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

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PART I



Locating Bosnian Islamic Discourse within Global Muslim Intellectual Development

CHAPTER 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 Pandejmoni, 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 inhiṭāt: The Discrete Charm of Decadence in 19th and 20th Century Language Games,” in *Inhiṭāt – 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 ‘Abduh (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-Herzegovina 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 'Abduh and his Interlocutors*; Jung, *Orientalists, Islamists and the Global Public Sphere*; Monika 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 Qur'ān.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 Shari’a,” 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 ‘*ulamā*’ 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 ‘*ulamā*’. As Feener also states, it „effectively broke the monopoly that traditionally trained ‘*ulamā*’ 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, ‘*ulamā*’, 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 ‘*ulamā*’, 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 Ġamāl 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 Hadīth, but those of the Qur’ān 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 ‘*ulamā*’ 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 ‘*ulamā*’, 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 Qur'ān 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 'Abduh 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 Browsers, 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 Browsers, "Introduction: Comparing Reformations," in *An Islamic Reformation?* eds. Michaelle Browsers and Charles Kurzman (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2004), 4.

130 Kurzman and Browsers, "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 Qur'ān.¹³⁶ Even though the theme of relation between Islam and rational thought had been scrutinized earlier in Islamic history, primarily within the circle of Mu'tazila 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 'Ali, "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; Qur'ān 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 Qur'an 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, "Ijtihad 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 ‘*ulamā*’ 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 '*ulamā*' towards Islam, as the sort of behaviour that is strictly condemned by the Qur'ān itself linking *taqlīd* with the critical and condemning stance in the Qur'ān 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 Qur'ān, as the mechanism responsible for the fact that the authority of the Qur'ān itself became replaced by the authority of its interpreters. On the contrary *ijtihād* is identified with Qur'ānic 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 Qur'ān, and the Prophet, which was subverted by the obedience to past scholars of Islam.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, Muḥammad 'Abduh held that it is not only a right but a duty of every Muslim to go directly to the Qur'ān and teachings of the Prophet, emphasizing that the Qur'ān itself forbids Muslims to be credulous.¹⁵⁸ From 'Abduh'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 Qur'ān 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 Muḥammad 'Abduh, *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 *Taqīd* 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 *taqīd* 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 Qur’ān 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 *taqīd* point to different understandings of religious authenticity by reformist and conservative circles. Insistence on *ijtihād* within the reformist circles

160 Sherman A. Jackson, “Taqīd, Legal Scaffolding and the Scope of Legal Injunctions in Post-Formative Theory: Mutlaq and ‘Āmm 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 Schmidke, “Introduction,” 7.

165 See as an example Albert Hourani’s criticism of ‘Abduh’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 'Alī 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 Qur'ān itself advocates monogamy and it is Qur'ānic 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 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 fundamentals 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 Ijtihad 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 ‘Abduh, 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 ‘*ulamā*’, 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 Qur’ān, and even if I know what *sharī’a* lawyers and commentators have said, I prefer to conform to the precepts of the Qur’ān, since it is here forever and for all times. I am required to do this by the Qur’ān, 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 Qur’ān 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.