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**The Muslim woman question in Bosnia and Herzegovina:
between Islamic tradition and global modernity**
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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: Miadlı Dolmayan Umut = Islam in the Balkans: Unexpired Hope*, ed. Muhammet Savaş Kafkasyalı (Ankara: TİKA, 2016), 37; Hajrudin Čurić, *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 Hajdarpašić, “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-Erdoğdular, “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 Šístek 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 interconfessional 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 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 Herzegovina, 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 Herzegovina," 44.

195 Stijn Vervaeke, "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 Ilija 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)," *Analizirajući Husrev-begove biblioteke* 13, no. 23/24 (2005): 257.

206 Rizvić, *Behar*, 158.

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

208 Kemura, *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 Qur'ānic 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 Konjhožić, "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 "Terdzuman 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, '*ulamā*'.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 Biseru," *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 Vervaeet 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* as Serbs, whereas those writing in the journal *Biser* believed Bosnian Muslims should join forces with the supranational movement of pan-Islamism. Vervaeet'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 Vervaeet, "Između hrvatstva, srpstva i panislamizma."

260 Stijn Vervaeet, "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 conservatism 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 relaunched 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.

Hikmet 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. *Hikmet* argued that the divisions within the Muslim community were caused by the reformists' tendency to interpret Islamic sources freely and arbitrarily. Therefore, *Hikmet* viewed it as its duty to suppress reformist viewpoints on Islam in order to maintain unity and cohesion within the Muslim community.²⁶⁸

Adnan Jahić, 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 *Hikmet* were its owner and editor Ibrahim Hakki Čokić (Chameran), his brother Ahmed Lutfi, Mehmed Handžić, Muhamed Zahirović and Husein Jahić.

Although Ibrahim Čokić encouraged *Hikmet* 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 *Hikmet'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 *Hikmet* 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 *Hikmet*, 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," *Hikmet* 1, no. 2 (1929), 64.

268 Adnan Jahić, *Hikmet*, 62–63.

269 Adnan Jahić, *Hikmet*, 63.

270 Adnan Jahić, *Hikmet*, 65.

271 Adnan Jahić, *Hikmet*, 68.

272 Adnan Jahić, *Hikmet*, 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, *Bibliografija 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; Šistek, *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 Šitek summarizes 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 Šitek, “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 *shari'a* 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, centered 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 ‘Abduh, al-Afghānī, and Sayyid Amīr ‘Alī, 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 Lipp, Volter, Leibniz, Lessing, and Hermann Samuel Reimarus.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 Sanitätswesen 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 svjetlu 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 *Hikmet* 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," *Hikmet* 2, no. 20 (1930): 236.

299 Husejin A. Šehić, "Reformašu," *Hikmet* 2, no. 20 (1930): 231–232.

300 Chameran [Ibrahim Hakki Čokić], "Ummeti Muhammedijje i Ummeti Kantijje," pt. 1, *Hikmet* 2, no. 19 (1930): 207–212; pt. 2, *Hikmet* 2, no. 20 (1930): 242–245; pt. 3, *Hikmet* 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 Qur'ān.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 *Hikmet* that openly criticizes the lifestyle of modern-educated intellectuals are: Husein Husin, "Neumjesnost ili pretjerivanje (Suljo, šunka, vino i Ramazan)," *Hikmet* 2, no. 23/24 (1931), 353–356; Jahjaze, "Hohštaplera će vazda biti," *Hikmet* 4, no. 42 (1932): 185–188; Jahjaze, "Neozbiljna ambicija naše inteligencije," *Hikmet* 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," *Hikmet* 4, 45 (1933): 263–266; Chameran [Ibrahim Hakki Čokić] "O Kur-anu azš," *Hikmet* 6, no. 11 (1936): 321–326; Chameran [Ibrahim Hakki Čokić], "Ko potiče prevođenje Kur'ana azš," *Hikmet*, 6, no. 9 (1936): 267.

305 Chameran [Ibrahim Hakki Čokić], "Hamiš ('Odgovoru ilmije' od Ibnul Ajna)," pt. 1, *Hikmet* 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 centered 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 '*ulamā*' 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 result of passivity and *taqlid* 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 Čerimović, "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 '*ulamā*' 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 '*ulamā*'s 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 Qur'ān, or more precisely to individual verses that in reformists

309 Tefik 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 *Analī 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, "Idžtihād je prijetka potreba sviju vremena," *Novi Behar* 2, no. 13 (1928): 193–194; Muhamed Šemsuddin, "Što je idžtihād i kakvi se propisi mogu idžtihād činiti?" *Novi Behar* 2, no. 16 (1928): 241–243; Muhamed Šemsuddin: "Zatvaranje idžtihad," *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 *muʿtazilism*.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 *Hikmet* 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 Kurʾana,” *Hikmet* 2, no. 20 (1930): 248–250.

316 Editorial Board, “Pravac Hikmeta,” *Hikmet* 1, no. 1 (1929): 3–5.

317 Editorial Board, “Pravac Hikmeta,” *Hikmet* 1, no. 1 (1929): 3–5.

318 Fahrudin, “Povodom pokrštenja jedne učiteljice,” *Hikmet* 4, no. 38 (1932): 63–64; Chameran [Ibrahim Hakki Čokić], “Hamiš (Odgovoru ilmijje of Ibnul Ajna),” pt. 3, *Hikmet* 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 Qur'ānic verses in his book *Muhamed i Koran* (Muḥammad and Qur'ān) 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 Qur'ān 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 '*ulamā*' 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 'Muhammed i Koran.' " pt. 2. *Hikmet* 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 'Muhammed i Koran.' " pt. 1. *Hikmet* 4, no. 39 (1932): 80.

324 Abdurrahman Adil Čokić, "Muhammed alejhisselam," *Hikmet* 1, no. 4 (1929): 97.

325 Jahjajade, "Neobiljna ambicija naše inteligencije," 250–253.