bosnian Muslims. Furthermore, he believed that Islamic moral values could counteract the moral decline observed in Western societies.[292] Due to their unique historical and cultural legacy, he considered Bosnian Muslims to be inheritors of both Islamic and Western civilizations, responsible for maintaining the most valuable aspects of both.[293]

The idea of Islam and Europe being mutually interdependent was further enhanced by the widespread conviction among reformists that Islam played a significant role in

289 Mehmed-beg Kapetanović Ljubušak, *Budućnost ili napredak muhamedovaca u Bosni i Hercegovini*: *namijenjeno za pouku i ogled nekoj našoj braći Bošnjacima i Hercegovcima* (Sarajevo: Tiskara Spindlera i Löschnera, 1893), 4–6.
290 Kapetanović Ljubušak, *Budućnost ili napredak Muhamedovaca*, 5–6.
291 Osman Nuri Hadžić, *Muslimansko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Zagreb: Tisak dioničke tiskare 1902), 4.
292 Alija Nametak, "Kultura i civilizacija," *Novi Behar* 9, no. 18 (1936): 239–240.
293 Nametak, "Kultura i civilizacija," 240.

the development of Europe. The reformist narratives described Islam as synonymous with civilization, science, and a critical spirit, as well as an essential component of the development of European science, medicine, and culture. The embrace of modern European achievements, in particular modern education and technological advances was viewed from this perspective as a rediscovery of Islamic principles.[294]

A notable feature of the Bosnian reformist discourse is the use of arguments developed by Western European authors in their writings, particularly in those dealing with the relationship between Islam and European modernity. This approach, while significant in Bosnia, was also common among Muslim reform thinkers across the Muslim world at that time.

In 1894, Osman Nuri Hadžić published a book *Islam and Culture*, which was considered to be one of the first books written by a Bosnian Muslim author to make use of European sources alongside Islamic classical works. In this ground-breaking work, Osman Nuri Hadžić combined Islamic and European sources of knowledge to present a comprehensive picture of Islamic culture. Among the authors he referred to were Edward Gibbon, Gustave Le Bon, and Croatian politician Ante Starčević.[295] Safvet-beg Bašagić also, in an article published in the journal *Behar* in 1904, quoted positive opinions on Islam from several European authors, including John Devenport, Thomas Carlyle, Rudolph Krehl, William Muir, Gibbon, Edmund Burke, among others. Salih Hadžialić, in addition to citing prominent Muslim reformists such as Muḥammad ʿAbduh, al-Afghānī, and Sayyid Amīr ʿAlī, employed European sources in an article published in 1930 to respond to Lord Cromer and Ernest Renan's criticism of Islam as a religion hostile to reason and science.[296] To demonstrate Islam's progressive and rational nature, he made reference to Western scholars such as Christopher Dawson, Hadrian Reland, Joseph Lippl, Volter, Leibniz, Lessing, and Hermann Samuel Reimaras.[297]

The reformists' practice to quote Western authors who praised the historical role of Islam in the development of civilization enabled Bosnian reformists to expand the reach of their ideas and make them more accessible to a wider, non-Muslim audience. It is clear from their argumentation that they were not writing only for Muslims but also partaking in a lively global debate about the relationship between Islam and the West.

294 Hadžić, "Načela islama i naš zadatak," 6–9; "Zadaća Behara. Pismo uredništvu," *Behar* 1, no. 13 (1900), 206–208; M.T., "Das Sanitatswesen in Bosnien und Hercegovina," *Behar* 3, no. 19 (1903): 302–303; Salih Hadžialić, "Islam i stvarnost," *Novi Behar* 13, no. 13/18 (1940): 210 –214.

295 Karčić, "Izazovi i bošnjački intelektualni odgovori," 161.

296 Hadžialić, "Islam i stvarnost," 210.

297 Hadžialić, "Islam i stvarnost," 210–214. See also as an example of Bosnian Muslim engagements with European views on Islam the following work: Hazim Šabanović, *Muhammed a.s. u svietlu europske kritike* (Sarajevo: Prva muslimanska nakladna knjižara, 1943).

In addition, I hold that reformist reliance on modern European authors was also related to their specific attitude towards European culture. Their use of modern European works on Islam alongside Islamic sources indicates that reformists did not view Islam and Europe as mutually exclusive, but rather as complementary entities. Their choice of literature certainly reflects their specific educational and cultural background. A combination of religious and secular education, along with an upbringing in a society in which traditional forms of life were intertwined with modern trends in everyday living, must have contributed to the writers' sense of rootedness in both Islamic and European traditions.

Conservative and revivalist circles, which viewed Islam and Europe as essentially different and mutually irreconcilable entities, strongly criticized these reformist ideas on the amicable relationship between Islamic tradition and modern Europe. Reformists were regarded as agents of westernization, the main threat to the preservation of Islam, and Muslim morality in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The concept of European progress was negatively construed in their works as synonymous with immorality and prostitution.[298]

In 1930, Husejin Šehić published a short poem in the journal *Hikjmet* which summarizes well the conservative attitudes towards reformist approaches to European modernity. This artistically modest piece can be viewed as an attack on reformist intellectuals as being those who abandoned the Islamic zeal, mocked local customs such as female veiling and wearing of the fez, betrayed their traditions and religion, and who were ashamed of their own country and culture.[299]

In the same year Islamic scholar Ibrahim Hakki Čokić wrote an essay suggestively entitled *Ummeti Muhammedijje i Ummeti Kantijje* (Muhammad's Community and Kant's Community), in which he polemicized against reformists. As the essay's title suggests, conservative authors have considered Muslims to be divided into two camps: those who follow the Islamic tradition and those who follow modern European philosophical and cultural traditions and who, as such, cannot be considered as true Muslims.[300] It is evident from his narrative that modern European lifestyles and worldviews were considered not only to be incompatible with Islamic values but also as a major threat to Islam and Muslim identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The conservative perspective questioned the loyalty of reformists to Islam and the Muslim community. Throughout different polemics, conservative scholars used the same strategy of referencing reformists' lifestyle as a means of demonstrating that they were nominal Muslims alienated from their own tradition and community. As a means of discrediting

298 Muslim, "Žrtva progresa," *Hikjmet* 2, no. 20 (1930): 236.
299 Husejin A. Šehić, "Reformašu," *Hikjmet* 2, no. 20 (1930): 231–232.
300 Chameran [Ibrahim Hakki Čokić], "Ummeti Muhammedijje i Ummeti Kantijje," pt. 1, *Hikjmet* 2, no. 19 (1930): 207–212; pt. 2, *Hikjmet* 2, no. 20 (1930): 242–245; pt. 3, *Hikjmet* 2, no. 23/24 (1931): 358–366.

reformists as individuals lacking moral dispositions necessary to participate in religious debate, conservatives portray reformists as persons who enjoy things forbidden by Islam, such as pork, alcohol, and modern forms of entertainment, such as dancing and theatre, and who favour mixed marriages.[301] It was generally believed that modern European education was responsible for alienating Muslims, especially youth, from Islamic values.[302]

The reformist's reliance on European literature often prompted criticism from conservative authors.[303] However, it is interesting that these authors did not hesitate to refer to European works to support their arguments about the importance of preserving traditional practices, the superiority of Islamic social practices and even the untranslatable nature of the Qurʾān.[304] As we will see in the chapters discussing Bosnian debates about the Muslim woman question, European studies of the time about venereal diseases, divorces, and prostitution were often selectively used as evidence of moral decline of the West.

The use of European sources allowed conservative authors to establish their familiarity with European intellectual trends, undermining their opponents' assertions that they were uninformed and ignorant. Since conservatives generally criticized the reformists' reliance on European authors as a betrayal of Islamic heritage, it is not unexpected that they felt forced to defend their own use of European sources. They defined it as a rhetorical strategy used to confront reformists who disregarded the authority derived from their own intellectual and religious tradition. The conservatives presented this as an opportunity to combat the reformists on their own terms, while remaining faithful to the authority of the Islamic tradition.[305]

3.3.2. Authenticity, Authority, and the Quest for Muslim Progress

Most Muslim authors, regardless of their orientation, were in agreement that Bosnian Muslims were experiencing a crisis and decline. They viewed ignorance, lack of education, primitivism, superstitions, alcoholism, sexual immorality, and complete economic decline as widespread social ills plaguing the Muslim community However, they differed in their assessment of the causes of these social ills and of Bosnia's backwardness, as well as their understanding of the path to Muslim advancement.

301 Some of the articles published in Hikjmet that openly criticizes the lifestyle of modern-educated intellectuals are: Husein Husin, "Neumjesnost ili pretjerivanje (Suljo, šunka, vino i Ramazan)," *Hikjmet* 2, no. 23/24 (1931), 353–356; Jahjazade, "Hohštaplera će vazda biti," *Hikjmet* 4, no. 42 (1932): 185–188; Jahjazade, "Neozbiljna ambicija naše inteligencije," *Hikjmet* 4, no. 44 (1933): 250–253.

302 Husin, "Neumjesnost ili pretjerivanje," 353.

303 Lutfi A Čokić, *Prikaz i ocjena rada g. Dr. Mehmeda Begovića: o njegovu naziranju na islamsku ženu i njen položaj po islamskoj nauci izloženog u njegovoj knjizi* (Tuzla: Štamparija Jovana Petrovića, 1931), 30–32.

304 See more: Ibnul-Ajn [Derviš Korkut], "Odgovor ilmije," *Hikjmet* 4, 45 (1933): 263–266; Chameran [Ibrahim Hakki Čokić] "O Kur-anu azš," *Hikjmet* 6, no. 11 (1936): 321–326; Chameran [Ibrahim Hakki Čokić], "Ko potiče prevođenje Kur'ana azš," *Hikjmet*, 6, no. 9 (1936): 267.

305 Chameran [Ibrahim Hakki Čokić], "Hamiš ('Odgovoru ilmijje' od Ibnul Ajna)," pt. 1, *Hikjmet* 4, no. 45 (1933): 266–270; Chameran [Ibrahim Hakki Čokić], "O Kur-anu azš," 323.

These social ills were attributed by conservative authors to the departure from traditional moral norms and practices caused by Western liberalism and materialism, whereas reformists believed that these problems were primarily the result of conservative blind reliance on an ossified religious tradition, as well as backward education and an abandonment of Islam's critical, rational spirit.[306] However, both sides rejected the claim that Islam is responsible for the backwardness of Muslims and agreed that addressing society's problems must be accomplished by returning to Islamic values. Their disagreements cantered on what constitutes authentic Islamic values and what constitutes adequate qualifications for determining these values. The intra-Muslim debates about Muslim backwardness were largely focused on who gets to decide what is authentically Islamic, and how that judgment is made. In other words, the disagreement was over who had the authority to determine the legitimacy of certain religious practices.

In a similar manner to their counterparts throughout the Muslim world, Bosnian Muslim reformists did not perceive Islam as a contributing factor to the Muslim crisis. They rejected the ideas of European critics of Islam who argued that Islam's despotic and irrational nature explains the backwardness of Muslims. It was an integral part of reformist discourse to distinguish between Islam and Muslims, that is to say between the true Islamic message and temporal understandings of that message. European critics of Islam in Europe who suggested that Islam itself was the cause of the perceived backwardness of Muslim societies, were criticized of intentionally blurring the line between Muslim local customs and practices and the true Islamic message in order to present Islam as a backward religion with no real value for the modern age.[307]

According to reformists, the overall decline of Bosnian Muslims was the result of the specific historical and economic developments that Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced from the late 19th century on the one hand and the lack of competence of the class of *ʿulamāʾ* on the other.[308]

A general spirit of the time, characterized by the triumph of scientific and technical reason and the global discourses on science and religion led Bosnian Muslim authors to devote considerable attention to the relationship between Islam, rational inquiry, and science. As summarized by Bosnian sociologists Šaćir Filandra, one of the main characteristics of the Bosnian Muslim reformist discourse on Islam and science was criticism of the discrepancy

306 For more on the reformists' understanding of the backwardness of Muslims as a ressult of passivity and *taqlīd* mentality see: Kapetanović, *Budućnost ili napredak Muhamedovaca*, 4; Faik Zeki "Za što islamski narodi ne napreduju," *Behar* 8, no. 2 (1907): 26–27.

307 Mehmed Ali Ćerimović, "Vjera i savjest," *Novi Behar* 13, 23 (1940): 308.

308 As an example of this understanding see; Abdulhak, "Stagnacija u našem javnom životu," pt. 1, *Behar* 7, no. 4 (1906): 37–38; pt. 2, *Behar* 7, no. 5 (1906): 50–51; pt. 3, *Behar* 7, no. 6 (1906): 61–62; pt. 4, *Behar* 7, no. 14 (1906): 157–158. According to Muhsin Rizvić, the pseudonym Abdulhak was used by Osman Nuri Hadžić. See: Rizvić, *Behar*; 297.

between Islam and science present in the modern Muslim world as well as an attempt to demonstrate their unity in the past. Already the first issue of reformist journal *Behar* stated that one of his tasks was to re-establish unity between Islam and science.[309] Osman Nuri Hadžić who saw Islam as a religion of reason whose fundamental principles and values were progress, development, goodness and compassion argued that Muslims' entire material and cultural backwardness is as a result of a failure to adhere to fundamental Islamic principles.[310]

Reformist criticism of the situation within the Muslim world and particular within Bosnian Muslim community was based on the conviction that the reliance of the *ʿulamāʾ* on *taqlīd* was to be blamed for the conflict between science and Islam and for preventing Muslims from achieving their full socio-economic potential. It was believed that the discrepancy and conflict between Islam and science were not due to an inner incompatibility between them, but rather to *ʿulamāʾs* intellectual laziness, formalism, and neglect of rational inquiry.[311] According to reformist discourse, the conservatism of the most of religious scholars who resisted the modernization of Muslim education and persisted in inherited cultural practices that not only failed to meet the needs of the time, but were also in opposition to Islamic teachings, was the main obstacle to the progress of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina. [312]

It is acknowledged that one of the central topics in modern Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the idea of progress. While numerous authors and magazines advocated progress of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, their understanding of what constitutes a path leading to progress was profoundly different.[313] For reformists the desired progress required that Muslims critically and rationally reflect on their own traditions and return to the textual sources of Islam to discover true Islamic values. Muslim progress was viewed as contingent on loyalty to true Islamic values, rather than necessarily inherited traditions, ideas, and institutions. This understanding of Muslim progress went hand in hand with reformist call for revaluation and reinterpretation of the Islamic textual sources, that is to say their call for the revival of *ijtihād* in order to discover and realize true Islamic norms.[314] References to the Qurʾān, or more precisely to individual verses that in reformists

309 Tevfik ef. Azabagić, "Znamenite izreke," *Behar* 1, no. 2 (1900): 3–4.

310 Hadžić, "Načela islama i naš zadatak," 6–9.

311 Šaćir Filandra, "Muslimani i Evropa s kraja 19. i početka 20. stoljeća," in *Anali Gazi Husrev-begove biblioteke* 11, no. 19/20 (2001): 337.

312 Šaćir Dedić-Lutvica, *Međusobna vjerska borba muslimana u Bosni*, (Banja Luka, 1928), 11.

313 Dženita Karić, Karic, "Multiple Paths to the Holy: Continuity and Change in Bosnian Hajj Literature" (PhD diss., SOAS University of London, 2018), 152; Karić, "Islamic Thought in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 20th Century," 391–392.

314 Reformist oriented journals frequently published original articles, as well as translations of foreign works that advocated the right of *ijtihād*. Novi Behar frequently published articles on *ijtihād*. See: Muhamed Šemsuddin, "Idžtihad je prijeka potreba sviju vremena," *Novi Behar* 2, no. 13 (1928): 193–194; Muhamed Šemsuddin, "Što je idžtihad i kakvi se propisi mogu idžtihad činiti?" *Novi Behar* 2, no. 16 (1928): 241–243; Muhamed Šemsuddin: "Zatvaranje idžtihada," *Novi Behar* 3, no. 3 (1929):41–43. Sulejman Topić, "Idžtihad," *Novi Behar* 3, no. 16 (1929): 250–251.

interpretation were understood as advocating rational inquiry were used to provide religious justification for their call for the reopening the gate of *ijtihād*. In the following chapters we will see that the return to and rational interpretation of Islamic textual sources, primarily of the Qurʾān, were the basic strategy used by modern reformists in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to justify their ideas of different aspects of the woman question.

Conservative discourses on progress are characterized by two seemingly opposing views of progress. They praised the advancement of technology on the one hand and modern sciences. In contrast, they have criticized what they consider to be a false, materialistic" European progress, which places a priority on autonomy, materialism, and moral relativism over traditional values and beliefs.[315]

Conservative narratives depicted reformists' vision of Muslim progress as a plea for Westernization, and as a path that would lead to the collapse of traditional institutions and general anarchy. The true path of progress for conservative authors was the reliance on the rich Islamic intellectual, legal, and theological tradition. Reforms within the conservative discourse were allowed only if they moved within the boundaries of Islamic cumulative tradition.[316] The circle of conservative authors explicitly rejected the reformist call for reinterpretation of Islamic sources, regarding it as a type of *muʿtazilizm*.[317] The conservative explicit rejection of the reformists call for *ijtihād* in the sense of independent, rational reinterpretation of Islamic textual sources was closely related to their belief that it would allow layman, arbitrary interpretations of Islamic sources, based primarily on the changing, subjective interests of their interpreters. Reinterpretation of Islamic sources by persons who did not belong to the class *ʿulamāʾ* was understood as one of the main factors contributing to the weakening of the moral and religious norms of the Muslim community in Bosnia.[318] Namely, independent interpretations of Islamic sources were seen by conservatives as a threat to the integrity of the Islamic tradition and as a path that inevitably leads to chaos, as such interpretations might contradict interpretations and rules established by the classical authorities in legal and exegetical field.[319] Thus conservative authors, especially a circle around the journal *Hikjmet* severely criticized reformists' involvement in the field of interpretation of sacred texts of Islam. They defined and criticized modern reinterpretations of the sacred texts of Islam, especially of the Qurʾān, as arbitrary because of the departure from the established interpretations of classical Islamic scholars.

315 Karić, "Multiple Paths to the Holy," 162; Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, "Krivo tumačenje islama i Kur'ana," *Hikjmet* 2, no. 20 (1930): 248–250.
316 Editorial Board, "Pravac Hikjmeta," *Hikjmet* 1, no. 1 (1929): 3–5.
317 Editorial Board, "Pravac Hikjmeta," *Hikjmet* 1, no. 1 (1929): 3–5.
318 Fahrudin, "Povodom pokrštenja jedne učiteljice," *Hikjmet* 4, no. 38 (1932): 63–64; Chameran [Ibrahim Hakki Čokić], "Hamiš (Odgovoru ilmijje of Ibnul Ajna)," pt. 3, *Hikjmet* 4, no. 47 (1933): 342–344.
319 Fahrudin, "Povodom pokrštenja," 63–64.

Thus, in a polemic with reformist scholar Osman Nuri Hadžić, Abdurrahman Adil Čokić criticized Hadžić for translating Qurʾānic verses in his book *Muhamed i Koran* (Muḥammad and Qurʾān) too liberally, and for neglecting the rich Islamic exegetical tradition. According to Čokić, it was Hadžić's enthusiasm and belief in modern science that led him to translate irresponsibly Qurʾān 17:36 in the following manner: "Do not accept anything that science cannot confirm. God gave you the hearing (to hear), the eyesight (to see), and the brain (to feel and to thin), for all these organs you are accountable to God."[320] According to Čokić this translation was fully inadequate and unacceptable, as it denies and rejects those parts of Islamic teaching that cannot be proven by science such as the afterlife.[321] In addition, Čokić warned that this translation does not rely on any one of the great authoritative works in the field of *tafsīr*, that is therefore beyond the scope of Islamic tradition, and as such arbitrary.[322] Čokić's remark given in the first of several polemical articles about Hadžić's book in which he underlines that he wrote his critique as a Sunni expert in the field of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* faithfully presents not only Čokić's personal, but general conservative view that only the *ʿulamāʾ* have the right to discuss religious issues.[323] The same position Čokić advocated in the work *Muhamed alejhisselam* (Muḥammad, peace be upon him), in which he says that only a qualified theologian and a good and pious Muslim can be an authority in the religious field.[324] Internal divisions within the Muslim community and its decline conservative discourse interpreted as a product of the encroachment of unqualified individuals into religious affairs of the Muslim community. Besides, conservatives criticized different calls for the reform of religious and social institutions understanding them as an attempt to implement in Bosnia the Kemalist reforms, which were considered to be identical to the Bolshevik reforms. By labelling reformists' demands as Bolshevism, conservatives were bringing into question the credibility of the modern educated Muslim intellectuals both within the Muslim community and among the general population and the institutions of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.[325]

Issues such as education of women, women's veiling and morality, as well as the status and the place of women in family and societies, as we will see in the following chapters, were deeply emerged into the wider discussions on the relationship between Islam and Europe and the authenticity of established practices of Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and authority to define what the true Islam is.

320 Abdurrahman Adil Čokić, "Mudafea i objašnjenje povodom odgovora g. Hadžića na moju kritiku njegove knjige 'Muhamed i Koran.' " pt. 2. *Hikjmet* 4, no. 40 (1932): 105.
321 Čokić, "Mudafea," pt. 2, 105.
322 Čokić, "Mudafea," pt. 2, 109.
323 Abdurrahman Adil Čokić, "Mudafea i objašnjenje povodom odgovora g. Hadžića na moju kritiku njegove knjige 'Muhamed i Koran.' " pt. 1. *Hikjmet* 4, no. 39 (1932): 80.
324 Abdurrahman Adil Čokić, "Muhamed alejhisselam," *Hikjmet* 1, no. 4 (1929): 97.
325 Jahjazade, "Neozbiljna ambicija naše inteligencije," 250–253.

PART II

The Bosnian Muslim Woman Question within the Global Contestations over Islamic Tradition and Modernity

CHAPTER 4

4. Exploring the Multifaceted Roles of the Muslim Woman Question in Global Modernity

What became known as the "Muslim woman question" emerged as a global topic in the 19th century, capturing the attention of both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In the 19th century, dominant European narratives of discriminated Muslim women —which will be elaborated on further in subsequent sections—served to establish an inferior Other against which the European world could define itself as superior. This prompted Muslims to respond by conveying their own perspectives regarding their identity as well as their relationship with the West and with their own cultural and religious heritage. The Muslim woman question played a crucial role in (re)defining and conceptualizing the concepts of identity, progress, civilization, tradition, and modernity within both European and Muslim intellectual thought.

This topic played a multifaceted role within the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters. The Muslim woman question provided Bosnian Muslims with an opportunity to express their various views about their tradition, their place within the global Muslim community as well as within the context of European modernity and local socio-political context. Yet, the issue was also crucial to the definition of the "inner Other." Different intellectual currents utilized this issue to justify their own perspectives on Islam and to criticize their opponents.

4.1. The Woman Question in Global Modernity

The controversial term the "woman question" was, as Karen Offen points out, an integral part of a global effort to "describe the complex totality of issues raised for women and for men by women's subordinate status."[326] The term woman question was coined in Europe in the eighteenth century and became widespread in other parts of the world in the 19th century.[327] Ayşe Polat argues that the it "encapsulated various intellectual, cultural and political disputations on the nature of women, their attributes, social status and roles, and less directly but no less significantly, about society, juxtaposed with perspectives on a remodelling of social institutions, particularly issues of family structure, economy and the

326 Offen, *The Woman Question in France*, 13.

327 Ayşe Polat, "The Late Ottoman Novel as Social Laboratory: Celal Nuri and the 'Woman Question'" in *Ottoman Culture and the Project of Modernity*: *Reform and Translation in the Tanzimat Novel*, eds. Monica M Ringer and Etienne Charrière (London: I. B. Tauris, 2020), 147–148.

law."[328] During the eighteenth century the issues of woman's nature, her place and role in society, and the relations between men and women became widely theorized and disputed in Europe. The 18th century discussions, as Naomi Andrews has shown, drew "on two older strands of argument: the "querelle des femmes" dating to the Renaissance, and debates over the relationship between the individual and society that marked the Enlightenment."[329] According to Melissa Hyde and Jennifer Milam, discussions on the woman question were a "central to the Enlightenment's exploration of human society."[330]

In the 19th and the early 20th century the woman's question— encapsulating questions of female nature, education, the natural role in the family and society—emerged as a constitutive part of intellectual debates about modernity, tradition, progress, and identity around the world.[331] During the 19th century European intellectuals such as Charles Fourier and John Stuart Mill defined the status of women as the measure of civilization, as a standard to distinguish "civilized" states from barbaric societies.[332] This idea, blended with the modern notion that society progresses through stages of development, from savagery to civilization occupied the central place in the European representations of colonized women as passive victims of their inherently backward and savage traditions whose liberation justified colonial imposition of measures that were presented as an integral part of modern emancipatory processes.[333] In all colonial contexts, women occupied the central place in "a civilizational narrative of progress that placed on Europe the responsibility to civilize non-Europeans."[334] Meyda Yeğenoğlu and İrvin Cemil Schick have shown that "representations of cultural and sexual difference are constitutive of each other"[335] and that gender is at the centre of discourses of otherness.[336] The depictions of foreign women as passive, alluring, or backward have been an integral part of the Western construction and representation of its own cultural superiority. Probably nowhere did the binary opposition between tradition and modernity, inherent in modern European discourses of the late nineteenth and early

328 Polat, "The Late Ottoman Novel as Social Laboratory,"148.

329 Naomi Andrews, "The Woman Question: Liberal and Socialist Critiques of the Status of Women," in *The Cambridge History of Modern European Thought* 1, eds. Warren Breckman and Peter E. Gordon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.), 255.

330 Melissa Lee Hyde and Jennifer Milam, "Introduction: Art, Cultural Politics and the Woman Question," in *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Melissa Lee Hyde and Jennifer Milam (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 1.

331 Lucy Delap, "The 'Woman Question' and the Origins of Feminism," in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought,* eds. Gareth Stedman Jones and Gregory Claeys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 319–320.

332 Jonathan Beecher, "Women's Rights and Women's Liberation in Charles Fourier's Early Writings," in *Utopian Moments: Reading Utopian Texts,* eds. Miguel A. Ramiro Avilés and J C. Davis (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012.) 92–98; Towns, "The Status of Women," 681–706.

333 Frédérique Apffel-Marglin and Suzanne L Simon, "Feminist Orientalism and Development," in *Feminist Perspectives on Sustainable Development*, ed. Wendy Harcourt (London: Zed Books, 1994), 27–28.

334 Sher Ali K. Tareen, "Struggles for Independence: Colonial and Postcolonial Orders," in *The Wiley Blackwell History of Islam*, eds. Armando Salvatore, Roberto Tottoli, and Babak Rahimi (Hoboken, NJ : Wiley-Blackwell, 2018), 525.

335 Meyda Yegenoglu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

336 İrvin Cemil Schick, *The Erotic Margin: Sexuality and Spatiality in Alteritist Discourse* (London; New York: Verso, 1999).

twentieth centuries, come to the fore as in the constructions of the native Muslim woman. The subject of Muslim woman was the cornerstone of the Western narratives about Islam, tradition, and modernity.[337] Edward Said has shown that feminization of the Oriental Other as a means legitimizing the colonial power of Europe was the integral part of the Western discourses.[338]

According to recent research, Orientalist representations of Muslim women had several common characteristics: the notion of Muslim woman as oppressed, essentialist understanding according to which everything in Muslim societies, including the Muslim woman's status, was determined by Islam, the assumed total dichotomy between tradition identified with Muslim societies and modernity identified with the West.[339] Scholars, artists, missionaries, and travellers from Europe portrayed Muslim women as exotic, sexualized, secluded, powerless slaves who were oppressed by their static, unchanging, and backward religious tradition.[340] Indeed, in the Orientalist worldview, the Orient itself was imagined "as feminine, erotic, exotic, and savage, allowing the West to accede to a position of superiority as Christian, civilized, and moral." [341] This implicitly meant that only in the Western of Westernized culture women were able to achieve freedom. Keddie notes that European narratives about Muslim women were a specific mix of prejudices against Islam, scientific racism, and convictions about the possibility of progress only by following and adopting European institutions and values.[342] Carl Ernst points out that, besides the scientific language of racial categories and the alleged evolutionary superiority of Europeans, European language of the emancipation of women was the key element in the ideology of colonial ascendancy.[343]

While the Orientalists discourses of the 19th and early 20th century presented the European women as the standard against which to measure civilizational progress, recent research points at the discrepancy between the ideal of women's emancipation in Europe, and the reality of European women's lives and positions. Uma Narayan argues that the West saw and presented itself as completely committed to values like liberty and equality, while simultaneously resisting granting political and civil rights even to large numbers of Western

337 Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 150–155.

338 For more on the feminization of the Orient see: Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 6.

339 Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in the Twentieth-Century Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5–9; Mohja Kahf, *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman from Termagant to Odalisque* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999). 1–9, 177; Al-Saji, "Muslim Women and Rhetoric of Freedom," 65–87.

340 Kahf, Western *Representations of the Muslim Woman*, 6–9; Hana Sobotkova, "The Image of Balkan Muslims in Czech and French Journals around 1900," in *Developing EU-Turkey dialogue: a CLIOHWORLD Reader,* eds. Guðmundur Hálfdanarson and Hatice Sofu (Pisa: Edizioni Plus – Pisa University Press, 2010), 57–69.

341 Reina Lewis, " 'Only Women Should Go to Turkey': Henriette Browne and Women's Orientalism," *Third Text* 7, no. 22 (1993): 54.

342 Keddie, *Women in the Middle East: Past and Present*, 63.

343 Carl W. Ernst, *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 144. For similar interpretations of modern European narratives about women see: Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 153–155; Al-Saji, "Muslim Women and Rhetoric of Freedom," 65–87.

subjects, including women.[344] Studies taking a critical stance towards modern European discourses on women in Muslim societies interpret the European focus and obsession, as they claim, with women's issues primarily as an attempt to undermine Islam and the cultures of Muslim peoples. To show that the main motivation behind the European goal of liberating Muslim women was not genuine concern for women emancipation, these studies have pointed out that some of the most vocal advocates of the liberation of Muslim women, such as Lord Cromer and Lord Curzon, strongly opposed women's liberation movements in their own countries.[345] Anne Towns has demonstrated that during the 19th century, excluding women from the political sphere in Europe was viewed as a sign of a more civilized society. Her work calls for the re-evaluation of the prevailing belief that women's empowerment is inherently tied to Western modernity, as 19th century political and intellectual elites regarded societies where women held political power as backward.[346]

The idea that the social position of women reflects a state's level of civilization was not limited only to the Western world. It was translated, adopted, and reconfigured by predominantly male intellectuals from non-Western countries who discussed it in their encounters with the West, and in their local intellectual spheres to rethink their traditions and the future of their societies that were to be modern civilized societies.[347] Debates on women's place in society and on gender relations more broadly became, as Fabio Giomi puts it, "a global phenomenon par excellence," through which the place of men and women in modernity was discussed.[348]

4.2. Muslim Discourses on the Woman Question in Global Perspective

In the latter half of the 19th century, Muslim women's rights, their status, and roles within both the family and society became an integral part of diverse state modernization efforts in various Muslim regions. Likewise, these issues became a focal point within the developing Muslim public sphere. During the first half of the 20th century a wide range of actors,

344 Uma Narayan, "Contesting cultures. Westernization, Respect for Cultures, and Third World Feminists," in *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third-World Feminism*, ed. Uma Narayan (New York: Routledge, 1997), 15.

345 See for example: Omnia Shakry, "Schooled Mothers and Structured Play: Child Rearing in Turn-of-Century Egypt," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 126–170; Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 153.

346 Towns, "The Status of Women" 681–706.

347 For more on the link between civilization and the "the woman question" across different regions see, Kim Yung-Hee. "In Quest of Modern Womanhood: Sinyŏja, A Feminist Journal in Colonial Korea," *Korean Studies* 37, no. 1 (2013): 44–78; Carrie Khou, "Trajectories of change: Modernity / the woman question / new woman fiction, progressive America (1890–1920) and Meiji Japan (1868–1912)" (PhD diss., Universitat Mannheim, 2015); Sanjay Seth, "Nationalism, Modernity, and the 'Woman Question' in India and China" *The Journal of Asian Studies* 72, no. 2 (2013): 273–297; Ringer, "Rethinking Religion, 49–57.

348 Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*, 67.

including secular-oriented political elites, religious scholars, Muslim intellectuals, and early Muslim feminists played an important role in transforming the Muslim woman question into a crucial forum for discussing a broad range of religious, cultural, and political issues.[349]

Scholarly research since the 1990s has focused on and enhanced our understanding of the critical role that debates about Muslim women's rights have played in the context of state modernization efforts, anticolonial struggles, and conversation regarding national progress and the effects of Westernization within the Muslim world.[350] This scholarship has underscored the nuanced and central nature of Muslim women's issues in these debates.

However, here I focus on another, but not less important, aspect of the Muslim woman question, that is its place and role in global Islamic discourse about the place of Islam in modernity. The late 19th and the first half of 20th century witnessed significant interest among Muslim intellectuals and religious scholars who used the woman question to discuss the possibilities, legitimacy and scope of internal religious reform. They positioned debates concerning the rights and status of Muslim women as a fundamental part of the global Muslim introspective engagements with Islamic tradition. Women, or perhaps more pointedly the definitions of the proper Islamic roles and duties of Muslim women, were the ground on which wider struggles over Islamic norms and values and the authority to define Islamic norms and values took place.

The centrality of this issue in the process of (re)thinking Islam within global Islamic thought was linked to Western critiques of the treatment of women in Muslim societies, a dimension that has been widely acknowledged in literature, as I will discuss below. Nonetheless, as we will see, the Muslim intellectuals and religious scholars who discussed this issue within an Islamic framework went beyond mere reactions to Western critiques, developing their own views on true Muslim womanhood deeply intertwined with their understandings of authentic Islam.

4.2.1. Western Criticism of Muslim Women's Status and Muslim Discursive Engagements

Muslims have, in different socio-historical circumstances, developed different models of the ideal Muslim woman and gender relations, in complex interaction between general principles of Islam and predominant paradigms on women in different cultural

349 Elizabeth Frierson, "Women's Rights: Male Advocacy" in *Encyclopaedia of Women & Islamic Cultures*, ed. Joseph Suad, vol. 2, *Family, Law and Politics* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 779–782.

350 Lisa Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation the Family Politics of Modernizing, Colonizing and Liberating Egypt (1805/1923)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Beth Baron, *Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender, and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Deniz Kandiyoti, ed., *Women, Islam and the State* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991); Renata Pepicelli, "Rethinking Gender in Arab Nationalism: Women and the Politics of Modernity in the Making of Nation-States. Cases from Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria," *Oriente moderno* 97, no. 1 (2017): 201–219.

environments. What sets apart modern, 19th century and early 20th century Islamic discourses from pre-modern discourses, is the fact that the status of Muslim women was an important part of "the comparative cultural evaluation and a domain in which the gaze of the colonial European Other played an important role."[351]

The global domination of the West was an important factor determining the development and content of the Muslim discourses on women. Studies focused on the specific socio-historical context in which this issue emerged and was discussed among Muslims generally share the idea that European narratives about Muslim societies had an important role in the emergence of this issue and on development of complex ideas of Muslim authors about the woman question. European criticisms, as well as the fear of total European cultural domination, provided an initial impetus for a critical reflection on the status of women in Muslim societies and Islamic teachings on women by Muslim authors.

According to Gail Minault, the initial motivation behind the Muslim authors' concern for women was a defence of Islam and Muslim cultures against European critics.[352] Leila Ahmed, using example of modern discourse on the woman question in Egypt, argues that the woman question was inextricably tied to broader issues such as cultural status of Muslims and the relationship between Islamic tradition and the West.[353]

The Western critiques that targeted the traditional roles of women in Muslim societies, portraying them as indicative of Islam's resistance to progress and modernization had multiple effects on Islamic thought. They were generally perceived within the Muslim world as part of a broader Western agenda against Islam and consequently, in Muslim public discussions, the woman question emerged as closely related to the issue of Westernization and its consequences for Islam and Muslim identity. These criticisms shifted discussions about Muslim women's rights, social roles, bodies, and attire to the forefront of broader debates concerning the cultural and religious authenticity, the civilizational status, and Westernization.[354]

The interrelation between Muslim cultural practices, Islam, and Muslim woman status present in Western discourses on Muslim women not only have drawn increased attention to issues concerning Muslim women within the global Muslim intellectual community but

351 Elizabeth Suzanne Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought: Cultural Critique in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 22.

352 Gail Minault, "Sayyid Mumtaz 'Ali and *Tahzib un-Niswan*: Women's Rights in Islam and Women's Journalism in Urdu," in *Religious Controversy in British India: Dialogues in South Asian Languages*, ed. Kenneth W. Jones (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 196.

353 Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 127–143.

354 Judith Tucker, "Gender and Islamic History," in *Islamic & European Expansion: The Forging of a Global Order*, ed. Michael Adas (Philadelphia: Temple University Press; 1993), 62; Najmabadi, "Veiled Discourse—Unveiled Bodies," 487–518.

also played an important role in positioning women and familial structures as the central arena for both cultural resistance and reform. Western narratives on Muslim woman question stirred a more in-depth conversations concerning the tension between conserving traditional practices and implementing progressive reforms among Muslim intellectuals and religious scholars. Within these discussions, some emphasized the importance of preserving established women's roles and family structures as vital to maintaining Muslim cultural and religious identity, while others contended that these roles and structures, as cultural practices and not religious commands, required critical reassessment to ensure progress of Muslim societies.[355]

4.2.2. The Woman Question in Muslim Debates about Islamic Tradition

The woman question in intra-Muslim conversations from late 19th century transcended mere discussions about women's roles and rights, becoming deeply intertwined with issues regarding authenticity and the (re)interpretation of Islam in the context of modernity.[356] At the heart of this issue was not only the position of women, or interests of men, but the future of Islam.[357] During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, discussions surrounding women were central to internal Muslim debates about creating a moral and progressive society founded on Islamic principles and values. These discussions symbolized the broader effort to preserve Islamic values and authenticity in the modern world.[358]

In a time of deep crisis caused by European domination, different circles focused on the woman question to express their understandings of the causes of the crisis of the Muslim world, true Islamic values and their visions of the identity and future of the Muslim community. Muslim women were turned into a symbol of everything valuable that needed to be preserved as authentically Islamic, but at the same time a symbol of degeneration of the true Islamic message and everything that needed to be reformed so that Muslims could return to true Islam and walk the path of progress.[359]

The debates on this issue clearly show that Muslim understandings of what constitutes true Islamic values and who has the right to define them were far from static or uniform. On the contrary: these debates reflect the deep polarization in modern Islamic thought when it

355 Valerie Hoffman-Ladd, "Polemics on Modesty and Segregation of Women in Contemporary Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 19, no. 1 (1987): 23.

356 Deniz Kandiyoti, "Introduction," in *Women, Islam, and the State,* ed. Deniz Kandiyoti (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), 7; Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam,* 127–168.

357 Hoffman-Ladd, "Polemics on Modesty and Segregation of Women in Contemporary Egypt," 23.

358 Barbara Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 5.

359 Gail Minault, "Women, Legal Reform and Muslim Identity," in *Islam, Communities and the Nation: Muslim Identities in South Asia and Beyond*, ed. Germany Mushirul Hasan (New Delhi: Manohar 1998), 139–158. See also: Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*; Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an*, Ziba Mir-Hosseini, *Islam and Gender: The Religious Debate in Contemporary Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

comes to attitudes towards one's own tradition and its place in modernity.[360] As Dona Lee Bowen suggests, the question of gender roles and gender relations in intra-Muslim debates has been a symbol of the validity of different visions of Islam and the true Islamic social and moral order.[361]

The Muslim public debates of the late 19th and early 20th century clearly illustrate the inherent tension in Islamic thought between the demands for preserving inherited traditions and interpretations and calls for their critical re-examination. These tensions are closely tied to divergent conceptions of authenticity and authority.

4.2.3. The Muslim Woman Question in Discourses on Islamic Reform

Within Muslim debates on the woman question, the reformist intellectual movement occupies a special position due to its influence on intra-Muslim reflections and discussions on this topic since late 19th century. Reformists discourse raised the issue of Muslim women's status as a critical domain for the re-examination of Islamic tradition. Their advocacy of reforming traditional practices and institutions regarding women as part of renewing the authentic Islamic message was instrumental in providing a conceptual framework within which discussions on this topic evolved among Muslims throughout the world. The establishment of a strong connection between the Muslim woman question and the search for the true meaning of Islam has significantly shaped discussions among Muslims about women since the late 19th century. Since that time, discussions among Muslims regarding the status of Muslim women have notably incorporated efforts to reinterpret Islamic texts and history, aiming to develop an authentic Islamic perspective on womanhood.

The status of Muslim women was a topic through which different reformist authors expressed their views about the discrepancy between Islamic ideals and Muslim realities – between true Islam and its historical realization. Throughout the Muslim world it was an integral part of the discourses of Muslim scholars and reformers such as Egyptian scholar Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1849 –1905), Crimean Tatar reformist İsmail Gasprinski (1851–1914), Indian Muslim jurist and writer Sayyid Amīr ʿAlī (1849–1928), Egyptian Muslim intellectual Qāsim Amīn (1863–1908), Indian Muslim scholar Mumtāz ʿAlī (1860–1935), and one of the first female Ottoman novelists and an advocate of women's rights Fatma Aliye (1862–1936) who advocated a wide range of reforms of institutions and customs related to women. Their calls for reforms were generally situated within rhetoric about the need for the return to true Islamic norms and values, which they saw as the only true path to progress

360 Mansoor Moaddel, "Religion and Women: Islamic Modernism versus Fundamentalism," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37, no. 1. (1998): 108–130.

361 Dona Lee Bowen, "Islamic Law and the Position of Women," in *Islam and Social Policy*, ed. Stephen P. Heyneman (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004), 112.

and prosperity in the modern age. The most common topics in reformist discourses were female education, veiling, polygamy, divorce, and the nature of marriage.[362]

The modern idea according to which women are the crucial element for the prosperity or regression of society was definitely one of the central motifs of reformists discussion on woman question.[363] In these discourses women generally epitomized the backwardness of the Muslim world. Generally, the low education of women and their exclusion from the society was presented to be the main culprit for a series of social problems and deviations, from poverty to prostitution, as well as deviation from the true spirit of Islam. Reformists' call for reforms of a wide range of customs and institutions related to women followed from their preoccupation with regeneration of truly Islamic values. The changes in the customs related to female education, female dress, marriage and reforms of laws, especially those governing polygamy and divorce, were presented as significantly important to the progress of the Muslim world.[364] Contrary to the European discourses that held Islam responsible for the low status of women in Muslim societies, the reformist call for the reform of inherited norms and customs related to women was situated in the larger framework of the criticism of *taqlīd* and advocacy for reinterpretation of Islamic foundations (*ijtihād)*.[365]

In the pursuit of modernity, Muslim reformists generally stressed the vital importance of upholding the authentic principles of Islam. Modernity and progress were considered closely related to a pure and uncorrupted form of Islam.[366] Their criticism of inherited practices and institutions related to women was focused on correcting distorted interpretations of Islam. In accordance with their separation between true Islam and its historical realisation reformist authors argued that Islam itself had granted women their rights but that they were not able to make use of these rights due to the corruption of the real Islamic message.[367] Amīr ʿAlī, in his work *The Spirit of Islam*, argued that the Qurʾān recognized women as full human beings and that it was not Islam that lowered status of women in Muslim societies, but the Muslims' departure from the true Qurʾānic message and adherence to false customs.[368] İsmail Gasprinski, who held that the equality of women and men was a fundamental Qurʾānic principle, used the same kind of argument. According to Gasprinski and other reformists, many practices associated with Muslim women, such as face veiling and seclusion, that were generally considered by Muslims and non-Muslims alike as essential and unchangeable parts of Islamic doctrine, were in fact cultural traditions that had been assimilated into Islam. Reformist claimed that these practices, having been assimilated from external cultures over time, were not inherent to Islam. Consequently,

362 Kurzman, "Introduction," 23.
363 Valerie Hoffman-Ladd, "Polemics on Modesty and Segregation of Women in Contemporary Egypt," 25–26.
364 Minault, "Women, Legal Reform and Muslim Identity," 139–158.
365 Shakry, "Schooled Mothers and Structured Play: Child Rearing in Turn-of-Century Egypt," 128.
366 Amzi-Erdogdular, "Alternative Muslim Modernities," 928.
367 Mazheruddin Siddiqi, "Islamic Modernism," *Islamic Studies* 12, no. 3 (1973): 189.
368 Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, 222–267.

they argued that reforming or even abandoning these practices was not only permissible but also essential for a true adherence to Islamic principles.[369]

This strategy had two main objectives: firstly, to refute the Western assertion that Islam was the source of women's oppression in Muslim societies; and secondly, to validate their push for change in the eyes of those Muslims who viewed traditional gender roles as divinely ordained. By making a clear distinction between cultural customs and the fundamental teachings of Islam, reformists managed to argue that their proposals for reform were not only compatible with Islamic values but also a revitalization of its authentic principles. In this way, they were able to defend themselves against claims that their efforts were part of the Westernization process.

Fatma Aliye, for instance, argued that Islam had already granted women equal rights to men, but customs and traditions had revoked them. A lack of understanding about Islam and about Muslim women's positions during the Golden Age of Islam led to the inferior status of women in Ottoman society, according to her. The path to true emancipation for Muslim women was not based on accepting Western feminism, which she opposed, but on fighting ignorance.[370] Islam, progress and knowledge were closely related, with Islam serving as a catalyst for progress while knowledge was necessary for a true understanding of Islam.

Argumentation of modern reformists included two important elements, still found in various discussions about women and Islam. First reformists introduced distinctions between the Qurʾān and the later Muslim interpretations of its texts and traditions. From a reformist perspective the Qurʾān was a liberator of women, a text whose principal message is equality between men and women, while later interpretations were understood to be responsible for the abandonment of this original, egalitarian message.[371] Second, the abandonment of this egalitarian voice was primarily understood as the result of foreign influences on Islam. Specifically, it was seen that Muslim interpreters of the Qurʾān were impacted by foreign cultural norms, leading them to interpret the Qurʾān in that light. We frequently come across these arguments, also in recent studies on women and Islam, especially among the

369 Alan W. Fisher, "A Model Leader for Asia, Ismail Gaspirali" in *The Tatars of Crimea: Return to the Homeland*, ed. Edward A. Allworth (New York: Duke University Press, 1998), 39; Siddiqi, "Islamic Modernism," 189.

370 Barbara Dell'Abate Çelebi, "Fatma Aliye: At the Intersection of Secular and Islamic Feminism," *Women's Studies* 51, no. 7 (2022): 812.

371 On the division between tradition as oppressor and the Qurʾān as liberator of women see: Naguib Shuruq, "Horizons and Limitations of Muslim Feminist Hermeneutics: Reflections on the Menstruation Verse," in *New Topics in Feminist Philosophy of Religion: Contestations and Transcendence Incarnate*, ed. Pamela Sue Anderson (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 45. To explore how modern Islamic feminism portrays the Qurʾān as a source of liberation and tradition as a source of oppression, refer to the following key works: Asma Barlas, *"Believing Women" in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qurʾan* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002.); Amina Wadud*, Qur'an and Woman : Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (New York ; Oxford University Press, 1999).

circle of progressive authors who claim the right to independent, rational interpretations of Islamic sources in order to restore the authentic Islamic message and to renew the true, egalitarian model of relationships between men and women.[372]

The reformist emphasis on distinguishing between pure and traditional Islam is an aspect of what Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori have termed the "objectification" of religion to describe a conscious questioning of religion's traditions.[373] It is the process through which Islam became an object that can be reflected upon, defined, and justified as something relevant and important in the modern world. In order to answer their primary concern—how a Muslim can remain authentic and modern at the same time—Muslim reformists engaged in a critical evaluation of their own tradition and European modernity. In the context of Islamic discussions on tradition and modernization, the conscious (re)definition of true Muslim womanhood played a significant role. Separating what is authentically Islamic from what is a product of non-Islamic influences and practices, between the essence of Islam and cultural practices, was an integral part of reformists' conceptualizations of the modern Muslim woman, one that is both authentically Muslim and modern at the same time.

The reformist conceptualizations of the true Muslim womanhood through the critique of historical Islam and local customs faced strong opposition from conservative factions within Muslim societies. Conservatives viewed traditional practices, institutions, and values as integral to Islamic doctrine and distinctive markers of Muslim cultural identity.[374] As in Western narratives, conservative discourse imbued Muslim traditional practices related to women with a sacrosanct significance and questioned the reformists calls for women's emancipation based on reinterpretation of Islamic teachings. Since conservative discourses, much like Western ones, generally linked the emancipation of Muslim women with secularization and Westernization, it is not surprising that reformists' efforts were largely viewed, criticized and dismissed by conservatives as an attempt to introduce Western trends and ideals into Muslim societies under the guise of Islam.[375] Moreover, the proposed reforms, based on direct and critical engagement with the Qurʾān, challenged conservative interpretations of Islamic intellectual and religious heritage, as well as established notions of authority and authenticity. Conservatives maintained that the interpretations and practices developed throughout Islamic history were essential elements of Islamic doctrine and rejected the idea that the Qurʾān could or should be interpreted independently from its historical and scholarly heritage.

372 Emile Sahliyeh, *Religious Resurgence and Politics in the Contemporary World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.), 198.

373 Dale F. Eickelman, and James P. Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, 37–45.

374 Nadia Hijab, *Womanpower: The Arab Debate on Women at Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 38.

375 Moaddel, "Religion and Women: Islamic Modernism versus Fundamentalism," 120; Hoffman Ladd, "Polemics on the Modesty and Segregation of Women," 23.

Although conservative discourse has often been viewed as inherently opposing modernity, Adeeb Khalid's study of Muslim debates in Central Asia has plausibly shown that conservative discourse went beyond simple opposition to modernity or a disregard for social transformations confronting Muslims since the 19th century. Rather, according to him, conservatives' public defences of traditional practices represented a form of an active engagement with modern developments.[376] This also appears to be the case with the Bosnian debates on the Muslim woman question. They were part of Muslim global conversations about the woman question marked by the intermingling of central Islamic concepts, such as *ijtihād* and of *taqlīd* with the seminal ideas of European modernity, such as progress, civilization and emancipation. The issue of the Muslim woman status served as a forum through which Bosnian Muslim intellectuals publicly articulated their various, often contradictory, notions of the diverse religious, social and cultural issues.

4.3. The Construction of the Ideal Muslim Woman in Bosnian Muslim Public Discourses

Nowadays, the term "woman question" is criticized in feminist scholarship as a reductionist and essentialist term. On the one hand, it posits women primarily as a subject of male dominated discourses, while on the other hand it runs the risk of essentializing women without recognizing the differences among women like race, class, regional origins, and other.[377] However, as previously shown, non-Muslim, as well as Muslim discourse in the 19th and early 20th century maintained such reductionist representation of Muslim women. These representations have certainly contributed to the rise of a specific construct which until this day has been present in different discussions on Islam, which Miriam Cooke calls *Muslimwoman* to denote a specific "religious and gendered identification that overlays national, ethnic, cultural, historical, and even philosophical diversity."[378]

In the early 20th century, the static category of Muslim woman, emerged as a central trope in Bosnian Muslim public sphere. Starting in the early 20th century, when the magazine *Behar* began reporting about the emancipation of Muslim women from other Muslim regions, to the 1950, the Bosnian Muslim public sphere was dominated by debates about the Muslim woman status, the types of education appropriate for Muslim women, and the practice of veiling. As an essentialized entity, the Muslim woman was positioned in these

376 Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 11.

377 Offen, *The Woman Question in France,* 12–16; Taslim Madhani, "Constructions of Muslim Identity: Women and the Education Reform Movement in Colonial India" (MA diss., Institute of Islamic Studies McGill University Montreal, 2005), 6–7.

378 Miriam Cooke, "Deploying the Muslimwoman," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 24, no 1 (2008): 91–99.

discussions as an embodiment of authenticity, as well as a measure of the progress of the Muslim community.

Before proceeding to the content of the Bosnian debates, I first want to introduce several general principles and assumptions that are useful for the contextualization and analysis of these debates.

Building on the concept of woman as a cultural symbol, a concept developed within the contexts of women's and gender studies, I view Bosnian Muslim discussions regarding the woman's question as deliberate efforts aimed at constructing the ideal Muslim woman, as a bearer of culture, a symbol of a unique Bosnian Muslim identity, and a representation of true Islamic values and the authentic Islamic path to progress.[379] To understand the close relationship between the woman question and religious-cultural authenticity and progress in these discussions, it is necessary to acknowledge that women have historically been assigned complex and conflicting roles. The women have not only been considered responsible for transmitting the religious and cultural values of their group, but they have also served as symbolic figures illustrating the modernity of the community and demonstrating the moral standards of their families and communities.[380]

The concern for women-related issues during periods of significant social transformations has been a common theme in many religious and cultural traditions. The concept of the ideal woman, an evolving and changeable construct, has historically been at the forefront of communal reflections during times of profound socio-cultural, political and economic shifts perceived as threats to the moral integrity and identity of the community.[381] Thus, it is not surprising that Bosnian Muslims focused on issues related to Muslim women during the first half of the 20th century, a time of both global and local transformations. Global dynamics, such as Western dominance, modernization initiatives in wider Muslim world, and the global spread of the ideas of Islamic reformism, in combination with profound political and socio-cultural transformations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, heightened attention of Bosnian intellectuals and religious scholars to issues related to women.

In discussing these issues, Bosnian Muslims did not merely express concern for the rights of women, but primarily for the survival of Islam and their distinctive identity. My reading of the previously described selected periodicals as well as other publications from the first half of the 20th century that will be analysed in greater detail in the following two chapters

379 Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation* (London: Sage, 1997); Bronwyn Winter, "Women as Cultural Markers/Bearers," *Wiley Online Library* (John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2016), accessed November 2022, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/9781118663219.wbegss695

380 Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 39–46.

381 Joseph Martos, "The Evolving Ideal of the Family in the Catholic Tradition," in *The Ideal in the World's Religions: Essays on the Person, Family, Society, and Environment*, eds. Robert Carter and Sheldon Isenserg (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1997), 240.

indicates that Bosnian Muslim discussions regarding the Muslim woman issue were less concerned with the well-being of Muslim women than with preserving the relevance of Islam in modernity and preserving the identity of Bosnian Muslims. Bosnian Muslim representations of women provide little information concerning the actual position of Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nevertheless, they provide an excellent insight into how Bosnian Muslim men interpreted their own cultural and religious tradition and the place of Islam in modern society. As well they provide an insight into how Muslim intellectual and religious elite perceived the place of Bosnian Muslims within the local socio-cultural context, marked by constant socio-cultural, legal and political transformations, as well as an insight into their diverse views on global developments; both in the Muslim world and the West.

Similar to discussions in various Muslim regions, the discussions about Muslim woman question in Bosnia played a key role in the process of the internal Muslim self-critical engagements with the various aspects of the Islamic tradition in which issues of authenticity, authority and modernity played the key role.

These discussions present a variety of perspectives regarding the Islamic tradition, along with diverse interpretations regarding the legitimacy of speaking on behalf of Muslim women. The issues of (re)interpretations of the Islamic textual sources and Muslim history, the universal validity of Islamic legal and exegetical heritage were debated and pondered upon in discussion about the authentic Islamic view on women.

Moreover, these discussions as elsewhere largely concentrated on, what Adeeb Khalid calls, the struggle over the possession and redefinition of *cultural capital*.[382] Not only did Bosnian Muslims use the Muslim woman question to redefine the position of women in the family and society, but they also used it to redefine the very competencies necessary to define Islamic values in the first place. Both secular intellectuals and religious scholars have used the Muslim woman question to assert their exclusive authority over what constitutes a true Islamic practice and what constitutes a deviation from it. In this regard, this issue played an important role in drawing internal boundaries within the Muslim community.

These discussions also provided Bosnian Muslims with an opportunity to debate their diverse views regarding local modernization narratives and processes, as well as their complex positions regarding the seminal ideas of European modernity. Contrary to the essentialist views prevalent in modern European scholarship, which strongly associate modernity with the West and automatically align Islam with tradition, the Bosnian Muslim

382 Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*, 5–6.

discussions about women present a more complex picture.[383] These public discussions challenge the simplistic categorization of Muslim authors in general as "either as strategically employing traditional concepts and ideas in order to serve as transparent guises for what are 'really' imported Western notions, or as compulsively, and sometimes aggressively, parroting ancient traditions in an act of intellectual resistance."[384] Within the discussions on the woman question, Bosnian Muslim intellectuals and religious experts have through a dynamic process of adopting, adapting, redefining and synthesizing elements of Islamic religious tradition, modern ideas from the wider Muslim world and central concepts of European modernity developed their own, often divergent viewpoints on the relationship between Islam and European modernity, and expressed various visions of true Islamic modernity and progress. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the issue of the Muslim progress and the recognition of women's important role in the advancement of the Muslim community dominated the public sphere. Nevertheless, Muslim authors differed considerably in their understanding of the meaning of progress and the specific role of Muslim women. Whether the path to progress lay in reforming the traditional practices and institutions, or in preserving traditional ways of life, was a question that divided Muslim authors. The different responses to this question reflect varied perspectives on their own religious and cultural heritage, as well as on modern Europe.

The following chapters of Bosnian Muslim discussions on Muslim women education and veiling were used to express diversity of views about the relationship between the West and Islam, tradition and modernity; but also, in discursive constructions of true Islam and specific Islamic modernities.

383 For further information on essentialist perspectives that portray Muslims as inherently incapable of being modern, see Reinhard Schulze, "Is there an Islamic modernity?" in *The Islamic World and the West: An Introduction to Political Cultures and International Relations,* eds. Mohammed Arkoun and Udo Steinbach (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 25–28.

384 Elisabeth Kendall, and Ahmad Khan, "Introduction," in *Reclaiming Islamic Tradition Modern Interpretations of the Classical Heritage,* eds. Elisabeth Kendall and Ahmad Khan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 3.

CHAPTER 5

5

5. Muslim Woman's Education, Authenticity, and Progress: Bosnian Muslim Perspectives

> *To bring a rational way of life into a Muslim household, it is first and foremost necessary to enlighten the woman..... An enlightened woman can advance the family, and an enlightened and well-educated mother can properly raise children. It is our children who determine our future...*[385]

This chapter focuses on Bosnian Muslim public discussions regarding female education, which was one of the most discussed topics regarding woman question in the first half of the 20th century. In the early years of the 20th century, this topic was introduced and predominantly discussed by Bosnian Muslim reformists, whose perspectives dominated the Bosnian Muslim public sphere. Over time, in response to reformists' public advocacy for Muslim women education, and local developments in the area of education — details of which are described later in this chapter — the discourse about Muslim women's education evolved to include conservative and revivalist voices, thus allowing for a broader range of perspectives to be expressed in the debates.

This evolution in the discourse about Muslim women's education was marked by a specific tension. On the one hand, there was a pressing need for socio-cultural and economic development, which was believed to be accomplished in part by educating women. On the other hand, there was a desire to preserve a distinctive Muslim identity, with concerns that adopting Western educational models might compromise traditional values.

Bosnian Muslim intellectuals and religious scholars responded to these challenges with a variety of interpretations and solutions.

Reformist authors generally supported modern education for women, modelled after European systems, arguing that it was not only essential to the community's advancement and modernization, but also compatible with the principles of true Islam. In contrast, conservatives and revivalists viewed the adoption of Western educational models as a threat to the Islamic identity of Bosnian Muslim women. However, their proposed solutions ranged from isolating Muslim women from modern educational institutions to proposing the establishment of modern Islamic educational institutions.

385 Hamdija Mulić, "Naše životne prilike i dijete," pt. 2, *Gajret* 22, no. 3 (1941): 64.

As a first step towards understanding the discussions about women's education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I will describe the key external and internal factors shaping the Bosnian Muslim engagements with the issue of Muslim women's education. I will highlight the main features of the global reformist demand for modern education for Muslim women as part of the revitalization of Islamic values and the progress of Muslim societies. This focus on the global reformist demand for Muslim women's education is necessary as it was crucial external factor shaping Bosnian reformists' initial advocacy for women's education. Furthermore, I will present the Habsburg reforms in the area of education and later developments in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia as important internal factors that further contributed to the development of intra-Muslim debates about the nature and the scope of Muslim women's education. In the central parts of this chapter, I will investigate in detail the perspectives of reformists, conservatives, and revivalists in Bosnian Muslim society regarding women's education.

5.1. External and Local Factors Shaping the Muslim Discourse on Women's Education in Bosnia

The Bosnian Muslim debates on female education developed within a complex and dynamic intellectual and socio-cultural environment, where various discourses and narratives intersected. Both external factors and internal developments within Bosnian society influenced the interests and discourses of Bosnian authors about women's education.

The global expansion of modern education that gained momentum in the Muslim world in the second half of the 19th century, alongside the rise of global Muslim reformist discourse was one of the important external factors that led Bosnian reformists to concentrate on Muslim women's education within the Bosnian Muslim public sphere. Based on shared themes and opinions of Muslim reformists worldwide, local reformists' discourse underscored the critical role that female education plays in driving social progress and fostering Muslim religious renewal. This emphasis on women's education sparked a broader debate within Bosnian Muslim intellectual community.

At the local level, the evolution of the Bosnian public educational system and the adoption of European pedagogical theories in the late 19th century and the interwar educational efforts in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia further contributed to local interest and discussions about this subject. Combined, these factors produced a dynamic interplay that enriched and diversified the local discourse on women's education.

5.1.1. Global Themes Initiating and Shaping Local Debates

Educational institutions for women began to emerge across the Muslim world from the second half of the 19th century, as part of the broader global phenomenon of the expansion of modern education. This development was shaped by complex interplay between the specific internal needs of Muslim societies and external influences. Private initiatives, state reforms and colonial policies played a crucial role in establishing formal institutions of learning for women.[386] The establishment of these institutions, largely modelled on European institutions of learning for women, was not a passive process of adoption, but rather one of active engagement.

Various actors—from conservative layers of *ʿulamāʾ*, to colonial administrators, secular elites, and religious reformists—actively participated in discussions in which the issue of women's education became closely intertwined to issues of identity, tradition, modernity and progress. While conservative Muslim scholars opposed the modern education as foreign import and as such as a direct threat to Islamic values, morality and traditional social norms, others advocated for it using arguments that ranged from its potential social benefits to its role in fostering moral renewal. [387]

One of the most globally significant intellectual responses to the widespread concern—shared by the general Muslim population and conservative members of the *ʿulamāʾ* class—that Western-style education could undermine Muslim religious identity, and the moral fabric of society was reformist discourse. Although reformists across the Muslim world varied in their views regarding the exact type and the extent of education appropriate for women, they were unified in framing the women's education, both in religious and secular subjects, not merely as a socio-economic necessity, but as an inherently Islamic value upon which social progress should be based. In the global Muslim reformist discourses the issue of female education was closely intertwined with issues of authenticity and progress of Muslims. According to Moazzami and Salvatore the woman question was "one of the most powerful topics for the Islamic reformers' goal to publicise a distinctive model of education,"[388] designed to enable the development of the pious, educated Muslim woman. A point of agreement among modern reformers was the belief that modern education was

386 Asma Afsaruddin, "Muslim Views on Education: Parameters, Purview, and Possibilities," *Journal of Catholic Legal Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 167–170; Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 66; Mona Russell, "Competing, Overlapping, and Contradictory Agendas: Egyptian Education under British Occupation, 1882–1922," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 21, no.1/2 (2001): 54–57; Nikki R. Keddie, "The Past and Present of Women in the Muslim World," *Journal of World History* 1, no. 1 (1990): 77–108; Cynthia Nelson, "Islamic Tradition and Women's Education in Egypt," in *World Yearbook of Education 1984: Women and Education,* eds. Sandra Acker, Jacquetta Megarry, Stanley Nisbet and Eric Hoyle (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 216–217.

387 Linda Herrera, "Education, Islam, and Modernity: Beyond Westernization and Centralization," *Comparative Education Review* 48, no. 3 (2004): 318–326; Ömer Çaha, *Women and Civil Society in Turkey: Women's Movements in a Muslim Society* (London: Routledge, 2013), 35–36.

388 Schirin Amir-Moazzami and Armando Salvatore, "Gender, Generation, and the Reform of Tradition," 57.

not only a tool for ensuring socio-cultural and economic progress but an Islamic religious duty.

These global debates resonated with Bosnian Muslim community. In the early 20th century, Bosnian reformists introduced the issue of public women education into the local public sphere, thereby responding to the global debates as well as to the local context. Their public advocacy for education for Muslim women echoed two themes of global reformism: the idea of women's education as part of authentic Islamic doctrine, and as prerequisite of genuine social progress. These themes were introduced by Bosnian Muslim reformists and provoked heated debates with other actors, first conservatives and later revivalists. Since the global reformist themes and arguments ultimately shaped not only discourse of Bosnian reformists, but also the intellectual contributions of their opponents I will provide a brief, general overview of these themes. My purpose here is not to examine the direct influence of individual Muslim reformists from different parts of the world on Bosnian thought. Instead, I will focus on the common themes and arguments of global reformism that found relevance, meaning, or provoked critical engagements in Bosnian context.

One theme that held particular significance in the Bosnian context was the idea of female education as a religious duty. This perspective, shared by reformist authors around the globe, connected the issue of education to broader concerns as regards authenticity, progress moral and religious decline. As we will later see in sections about Bosnian Muslim conservative and revivalist perspectives, this interrelation was addressed by authors of other ideological currents. Globally influential reformists considered ignorance to be a kind of moral failing. Ignorance, in particular of correct Islamic practices and values, was understood as a threat to the moral integrity of Muslim community. Education was promoted as a means of liberating the will from the bonds of ignorance and superstition. It served as an instrument that would enable Muslims to make independent and rational decisions on the basis of Islamic norms and modern knowledge, which would liberate them from the fatalism and passivity that, according to modern reformers, significantly marked the Muslim world.[389] Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1849–1905), a well-known Egyptian reformist who had a strong influence on Bosnian reformists, and İsmail Gasprinski (1851–1914), a Crimean Tatar intellectual well known in Bosnian circles, are paradigmatic examples of Muslim reformists from diverse regions who shared the conviction that depriving women

389 Michael Gasper, "Abdallah al-Nadim, Islamic Reform, and 'Ignorant' Peasants: State Building in Egypt," in *Muslim Traditions and Modern Techniques of Power*, ed. Armando Salvatore (Munster: LIT, 2001), 75–92.

of education and compelling them to remain ignorant was a crime.[390] They advocated modern education of women not only in religious matters, but also in home management, proper education of children and in the sciences as restoration of true Islamic values, but also understood as a prerequisite for cultural emancipation of Muslims and, as such, necessary if Muslim societies wanted to reach the developmental level of Europe.[391] While in reformist discourses Europe was generally considered the yardstick with which development and progress was to be measured, global Muslim reformist argumentation indicate that they did not see the need for full adoption of European institutions and values related to women. Their aim was the regeneration of Islamic norms as means of emancipation of women and of development of the Muslim world. The writings of the late 19th and early 20th century Ottoman authors such as Namık Kemal (1840–1888), Ahmed Midhat (1844–1912), Şemseddin Sami (1850–1904) and Fatma Aliye (1862–1936), which were introduced to Bosnian readers through translations and discussions, serve as examples of this perspective.[392] These authors advocated women's education not by blindly following Western models, but by framing their arguments within the context of revitalizing Islamic values. They believed that promoting education for women was an integral part of renewing and strengthening Islamic principles, which would, in turn, foster social progress and development.[393] Their discourses on women education reveal a general reformist understanding of the dangers associated with both traditional conservatism and blindly copying the latest Western trends, such as limiting progress, maintaining the status quo, risking cultural authenticity and moral loss. [394]

390 For more about the influence of Muḥammad ʿAbduh upon reformist ideas of Bosnian reformists such as Džemaludin Čaušević, Šukrija Alagić and Husein Đozo see: Almir Hadžić, "Reformatorska misao šejha Muhameda Abduhua," *Novi Muallim* 13, no. 49 (2012): 92–95; As examples of reformist portrayal of ʿAbduh as an authoritative religious figure see Šukrija Alagić, "Drugi odgovor Hikjmetu i njegovom uredniku A. L. Čokiću," *Gajret* 8, no. 9 (1932):145–147, Husejn Đozo, "Problem našeg napretka," *Glasnik Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 6, no.11 (1938): 392–394. In 1910 when *Gajret* began publishing the "Islamic world" section, the first article was about Russian Muslims with a particular focus on the views of İsmail Gasprinski and his work in the area of education. See; Ibni Munib, "Islamski svijet," *Gajret* 3, no. 7/8 (1910): 124–127. See also following articles about his work in the field of Muslim women emancipation Bosnian periodicals: "Ženski svijet," *Behar* 6, no. 26 (1906): 364; Gariba, "Pismo uredništvu," *Behar* 4, no. 4 (1903): 52–55. For more on Gasprinski's views on education as an integral part of Islamic teachings and a prerequisite for social development and his views on women's education see: Ismail Bey Gasprinskii, "First Steps toward Civilizing the Russian Muslims," in *Modernist Islam: 1840–1940. A Sourcebook*, ed. Charles Kurzman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 223–226.

391 Yvonne Y. Haddad, "Muhammad Abduh: Pioneer of Islamic Reform," in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival,* ed. 'Ali Rāhnamā (London: Zed Books, 1994), 46; "7 Documents about Forming a Modern Identity" in *The Tatars of Crimea. Return to the Homeland. Studies and Documents*, ed. Edward A. Allworth (New York: Duke University Press, 1998), 140–141.

392 For more about these authors within the discussion on Muslim women education see: Mirza Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 13, *Behar* 4, no. 14 (1903): 209–211; Olga de Lebedeff, "O emancipaciji muslimanske žene," *Gajret* 4, no. 6 (1011); 85–86. For discussion about the life and work of Ahmed Midhat see: J. Oestrup, "Ahmed Midhat," *Gajret* 4*,* no. 8 (1911):119–120; Halim, "Merhum Ahmed-Midhat," *Gajret* 6, no.4/5 (1913):112–113; For more about Namık Kemal's view that education is the prerequisite for social progress and that status of women serves as a measure of such progress in Bosnian periodicals from the early 20th century see Sulejman Topić "Jedno pismo," *Gajret* 9 (1928): 173; Ata Nerćes (Hamdija Mulić), "U komšiluku," *Behar* 10, no. 7 (1909): 109–111.

393 Deniz Kandiyoti, "End of Empire. Islam, Nationalism and Women in Turkey" in *Women, Islam, and the State,* ed. Deniz Kandiyoti (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), 25–27; Nilufer Göle, *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), 33–34.

394 Göle, *The Forbidden Modern*, 34.

The second important theme that global reformism placed at the centre of discussions about women's education, and that also shaped the evolution of Bosnian debates was the understanding that women's education, particularly that of mothers, was a fundamental prerequisite for social progress. At the centre of this theme was the redefinition of motherhood as an important social function. Mothers were viewed not only as caregivers but also as primary educators of their children, responsible for shaping the development of an educated, progressive, and modern society. Contrary to pre-modern discourses, modern Islamic reformists discourses about upbringing posited the mother and not the father as the legitimate and primary educator of children.[395] The importance given to women's education was closely linked to the idea that the mother was primary source of moral and religious values and as such extremely important for the upbringing of children, understood as men of the future, and consequently responsible for social progress itself.[396] The issues of motherhood, wifehood, proper upbringing and the progress of Muslims were all intertwined in the different discourses on education. All over the Muslim world there was an emergence of scientific discourses on upbringing and motherhood. Women had to be educated in order to fulfil their roles as good wives and mothers.[397]

The views promoted by Ottoman intellectual Şemseddin Sami are an illustrative example of the reformist understanding of female education that is both rooted in Islamic tradition and new, modern understanding of motherhood. Şemseddin Sami in his book *Kadınlar* [*Women*] published in 1879, placed women's education within the broader context of civilizational discourse, acknowledging its crucial role in the advancement of any civilization.[398] According to him, women as mothers play a crucial role in passing on moral values and educational principles to their children, thus contributing significantly to the advancement of civilization. As Nilüfer Göle has pointed out, he defended women's right to education both as a means of honouring their motherhood tasks and in the interest of advancing civilization.[399]

One of the authors directly referenced by Bosnian reformists—which will be discussed in more detail in section 5.2.4.—was Qāsim Amīn, whose sharp critique of Egypt's social conditions in the late 19th century, along with his advocacy for women's education, was closely linked to the idea that women play a crucial role in society's advancement.[400] Amīn

395 On redefinitions of child-rearing practices and women's domesticity see: Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Crafting an Educated Housewife in Iran," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 91–126; Shakry, "Schooled Mothers and Structured Play," 126–170.

396 Ellen L. Fleischmann, "The Other 'Awakening': Emergence of Women's Movements in the Modern Middle East, 1900–1940," in *Social History of Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East*, eds. Margaret L. Meriwether and Judith E. Tucker (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 100.

397 Fleischmann, "The Other 'Awakening'," 100.

398 Ebru Boyar, "The Public Presence and Political Visibility of Ottoman Women," in *Ottoman Women in Public Space,* eds. Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 246–247.

399 Göle, *The Forbidden Modern,* 32.

400 Already in 1901 *Behar* reported on debates sparked by his book *The New Woman*. See: "El –mer'etul džedidetu," *Behar* 1, no. 23 (1901): 369–370.

describes the backwardness of Egypt primarily as a result of the backwardness of women themselves, and, according to Amīn, education of women should primarily serve the moral and general renewal of Egyptian society. For him education was primarily a way of preparing better views and more educated mothers, able to educate future generations, or more precisely successful men of the future.[401] In his work we find depictions of Egyptian women as ignorant and superstitious mothers unable to take proper care of physical development of children and to inculcate good qualities in a their character.[402] This inability, so he argued, was the result of a general low level of knowledge among women and their reliance upon the wide spread superstitions. The core of reformist discourses in general, as well as of Amīn's discourse on education was an idea that only educated mothers are able to educate properly their children and thus to contribute to the overall renewal and progress of society.

While accusations in recent feminist literature suggest that Amīn exhibited misogyny and replicated European prejudices against Islam through his depiction of Egyptian women as backward, ignorant, cunning, negligent about the upbringing of children, I agree with Marilyn Booth's view that Amīn's work can hardly be characterized as misogynist as his negative description of Egyptian women were clearly positioned „within a rhetoric of ultimate male responsibility for a situation that is alterable."[403] Backwardness of women, as well as of wider society in his discourse was primarily men's responsibility. Thus, although paternalistic, Amīn's views in the *Liberation of Women* can hardly be described as misogynist.

Although the reformist notion of the importance of mother in the progress of society and civilization resembles the modern European notion of a woman as the mother of the nation, recent studies on the modern reformist discourses on women, motherhood and upbringing point to the fact that they could hardly be explained as a mere reflection of European discourses. Omnia Shakry emphasizes that unlike European concepts, reformist discourses on motherhood and child-rearing were framed within a larger request for a return to true Islam and a critique of prevailing social customs. [404] In her analysis of early 20th century reformist discourses in Egypt, Shakry notes that reformists discussions on proper child-rearing were not merely derivatives of European ideas. Instead, they were deeply rooted in the Islamic concept of *adab*, "entailing a complex of valued dispositions (intellectual, moral, and social), appropriate norms of behaviour, comportment, and

401 Amin, *The Liberation of Women; and, the New Woman*, 71.
402 Amin, *The Liberation of Women; and, the New Woman*, 162–163.
403 Marilyn Booth, "Woman in Islam: Men and the 'Women's Press' in Turn-of-the-20th-Century Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33, no. 2 (2001): 198. For an example of interpreting Amin's views as both misogynistic and reflective of European narratives about Muslim women, consult the book Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 159–160.
404 Shakry, "Schooled Mothers and Structured Play," 157–158.

bodily habitus."[405] Thus, the Islamic tradition itself provided modern reformers with ideas emphasizing the importance of proper pedagogy, bodily discipline and moral education of the self for the development of the Muslim community. Domesticity, the primary sphere of women in reformist discourses, became of the central importance to the renewal of a true community of Muslims. As Jouili and Schirin Amir-Moazam point out, domesticity was understood as "the basis for the creation of a collective subject, based on Islamic virtues, envisaged for the wider Islamic (transnational) *umma* through religious instruction and the rediscovery of 'true Islam' through appropriate knowledge and guidance."[406]

While the rise of Islamic reformist discourse was a significant external factor that prompted Bosnian Muslim discussions on women's education, it is important to also consider the internal developments within Bosnian society that played a crucial role in shaping Bosnian debates on Muslim education.

5.1.2. Local Developments Shaping Muslim Debates on Muslim Women Education

Previously discussed establishment of interconfessional public elementary and higher education institutions by the Habsburg authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1879 combined with Bosnian Muslims' reluctance to send their children—particularly girls—to these modern schools were important internal factors that prompted reformists to place the issue of modern Muslim education at the centre of Muslim public sphere.

As has been discussed above, the Habsburg authorities in Bosnia had established public interconfessional schools. However, local Muslim officials objected to this interconfessional approach, and Muslim parents were particularly hesitant to send their daughters to these schools. In an effort to overcome these objections and to address the high illiteracy rates among Muslim women, the Habsburg authorities established public schools exclusively for Muslim girls in Sarajevo in the last decade of the 19th century.

In 1894, the Provincial Government in Sarajevo established a private 4-year course for the education of Muslim girls aged 7–14. In 1897 the course was transformed into a four-year girls' elementary school. As the initial group of female students completed their elementary school level, the school instituted an advanced three-year course in 1901 for girls who wanted to continue their education. This course developed into the Muslim Higher Girls' School, with a curriculum similar to that of the state higher girls' schools. In 1913, the

405 Omnia Shakry, "Science: Medicalization and the Female Body," in *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures*, eds. Suad Joseph and Tony Beukers, vol. 3*, Family, Body, Sexuality and Health* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 357.

406 Jeanette S. Jouili and Schirin Amir-Moazami, "Knowledge, Empowerment and Religious Authority among Pious Muslim Women in France and Germany," *The Muslim World (Hartford)* 96, no. 4 (2006): 623.

school became a four-year institution with a separate three-year program for training Muslim female teachers.[407]

The establishment of these educational institutions for Muslim women in Sarajevo by the Habsburg authorities was an integral part of the Habsburg civilizing mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. An important aim of these Muslim girls' schools was a promotion of the certain type of femininity supported by imperial pedagogues. For them, modern education of women in household management, hygiene, crafts, and pedagogy was supposed to create modern housewives and mothers able to contribute to the development of the modern, civilized society.[408] Educational programs and aims in these educational institutions for Muslim women were in accordance with the idea that the primary aim of female education is the creation of a pious woman, good wife and mother.[409] The creation of these schools, combined with the rising demand for skilled labour and exposure to diverse modern education ideologies–both Western and those from the broader Muslim –sparked discussions among Muslims about the types and objectives of female education.

This topic was initially mostly discussed by reformists authors, but the year 1911 marked the beginning of wider intellectual debate on Muslim women education. The attempt of Habsburg authorities to introduce mandatory primary education for all children in Bosnia and Herzegovina regardless of sex prompted a strong opposition from Muslim politicians who eventually succeed to obtain a clause that specifically exempted Muslim girls from mandatory education. This attempt by Habsburg authorities prompted not only advocates of Muslim women's education, but also its opponents to express their views on this issue publicly.[410] Thus, in 1911 the association of Muslim school teachers *Muallim* published a book with the title *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja* (Letters in Defense of Muslim Women) written by Sofija Pletikosić. As mentioned earlier in section 1.2.1. she was Serb-Orthodox but nevertheless was considered by Muslim association *Muallim* to represent the official position of conservatives regarding the issue of female education. In the following pages I will discuss this work as the Muslim association *Muallim* portrayed it: as an expression of conservative perspectives on female education.[411] Pletikosić's book, which will be later thoroughly analysed, summarizes the anxieties that were typical for conservatives of the time, and their reasons for opposing modern, secular education for women. This publication was one of the rare works during this period that systematically addressed the issue of female education from conservative viewpoint. Muslim conservatives touched

407 Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*, 46; Snježana Šušnjara, "Školovanje ženske djece Bosni i Hercegovini u doba Austro-Ugarske (1878–1918)," *Napredak* 155, no. 4 (2014): 457; Catherine Horel, *Multicultural Cities of the Habsburg Empire, 1880–1914: Imagined Communities and Conflictual Encounters* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2023), 188–190.

408 Giomi, "Forging Habsburg Muslim Girls," 274–292.

409 For more see: Vujković, *U građanskom ogledalu*, 114.

410 Popov Momčinović, Giomi and Delić, "Uvod –Period austrougarske uprave," 26.

411 Giomi, "Forging Habsburg Muslim Girls," 285.

upon the issue of female education mostly in journal *Hikjmet*, albeit in a non-systematic manner, by making general observations on the subject. Notably, the conservative discourse of the time placed greater emphasis on topics such as veiling and gender segregation than on education.

After World War I and the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, debates regarding women's education in Bosnia and Herzegovina gained particular prominence. An increasing interest in women's education can be attributed to a number of factors. As a result of the war, poverty had increased, requiring an urgent need for economic development. The reformist discourse—as I will explain in detail later—generally recognized that women could be instrumental in the economic recovery of Muslim community if they were offered educational opportunities that would allow them to take part in the economic reconstruction.

Additionally, state initiatives aimed at the enhancing education in general as a key pathway to the modernization of the country and national unity further fuelled these discussions. Until 1941, illiteracy was a prime focus of the government of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia. It was a response to high levels of illiteracy, particularly in its central, north-western and eastern regions. Official Yugoslav statistics indicated that in 1931 the illiteracy was 72.9 percent among Bosnians, 62.3 percent Serbians, and 6.8 percent. Slovenians[412]

Recognizing that reducing illiteracy was crucial for the modernization of the country and for fostering a Yugoslav national spirit among pupils, the government significantly enhanced the educational infrastructure. The task of school was to combat illiteracy, but also to educate the youth in the spirit of national unity, loyalty, and devotion to the Karađorđević dynasty.[413] The school was to promote the image of Yugoslavs as a single nation belonging to three tribes: Serbs, Croats, Slovenes.[414]

During the Kingdom's existence from 1918 to 1941, the number of elementary public schools rose from 5,610 to 8,359, and student enrolment surged from 650,000 to 1,393,422. This expansion was seen as the foundational step towards modernizing the nation and uniting its diverse populations under a common educational framework.[415]

412 Stipica Grgić, "The Kingdom of Diversity and Paternalism. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, 1918–1941," in *Interwar East Central Europe, 1918–1941: The Failure of Democracy-Building, the Fate of Minorities,* ed. Sabrina Ramet (London: Routledge, 2020), 217.

413 Dragutin Franković, *Povijest školstva i pedagogije u Hrvatskoj* (Zagreb: Pedagoško-književni zbor, 1958): 308; Pietr Troch, "Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia. Possibilities, limitations and interactions with other national ideas" (PhD diss., Ghent University, 2012), 122.

414 Bougarel, *Islam and Nationhood in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 29.

415 Grgić, "The Kingdom of Diversity and Paternalism," 217.

In spite of the significant expansion of schools and student numbers across the Kingdom, most Bosnian Muslims continued to receive their education exclusively in Muslim primary schools.[416] Muslim students attended public primary and secondary schools in significantly lower numbers than children of other denominations. Besides, in the state schools there was a high disparity between the number of Muslim male and female pupils. Thus in 1931/1932 there were in total 30.819 Muslim pupils in public primary schools, out of which 22.218 boys and 8.601 girls.[417] As for secondary education, in the same year there were 431 boys and 107 girls in lower-level schools focused on general knowledge and skills for trade, hospitality and administration known as civil schools, 835 boys and 197 girls in academic oriented gymnasiums, 70 boys and 37 girls in teacher's schools and 196 boys and 266 girls in vocational schools.[418]

In 1931/1932, only 197 Muslim students, or 1.3 percent of the total student population in the Kingdom were enrolled in universities. When we consider that 11 percent of the population of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was Muslim, this figure clearly shows that Muslims were significantly underrepresented in universities compared to the overall population.[419]

The low enrolment of Muslim children in public schools was heavily influenced by ideological factors, particularly the fear that such an education would undermine Muslim cultural and religious identity.[420] These concerns have been exacerbated by the state curriculum's emphasis on the Serb Orthodox heritage, including its representation in textbooks and other educational materials.[421] Due to these concerns, the Supreme Islamic Council demanded reforms in 1935 to remove material offensive to Muslim religious sentiments and exempt Muslim students from Orthodox holiday celebrations.[422] Among these, the celebration of Saint Sava's Day on January 27, which the state sought to establish as a school holiday, was widely opposed not only by Muslim, but also Croatian, and Slovene communities, who considered it as „covert Serbianization under the guise of Yugoslavism."[423]

In this socio-historical context Muslim intellectuals and religious scholars closely linked discussions about the education of Muslim women to issues of the progress of Bosnian

416 "Prilog 8," *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 1, no. 6 (1933): 46–49.
417 "Prilog 11," G*lasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 1, no. 6 (1933): 56.
418 "Prilog 11," 54–57. For more about the types of schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the period covered by this research see: Papić, *Školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme austrougarske okupacije,*131; Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988* (Beograd: Nolit, 1988), 325.
419 "Izvještaj delegata IVZ Kraljevine Jugoslavije na Kongresu evropskih muslimana u Ženevi 12–15 Septembra 1935. godine," *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 3, no. 10/11 (1935): 467.
420 Ibrahim Z. Hodžić, "Treba paziti i šta naša mladež uči," *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 8 (1939): 100–101.
421 Nusret Kujraković, "Odnos Bošnjaka prema državnom školskom sistemu Bosne i Hercegovine između dva svjetska rata," *Pregled* 50, no. 2 (2009): 217–232.
422 "Odluke i saopštenja Vrhovnog starešinstva Islamske verske zajednice," *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 3, no. 10/11 (1935): 498.
423 Grgić, "The Kingdom of Diversity and Paternalism," 227.

Muslims, their identity and their position within the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia.

This will be discussed later, but here I would like to highlight two specific aspects typical of the Muslim discourse on women's education during the 1930s. First, there was the emergence of discourse which promoted Muslim women's education in state institutions as a key component of integrating Muslims into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. This perspective was characteristic of a group of authors gathered around the journal *Gajret* which was ideologically affiliated with the Karađorđević dynasty which ruled the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In this discourse, the education of Muslim women was viewed as a means of Muslim advancement, as in reformist discourse in general, but it was also seen as a means of promoting national unity in a country characterized by significant ethnic and religious diversity. Additionally, a Bosnian revivalism developed during the 1930s, intensified discussions regarding women's education among Muslims. In this discourse, it was advocated that Muslim educational institutions be established for women in order to preserve their distinct Muslim identities. This issue will be discussed in more detail later.

5.2. Bosnian Muslim Reformist Views on the Women's Education: Muslim Progress and Authentic Islam

The modern Muslim reformist discourse on female education in Bosnia and Herzegovina was inextricably linked to narratives about the causes and remedies of the perceived Muslim backwardness. The Bosnian reformists' writings regarding Muslim women's education echoed a wider consensus among Muslim reformists throughout the world that women's education is of utmost importance to the progress of the Muslims.[424] The low level of education of Bosnian Muslim women—described as not only as the least educated part of the Bosnian population, but also as the most ignorant women in Europe[425] were seen as the cause of religious, cultural, educational, moral and economic degradation of Bosnian Muslim community.[426] Consequently, the advancement of Muslim women education was understood to be as the primary means of overcoming these challenges.

Throughout this section, I analyse the use of two fundamental types of arguments—pragmatic and religiously grounded—used by Bosnian reformists to assert the close connection between modern Muslim women's education, the advancement of the

424 For more on this idea in global Muslim discussions see: Najmabadi, "Crafting an Educated Housewife in Iran," 101–102; Safdar Ahmed, *Reform and Modernity in Islam: The Philosophical, Cultural and Political Discourses Among Muslim Reformers* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 102.

425 Hodžić, "Naobrazba muslimanskih žena," pt. 1, 344–350; Šukrija Alagić, "Emalijju dinijjetun," *Novi Behar* 6, no. 3 (1932): 34–35.

426 Omer Zuhrić, "Kojim putem treba da idu naša kulturna društva da bi udovoljili narodnim potrebama," *Novi Behar* 12, no. 24 (1939): 307–309.

Muslims, and authentic Islam. The arguments of the conservatives and revivalists will be addressed in the next section.

First, I will here examine the pragmatic arguments of reformists, who emphasized the importance of educating Muslim women for religious enlightenment, improving family life, and raising the status of Muslims economically. This analysis will show how the Bosnian reformists' line of reasoning aligned with the global reformist discourses on women's education across the Muslim world that often appealed to men's self-interest to promote the education of Muslim women.[427] In addition, the analysis of these pragmatic arguments will demonstrate how the issue of Muslim women s education served as a platform for reformists in redefining true religiosity, traditional roles of women as mothers, housewives, and wives, and expressing opinions concerning Bosnian Muslims' socioeconomic situation.

Following this, I will examine their argument that the need for women's education is not merely aligned with Islamic values but deeply rooted in Islamic teachings. This analysis will demonstrate a specific understanding of religious authenticity, where reformists referred to the primary textual foundations of Islam and the broader Muslim world as evidence of women's education as a genuine Islamic value.

5.2.1. Women's Education as a Key to Religious Enlightenment

One of the key characteristics of the global reformist discourse on women's education was the contrast between the true knowledge of Islamic foundations, on the one hand, and superstitions, on the other, that were seen as contributing to the overall decline of Muslims. Women, particularly those from rural areas, were in global reformist narratives generally depicted both as victims of superstitions due to their ignorance and as agents of the perpetuation of that ignorance. Consequently, reformists emphasized the importance of education as a crucial tool for enlightening and advancing Muslims.[428] This connection between education of Muslim women, and their religiosity and morality was one of the central themes also in Bosnian reformist discourses.

Bosnian reformist advocates of women's education established the close relationship between women's education, the authentic understanding of Islam and genuine piety. They argued that in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a lack of education among Muslim women was directly related to a persistence of obscure and often incorrect religious practices and beliefs among Bosnian Muslim. Two prominent features characterize their understanding of the connection between women's education and religious enlightenment.

427 As an example of such argumentation, see: Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan,* 40–43.
428 Gasper, "Abdallah al-Nadim, Islamic Reform, and 'Ignorant' Peasants,"75–92.

In the first place, Muslim women were generally described as superficial and prone to superstitions. However, this characteristic was viewed as a direct consequence of their lack of education, particularly in their own religion, rather than an inherent characteristic.[429]

Second, this tendency toward superstition was considered a major obstacle to the religious and moral development of the Muslim community, as mothers, acting as primary educators, passed along these tendencies to their children, thereby preventing development of the entire community. Accordingly, Muslim reformists considered and advocated religious education for women not only as essential to improving the moral character and piety of Bosnian Muslim women, but also for the betterment of the entire community.[430] Knowledge of true Islam embodied in its textual sources was generally viewed as the most effective means of defending against superstitions.

A critique of women's superstitions and irrational beliefs was part of a broader reformist critique of Bosnian Muslim folk religion.[431] Reformists described Muslim practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina as being characterized by superstitions, formalist, foreign influences and mysticism. Religious formalism and superstition were interpreted to be primarily a result of a lack of understanding of Islam's genuine tenets. They believed that reform of traditional religious education, which they saw as a formalistic process based solely on memorization of religious texts, was necessary for the development of true religiosity, that is a religiosity that is rooted in a profound understanding of Islam's principles.[432]

The reformist texts analysed for this research do not discuss religious content to be taught to female students or methods of instruction, however, their emphasis on the need to improve literacy among women and to revitalize true Islam as enshrined in its foundational texts, together with their criticism of traditional Muslim education, suggests that they favoured using modern teaching methods for the purpose of conveying Islamic religious principles and values to Muslim women.

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429 For more about criticism of Bosnian Muslim women's superstitious beliefs and magical practices see: Muhamed Hilmi Hodžić, "Nešto iz djevojačkog svijeta ili: gatke i bajanja," *Behar* 9, no. 13 (1908): 197–201; Ahmed. Aličić, "O bajanju kod muslimanskog ženskinja," *Novi Behar* 13. no. 19/22 (1940): 286–288; Ćamil Avdić, "Islam je konstruktivan (Prigodan vaz)," *Glasnik Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 8, no. 3 (1940): 97–102.

430 Ibrahim Džafčić, "Naš ideal," *Đulistan* 1, no. 1 (1926): 8; Alagić, "Emalijju dinijjetun," 34–35; Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci*, 59–61.

431 For more on reformist criticims of Bosnian folk Islam see Enes Karić,"Narodna vjera bosansko-hercegovačkih muslimana: Kratak osvrt na islamsku modernističku kritiku 'narodne vjere' bosanskohercegovačkih muslimana," *Novi Muallim* 11, no 42 (2010): 41–48; Enes Karić, "A Short Survey of the Islamic Modernist Critique of Bosnian Muslims' Folk-Religion," *Balkans and Islam: Encounter, Transformation, Discontinuity, Continuity*, eds. Ayşe Zişan Furat and Hamit Er (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2012): 136–156.

432 Hadžić, "Načela islama i naš zadatak," 8; Atif Hadžikadić, "Škola i zanat", *Novi Behar* 3, no. 23 (1930): 361–362; Muhamed S. Serdarević, "Budimo muslimani," *Biser* 3, no. 13/14 (1918): 199–203; Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci*, 59.

5.2.2. Redefining Domesticity: Justifying Women's Education by Reimagining Traditional Roles

In the late 19th and early 20th century Bosnian society underwent significant socioeconomic changes, including the proliferation of modern educational institutions, the increasing influence of the European scientific worldview, the separation of economic activities from the home, and the emergence of modern lifestyles, particularly in urban areas. This combination of changes raised concerns among many Muslims that the Muslim family structure may be undermined.

Within this context the concept of scientific domesticity gained traction in reformist thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina since it offered a framework for reconciling modernization with traditional values.[433] The notion of the scientific domesticity redefined traditional roles of women as mothers, housekeepers, and wives and was an integral part of different movements for female education in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century in Europe, the North America, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.[434] This concept promoted these roles as professions requiring formal education and training, highlighting their crucial importance for social development. This notion was, as we have seen, an integral part of global reformist discourses, as well as the educational policies of both the Austro-Hungarian and later Yugoslav governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina which promoted idea that educated mothers, housewives, and wives play an important role in the development and progress of the nation.[435]

Reformist advocates of female education in Bosnia and Herzegovina upheld established traditional women's roles but, as I will demonstrate below, they redefined the meaning of these roles by embracing the globally influential notion of the scientific domesticity. Through the adoption of the concept of scientific domesticity, Muslim reformists in Bosnia and

433 For an excellent account of the relationships between socio-economic changes and the local acceptances of discourses of scientific domesticity, see Nikki R. Keddie, "Women in the Middle East Since the Rise of Islam," *Women's History in Global Perspective*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith, vol. 3 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press,2005), 68–111.

434 For more on the discourses of scientific domesticity in different regions see: Lynn Abrams, *The Making of Modern Woman: Europe 1789–1918* (London: Longman, 2002); Stacy Gillis and Joanne Hollows, "Introduction," in *Feminism, Domesticity and Popular Culture*, eds. Stacy Gillis and Joanne Hollows (New York: Routledge 2009): 1–15; Keddie, "Women in the Middle East," 68–111; Jasamin Karin Rostam-Kolayi, "The Women's Press, Modem Education, and the State in Early Twentieth-Century Iran, 1900–1930s" (PhD diss., Michigan University, 2000); Kenneth M. Cuno, *Modernizing Marriage: Family, Ideology, and Law in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth Century Egypt* (New York: Syracuse University Press: 2015); Judith E. Walsh, *Domesticity in Colonial India: What Women Learned when Men Gave Them Advice* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004); Theodore Jun Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910–1945* (Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008); Kaku Sechiyama, *Patriarchy in East Asia: A Comparative Sociology of Gender* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

435 For more on the incorporation of ideas of scientific domesticity into educational programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the dominant pedagogical paradigms during the period under the research see: Giomi, "Forging Habsburg Muslim Girls," 274–292; Šušnjara, "Školovanje ženske djece u doba Austro-Ugarske," 453–466; Mladen Bevanda, *Pedagoška misao u BiH 1918–1941* (Sarajevo, Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2001), Ida Ograjšek Gorenjak, *Opasne iluzije. Rodni stereotipi u međuratnoj Jugoslaviji* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2014).

Herzegovina were able to imbue women's domestic roles with a profound moral and social significance and to justify women's education in light of their domestic responsibilities. Mothers, housewives and spouses were presented as responsible for morality and education of their children, the establishment of a healthy domestic environment, the advancement of their families, and the stability of their marriages, as well as for the advancement of the entire Muslim community. The ideal Muslim mother and housewife was a trained educator of her children, a responsible manager of her household and a wise companion to her husband. By positioning Muslim women education within the narrative of scientific domesticity, Bosnian Muslim reformists were able to perceive and present Muslim women's education not as a threat, but as a means of advancing the strength, morality, and prosperity of the Muslim family and community. The educated Muslim woman was given a major role in building a new, both modern and Islamic family household that was to renew true Islamic morality and to ensure the cultural and economic progress of the entire community. The reformist advocacy for women's education, reinterpreting their domestic roles and responsibilities cantered on three key aspects: motherhood, household management, and marriage.

- ***Motherhood***

Bosnian Muslim reformists as Muslim reformists worldwide emphasized the cultural and social roles of motherhood, arguing that the well-being of the family—the fundamental unit of society—depends on mothers.[436] Their capability to educate and transmit moral values to their children—viewed as directly related to their educational level—was considered crucial in shaping the future of the Muslim community. A mother's education was, from this perspective, regarded as one of the most important factors in fostering the development of Bosnian Muslim community and the preservation of Islamic values. This understanding of the social role of motherhood aligned with the general view of Bosnian reformists that motherhood was not based on instinct but on institutionally acquired knowledge.[437] This view echoed the modern notion of professional motherhood that became globally popular in the early 20th century, which held that motherhood should be viewed as a profession for which women must be adequately trained.[438]

436 Uredništvo, "Uvodna riječ," *Đulistan* 1, no. 1 (1926): 1; Uredništvo, "Poziv žene," *Đulistan* 1, no. 2 (1926): 21; Hamdija Mulić, "Porodični uzgoj," *Gajret* 10 (1929): 363–364; Suada Muftić, "Gajret i prosvjećivanje muslimanki," *Gajret* 13, no. 21 (1932): 344–345; Omer Zuhrić, "Nešto je truhlo," *Novi Behar* 6, no. 18 (1933): 237–238.

437 Enver Pozderović, "Važnost domaćeg odgoja," *Novi Behar* 16, no. 14 (1944): 223–225; H. "Porodica i pomladak," *Gajret* 19, no 12 (1938):213; Husein Hamšić, "Potreba širenja pismenosti i prosvjećivanja muslimanke," *Gajret* 21, no. 11 (1940): 230–231; Ata Nerćes (Hamdija Mulić), "Potreba boljeg uzgoja omladine," *Gajret* 8, no. 6 (1924):106–107.

438 For more on the development of the ideology of professional or scientific motherhood in general see Rima D. Apple, "Constructing Mothers: Scientific Motherhood in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Social History of Medicine* 8, no. 2, (1995): 161–178; Elif Ekin Aksit "Scientific Motherhood," in *Encyclopedia of Motherhood,* ed. Andre O. Reilly (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2010):1103–1104; Jodi Vandenberg-Daves, *Modern Motherhood: An American History* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2014).

This concept of professional motherhood was most particularly promoted in the *Đulistan*, the first Bosnian Muslim magazine exclusively dedicated to women's issues. *Đulistan* challenged the traditional naturalistic view of motherhood and advocated for a systematic education of mothers to equip them with the skills they need to fulfil their roles effectively and efficiently.

In the *Đulistan*'s discourse, the ideal Muslim woman was not just to give birth to future generations of Muslims and ensure the physical survival of the community, but also to raise a generation of responsible, pious Muslims who can contribute to the community's cultural, religious, and social renewal.[439] Motherhood was portrayed as synonymous with teaching, a role that could be efficiently performed only by educated mothers.[440] Only the educated Muslim woman was seen as capable of providing her children with moral and religious education, as well as of providing them with practical skills, that is to say of raising the new generation of modern educated and moral Muslims.[441] Female education was presented as a kind of medicine against so-called "social diseases" such as laziness, decadence, alcoholism and promiscuity. Thus, one can find in the journal *Đulistan* strong statement that mothers are of crucial role for the development the new generations of Muslims who would be better than old generations of Muslims described as "cowards, parasites and sluggards."[442]

The construction of the ideal Muslim mother in *Đulistan*'s discourse went hand in hand with the general Bosnian Muslim reformist critique of the illiteracy of Muslim women, regarded to be one of the main culprits responsible for perpetuating harmful practices and behaviours among Bosnian Muslims. Muslim reformists' journals generally depicted Muslim mothers as ignorant individuals who either blindly followed inherited customs and traditional lifestyles, or uncritically accepted only the superficial aspects of European modernity, neglecting their maternal duties in favour of spending time in cafes, cinemas, and other popular gathering places.[443] The depictions of Muslim mothers as blindly traditional or superficially modern indicate that reformists considered both behaviours to be obstacles to the development and progress of the Muslim community.

This viewpoint is particularly evident in debates about the causes of low levels of education among Bosnian Muslim women. Reformists contend that two main factors prevented

439 Umija Muftić, "Moralni uzgoj djeteta," *Đulistan* 1, no. 27 (1926): 26–27; Nira Bećirbegović Filipović, "Odgojna uloga žene u društvu," *Đulistan* 1,no. 2 (1926): 24–25.

440 Muftić, "Moralni uzgoj djeteta," 27; Bećirbegović – Filipović, "Odgojna uloga žene," 24.

441 Bećirbegović Filipović, "Odgojna uloga žene," 24–25.

442 Uredništvo, "Poziv žene," 21.

443 For more about criticism of Muslim women who accepted only the most superficial aspects of European modernity see: Muhamed Hasić, "Raskoš," *Novi Behar* 10, no. 1/3 (1936): 5–7 Hamdija Mulić, "Naše životne prilike i dijete," pt. 1, *Gajret* 22, no. 2 (1941): 43–46. For more about illiteracy and ignorance of Muslim mothers see: Pozderović, "Važnost domaćeg odgoja," 223–225; Ahmet Ljubunčić, "Kulturno i socijalno podizanje naše žene," *Đulistan* 1, no. 1 (1926): 9–10, Hodžić "Naobrazba muslimanskih žena" pt. 1, 344–350.

Muslim women from obtaining an adequate education: conservative opposition to modern education for women, and a lack of interest among young, modern-educated Muslims in promoting cultural and educational revival. They argued that these obstacles to women's education contributed to the spread of harmful practices, which stemmed either from outdated inherited cultural traditions or from harmful aspects of European modernity.[444]

Contrary to these depictions of uneducated mothers, ideal Muslim woman was seen as educated women, competent mother and household manager, whose primary concern is the happiness and prosperity of her family.[445]

Though Muslim reformists acknowledged the traditional view that motherhood is the main role of women, they gave this role a new meaning that allowed them to advocate for greater educational opportunities for women. They viewed modern education for Muslim girls as a tool to provide women with a comprehensive understanding of their social obligations, enable them to provide proper education for their children, and safeguard them from the frivolous elements of Western culture.

- ***Household management***

Apart from being defined as primary educators of their children, women in reformist literature were generally seen as housewives, responsible not only for the execution of simple household tasks, but also for household management. Bosnian Muslim reformists saw family household as a central site for the development of healthy, moral and educated members of the wider community that was to be organized upon scientific principles. Therefore, women were to be educated in hygiene, accountancy, handicraft, cooking, and cleaning in order to organize their home life in a proper manner. Domestic skills were not understood as something that could be simply passed by one generation to the next one, but as something that should be systematically taught and transferred to women to enable them to manage their family and domestic affairs in the accordance with the modern scientific principles.[446]

In line with the global reformist discourse, Bosnian Muslim reformists argued that women's lack of formal education and blind following of the backward practices, negatively impacted

444 Ibrahim Maslić, "Vjerski odgoj naše mlade inteligencije," *Gajret* 20, no. 11 (1939): 203; Hadmija Mulić, "Pred kulturnim pokretom Muslimana u Bosni i Hercegovini," *Gajret* 9 (1928): 77–78; Ahmet Đumišić, *Ko smeta napretku i prosvjećivanju muslimana, a osobito muslimanki* (Spas: Banja Luka. 1919), 3–4, 16.

445 Ahmet Ljubunčić, "Kulturno i socijalno podizanje," 9–10.

446 Osman Muradbašić, "Važnost i organizacija državnih domaćičkih škola u Bosni i Hercegovni," *Novi Behar* 2, no. 10 (1928):148–150.

Muslim households. These households were portrayed as a soiled places characterized by misery, disease and negligence as regards healthy diet, education of children and hygiene.[447]

Although reformist discourses attributed the poor living conditions of Bosnian Muslim populations directly to the women's lack of education, they did not blame women in general, but the conservative masses and their *'ulamā'* for Muslim backwardness. It was believed that their opposition to women's modern education was responsible for women's ignorance and, as a result, the backwardness of Muslim households.[448] This position set the reformists apart from secular circles, which generally viewed religion as an obstacle to modernization, as well as from conservative circles that insisted on preserving traditional practices as part of Islamic doctrine.

A number of texts during the period under the research specifically addressed the issue of hygiene in Muslim households. In general, these texts shared the central ideas of both official Habsburg and later Yugoslav discourses that there is a direct link between health in the family and health in society as a whole (nation), and that their improvement depends on women, who were regarded as responsible for ensuring appropriate hygienic practices in daily life and combating unhealthy practices and traditions in which the masses lived.[449] Women's ignorance in domestic sciences and hygiene was blamed for the poor health conditions in Muslim families and particularly for the high rates of infant mortality.[450]

To understand this focus on the issues of health and hygiene and their close relationship with the issue of female education in the works of Bosnian Muslim authors it is important to take into account that from the second half of the 19th century health and hygiene became the subjects of global interest. In this period in modern Europe, hygiene became synonymous with civilization and progress and thus it is not surprising that hygiene education became an important part of numerous modernization projects not only in

447 Hodžić, "Naobrazba muslimanskih žena," pt. 1, 345–350; Muradbašić, "Važnost i organizacija državnih domaćičkih škola u Bosni i Hercegovni," 148; Džemaludin Čaušević, "Okružnica našeg presv. Gosp. Reis ul-uleme," *Novi Behar* 2, no. 15 (1928): 225–227; Omer Zuhrić, "Kojim putem treba da idu naša kulturna društva da bi udovoljili modernim potrebama," *Novi Behar* 12, no. 24 (1939): 307–309; Mustafa Mulalić, "Dva naša osnovna problema," *Gajret* 12, no. 9 (1931): 224–225; Mulić, "Naše životne prilike i dijete," pt. 1, 43 – 46; Hamdija Mulić, "Pohađanje seljačke ženske djece u školu," *Gajret* 19, no. 14 (1938): 241.

448 Muradbašić, "Važnost i organizacija državnih domaćičkih škola u Bosni i Hercegovni," 148–150.

449 Hamdija Mulić, "Čistoća i red u nauci islama," *Novi Behar* 8, no. 11/12 (1934): 186; Abdulah Bukvica, "Općenito o higijeni," Novi *Behar* 8, no. 11/12 (1934): 186 – 188; N., "Dvije važne stvari za održanje u sadašnjosti i bližoj budućnosti," *Glasnik Islamske vjerske zajednice Nezavisne Države Hrvatske* 10, no. 4 (1942): 120–123. For more on Austro-Hungarian and later Yugoslav understandings of health and hygiene see: Fuchs, "Orientalizing Disease: Austro-Hungarian Policies of Race, Gender, and Hygiene in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1874–1914," 57-86. and Željko Dugac, "Like Yeast in Fermentation: Public Health in Interwar Yugoslavia" in *Health, Hygiene, and Eugenics in Southeastern Europe to 1945*, eds. Christian Promitzer, Sevasti Trubeta and Marius Turda (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010), 193–233.

450 Hodžić, "Naobrazba muslimanskih žena," pt. 1, 344 –350.

Europe, but also in the United States and colonial world.[451] The idea that civilization was synonymous with cleanness was used in European discourses on civilizing missions to mark out the boundary between civilized, healthy, clean Europeans and uncivilized, dirty natives, and thus to legitimize colonial interventions and different projects aimed at moral, intellectual and cultural uplift of natives, among which an important project was modern education of women in modern hygiene and health standards.[452]

In the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Austro-Hungarian Empire considered the establishment of a modern system of public health and hygiene in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a vital component of civilizing the Bosnian population. They saw it as an integral part of the transition from what they regarded as an uncivilized state to a civilized one. As a part of this transition, they invested in the education of Bosnian women, particularly Muslim women, in hygienic practices.[453] The Austrian-Hungarian authorities were particularly interested in educating the Muslim population since Muslims were considered to be both antithetical to modern hygiene as well as to modernity in general.[454] It has been shown by Fuchs that the writings of Austro-Hungarian military personnel, physicians, and engineers depicted Muslim populations in Bosnia and Herzegovina as backward, anti-modern, filthy, and degenerated, and as contributing to epidemics of venereal disease and (endemic) diseases.[455]

Besides establishing a modern health system, the Austro-Hungarian authorities focused on educating Muslim women in the field of health and education. Between 1892 and 1918, the Austro-Hungarian authorities appointed six female health officers from other parts of the Empire to districts dominated by Muslims.[456] During the Austro-Hungarian era, female physicians were employed primarily for the purpose of collecting scientific information on native Muslim communities, suppressing unhealthy customs, and transforming Muslim family relations and gender roles according to modern Western models.[457] The writings of Teodora Krajewska, an academically trained female health officer appointed by Austro-Hungarian authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1890s, clearly shows how discourses on hygiene and health had an important role in establishing the clear boundary

451 During the course of the 19th century ten sanitary conferences were held that presented hygiene, public health and sanitation as crucial for the development of civilization: For more see: Valeska Huber, "The Unification of the Globe by Disease? The International Sanitary Conferences on Cholera, 1851–1894," *The Historical journal* 49, no. 2 (2006): 453–476.

452 Towns, "Civilization," 79–99.

453 Fuchs, "Orientalizing Disease. Austro-Hungarian Policies of 'Race,' Gender and Hygiene in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1874–1914," 65–85.

454 Fuchs, "Orientalizing Disease. Austro-Hungarian Policies of 'Race,' Gender and Hygiene in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1874–1914," 84.

455 Fuchs, "Orientalizing Disease. Austro-Hungarian Policies of 'Race,' Gender and Hygiene in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1874–1914," 58–69, 74–76.

456 Brigitte Fuchs, "Austria-Hungary's Civilizing Mission in Bosnia," accessed August 23, 2022, (PDF) Austria-Hungary's Civilizing Mission in Bosnia and its Positive Effects on Domestic Feminists' Demands 1890–1918

457 Fuchs, "Austria-Hungary's Civilizing Mission in Bosnia" Fuchs, "Orientalizing Disease. Austro-Hungarian Policies of 'Race,' Gender and Hygiene in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1874–1914,"76–80.

between civilized Europeans and primitive Muslims.[458] She characterized Muslim population as being less civilized and intelligent than Western Europeans and other Bosnian natives, and she decried the practices and traditional customs of Muslim women as harmful to health.

According to Krajewska, Muslim women were idle, passive, secluded, and ignorant of proper nutrition, modern hygienic standards, infant care, child rearing, and the education of children.[459] Further, she held that imposition of civilization from above was an essential necessity for achieving progress in what she considered a backward country like Bosnia and Herzegovina.[460]

It should also be noted that hygiene conditions in villages and the education of the rural population, particularly women in proper household management, were among significant issues in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. There was a close connection between discussions concerning hygiene standards in Yugoslav villages and concerns regarding the survival and development of the nascent state in political and scientific discourses in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia particularly in 1930s. The issues of hygiene, public health, and education were deeply embedded in Yugoslav discourses of modernization, reflecting their pivotal role in the nation's development.[461]

Bosnian reformist advocates of women's modern education embraced the idea that hygiene and health are fundamental to civilization, framing it within the general reformists' distinction between true Islam, seen as the source of modern hygienic standards, and its historical manifestations. The poor health conditions in Muslim households in Bosnia and Herzegovina were primarily attributed to socio-economic factors such as poverty and the ignorance of Muslim women. It was argued by reformists that Muslim women's ignorance of Islamic sources was the primary reason for their failure to incorporate modern hygienic

458 Fuchs, "Orientalizing Disease. Austro-Hungarian Policies of 'Race,' Gender and Hygiene in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1874–1914," 80.

459 Fuchs, "Orientalizing Disease. Austro-Hungarian Policies of 'Race,' Gender and Hygiene in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1874–1914," 80–82.

460 Fuchs, "Austria-Hungary's Civilizing Mission in Bosnia."

461 Rory Yeomans, "Of 'Yugoslav Barbarians' and Croatian Gentlemen Scholars: Nationalist Ideology and Racial Anthropology in Interwar Yugoslavia," in *Blood and Homeland: Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900–1940*, eds. Marius Turda and Paul J. Weindling (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), 85–88.

standards, believed to have their origins in Islam.[462] Modern science and hygiene standards were presented as typical of Islam and negligence of hygiene as a failure to comply with Islamic requirements. The education of women was seen as a means of eradicating backward local practices and traditions that were viewed as a threat to the health of individuals, families and the entire Muslim community, and therefore a prerequisite for the overall elevation of the entire community, as well as fulfilling religious obligations under Islam.[463]

During the 1930s, the journal *Gajret* played an important role in advocating for the modernization of traditional women's roles, promoting professionalisation of domestic duties. It actively reported on the efforts of members of the *Gajret* association in establishing schools and courses for housewives. These schools were part of the broader national initiative that the state authorities began in 1919. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia began establishing schools and courses for housewives, often in collaboration with various associations, across the country. The schools were open to girls over 15 years old, with the primary aim of educating them for the rational management of households.[464] In these institutions girls were taught hygiene, laundry, housekeeping, cooking and handiwork, along with standard subjects such as language, history, and geography.[465]

Members of *Gajret* association played a significant role in organization of these schools and courses at the local Bosnian level, collaborating with state authorities who provided financial resources, teachers, and teaching materials.[466] The journal *Gajret* reported on these efforts and encouraged Muslim girls to attend such institutions arguing that modern education in domestic sciences was necessary means for enabling Muslim women for rational, professional and progressive household management.[467] *Gajret*'s reports, as well as practical efforts of the members of *Gajret* association contributed to the transformation

462 Mulić, Čistoća i red u nauci islama,"186, Abdulah Bukvica, "Općenito o higijeni," *Novi Behar* 8, no. 11/12 (1934): 186–188; N., "Dvije važne stvari za održanje u sadašnjosti i bližoj budućnosti," 120–123. This kind of argumentation was present also in the works of reformists authors outside Bosnia and Herzegovina. See as an example argument made by 'Abdalrauf Fitrat; Adeeb Khalid, "Representations of Russia in Central Asian Jadid Discourse" *in Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917,* eds. Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2001), 188–202. A similar argument regarding the close connection between Islamic principles and public health is also found in a translation from French of a work published in Sarajevo in 1913 that was intended to demonstrate that Islam is a rational religion that positively contributes to social progress. See: Ahmedbeg Džejhun, *Islamske dužnosti sa gledišta higijenskog (zdravstvenog)* (Sarajevo: Prva muslimanska nakladnička knjižara i štamparija, 1913).

463 S. Jergović, "Domaćica: zdravlje," *Đulistan* 1, no. 2 (1926):30, Abdulah Bukvica, "Islam i higijena," *Glasnik Vrhovnog vjerskog starješтinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 1, no. 3 (1933): 48–56.

464 Željko Bralić, *Obrazovanje odraslih u pokušaju: Prilog andragoškoj istoriji* (Beograd: Univerzitet u Beogradu, 2018), 123–165; Kemura, *Uloga Gajreta*, 317; Troch, "Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia," 139.

465 Troch, "Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia,"139.

466 Kemura, *Uloga Gajreta,* 319.

467 "Kako se osnivaju Državne škole za domaćice," *Gajret* 11 (1930): 236–237; "Rad na osnivanju domaćičkih škola," *Gajret* 11 (1930): 337; "Izvještaj glavnog odbora Gajreta o radu u društvenoj godini 1930–1931," *Gajret* 12, no. 12 (1931): 322.

of the role of mother and housewife into a profession based on scientific knowledge and technical skills.

A specific feature of argumentation found in *Gajret* 's articles is the presentation of education of Muslim women in these public educational institutions as a prerequisite for the national prosperity and development of the common national identity, which was in line with the general integral Yugoslav orientation adopted in this journal during 1930s.[468] While *Gajret* associated Muslim women's education in 1930s with the issue of integration of Muslims within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the national progress it is important to acknowledge that this argumentation was situated within the general *Gajret's* viewpoint that education of women is part of the Islamic doctrine. Educating Muslim girls in *Gajret's* perspective was intended to ensure not only their integration into Yugoslavia, but also the renewal of true Islamic teachings about the education of women.

Due to the fact that basic education of women in domestic skills was generally viewed by reformists as being an integral part of the Muslim renewal, it is not surprising that reformist journals such as *Gajret* and *Novi Behar* regularly provided concise advice regarding a variety of topics related to practical housekeeping for Muslim women. In 1933 *Novi Behar* began publishing a special column titled *For our wives*.[469] This section, published articles on a range of domestic topics including health, nutrition, child rearing, housekeeping, and hygiene for the purpose of educating Muslim women. These simple and short instructions regarding household tasks may appear insignificant from our perspective, but the editors of these journals undoubtedly considered them not only to be simple advice given to women, but also to be practical tools that would support the enlightenment of Muslim families and wider society.

- ***Marriage***

Similarly, to global reformist perspectives, Bosnian reformists argued that education of women was not only necessary to achieve efficient household management and childcare, but also a prerequisite for achieving marital harmony.

The article written by reformist author Šukrija Alagić published in *Novi Behar* in 1933 provides an excellent elaboration of this principle.[470] The article echoed the global reformist conception of marriage as a community based on love and understanding, emphasizing the

468 More about Gajret's ties with the Yugoslav state regime and its pro-Yugoslav and pro-Serb orientation see: Troch, "Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia," 116.

469 The column titled *For our housewives* appeared first appeared in *Novi Behar* 7, no. 1 (1933): 31.

470 Šukrija Alagić, "Izobraženje žene," *Novi Behar* 6, no. 19/20 (1933): 260–262.

importance of educational compatibility between spouses to the accomplishment of this ideal.[471]

Alagić specifically attributed his understanding of the verse 30:21 as a key text that defines the ideal Islamic marriage to discussions on the subject in the Egyptian reformist journal *al-Manār*. Drawing from these insights, Alagić viewed the Qurʾānic verse "And of His signs is this: He created for you helpmeets from yourselves that ye might find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo! herein indeed are portents for folk who reflect" as defining marriage within Islam as a partnership based on mutual support and understanding.[472]

A similar vision of marriage can be found among other Bosnian reformists who viewed marital relationship based on love and mutual understanding not only as an ideal prescribed by the Qurʾān, but also as an essential prerequisite to the development of moral character in individuals and the establishment of a harmonious environment necessary for the upbringing of children.[473] This interpretation of marriage clearly contrasted with the conservative and revivalist Bosnian narratives in which marriage was predominantly viewed as a means to satisfy sexual needs and ensure reproduction.[474]

Reformists' understanding of marriage was closely related to their general stance that educational compatibility between partners is a prerequisite for a successful marriage. The above-mentioned Alagić's text illustrates the common reformist viewpoint that only wife who is nearly as educated as her husband can provide him with the necessary comfort and understanding, thereby ensuring marital harmony.[475] Alagić's text was not the only text emphasizing the importance of educational compatibility between spouses in achieving the Qurʾānic ideal of marriage. In 1935 *Novi Behar* published an article by non-Muslim publicist Dragutin Hofbauer (1869–1936) to highlight the universal importance of women's education in ensuring educational compatibility between spouses and a harmonious marriage.[476]

The unique interpretation of this perspective was reflected in public debates regarding mixed marriages between Muslim men and non-Muslim women during the 1930s. Namely, there was the rise in interfaith marriages between Muslim intellectuals and non-Muslim women during this period which sparked considerable discussions among Muslims. These marriages

471 Sherry Sayed Gadelrab, M*edicine and Morality in Egypt: Gender and Sexuality in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (London: I.B. Tauris: Library of Middle East History, 2016), 105–107; Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition*, 153 – 187; Alagić, "Izobraženje žene," 261.

472 Alagić, "Izobraženje žene," 260.

473 Pozderović, "Važnost domaćeg odgoja," 223–225; Mehmed Begović, "O braku," *Gajret* 15, no. 13 (1934):174–175.

474 Ali-Riza Prohić, *Šta hoće naša muslimanska inteligencija* (Sarajevo: Štamparija Omer Šehić, 1931), 12–13; Kasim Dobrača, „Jedan vaz (Nekoliko Islamskih propisa o privatnom i društvenom životu čovjeka," *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 4, no. 11 (1936): 419–425.

475 Alagić, "Izobraženje žene," 261.

476 Dragutin Hofabauer, "Čar Orijenta u Bosni," *Novi Behar* 8, no. 24 (1935): 406.

were viewed by conservatives as a sign of religious indifference of secular educated Muslim elites.[477] Some reformists however argued that these marriages were primarily caused by the low educational level of Muslim women, which led Muslim intellectuals to seek partners among more highly educated non-Muslim women.[478] Interfaith marriages were believed to arise primarily from the significant educational disparity between Muslim men and women. Consequently, the education of Muslim women was viewed as a key solution to this problem.

5.2.3. Muslim Women Education and Economic Progress of Muslims

While reformists predominantly advocated for modern women's education as necessary for fulfilling their domestic roles, some authors also emphasized the critical role of education in advancing the economic development of the Muslim community.

This argument was particularly used in reformists text published during the interwar period. Muslim reformists responded to the increasing poverty after World War I by demonstrating the close connection between women's education, participation in the labour force and economic growth. They sought to show that by increasing education among women, their participation in the labour force would be enhanced, leading to greater contributions to household income and ultimately reducing poverty in Muslim communities.[479]

The resistance among many Bosnian Muslims to modern education of Muslim women (see sections 5.1.2 and 5.3.) was widely condemned for deepening the economic hardships faced by Muslim community.[480] A particular focus of reformist criticism was directed at conservative members of class, who were harshly criticized for absolutizing the Qurʾānic concept of the man as primary provider for his family.[481] The interpretation of this concept as the total subordination of women to men and the exclusion of women from the labour force was criticised for failing to acknowledge the reality that many families lack a male provider. Furthermore, this interpretation was seen as detrimental to the welfare of the Muslim community and possibly leading to women in these families turning to prostitution to provide for their families.[482]

477 For more on the issue of interfaith marriages in the interwar period see: Feđa Burić, "Becoming Mixed: Mixed Marriages of Bosnia-Herzegovina during the Life and Death of Yugoslavia" (PhD diss., University of Illinois 2012), 39–79.

478 Ibro Brkić, "O braku," *Gajret* 18, no. 5 (1937): 82–83.

479 Salih Ljubunčić, "Zaboravljeni i napušteni rod," *Đulistan* 1, no. 2 (1926): 21–23; Ahmed Omerhodžić, "Problem osnovnog školstva i osnovne prosvjete u Bosni i Hercegovini i njegovo rješenje," *Novi Behar* 10, no. 15/16 (1936):179–183; "Lijep primjer svijesti i razumijevanja prema školovanju naše muslimanke," *Gajret* 19, no. 3 (1938): 56; Ahmed Muradbegović, "O ženi i muslimanskom društvu," *Gajret* 10, no. 1 (1926): 1–3.

480 Omerhodžić, "Problem osnovnog školstva i osnovne prosvjete u Bosni i Hercegovini i njegovo rješenje," 181–182; Muradbegović, "O ženi i muslimanskom društvu," 1–3.

481 Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci*, 86.

482 Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci*, 85–90.

In general, however, women's vocational training and participation in the labour force was not regarded as a right belonging to them as human beings, but rather as a necessity. It should be noted that reformist discourses, as well as later revivalist discourses, took a primarily utilitarian approach to women's employment outside the home. Women's vocational training and participation in the labour force were described primarily as a means of ensuring that unmarried Muslim women and widows would not become a burden to their families.[483] This understanding of the purpose of female education was in accordance with global discourses on women's education from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In different cultural contexts the advocates of female education stressed the utilitarian aspect of women's education and employment, stating that it adds economic benefit to the family, community, and nation.[484]

Although some authors acknowledged women not only as recipients of education, but also as enlightenment agents, they attributed distinct educational activities to men and women in accordance with their understanding of the inherent differences between men and women. Educated women in reformist discourses had the primary responsibility of enlightening other women within the Muslim community and their families, particularly their children. They were assigned the task of eradicating religious illiteracy, spreading authentic knowledge of Islam among Muslim women and putting an end to harmful practices.[485]

5.2.4. Women's Education as the Islamic Value

A prominent feature of Bosnian reformist discourses was the belief that women's education was not only a socio-economic necessity, but also an Islamic principle, founded in the core Islamic texts.

This approach to women's education clearly reflects a broader reformist interpretation of Islam as a religion that promotes both religious and secular knowledge acquisition. During the research period, the issue of the authentic Islamic view of education in general was extensively discussed in Muslim reformist journals, where several key characteristics emerged.

483 Zija, "Šaljimo djecu u škole," *Novi Behar* 6, no. 4/5 (1932): 49–50; Muhamed Hifzi Muftić "Nešto o uzgoju," *Behar* 3, no. 18 (1903): 277–278.

484 Karin Baumgartner, "Female Education in Nineteenth-Century Germany: Caroline de la Motte Fouque and the Rejection of Bourgeois Models of Domesticity," in *Dominant Culture and the Education of Women*, ed. Julia C. Paulk (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 82–97.

485 Hamdija Mulić, "Ženska Medresa," *Novi Behar* 10, no. 23/24 (1936): 331–332; Hamdija Mulić, "Problem zaštite djece u nas," *Gajret* 11, no. 13 (1927): 201–202; Salih Uđvarlić, "Našim učiteljicama i učenicama," *Đulistan* 1, no. 3 (1936): 38–39.

First, the published articles provided examples of how the Qurʾān strongly encourages not only religious education, but also the acquisition of secular, practical knowledge relevant to the individual's particular socioeconomic and historical situation.[486]

A common reformist reference to the *ḥadīth* "Seek knowledge even as far as China" reveals another characteristic idea of the reformist discourse on education.[487] Using this *ḥadīth*, they sought to emphasize that the early Islamic community recognized the value of knowledge and science, and that its rise was precisely the result of this recognition.[488] This *ḥadīth* was also interpreted by reformists as a statement that science and its value are universal, and that Muslims are obliged to educate themselves in a variety of sciences regardless of their origin.[489]

It is evident that both of these proposals were intended to respond to the conservative *ʿulamāʾ* and the masses who perceived modern education for Muslims in public institutions to be a threat to Muslim identity. Given that the general population had a particularly negative attitude towards women's education in modern public institutions, it is not surprising that the third prominent idea in these discussions was that Islamic texts impose upon Muslim women, as well as men, the obligation to acquire knowledge and education, not only in religious sciences but also in secular subject, regardless of their origin.[490]

To underline their main thesis that it is a duty of every Muslim man and woman to pursue education they used three main strategies which were consistent with their general distinction between true Islam, as enshrined in Islamic founding texts and its historical realization. These strategies, that will be bellow analysed in detail are: reinterpretation of Islamic foundational texts; the revision of classical historical narratives; and the integration of global reformist ideas into the Bosnian context.

- ***Reinterpretation of Islamic foundational texts***

The reinterpretation of core Islamic texts was the primary strategy used by reformists to establish Islamic legitimacy for their advocacy of Muslim women's education. This strategy embedded pragmatic arguments for women's education within an Islamic framework,

486 "Kongres muslimana intelektualaca održan 6. i 7. septembra, prilikom proslave Gajretove dvadesetpetogodišnjice," *Gajret* 9, (1928): 290; Džemaludin Čaušević, "Božija zapovijed," *Novi Behar* 8, no. 17/18 (1935): 289.

487 The full *ḥadīth* reads "Seek knowledge even if it be in China, for the seeking of knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim." Among Muslim theologians since early Islam, the first part about China is generally considered inauthentic, but the second part is considered authentic (see various Islamic scholarly websites: https://www.al-mawrid.org/Question/60a204a3923f0b12074d8517/seek-knowledge-even-if-you-have-to-go-to-china; https://islamqa.info/en/answers/13637/seek-knowledge-even-if-you-have-to-go-as-far-as-china-is-a-false-hadeeth).

488 See: Safvet-beg Bašagić, "Gajret," *Behar* 4, no. 16 (1903): 253–254; I. H. Meginagić "Muslimanskim roditeljima i muslimanskoj mladeži," *Novi Behar* 1, no. 12 (1927): 177; Atif Hadžikadić, "Škola i zanat," *Novi Behar* 3, no. 23 (1929): 361–362; H. M. Handžić, "Nada u budućnost," *Novi Behar* 8, no. 9/10 (1934):141–142.

489 Hadžikadić, "Škola i zanat," 361–362; Mustafa Mehić , "Uloga Muslimanskog sveštenika na selu, (s pogledom na prošlost i prospektom na budućnost)," *Gajret* 21, no. 11 (1940): 228–230.

490 Osman Nuri Hadžić, *Islam i kultura* (Zagreb: Self-published, 1894), 90–91.

thus making these arguments more persuasive and acceptable to a wider audience. This approach was extensively employed by Muslim reformists globally during the study period and it remains relevant in contemporary discourses regarding the status and rights of Muslim women on a global scale.[491]

In general, reformist authors viewed Qurʾān commandments as being egalitarian in nature, advocating and promoting equality between men and women in families and society.[492]

Prominent Muslim reformist scholar Džemaludin Čaušević (1870–1938) used the following two verses to claim that seeking knowledge is not only encouraged but is considered a sacred duty for all Muslims, irrespective of gender: [493]

> *Then exalted be Allah, the True King! And hasten not (O Muhammad) with the Qur'ân ere its revelation hath been perfected unto thee, and say: My Lord! Increase me in knowledge. (20:114)*
>
> *… We raise by grades (of mercy) whom We will, and over every lord of knowledge there is one more knowing (12:76)*

His interpretation of these verses suggested that women were excluded from education in Muslim communities because of patriarchal interpretations of Islamic texts rather than Islamic doctrine. He emphasized that the Qurʾān calls on Muslims, regardless of gender, to pursue knowledge as an essential component of personal development and communal well-being. By emphasizing the egalitarian nature of Qurʾānic teachings, he clearly aimed to demonstrate that Islamic doctrine supports equal educational opportunities for men and women.[494]

The reformist thesis that women should be guaranteed similar rights including the right to education because they are of kindred nature with men found its legitimacy in the Qurʾānic text 4:1 stating: "O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate…"[495]

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491 For contemporary uses of this strategy in various Muslim debates about women, see Anne Sofie Roald, *Women in Islam: The Western Experience* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 120–126.

492 Osman Nuri Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 2, *Gajret* 9, no. 19/20 (1925): 301–302.

493 Džemaluddin, "Zajedničko poučavanje," *Novi Behar* 2, no. 1/2 (1928): 2.

494 Džemaluddin, "Zajedničko poučavanje," 2–3.

495 For more on the interpretation of this verse in terms of shared origin of men and women, and the similarity of their rights and responsibilities see: Mustafa Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 1, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 6 (1927): 92; Nuri Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 2, 301–302; Kasim Hadžić, *Položaj žene u islamu* (Sarajevo: Nova tiskara Vrček i dr., 1940), 11; Mirza Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 12, *Behar* 4, no. 13 (1903):193.

Safvet-beg Bašagić's (1870–1934) views provides a useful example of a modern interpretation, which recognizes equal rights for both men and women in this verse. Although Bašagić's interpretation aligned with traditional interpretations that generally viewed it as evidence of the origin of humankind being man (Adam), he did not suggest that women are inherently inferior or subordinate to men, as was often implied by traditional exegesis. He instead introduced a fresh perspective on gender relations, challenging the conventional exegesis that suggested the inferiority of women.[496] Bašagić viewed it as a clear statement of equality between men and women, pointing out their shared origin, complementary roles, and inherently similar qualities.[497]

Bašagić's interpretation of the verse is specific due to his selective approach to *ḥadīth* material, a strategy often also used today in discussions on Islamic teachings about women.[498] It involves selecting and emphasizing certain *ḥadīths* that support particular viewpoints while ignoring or dismissing other *ḥadīths*, which might offer alternative interpretations. Bašagić quotes short statement *ḥadīth*s that were in accordance with his view of Qurʾān 4:1, without questioning their historical authenticity. The following *ḥadīths* are mentioned: "The best of you is the one among you who treats his wife the best;" "Be gentle and kind to women;" "Only a man of noble character will honour women, and only a man of base intentions will dishonour them."[499]

This selectivity certainly may be subject to criticism as it does not provide a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings nor addresses the issue of *ḥadīth* authenticity systematically. It is however important to note that this kind of selectivity is an integral component of any reform project, as Khaled Abou El Fadl notes in his study on contemporary approaches to *ḥadīth* literature.[500] The attempt to provide an objective interpretation is essentially an attempt deeply influenced by the broader perspective of the interpreter. In Bašagić's case, as well as among many other reformists to the present day, it has become clear that only *ḥadīths* that support the egalitarian message of the Qurʾān should be considered credible.

496 Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić] "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 12, 194. For more about traditional understandings of this Qur'anic verse and related ḥadīths: Karen Bauer, G*ender Hierarchy in the Qur'an: Medieval Interpretations, Modern Responses* (New York: Cambridge University Press: 2015.): 101–136.

497 Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 12*,* 193.

498 A similar type of selective approach can also be found in other Bosnian reformists. See: Šukrija Alagić, "Od predrasuda k istini," *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinska Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 3, no. 2 (1935): 79–80; Osman Nuri Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 1, *Gajret* 9, no. 17/18 (1925): 259–260. For more on selectivity in contemporary approaches to *ḥadīths*, Khaled Abou El Fadl, "Modern Rereadings of the Ḥadīth through a Gendered Lens," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Women,* ed. Asma Afsaruddin (Oxford Handbooks, 2023), 135; Roald, *Women in Islam*, 220.

499 Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt.12, 194

500 Khaled Abou El Fadl, "Modern Rereadings of the Ḥadīth through a Gendered Lens," 135.

The Bosnian reformists' focus on the Qurʾān and selected *ḥadīth* materials demonstrates the underlying proposition of the reformist movement that all reform should be based on revitalizing true Islamic principles found in Islamic foundational texts. Free reinterpretation of these texts, without extensive reliance on classical authorities to support their views on women's education, reflects a larger process. This process involved rejecting previous authorities, the authority of *ʿulamāʾ* and the authority of established institutions and practices, while simultaneously strengthening the authority of the scriptures.

- ***The revision of classical historical narratives***

The second of these strategies, the revision of the classical historical narratives, was used to emphasize how the value of female education had been embedded in Islamic history. As already shown representations of the past have been crucial to discourses about cultural authenticity, including diverse Muslim perspectives on gender relations.[501] In an effort to legitimize their views on Muslim women's education and social participation as authentically Islamic, Bosnian reformers, as well as Muslim reformists worldwide, revised historical narratives about women in early Islam.[502] By doing this, they aimed to demonstrate that education was not merely modern, foreign concept, but an Islamic value that was deeply rooted and historically realized within their own religious and cultural tradition.

Bosnian reformist authors presented the early period of Islamic history between the 8th to 12th centuries as a Golden Age for Muslim women, during which they genuinely participated in all areas of public life. This allowed reformists to position their advocacy for women's education within a perceived tradition of female involvement and influence in early Islamic society. Advocated modern education of Muslim women in Bosnian context became in their discourse a means of restoring the status that women supposedly had in the early Islamic community.[503] Their appeal to early Islam was certainly part of a wider glorification of the early Islamic history and its transformation into an ideal that modern society ought to emulate. They (re)interpreted the first centuries of Islam as an era of genuine equality between men and women, aiming to demonstrate the emancipatory nature of true Islam, reject Western criticism of Islam as being a backward religion, and criticise conservative members of *ʿulamāʾ* class for departing from Islamic teachings on women.

501 Omerika, "Negotiating Modernity through Constructions of History in Modern Muslim Religious Thought," 42.

502 For an overview of how classical historical narratives about Muslim women have been revised in the 20th century by Muslims worldwide to support diverse visions of gender roles see: Matthew Pierce, "Remembering Fāṭimah: New Means of Legitimizing Female Authority in Contemporary Shīʿī Discourse," in *Women, Leadership, and Mosques: Changes in Contemporary Islamic Authority*, eds. Masooda Bano and Hilary Kalmbach (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012): 345–360; Aisha Geissinger, "Feminist Muslim (Re)Interpretations of Early Islam," in *Routledge Handbook of Early Islam*, ed. Herbert Berg (London: Routledge, 2017), 296.

503 Mirza Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 11, *Behar* 4, no. 12 (1903): 177; Safvetbeg Bašagić, "Žene su ures svojih muževa," *Đulistan* 1, no. 1 (1926): 3; Mustafa Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 3, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 8 (1927) 124; Šukrija Alagić, "Od predrasuda k istini," 80; Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 1, 259–260; Osman Nuri Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 5, *Gajret* 9, no. 24 (1925): 369–370.

The article titled *Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene* (The Life and Social Status of Muslim Woman) published in the journal *Novi Behar* in 1927 is noteworthy in this context.[504] Its author Mustafa Čelić (1893–1940) compiled a list of Muslim female figures who held scientific, educational, military, and state roles from the earliest days of Islam to the modern age. He placed a special emphasis on educated Muslim women who had contributed to the advancement of science and culture, established charitable, educational, and religious institutions, and held important public roles during the earliest period of Islamic history. Čelić used this list as evidence that women enjoyed equal rights to men in public life during the first centuries of Islam and that educating women was an Islamic ideal. He depicted well-known historical figures from the early centuries of Islam as playing a significant role in transmitting religious knowledge and taking an active part in state affairs.[505]

As Čelić illustrates, the Bosnian reformists envisioned the ideal Muslim woman as an active participant in public affairs who contributed to community prosperity. She was portrayed as embodying true piety, possessing a comprehensive education, and actively participating in community affairs.[506] The deliberate emphasis on the connection between comprehensive education, social participation, and genuine piety in reformist representations was likely intended to address conservative concerns regarding the impact of education on Muslim women's adherence to their religious and cultural values. In the following pages, I will explore this issue in more detail.

These representations allowed reformists to claim that their perspective regarding the education of Muslim women was founded upon an authentic understanding of Islam, which clearly targeted internal opponents who opposed modern education for women. Moreover, their representation of the past seems to serve the purpose of indicating to non-Muslim critics of Islam that Islam is not a misogynistic religion. An idealized portrayal of the early Islamic community and of prominent Muslim women was used to suggest that Islam greatly improved the status of women in Arabia and that women enjoyed greater rights and privileges during the early Islamic period than Western women during the modern era. [507] In the following sections I will show how this type of argumentation was later elaborated upon by revivalist authors to emphasize the superiority of Islamic social teachings.

504 Čelić, Mustafa, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 1, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 6 (1927): 91–93; pt. 2, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 7 (1927): 101; pt. 3, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 8 (1927): 124; pt. 4, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 9 (1927): 133–134; pt. 5, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 10 (1927): 150–155; pt. 6, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 14 (1927): 214–216.

505 Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 3, 124; Mustafa Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 4, 133–134.

506 See also: Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 11, 177–178. Safvetbeg Bašagić, "Žene su ures," 3.

507 Halid Buljina, "Kult rada u islamu," *Glasnik islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 6, no. 4 (1938): 157.

- ***The integration of global reformist ideas into the Bosnian context.***

Alongside justifying their call for women's education in Islamic history, Bosnian reformist strengthened their position by framing their arguments within broader global reformist perspective on education The Bosnian Muslim reformist journals played a significant role in acquainting their readership with authors and initiatives from other parts of the Muslim world that advocated for the educational emancipation of women. They closely followed and documented developments in women's education across various Muslim regions and translated and shared articles by Muslim authors from abroad who viewed women's education as an intrinsic right bestowed upon them by Islam.

The reformist journal *Behar* began to address the issue of women's education first by publishing short, informative articles about Muslim women's education in other parts of the world, with a particular focus on the Russian Empire and India. It is clear from these articles that *Behar* sought to demonstrate that not only modern Europe but also Muslims in different parts of the world recognized the crucial importance of female education in promoting economic and cultural advancement of the society. Short reports about the efforts of Indian Muslims to enhance women's education through the establishment of schools for Muslim women exemplify this stance. [508] *Behar* also paid special attention to Muslims living in the Russian Empire, reprinting articles from the prominent bilingual newspaper *Perevodchik-Tercüman*, which was published by the Crimean Tatar reformer İsmail Gasprinski. These articles shared *Tercüman*'s central notion that the modernization of traditional Muslim education systems and the education of Muslims, especially women, were key tools for ensuring the restoration of true Islam and the overall progress of Muslims.[509]

The role of philanthropists from various Muslim regions who provided support for women's education was a recurring theme in *Behar*, and later in the journal *Novi Behar*. [510] These articles were evidently aimed at encouraging wealthy members of the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina to provide financial support for the education of Muslim women.

508 "Islamsko društvo u Lahuru," *Behar* 2, no. 3 (1901): 47; "Muslimanska ženska visoka škola u Aligari," *Behar* 7, no. 18 (1907): 216.

509 Gariba, "Pismo uredništvu," 52–55; Seradž, "Svadbe, suneti, pokopi," *Behar* 1, no. 20 (1901): 323–324; Početak civilizovanja ruskih muslimana," pt. 1, *Behar* 2, no. 16 (1902): 249–251; "Početak civilizovanja ruskih muslimana," pt. 2, *Behar* 2, no. 17 (1902): 267–268. For more on *Tercüman* central ideas and influence in the Muslim world see: Khalid*, The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*.

510 "Muslimanski dobrotvor u Rusiji," *Behar* 4, no. 9 (1903):143; H.A.B. "Muslimanska dobrotvorna društva u Rusiji," *Behar* 6, no. 3(1905): 45; "Društvo Nešri Mearif u Baku," *Behar* 7, no. 16 (1906): 192; "Našri Mearif u Baku-u," *Behar* 7, no. 18 (1907): 216; "Žensko dobrotvorno društvo u Vladikavkazu," *Behar* 7, no. 18 *(*1907*)*: 215; Ćazim [Musa Ćazim Ćatić], "Poziv na opći islamski kongres," *Behar* 8, no.15 (1907): 225–227; "Iz života ruskih muslimana," *Behar* 2, no.7 (1901): 110–111; "Iz života ruskih muslimana," *Behar* 2, no.8 (1901): 127; Aabida Magmuma, "Ženski mekteb u gradu Baku," *Behar* 1, no. 12 (1901): 190; K. Nihad, "Ženski mekteb u gradu Baku," *Behar* 3, no. 15 (1902): 240; K. Nihad, "Ženska naobrazba;" *Behar* 3, no. 19 (1903): 303.

This aligned with the common belief expressed in reformist publications that investing in education was the most noble form of charity.[511]

In addition, reformist journals played a significant role in acquainting Bosnian Muslims with prominent, educated women from other Muslim communities.

From 1903 onwards, particular attention in journals *Behar*, *Gajret* and *Biser* was devoted to literary works of Ottoman women writers and poets of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The literary works of Fatma Aliye (1864–1924), Nigâr Hanım (1856–1918), Abdülhak Mihrünnisa Hanım (1864–1943), Makbule Leman (1865–1898), Yaşar Nezihe Bükülmez (1882–1934), Güzide Sabri Aygün (1886–1946) were regularly translated and published on the pages of these journals.[512]

Recent Bosnian scholarship generally interprets the prominent place given to these authors in Bosnian Muslim periodicals as a reflection of the Bosnian Muslim community's enduring interest in Ottoman literature, which persisted even after the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[513] However, the translation of the literary works of these women, I contend, went beyond a mere fascination with their artistic and intellectual achievements. Translating these women's literary works was a deliberate effort to highlight the active roles that educated women played in the cultural evolution of the late Ottoman society. It was through the circulation and publication of writings by late Ottoman women and works about them written by Bosnian men that a new narrative regarding late Ottoman women emerged, portraying them as central figures in the cultural and social advancement of their community.[514]

511 Safvet-beg Bašagić, "Gajretova skupština," *Behar* 4, no. 5 (1903): 67–68. For more about philanthropy as an Islamic value see: Mirza Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 16, *Behar* 4, no. 17 (1904): 257–259. See also:"Naš dobrotvor," *Behar* 6, no. 9, (1905): 143; Hamdija Mulić, "Čuvajmo uspomene iz naše prošlosti," *Novi Behar* 11, no. 12 (1937): 173; Džemaludin Čaušević, "Međusobno se potpomažite u dobrim i pobožnim djelima," *Novi Behar 7,* 1/2(1933): 1.

512 *Behar* serialized Fatma Aliye's novel *Muhadarat* (*Muḥādarāt*) under the title *Razgovor- Roman iz turskog života*, spanning *Behar* 4, nos. 1–24 (1903–1904), and later serialized her novel *Udi* (*Ūdī*) throughout 1905–1906. See: *Behar* 6, nos. 4–19 (1905–1906). Musa Ćazim Ćatić published an informative article about Nigâr Hanım, describing her as the most important Turkish female writer. See: Ćazim [Musa Ćazim Ćatić], "Turska pjesnikinja Nigjar," *Behar* 8, no. 7 (1908): 104–106. *Behar* published a translation of a poem by Abdülhak Mihrünnisa Hanım under the title „Ja i ćuk," *Behar* 7, no. 17 (1907): 196–197. Ahmed Šerić translated Makbule Leman's short story *Pişmanlık* under the title *Pokajanje*. See: *Behar* 4, no. 21 (1904): 324–326, while Musa Ćazim Ćatić translated her poem *Solmuş Gülüme* as *Mojoj uveloj ruži* in 1908. See *Behar* 9, no. 2 (1908): 24. Additionally, Yaşar Nezihe Bükülmez's poem *Tahassürüm* was published under the title *Moja čežnja* in *Biser* 2, no. 8 (1913): 122–123.Finally, *Gajret* serialized Güzide Sabri Aygün's novel *Münevver* under the title *Munevera - ljubavna pripovijest iz carigradskog života*. See: *Gajret* 3, nos. 1–4 (1910).

513 For more about the reception of Turkish literature in Bosnia and Herzegovia see: Alma Spahi, "Recepcija turske književnosti u Bosni i Hercegovni u XX vijeku" (PhD diss., Beograd University 2006); Azra Ibrulj i Eldina Memić, *Turska književnost u bosanskohercegovačkoj periodici* 1895–1942 (Sarajevo: Institut "Yunus Emre" Sarajevo, 2017).

514 See: Mustafa Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 5, 150; Ćazim [Musa Ćazim Ćatić], "Turska pjesnikinja Nigjar," 104–106.

Translated works by Halide Edip (1884–1964), a prolific author and public figure of the late Ottoman and early Republican periods, were extensively published in the magazines *Gajret* and *Novi Behar* in the late 1920s.[515] *Gajret*'s and *Novi Behar*'s interest in the work of this intellectual was part of a larger trend that emerged during the late 1920s. This trend was characterized by an increasing Muslim interest in institutional and social changes taking place in Turkey, particularly in relation to reforms that affected women. It is worth noting that the Muslim reformist press during this period displayed overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward reforms in the Republic of Turkey that were generally described as aligned with Islamic principles.[516] In the discourses of Bosnian reformists, the "new Turkey" and the "new Turkish woman" were regarded as evidence that Muslims could embrace modernity while still preserving their unique religious and cultural identity. As such they were portrayed as models for Bosnian Muslims to follow. Halide Edip was portrayed in these journals as more than just the new Turkish woman. She was presented as the ideal Muslim woman who was actively involved in the advancement of her society, and as someone who Bosnian Muslim women should emulate.[517]

Apart from these female authors, Bosnian journals introduced Muslim readers in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the accomplishments of Muslim women from the late 19th and early 20th century from various regions in the fields of education, culture, and politics. For instance, Bosnian reformist Mustafa Čelić in his article published in 1927 in *Novi Behar* argued that the exclusion of women from public education in certain Muslim societies was not due to Islamic teachings, but rather due to patriarchal attitudes prevalent in these societies. His discussion focused on the range of perspectives on women's education within different Muslim countries, including Turkey, India, Egypt, Russia, Algeria, Tunisia, Afghanistan, Syria, and Iran. According to him, these differences confirm the influence of local cultural traditions on interpretations of Islamic texts regarding women's education.[518] Consequently, he argued for the liberation from local traditions that he believed were hindering the educational status of Muslim women and instead called for a return to the original sources of Islam. Additionally, he presented modern-educated Muslim women who actively participated in their communities as devout Muslims who brought the true message of the Islamic foundational sources and practices to the present. Čelić's references to these women aimed to demonstrate to Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina that modern

515 *Novi Behar* published her novel *Kalb Ağrısı* under the title *Bolja na srcu* in installments beginning with the first issue of the journal in 1927 (*Novi Behar* 1, no. 1 (1927): 9–10) and continuing until 1930 (*Novi Behar* no. 17/18 (1930): 280–81). The same magazine published the novel *Handana* in installemnts from issue 1 released in 1930 to issue 23/24 released in 1932. Ahmed Rasidkadic translated her poem *Sadaka* under the title *Milostinja* in *Gajret* 12, no. 3 (1913): 56. Safvet-beg Bašagić translated her poem *Dua* under the title *Molitva* in *Gajret* 9, no. 3 (1925): 41–42. The same journal started to publish the translation of her novel *Ateşten Gömlek* under the title Ognjena košulja in 1924.

516 Giomi, "Domesticating Kemalism," 162–164.

517 "Jedna turska 'Djevica Orleanska.' " trans. Rešida R., *Gajret* 8, no. 18 (1924): 286–287; Halide Edip, "Molitva," *Gajret* 9, no. 3 (1925): 41–42; Mustafa Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 5, 150.

518 Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj žene," pt. 5, 150.

education for women was a part of Muslim women's social and religious obligation to participate in the progress of the Muslim community.[519]

Apart from Čelić's article, *Novi Behar* also often published brief informative articles on educated Muslim women from various Muslims regions who actively contributed to the progress of their societies. These articles were to reveal to Bosnian Muslims that the education of women and their active participation in the labour force were realities across many Muslim regions.[520]

Reformist journals also played a significant role in introducing Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the ideas of modern Muslim male proponents of female education from around the Muslim world. As early as 1901, *Behar* published a brief report about Qāsim Amīn's book, *The New Woman*. Also, between 1901 and 1902, *Behar* serialized the book *Woman in the Islamic World* by Ahmet Ağaoğlu (also known as Ahmet Agayev Bey), which advocated the education of Muslim women as a crucial prerequisite for national liberation and advancement.[521] Safvet-beg Bašagić's article *Sto i jedan hadisi šerif* published in *Behar* in 1903 identifies prominent Muslim intellectuals Ahmed Midhat Efendi, Sayyid Amīr ʿAlī and Qāsim Amīn's not only as advocates of women's education but also as authentic scholars of Islam.[522] This illustrates that modern discussions about the status of Muslim women were closely intertwined with issues of interpretative authority within Islam. Aware of the profound division and conflict between modern Muslim reformists and the conservative members of *ʿulamāʾ* class over the question of religious authority, Bašagić argues that the conservative members of *ʿulamāʾ* have no right to criticize these authors for interfering in the work of Islamic religious scholars, since, in his view, the educational background of modern reformists gave them the full right to discuss socio-religious issues. According to Bašagić their modern education, that gave them knowledge of both Islamic tradition and modern sciences and humanities, equipped them with tools necessary not only for understanding properly their own religious doctrine, but also for responding to modern European critics of Islam and Muslim world. Bašagić, in reformists manner blamed *ʿulamāʾ* for intellectual ossification of Islam, the spread of religious formalism among Muslims and stagnation of Islamic thought.[523]

The strategic incorporation of a wide range of resources from the broader Muslim world into Muslim reformists discussions about women's education elucidates not only the dynamic flow of ideas between Bosnian Muslims and Muslims from other regions but

519 Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj žene," pt. 5, 150.
520 "Prva inženjerka u Turskoj," *Novi Behar* 6, no. 10/11 (1932): 143; "Perzijanka u državnoj službi," *Novi Behar* 6, no.22 (1933): 315; "Prva advokatica u Egiptu," *Novi Behar* 7, no. 15/16 (1934): 233.
521 "El –mer'etul dždedidetu (Nova žena)," *Behar* 1, no. 23 (1901): 369–370; Ahmet Ağaoğlu's book *Woman in the Islamic World* was published in sequels in *Behar* during 1901 and 1902.
522 Mirza Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 13, 210.
523 Mirza Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 17, *Behar* 4, no. 18 (1904): 273–274.

also evolving nature of Bosnian Muslim perspectives. While Bosnian Muslim reformists exhibited a keen interest in and maintained cultural connections with Istanbul, they also forged new connections with Islamic reform movements in the wider Muslim world.[524] In these discussions they clearly expressed a growing sense of unity with Muslims from other parts of the world, regardless of geographic or cultural differences. These writings demonstrate that the early 20th century was a significant phase in the transformation of the religious identities of Bosnian Muslims as they shifted their focus from historical and regional ties, "to the broader framework of Islamic unity."[525]

5.2.5. Reformist Distinction between "True" and "Superficial" Emancipation of Women

The modern Bosnian Muslim reformists' discourse on Muslim women's education is characterized by a notable feature of distinguishing between "true" and "superficial" (or even "extreme Europan") emancipation of women. I have the distinct impression that the reformists' distinction between what they saw as "true" emancipation and merely "superficial" emancipation was an effort to counteract negative perceptions of female emancipation that were prevalent in Bosnian society. These negative views that will be discussed in greater detail below often linked emancipation with materialism, sexual liberalism, and secularism which were seen as undesirable or harmful European trends. Reformists used the concept of "true" emancipation to clarify their position on Muslim women's rights. They aimed to show that their approach was not simply a blind imitation of modern European ideals, as their critics often claimed. They argued that empowering women through education and critical thinking was not only compatible with Islam but essential to its values, offering a model of emancipation rooted deeply in their religious and cultural context.

In his article *Naš ideal* (Our Ideal) Ibrahim Džafčić, a sharp reformist critic of Bosnian society at that time, argued that it was a sacred duty of Muslims to provide modern education to Muslim women. However, he openly criticized adopting modern European trends, drawing a clear distinction between educational advancement and cultural assimilation. His critique of European social trends specifically mentioned the "Bubikopf," a bob haircut that gained widespread popularity in the 1920s and symbolised a radical shift toward women's independence. Symbolizing a broader liberation movement among women, this hairstyle was regarded as a radical departure from traditional gender roles. Besides, he also expressed disapproval of several other modern European fashion trends. He criticized the adoption of pointy shoes and modern skirts, viewing these fashion choices as symbols of Western decadence and moral laxity. He also expressed disdain for dancing, which he

524 Xavier Bougarel, "The Diasporic Experience," 58; Balázs Trencsényi *et al., A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*, 544.

525 Balázs Trencsényi *et al*., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*, 544.

saw as another manifestation of Western cultural influence encroaching upon traditional Muslim lifestyles.[526]

The distinction between true and false emancipation was the subject of the article published in *Gajret* 1931, written by a certain teacher named Vehbija Imamović. His contention was that all Muslim authorities, religious and social, had a responsibility to raise the educational level of Muslim women, as Islam emphasizes equal importance for both men and women. Aside from this, he presented education as the most powerful means of emancipating Muslim women from both; false imitation of the West and complete adherence to old, local traditions that have caused harm not only to women but to the entire Bosnian Muslim community.[527] His assertion was that education would not liberate women from their religious heritage and impose westernization upon them. Instead, he argued that education would equip women with fundamental literacy, employment prospects, household and motherhood abilities, as well as essential values and knowledge, necessary to comprehend that emancipation does not entail blindly adopting Western trends. [528]

Ambivalent attitudes towards European modernity, generally present in the reformist discourse, is perfectly illustrated by a text written by writer and publicist Murat Šuvalić (1897–1936) and published in *Novi Behar* in 1932. This literary-didactic text entitled *Zašto nije i ona kao ostale* (Why Isn't She Like the Others*?*) features a young, naive female protagonist who, influenced by contemporary trends, falls into decadence, ultimately leading to tragic consequences.[529] The article describes the Muslim woman as pure and innocent, but also as imprudent because of the lack of education. It was precisely the lack of formal education, according to the text, that made Muslim women susceptible to superficial, material aspects of European modernity and its vices. The main aim of Šuvalić's article undoubtedly was to encourage the wider Muslim community to pay special attention to the protection of Muslim girls. The reformist component of this text lies in the specific understanding of the very nature of this protection. In this text, there is an understanding that modern education is the fundamental tool for protecting Muslim women from the trivialities of modern European culture. It was to empower Muslim women to consciously adopt only those achievements of European modernity that were consistent with their religious and cultural tradition. In this Šuvalić's text ignorance was considered to be a moral falling and education to be the necessary means to secure the survival of true Islamic moral values.

526 Džafčić, "Naš ideal," 8.

527 Vehbija Imamović, "Prava i loša emancipacija," *Gajret* 12, no. 4 (1931): 85. As a co-author of the dramatic text entitled *Emancipated Woman*, he expressed the same ideas. See: Mustafa Alikalfić and Vehbija Imamović, *Emancipovana žena* (Sarajevo: Vlasništvo i naklada Gajreta, 1932).

528 Imamović, "Prava i loša emancipacija," 84–85.

529 M. Šuvalić, "Zašto nije i ona kao ostale," pt. 1, *Novi Behar* 5, no. 21/22 (1932): 295–297, pt. 2, *Novi Behar* 5, no. 23/24 (1932): 322–325.

The same central thesis of this text we also find in the work of Dževad Sulejmanpašić, who considered modern education of Muslim women to be the best shield against negative social trends of modern European societies. He openly criticized both; the expansion of the materialistic worldview and the spread of sexual liberalism among Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the conservative focus on veiling and segregation of Muslim women as a means of protecting Muslims from these negative aspects of modernity. Sulejmapašić in his text *Prodiranje sveta u život muslimanke* (Penetration of the Secular World into the Life of a Muslim Woman) argued that the conservative insistence on the preservation of traditional practices, such as veiling and seclusion of Muslim women, was a consequence of a lack of understanding of a social reality in which Muslims lived.[530] Namely, he held that economic conditions of Muslim families already had compelled many Muslim women to seek for paid employment and that it was impossible under the economic and social circumstances to keep women confined exclusively to the domestic sphere. He also argued that because of the global impact and spread of modern European ideas and customs it was illusory to try to keep women away from them. For him, only education of Muslim women had the power to contribute to the preservation of Islamic morality and values among women by providing them with knowledge necessary to distinguish positive from the negative aspects of European modernity. A genuine threat to Islamic morality according to Sulejmanpašić were not education of Muslim women and their integration into the workforce, but Muslim women's illiteracy that made them susceptible to negative aspects of European modernity. Besides, Sulejmanpašić, like already mentioned by Begović, sought to show interrelatedness of women's lack of education and prostitution. According to him limited employment opportunities for women who lack of education made them particularly likely to seek income in prostitution. Thus, for Sulejmanpašić depriving Muslim women of education was an act that did not contribute to the preservation of traditional morality, but on the contrary, it contributed to the spread of immoral practices among women and had very damaging effect on the entire Muslim community.[531]

Writings of advocates of modern female education, particularly those of female authors, show us that they were fully aware of the negative image the public associated with educated Muslim women and to a certain extent influenced by the negative connotations that had been already attached to the term emancipation, such as sexual promiscuity, denial of tradition, westernization and anti-motherhood. To ensure wider support for their ideas female advocates of Muslim women education reaffirmed motherhood as the highest role of women and have sought to distance themselves against modern European trends and ideas.[532] Muslim female writer Nira Bećirbegović Filipović in a text in which she openly advocated education of Muslim women as a means of emancipating them as

530 Dževad Sulejmanpašić, "Prodiranje sveta u život muslimanke," *Gajret* 10 (1929): 285–286.
531 Sulejmanpašić, "Prodiranje sveta u život muslimanke," 285–286.
532 Bećirbegović – Filipović, "Odgojna uloga žene," 24–25.

future mothers from ignorance and all harmful traditions that hindered the community's progress, explicitly writes that she does not consider "extreme" European type of women's emancipation to be a true emancipation and to be a model that Muslim women should follow.[533] Though he does not define this term in the text, it is obvious that she identifies it with promiscuity, smoking, drinking, dancing and entertainment.[534]

Jovanka Šiljak (1883–1962), a Serb non-Muslim feminist activist and associate of journal *Đulistan*, in her speech delivered at a Congress of Muslim Intellectuals held in 1928 in Sarajevo gave special attention to the concepts of feminism and emancipation. Her speech addressed the fears of those Muslim men that held that emancipation would lead to the disruption of established family structures. She sought to show that feminism is not female supremacy and that emancipation of women, that she advocated, does not lead women to neglect their duties as wives and mothers by establishing clear division between true and false emancipation and by claiming close link between female emancipation and the progress of family and community.[535] While, she defined adoption of habits recognized as male such as visiting clubs and coffee rooms as pseudo-emancipation, she depicted authentically emancipated woman as a woman liberated from the ignorance that was truly devoted to the welfare of her family and community. Educated woman was the one who acquired domestic skills necessary for raising family, and vocational skills necessary for her employment, that is to say the one who was able to actively contribute to the progress of her family and the wider community. Muslim women's education in Šiljak speech was presented as a social necessity. The high level of illiteracy and criminality among young Muslims and the miserable economic status of the community in its entirety she attributed to Muslim women's ignorance with an obvious aim of showing that female ignorance and not education was a real threat to community. She insisted that the true recovery of the Muslim community demanded emancipated women able to take an active role in family and community.[536]

The distinction between "superficial" and "true" emancipation and openly critical attitudes towards some aspects of European modernity, especially the modern inclination towards material luxury and sexual liberalism, present in reformist discourse show us that Muslim reformers selectively accepted those modern European ideas and values that they considered to be an integral part of their own religious and cultural tradition. Female education was primarily meant as an Islamic value and thus as a key for building a modern and progressive Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina that authentically respects

533 Bećirbegović – Filipović, "Odgojna uloga žene," 25.
534 Bećirbegović – Filipović, "Odgojna uloga žene," 25.
535 "Kongres muslimana intelektualaca održan 6. i 7. septembra, prilikom proslave Gajretove dvadesetpetogodišnjice (nastavak)," *Gajret* 9, (1928): 328.
536 Kongres muslimana intelektualaca održan 6. i 7. septembra, prilikom proslave Gajretove dvadesetpetogodišnjice (nastavak), Gajret 9, (1928): 328.

its own religious principles. Such a selective and critical attitude towards the material and cultural aspects of European modernity was in accordance with reformist general idea according to which values such as rationalism, progress, human freedom were deeply rooted in the Islamic scriptures and in the history of Islamic civilization.

5.3. Muslim Women's Education in Conservative and Revivalist Discourses on Identity and Moral Order in Bosnia

The changes that occurred from the late 19th century in the field of education and reformist responses about public, modern education of Muslim women triggered opposition from proponents of other intellectual orientations present in Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this section I will show how reformist ideas on female education, particularly their positive attitudes towards Muslim women's education in public institutions, provoked two different types of reactions.

Conservative circles were the first to oppose the reformist ideas on female education, advocating the preservation of traditional institutions and methods of educating Muslim women within the family household. They viewed this type of education as authentically Islamic and a shield against modern European social trends perceived as anti-Islamic. Islamic revivalism which emerged in 1930s introduced the new and distinctive opposition to reformists ideas on female education This intellectual orientation called for the creation of Islamic educational institutions that would provide Muslim women with modern education while preserving Islamic values. While revivalists accepted the reformist idea that women's education was crucial for community progress, they, like conservatives, advocated for the preservation of traditional gender relations and practices that they believed were inherent to Islamic tradition.

Conservative and revivalist circles opposed modern education for Muslim women in public institutions primarily on the grounds that such education adversely affects the morals and identity of Muslim women, and ultimately the entire community as a whole. The concerns regarding female education, the moral health of the Muslim community, and its identity were all interdependent. This is evident from the press of that time, which identified as one of the fundamental reasons for Muslim resistance to female education a widespread belief that modern education leads to the moral degradation of girls, the alienation from their own tradition and the Westernization of the entire community.[537]

537 "Lijep primjer svijesti i razumijevanja prema školovanju naše muslimanke," *Gajret* 19, no 3 (1938): 56; Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci* 5.

There was a strong correlation between women's education, moral issues, and identity, not only in conservative and revivalist discourse but also in reformist discourse, as previously shown. What distinguishes these discourses significantly is the understanding of the impact of modern education on identity and morality.

The significance placed on women's morality and identity in discussions regarding their education stems from the prevalent belief—shared by reformist, conservatives and revivalists— that women are custodians and embodiments of moral principles and community identity, a notion present in various religious and cultural contexts.[538] Scholars such as Barbara Freyer Stowasser, Ziba Mir-Hosseini, and Afsaneh Najmabadi have demonstrated that in different Muslim communities, women's issues, especially women's education, have served as a focal point for heated intra-Muslim debates about Muslim morality and cultural authenticity.[539] The notion that women play a crucial role in the socialization and enculturation of children was embraced not only by reformists but also conservatives and revivalists in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Muslim mothers were commonly viewed as playing an important role in transmitting Islamic values to future generations of Muslims, thus having a major impact on the formation of Muslim morality and identity. The Islamic intellectual community in Bosnia and Herzegovina disagreed, however, as to the effect of modern education on the execution of this important role for women and on the stability and identity of the entire Muslim community.

In addition, the discussion about Muslim women's education was inextricably linked to broader concerns among the Bosnian Muslim population regarding the impact of European modernity on Muslim identity. It should not be surprising that attitudes towards female education were greatly influenced by distinct views of Europe and its modernity, as the introduction of modern European institutions and the penetration of modern European pedagogical ideas into Bosnia and Herzegovina led to the debates over Muslim women's education. Scholars Towns, Thompson, and Göle have demonstrated how, in many modern Muslim communities, the issue of women's education has been inextricably linked to the issue of compatibility between Islam and European modernity. They generally have identified three distinct perspectives on the connection between Islam and modern European civilization in discussions on Muslim woman status: a complete rejection of Western civilization; a division of culture into two spheres—the material and the spiritual—with the claim of Islamic civilization's superiority in the spiritual realm; and an assertion of

538 See: Seid Korkut, "Etika i moral," pt. 2, *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 3 (1939): 43–44.

539 Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an,* 5; Mir-Hosseini, *Islam and Gender*; Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Hazards of Modernity and Morality: Women, State and Ideology in contemporary Iran," in *Women, Islam and the State*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti (Basingstoke [etc.]: Macmillan, 1991), 48–77.

compatibility between Islam and the modern West in terms of women's status, particularly their right to education.[540]

5.3.1. Education, Identity, and the Moral Order of the Muslim Community: A Conservative Perspective

The conservative opponents of modern education for Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina grounded their opposition on two key premises. First, they saw a strong correlation between the modern education of women and the decline of morality, social decay, and anarchy. Second, they argued that education in institutions modelled after European schools would invariably result in the loss of the Islamic identity of Muslim children.

- ***Fears of moral and social chaos***

In contrast to Muslim reformists, Muslim conservatives generally viewed modern education as a threat to the "natural" gender order. The brochure written by Sofija Pletikosić in 1911 offers the most perceptive understanding of the conservative viewpoint on the correlation between morality and modern education.

As a central component of Pletikosić's critique of reformist views on education for Muslim women, she asserted that modern education threatens women's "natural" roles, undermining the stability of society as a whole. Unlike reformist authors who viewed modern education as a means for women to successfully fulfil their domestic roles, Pletikosić saw such education as a pathway to the breakdown of the natural order between the sexes. In her critique of modern education for Muslim women, Pletikosić constructed and compared stereotypical images of the ideal Muslim mother and wife—a physically and mentally healthy woman fully devoted to her family and community—to that of the morally corrupt European woman. The latter was depicted as physically and mentally ill, lacking respect for men, and demanding absolute equality between men and women.[541] Pletikosić's stereotypical characterization of modern, educated European woman clearly demonstrates that her opposition to the modern education of women rested on the belief that such a type of education encourages women to leave their natural roles and consequently leads to social anarchy..[542] She contended that any departure from traditional gender roles, where the wife submits to her husband's authority, would lead to moral decline and ultimately, the downfall of civilization. Thus, she promoted an education for women that consisted of religious instruction, basic literacy and numeracy skills, as well as practical skills required for

540 Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens. Republican Righs, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Towns, "The Status of Women" 681–706; Göle, *The Forbidden Modern*, Towns, "Civilization," 91–94.

541 Safijje-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja,* 4, 22–24.

542 Safijja-hanum – Sofija Pletikosić, *Polemika o emancipaciji žene. U obranu muslimanskog ženskinja* (Opatija: Self-published, 1911), 37–40; 49; 59–62.

household management, child-rearing, cooking, and sewing.[543] This kind of education was understood as something to be done in private or semi-private sphere such as home, rather than in separate educational institution.[544]

Pletikosić's critique of modern education for women adhered to her pessimistic view of modern education as a whole, which she argued neglected the cultivation of students' moral character in favour of vocational training.[545] In her view, modern schools were the primary cause of the moral and economic decline of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As opposed to Muslim proponents of female education who identified women's lack of education as a major cause of Muslims' economic and cultural underdevelopment, she blamed modern educated Muslim men for all forms of social problems within the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She portrayed them as individuals who had abandoned their traditions and values for a modern way of life and values that hindered the moral and economic well-being of Muslims. Pletikosić attributed social issues like alcoholism, sexual promiscuity, and a lack of respect for traditional authorities to modern educated Muslim men. She argued that these men were responsible for the deterioration of family structures and the overall disintegration of the Muslim community.[546]

Also evident in the work of Muslim male conservatives is their fear that modern women's education would encourage women to participate in paid employment, which was viewed as contrary to the nature of a woman and as a threat to the traditional division of labour that casts men as the primary breadwinner and women as the primary domestic worker. As part of conservative rejections of women's participation in paid labour, the emphasis was placed on natural, biological differences between men and women, claiming that these differences entirely determine both women's and men's different roles and responsibilities in public and private sphere. In conservative perspective, women's participation in paid labour was not only a violation of established social norms, but also a violation of natural, God-given laws.[547]

Based on verse 4:34 of the Qurʾān, Bosnian conservative author Ali Riza Prohić writes that the traditional division of roles is grounded in the Qurʾān itself. The verse, "Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women). So good women are the obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah hath guarded…" he interprets as assigning

543 Safijje-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja,* 9; Safijja-hanum – Sofija Pletikosić, *Polemika o emancipaciji žene*, 55.
544 Safijje-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja*, 9–10; 21.
545 Safijje-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja*, 8–9.
546 Safijja-hanum – Sofija Pletikosić, *Polemika o emancipaciji žene*, 59–62.
547 Mustafa Forto, *Otkrivanje muslimanskog ženskinja* (Sarajevo: Štamparija B. Buchwald i dr., 1925), 5–10.

men the responsibility of managing external, public affairs, while women are primarily responsible for household matters.[548]

Ahmed Lutfi Čokić (1878–1933) argued that a woman's employment outside the home is a form of violence against her domestic nature. Čokić believed that paid work conflicts with a woman's primary responsibilities as a mother and housewife, as well as her physical and intellectual characteristics. He viewed women as innately physically and intellectually inferior beings who needed protection from life's challenges, similar to the views of other conservatives.[549] From Čokić's perspective exclusion of women from participation in public life and paid work was not a kind of discrimination against women, but on the contrary an act of justice, based on the recognition of and respect for natural differences between men and women.[550] Thus, it is not surprising to find in his work the assertion that Muslim women who are employed are actual victims of their fathers and husbands, who fail to fulfil their duty as breadwinners. Moreover, he strongly condemned advocates of women's work outside the home, describing them as cowards, sluggers and degenerates who were not truly interested in the welfare of Muslim women and the welfare of the Muslim community at large. [551]

Similarly, Muhamed Hifzi Muftić (1872–1920) argued that complete social equality between men and women went against both nature and Islamic teachings. He believed that the exclusion of Muslim women from public life and paid work did not demonstrate that Islam was a misogynistic religion. Instead, he saw it as proof that Islam was the perfect natural religion, respecting the natural laws that established distinct social functions and roles for men and women, as well as a hierarchy of the sexes with men in a position of supremacy.[552] Muftić cited the exclusion of women from certain professions in modern European countries as evidence that even modern Europe does not fully endorse absolute equality between men and women, recognizing instead the biological differences between the sexes. [553]

The arguments that Ibrahim Hakki Čokić (1871–1948), the conservative *muftī* of Tuzla, used to oppose the inclusion of Muslim women in paid labour closely resembled those expressed by Egyptian scholar Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī (1878–1954) in his 1901 book *The Muslim Woman*, which was published as a response to Qāsim Amīn's (1863–1908) book *The New Woman*. This book was translated in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1915, after being published in instalments in the journal *Biser* during 1913 and 1914.[554] Čokić similarly to Wajdī claimed

548 Ali Riza Prohić, *Što hoće naša muslimanska inteligencija*, 23–24.
549 Ahmed Lutfi Čokić, "Islam, nošnja i otkrivanje," pt. 2, *Hikjmet* 2, no. 23/24 (1931): 339.
550 Čokić, "Islam, nošnja i otkrivanje," pt. 2, 335–339.
551 Čokić, "Islam, nošnja i otkrivanje," pt. 2, 339.
552 Muhamed Hifzi Muftić, "Šta je naš cilj," *Biser* 1, no. 2/3 (1912):21.
553 Muftić, "Šta je naš cilj," 21.
554 Muhamed Farid Vedždi, *Muslimanska žena* (Mostar: Prva muslimanska nakl. Knjižara, 1915).

that such inclusion would disrupt the "natural" division of labour, which he believed was necessary for the survival of the human race.[555] Čokić emphasized women's natural and reproductive functions, arguing that women were primarily and solely responsible for being mothers and fulfilling the duties of childbearing, nurturing, and raising children. Čokić believed that women cannot perform these demanding functions while also competing with men in the labour market. Therefore, he regarded women's paid work as a danger to their ability to properly fulfil their most important roles, and consequently, as a threat to the survival of humanity.[556]

Although Čokić's discussion on women's paid labour—which was part of a broader debate on veiling with his opponent Mehmed Begović—did not explicitly mention Wajdī, it seems apparent that Čokić based himself on the main arguments presented in Wajdī's book *The Muslim Woman*. The remarkable similarity between their arguments leads to this conclusion. In another part of the mentioned debate about veiling, Čokić praised and recommended Wajdī's work as an excellent critique of the dangers posed by the European model of women's emancipation.[557] This suggests that he was familiar with and appreciated Wajdī's work. Čokić's endorsement of Wajdī's views on emancipation can be attributed to his strong opposition to European type of emancipation, particularly the participation of women in industrial labour, which he regarded as a kind of slavery that was harmful to women's nature.[558]

Mustafa Forto makes an interesting argument in his book *Otkrivanje muslimanskog ženskinja* (Unveiling of Muslim Women) that reflects the conservative view that women's employment challenges traditional gender roles within marriages. He opposes women's employment outside the home, arguing that financially independent women are less likely to be obedient to their husbands since they are no longer dependent upon them. The view reflects a broader conservative concern that women's economic emancipation threatens traditional family structures and male authority.[559]

- ***Muslim woman's education, Muslim identity, and Europe***

Understanding the sceptical views regarding Muslim women's education in public educational institutions, as reflected in conservative discourses in Bosnia and Herzegovina, requires also recognizing their perception of the discrepancy between Islamic principles and those of modern Europe.

555 Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, "Zejluttesettur ili odgovor g. Bušatliću," pt. 2, *Hikjmet* 1, no. 4 (1929): 120–125.
556 Čokić, "Zejluttesettur," pt. 2, 121. For more about Wajdī views on women's employment see: Sherry Sayed Gadelrab, *Medicine and Morality in Egypt: Gender and Sexuality in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century* (London, New York: I.B Tauris & Co. Ltd: 2016), 93–94.
557 Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, "Zejluttesettur ili odgovor g. Bušatliću," pt. 1, *Hikjmet* 1, no. 3 (1929) 83–84.
558 Muhamed Ferid Vedždi, "Muslimanska žena," *Biser* 2, no. 14 (1914): 213–214.
559 Forto, *Otkrivanje muslimanskog ženskinja*, 11–12.

An article written by a Bosnian Muslim scholar Derviš Korkut (1888–1969), published in *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* in 1934, gives us good insight into conservative understanding of the relationship between Islam and European modernity. In his article entitled *Naobrazba i moral* (Education and Morality), Korkut did not refer directly to the issue of women's education but discussed a reformist understanding of modern education as a necessary tool for community's progress. There are two main characteristics of Korkut's article. First, Korkut's article places greater importance on religious and moral values than on scientific and technical accomplishments. He utilized the theme of the rise and fall of civilizations to depict the conflict between science and morality. In line with both Muslim and modern European moralists, he argued that great civilizations declined due to the abandonment of moral standards, which occurred following the zenith of scientific and technological progress.[560] Korkut acknowledged the significance of education in achieving progress and prosperity. However, he strongly believed that the preservation of traditional morality was the most sacred obligation of Muslims, as the survival of the Muslim community according to him depended on it.[561] Second, Korkut closely associated the traditional Muslim way of life with morality, and Europe with scientific and technical progress, as well as with the crisis of morality. Given his views, it is not surprising that Korkut regarded Muslim villages in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were isolated from modern trends, as bastions of authentic Muslim religiosity and identity.[562] It is clear that morality in his discourse was identified with traditional Muslim values and practices. On the other hand, he considered corruption, moral crisis, perversion, cult of stupidity, loneliness, and ignorance to be the main characteristics of European modernity.[563] Thus, he approved the adoption of the scientific and technological achievements of the modern Europe but strongly rejected modern European values seeing them as a threat to authentic Islamic morality.[564]

Sofija Pletikosić's aforementioned work from 1911 features similar arguments. She argued that despite its scientific and technological advancements, modern European civilization is inferior to Islamic civilization in terms of moral and family values. She constructed Islam and modern Europe as opposed to each other, creating binaries between piety and scientific progress, spirituality and vanity as well as harmony and discord in the family.[565] Pletikosić acknowledged the existence of moral decay and negative social phenomena, including prostitution, among Bosnian Muslims. However, she attributed these social ills primarily to the influence of modern education institutions and modern social theories on Bosnian society. She attributed the loss of faith, morality, and solidarity in the Muslim community

560 Derviš Korkut, "Naobrazba i moral," *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 2, no. 12 (1934): 629–633.
561 Korkut, "Naobrazba i moral," 629.
562 Korkut, "Naobrazba i moral," 633.
563 Korkut, "Naobrazba i moral," 628.
564 Korkut, "Naobrazba i moral," 628.
565 Safijja-hanum – Sofija Pletikosić, *Polemika o emancipaciji žene*, 35–37.

to the influence of Darwinism and Kant's philosophy among Muslim intellectuals.[566] She established a sharp distinction between traditional Muslim women and modern educated Muslim men. While women in her works are equated with idealized Islamic tradition, modern educated men are equated with the modern, according to her immoral, West. She strongly criticized modern educated Muslims holding them to be responsible for vulgarity, obscenity, and pollution of their own religious and cultural tradition.[567] She argued that the introduction of modern schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina led to the creation of materialistic and selfish Muslim men who were ashamed of their own tradition and indifferent to the welfare of their community. Pletikosić depicted modern educated Muslims as individuals who "Drink wine, eat pork, mocked the law, abandoned their faith, disregarded their customs and traditional clothing, and desecrated their sacred things."[568] I argue that this contrast between modern educated Muslim men—generally associated with the perceived vices of the modern West—and traditional Muslim women, seen as embodiment of true morality, served a dual purpose. It was to demonstrate the superiority of the Islamic value system compared to the modern West, but also to establish an internal boundary between "true" Muslims and only nominal, Westernized Muslims within the Bosnian Muslim community.[569]

The didactic articles about Muslim women isolated from moral social trends, as well as stereotypical representations of modern educated men published in the conservative journal *Hikjmet* certainly had same functions. In *Hikjmet*'s discourse traditional Muslim woman was an embodiment of true Islamic morality and traditional practices related to women; particularly practices of seclusion and the face veiling were perceived as being of crucial importance for the preservation of the authentic Islamic morality and identity. On the contrary, modern educated Muslim men were condemned for betraying their religion and culture, which illustrates that *Hikjmet* viewed modern, public education as closely related to the weakening of Islamic identity in general.[570] To my understanding, their insistence on conserving traditional practices and customs related to women was connected with their efforts to maintain the clear distinction between Islam and Western civilization, which were understood to be mutually exclusive. Certainly, such views were not specific to the Bosnian conservative discourse. Chaterjee's analysis of Indian responses to Western colonialism and Gole's examination of the 19th century Ottoman Empire have demonstrated how the preservation of traditional practices and customs related to women

566 Safijje-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja*, 17–19.
567 Safijje-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja,* 24–25.
568 Safijje-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja*, 8.
569 For more about the use of Muslim women's issues for establishing a border to the internal-Other see Kandiyoti, "Introduction," 8.
570 Jahjazade, "Neozbiljna ambicija naše inteligencije," 250–253; Jahić, Husejn. "Pokriti ili otkriti." *Hikjmet* 3, no. 26 (1931): 51–53; Hussein Husin, "Zbog muževe mode," *Hikjmet* 3, no. 27 (1931): 85–87¸ Muslim, "Žrtva progresa," 232–237; Husejin A. Šehić, "Iza mušebaka i izvan mušebaka," *Hikjmet* 2, no. 15 (1930): 89–91; Husejin A. Šehić, "Jedna šetnja kroz vašar u noći," *Hikjmet* 5, no. 56 (1934): 247–250.

was essential for maintaining a clear distinction from the West.[571] Similarly, conservatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina viewed traditional institutions and practices as a distinctive part of their identity to be safeguarded from foreign influence. In conservative discourses, negative attitudes towards modern education for Muslim women were closely linked to fears that such education would threaten the practice of the face veiling, which was seen and presented as both a religious requirement that protected women's morals and a symbol of distinctive Muslim identity. This fear cannot be fully understood without considering the common premise of reformists that the veiling of Muslim women was one of the main obstacles to their education and the progress of Muslims—a theme that will be elaborated in the following chapter.[572] Advocates of unveiling among Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina argued that it was necessary for education, employment, and the advancement of the Muslim community. Given the close connection between Muslim morality and the veil Homa Hoodfar has shown that this close association between advocacy of public education for Muslim women and unveiling generally present in global Muslim reformist discourses was a "strategic mistake" that gave conservative groups a chance to justify their opposition to formal education for women by framing it as a moral and religious issue.[573] In the next chapter we will see how Muslim conservatives harshly rejected reformists' advocacy of unveiling as anti-Islamic and as a threat to the morals of the Muslim community and its distinctive identity. While Muslim reformist strategically claimed that even traditional scholars had different opinions about the extent to which a Muslim woman should be covered in order to show that full veiling was not an Islamic requirement, but a custom that kept Muslim women in ignorance, Muslim conservatives claimed that all the great authorities of the past defined it as a religious requirement that protects women's morality and that they allowed Muslim women to unveil only in cases of necessity or need. Further, they sought to show that these accepted, trustworthy interpreters of Qurʾān nowhere defined education or women's employment as a need or necessity that may justify the act of uncovering.

The analysis of Bosnian conservative perspectives indicates that their critiques of modern education of Muslim women were not merely product of their ignorance, as suggested by their reformist opponents, but primarily reflected their deep existential concern for

571 Partha Chatterjee, "Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women: The Contest of India," *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (1989): 622–633; Nilufer Gole, *The Forbidden Modern*, 30–31.

572 Đermana Šeta, *Zašto marama. Bosanskohercegovačke muslimanke o životu i radu pod maramom* (Sarajevo: CNS and CIPS, 2011): 8.

573 Homa Hoodfar, "The Veil in Their Minds and on Our Heads: Veiling Practices and Muslim Women," in *Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader,* eds. Elizabeth A. Castelli and Rosamond Rodman (New York: Palgrave, 2001): 428.

preserving inherited institutions and practices understood to be of central importance for maintaining moral order and identity of Bosnian Muslims.[574]

5.3.2. The Issue of Muslim Women's Education in Revivalist Perspective

In the late 1930s, revivalist scholars associated with the magazine *El-Hidaje* began to explore the topic of women's education. Articles published in *El-Hidaje* present a unique perspective on the issue of Muslim women's education. The perspective articulated in *El-Hidaje* was critical of both: conservative elements within the *ʿulamāʾ* class, and reformists initiatives that were seen as contributing to the Westernization of the Muslim community.

Similar to the reformists, they recognized the importance of Muslim women in the advancement of the Muslim community and held religious authorities accountable for not providing adequate educational opportunities for Muslim women. But unlike the reformists, they were more critical of modern European ideas, especially those related to gender issues.[575] *El-Hidaje's* articles on Muslim women education characterize generally a deep concern over moral and economic degradation of the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina and an attempt to show that Islam is the only true solution to the social issues facing the Muslim community.

- ***Moral and economic progress of Muslims***

El-Hidaje's interest in women's education was part of a larger concern for the moral development of Muslim youth.[576] The authors of this journal believed that the economic crisis and social issues faced by Muslims in modern times were primarily indicative of a moral crisis within the Muslim community. Consequently, while acknowledging the need to increase literacy and education levels among Muslims, they argued that public education alone was not sufficient to ensure the survival and progress of the Muslim community. They believed that only education based on Islamic principles could protect Muslim identity and morality, which they believed was under threat from modern Western ideologies.[577] *El-Hidaje* contributors Tarik Muftić (1920–2013), Mustafa Brkić (dates unknown), and Mehmed Handžić (1906–1944) criticized equally those Muslims who blindly followed their parents' interpretation of Islam, considering them as fatalistic, as well as modern, secular

574 This type of moral anxiety and concern regarding changes in established gender roles was not exclusive to Bosnian conservative discourse of the early 20th century but has appeared across various historical and social contexts. Gender roles have long occupied a central place in the definition of moral order and collective identity—from colonial narratives and policies to contemporary debates on modernity, identity, and social change. For broader discussions of these dynamics see: Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Clarissa, Adamson, "Gendered Anxieties: Islam, Women's Rights, and Moral Hierarchy in Java," *Anthropological Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (2007): 5–37.

575 For more about their views on Bosnian *ʿulamāʾ* see: Muhamed Pandža, "O podizanju moralnog autoritete ilmije," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 3 (1940): 69–71; Dobrača, "Ulema: njena uloga, odgovornost i mogućnosti rada," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 9/11 (1941): 224–233.

576 Mustafa Bajrović, " 'Jedan slučaj za opomenu,' " *El-Hidaje* 2, no. 10 (1938): 152.

577 Mustafa Rešidov Mehić, "Loše strane poslijeratnog života bos.-herc. Muslimana," *El-Hidaje* 2, no. 8 (1938): 116–120; Ibrahim Trebinjac, "Nekoliko riječi o našoj omladini," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 6 (1941): 150–152.

educated Muslims for rejecting and betraying their religious heritage and community. Their texts suggest that that true Muslim for revivalists was educated, moral and self-conscious believer, proud of his own cultural and religious tradition.[578]

A major focus of *El-Hidaje*'s authors was the moral and religious education of Muslim women. It resonated with their overarching belief that a Muslim woman's foremost duty is to educate and raise future generations of devout Muslims. Revivalist discourse regarded and depicted mothers as moral agents responsible for transmitting Islamic moral standards to their children, making them an important factor in the moral development of the Muslim community. As a result, their inadequate education in religious matters was condemned as a threat to the entire community.[579]

Revivalist discourse glorified motherhood as a sacred duty for women, while also condemning "modern Muslim women" who were often stereotyped as prioritizing fashion and personal comfort over their children's welfare. This behaviour was believed to be influenced by modern European trends.[580] The condemnation of modern educated Muslim women as a women who neglected their "natural" roles of housewives and mothers primarily aimed to show negative effects of the adoption of Western lifestyles and ideologies among Muslims. European feminism and emancipation were seen not only as threat to Muslim women's morality but to the health and stability of the entire Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Modern European societies were depicted as grappling with various social problems, including a rise in divorce rates, abortions, infanticide, and the proliferation of prostitution, attributed to what was perceived as the European "unnatural" emancipation. This emancipation was described as a form of rebellion against traditional notions of marriage and motherhood.[581]

In 1942, Mustafa Hadžimulić (dates unknown) wrote an article in *El-Hidaje* that illustrated how revivalists drew inspiration from a variety of sources. Hadžimulić used Qurʾānic and *ḥadīth* material, as well as works by Herbert Spencer and Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī, to argue that women's primary area of activity and influence is the home and family. He emphasized the importance of increasing the education level of Muslim women, as they play a crucial role as mothers in the primary education and socialization of their children, and in the development of stable and functional families and society. Although Hadžimulić did not specify the type of education Muslim women should receive, his general views on the role

578 Mladi musliman [Teufik Muftić], "Problem naše omladine," *El-Hidaje* 6, no. 1/2 (1942): 17–22; Brkić, "Uloga vođa i inteligencije," 342–346; Mehmed Handžić, "Obnavljanje islama. Komentar jednog hadisa," *El-Hidaje* 7, no. 11/12 (1944): 340–341.

579 Mustafa Hadžimulić, "Problem odgoja naše djece," *El-Hidaje* 6, no. 3 (1942):59–60.

580 Muhamed Borić, "Majka," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 3 (1940): 81–83.

581 Mustafa Busuladžić, "Kult golotinje," *El-Hidaje* 7, no. 7/8 (1943): 222.

of women in the family and society suggest that he supported their education primarily in religious and so-called domestic sciences.[582]

While *El-Hidaje* primarily advocated education of Muslim women in religious and domestic sciences, harsh reality at the dawn of World War II certainly contributed to the fact that it also published articles advocating higher training of Muslim women in crafts, as a means of ensuring economic recovery and development of Muslims.[583] In 1939 and 1940 *El-Hidaje* published two articles that openly criticized various Muslim groups because of the neglect of Muslim women's primary and vocational education. There are two common characteristics of these articles. First, both works characterizes utilitarian approach to female education. Authors of these works Alija Silajdžić (1909–1973) and Muhamed Borić (dates unknown) advocated better primary and vocational education for Muslim women, as a means of ensuring economic stability of Muslim families and the wider community in wartime conditions. In these articles, Muslim women vocational training was presented as a key tool that was to contribute to the economic revitalization of Muslim families and communities.[584] Besides, educating Muslim women was also seen as a way to prevent further moral decay of Muslim women and families, often caused by poverty. Borić explicitly states that low education and illiteracy among Muslim women were major factors that allowed for the exploitation of Muslim women through prostitution and low-paid work in wealthy non-Muslim families.[585]

Unlike conservatives, revivalists generally saw prostitution not only as the result of penetration of Western values, but as closely related to Muslim poverty and misery.[586] Both authors appealed to Muslims of all intellectual orientations to stop empty talks on Muslim women and to devote their time and energy to the issue of Muslim women education and employment.[587] Borić argued that Muslims had a responsibility to establish institutions offering primary and vocational education for Muslim women in fields traditionally associated with women and home-based industries. This would enable women to contribute to the economic well-being of their families without compromising their morality.[588] Borić's and Siljadžić's writings criticized not only modern educated Muslims, but also conservatives for neglecting actual social problems and female education. For them, the moral and economic crisis demanded from Muslims to organize distinct schools for Muslim women that would provide them with skills necessary for the economic recovery

582 Hadžimulić, "Problem odgoja naše djece," 56–60.
583 Alija Silajdžić, "Društveno pitanje muslimanke," *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 6/7 (1939): 75; Muharem Borić, "Za bolju budućnost naše muslimanke," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 6 (1941): 154–156.
584 Silajdžić, "Društveno pitanje muslimanke," 75; Borić, "Za bolju budućnost naše muslimanke," 154–156.
585 Borić, "Za bolju budućnost naše muslimanke," 154–156. A similar argumentation is present also in the following article: Muhamed Pandža, "U borbu protiv prostitucije," *El-Hidaje* 1, no. 4 (1937): 62–63.
586 "U borbu protiv prostitucije,"*El-Hidaje* 1*,* no. 4 (1936): 62.
587 Silajdžić, "Društveno pitanje muslimanke," 75; Borić, "Za bolju budućnost naše muslimanke," 154–156.
588 Borić, "Za bolju budućnost naše muslimanke," 154–156.

of Muslims and moral and religious education necessary for the moral renewal of the community.

These articles are characterized by a clear revivalist tone, depicting women's education as an ideal that had already been fully realized in the early Muslim community. This is especially evident in Alija Siljadžic's text, which highlights the early Islamic community as the reference point towards which everything should be oriented. Conversely, the Bosnian Muslim attitude towards girls' education is depicted as a betrayal of Islamic principles and an embodiment of pre-Islamic Arab values and traditions.[589]

These articles that advocated organization of distinct modern educational institutions for Muslim women that were to be both modern and Islamic one show us that revivalist authors although aware of deep moral and economic problems were sceptical towards existing modern educational institutions and that they tried to offer Islamic solution for existing social problems.

- ***The glorification of the early Muslim community***

The revivalist texts focused on the early Islamic period as the epitome of women's liberation. While this approach was similar to that of reformists, the revivalists' main objective was to demonstrate Islam's superiority over other religions and cultures. Mehmed Handžić's (1906–1944) discussion on the education of Muslim women is a particularly illustrative example in this regard. While Handžić saw as the ideal Muslim woman the one who focuses on her responsibilities as mother and housewife, he glorified educated women from the early Muslim community and their contributions to the field of science and culture. The references he made to prominent female figures from early Islamic history served to confirm the enlightening and human character of Islam, as well as the superiority of Islamic social teachings over those of other faiths and the modern Europe.[590] In a time when women's emancipation became a measure of civilization, Handzic wrote about Islam as a religion of liberation that brought true emancipation for Muslim women. He argued that in the early period of Islamic history, women attained rights and freedoms that were not achieved by Western women until centuries later.

There are two fundamental characteristics of Handžić's discourse on women's education in the early Muslim community. First, he held that women in the early Muslim community were given education with an aim of enabling them to fulfil their "natural" roles of wives and mothers and to contribute to the development of Islamic culture and the spread of Islam. This suggests that he viewed women's work outside of the home as acceptable, as long as it was directed towards the advancement of Islam and the progress of Muslims.

589 Silajdžić, "Društveno pitanje muslimanke," 75.
590 Mehmed Handžić, "Položaj žene u Islamu," *El-Hidaje* 2, no. 2/3 (1938): 21.

Second, Handžić described prominent women from the early Muslim community as adherents of the veiling practice. Handžić's aim was to demonstrate that veiling had its roots in the early history of Islam, which was a response to reformist circles who believed that veiling was a result of the absorption of other cultures into Islam and who regarded veiling as one of the main obstacles to their modern Muslim women's education. In contrast, Handžić argued that veiling was a required Islamic behaviour and that it did not pose any obstacle to women's education.[591] Handžić's belief that veiling and seclusion, as well as traditional family structures where women are subordinate to men, were necessary to maintain chastity and prevent social chaos led him to emphasize the importance of educating Muslim women in religious and domestic sciences.[592]

Several of Handžić's texts about exemplary women from the first centuries of Islam highlight their virtues, morality and full commitment to family. They were depicted as gentle mothers, devoted wives who unconditionally served their husbands, enlightened pious women and as such true models for Muslim women.[593] Handžić's texts about prominent Muslim women from the early Islamic centuries served the primary purpose of demonstrating that the early Islamic period, rather than the modern West, serves as a model of genuine and authentic emancipation for Muslim women.

- ***Self-sufficiency and superiority of Islam***

The revivalists' critical attitudes towards modern Europe and its institutions, as well as their efforts to establish a unique Islamic education for Muslims were closely linked to their understanding of Islamic self-sufficiency. In their discourse Europe was primarily identified with technical achievements and moral decline, while Islam was described as superior as regards both, science and morality. Although both revivalist and reformist circles in Bosnia and Herzegovina shared an understanding of Islam as a religion of science, they significantly disagreed on the relationship between Islam and modern Europe. Revivalists' general understanding of Islam as essentially different from and superior to the Western culture was closely linked to the fact that they were much more than reformists "sweeping in their indictment and condemnation of the West and their assertion of the total self-sufficiency of Islam,"[594] as Esposito points out in his discussion on Islamic revivalism.

591 Handžić, "Položaj žene u Islamu," 21.

592 Mehmed Handžić, "Vaz o ulozi muža i žene u braku i njihovim dužnostima," *El-Hidaje* 1, no. 9 (1937): 145–147; Handžić, "Položaj žene u Islamu," 18–19; Mehmed Handžić, "Ummul-Benin, jedan primjer odgojene žene iz prvih doba islama," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 7/8 (1941): 192–194.

593 "Majka pravovjernih Hadidža kći Huvejlidova," *El-Hidaje* 1, no. 6 (1937): 99.

594 John L. Esposito, "Traiblazzers of the Islamic Resurgence," in *The Contemporary Islamic Revival: A Critical Survey and Bibliography,* eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, John Obert Voll, John L. Esposito (Westport: Greenwood Press: 1991): 38–39.

Muslim revivalist in Bosnia and Herzegovina understood Islam not only as a religion, but as "the most perfect universal ideology."[595] Reform and renewal of Islam in their perspective meant primarily a deep purification of Islam from foreign accretions and a creation of a society based purely on the foundations of Islam and the example of the first centuries of Islam. Such a renewal of Islam was to protect Muslims from modern European values and ideologies that were perceived to be contrary to Islam.[596] Their understanding of Islam and the relationship between Islam and the West played a crucial role in their pursuit of creating genuine Islamic cultural and educational institutions. These institutions were intended to equip Muslims with the skills and knowledge required for their economic and cultural survival, while also instilling them with authentic Islamic values. It is evident that the Bosnian revivalist authors of this period supported the adoption of modern European innovations only if they were integrated with what they deemed as perfect Islamic values. They not only acknowledged the scientific debt that Europe owes Islam, but also contended that the true unity between knowledge, i.e., science and morality, was embodied only in the first centuries of Islam. According to their perspective, the adoption of modern European sciences and achievements was not enough to ensure the progress of Muslims as modern sciences developed with little regard for the demands of morality. In order to establish the superiority of Islam in science and education, they argued that Islamic science developed in the first centuries of Islam never separated facts from moral values and always remained at the service of humanity. In contrast, modern European sciences were seen as primarily interested in financial gain. Thus, according to their perspective, it was not the modern West and its institutions, but the first centuries of Islam that provided the ideal upon which Muslims were to model not only their private lives, but also their social institutions.[597] Eminent Bosnian scholar Kasim Dobrača (1910–1979) in an article published in *El-Hidaje* argued that scientific knowledge and technological achievements detached from moral values and spiritual needs of people despite their importance for material development cannot ensure true development and survival of people and nations. According to Dobrača the real progress of Muslims and all of humanity demanded moral rejuvenation. In his discourse Islam is presented as a comprehensive guide to a happy, balanced and prosperous life, since on the one hand it encourages critical observation, research and innovation, while on the other hand it gives moral principles necessary for a correct and useful application of scientific knowledge.[598]

We find similar ideas in the articles of one of the most prolific authors in the journal *El-Hidaje,* Mustafa Busuladžić (1914–1945), who placed a strong emphasis on the role of

595 Mladi musliman [Teufik Muftić], "Kompromisni islam i kompromisni muslimani," *El- Hidaje* 6, no. 4 (1942): 93.
596 Mladi musliman [Teufik Muftić], "Kompromisni islam i kompromisni muslimani," 94.
597 Kasim Hadžić, "Islam i kultura," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 9/11 (1941): 249–258. For more about the importance of science in Islam see: "Muhamed Alejhisselam o nauci i prosvjeti," *El-Hidaje* 8, no. 2/3 (1944): 123–125.
598 Kasim Dobrača, "Vjersko i moralno učenje islama," *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 1 (1939): 3–6; Seid Korkut, "Etika i moral," pt. 1, *El- Hidaje* 3, no. 2 (1939): 24–29.

morality in civilizational progress. Busuladžić emphasized the strong correlation between civilizational and moral progress, as well as the link between civilizational decline and moral decay. He argued that the failure of past civilizations, despite their economic power, was due to their moral, social, and cultural degeneration.[599] Busuladžić's references to past civilizations aimed to prove that the modern West, which was seen as morally decadent and superior in material civilization, could not provide a solution to the crisis in the Muslim world. Although he had a favourable attitude towards the adoption of modern Western scientific and technological achievements, Busuladžić argued that the true progress of Muslims depended mainly on the moral revival of the Muslim community.[600]

The Bosnian Muslim debates on women's education reveal that the matter was much more complicated than a simple conflict between supporters and opponents of Western ideas and concepts. The analysis of reformist advocacy for women's education within the modern institutions that emerged in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the late 19th century indicates that this was not simply a replication of Western trends. It was an attempt to find a solution to Muslims' economic, political, and social decline, drawing inspiration from their immediate surroundings, Europe in general, and their own religious tradition. Furthermore, these discussions reveal that the conservative negative attitude towards modern education was not simply a consequence of conservative scholars' ignorance or their inability to understand Muslim needs, as their reform-minded colleagues argued. In my view, their attitudes were closely related to their understanding of the potential of women's education to effect sociocultural change. Considering the socio-political context in which Bosnian Muslims faced numerous civilizational and assimilation efforts aimed at challenging the survival of a distinct Muslim identity, it is not surprising that some members of the community viewed any intrusions into their traditional way of life as a threat to their collective identity.

599 Busuladžić, "Predavanje održano prilikom el-Hidajinog mevluda," *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 12 (1940): 148.
600 Busuladžić, "Predavanje održano prilikom el-Hidajinog mevluda," 148.

CHAPTER 6

6

6. Debates on Face Veiling

This chapter examines the lively public debates about Muslim women's face veiling that unfolded in the early 20th century among Bosnian Muslim intellectuals and religious scholars, who claimed the right to speak on behalf of Islam and Muslim women. It focuses on the diverse meanings attributed to the veil within the modern Muslim discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It highlights the arguments of both proponents and opponents of the face veiling, revealing how the veil served as a kind of screen onto which the different understandings of Islam, identity and future of Bosnian Muslims were projected. My analysis of veiling debates in Bosnia draws on recent studies that have demonstrated how these discussions were deeply intertwined with broader socio-religious issues.

The significant interest that Bosnian Muslim authors had in this issue was, to my mind, linked to several factors.

First, clothing in general is a powerful communication system. It does not have only a protective function, but also a symbolic function of reinforcing and expressing group identity, social status, religious affiliation, marital status and sexual availability.[601] In Muslim communities "clothing has historically been intimately connected with notions of purity and impurity (ṭahāra and najas), ritual behavior (sunna), and the differentiation of the believer from the unbeliever (ghijār), as well as the separation of the genders (ḥijāb)."[602] Clothing is both "an indicator and a producer of gender."[603] Burman and Turbin have noted that clothing is "one of the most consistently gendered aspects of material and visual culture."[604] While the close association between dress and gender is a universal element of all cultures, what is held appropriate for each sex is culturally determined and temporal. The attitudes towards socially acceptable ways of dressing for women and men indicate the relationship towards dominant social norms and values. Clothing is used to express both, the acceptance and the resistance towards hegemonic norms and socio-cultural changes. As women in different societies throughout the history have had an important role in preserving and expressing group identity, honour, and morality it is not surprising that in the times of deep social, political and cultural changes during the first half of the 20th century Muslim woman and her veil became an integral part of intra-Muslim discussions on the future of Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, its identity, progress and

601 For more on symbolic function of clothing and dress see: Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins and Joanne B. Eicher, "Dress and identity" in *Dress and identity, eds.* Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins, Joanne B. Eicher and Kim K. P. Johnson (New York: Fairchild Publications, 1995), 7–18; Malcolm Barnard, *Fashion as communication* (New York: Fairchild Publications, 2002).

602 Yedida Kalfon Stillman and Norman A Stillman, *Arab Dress: From the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003): 1.

603 Saadia Abid, "Religion as Faith? Education Purdah and Modernity. An Ethnographic Study of Islamabad's Madrassah Jamia Hafsa" (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 2010), 34.

604 Barbara Burman and Carole Turbin, "Introduction: Material Strategies Engendered," *Gender & History* 14, no. 3 (2002): 371.

morality. During that time, there were changes in traditionally accepted ways of dressing for Muslim women, primarily from urban areas. The traditional urban attire of Muslim women worn outside home consisted of *feredža* (*ferace*), which was later replaced by *zar* (*izār*).[605]

Till the second half of 19th century women mainly wore a type of wide coat with long wide sleeves and a large collar around the neck made of black or dark green thick woolen cloth, called the *feredža*. Together with the *feredža* three covers for the head and face were worn: a *jašmak* (*yaşmak*), *čember* (*çember*) and *dušeme*.[606] In the second half of the 19th century a more affordable cloak named the *zar* began also to be worn by Muslim women. The *zar* was a kind of a wide, uncut coat that, gathered at the waist, formed a skirt in the lower part, and the upper part just rolled over the head and shoulders. The face was covered by a black veil called *peča* (*peçe*).[607] Rural women and maids of lower socioeconomic status when going out covered the head, shoulders and bosom with a large rectangular linen or hemp scarf; *bošča.*

The Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina brought gradual changes in the dress of Muslim women. As the result of the penetration of new, Central European fashion trends and new industrial fabrics traditional Muslim female costumes began to undergo changes, both in terms of cut and in terms of fabrics and patterns. Thus, the new cut of the *zar* coat similar to pelerine appeared, as well as striped and checked patterned coats. Furthermore, the World War I "saw the first instances of partial unveiling of Bosniak (Muslim) women, who, needing to secure the bare necessities of life, had to get employed as industrial workers."[608] These changes, that took place under the influence of modernization processes and the necessities of modern life, forced Bosnian Muslim intellectuals to rethink and to redefine the traditional notions of woman's role, but also their own identity and the place of Bosnian Muslim in the modern world.

Second, the focus and interest of in the issue of veiling were certainly linked to the emergence of worldwide European and Muslim discussions on that issue in the late 19th century, where the veil came to symbolize both the perceived flaws and virtues of Muslim societies and Islam—a topic to be discussed in the following section. To properly understand

605 Aida Abadžic Hodžić, "Kultura odijevanja u Bosni i Hercegovini na prijelazu iz 19. u 20. stoljece: uloga i znacaj ilustracija i priloga u časopisu Nada (1895.–1903.)," in *Odjeća kao simbol identiteta*, ed. Hošić Irfan (Bihać: Gradska galerija, 2011), 23.

606 *Jašmak* covered the face up to the eyes and was fastened at the back of the head, while a *čember* covered forehead down to the eyebrows. A *dušeme* covered the whole head and flowed down the *feredža*. Some of the wealthier women wore, instead of a *jašmak*, *a peča*, that is to say a rectangular piece of cloth with slits for the eyes. See: Svetlana Bajić, "The Culture of Covering the Woman in the Balkans in the Ethnographic Collection of the National Museum in Sarajevo. Bosniak (Muslim) Garments for the Street – Headscarf, *Feredža*, *Zar*,…" in *The Hidden world of Balkan Women*, eds. Mirjana Menković and Svetlana Bajić (Sarajevo: Institute for Islamic Tradition of Bosniaks, 2014), 54.

607 Bajić, "The Culture of Covering the Woman in the Balkans," 56.

608 Bajić, "The Culture of Covering the Woman in the Balkans," 60.

Bosnian Muslim discussions on veiling and their interconnectedness with broader concerns over identity, tradition, and modernity, it is essential to note that, since the late 19th century, Muslim women's attire has been transformed in diverse global narratives into "the key measure by which to judge a society's modernity."[609] Furthermore, as Bronwyn Winter has demonstrated, it also has served as "the litmus test of cultural and moral values, of their preservation or loss."[610]

Fig. 1. Outdoor shot of Muslim women wearing light-coloured dresses (*zar*) and dark, face veils (*peča*). Sarajevo, date unknown, somewhere between 1920 and 1950.

Downloaded from: https://gams.uni-graz.at/o:vase.2463

609 Sahar Amer, *What is Veiling?* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 2014): 5.

610 Bronwyn Winter, *Hijab & the Republic: Uncovering the French Headscarf Debate* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008): 21.

Fig. 2. A group of women is walking in the street near Marijin Dvor (Mary´s house) in Sarajevo. One of them is wearing an urban skirt suit; a black veil is covering her face and she is wearing black gloves. The girl next to her is wearing an urban dress. Two other women are wearing veiled robes (*zar*) and also black veils covering their faces. Uncirculated postcard. Undated, but between 1920 and 1950.

Downloaded from: https://gams.uni-graz.at/o:vase.2492

6.1. Veil in Global Muslim Discourses on Reform and Renewal of Islam

In the late 19th century, global discussions on the face veiling among Muslims arose, differing significantly from previous conversations on the topic as the veil took on a more profound symbolic meaning. Before the 19th century, there were disagreements among Muslim scholars regarding the dress code for women. However, they debated issues such as the appropriate attire for women and which parts of the female body could be exposed, mainly in relation to women's sexuality and nature.[611]

611 Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an*, 91–94; 127–128.

The late 19th and early 20th century discussions within Muslim communities imbued the veil with multiple symbolic meanings, closely tied to the identity of Muslims, the role of Islam in modern societies, and comparisons between Islam and the West. These global disputes about the face veil highlights the veil's unique significance, as it became a focal point in discussions about how Muslims view themselves and their heritage in a rapidly changing world.

It is widely accepted in the Western scholarship that colonial and Orientalist narratives of Muslim women from the late 19th century which in general portrayed Muslim cultures as exotic and alien, played a role in turning the issue of veiling into a matter of cultural and religious authenticity, by describing the veil not merely as a cultural item but as a crucial and oppressive aspect of Islamic practice.[612] According to Leila Ahmed, the Western perceptions which portrayed the veil both as a quintessential Islamic symbol and as a sign of Islam's oppressive nature, have profoundly impacted internal debates within Muslim communities. She asserts that this framing has turned the veil into a contentious issue central to Muslim discussions about the essence of Islam, its role in the modern world and modernity.[613] The veil from the late 19th century has emerged as a central symbol for various groups within Muslim societies—reformists, conservatives, revivalists, feminists, secular elites among others—who strategically appropriated and interpreted this issue to demonstrate either their authenticity or modernity.[614] While Ahmed has correctly recognized the significant role that European colonial and Orientalist narratives played in positioning the issue of face veiling at the centre of internal Muslim debates and in attributing immense symbolic significance to this particular item of clothing, I hold that Ahmed has overestimated the role of Western discourses in the constructions of the Muslim narratives on veiling. Her interpretation of Muslim debates on the veil, particularly reformists discourses from the late 19th and early 20th century, as simply a defensive reaction to or imitation of European narratives overlooks the fact that various Muslim perspectives on this issue were firmly embedded in broader Muslim conversations about backwardness, moral decline, and the progress of the Muslim world in the late 19th century in which issues of (re)interpretations of the cultural and religious heritage was of the crucial importance.

Similarly to European narratives, Muslim reformists from diverse regions identified the face veil, usually worn by well-off urban women who could afford seclusion, as a primary

612 Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam,* 152; Fadwa El Guindi, "Veiling Resistance," *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 595–596; Ernst, *Following Muhammad*, 148.

613 Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 144–168.

614 Lila Abu-Lughod, "Modesty Discourses. Overview," in *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures,* ed. Suad Joseph, vol. 2, *Family, Law and Politics* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 494–498. About strategic appropriations of the veil in the case of Turkey see: Kandiyoti, "The End of Empire," 22–48; about Iran see: Najmabadi, "Hazards of Modernity and Morality," 48–77.

indicator of Muslim society's backwardness and generally advocated for its abolishment.[615] However, their criticism of this practice was founded on entirely different grounds than European criticisms. The link between the veil and backwardness was situated within the larger reformist attempt to make a differentiation between cultural practices and essences of Islam, which made the topic highly significant in intra-Muslim discussions on true Islam.

While generally in Muslim reformists discourses the face veil was considered to be a part of traditional cultural practices, Muslim conservatives invested it with the value of religious command. Conservatives advocated it as an authentic Islamic practice, of the utmost importance for maintaining separate Islamic identity and morality of Muslims.[616] Reformist criticism of face veil and the advocacy for unveiling were thus perceived by conservative circles as a direct attack on the very foundations of Muslim morality and identity, as well as a replication of Western views.[617]

The differing perspectives on the face veil in reformist and conservative discourses were primarily connected to varying interpretations of the historical background of the practice, divergent interpretations of key Qurʾānic verses traditionally interpreted to advocate the face veiling, and their differing views on morality.

One of the most recurrent themes in reformist narratives related to the veil was their attempt to demonstrate that early Muslim adoption of face veiling was influenced significantly by the cultures Muslim encountered in the early centuries of Islam.[618] This argument, which also gained wide acceptance in Bosnian Muslim discussions, as I will later show, asserts that the veil was adopted and institutionalized due to external cultural influences. The reformists strategically aimed to demonstrate the non-Islamic origins of the face veil in order to challenge those who believed that it was an inherently Islamic practice.

Furthermore, reformists authors challenged the idea that Islam requires the covering of the entire body, including the face using the standard reformists methodology of returning to the Qurʾān. They shared the conviction that this particular style of dress was not explicitly required by the Qurʾān.[619] The reformist approach to the veiling issue involved reinterpreting verse 24:31 and 33:59 of the Qurʾān that had traditionally been cited to justify the covering of women's faces. Their reinterpretation examined the social and historical context in which

615 Stephanie Cronin, "Introduction: Coercion or Empowerment? Anti-Veiling Campaigns: a Comparative Perspective," in *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress,* ed. Stephanie Cronin (London: Routledge, 2014), 5–7.

616 Amer, *What is Veiling,* 3–5.

617 Cronin, "Introduction: Coercion or Empowerment?" 7–8.

618 See: Amin, *The Liberation of Women; and, the New Woman,* 36–37; Ali, *The Spirit of Islam,* 248.

619 Amin. *The Liberation of Women; and, the New Woman*, 37–45; Gail Minault, "Sayyid Mumtaz Ali and 'Huquq un-Niswan': An Advocate of Women's Rights in Islam in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Modern Asian Studies* 24, no. 1 (1990): 147–172.

these verses were originally revealed. Since moral laxity was viewed as one of the main characteristics of pre-Islamic Arabian society, reformists argued that these verses aimed to encourage and promote behaviour as well as a dress code based on high moral standards and not specific type of clothing.[620]

As we have already seen in the previous chapter the global reformist discourse on education emphasized the significance of women in upholding the moral values of the community and transmitting them to future generations. However, the reformists' discussions surrounding female dress code and veiling was primarily rooted in the notion that both men and women are equally accountable for preserving the moral fabric of society. The conservative belief that complete face veiling and gender segregation are necessary to maintain Islamic moral standards was generally contested by reformists who emphasized that the Qurʾān's directives concerning modest behaviour do not only apply to women, but also to men. The reformist authors put an emphasis on verse 24:30 of the Qurʾān, which orders men "to lower their gaze and to be modest." This specific verse was commonly cited by reformists as evidence that the Qurʾān's injunctions regarding modest dress directed towards women in other verses cannot be interpreted as a mandate to cover the face, as the verse in question would be redundant if that were the case.[621] According to reformists, face veiling was a cultural practice that exceeds the broad parameters of modest behaviour outlined in the Qurʾān.

The publication of Egyptian intellectual Qāsim Amīn's pivotal text, *The Liberation of Woman*, in 1899, sparked considerable controversy, notably due to his advocacy of the unveiling of Muslim women's faces. Although Amīn's views regarding the veil have frequently been interpreted as being internalisation and replication of the European, colonialist European criticisms of the veil, his criticism was to a large extent founded upon the general reformist understanding of true modesty as an inner virtue, based on self-control, rather than externally imposed through practices such as veiling and segregation.[622]

Just like the conservative circles, Qāsim Amīn linked the veil to morality; however, in opposition to conservative circles, his aim was to point out that a certain form of the veil still does not guarantee inner morality, nor does it necessarily reflect it. Qāsim Amīn depicted the conservative insistence on a particular style of dress as a form of hypocrisy. In his discourse, the veil represented not only backwardness, illiteracy, and subordination of Muslim women, but also false morality. He associated the veil directly with immoral conduct,

620 Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, 249–251; Minault, "Sayyid Mumtaz Ali and 'Huquq un-Niswan,' " 160–161.

621 Minault, "Sayyid Mumtaz Ali and 'Huquq un-Niswan,' " 147–172; Amin, *The Liberation of Women; and, the New Woman*, 42, Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition*, 133–134.

622 On interpretations of Amin's advocacy of unveiling as borrowing of European ideas see: Katherine Bullock, *Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil: Challenging Historical and Modern Stereotypes* (London: IIIT, 2002), 27 Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam,* 161.

aiming to illustrate how the veil can facilitate actions that may be considered unethical or improper by providing a means to conceal one's identity or intentions. This association was made to argue that the practice of veiling does not inherently prevent immoral behaviour but instead may inadvertently enable it under certain circumstances.[623] Whereas the veil was viewed in European narratives as a representation of Islam, Qāsim Amīn's discourse portrayed it mainly as a symbol of a particular, and in his view, misconstrued interpretation of Islam prevalent among conservative religious scholars.

This perspective reflects the broader reformist viewpoint that morality cannot be imposed externally. Rather, it was considered to be the result of rational self-discipline.[624] While Amīn's discourse shared some similarities with European discourses regarding the depiction of Muslim women's position in Egypt and the negative connotations surrounding the veil, it also intersected with the discourse of Muslim authors who criticized social and cultural practices related to women within a broader critique of conservative religious scholars' inability to convey Islam's true moral values. Like Amīn' Muslim other scholars like Mumtāz ʿAlī questioned the conservative view the veiling was essential to maintaining Islamic morality. He contended that such an idea is un-Islamic since it implies that Muslim men and women cannot discipline their lust or restrain their passion. For Mumtāz ʿAlī, maintaining moral standards was largely dependent on self-control rather than the imposition of external constraints.[625] This understanding of true morality certainly was an expression of the growth of self-consciousness and self-examination that Francis Robisnon considers to be the key element of modern Islamic reform. The true belief and morality had to be self-conscious one.[626]

The request to abandon the practice of full-face veiling was accompanied by a specific emphasis on its negative outcomes that impact various aspects of women's lives, including their health, education, intercommunal trust, and economic and legal status. Face veiling, when combined with gender segregation, was alleged to restrict women's ability to improve their social status by excluding them from education and requiring them to engage in legal and business transactions through intermediaries.[627]

The Bosnian Muslim intellectual and religious community actively participated in the debates concerning the Muslim women veiling, its appropriate form, social function, and its religious authenticity, as we shall see in the next sections of this study. Reformist ideas described here were both accepted and developed, as well as criticized.

623 Amin. *The Liberation of Women; and, the New Woman,* 42–43.
624 Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition*, 133–134.
625 Minault, "Sayyid Mumtaz 'Ali and 'Huquq un-Niswan,' " 161.
626 Robinson, "Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia," 272–273.
627 Minault, "Sayyid Mumtaz Ali and 'Huquq un-Niswan,' " 162; Amin, *The Liberation of Women; and the New Woman,* 40.

6.2. The Chronology of the Face Veiling Debate: Main Actors and Positions in Bosnian Context

In 1918, the reformist Dževad Sulejmanpašić published a book entitled *Muslimansko žensko pitanje: Jedan prilog njegovom rješenju*, which enthusiastically promoted the unveiling of Muslim women faces as a prerequisite for the emancipation of Bosnian Muslims. The publication encountered a hostile and adverse response from the broader public. A group of Muslims burned the publication in the yard of the Husrev-bay mosque and threw rocks at the author's residence.[628] Even though Sulejmanpašić' advocacy of unveiling provoked a strong public backlash; Bosnian Muslim intellectuals and religious scholars did not engage seriously with this issue until the late 1920s.

According to scholars such as Xavier Bougarel, Enes Karić, and Adnan Jahić, the public lecture delivered by Mehmed Džemaludin Čaušević in 1927 marked the beginning of a long intra-Muslim public debate on the issue of unveiling.[629] The lecture was given during a preparatory meeting for the congress of Muslim intellectuals scheduled for the September 1928. Congress had an important aim of gathering secular educated intellectuals and religious scholars who were to propose a set of reforms in Muslim community. During the event, Čaušević expressed his favourable views on the social reforms that were being implemented in Turkey, particularly regarding the discouragement of the face veil.[630] According to Bosnian scholar Jahić, Čaušević's lecture and subsequent public statements on the topic of veiling in newspapers *Politika* and *Jugoslavenski list* were of great importance for the intellectual development of Muslims, as they initiated the publication of books, pamphlets, and articles on the subject of veiling written by both Čaušević's opponents and supporters. In these public statements, Čaušević explicitly claimed that the Muslim woman was not required by Islamic precepts to cover her face.[631] While I acknowledge the significance of Čaušićev's statements on veiling in initiating a broader debate on this issue, I do not completely agree with Jahić's assertion that it opened the door to free and critical thinking about social and religious issues among Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[632] The fact remains that many socio-religious matters had already been extensively debated among Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina well before 1927. However, I agree with Jahić that Čaušević's statements contributed to intensifying intra-Muslim public discussion and increasing conservative Muslim participation in the public sphere.

628 See Adnan Jahić, "Modernizam Dževada Sulejmanpašića," *Bošnjačka pismohrana. Časopis za povijest i kulturu Bošnjaka u Hrvatskoj* 5, no 17/20 (2005): 135.

629 Xavier Bougarel, "Reis i veo," *Historijska traganja*, no. 06 (2010): 71–72; Karić, "Islamic Thought in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 20th Century," 418; Adnan Jahić, *Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme monarhističke Jugoslavije*: (*1918–1941*) (Zagreb: Bošnjačka nacionalna zajednica za Grad Zagreb i Zagrebačku županiju: 2010), 254. Giomi, "Domesticating Kemalism," 168.

630 Giomi, "Domesticating Kemalism," 168.

631 Jahić, *Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme monarhističke Jugoslavije*, 254.

632 Jahić, *Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme monarhističke Jugoslavije*, 254.

Due to his prominent position among religious officials and the widespread acceptance of his message among Bosnian reformists, his conservative opponents, who generally opposed public discussions on issues they considered exclusive to religious scholars, resorted to using modern print media that could reach a broader audience. Furthermore, they adopted a new style of argumentation, employing simpler arguments more suitable for print media. Čaušević's statements played a crucial role in the establishment of the journal *Hikjmet*, the important platform for conservative Muslim religious officials, as it emerged in response to his views on veiling.[633] The importance of *Hikjmet* lies in the fact that it, as Fabio Giomi notes, challenged the monopoly of Muslim reformists over the public sphere.[634]

Furthermore, the intense public debate between one of the most distinguished officials of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Islamic community and leading conservative religious scholars reveals the divisions within the class of religious scholars, which clearly demonstrate that Bosnian Muslim debates cannot be oversimplified as a conflict between secularly educated Muslims and religious authorities.

As Čaušević's position on the issue of Muslim women veiling caused a great turmoil within the class of religious scholars the *Islamic Electoral Curia*, the body in charge of electing the Reis-ul-ulema, on 10 July 1928 issued a statement entitled *Takrir Islamske izborne kurije* (The Resolution of Islamic Electoral Curia).[635] While the statement affirmed Čaušević's position that face veil was not an Islamic religious duty, it nevertheless recommended it as a kind of shield against immorality. More importantly, this statement openly condemned public polemics over veiling holding that it was, as an important religious and social issue, to be discussed exclusively within established Muslim institutions. The statement openly warned Čaušević that he had exceeded his authority and that he should not issue such declarations any longer.[636] While Čaušević's opponents saw this statement as confirmation of their views, he argued that it "does not reject [his] principal opinion that a Muslim women who is conversant with the study of science, the acquisition of a craft and other commercial skills, may have her face unveiled and her hands bare."[637]

The lack of clarity in this statement resulted in the continuation of public debates on the issue, and it is not surprising that they persisted throughout late 1920s and the 1930s. On one side there were those who supported Čaušević's approach, such as secular educated intellectuals Osman Nuri Hadžić (1869–1937), and Mehmed Begović (1904–1990) and religious scholars such as Husein Đozo (1912–1982) and Abdulah Ajni Bušatlić (1871–1946). On the other side there were the advocates of Islamic conservatism who viewed the veil

633 Giomi, "Domesticating Kemalism," 179.
634 Giomi, "Domesticating Kemalism," 178.
635 Editorial board "Takrir isl. izborne kurije," *Novi Behar* 2, no. 6 (1928): 81–82.
636 Editorial board "Takrir isl. izborne kurije," 81–82.
637 Karić, "Islamic Thought in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 20th Century," 428.

not only as a religious obligation but also as a symbol of distinct Muslim identity. Among the most important conservative scholars who publicly opposed Čaušević statements and reformists views on veiling in general were Ali Riza Karabeg (1872–1944), Sejfullah Proho (1858–1932), and Ibrahim Hakki Čokić (1871–1948).

During the inter-war period, the state remained neutral and did not take a stance on the issue of veiling among Muslims. However, the situation drastically changed after the end of World War II and the establishment of the communist regime, which openly promoted campaigns that encouraged unveiling of the Muslim women faces and eventually prohibited the practice altogether. When the issue of veiling came again to the centre of attention of Muslim intellectuals in 1940s, it was directly caused by the attempt of the new Yugoslav communist regime to eliminate this practice. Andreja Mesarič has shown that the post-World War II Yugoslav government's attempt to eradicate veiling was a part of its larger effort to push religious symbols and ethnic differences to the margins of public space in order to build a modern Yugoslav state, in which religions were not to have any official role or public influence. Besides, Mesarič, Hadžiristić and Simić argue that veil was not perceived by communist regime only as a religious symbol, but also as a remnant of Turkish burden, "a relic of mediaeval times brought to the region by 'backward Asian tribes.' "[638] Therefore, these scholars understand communist attempts to eradicate this practice also as an effort to rid Bosnian society of outward evidence of "foreign, 'Turkish' invasion."[639] In 1947, the *Antifascist Front of Women*, a state-sponsored organisation, launched campaigns in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in Macedonia and Kosovo, encouraging Muslim women to abandon the veil as a backward and oppressive tradition that was the biggest obstacle to liberation of Muslim women.[640]

Muslim reformist theologian Ibrahim Fejić (1879–1962) who served as Reis-ul-ulema from 1947 to 1952 endorsed these campaigns in his inaugural address on 12 September 1947 stating that "women cannot achieve the full expression of [the equality won by the liberation war] as they are inhibited by wearing the veil and gown."[641] In 1950, the official journal of the Islamic community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Glasnik Vrhovnog Islamskog Starješinstva*, published several articles that discussed the issue of female veiling from religious, social, and cultural perspectives. The articles unanimously supported the unveiling of women, in contrast to the inter-war period when there were opposing views.

638 Andreja Mesarič, "Wearing Hijab in Sarajevo: Dress Practices and the Islamic Revival in Post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 22, no. 2 (2013): 17–18; Tea Hadžiristić, "Unveiling Muslim Women in Socialist Yugoslavia: the Body between Socialism, Secularism, and Colonialism," *Religion and Gender* 7, no. 2 (2017): 192; Ivan Simić, "Soviet Influences on Yugoslav Gender Policies, 1945–1955" (PhD diss., University College London, 2016), 151.

639 Mesarič, "Wearing Hijab in Sarajevo," 18. See also: Hadžiristić, "Unveiling Muslim Women,"192.

640 Marko Attila Hoare, *The Bosnian Muslims in the Second World War: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 374. For more on these campaigns see: Senija Milišić, "O pitanju emancipacije muslimanske žene u Bosni i Hercegovini," *Prilozi* 28 (1999): 235–240.

641 Hadžiristić, "Unveiling Muslim Women in Socialist Yugoslavia," 192.

This was likely due to the dominance of the Marxist ideology in the public sphere, and the fact that the Islamic community was under state control in the post-WWII period. As noted by Dževada Šuško and Hüsrev Tabak, the state gradually nationalized its property and interfered in the elections of its high officials, ensuring that the Islamic community was directly run by those loyal to the regime.[642]

On September 28, 1950, due to the limited success of the veil lifting campaigns, the People's Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina passed a law that prohibited the wearing of face veils, with the punishment being hefty fines and imprisonment for up to three months.[643] The law applied not only to women, but also to family members who forced or encouraged them to wear a veil. This event symbolically marked the end of an era of deep public confrontations between Muslims of different intellectual orientations on veiling. This law, as Enes Karić argues, not only "abolished the face veil but also eliminated any form of theoretical debate on the subject, particularly those that might advocate for wearing such attire."[644]

6.3. Veil: From a Symbol of Backwardness to an Expression of Moral Superiority of Muslims

A number of recent studies have demonstrated the close relationship between modern Muslim discourses about veiling and narratives of identity, morality, and progress. It has been highlighted by Mary Neuburger that the veiling debates in Egypt, Turkey, the Balkans, and Russia took place within the context of broader discussions concerning progress and the Westernization of society.[645] Beth Baron in her analysis of modern discussions on veiling that occurred in early 20th century Egypt has demonstrated that the issue of veiling was inextricably linked to morality and progress. As she argues, conservatives viewed the veil as a symbol of modesty, while reformists viewed it as a symbol of Muslim backwardness and as an obstacle to Muslim progress.[646] According to Marianne Kamp and Noor Borbieva, proponents of unveiling in early 20th century Central Asia viewed the veiling and seclusion of women as hindrances to women's education and social progress. In contrast, those who

642 Hüsrev Tabak, "A History of 'Who Speaks for Islam?' in Bosnia - Herzegovina: An Official Versus Popular Islam Debate," *Gazi Akademik Bakış* 10, no. 20 (2017): 303; Dževada Šuško, *A Model for Europe? History and Practice of Islam in Bosnia-Herzegovina,* (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2017), 9–10.

643 After Bosnia and Herzegovina, laws prohibiting the full-face veil were passed separately in all Yugoslavian republics with a Muslim population. See: Ivan Simić, "Soviet Influences on Yugoslav Gender Policies," 155–156; Fikret Karčić, "Primjena zakona o zabrani nošenja zara i feredže BiH," *Novi Muallim*, 14, no. 56 (2013): 50–56

644 Karić, "Islamski reformistički pokreti kod Bošnjaka," 62.

645 Mary Neuburger, "Difference unveiled: Bulgarian national imperatives and re-dressing of Muslim women, 1878–1989," in *Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Muslim World: Gender, Modernism and the Politics of Dress*, ed. Stephinie Cronin (London: Routledge, 2014), 254.

646 Beth Baron, "Unveiling in Early Twentieth Century Egypt: Practical and Symbolic Considerations," *Middle Eastern Studies 25*, no. 3 (1989): 378–379.

advocated veiling saw it as a way to prevent social chaos that would result from allowing women to reveal their faces.[647]

The debates in Bosnia and Herzegovina mirrored the global discourse on veiling that Muslims engaged in from the late 19th century. Bosnian scholar Đermana Šeta has demonstrated that face veiling was a central issue in modern Bosnian intra-Muslim debates during the late 1920s and throughout 1930s. She has shown that Muslim intellectuals of various orientations made use of the topic to legitimize their vision of true Islam and the future of Bosnian Muslims during this period.[648] Šeta's research reveals profound ambivalence within the Bosnian Muslim community regarding veiling, reflecting contradictory views on traditional Muslim lifestyles and the impact of European modernity on Bosnian Muslim identity and morality."[649]

Bosnian scholar Šefik Kurdić these Bosnian debates from the first half of the 20th century describes as a part of a broader disagreement among Muslim intellectuals in Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding the interpretation of Islam and its role in society.[650] Xavier Bougarel's research depicts Bosnian veiling debates as a medium through which Bosnian Muslims expressed not only different, but opposing views on Islam, the Muslim world but also on Europe.[651]

Whether the veil was an oppressive cultural custom that hindered Muslim progress, or a manifestation and shield of Muslim morality and identity was the central point of contention between proponents and critics of veiling in both global and local Bosnian contexts.

In the forthcoming sections, I will demonstrate that Bosnian proponents of unveiling, linked it with liberation and progress. Conversely, those who opposed it perceived unveiling as a fundamental loss of religious and cultural identity, leading to complete Westernization.

6.3.1. Veil and the Idea of Progress

One of the central features of modern reformist discourses about veiling in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the close connection between veiling and Muslim socio-political decline and economic backwardness. The face veil was associated with the practice of seclusion, which hindered women's education and their full participation in economic activities. In

647 Marianne Kamp and Noor Borbieva, "Veiling and unveiling in Central Asia. Beliefs and Practices, Tradition and Modernity," in *The Routledge International Handbook to Veils and Veiling Practices*, eds. Anna-Mari Almila and David Inglis (London: Routledge 2018), 91.

648 Jahić, *Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme monarhističke Jugoslavije,* 253; Đermana Šeta, *Zašto marama,* 82.

649 Šeta, *Zašto marama*, 87.

650 Kurdić, "Percepcija sunneta," 25.

651 Bougarel, "Reis i veo," 84.

their discourse veiling and education were viewed as mutually exclusive.[652] In view of the fact that women were considered to be crucial to social progress, unveiling was advocated not only as a necessary means for educational emancipation of women, but as a means for intellectual and economic progress of the whole Muslim community. Attack on veiling was based upon the belief that it was a backward custom, incorrectly identified as a religious obligation that condemned the entire Muslim female population to illiteracy, and as a consequence, the whole community to economic and intellectual poverty.[653]

I have identified three distinct strategies employed by Muslim reformist advocates of unveiling to argue for the strong interconnectedness between the practice of veiling and Muslim socio-economic status.

First, they draw attention to socio-economic context in which the practice of veiling appeared and became widespread among Muslims. They argued that the practices of seclusion and veiling were originally enforced on women from the urban, middle, and upper classes of the Middle East, under the influence of foreign cultures where they symbolized high social status.[654] Focus on socio-economic context in which this practice emerged allowed them to argue that veiling was originally a marker of a high socio-economic status, and not of piety. Mehmed Begović argued that the primary reason behind the adoption of veiling by Arabs, which he regarded as having its origins in Persia, was the aspirations of women from privileged social strata to differentiate themselves through the adoption of exotic fashion trends that were considered more extravagant and attractive than the indigenous Arab customs they were accustomed to.[655] It was not a moral motivation, according to Begović, but a desire to show prestige that stood behind women's readiness to accept the full-face veil.

Second, advocates of unveiling argued that the face veil was in general an urban phenomenon, typical for wealthier classes, rarely found among peasant Muslim women. Husein Brkić and Reis-ul-ulema Džemaludin Čaušević wrote that throughout the history peasant Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as elsewhere, never strictly observed the practice of face veiling as they had to take part in the daily work of their households.[656] The references to peasant Muslim women were to prove that the full-face veil was not a universal sign of piety or religious precept, but a cultural custom, closely related to socio-economic status.

652 Šeta, *Zašto marama,* 25. For more about connection between veiling and Muslim socio-political decline in global context see Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan*.

653 Dževad Sulejmanpašić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje: Jedan prilog njegovu rješenju* (Sarajevo: Self-published 1918), 15; Džemaluddin, "Zajedničko poučavanje," 2–3.

654 Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci,* 23–25; Husein S. Brkić, "Naše žensko pitanje," *Gajret*, no. 5 (1928): 73.

655 Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci*, 25.

656 Brkić, "Naše žensko pitanje," 73; Čaušević "Drugi odgovor Reis-ul-uleme," 25–26.

As a third reason, they argued that the liberation of Muslim women from the face veil was crucial for increasing women's participation in the labour market, which would, in turn, lead to economic recovery for the entire Muslim community.[657] The link between unveiling, the educational emancipation of the Muslims, and economic growth of Bosnian Muslims was particularly stressed by Dževad Sulejmanpašić. His contention was that Muslim women's active involvement in the workforce would have a significant economic impact on the entire community. In addition, it would serve as a deterrent to immoral and illicit activities like prostitution. This argument was based on the notion that the veil not only impedes women's progress but also perpetuates poverty, underdevelopment, and prostitution within the community.[658]

Sulejmanpašić claimed harmful effects of veiling on marital relationship and Muslim children's intellectual development and health. Similar to Qāsim Amīn in Egypt, Dževad Sulejmanpašić asserted that the veil hindered women's spiritual and intellectual growth and created a barrier between men and women. In his opinion, this led to marriages based on physical attraction rather than emotional connection and mutual understanding.[659] Based on the concept of scientific motherhood, he argued that the veil hindered women's development as mothers. It was his opinion that veiling and seclusion restricted women's access to education, impairing their ability to pass on knowledge and authentic Islamic values to the next generation. Accordingly, the veil was portrayed as a threat to Bosnian Muslims' future.[660]

Despite the fact that Muslim reformists shared with Western discourses the idea that the veil is a contributing factor to Muslim backwardness, they differed in their focus on the veil's effects on religious consciousness. Reis-ul-ulema Čaušević presented face veiling as an obstacle to living in accordance with the precepts of Islam. He argued that veiling hindered the education of Muslim women, which he considered one of the essential duties in Islam.[661] Čaušević harshly condemned those circles who opposed female education and insisted on face veiling, describing them as formalist who were more concerned about female clothing, than about the dress of piety (*libās al-taqwā*); that is to say about the observation of God's laws.[662] As according to him education in all areas of knowledge, irrespective of their origin was endorsed by Qurʾān, he criticized Muslims, particularly conservative members of

657 See the report on discussions held during the 1928 Congress of Muslim Intellectuals in Sarajevo: "Kongres muslimana intelektualaca održan 6. i 7. septembra, prilikom proslave Gajretove dvadesetpetogodišnjice (nastavak)," *Gajret* 9 (1928): 326–332.
658 Sulejmanpašić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje*, 30–32.
659 Sulejmanpašić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje*, 27–29.
660 Sulejmanpašić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje*, 27–29. See also: "Kongres muslimana intelektualaca održan 6. i 7. septembra, prilikom proslave Gajretove dvadesetpetogodišnjice (nastavak)," *Gajret* 9 (1928): 327.
661 Džemaluddin, "Zajedničko poučavanje," 2–3.
662 Džemaluddin, "Zajedničko poučavanje," 3.

ʿulamāʾ class, for formalist insistence on the preservation of external customs and blamed them for neglecting God's laws.

The reformist view that the face veil impedes the education of Muslim women was subject to dispute. Mehmed Handžić in an article published in the revivalist journal *El-Hidaje* reinterpreted the early Islamic history as an era in which women were decently veiled, according to Islamic principles, and yet educated and more emancipated that modern Western women, to argue that it was not Muslim woman veil that kept them ignorant. Although he did not specifically address the causes of Muslim women's low level of education, he strongly rejected the notion that veiling was responsible for it.[663] In this context attention should be drawn also to an article published under the pen name Razija in the journal *Biser* as early as 1914, long before the debate on unveiling of Muslim women gained prominent attention among Muslim intellectuals and religious scholars. This article, tries, as Stijn Vervaet argues, to strike a balance between the apparent need for community advancement and the preservation of already established traditional practices and forms of social life.[664] It openly rejected idea that the face veil controls Muslim woman participation in the workforce and education and presented not the veil, but the specific social context as responsible for the low educational level of Muslim women. The proposed solution for the apparent female illiteracy and backwardness of the Muslims is the development of modern Muslim education in line with Islamic culture, described as the opposite to the Western, immoral culture.[665] The article regarded the veil as a protector of morality, rather than an obstacle to Muslim education. As a result, it vehemently denounced the unveiling of Muslim women, describing it as a mindless imitation of European values and trends that inevitably lead to an erosion of the moral integrity of Muslim women.[666]

6.3.2. Veiling, Modesty and Morality

It is not surprising that the debate on veiling and its appropriate form was predominantly framed on moral grounds, given that in a number of cultures clothing, modesty, and morality are strongly related.[667] Different studies have shown that all major religious groups view modesty as a moral and social value and seek to ensure it by defining appropriate dress codes for women.[668] The notion of modest female dress in different religions generally includes covering of the body, hiding of the female body curves and secondary sexual

663 Handžić, "Položaj žene u islamu," 21.
664 Stijn Vervaet, "Između hrvatstva, srpstva i panislamizma."
665 Razija, "O ženskom pitanju," *Biser* 2, no. 17/18 (1914): 282.
666 Razija, "O ženskom pitanju," 282.
667 For more on a relationship between clothing, modesty and morality see: Gregory G. Bolich*, Crossdressing in Context,* vol.1, *Dress and Gender* (Raleigh, North Carolina: Psyche's Press, 2007), 90–107.
668 Linda B. Arthur, "Religion and Dress" in *Encyclopedia of Clothing and Fashion*, ed. Valerie Steele, vol. 3, *Occult Dress to Zoran* (Farmington Hills, MI : Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005), 98; Zohreh Sadatmoosavi, Wan Zailan Kamaruddin Wan Ali and Mohammad Ali Shokouhi, "The Conception of Modesty and Modest Dress," *Afkar* 18, no. 2 (2016): 229–270; Lynne Hume, *The Religious Life of Dress: Global Fashion and Faith*. *Dress, Body, Culture* (London: Bloomsbury 2013).

characteristics; and the covering of women's hair because of its association with female sexuality.[669]

The use of clothing extends beyond mere coverage of the body, as it also serves as a means of expressing one's attitude towards established social and moral norms, whether it involves adhering to or opposing them. Additionally, clothing can serve as a symbol of adaptation to social changes.

Furthermore, the close reading of modern Muslim discussions on veiling shows that the issue of veiling served as a kind of tool used not only for discursive (re)definition of virtuous Muslim woman, but also of collective morality and identity. Women in modern Bosnian Muslim discourses on veiling, as elsewhere in Muslim world, were turned not only into markers of collective identity but also into, as Helie Lucas puts it, the very stakes of cultural competition.[670] The veil of the Muslim woman was the focus of the largest cultural contest, in which the moral standing of Islamic and modern European civilization was measured.

Similarly to Muslim reformists from the wider Muslim world, Bosnian reformists created what Stephanie Cronin dubbed as "the concept of the metaphorical 'veil of chastity,'" by emphasizing moral superiority of unveiled woman "who defended her own chastity through an internalized morality instilled through education."[671] Bosnian reformists engaged in the redefinition of true Islamic morality arguing that it was not a particular form of dress, but a proper moral upbringing that was an essential part of Islam. Deeds and conduct based on Islamic moral values were to reflect the faith of Muslims, not particular types of clothing. Dževad Sulejmanpašić argued that veiling impeded the cultivation of critical consciousness necessary to combat the erosion of moral values in modern society. According to him, only a proper family upbringing and modern education could protect Bosnian Muslim women from the modern deviations that had already begun to infiltrate local society.[672] Face veiling was criticized as failing to distinguish between immutable Islamic principles and inherited customs, thereby causing erroneous associations between Islam and specific symbols of local culture. In words of Reis-ul-ulema Čaušević the most important attire for Muslim women, and men alike, was good religious education and the purity of their hearts.[673]

Reformist advocates of unveiling sought to challenge the traditional link between veiling, modesty, and Islamic morality by emphasizing the association between veiling and immoral

669 Linda B. Arthur, "Religion and Dress," 98.
670 Marie-Aimée Hélie-Lucas, "The Preferential Symbol for Islamic Identity: Women in Muslim Personal Laws," in *Identity Politics and Women Cultural Reassertions and Feminisms in International Perspective,* ed. Valentine M. Moghadam (Boulder CO: Westview, 1994), 391–407.
671 Cronin, "Introduction: Coercion or Empowerment?" 17.
672 Sulejmanpašić, "Prodiranje sveta u život muslimanke," 285–286.
673 Džemaludin Čaušević, "Odgovor Reis-ul-uleme Džematskom medžlisu," in *Sarajevski džematski medžlis i Reisove izjave*, ed. Hadži Mujaga Merhemić (Sarajevo: Hrvatska tiskara, 1928), 13.

behaviour, such as prostitution. Dževad Sulejmanpašić's work is a notable example of this approach. In Sulejmanpašić's perspective, veiled women represented not only a hindrance to modernization and progress but, more significantly, a complete opposition to authentic Islamic morality.[674] Veiling was not viewed, contrary to traditional and conservative interpretations, as a shield against immorality, but rather as a practice that condemned women to prostitution. He argued that veiling was responsible for the proliferation of prostitution due to two primary reasons.

The first argument he made was that veiling and seclusion of Muslim women, as obstacles to their education and employment, condemned them to a life of poverty and immoral means of earning. According to him, for women who remained without any male protection due to the Great War or repudiation by their husbands, prostitution was the only option, as they did not only lack the necessary skills to enter the labour market, but they also lived in an environment that condemned women's education and work outside the home.[675] In order to assert that formal education was not a threat to Islamic morality, but rather a type of protection of Muslim women's moral integrity, he argued that prostitutes were primarily uneducated, illiterate women from lower social classes lacking the skills necessary for the labour market.[676]

A second argument he made was that the imposition of strict clothing regulations on women had a detrimental effect on their moral development. It was his perspective that strict external controls placed on women prevented the development of their self-discipline and made them susceptible to irresponsible behaviours.[677] Sulejmanpašić espoused a typical reformists view according to which true morality was a matter of controlling one's own passions and desires, rather than trying to control others' behaviour.

In contrast, conservative and revivalist discourses considered veiling to be an indicator and a guardian of distinctive Islamic morality.[678] One of the most important strategies used by Muslim advocates of veiling in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the discursive construction of an immoral West. The West was equated with sexual immorality and the collapse of traditional norms, which they further directly linked to women's emancipation and modern fashion trends.[679] Hoffman Ladd has shown that advocates of veiling in different parts of Muslim world frequently employed this tactics of pointing out to "the collapse of sexual moral standards in the West as an indication of what will happen to Muslims

674 Sulejmanpašić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje*, 16–24.
675 Sulejmanpašić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje*, 18–19; 30–32.
676 Sulejmanpašić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje*, 32.
677 Sulejmanpašić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje*, 19–23.
678 Chameran [Ibrahim.Hakki Čokić], "O napadaju na 'takrir' i hodže," pt. 2, *Hikjmet* 1, no.3 (1929): 94; Muhamed Zahirović, "Kuda vodi otkrivanje lica muslimanki," *Hikjmet* 2, no. 14 (1930): 47; Mustafa Forto, *Otkrivanje muslimanskog ženskinja*, 8.
679 Jahić, "Pokriti ili otkriti," 51–53.

if they pursue the same standards of immodest dress and integration of the sexes."[680] In that manner conservative Bosnian scholar Ibrahim Hakki Čokić (1871–1948), claimed that 60 percent of the population in Croatia had venereal diseases, which he attributed to the proliferation of modern trends among women. According to him, venereal diseases were modern European phenomena that did not exist in traditional Muslim societies.[681] While the Islamic religious tradition was the fundamental frame of reference for conservatives, or "the basis of their identity and authority,"[682] as noted by Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Čokić's defence of the face veil also illustrates Karen Bauer's observation that conservatives often selectively employed modern, scientific justifications and non-Muslim sources to reinforce their views.[683] Although Čokić openly criticized reformists for incorporating foreign theories and authors into their works, he did not hesitate to reference certain Western practices and cite non-Muslim authors to prove the social benefits of veiling. For example, in 1928, he praised the Italian regime for promoting a decent dress code for women, concluding that even "civilized Europe", as he wrote, understands the close connection between women's attire and the preservation of traditional morals.[684] Margot Badran's research on Egypt indicates that Čokić's approval of the imposition of women's dress codes by Italian regime was not unique. An article published in conservative journal *The Woman's Awakening* in 1929 similarly advocated veiling "pointing out that both the pope and Mussolini insisted on women's modest attire."[685]

Furthermore, Čokić invoked the arguments of certain Serbian physician Aleksandar Kostić, who harshly criticized modern European culture for its emphasis on physical pleasures and fashion trends. Čokić cited Kostić's thesis that the hedonism of modern culture was to blame for the supposed physical and spiritual deterioration of European women. He used this to argue that Muslims must safeguard their strict rules on female dress and behaviour in order to protect women from moral decline and preserve the moral integrity of Bosnian Muslims.[686]

A similar type of argumentation we find also in the works of other conservatives who referred to European intellectual tradition, from Aristotle to Schopenhauer, to claim that women as physically and morally weaker beings, require special protection of their morality.[687]

680 Hoffman Ladd, "Polemics on the Modesty and Segregation of Women," 32.
681 Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, *O teset-turu*, (Tuzla: Štamparija Petrović,1928), 11.
682 Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, 10.
683 Bauer, *Gender Hierarchy in the Qur'ān*, 7–8.
684 Čokić, *O teset-turu*, 11.
685 Margot Badran, Feminists, *Islam and Nation. Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Universtity Press, 1995), 93.
686 Čokić, *O teset-turu*, 11; 64–65.
687 Jahjazade, "Savremena emancipacija žene," *Hikjmet* 4, no. 47 (1933): 348.

Among Muslim authors gathered around revivalist journal *El-Hidaje*, the veil was understood as a religious directive based on the Qurʾān, whose fundamental purpose was to ensure women's dignity and Muslim moral behaviour.[688] *El-Hidaje* discourse about the veil developed out of a larger critique of European emancipation, which they regarded as a violent erasure of gender boundaries and an inevitable precursor to the end of civilization. They identified the infiltration of contemporary European forms of entertainment and fashion trends as the primary reasons why women in Bosnia and Herzegovina were rejecting the face veil. It was suggested that these factors were also responsible for declining marriage rates, a rise in bachelors, infertility, infanticide, and other negative social trends that were spreading in Bosnian society.[689] In addition, the texts in *El-Hidaje* lamented over the growing impoverishment of Muslims, describing it as another important element leading to the rejection of the veil and spread of prostitution among Muslim women.[690] In short, the direct contact with the West was blamed for both impoverishment of Muslims and the penetration of modern, anti-Islamic social trends, that is to say for elements recognized as causes of unveiling and moral decline.

6.3.3. Veiling and Identity

The Bosnian debates on veiling on several levels questioned the relationship between Islam and Muslims and others religious and cultural traditions and communities. The issue of the relationship between Bosnian Muslims and Europe in general and particularly between Bosnian Muslims and other ethnic and religious groups in Bosnia and wider Yugoslavian context were deeply embedded in the debates on veiling. In addition, these debates served to question the position of Bosnian Muslims in the wider Muslim world.

- ***Bosnian Muslims in the wider European and Yugoslav space***

During the interwar era, the topic of the veil was closely intertwined with the matter of situating Muslims within the broader European and Yugoslav context.

In an article published in 1928 in *Gajret* Husein Brkić (1889–1947) argued in favour of unveiling, addressing broader concerns about foreign perceptions of Bosnian Muslims. This method of argumentation reflects a broader trend among Muslim intellectuals of the time. Nathalie Clayer has shown that also Albanian intellectuals, both secular and religious, who

688 Handžić, Položaj žene u islamu," 21; Muhammed Sadik, "Profanisanje zara i peče," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 2 (1940): 44–45.

689 Šaban Hodžić, "Ustezanje od braka," pt. 1, *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 4/5 (1939): 55–56; Šaban Hodžić, "Ustezanje od braka," pt. 2, *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 6/7 (1939): 76–78; Hafiz Trebinjac, "Blud (zina, prostitucija)," *El-Hidaje* 5, no. 8/10 (1942): 216; Busuladžić, "Kult golotinje," 220–225.

690 Busuladžić, "Kult golotinje," 223–224; Muharem Borić, "Za bolju budućnost muslimanke," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 6 (1941): 154–156.

supported unveiling during the inter-war period often "structured their arguments around the question of perception." [691]

From Brkić's perspective unveiling was an important element meant to demonstrate to non-Muslims compatibility between true Islamic and modern European values.[692] It was to show that Bosnian Muslims, although on the periphery of Europe, belonged to the European cultural landscape. The opening of Brkić's article is crucial to understanding his views on modern Europe and Bosnian Muslims. He begins his article by recalling an encounter with a group of Swedish women teachers traveling through Bosnia and Herzegovina, during which he felt ashamed. He alleged that the Swedish women whom he described as famously the most liberated in Europe, were shocked and terrified to see Bosnian Muslim women shuffling along like mummies, without any voice or autonomy, totally bound to their husbands.[693] Contrary to the prevailing Orientalist view, Brkić did not attribute the status of Muslim women in Bosnian society to Islam. Instead, he argued that the enforcement of veiling was a manifestation of a patriarchal mindset that hindered Bosnian Muslims from advancing and reinforced negative stereotypes about Muslims. He criticized Bosnian Muslims for adopting socially harmful practices, including the enjoyment of alcohol, which is clearly forbidden according to Islamic scriptures, while insisting on the continuation of the practice of veiling whose Islamic textual sources are at least controversial.[694] Brkić's discourse closely related the Muslim women veil to barbarism, authoritarianism, and the cultural and economic decline of Muslims. It was presented as incompatible with both civilized Europe and true Islam.

The veil was utilized during the interwar period to not only reconsider the position of Bosnian Muslims in the wider European cultural context, but also to reassess the national identity of Bosnian Muslims and their interaction with non-Muslims in Yugoslavia. As already mentioned, there were significant differences among Muslim intellectuals regarding the national identification of Bosnian Muslims during this period. They did not only oscillate between Croat, Serb or Yugoslav national identity, but they often shifted during their lifetime from one category to another.[695] Despite these differences, Xavier Bougarel has shown that secular educated Muslim intellectuals generally advocated for the unveiling of women as a component of the process of nationalization, which was generally supported as a sign of modernity. They regarded the veil as a barrier to the development of national

691 Nathalie Clayer, "Behind the Veil: The Reform of Islam in Inter-war Albania or the Search for a 'Modern'and 'European' Islam," in *Islam in Inter-War Europe*, eds. Nathalie Clayer and Eric Germain.Hurst (London: Hurst, 2008): 143.

692 Brkić, "Naše žensko pitanje," 72.

693 Brkić, "Naše žensko pitanje," 72.

694 Brkić, "Naše žensko pitanje," 72.

695 For more on national identification of Bosnian Muslims see: Mirsad Krijestorac, "Nationalism as a Process for Making the Desired Identity Salient: Bosnian Muslims Become Bosniaks" (PhD diss., Florida International University, 2016); Stijn Vervaet, "Između hrvatstva, srpstva i panislamizma;" Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

feelings among Muslims and as a cultural and social barrier between Muslims and non-Muslims in Yugoslavia.[696]

Of special importance in this context are *Gajret*'s short written and visual reports from the interwar period about the female beauty contests organized by the eponymous cultural association. Local branches of the *Gajret* cultural association organized cultural and social events that "typically consisted of banquets, concerts, performances by choral societies, theatre plays, dances and tombola's [*sic*]."[697] During 1930s beauty contests became an integral part of these events, with *Gajret* frequently publishing reports on these contests and photographs of the local beauty queens.[698]

In light of recent research that has established a link between beauty contests and notions of social progress, modernity, civilization, and nation, I contend that these *Gajret's* reports on beauty contests offer valuable insights into its broader views on women's roles and bodies, as well as the place of Muslims within monarchist Yugoslavia.[699] In these brief reports, little information was provided concerning the rules for the beauty contests or information on the selected local beauty queens. The photographs accompanying these reports, however, clearly demonstrate that *Gajret* advocated not only the abolition of the full-face veil, but also the replacement of traditional dress codes with modern, European-style dress codes.[700] The visual materials in Gajret show Muslim women wearing makeup, bob hairstyles, and modern clothing, without any religious symbols.

Gajret's position about Muslim women's dress practices cannot be properly understood without taking into account its general anti-Ottoman stance and pro-Serb and pro-regime orientation.[701] *Gajret* promoted modern education of Muslim women, and their stronger inclusion in the salaried work and social life, as well as adoption of modern middle-class manners and clothing practices, as steps that were to bring not only the transformation of the social position of Muslim women, but also the liberation of Bosnian Muslims from the Ottoman heritage and their assimilation into the wider Yugoslav community. As Fabio Giomi puts it *Gajret* 's activities aimed to foster "new generations of modern, nationally

696 Bougarel, *Islam and Nationhood in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 45.

697 Troch, "Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia," 163.

698 "U Derventi," *Gajret* 15, no. 1 (1934): 23; "Velika Gajretova zabava u Travniku," *Gajret* 14, no. 7/8 (1933): 137; "Veliki Gajretov teferič u Lastvi kod Trebinja," *Gajret* 19, no. (1938): 235; Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*, 303.

699 Colleen Ballerino Cohen, Richard Wilk and Beverly Stoeltje, "Introduction," in *Beauty Queens on the Global Stage: Gender, Contests, and Power,* eds. Colleen Ballerino Cohen, Richard Wilk and Beverly Stoeltje (New York: Routledge, 1996): 1–11.

700 Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European,* 303–306.

701 For more on the Gajret's pro-regime and pro-Serb orientation see; Troch*,* "Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia," 162–163; Mitja Velikonja, *Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 139.

aware Muslim men and women capable of playing an active role in the emerging Yugoslav middle class."[702]

Fig. 3 Portrait of Nufeta Arpadžić
Miss Gajret, 20 February 1932, Mostar
Source: *Gajret* 13, no 4 (1932):58

- ***The fear of assimilation***

The beauty contests organized by the *Gajret* association were strongly condemned as a source of immorality and social anarchy by conservative religious scholars.[703] Furthermore, they correctly understood that *Gajret* advocated not merely the rejection of the face veil, but also the adoption of modern female attire as part of the wider effort to promote Yugoslav national unification. They held that this effort threatened the cultural and religious distinctiveness of Bosnian Muslims.[704]

702 Giomi, "Muslim, Educated and Well-Dressed: Gajret's Self-Civilizing Mission in Interwar Yugoslavia," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 26, no. 1 (2019): 41.

703 Muslim, "Kraljica ljepote," *Hikjmet* 3, no. 27 (1931): 78–85; Ahmed Lutfi Čokić, "Posljedice današnjeg 'savremenog' društva," *Hikjmet* 3, no. 34 (1932): 317.

704 Zahirović, "Kuda vodi otkrivanje lica muslimanki," 47–51; Chameran [Ibrahim Hakki Čokić], "Zar i to," *Hikjmet* 2, no. 14 (1930): 54–63.

Conservatives' emphasis on preserving the outward symbols of Islam as essential elements of their faith, which Muslims must uphold to be considered true believers, can be seen as a strategy to maintain a distinct separation between Muslims and other groups within Yugoslavia. They regarded traditional Muslim clothing for both men and women, such as the face veil and red *fez*, a specific type of Muslim male headgear, as expressions of the faith and cultural symbols of Islam.[705] They referred to the alleged *ḥadīth* "whosoever imitates a group, he becomes one of them" to proclaim anyone who abandon traditional attire to be unbeliever.[706] Thus, Ibrahim Hakki Čokić wrote that Islam demands from Muslims not only inner discipline, but also that they bear distinctive external sings of religious belonging**,** whose main purpose is to accentuate difference between Muslims and non-Muslims. Rejecting external signs of Islam for him was an act of unbelief. He considered those who do not demonstrate their faith through their actions as well as those who renounce the external symbols of Islam as deserters, at least.[707]

The revivalist journal *El-Hidaje* employed a similar line of reasoning, depicting the face veil as a symbol of a unique Muslim identity and a means of resisting the influences of other religions and cultures. Mehmed Handžić, who extensively dealt with the importance of external signs in Islam claimed that external, visible signs of every religion were its constitutive parts and that adoption of external signs of other religions such as celebrations, prayers, fasting or clothing was forbidden to Muslims as it signifies the partial adoption of that religion.[708] He, similarly to Čokić saw Muslim traditional Muslim hat (*fez*) worn by men and the face veil worn by women to be visible symbols of Islamic faith and Muslim identity.[709]

Handžić and Čokić's writings reveal that the strong resistance to adopting modern European fashion trends and the emphasis on preserving what was considered specific Muslim clothing was not only linked to concerns about moral health but also to the identity of the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their defence of the face veil as the most visible marker of cultural and religious distinctiveness of Bosnian Muslims demonstrates their deep fear of assimilation and losing their distinct identity in a specific local Bosnian multicultural and multireligious environment. Furthermore, their essentialist position assumes sharp binaries and incompatibility between Islam and other cultural and religious traditions.

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705 Ahmed Lutfi Čokić, "Islam nošnja i otkrivanje," pt. 1, *Hikjmet 2,* no. 21/22 (1931): 287.

706 Bougarel, "Reis i veo," 84.

707 Čokić, *O teset-turu*, 32; Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, "Zejlutesettur, (ili odgovor g. Bušatliću)," pt. 7, *Hikjmet* 1, no. 10/11 (1929): 327.

708 Mehmed Handžic, "Kakvih nas sve ima," *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 4/5 (1939): 64; Mehmed Handžić, "Važnost vanjskih znakova sa šeriatskog gledišta," *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 6/7,(1939): 80–82. See also, Hazim Fazlić, "Modern Muslim Thought in the Balkans: The Writings of Mehmed ef. Handžicć in the *El-Hidaje* Periodical in the Context of Discrimination and Genocide," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 35, no. 3 (2015): 444–445.

709 Čokić, *O teset-turu,* 32; Handžić, "Kakvih nas sve ima," 64; Handžić, "Važnost vanjskih znakova sa šeriatskog gledišta," 80–82.

Similarly, an article published in 1940 in *El-Hidaje* criticizing the changes in traditional Muslim women clothing, concludes that it is no longer clear who is Anka, and who is Hanka.[710] This remark vividly reflects deeper concern about the blurring of religious and cultural identities in Bosnia and Hercegovina, where Anka is common Christian name, and Hanka Muslim one. The changes in traditional Muslim women attire were seen as indicative of loss of communal identity and Islamic values.

In these conservative and revivalists' narratives the Muslim women's face veil functioned as a tool of resistance against European modernity and Yugoslavian efforts aimed and national and cultural assimilation of Muslims. It was utilized to emphasize the Muslim "Otherness" in relation to modern European values, as well as other ethnic and religious groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina and royalist Yugoslavia.

The previously mentioned statement, titled *Islamska izborna kurija i Reisove izjave* (The Islamic Electoral Curia and the Reis' Statements) from 1928, also clearly demonstrates that modern debates on Muslim women's veiling were largely concerned with the identity of Bosnian Muslims within the broader Yugoslav landscape. The statement affirmed the reformists' position that wearing the face veil was not a religious obligation for Muslim women, but it clearly opposed adopting modern dress codes for the sake of "fashion, custom or even the wish for unification with our brothers by blood and language."[711]

Bosnian Muslim debates confirm recent studies that have suggested a strong connection between the Muslim woman veil and identity constructions. In the Bosnian context, the emphasis on preserving traditional dress codes can be attributed to the fact that, as demonstrated by Wolfgang Wagner and others, Muslims in minority settings often use the veil to accentuate their group membership and distinguish themselves from the wider society.[712]

The presented interwar debates among Bosnian Muslims show that the issue of unveiling was an important arena for negotiating collective identity, belonging, and the future of Bosnian Muslims within the monarchist Yugoslavia. The opposing positions presented in these debates reflect divergent yet equally serious attempts to preserve and (re)define the collective identity of Bosnian Muslims within a specific socio-political framework that did not recognize their right to autonomous national articulation.

710 Sadik, "Profanisanje zara i peče," 44–45.

711 Editorial board "Takrir isl. izborne kurije," 81–82. Translation provided by Xavier Bougarel. See: Bougarel, "Farewell to the Ottoman Legacy," 19.

712 Wolfgang Wagner, Ragini Sen, Risa Permanadeli, & Caroline S. Howarth, "The Veil and Muslim Women's Identity: Cultural Pressures and Resistance to Stereotyping," *Culture & Psychology* 18, no. 4 (2012): 521.

The advocacy for unveiling by secular Muslim intellectuals—regardless of their formal identification with either Croatian or Serbian national identity—shows that unveiling was understood as a necessary step toward the development of national sentiments among Muslims and their integration in Yugoslavian kingdom. Yet this raises a crucial question: did such an approach represent a denial of Muslim distinctiveness, or was it the opposite, that is an attempt to define the Muslim community beyond strictly religious frameworks, in a form acceptable within the prevailing political system which excluded Muslims as a distinct national subject?

Articles published in *Gajret* clearly reflect this ambivalence. Its advocacy for unveiling aligned with its broader anti-Ottoman sentiments and with its political positioning within the pro-regime, and pro-Serbian discourse. While such orientation can be interpreted as a denial of the distinctive collective identity of Bosnian Muslims, it can also be understood as a pragmatic survival strategy—a means by which Muslims sought to affirm themselves as equal, nationally conscious, and socially visible citizens of the new state, within a system that did not recognize their national autonomy.

Conversely, conservative and revivalist voices did not simply express resistance to change but insisted on preserving traditional practices and visible markers—such as the veil—as a means of defending collective cohesion and identity-specific distinctiveness. Their stance reflects the fear that rapid integration into national projects, which viewed Muslims solely as Serbs or Croats, could result in the complete erasure of their distinctiveness.

Rather than viewing these positions as mutually exclusive they could be understood as two different strategies for preserving the Muslim community within a political framework that left no room for its autonomous national development. The debate over the veil—and, more broadly, over the role of women in society—thus became a discursive site wherein deeper dilemmas concerning belonging, visibility, and survival were articulated.

- ***Reflecting on Bosnian Muslims' Place in Global Islamic Developments***

The topic of veiling served also as an important platform for Bosnian Muslims to express their views on their place within the broader Muslim world, particularly in relation to the Kemalist reforms in Turkey.

The distinctive geographic location of Bosnia and Herzegovina played a role in shaping the particular tone of Bosnian Muslim discussions that occurred on the periphery of both the European cultural space and the Muslim world. Muslim reformists discourses on education frequently drew upon movements and trends from throughout the Muslim world, including those among Indian and Russian Muslims. However, in debates surrounding the veil, a distinct differentiation emerged between central and peripheral Muslim communities along

with general view that the central Muslim lands should be a model for communities on the periphery, such as the Bosnian one. The discourses about veiling demonstrate that Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina considered primarily Arab world to be the heart of Islam.

Reformist oriented religious and secular intellectuals Džemaludin Čaušević, Dževad Sulejmanpašić and Husein Đozo showed an obvious inclination towards the reformist movement in Egypt, specifically in relation to the concepts put forth by Egyptian scholar Muḥammad ʿAbduh. This inclination was undoubtedly linked to global influence of this reformist trend and the fact that some of the most notable scholars who engaged in these debates, such as Džamaludin Čaušević was educated in Egypt during the period when Muḥammad ʿAbduh ideas were gaining popularity.

It is evident from the writings of Džemaludin Čušević that he considered his own views about veiling of Muslim women to be an extension of Muḥammad ʿAbduh's efforts aimed at socio-cultural and religious renewal of Muslims. He used various occasions to present himself as a disciple of Muḥammad ʿAbduh with the obvious aim of proving that his own position according to which veiling was not religious precept founded in the Qurʾān, but a cultural practice that impeded Muslim women education and the general progress of Muslims was not just his arbitrary view, but a common reformists' position.[713] Likewise, Husein Đozo described Čaušević as a proponent of modern Muslim reformists' stances on Muslim women's position in society.[714]

Reformists deliberately positioned their call for unveiling within the broader reformist intellectual trend advocating the emancipation of Muslim women from traditional patriarchal practices. This strategy served to legitimize their own views regarding the present and future of the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. [715]

The polemics between Reis-ul-ulema Čaušević and his conservative opponents about veiling illustrate a deep disagreement among Bosnian *ʿulamāʾ* regarding the socio-religious reforms in modern Turkey. While Čaušević generally considered these reforms to be a role model for Bosnian Muslims seeking progress, his opponents regarded them as unequivocally pro-Western and anti-Islamic.[716] The conservative attitudes towards Kemalist social reforms is well illustrated by the fact that the journal *Hikjmet* had two informational sections; one entitled "From the Turkish world" and the other "From the Islamic world." This division clearly shows that *Hikjmet*'s editors did not regard modern Turkey to be the part of the Islamic world anymore. On the contrary, it embodied wicked departure

713 "Kongres muslimana intelektualaca održan 6. i 7. septembra, prilikom proslave Gajretove dvadesetpetogodišnjice (nastavak)," *Gajret* 9 (1928): 331; Čaušević, "Odgovor Reis-ul-uleme Džematskom medžlisu,"12–13.
714 Husejn Đozo, "Da li je problem otkrivanja žene vjerskog ili socijalnog karaktera," *Novi Behar* 10, no. 6/9 (1936): 79.
715 Karić, "Islamic Thought in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 20th Century," 417; Jahić, *Hikjmet*, 169.
716 Giomi, "Domesticating Kemalism," 151–187.

from Islamic values and principles. Ibrahim Hakki Čokić scholarly works demonstrate an antipathy towards the social reforms introduced in modern Turkey during the 1920s, especially those concerning women's rights. His view was that reforms of this nature have a detrimental impact on social morality and order. According to him, the unveiling of Muslim women in Turkey and the subsequent visibility of women in the public sphere and the social mixing of men and women were directly responsible for the spread of bars, nightclubs, and the various social ills.[717] In the opinion of Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, the uncritical adoption of Western cultural norms by Turkey did not provide a suitable model for Bosnian Muslims. Instead, he suggested that modern Japan, which successfully integrated Western technological achievements and its traditional practices and religious beliefs, represents a more suitable model.[718] In an effort to degrade Bosnian Muslim advocates of unveiling who generally viewed and presented the social reforms in Turkey as compatible with Islam, the conservative association between the alleged moral decline and the reforms related to women in modern Turkey played a significant role.[719] The conservative sarcastic remark that Čaušević's call for reinterpretation of Qurʾānic verses related to women's dress was nothing more but an attempt to establish a fifth "Kemalist" *maḏhab* in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be also interpreted in this sense.[720]

6.4 . The Issue of the Authenticity of Veiling and Authority to Define what Constitutes True Islam

Bosnian Muslim debates over veiling were defined by a fundamental disagreement regarding whether this custom is merely part of cultural traditions or an authentic Islamic practice.[721] In order to understand the differences between Bosnian Muslims regarding the issue of the authenticity of veiling it is necessary to take into account the broader methodological differences between Muslim scholars regarding the place and importance of established scholarship and the right to an independent, rational interpretation of the Islamic textual sources.

Given the fact that the Muslim reformists, both secular and religious educated, advocated publicly the abolition of the face veil as a part of the revitalization of the true Islam, they brought into the focus the issue of representation and authority to speak about Islam,

717 Čokić, *O teset-turu*, 11; Čokić, "Zejluttesettur," pt. 2, 121; Chameran [Ibrahim Hakki Čokić], "Jedan pogled na turske protuislamske reforme," *Hikjmet* 1, no. 4 (1929): 116–117.

718 Čokić, *O teset-turu*, 11.

719 See as an example Prohos' criticism of reformist link between socio-cultural progress of Turkey and the emancipation of women, Sejfullah Proho, "Frkai dalla" in *Sarajevski džematski medžlis i Reisove izjave*, ed. Hadži Mujaga Merhemić (Sarajevo: Hrvatska tiskara d.d. 1928), 52–53.

720 "Drugi odgovor Džematskog medžlisa Reis-ul-ulemi," in *Sarajevski džematski medžlis i reisove izjave*, ed. Hadži Mujaga Merhemić (Sarajevo: Hrvatska tiskara d.d. 1928), 37; Proho, "Frkai dalla," 52–53.

721 Kurdić, "Percepcija sunneta," 27; Fikret Karčić, "Stavovi vodstva Islamske zajednice u Jugoslaviji povodom zabrane nošenja zara i feredže,"*Anali GBH* 42, no. 34 (2013): 225.

one of the most contentious issues among Muslims up to these days. The reformists' public advocacy for unveiling triggered a series of responses from conservative members of the *ʿulamāʾ* who saw and presented themselves as the guardians of Islamic doctrine and tradition. Conservative members of the *ʿulamāʾ* class faced challenges not only from secular, educated intellectuals questioning their self-proclaimed role as mediators of Islamic tradition and authentic interpreters of Islamic doctrine, but also from reformist members of the *ʿulamāʾ* class. They denounced conservative views on veiling as contrary to the spirit of the Qurʾān grounding their claim on the two basic points: intellectual sterility and formality of conservative religious officials and a devastating impact of the *ʿulamāʾs* blind adherence to tradition on all forms of enquiry. As the issue of intellectual qualifications of conservative *ʿulamāʾ* and the relevance of the concept of *taqlīd* was primarily questioned by reformist oriented religious scholars, it is not surprising that the heated polemics regarding the issue of unveiling occurred among religious scholars, who had opposing views regarding not only the role future of Muslims and Islam, but also the Islamic past.[722]

In the following sections I will show how the debates on the veil generally served as a medium through which a range of actors confronted their opinions regarding the right to *ijtihād,* the qualifications necessary to interpret Islam, form and issue judgements, as well as regards the role of Islamic religious institutions, and the place of the Islamic traditional scholarship.[723]

6.4.1. Reformist Orientation to the Qur'ān

Bosnian Muslim reformers viewed face veiling not as a religious requirement, but as a cultural practice that could therefore be changed.[724] This understanding primarily relied on the reinterpretation of Qurʾānic verse 24:31 that states "…tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment *(zīna)* only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils *(khumur, sing. khimār)* over their bosoms (*juyūb,* sing. *jayb*), and not to reveal their adornment save to their own husbands or fathers, or husbands' fathers,…" and Qurʾān 33:59, which addresses the Prophet to tell "thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks *(jalābībihinna)* close round them (when they go abroad). That will be better, so that they may be recognised and not annoyed…"

As the majority of traditionally educated religious scholars in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as elsewhere in Muslim world, were opposed to reformists' call for return to Islamic sources

722 Bougarel, "Reis i veo," 93.

723 Bougarel, "Reis i veo," 70; Senadin Lavić, "Kulturno-obrazovna i prosvjetiteljska djelatnost reisa Mehmeda Džemaludin-ef. Čauševića," *Znakovi vremena* 17, no. 65/66 (2014): 13–25.

724 Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci*, 20–27; Otokar Sykore, "Važne izjave Reis-ul-uleme," *Jugoslavenski list*, December 10, 1927, 3; Abdulah Ajni Bušatlić, "O teseturu i hidžabu," pt. 4, *Novi Behar 2,* no. 5 (1928): 69.

and (re)interpretation of the Qurʾān, the advocates of the face unveiling first needed to legitimize their right to reinterpretation of these verses. Since principle of *ijtihād* traditionally had been confined to matters on which there is no clear and categorical text of the Qurʾān and there is no *ijmāʿ* it is not surprising that reformists generally accentuated ambiguous character of Qurʾānic verses dealing with Muslim woman's clothing in public and related diversity of opinions among classical exegetes and jurists on the issue.

Reformists' interpretation of the Qurʾānic verses traditionally used to advocate total veiling involves two key elements: a re-examination of the meaning of the Qurʾānic vocabulary related to women's clothing and a contextualization of these verses within the specific socio-cultural milieu in which they were revealed.

When it comes to the Qurʾānic terminology, reformists sought to show that Qurʾānic terms such as *khimār* and *jilbāb* used in verses 24:31 and 33:59 are not specifically defined and that they, contrary to conservative understanding, do not refer unequivocally to face veiling, but to body covering more generally. Reformist scholars such as Džemaludin Čaušević Mehmed Begović and Abdulah Ajni Bušatlić claimed that nowhere in the Qurʾān is face covering mentioned or prescribed. They argued that the absence of any specific mention of the face or the terms *niqāb* and *burquʿ* in these Qurʾānic verses indicates that they do not mandate covering the face, but rather prescribe modest conduct in accordance with general Islamic moral principles.[725] Čaušević and Begović similarly defined the vague term *jilbāb* mentioned in Qurʾān 33:59 simply as a kind of long, outer garment and the term *khimār (pl.khumur)* mentioned in the Qurʾān 24:31 as a short scarf that covers hair, neck and breasts, to argue that these verses do not imply any kind of face covering.[726]

Ambiguous order directed to women in Qurʾān (24:31) "…to display of their adornment (*zīna*) only that which is apparent (*illā mā ẓahara minhā*)..." was an important part of Muslim Bosnian discussions on modesty and veiling. As regards the term adornment *(zīna)* Dževad Sulejmanpašić argued that it would be inaccurate to interpret *zīna* as the whole female body, since the same verse explicitly commands women to covers their bosoms. According to him if the entire body were considered *zīna*, this command would be illogical. Furthermore, he freely defined *zīna* as those parts of female body that define person as a female and that arouse sexual desire in men (sexual charms).[727] Similarly, Čaušević defined *zīna* as referring to those parts of the body that are naturally hidden.[728]

725 Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci*, 26; Čaušević, "Drugi odgovor Reis-ul-uleme," 27; Bušatlić, "O teseturu i hidžabu," pt. 4, 69.
726 Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci*, 21–22; Čaušević, "Drugi odgovor Reis-ul-uleme" 27–28.
727 Sulejmanpašić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje*, 26.
728 Čaušević, "Drugi odgovor Reis-ul-uleme," 27.

The phrase in 24:31, *illā mā ẓahara minhā*, Sulejmanpašić interpreted as what is customary or normally held to be external. He argued that this Qurʾānic exception applies not only to the face, but also to the neck, hair, and hands. Furthermore, he believed that this Qurʾānic expression may also pertain to other parts of the body that were traditionally exposed in early Muslim community.[729] While he refrained from specifying which body parts these might be, stating that his knowledge of the appropriate dress codes of that period was limited, it is evident that Sulejmanpašić regarded the notions of modesty as culturally contingent. The same phrase Čaušević interpreted as the face and the hands; arguing that they were places of external adornments allowed to be displayed.[730]

Moreover, religious trained Muslim reformists emphasized the diversity of opinions within Islamic tradition in relation to veiling and claimed that even the majority of pre-classical and classical exegetes and jurists interpreted verse 24:31 as to command the covering of the woman's body, apart from face, the hands and the feet.[731] I contend that reformist emphasis on variety of opinions regarding the issue of veiling within Islamic exegetical and legal tradition served twofold purposes. It was to show that there was no consensus among the accepted authorities from the past on the matter, and that therefore, it was permissible to reinterpret Islamic textual sources in order to solve this issue.[732] Additionally, references to past interpretations that allowed women to show their faces were intended to demonstrate that reformist views were not a radical departure from Islamic exegetical and legal traditions.

Advocates of unveiling generally opposed a verse-by-verse interpretation common in traditional exegetical literature and advocated a contextual interpretation of verses often used to justify female face veiling. They claimed that the true meaning of these verses cannot be properly understood without situating them within a specific historical, social, cultural, as well as wider literal context.

Their understanding of the verse 24:31 was based on the widely accepted belief that prior to the revelation of this verse women in Arabian society dressed immodestly, leaving much of their bodies exposed. Dževad Sulejmanpašić, Džemaludin Čaušević, Abdulah Ajni Bušatlić, and Osman Nuri Hadžić claimed that it was common prior to the revelation of this verse to see Arabian women wearing a headscarf that flowed loosely around their shoulders, leaving their upper chest exposed. According to them this verse was intended to encourage these women to dress decently and in accordance with new Islamic moral standards. Thus,

729 Sulejmanpašić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje*, 26–27.
730 Čaušević, "Drugi odgovor Reis-ul-uleme," 27.
731 Čaušević, "Odgovor Reis-ul-uleme," 12-13; Bušatlić, "O teseturu i hidžabu", pt. 4, 69–70; Abdulah Ajni Bušatlić," O teseturu i hidžabu," pt. 5, *Novi Behar* 2, no. 6 (1928): 88.
732 Čaušević, "Odgovor Reis-ul-uleme," 12–13.

they argued that this verse was revealed to correct the then-prevailing customs and that it prescribed chastity and morality and not the specific type of covering.[733]

Čaušević's interpretation of this verse was in line with his general position that the particular verse must be interpreted in conjunction with its preceding and following verses, as well as with the Qurʾān as a whole. He openly blamed advocates of the face veil for failing to read Qurʾān 24:31 in connection with the preceding verse 24:30 that commands Muslim males "to lower their gaze and to guard their modesty."[734] The conservative interpretation of verse 24:31 as ordering segregation and full covering of women according to Čaušević contradicts the fundamental message of the Qurʾān regarding the equality of men and women in terms of moral responsibility. He argued that interpreting this verse out of the context of its revelation had led to a flawed understanding, one that places the primary responsibility for upholding Islamic moral values on women and overemphasizes the moral significance of their clothing. Furthermore, he argued that the reading of Qurʾān 24:31 in connection to 24:30 unquestionably indicates that God places the moral burden on both men and women equally and holds them accountable for the collective morality. Thus, he concludes that it was not a piece of clothing, but moral character of men and women that the Qurʾān exhorted as the most significant means of preserving public morality.[735]

Regarding Qurʾān 33:59, Mehmed Begović argued that it was essential to place the verse within the specific historical and cultural context in which it was revealed. Only then, according to him, it is it possible to understand that the *jilbāb* mentioned in this verse was not intended to conceal Muslim women but rather to serve as a form of their protection. Begović emphasized that this verse was revealed to address specific problem at the time of revelation. Specifically, it was revealed five years after the Prophet migrated to Medina, where Muslim women were often being harassed by hypocrites who claimed to have mistaken them for slaves, which were considered to be fair game for sexual assaults.[736] The context of this verse according to Begović suggests that its purpose was not to mandate the complete covering and segregation of Muslim women, but rather to instruct them to use a long outer garment (shawl) to cover their bodies, thereby identifying themselves as free, chaste Muslim women. Begović, claimed that the Qurʾān 33:59 when put within its proper revelational context, clearly demonstrates that *jilbāb* was prescribed primary as a marker of distinction between free Muslim women and slaves in a society where slave women were considered to be sexually available, and thus as a specific form of recognition of Muslim women.[737]

733 Sulejmanpašić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje,* 25–26; Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 5, 369–370, Čaušević, "Drugi odgovor Reis-ul-uleme," 27; Bušatlić, "O teseturu i hidžabu," pt. 4*,* 69–70.

734 Čaušević, "Drugi odgovor Reis-ul-uleme," 27.

735 Čaušević, "Drugi odgovor Reis-ul-uleme," 27.

736 Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci*, 21.

737 Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci*, 21–22.

Čaušević's interpretation of the Qurʾān (33:59) reveals a typical reformist distinction between the true Islamic message contained in the Qurʾān and its later interpretations. He claimed that this Qurʾānic verse simply commands Muslim women to draw upon themselves their outer garment (*jilbāb*) to cover their chests, while some of its later interpreters required covering of the whole woman's body including the face by claiming that *jilbāb* mentioned in this verse should be held in hands in such a way so that only one eye can be exposed.[738] Čaušević's distinction between the Qurʾānic text and its later interpretation served, as in reformist discourse in general, to prove that some Muslim commentators inaccurately translated God's clear command of modest apparel into a requirement for Muslim women to cover their faces.[739] The distinction between the true Islamic message contained in the Qurʾān and the historical interpretation of that message was in line with his critical attitudes towards passive acceptance of dogmas from religious authorities.

6.4.2. The Early Islamic History and the Issue of Foreign Influences

Not only Islamic religious texts, but also the early Islamic history was employed and interpreted to claim that the face veil was rooted in foreign cultural traditions rather than mandated by religious doctrine.

Osman Nuri Hadžić drew on the portrayal of free and powerful Muslim women that played an important role in the formation of the first Muslim community, which was a common theme in reformist literature, to argue that women in the Golden Age of Islam were not completely veiled or secluded. Based on this premise, he contended that the face veil cannot be considered an authentic Islamic religious obligation.[740] In Hadžić's discourse, the early Islamic community was depicted as a manifestation of the fundamental Islamic principle of equality between men and women which was subsequently compromised under the influence of foreign cultures. Hadžić viewed the Muslim woman's face veil as the most visible sign of Muslims' departure from the true and authentic Islamic message and their adoption of foreign patriarchal customs.[741]

The issue of foreign influences on Islamic religious and cultural tradition was a significant aspect of the various intra-Muslim debates in Bosnia and Herzegovina concerning the authenticity of veiling. Those who opposed veiling claimed veil's foreign provenance to support their position that it is not an authentic Islamic duty or specific sign of cultural and religious distinctiveness. Conversely, proponents of veiling viewed the unveiling as a direct result of modern Western European culture and rejected it as an attempt at Westernization. This is certainly not a peculiarity of Bosnian Muslim discourses. Asma Afsaruddin has shown

738 Čaušević, "Drugi odgovor Reis-ul-uleme," 28.
739 Čaušević, "Drugi odgovor Reis-ul-uleme," 28.
740 Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 5, 369–370.
741 Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 1, 259.

that both, veiling and unveiling, have been in various discussions from 19th century onward regularly attributed to foreign influence. [742]

Muslim reformists from Bosnia and Herzegovina similarly to their counterparts in the wider Muslim world understood and presented practices of veiling and seclusion not as original Islamic practices, but as a legacy of Byzantine, Persian, and Jewish, with which Muslims in the early centuries came into the contact.[743] Their interest in the origin of veiling certainly was not a purely historical; references to foreign origin of this practice were intended to serve as a proof that it was not an Islamic religious duty, but indeed non-Islamic historical accretion. Authors such as Mehmed Begović and Osman Nuri Hadžić argued that veiling and seclusion over the centuries became associated with Islam not only because Muslims adopted these practices, but mostly due to the fact that later religious authorities interpreted the Qurʾānic verses on modesty through the lens of foreign traditions.[744]

It is clear that from in the perspective of these authors veiling was not regarded as an Islamic obligation or a specific manifestation of Muslim identity as seen in conservative discourses, nor as a symbol of Islam's oppressive and barbaric nature, as in Orientalists' critiques of veiling. Instead, it was understood as a result of historical deviations from Islam and as a sign of departure from authentic Islamic principles and practices. Consequently, reform of the veiling and seclusion practices was framed as a renewal of Qurʾānic teachings and not as an abandonment of Islam.

Mustafa Čelić (1893–1940) claimed that the practice of veiling was not exclusive to Bosnian Muslims and could also be found among Jews and Catholics in Western Bosnia, as well as to some extent in Dalmatia. He did so to demonstrate that veiling was not a unique or authentic Islamic tradition, but rather a custom with diverse cultural origins.[745] In addition for the same author the wide variety of Muslim women's clothing in different countries was a proof that local customs and cultural practices influenced the understanding of Muslim women's appropriate dress.[746]

742 Asma Afsaruddin, "Introduction: The Hermeneutics of Gendered Space and Discourse," in *Hermeneutics and Honor: Negotiating Female "Public" Space in Islamic/ate,* eds. Asma Afsaruddin and Anan Ameri (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999): 7.

743 Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci*, 23–25; Osman Nuri Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 4, *Gajret* 9, no. 22/23 (1925): 345; Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 5, 369–370.

744 Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci,* 23–25; Osman Nuri Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 5, 369–370.

745 Mustafa Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 2, *Novi Behar*, 1, no. 7 (1927): 101.

746 Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 2, 101.

6.4.3. Reformist Critique of Conservative Bosnian *ʿUlamāʾ*: Debating Intellectual and Religious Authority

Muslims advocates of unveiling were aware that the issue of unveiling was considered to be in the exclusive domain of religious scholars. Consequently, they recognized that their advocacy for unveiling was likely to encounter resistance from conservative members of the *ʿulamāʾ* class and the broader population. This is clearly evident in the introductory chapter of Dževad Sulejmanpašić's book *Muslimansko žensko pitanje* in which he apologizes for discussing as a young man such an important issue as veiling. In his apology, while anticipating possible disdain from his fellow Muslims, he indicates that he felt it was his duty to inform them on the topic.[747] This demonstrates his awareness of both the significance and the controversial nature of the topic.

During a preparatory meeting held in 1927 for the congress of Muslim intellectuals, which was scheduled for September 1928, participants clearly expressed concerns that discussing the issue of veiling—traditionally seen as the exclusive domain of religious scholars—could lead to condemnation from conservative members of the *ʿulamāʾ*. Replying to these concerns, Reis-ul-ulema Džemaludin Čaušević argued that it was not only permissible, but also necessary to involve secular educated Muslim intellectuals in discussions on the key socio-cultural issues confronting Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to pave the way for their progress.[748] Although a member of *ʿulamāʾ* class, he encouraged secular educated Muslims to work on the enlightenment of Bosnian Muslims and defended their right to participate in socio-religious and cultural debates arguing that it was their duty to work on the welfare of their community. The same position towards the secular intellectuals was expressed also by other reform-oriented religious scholars such as Husein Đozo (1912–1982).[749]

The discussions on veiling are of the great importance as they witness the fragmentation within the class of religious scholars, who had divergent views not only on this particular issue, but on the cultural and religious authority in general. Religious reform-oriented Muslim intellectuals, as well as secular educated reformists, seriously questioned the traditional notion of *ʿulamāʾ* as the exclusive repository of Islamic knowledge. Members of both groups criticized conservative members of *ʿulamāʾ* class in Bosnia and Herzegovina as incompetent to provide new, fresh, and yet Islamic solutions to problems facing Muslim women, and the Muslim community in general. They claimed that *ʿulamāʾs* poor secular education and the consequent lack of understanding of modern social processes disabled them to detect the burning issues the community was facing. In addition, their knowledge about Islam was depicted as formalistic and rigid and as such insufficient to provide true

747 Sulejmanpašić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje*, 6.
748 Gajret, "Konferencija muslimanske inteligencije u Gajretu," *Gajret* 11, no. 24 (1927): 384.
749 Đozo, "Da li je problem otkrivanja žene vjerskog ili socijalnog karaktera," 78–80.

Islamic solution to these problems. Their lack of knowledge, both secular and the religious one was generally stressed as responsible for the existing social order that was depicted as un-just and un-Islamic.[750]

Muslim reformist intellectual Dževad Sulejmanpašić presented the conservative members of *ʿulamāʾ* as a closed and incapacitated individuals, hampered by their outdated education and inability to comprehend the long-term social, economic, and moral consequences of isolating Muslim women. Sulejmanpašić interpreted the fear of female emancipation and unveiling among the *ʿulamāʾ* as a direct result of their limited general education and formalistic knowledge of Islam.[751]

The religious expertise of the conservative Bosnian *ʿulamāʾ* was particularly questioned by the reformist's members of *ʿulamāʾ* class. The conservatives were criticized for their intellectual and spiritual poverty, which was considered as the primary cause of irrationalism, religious pedantry, fatalism and obscurantism among Bosnian Muslims.[752] Religious educated reformists scholars such as Abdulah Ajni Bušatlić and Husein Đozo openly attacked what Đozo termed "*taqlīd* mentality" of Bosnian *ʿulamāʾs*, holding the blind adherence to the past authorities to be the major factor hindering the development of Islam and Muslims.[753] For these scholars it was a poor religious education of conservative *ʿulamāʾ* that was to be blamed for the failure to reflect critically upon the inherited exegetical and legal tradition and thus to distinguish between historical Islam, that was formed under the influence of different cultures and local traditions, and the true Islamic principles contained in its textual foundations. The conservative understanding of veiling as a religious duty was criticized as being based on a false and dangerous sacralization of historically and culturally determined understandings of the eternal Islamic principles of modesty. These reformist scholars blamed the uncritical acceptance of classical exegetical works as the ultimate authority on the issue of veiling for undermining the supreme authority of the textual sources of Islam, ossifying Islamic tradition and falsely attributing religious significance to a primarily socio-cultural issue. Moreover, they saw it as ultimately leading to a prohibition of critical discourses on the issue, which the *ʿulamāʾ* monopolized.[754]

The reformist critique of conservative defence of the face veil as a product of blind traditionalism challenged the very foundations of the *ʿulamāʾs* interpretative authority. It

750 Bougarel, "Reis i veo," 91.
751 Jahić, "Modernizam Dževada Sulejmanpašića," 136.
752 Abdulah Ajni Bušatlić, *Pitanje muslimanskog napretka u Bosni i Hercegovini (Iskrena i otvorena riječ)* (Islamska dionička štamparija, Sarajevo, 1928), 8.
753 Abdulah Ajni Bušatlić, "O teseturu i hidžabu," pt. 2, *Novi Behar* 2, no. 3 (1928): 37–38; Abdulah Ajni Bušatlić, "O teseturu i hidžabu," pt. 3, *Novi Behar* 2, no. 4 (1928): 57–58; Đozo, "Da li je problem otkrivanja žene vjerskog ili socijalnog karaktera," 78–79.
754 Bušatlić, "O teseturu i hidžabu," pt. 2, 38; Bušatlić, "O teseturu i hidžabu," pt. 3, 57; Đozo, "Da li je problem otkrivanja žene vjerskog ili socijalnog karaktera," 78–79.

discredited both; the traditional training of Islamic religious scholars and the concept of *taqlīd*. For religious reformist the desired revitalization of authentic Islam, was not possible without reforms of established institutions and the system of education of *ʿulamāʾ* class.

The critique of *taqlīd* and the focus on the text of the Qurʾān among the reformists were closely intertwined with their understanding of Islam as a religion that does not recognize intermediary between God and humankind. For Džemaludin Čaušević Islam was a free, personal submission of one's will to God's dictates as defined in the Qurʾān, rather than blind acceptance of the dogmas of religious authorities. [755] Even though Čaušević, prominent member of the class of religious scholars, appreciated Islamic tradition he strongly insisted on the differentiation between Islamic sources and their later interpretations, which he saw only as a human, fallible attempts to understand these sources and as such open to criticism and questioning.[756] To legitimize the revival of *ijtihād* Čaušević, as Muslim reformists elsewhere, claimed that even great founders of the legal schools did not considered their positions to be indisputable and final.[757] His intensive debate with the *Džematski medžlis* (local religious assembly) from Sarajevo reveals a specific reformists' method used to establish legitimacy for their own views. When the *Džematski medžlis* accused Čaušević of neglecting and exploiting Islamic intellectual tradition and thus for unbelief he tried to gain authority for his views by establishing links not primarily to past authorities, but to wider Islamic reformist movement. He argued that he was instructed by his respected teacher Muḥammad ʿAbduh to go straight to the sources of religion, primarily Qurʾān , to find solution for current problems facing Muslims and not to follow blindly opinions of the past authorities.[758] His attitude towards Islamic intellectual heritage illustrates well the following response addressed to his critics that charged him with unbelief: "although I am familiar with what *sharīʿa* jurists and commentators have said, I prefer to abide by the prescriptions of the Qurʾān, because it is eternal and for all times. This is what the Qurʾān itself prescribes for me, since it prescribes reflection, study and research. In this regard I do not need your authorization, and therefore it is needless to gainsay me what God Almighty has called upon me to do."[759]

A similar understanding of Islam is evident in the work of Muslim reformist scholar Abdulah Ajni Bušatlić (1871–1946), who publicly supported Čaušević's statements. Bušatlić defended Čaušević's right to express publicly his views on veiling by stating that every individual is personally responsible to God and should take responsibility for his/her actions. He explained that Čaušević nowhere order Muslim women to unveil, but only

755 Zeki, "Za što islamski narodi ne napreduju," 26–27. Faik Zeki, according to Enes Karić was pen name of Džemaludin Čaušević. See: Karić, "Islamic Thought in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 20th Century," 409.
756 Čaušević "Drugi odgovor Reis-ul-uleme," 24–25.
757 Čaušević, "Drugi odgovor Reis-ul-uleme" 25.
758 Džemaludin Čaušević, "Odgovor Reis-ul-uleme Džematskom medžlisu," in *Sarajevski džematski medžlis i Reisove izjave*, ed. Hadži Mujaga Merhemić (Sarajevo: Hrvatska tiskara d.d. 1928), 12–13.
759 Čaušević, "Drugi odgovor Reis-ul-uleme," 25.

informed Muslims what is according to Islam permissible and that therefore he did not in any way exceed the scope of his authority.[760] The following excerpt from Bušatlić book demonstrates his understanding of Islam and his attitudes towards Islamic tradition: „it is a characteristic of Islamic faith that each one of us is responsible for himself in every regard. There is absolutely no intermediary between God and man in Islamic teachings, and our entire life must be founded upon normal work and conduct."[761]

6.4.4. Authenticity and Authority in Conservative Perspective

Since the issue of veiling was raised in public sphere by reformists circles as a part of the larger call for a return to the foundations of Islam, primarily Qurʾān, it is not surprising that conservative discourses on veiling primarily challenged the legitimacy of that request. Conservative responses to reformists discourses on veiling can be reduced to two basic elements.

First, conservative circles, aware of the importance of the textual sources in reformist thought strove to show that foundational texts of Islam, primarily Qurʾān, clearly command Muslim women to cover their bodies entirely and that the full-face veil is therefore a religious ruling that cannot be an object of *ijtihād*.[762] Second, they denied the right of reformists authors, both secular and religious educated, to discuss this issue publicly holding it to be a religious issue to be discussed only within established Islamic institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and within boundaries set by classical legal and exegetical authorities. Reformists' focus on the Qurʾān was criticized as a sign of the complete rejection of Islamic dogmas and recognized authorities. On this assumption they based their criticism of reformists as outcasts from Islam.

- ***Veiling as a religious duty***

Regarding the textual foundations of Islam, conservatives placed emphasis on verses 24:31, 33:59, and 24:60, which they unanimously interpreted as an unambiguous directive to women to fully cover their bodies, including their faces, feet, and hands.

Ibrahim Hakki Čokić wrote in his book titled *O teset-turu* that the Qurʾān 24:31 contains a clear directive to women to lower their head coverings over their faces and bodies. Arabic term *khimār* Čokić translates into Bosnian as *jašmak* and *peča*; explaining additionally that *khimār* was at the time of revelation already known type of cloth used to cover the head and face.[763]

760 Bušatlić, *Pitanje muslimanskog napretka u Bosni i Hercegovini*, 18.
761 Bušatlić, *Pitanje muslimanskog napretka u Bosni i Hercegovini*, 18.
762 Čokić, "Islam nošnja i otkrivanje," pt. 1, 284–285.
763 Čokić, *O teset-turu* 32.

Conservative interpretations of this verse largely cantered around the order directed to women to display of their adornment (*zīna*) *only that which is apparent* (*illā mā ẓahara minhā*) as generally reformist authors generally cited the ambiguous phrase *illā mā ẓahara minhā* as a justification for women to uncover their faces, feet, and hands.

Muslim scholar Ali Riza Karabeg (1872–1944.) argued that this phrase can mean only "what is accidentally exposed."[764] He, as well as Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, argued that the meaning of this phrase mentioned in the Qurʾān (24:31) may seem unclear only when this verse is interpreted in isolation from other Qurʾān verses dealing with the same issues, which according to them mandated the full covering of women in order to completely eliminate the pre-Islamic practice of indecent body exposure. [765]

Ibrahim Hakki Čokić interpretated this phrase in accordance with his view according to which the entire woman's body is *zīna* (adornment) and as such a subject of veiling. Čokić reduced apparent adornment allowed to be displayed to woman's outer clothing; that is to the face veil and cloak (*peča* and *zar*) since, as he wrote, these will be always visible in public.[766] He based his argumentation upon a distinction between *awra* and *zīna ,* to argue that the Qurʾān 24:31 does not order women to cover only their intimate parts (*awra*) decently as these parts are to be covered even in the presence of male family members. Rather, the verse was understood as demanding the covering of a woman's beauty (*zīna*) in general.[767] According to his interpretation natural and artificial beauty, as well as woman's regular clothing was a kind of hidden *zīna*, to be decently covered.[768] Čokić, as well as Karabeg, contended that since the face is considered one of the most alluring and captivating features of female body, the complete covering of the face aligns with the Qurʾānic directive that women should conceal their *zīna* (adornment).[769]

Conservatives severely criticized reformists for claiming that even the majority of historical legal and exegetical authorities interpreted Qurʾānic verse 24:31 as allowing women to uncover their faces, hands, and feet. They argued that this reformist claim was based on a serious methodological flaw: the inability to make a clear distinction between general rules and exceptions. Conservative scholars warned that classical juridical and exegetical authorities allowed certain parts of female body such as face, feet and hands to be uncovered under genuine needs such as the identification, appearing before the judge

764 Ali Riza Karabeg, *Rasprava o hidžabu (krivenju muslimanki),* (Mostar: Hrvatska tiskara F.P., 1928), 14.
765 Karabeg, *Rasprava o hidžabu,*1–6; Ibrahim Hakki Čokić Zejluttesettur ili odgovor g. Bušatliću, pt. 6, *Hikjmet* 1, no. 8/9 (1929): 269.
766 Čokić, *O teset-turu*, 26–29.
767 Čokić, *O teset-turu*, 17–19.
768 Čokić, *O teset-turu*, 18–20; Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, "Zejluttesettur," pt. 5, *Hikjmet* 1, no.7 (1929): 215; Čokić, "Zejluttesettur," pt. 6, 268.
769 Karabeg, *Rasprava o hidžabu,* 28: Čokić, *O tese-turu*, 32; Čokić, Zejluttesettur, pt. 5, 215; Čokić, "Zejluttesettur," pt. 6, 268.

for witness, performing hard agricultural or commercial activities, and that therefore uncovering of the face and palms is a kind of exemption that cannot be generalized. Reformists claim was seen and criticized in conservative circles as a kind of manipulation of Islamic religious heritage to incorrectly transform an exception into a general rule.[770]

As regards the Qurʾān (33:58–59), conservative opponents of unveiling contrary to reformists authors who focused on the rationale behind this verse focused on the type of dress that this verse according to them orders. Čokić translated the term *jilbāb* as feredža, ogrtač, zar, čemeber, plašt explaining that it is actually a kind of cloak used to cover the head and upper part of the body. [771] Karabeg argued that early commentators such as Ibn Abbās understood this verse as mandating the full covering of woman's body, including her face.[772]

The specific characteristic of conservative defence of the face veil is a heavy reliance on the *ḥadīth* material. Various *ḥadīths* of questionable authenticity have been used to justify the interpretation of Qurʾānic verses about women's clothing as a mandate for covering the entire body.[773]

Apart from the reliance on *ḥadīth* material, conservative discourses characterize focus on the Qurʾān 24:60 that Čokić translates in the following manner: "As for women who are past their youth and who have no hope of marriage (and have no wish for marriage), it is no sin for them if they cast off their outer clothing (*feredža, zar* etc.) if they do not adorn themselves. But to refrain is better for them…"[774] This verse, interpreted as a kind of permission given to elderly women to take off their outer garment (*feredža, zar*, etc) and thus to uncover their hands, face, and feet in the presence of men, was presented as an exception that confirms general rule that young women were obliged to keep their body fully covered.[775]

Significant differences within the circle of Bosnian religious scholars regarding the authenticity of the veiling clearly shows that, as Marilyn Robinson Waldman points out, Muslims, like members of other religious traditions, have not developed an unambiguous interpretation of the fundamental religious scriptures, or a unanimous view on how to interpret "their own normative sources.[776] As we have seen the same normative sources

770 Karabeg, *Rasprava o hidžabu*, 14–15; Čokić, *O teset-turu*, 21–26; Čokić, "Zejluttesettur," pt. 6, 269–273.
771 Čokić, *O teset-turu*, 14.
772 Karabeg, *Rasprava o hidžabu*, 2.
773 Čokić, *O teset-turu*, 15–17; Karabeg, *Rasprava o hidžabu,* 2–3.
774 Čokić, O *teset-turu*, 14.
775 Čokić, *O teset-turu*, 14, 20.
776 Marilyn Robinson Waldman, "Reflections on Islamic Tradition, Women and Family," in *Muslim Families in North America*, eds. Earle H. Waugh, Sharon McIrvin Abu-Laban and Regula Burckhardt Qureshi (Edmonton: The University Alberta Press, 1991), 316. See also: Thomas Bauer, Hinrich Biesterfeldt, and Tricia Tunstall, *A Culture of Ambiguity: An Alternative History of Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021), 30–73.

were invoked to support and to challenge the notion that wearing a face veil is an Islamic obligation. The Bosnian Muslim debates on veiling support Sofie Roald's argument that "although something is written down, the written text does not always influence practice in actuality or as debated among various factions of Muslims. At the end of the day, it is the function of the text or how this particular text is perceived, which counts."[777]

The extensive use of Islamic sources in Muslim debates on veiling should be viewed not only in the light of the religious importance that these sources have for Muslims, but also in the light of their significance for the cultural identity of Muslims. As Nikki R. Keddie points out these sources have played an important role in defining Muslim identity, especially in relation to the West.[778] Essentially, these debates are influenced by both the religious significance of the Islamic foundational texts and their role in maintaining a distinct cultural identity in the face of Western influence.

- ***Defence of traditional authority***

In addition to arguing that the veiling of Muslim women's faces is rooted in the foundational texts of Islam and, as such, cannot be subject to (re)interpretation, the conservatives sought to reaffirm their position of exclusive guardians of Islamic knowledge.

It is not surprising that the main debate on veiling was held between religious educated scholars, particularly between Reis-ul-ulema Čaušević and his opponents, as reformist invocation of the principle of *ijtihād*, condemnation of *taqlīd* mentality of conservative scholars and reformists' generally negative view of traditional religious education of Bosnian *ʿulamāʾ,* called into the question the traditional notion of religious authority. Public discussions on the issue that started with Čaučević's public lecture in 1927 and his public statements in media were harshly condemned by conservative scholars as an irresponsible act that would encourage people with no required religious qualifications to discuss publicly socio-religious issues that were traditionally understood to be within the exclusive domain of the traditionally educated Islamic scholars and the established Islamic institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[779] Conservative negative stance towards public discussions on the issue of veiling rested on their accurate observation that these discussions could lead to the democratization of the religious sphere in the sense of the emergence of new voices claiming authority to interpret religious truths.

777 Roald, *Women in Islam*, xii.

778 Keddie, *Women in the Middle East: Past and Present*, 216.

779 H. M. Merhemić "Pismo Džematskog medžlisa Reis-ul-ulemi," in *Sarajevski džematski medžlis i Reisove izjave*, ed. Hadži Mujaga Merhemić (Sarajevo: Hrvatska tiskara d.d. 1928), 9; H. M. Merhemić, "Odgovor Džematskog medžlisa Reis-ul-ulemi," *Sarajevski džematski medžlis i Reisove izjave*, ed. Hadži Mujaga Merhemić (Sarajevo: Hrvatska tiskara d.d. 1928), 17.

The close reading of the previously mentioned statement of the *Islamic Electoral Curia* from 1928 clearly demonstrate that the issue of authority was an essential part of the debates on veiling. This statement that principally allowed women to unveil their faces under certain circumstances, harshly condemned public discussion on the issue considering them to threaten the integrity of Muslim community.[780] The statement's ambiguity indicates that the *Islamic electoral curia* aimed to ease tensions among the *ʿulamāʾ* without compromising traditional view of religious authority.

Conservative discourses on veiling characterizes sharp division between what they considered true, traditional authority and the flawed authority of reformist, whether members of the class of *ʿulamāʾ* or secular educated intellectuals. Their criticism of reformists' call for a return to the Islamic textual sources was based on two main elements: the defence of traditional Islamic thought and the related principle of *taqlīd* as a religious requirement, and the claimed reformists' lack of the recognized qualifications to exercise *ijtihād.*

Islamic conservative scholars such as Ali Riza Karabeg, Ibrahim Hakki Čokić and Sejfullah Proho argued that reformist positions on veiling were just a mere, arbitrary opinions which stood in opposition to the long and recognized Islamic exegetical and juridical tradition.[781] Reformists' focus on the Qurʾān was primarily perceived as a dismissal of other Islamic sources and a rejection of the Islamic tradition, which was believed to lead to anarchy among Muslims.[782] Ali Riza Karabeg openly accused Reis-ul-ulema Čaušević and reformist in general for rejecting religious dogmas and for trying to create *fitna* in Muslim community. He, as well as Čokić and Sejfulah Proho, argued that reformists' extensive reliance on the Qurʾān denied the validity of other foundations of Islam which in turns leads to collapse of Islam.[783] Reformist were also criticized for their selective use of classical authorities and their references to Islamic exegetical tradition were seen as a mere rhetorical strategy used to attain legitimacy for their arbitrary views.[784]

Džematski medžlis (local religious assembly) from Sarajevo harshly accused Reis-ul-ulema Čaušević of interpreting Qurʾān according to his own arbitrary understanding, with little regard for Islamic exegetical and legal tradition and for an attempt to impose his own unjustified opinion upon others.[785] This according to *Džematski medžlis* contravened "the understanding of all *mujtahids* [religious scholars], who do not accept the isolated *ijtihād*

780 Editorial board "Takrir isl. izborne kurije," 81–82.
781 Karabeg, *Rasprava o hidžabu,* 11–14, 23, 30; Proho, "Frkai dalla," 50; Čokić, *O teset-turu*,12.
782 Čokić, "Zejluttesettur" pt. 2, 122.
783 Karabeg, *Rasprava o hidžabu,* 8–9; Proho, "Frkai dalla" 50; Čokić, *O teset-turu*, 13.
784 Proho, "Frkai dalla," 53.
785 "Drugi odgovor Džematskog medžlisa Reis-ul-ulemi," 36.

[interpretation] of even much greater authorities [preferring to rely on *ijmāʿ*, the consensus of authorities]."[786]

Conservative descriptions of reformist positions regarding the veiling of Muslim women as subjective, arbitrary opinions demonstrate specific conservative understanding of religious-cultural authority. For conservative religious scholars, religious-cultural authority did not rest on the knowledge of Islamic foundational texts, a critical approach to tradition, or an understanding of the modern world, as reformists claimed. Instead, it was based on knowledge of and adherence to the Islamic religious-legal tradition—qualifications that they claimed to possess. This connection with the religious-cultural tradition, primarily gained through the traditional education system, was understood as a prerequisite to speak for Islam.[787] Karabeg saw even traditionally educated reformists, such as Čaušević, as innovators, who cannot be regarded not only as members of *ʿulamāʾ*, but also as members of Muslim community.[788] For him only conservative religious scholars were repositories of true knowledge of Islam.[789] He regarded reformists authors as "self-proclaimed progressives," who arbitrarily adapt Islamic principles to modern materialistic worldview. Any interference of secular intellectuals in matters that were considered to be religious was considered by conservative scholars an erroneous path leading to laxity in performing religious duties and anarchy.[790]

Conservative criticism of the reformist advocacy for independent reinterpretation of the foundational texts of Islam aimed to highlight not only that the reformists were rejecting the entire body of Islamic scholarship, but also that they lacked the necessary qualifications to exercise *ijtihād*.

Conservatives not only denied Čaušević, but also other religious scholars of that time, the right to practice *ijtihād* arguing that modern scholars lacked the qualifications and skills required for exercising independent reasoning. [791] Ali Riza Karabeg's argued that in the first centuries of Islam all possible interpretations of the textual sources of Islam were exhausted and that after that period activity of religious scholars was solely restricted to the application and explication of the doctrines of the recognized authorities and schools of law.[792] While, he did not deny that among existing scholars might arise someone in the rank of *mujtahid*, he held that the right to *ijtihād* was restricted to Arabs, as one of the

786 "Odgovor Džematskog medžlisa Reis-ul-ulemi," 18–19. Translation according to Džemaludin Čaušević, "Letter and Response" in *Modernist Islam 1840–1940,* ed. Charles Kurzman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 199.
787 Lutfi A Čokić, *Prikaz i ocjena rada g. Dr. Mehmeda Begovića,* 3–4.
788 Karabeg, *Rasprava o hidžabu,* 27–30.
789 Karabeg, *Rasprava o hidžabu,* 8.
790 Karabeg, *Rasprava o hidžabu,* 26.
791 "Odgovor Džematskog medžlisa Reis-ul-ulemi," 18–19, "Drugi odgovor Džematskog medžlisa Reis-ul-ulemi," 38–39.
792 Karabeg, *Rasprava o hidžabu,*11.

qualifications necessary for its execution was a perfect knowledge of Arabic language.[793] He characterized Čaušević's efforts as illegitimate, arguing that his insufficient knowledge of the Arabic language disqualified him from practicing *ijtihād*.

Conservative criticism of, what Clive Kessler terms the 'ijtihādic approach' of reformists, cannot be merely reduced to an attempt to preserve their role as exclusive interpreters of Islam and their social authority.[794] The modern Muslim debates on veiling in Bosnia and Herzegovina evidently show us that conservatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as their counterparts in other parts of the Muslim world, regarded *ijtihād* as something that would undermine Islamic legal tradition and the unity of the Islamic community.[795] Their insistence on the authority of traditional *ʿulamāʾ* and established doctrines and past authorities while could also be interpreted as an attempt to preserve their monopoly over Islam, certainly was closely linked to their concern about the future of already fractured community of Bosnian Muslims. If reformists understood *ijtihād* as a tool that ensures the return to authentic Islam and the progress of the Muslims, conservatives obviously regarded *taqlīd* as mechanism that ensures the link with the rich Islamic intellectual tradition and thus a stability of Islam, as well as the integrity of the Muslim community.

6.5. Islamic Community's Support for Unveiling after WWII: Continuation or Compromise?

After the establishment of communist regime after WWII the leadership of the Islamic community, contrary to majority of local imams, expressed formal support for the unveiling of Muslim women. To determine whether this support was mere strategic compromise to protect Islam under the new communist regime, or a continuation of earlier reformist efforts I will here examine articles published in *Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog straješinstva u Federativnoj Narodnoj Republici Jugoslaviji,* the official herald of the Islamic community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This publication featured several articles on the topic just before and after the 1950 enactment of the *Law on prohibition of wearing zar and feredža*.

Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva published four different articles discussing the issue of the Muslim woman's veil from religious, social, and cultural perspectives before the enactment of the aforementioned law. Although the articles differ regarding the approaches that were taken to analyse the issue, they uniformly supported the unveiling of Muslim women.

793 Karabeg, *Rasprava o hidžabu* ,12–13.

794 Clive C. Kessler, "Fundamentalism Reconsidered" in *Islam: Essays on Scripture, Thought and Society: A Festschrift in Honour of Anthony H. Johns (Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Science),* eds. Peter G. Riddel and Tony Street (Leiden: Brill, 1997): 338.

795 For more on this issue in a global context, see: Falk Gesink, " 'Chaos on the Earth,' " 712–713.

In this context, the most important article is certainly one written by Muslim scholar Ibrahim Fejić, who assumed the role of Reis-ul-ulema in 1947. It systematically addressed the issue from a religious viewpoint. The analysis of Ibrahim Fejić's arguments supporting his claim that none of the Qurʾān verses about women's modest dress mandate complete veiling shows that his views were a direct continuation of earlier reform efforts by *Reis* Čaušević. Fejić, like earlier reformists, linked the revelation of the Qurʾānic verses on modesty to the cultural state of the Arabs at the time of the Revelation. Fejić describes family life of pre-Islamic Arabs as lacking the basic rules of modest comportment, stating that it was a common practice to enter one's homes without prior announcement, to mix freely among different generation and sexes and to walk half-naked.[796] According to Fejić, interpreting the Qurʾānic verses on modesty within a broader literal and socio-historical context reveals that verses 24:31, 33:59, 24:27, and 24:50 were aimed at bringing order to early Muslim community. From his perspective, these verses generally instruct women to dress modestly and behave with dignity, protect women from ignorant youth and vilification, ensure the sacredness of home and family life, and shield family members from uninvited guests.[797]

Regarding the right to (re)interpret Islamic texts, Fejić embraced typical reformist view that Islam, as a universal religion revealed for all places and times, contains general principles that are open to new interpretation in accordance with the needs of the times and new situations. While Fejić advocated for the right to freely reinterpret the Qurʾān verses, he also referred to Islamic traditional exegetical authorities to claim that even Islamic scholarly tradition shows that the face veiling is not religious obligation. [798]

Three other articles published in the same number of the *Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva* were written by Muslim intellectuals: Selim Seferović, Hadži Hasan Ljubunčić and Hamid Kukić.[799] In their articles we come across arguments previously present in the interwar discourse of secularly educated Muslim intellectuals.

They depicted the face veil as both a cause and a visible symbol of Muslim backwardness. Furthermore, these articles argue that it contributed to the external perceptions of Bosnian Muslims and Islam as backward and oppressive. The face veil was also seen as an obstacle to unity and the development of a socialist society in Yugoslavia, where Muslim women and

796 Hadži Ibrahim Fejić, "Pokrivanje žene u Islamu," *Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog straješinstva u Federativnoj Narodnoj Republici Jugoslaviji* 1*,* no. 4/7 (1950): 100–101.

797 Fejić, "Pokrivanje žene u Islamu,"101–103.

798 Fejić, "Pokrivanje žene u Islamu," 102–104.

799 Selim Seferović, "Muslimanka sa zarom. Prijedlog za njeno otkrivanje," *Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog straješinstva u Federativnoj Narodnoj Republici Jugoslaviji* 1, no. 4/7 (1950): 107–114; Hadži Hasan Ljubunčić, "Otkrivanje muslimanke. Referat održan na sastanku muslimana - javnih radnika u Sarajevu," *Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog straješinstva u Federativnoj Narodnoj Republici Jugoslaviji* 1, no. 4/7 (1950): 117–120; Hamid Kukić, "Pitanje zara sazrelo je za konačno rješenje," G*lasnik Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva u Federativnoj Narodnoj Republici Jugoslaviji* 1, no. 4/7(1950): 144–145.

men were expected to participate alongside others.[800] Like religious reformists, they rejected the notion that the veil was a religious obligation and a means of preserving morality, arguing that the true morality is always the result of self-conscious and free acceptance of moral norms. In these articles we find well-known reformist idea that only self-aware and educated woman can truly protect her own and the morals of the community.[801]

What is new in these articles, compared to previous debates, is the positioning of this issue in the broader context of building a new, socialist society. In this sense, these articles align with the general ideas and approaches found in the discussions of National Assembly members during the debate on the law prohibiting the veil. The discussions of members of the National Assembly were published in the *Glasnik Vrhovnoga islamskoga starješinstva* alongside the adopted text of the *Law on the prohibition of wearing zar and feredža,* after the law was enacted. They portrayed the face veil as a relic of the outdated social and economic system that reactionary, anti-socialist elements sought to preserve.[802] The advocates of the veil were presented not only backward reactionaries, but also as enemies of the new regime. The face veil was not associated with Islam or the broader Muslim world, but it was seen rather as a relic of Bosnia's history under the Ottoman Empire. Its ban was portrayed as a crucial first step in liberating Muslim women, a process that would reach its full potential with the elimination of class distinctions and the establishment of a new socialist socio-political system.[803]

While Reis-ul-ulema Fejić's views on veiling can be regarded as the continuation of the earlier religious reformists' interpretations of the issue, it is clear that a new socio-political and economic context significantly influenced the arguments and tone of the discussions in 1950. Not only that official herald of the Islamic community published articles that equated liberation from the veil with the liberation from class-capitalist relations, but it also completely neglected voices that could call into the question ban on the veil. The adoption of this law marked the beginning of a decades-long absence of any public debate on the issue. The issue of the religious obligation of full covering was revisited during the 1990s in a new specific socio-political environment, which gave the old debates a completely new tone.

800 Seferović, "Muslimanka sa zarom," 107–114; Ljubunčić, "Otkrivanje muslimanke," 118; Kukić, "Pitanje zara sazrelo je za konačno rješenje,"144–145.
801 Seferović, "Muslimanka sa zarom," 109–110; Ljubunčić, "Otkrivanje muslimanke," 119.
802 "Usvojen je zakon o zabrani nošenja zara i feredže," *Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva u Federativnoj Narodnoj Republici Jugoslaviji* 1, no. 8/10: (1950): 282.
803 "Usvojen je zakon o zabrani nošenja zara i feredže," 278–305.

CHAPTER 7

7

7. Conclusion

7.1. The Bosnian Muslim Woman Question as a Prism for Diverse Perspectives on True Islam and Modernity

In this study I have demonstrated how public debates on the Muslim woman question in Bosnia and Herzegovina served as a central platform for expressing and debating different and often conflicting ideas about religious authenticity, authority, identity, tradition and modernity. I approached these debates, which dominated the Bosnian Muslim public sphere in the first half of the 20th century, as a constitutive part of a larger, global trend of (re)thinking fundamental questions such as: What is true Islam? Who has the authority to speak for Islam? What elements of the past should be preserved as authentic part of religious doctrine? And how should the Muslim future be imagined? This global framework enabled me to show how local discussions in Bosnia both mirrored and contributed to broader global conversations within the Muslim world.

Conceptually, I largely relied on research that approaches Islamic intellectual thought from a global perspective, with a particular focus on the cross-regional exchange of ideas.[804] This approach to Bosnian debates about the woman question has allowed me to highlight the dynamic interaction between Bosnian Islamic thought and global intellectual currents—primarily its connection with the reformist ideas from the wider Islamic world, dominant European discourses on Muslim women and Islam in general, and modern ideas about the place of woman in society. At the same time, it helped me demonstrate how the local context shaped the understanding of these ideas. Besides my understanding of the woman question as a key field where often conflicting ideas of religious authenticity and authority, as well as tradition modernity and identity have been globally articulated is informed by studies that have demonstrated how issues related to women and gender often serve as a means of expressing broader socio-cultural, religious and ideological concerns.[805]

My interest for Bosnian Muslim discourses about woman question in the first half of the 20th century emerged from a combination of my own personal experiences and academic curiosity. Personal conversations with friends and colleagues have shown me that the

804 Examples of such approaches can be found in the following studies: Jung, *Orientalists, Islamists and the Global Public Sphere*; Nordbruch and Ryad, *Transnational Islam in Interwar Europe*; Aydin, "Globalizing the Intellectual History of the idea of 'Muslim World,'" 159–186; Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World*; Kateman, *Muhammad 'Abduh and his Interlocutors*; Dierks, "Mediatising Violence and Renegotiating Commonality,"105–133; Dierks, "Scripting, Translating, and Narrating Reform," 157–222; Gelvin and Green, eds., *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*; Ringer, *Islamic Modernism and the Re-Enchantment of the Sacred.*

805 Offen, *The Woman Question in France, 1400–1870*; Clark, "Engendering the Study of Religion," 217–242. Najmabadi, "Veiled Discourse—Unveiled Bodies," 487–518; Fleischmann, *The Nation and Its "New" Women*; Ringer, "Rethinking Religion: Progress and Morality in the Early Twentieth Century Iranian Women's Press," 49–57; Alam, *Women, Islam and Familial Intimacy in Colonial South Asia*.

issue of Muslim woman is often used to portray Islam as inherently rigid, patriarchal religion incompatible with emancipation. As I have shown in this research, Western public discourses and humanities from the late 19th century also spread and reinforced such views. In this perspective all inequalities and examples of discrimination against women in Muslim society have been depicted as expressions of Islamic religious norms, while obvious diversities in everyday lives of Muslim women were attributed to external factors.

Such approaches overlook the important fact that Islamic tradition is significantly characterized by multi-layered and diverse interpretations of Islamic teachings regarding women. Furthermore, dominant Western public discourses often depict conservative interpretations of Islamic heritages as "true Islam," while other interpretations—particularly those outside the Arab world—are perceived as less authentic. In this perspective Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina is often depicted as some kind of moderate, liberal form of Islam that emerged as a fruit of modernization and secularization process that Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced during 20th century. These narratives imply that Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina is diluted form of authentic Islam found somewhere beyond European context.

My personal experience that I had at the start of this research illustrates well such perspectives. When I mentioned the topic of this study to a renowned expert in religious studies, he suggested that I should concentrate on the Arab world, which he described as a place representing "true Islam." At that time, I did not respond to this comment. However, this attitude presenting Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina as some kind of anomaly—neither fully European, nor true Islam—only reinforced my conviction that there is a need to research it more thoroughly. It reinforced my view that there is need to show how Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in other parts of the world, has been shaped through open, continuous and often conflicting debates. Islam is indeed, in the words of Talal Asad, a 'discursive tradition', and Bosnia has been intensive part of that discourse.

Treating questions about Muslim women as one of the key sites for global Muslim engagement with the broader issues such as authenticity, authority, tradition and modernity provides unique insight into the dynamic and multivocal nature of Islamic thought. In the Bosnian context, my analysis focused on three dominant intellectual orientations—reformism, conservativism and revivalism—to illustrate the complexity of Muslim interactions with their own religious and cultural heritage and their diverse visions of modernity. My aim here was not to offer normative judgements about these positions but to critically examine these discourses and to foster deeper understanding of the centrality of the Muslim woman question in intra-Muslim debates about tradition, modernity and identity.

7.2. Global and Local Dynamics

Before analysing Bosnian debates, I provided insights into three global and local developments that significantly shaped the evolution of Bosnian debates: (1) the global rise of the ideas of Islamic reformism, (2) the spread of Western discourses that portrayed Muslim women as victims of their religious heritage, and (3) local socio-cultural and political transformations that compelled Bosnian Muslims to (re)think their tradition, and their approaches to modernization.

My exploration of the global context began with an overview of the key ideas of Islamic reformism, as I consider it to be both, driving force and conceptual framework for global intra-Muslim debates on Islamic tradition and modernity, which reached its peak in discussions about the Muslim woman question. These debates were not only globally initiated by Islamic reformism but were also profoundly shaped by its core arguments about the interrelated issues of authenticity, authority, and modernity, as these arguments were further developed, critiqued, or rejected by other intellectual currents. The global reformist ideas of these interrelated issues were of the key importance for the development of the Bosnian Muslim woman question. When Bosnian reformist introduced the Muslim woman question at the beginning of 20th century in local public sphere their arguments were placed within global reformist critique of blind traditionalism and call for independent, free interpretation of Islamic foundations. This demand, closely related to general reformist understanding that only rediscovery of authentic Islamic principles could ensure Muslim progress strongly influenced the further development of Bosnian Muslim debate on the Muslim woman question. It provoked reactions first from conservative circles, and later revivalists that shaped their discourses in response to the main reformists' arguments.

In addition, Muslim public debates—both globally and locally—developed within a socio-political milieu deeply impacted by the West, which positioned the issue of Muslim women at the centre of its civilizational mission and identity narratives. Starting from 19th century essentialized portrayal of Muslim woman as a victim of her own religious heritage—present in both colonial narratives and Western scholarship—was used to argue that only Westernization of the Muslim world can ensure progress of Muslims and emancipation of Muslim women. This study has demonstrated how these positions and arguments compelled Muslims worldwide to place issues related to women at the heart of discourses of socio-religious reforms, as well as cultural and religious resistance.

Furthermore, I gave an insight into the specific local context in which Bosnian Muslim debates developed. This context was characterized not only by constant socio-political and cultural changes but also by the presence of various processes and narratives that positioned the emancipation of Muslim women as a crucial element of modernization

of Bosnian society. The transition from the Ottoman imperial framework to the Austo-Hungarian imperial framework, followed by royalist and socialist Yugoslavia on the one hand created a sense of continued identity crisis in Bosnian Muslim community. On the other hand, it provoked Bosnian Muslims to engage with various socio-political, cultural and religious issues, including Muslim woman question. In this complex local context, the Muslim woman question became a controversial issue within Bosnian Muslim community that reflected the tension between the need for Muslim progress and the preservation of distinct Muslim identity.

7.3. The Bosnian Muslim Debates

In the second part of this research, I analysed Bosnian Muslim debates about the woman question. I focused on the two key issues shaping these debates in the nascent Bosnian Muslim public sphere: education and veiling.

I have shown how Bosnian reformists—both secular intellectuals and religious scholars—placed the issue of Muslim women education as one of the central themes in the public sphere using it as lens to examine broader issues of Muslim decline and the envisioned path to progress. The first decade of the 20th century was marked by almost complete dominance of reformist discourses, particularly about Muslim women education. Bosnian reformists, building on the general principles of global reformism and the concept of scientific domesticity—which was integral to global education movements and to the educational policies of the Austro-Hungarian and later Yugoslav government—advocated women's education as a fundamental Islamic value and a prerequisite for religious renewal and social progress of Bosnian Muslims.

The almost complete dominance of reformists discourses was closely related to the fact that the conservative members of *'ulamā'* class expressed a sceptical stance towards public discussions on issues they considered to belong exclusively to the domain of religious scholars. And for them the Muslim woman question was one of these issues. However, in the interwar period, conservative circles in Bosnia and Herzegovina actively entered public debates as a direct response to reformist discourses on Muslim women or more precisely to their public advocacy of unveiling Muslim women. Namely, during the interwar period the reformists began to advocate for face unveiling of Muslim women, using different socio-cultural and religious arguments. Their discourse was grounded in a clear distinction between true Islam—which the reformists interpreted as not mandating this practice—and historical Islam, which they regarded as having been shaped by foreign influences that introduced this custom into Islam. The issue of veiling became closely intertwined with the themes of progress, morality and identity of Bosnian Muslims.

This advocacy of unveiling the faces of Muslim women provoked a strong reaction of conservative scholars, who felt compelled to publicly express their views on the issues related to Muslim women. Their opposition towards unveiling as well as public education of Muslim women (another reformist call) was based on their understanding that traditional practices and institutions related to women are shield and symbol of Muslim morality and identity. In the case of their opposition to education of Muslim women in modern institutions of learning, the conservatives primarily feared that such changes would lead to a decline in morality, social decay and anarchy. It is also clear from these discussions that conservatives regarded changes of traditional customs and practices as leading to the loss of identity of Bosnian Muslims. Analysis of the conservatives' efforts from the inter-war period to preserve the face veil, shows that they were closely tied not only to conservative concerns about the morality of Muslim women but also to their aim of maintaining a clear distinction between Muslims and others in Yugoslav society, resisting assimilation and maintaining separate identity.

During the 1930s, the complexity and controversy around the Muslim woman question was further intensified by the rise of Islamic revivalism, which publicly articulated its vision of the true Muslim women. The widespread poverty of the Muslim population, the large number of widows and unmarried women as a consequence of the First World War, as well as a sceptical stance toward European modernity, undoubtedly shaped the revivalist discourses of this period. The revivalists emphasized, like the reformists, the necessity of progress for Muslims, but they advocated for a distinctively Islamic model of modern education for Muslim women. From this perspective, an image emerged of an educated, active, yet veiled Muslim woman, modelled after the women of the early Islamic community.

7.4. The issue of Authenticity and Authority in Debates about the Muslim Woman Question

While these Bosnian reformist, conservative and revivalist perspectives expressed different views on central themes within the discourse on Muslim woman they shared a common approach to the issue. They all positioned the Muslim woman question as a central site that was used effectively to examine their own tradition and the various constructions of "authentic" (or "true") Islam, and to reflect on broader issues of modernity.

The analysis of Muslim debates in the Bosnian context demonstrates that discussions on the woman question cannot be reduced to mere reactions to Western critiques or to various modernization processes imposed from above. These debates reveal that, although influenced by external factors, they were fundamentally shaped by internal disputes within the Muslim community regarding authentic Islamic tradition and differing understandings

of who holds the authority to interpret that tradition. These debates played an important role in (re)defining religious and cultural authenticity and in creating boundaries between the legitimate interpreters of Islamic tradition and the "internal Other," that is the Muslims who were portrayed as responsible for the religious-moral and cultural decline of their fellow-Muslims.

The Bosnian reformists claimed that true authenticity could only be achieved through a direct engagement with foundational texts of Islam through the method of *ijtihād*, or independent interpretation and critical reasoning. Here, also, we see that their discourses on the duties and rights of women were much less about the women themselves and more about the authenticity of existing practices, customs and legal regulations in the light of the Qurʾān and, to a lesser extent, the *ḥadīth*. As a result, the reformists blamed what they saw as the backwardness of Bosnian Muslims, and especially Muslim women, on the Bosnian religious scholars' rigid and irrational imitation of past authorities. Their alleged intellectual and spiritual poverty was depicted by the reformists as the main cause for the spread of irrationalism, ignorance, fatalism, and obscurantism among Bosnian Muslims, particularly Muslim women. Both secular religious educated reformist scholars held the *ʿulamāʾ* responsible for the ossification of Muslim intellectual thought and the consequent overall decline of the entire community.

The *ʿulamāʾ*, who made up the larger segment of the conservatives, countered with the argument that reformists lacked the authority to speak on these matters, and by doing so were causing anarchy and the moral decay of the community. This criticism, however, was clearly not only about the qualifications of the reformists, because it was also directed towards members of the Bosnian *ʿulamāʾ* who were reformists. The main issue that rallied the conservatives was, from their perspective, the survival of the Muslim community and morality. In their protection thereof, the conservatives positioned themselves as the legitimate custodians of Islamic knowledge, and defenders of true Islamic norms and moral values. The reformist insistence on a renewed practice of *ijtihād* was interpreted as a sign of complete rejection of accepted Islamic authorities and dogmas.

Another important aspect of Bosnian Muslim discourses was the engagement with Muslim history in general and specifically Bosnian Muslim history. Selective interpretation of Muslim history was one of the fundamental strategies used by different actors to ensure legitimacy to the various constructions of the ideal Muslim woman. It was a particularly prominent strategy in reformist and later revivalist discourses. Both movements invoked early Islamic history and famous female figures to create an image of authentic Muslim women who had a significant impact on the development of Muslim community. However, they profiled that ideal woman differently: in the reformist discourse the Muslim woman from the early Islamic centuries was an educated, pious person that that actively participated in all areas

of life, while in revivalist discourse she was constructed as a veiled woman of outstanding religious education and morality. Therefore, it is not surprising that the reformists focused more on the Abbasid period, while the revivalists concentrated on the early Muslim community. The conservative discourse, on the other hand, held a romanticized image of a secluded, morally uncorrupted Bosnian Muslim women from earlier Ottoman period of Bosnian Muslim history. In doing so, a differentiation was made between the Ottoman heritage—seen as the embodiment of true Islamic values—and the political, social and intellectual reforms in modern Turkey, which were strongly condemned as anti-Islamic.

This bring us to a third significand aspect of the Bosnian Muslim attempts to articulate their view of the authentic Muslim woman: the effort to situate their narratives - in particular those of the reformists and revivalists - within the broader movements and transformations occurring throughout the Muslim world. While Bosnian Muslims were historically tied to the centre of the Ottoman Empire, Bosnian Muslim intellectuals and religious scholars in the first half of the 20th century developed new connections with Islamic movements and discourses in the wider Muslim world. The early 20th century marked a pivotal period in the transformation of Bosnian religious identities, characterized by the adoption of new influences from abroad, and a transition from the Ottoman-cantered perspective to a broader emphasis on the unity of Muslims.

7.5. Bosnian Muslim Engagements with Modernity

Bosnian Muslim discourses did not merely construct the image of the authentic Muslim woman, but also of the modern European woman. The discourses of conservatives, reformists and revivalists show a noticeable tendency to compare essentialized representations of Muslim women with those of European women. These comparisons served several purposes. In reformist discourses they generally highlighted a convergence between Islamic and modern European values with the aim to emancipate Bosnian Muslims so that they could reach the level of development of other ethno-religious groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Conversely, in conservative discourses these comparisons were mainly aimed at showing moral and cultural superiority of Islam in relation to modern Europe. The revivalists did a bit of both: they highlighted Islam's superiority, and also present Islam as a source of true emancipation (albeit that this had already been achieved in early Islamic history).

These comparisons highlight the crucial role that idealized representations of women played in establishing external boundaries between Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as in reinforcing civilizational hierarchies. At the same time, these representations provide insight into how Bosnian Muslims in the first half of the 20th century, within their

local historical and social context, understood and navigated the contested concepts of modernity, emancipation, and civilizational progress.

Their analysis has shown that both Bosnian Muslim intellectuals and religious scholars adopted and redefined the globally spread notion that the position of women is measure of civilization. This idea—originating in 18th and 19th century European thought and reinforced by colonial discourses to claim the superiority of Western civilization— shaped global debates on women, modernity and civilization. In Bosnia, it became a central element of local modernization projects. The state-led initiatives under Austro-Hungarian rule, monarchist Yugoslavia, and later socialist Yugoslavia set the emancipation of the Muslim woman as an important part of their civilizational and modernization projects.

Rather than passively accepting or outright rejecting this idea, all major intellectual currents among Bosnian Muslim scholars engaged with it critically. While they acknowledged the premise that women's status was linked to civilizational progress, they reinterpreted and redefined its meaning to align with and to express their own perspectives on modernity, civilization and progress.

These dynamic redefinitions present in discourses about Muslim women question ultimately challenge the notion that Bosnian Muslim intellectuals were either passive recipients or outright rejectionists of European ideas. Instead, their discourses reveal a more complex engagements that cannot be reduced to a simple binary of adoption or rejection.

In the Bosnian Muslim reformist discourse, the notion of the close link between civilizational status and the woman's status was adapted to develop a narrative of an Islamic history of decline and to claim a deep gap between true Islam and its historical realization, with the aim of pointing out the need for socio-religious reform based on the restoration of true Islam. The previous chapters have demonstrated that reformist discourses on the woman question do not counterpose modernity and tradition, but present modernity as inherent in the Islamic religious tradition. The reformist discourses do not understand true modernization as an imitation or mere adoption of the ideas and trends of European modernity but as a rediscovery of true Islamic principles through correct and contextual readings of the past. The distinction that reformist discourse made between true and superficial emancipation should be read as an act of active, critical reflection on European modernity. The discourse on women's education in the Habsburg and Yugoslav periods clearly illustrated the reformists' ambivalence towards modern Europe. The education of women within the state school system, modelled after modern European educational institutions, was promoted as the exclusive way to ensure the true emancipation of Muslim woman, and as the most powerful mechanism that can protect her from negative European social trends. This distinction between positive and negative aspects of European

modernity however in no way takes an anti-Western stance as one can find in conservative, and especially revivalist, discourses, which are characterized by the strong critique of European modernity in the name the preservation of Islamic tradition. However, analysis of conservative and revivalist discourses about the woman question demonstrated that even their ideas cannot be reduced to a mere rejection of modern European ideas. Their discursive constructions of the ideal Muslim woman, as well as their discussions about education, work and the unveiling were deeply rooted in the modern idea that the status of women is an indicator of civilization. It is evident that their discourses drew upon the civilizational framework of European origin, which they reshaped to align with their own perspectives. While European narratives used this concept to reinforce the boundary between the advanced and civilized West and barbaric others, conservative and revivalist discourses did not simply reject this notion. Instead, they actively engaged with it to claim the civilizational superiority of Islam, or its self-sufficiency.

Conservative and revivalist authors in Bosnia and Herzegovina, created a dichotomous image of the world in which Muslim woman as the embodiment of true morality is opposed to the modern European woman portrayed as the embodiment of moral decline. These comparisons of Muslim and modern European woman associated with narratives about the close association between civilizational decline and moral degeneration were to point out that modern Europe could not offer a path to true progress. However, as we have seen one should not assume that there was a general consensus regarding the issue of authentic, Islamic path to progress among critics of the European modernity. As we have seen, the emphasis of the conservative *ʿulamāʾ* on the preservation of established institutions and customs, and especially their resistance to the education of Muslim women, were criticized not only by reformists, but also by revivalist scholars. In this context, particularly important are texts on women's education published during the interwar period in the magazine *El-Hidaje*, which presented female education as a crucial element of the social, cultural, and economic progress of Muslims. The notion of the central place of women in social progress was used to criticize the *ʿulamāʾ* of Bosnia and Herzegovina for neglecting education Muslim women and to call for the establishment Islamic educational institutions that were to provide Muslim women with both modern vocational education and religious education, based on authentic Islamic values. Although *El-Hidaje* magazine has not elaborated any concrete plan for establishing such institutions it reveals an effort to conceptualize modernity in Islamic terms.

The analysis of debates on the woman question reveals how Bosnian intellectuals, through a dynamic dialogue with their own tradition, ideas from the broader Muslim world, and central concepts of European modernity, developed diverse and often conflicting visions of Islamic tradition and modernity.

7.6. Contributions and Future Directions

One of the key contributions of this study is its emphasis on the dialogic relationship between local and global discourses. By situating Bosnian Muslim debates within broader global context, I have demonstrated that Bosnian Muslim were active participant in global conversations about Islamic tradition, modernity, authenticity, and identity.

By analysing these debates which extended beyond the discussions about roles and duties of Muslim women I have shown how the Muslim woman question intersected with larger discourses about tradition, modernity and identity. This study underscores the importance of the Muslim woman question, not only in local context but more broadly, as a platform for negotiating broader socio-cultural, political and religious concerns.

This study of diverse Bosnian Muslim discourses on the status and position of Muslim woman has demonstrated how Islamic tradition in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as elsewhere, is open and encompasses diverse interpretations and perspectives. It has shown that discussions about the woman question among Bosnian Muslim intellectuals and religious scholars involved continuous debates and redefinitions regarding the right to independent, rational thinking of foundations of Islam, disagreements about the principles and values of Islam, qualifications necessary to speak about and for Islam, the relationship between Islam and European modernity, and the authentic path to progress.

It has also demonstrated that these discussion and disagreements about the Muslim woman question cannot be reduced to a conflict between secular educated, often portrayed as Westernized, intellectuals and religious scholars, that is to *say ʿulamāʾ*. The analysis of these debates has shown that Bosnian secular intellectuals primarily developed their arguments by relying on the Islamic tradition and that therefore it is not correct to portray them as Westernized. Furthermore, this study challenges the view of Bosnian religious scholars as a closed or monolithic group, revealing instead deep internal divisions and fragmentations.

I concluded this research with the year 1950, which is generally regarded as the beginning of the withdrawal of Islamic discourse from the public sphere and into the framework of Islamic religious institutions. Looking forward, future research could build on this study to examine the extent to which these topics were kept alive in Bosnian religious publications, how they were addressed, and what kind of resonance they had among Bosnian Muslims in socialist Yugoslavia. It could explore how these discussions, once part of the public sphere, were shifted into the confined settings of Islamic institutions and publications as socio-

political and religious developments in socialist Yugoslavia pushed religious discourses exclusively into the confines of religious institutions.[806]

Following the collapse of the communist regime and the establishment of Bosnia and Herzegovina's independence, issues related to Muslim women again became the prominent part of intra-Muslim public discussions. I believe that a useful direction for future research would be the analysis of these discourses in relation to both contemporary global discourses about Muslim women and Bosnian Muslim discourses from the beginning of the 20th century. This would help trace patterns of continuity and change in Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to examine how these discourses interact with global narratives about Muslim women.

806 Besides the historical studies on issues related to Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which I have already referenced in my research, some of the recent studies published in the past years, which approach issues related to Bosnian Muslim women from various disciplines are: Zilka Spahić-Šiljak, *Propitivanje ženskih, feminističkih i muslimanskih identiteta: Postsocijalistički konteksti u Bosni i Hercegovini i na Kosovu* (Sarajevo: Centar za interdisciplinarne postdiplomske studije, Univerzitet u Sarajevu, 2012); Andreja Mesarič, "Muslim Women's Dress Practices in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Localizing Islam through Everyday Lived Practice," in *The Revival of Islam in the Balkans: From Identity to Religiosity,* eds. Arolda Elbasani and Oliver Roy (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 103–121; Andreja Mesarič, "Disrupting Boundaries between Traditional and Transnational Islam: Pious Women's Engagement with Islamic Authority in Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Slavic Review* 79, no. 1 (2020): 7–27; Dženita Karić, "Bosnian Women on Hajj," in *Muslim Women's Pilgrimage to Mecca and Beyond : Reconfiguring Gender, Religion, and Mobility*, eds. Marjo Buitelaar, Manja Stephan-Emmrich, and Viola Thimm (London: Routledge, 2021),147–165; Adis Duderija, "The Concept of a Religiously Ideal Muslim Woman in Two Treatises on the Customs of Bosnian Muslims," *Hawwa* 21, 3 (2023): 213–230: Jelena Gajić, "Education of Muslim Girls During the Interwar Era and Socialist Transformation in Yugoslavia" (PhD diss., Charles University in Prague, 2024).

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Summary in English

At the heart of this dissertation are public debates over rights, duties, and public visibility of Muslim women in early 20th century Bosnia and Herzegovina—commonly referred to as the "Muslim woman question."

It examines how intellectuals and religious scholars in early 20th century Bosnia and Herzegovina used women related issues as a discursive space for negotiating broader religious and social tensions. Drawing on a range of published materials—including journals, books, and pamphlets—it shows that these debates were shaped by three major intellectual currents: reformism, conservativism, and revivalism. Despite their differences, each current mobilized the figure of the Muslim woman to express their competing visions of true Islam, religious authority, cultural identity, and progress. Rather than reflecting women's lived experiences, these discourses contributed to the development the Muslim woman as a discursive construct—an imagined and symbolically charged figure through which broader anxieties were expressed.

The research employs an interdisciplinary approach that integrates global history, gender theory and discourse analysis to situate Bosnian Muslim debates on gender within broader global intellectual currents, while paying attention to the local specifics of the debates.

The dissertation is organized into two central parts, each addressing a distinct but interconnected set of themes.

The first part of the dissertation entitled *Locating Bosnian Islamic Discourse within Global Muslim Intellectual Development* comprises two chapters. Chapter *Reformist Discourses: Foundations for Rethinking Islamic Tradition in Modernity* positions early 20th century Bosnian Muslim thought within the broader global Muslim search for authenticity. It primarily focuses on reformist discourses that called for a return to foundational sources of Islam, a critical reassessment of tradition, and independent interpretation. These discourses not only initiated local articulations of this search but also played a central role in establishing the tone, direction, and conceptual boundaries of public debates across the Muslim world. Whether reformist ideas were adopted, rejected, or critically engaged with, they helped shape the intellectual landscape of the time and served as a key referential framework for both global and Bosnian intra-Muslim debates—particularly those concerning the rights, duties and public visibility of Muslim women. The first part of dissertation further also explores the local socio-intellectual environment of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In chapter *Between the Global and Local: Islamic Discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina* it offers a detailed analysis of the factors that facilitated the pluralization of Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the late 19th century, such as the

modernization in the field of education, the emergence of Muslim cultural associations, and the development of a distinct Bosnian Muslim public sphere. It also provides insight into the key intellectual trends and debates that shaped modern Islamic thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the first half of the 20th century.

The second part of the work entitled *The Bosnian Muslim Woman Question within the Global Contestations over Islamic Tradition and Modernity* comprises three chapters that explore how Muslim women's roles, visibility, and rights become an integral part of both global, and Bosnian Muslim discourses. Chapter entitled *Exploring the Multifaceted Roles of the Muslim Woman Question in Global Modernity* examines the "Muslim woman question" as a deeply symbolic and charged issue in both European and Muslim discourses. It explores how the figure of Muslim woman was mobilized in colonial and orientalist narratives as marker of cultural backwardness of Muslims, and often rigid nature of Islam. At the same time, it demonstrates how within Muslim societies, the status of women became a key site of intra-Muslim polemic over the meaning and place of Islamic tradition in the modern world.

The chapter *Muslim Woman's Education, Authenticity, and Progress: Bosnian Muslim Perspectives* examines how the education of Muslim women became a prominent and contested issue among Bosnian Muslim intellectuals in the early 20th century. While the value of women's education as such was not widely disputed, it was the question of their participation in modern institutions of public learning that generated intense debate—particularly in relation to concerns about cultural integrity, moral boundaries, and the preservation of distinctive identity.

Chapter entitled *Debates on Face Veiling* focuses on one of the most contested issues in the global discussions on Islam and Muslims from the late 19th century. In the Bosnian context, as elsewhere, face veiling emerged as an important issue through which questions of local cultural traditions, moral values surrounding (un)veiling, collective identity, and the relevance and (re)interpretation of inherited legal and theological traditions were actively negotiated. This chapter situates these debates within the broader global discourse on veiling, and shows how the veil was frequently associated with opposing ideas.

Together, these two parts of the dissertation provide a comprehensive account of the intersections between global Islamic thought and local Bosnian Muslim debates on the Muslim woman question.

The thematic focus, centered on the intense and often heated intra-Muslim debates, placed within the broader context of the global Muslim search for authenticity, has provided several significant insights. First and foremost, it highlighted the multivocal character of

Islamic intellectual thought in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, it demonstrated how Muslim intellectuals and religious authorities were not only shaped by global intellectual currents but also actively contributed to shaping them. At the same time, the analysis revealed that gender debates functioned as key arenas where questions of religious authenticity, authority, progress, identity, and the place of Muslims in a rapidly changing social and cultural landscape were articulated, negotiated and contested.

Samenvatting

Centraal in deze dissertatie staan publieke debatten over rechten, plichten en publieke zichtbaarheid van moslimvrouwen in het begin van de 20e eeuw in Bosnië en Herzegovina—een discussie die gewoonlijk wordt aangeduid als de "de kwestie van de moslimvrouw."

Deze studie onderzoekt hoe intellectuelen en religieuze geleerden in het vroege 20e-eeuwse Bosnië en Herzegovina vrouwgerelateerde kwesties gebruikten als discursieve ruimte om bredere religieuze en sociale spanningen te bespreken. Op basis van publicaties uit die tijd—waaronder tijdschriften, boeken en pamfletten—laat de dissertatie zien dat deze debatten werden gevormd door drie belangrijke intellectuele islamitische stromingen: reformisme, conservatisme en revivalisme. Ondanks hun onderlinge verschillen gebruikte elk van deze stromingen de figuur van de moslimvrouw om hun concurrerende visies op de ware islam, religieuze autoriteit, culturele identiteit en vooruitgang tot uitdrukking te brengen. Hierbij werd niet uitgegaan van de geleefde ervaringen van vrouwen, waardoor deze discoursen bijdroegen aan de ontwikkeling van de moslimvrouw als discursieve constructie—een denkbeeldige en symbolisch beladen figuur via wie bredere angsten werden geuit.

Het onderzoek hanteert een interdisciplinaire benadering die 'global history', gendertheorie en discours analyse integreert om de Bosnisch-moslimse debatten over gender te situeren binnen bredere mondiale intellectuele stromingen, met aandacht voor de lokale specificiteit van de discussies.

De dissertatie is opgedeeld in twee centrale delen, die elk een afzonderlijke maar onderling verbonden reeks thema's behandelen.

Het eerste deel van de dissertatie, getiteld *Het positioneren van de islam in Bosnië binnen de mondiale ontwikkeling van islamitisch denken*, omvat twee hoofdstukken. Het hoofdstuk *Reformistische discoursen: Grondslagen voor het herdenken van de islamitische traditie in de moderniteit* plaatst het vroege 20e-eeuwse Bosnisch-islamitisch denken binnen de bredere mondiale islamitische zoektocht naar authenticiteit. De focus ligt hierbij op reformistische discoursen die opriepen tot een terugkeer naar de fundamentele bronnen van de islam, een kritische herwaardering van traditie en onafhankelijke interpretatie. Deze discoursen vormden niet alleen het lokale kader voor deze zoektocht, maar bepaalden ook de toon, richting en conceptuele grenzen van publieke debatten binnen de islamitische wereld. Of reformistische ideeën nu werden overgenomen, afgewezen of kritisch bevraagd, ze hielpen het intellectuele landschap van die tijd vorm te geven en dienden als belangrijk referentiekader voor zowel mondiale als Bosnische intra-moslimse debatten—met name over de rechten, plichten en zichtbaarheid van moslimvrouwen.

Het eerste deel onderzoekt verder ook de lokale sociaal-intellectuele context van Bosnië en Herzegovina. In het hoofdstuk *Tussen mondiaal en lokaal: Islamitisch discours in Bosnië en Herzegovina* wordt een gedetailleerde analyse geboden van de factoren die vanaf het einde van de 19e eeuw leidden tot een pluralisering van islamitisch denken in Bosnië en Herzegovina, zoals de modernisering van het onderwijs, de opkomst van islamitische culturele verenigingen en de ontwikkeling van een specifieke Bosnisch-moslimse publieke sfeer. Ook wordt inzicht gegeven in de belangrijkste intellectuele trends en debatten die het moderne islamitisch denken in Bosnië en Herzegovina in de eerste helft van de 20e eeuw vormgaven.

Het tweede deel van het werk, getiteld *De Bosnisch-moslimse vrouwenkwestie binnen mondiale discussies over islamitische traditie en moderniteit*, bestaat uit drie hoofdstukken die onderzoeken hoe de rol, zichtbaarheid en rechten van moslimvrouwen een integraal onderdeel werden van zowel mondiale als Bosnisch-moslimse discoursen. Het hoofdstuk *De veelzijdige rollen van de moslimvrouwenkwestie in de mondiale moderniteit* onderzoekt de "moslimvrouwenkwestie" als een diep symbolisch en beladen thema in zowel Europese als islamitische discoursen. Het laat zien hoe de figuur van de moslimvrouw werd ingezet in koloniale en oriëntalistische narratieven als symbool van culturele achterlijkheid van moslims en de vaak als star beschouwde aard van de islam. Tegelijkertijd toont het aan hoe binnen moslimgemeenschappen de status van vrouwen een belangrijk strijdtoneel werd in de interne discussies over de betekenis en plaats van de islamitische traditie in de moderne wereld.

Het hoofdstuk *Onderwijs, authenticiteit en vooruitgang: Bosnisch-moslimse perspectieven op moslimvrouwen* onderzoekt hoe het onderwijs van moslimvrouwen een prominente en omstreden kwestie werd onder Bosnisch-moslimse intellectuelen in het begin van de 20e eeuw. Hoewel de waarde van vrouwenonderwijs op zich nauwelijks werd betwist, riep vooral de vraag naar hun deelname aan moderne publieke onderwijsinstellingen hevige discussies op—met name in relatie tot zorgen over culturele integriteit, morele grenzen en het behoud van een onderscheidende identiteit.

Het hoofdstuk *Debatten over gezichtsbedekking* richt zich op een van de meest omstreden kwesties in mondiale discussies over de islam en moslims sinds het einde van de 19e eeuw. In de Bosnische context, zoals elders, kwam gezichtsbedekking naar voren als een belangrijk onderwerp waarlangs vragen over lokale culturele tradities, morele waarden rond (on)sluiering, collectieve identiteit en de (her)interpretatie van geërfde juridische en theologische tradities werden besproken. Dit hoofdstuk plaatst deze debatten binnen het bredere mondiale discours over sluiering en toont aan hoe de sluier vaak werd geassocieerd met tegengestelde ideeën.

Samen bieden deze twee delen van de dissertatie een uitgebreid beeld van de kruispunten tussen mondiaal islamitisch denken en lokale Bosnisch-moslimse debatten over de moslimvrouwenkwestie.

De thematische focus—gericht op intense en vaak verhitte interne moslimdebatten, geplaatst binnen de bredere context van de mondiale zoektocht naar islamitische authenticiteit—levert meerdere belangrijke inzichten op. Allereerst benadrukt het het meerstemmige karakter van islamitisch intellectueel denken in Bosnië en Herzegovina. Bovendien laat het zien hoe moslimintellectuelen en religieuze autoriteiten niet alleen werden beïnvloed door mondiale intellectuele stromingen, maar daar ook actief aan bijdroegen. Tegelijkertijd onthult de analyse dat genderdebatten fungeerden als belangrijke arena's waarin vragen over religieuze authenticiteit, autoriteit, vooruitgang, identiteit en de plaats van moslims in een snel veranderend sociaal en cultureel landschap werden gearticuleerd, bediscussieerd en betwist.

Curriculum vitae

Marija Šerić was born in 1976 in Osijek, Croatia. She completed her primary education in Garevac (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and her secondary education in Zagreb, where she also graduated in Croatology and Philosophy from the University of Zagreb. Furthering her academic formation in Rome, she obtained a Licentiate in Islamic and Arabic Studies from the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies (PISAI).

Her research interests lie primarily in modern Islamic intellectual history and Islam in European contexts. She is especially concerned with evolving interpretations of Islamic religious sources related to women, and the ways in which gender discourse intersects with broader social, religious, and political debates in Muslim societies.

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