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

Šerić, M.

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CHAPTER 5

5

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.1.1. Global Themes Initiating and Shaping Local Debates

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

394 Göle, *The Forbidden Modern*, 34.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

399 Göle, *The Forbidden Modern*, 32.

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

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

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

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

401 Amin, *The Liberation of Women; and, the New Woman*, 71.

402 Amin, *The Liberation of Women; and, the New Woman*, 162–163.

403 Marilyn Booth, “Woman in Islam: Men and the ‘Women’s Press’ in Turn-of-the-20th-Century Egypt,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33, no. 2 (2001): 198. For an example of interpreting Amin's views as both misogynistic and reflective of European narratives about Muslim women, consult the book Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 159–160.

404 Shakry, “Schooled Mothers and Structured Play,” 157–158.

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

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

5.1.2. Local Developments Shaping Muslim Debates on Muslim Women Education

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Additionally, state initiatives aimed at the enhancing education in general as a key pathway to the modernization of the country and national unity further fuelled these discussions. Until 1941, illiteracy was a prime focus of the government of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia. It was a response to high levels of illiteracy, particularly in its central, north-western and eastern regions. Official Yugoslav statistics indicated that in 1931 the illiteracy was 72.9 percent among Bosnians, 62.3 percent Serbians, and 6.8 percent Slovenians⁴¹²

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

416 “Prilog 8,” *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 1, no. 6 (1933): 46–49.

417 “Prilog 11,” *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 1, no. 6 (1933): 56.

418 “Prilog 11,” 54–57. For more about the types of schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the period covered by this research see: Papić, *Školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme austrougarske okupacije*, 131; Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988* (Beograd: Nolit, 1988), 325.

419 “Izveštaj delegata IVZ Kraljevine Jugoslavije na Kongresu evropskih muslimana u Ženevi 12–15 Septembra 1935. godine,” *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 3, no. 10/11 (1935): 467.

420 Ibrahim Z. Hodžić, “Treba paziti i šta naša mladež uči,” *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 8 (1939): 100–101.

421 Nusret Kujraković, “Odnos Bošnjaka prema državnom školskom sistemu Bosne i Hercegovine između dva svjetska rata,” *Pregled* 50, no. 2 (2009): 217–232.

422 “Odluke i saopštenja Vrhovnog starešinstva Islamske verske zajednice,” *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 3, no. 10/11 (1935): 498.

423 Grgić, “The Kingdom of Diversity and Paternalism,” 227.

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

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

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

The modern Muslim reformist discourse on female education in Bosnia and Herzegovina was inextricably linked to narratives about the causes and remedies of the perceived Muslim backwardness. The Bosnian reformists' writings regarding Muslim women's education echoed a wider consensus among Muslim reformists throughout the world that women's education is of utmost importance to the progress of the Muslims.⁴²⁴ The low level of education of Bosnian Muslim women—described as not only as the least educated part of the Bosnian population, but also as the most ignorant women in Europe⁴²⁵ were seen as the cause of religious, cultural, educational, moral and economic degradation of Bosnian Muslim community.⁴²⁶ Consequently, the advancement of Muslim women education was understood to be as the primary means of overcoming these challenges.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

427 As an example of such argumentation, see: Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan*, 40–43.

428 Gasper, "Abdallah al-Nadim, Islamic Reform, and 'Ignorant' Peasants," 75–92.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

• *Motherhood*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

442 Uredništvo, "Poziv žene," 21.

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

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

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

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

• *Household management*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

448 Muradbašić, "Važnost i organizacija državnih domaćićkih škola u Bosni i Hercegovini," 148–150.

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

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

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

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

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

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

452 Towns, "Civilization," 79–99.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

458 Fuchs, "Orientalizing Disease. Austro-Hungarian Policies of 'Race,' Gender and Hygiene in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1874–1914," 80.

459 Fuchs, "Orientalizing Disease. Austro-Hungarian Policies of 'Race,' Gender and Hygiene in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1874–1914," 80–82.

460 Fuchs, "Austria-Hungary's Civilizing Mission in Bosnia."

461 Rory Yeomans, "Of 'Yugoslav Barbarians' and Croatian Gentlemen Scholars: Nationalist Ideology and Racial Anthropology in Interwar Yugoslavia," in *Blood and Homeland: Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900–1940*, eds. Marius Turda and Paul J. Weindling (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), 85–88.

standards, believed to have their origins in Islam.⁴⁶² Modern science and hygiene standards were presented as typical of Islam and negligence of hygiene as a failure to comply with Islamic requirements. The education of women was seen as a means of eradicating backward local practices and traditions that were viewed as a threat to the health of individuals, families and the entire Muslim community, and therefore a prerequisite for the overall elevation of the entire community, as well as fulfilling religious obligations under Islam.⁴⁶³

During the 1930s, the journal *Gajret* played an important role in advocating for the modernization of traditional women's roles, promoting professionalisation of domestic duties. It actively reported on the efforts of members of the *Gajret* association in establishing schools and courses for housewives. These schools were part of the broader national initiative that the state authorities began in 1919. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia began establishing schools and courses for housewives, often in collaboration with various associations, across the country. The schools were open to girls over 15 years old, with the primary aim of educating them for the rational management of households.⁴⁶⁴ In these institutions girls were taught hygiene, laundry, housekeeping, cooking and handiwork, along with standard subjects such as language, history, and geography.⁴⁶⁵

Members of *Gajret* association played a significant role in organization of these schools and courses at the local Bosnian level, collaborating with state authorities who provided financial resources, teachers, and teaching materials.⁴⁶⁶ The journal *Gajret* reported on these efforts and encouraged Muslim girls to attend such institutions arguing that modern education in domestic sciences was necessary means for enabling Muslim women for rational, professional and progressive household management.⁴⁶⁷ *Gajret's* reports, as well as practical efforts of the members of *Gajret* association contributed to the transformation

462 Mulić, Čistoća i red u nauci islama,"186, Abdulah Bukvica, "Općenito o higijeni," *Novi Behar* 8, no. 11/12 (1934): 186–188; N., "Dvije važne stvari za održanje u sadašnjosti i bližoj budućnosti," 120–123. This kind of argumentation was present also in the works of reformists authors outside Bosnia and Herzegovina. See as an example argument made by 'Abdalrauf Fitrat; Adeeb Khalid, "Representations of Russia in Central Asian Jadid Discourse" in *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*, eds. Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2001), 188–202. A similar argument regarding the close connection between Islamic principles and public health is also found in a translation from French of a work published in Sarajevo in 1913 that was intended to demonstrate that Islam is a rational religion that positively contributes to social progress. See: Ahmedbeg Džejhun, *Islamske dužnosti sa gledišta higijenskog (zdravstvenog)* (Sarajevo: Prva muslimanska nakladnička knjižara i štamparija, 1913).

463 S. Jergović, "Domaćica: zdravlje," *Dulistan* 1, no. 2 (1926):30, Abdulah Bukvica, "Islam i higijena," *Glasnik Vrhovnog vjerskog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 1, no. 3 (1933): 48–56.

464 Željko Bralić, *Obrazovanje odraslih u pokušaju: Prilog andragoškoj istoriji* (Beograd: Univerzitet u Beogradu, 2018), 123–165; Kemura, *Uloga Gajreta*, 317; Troch, "Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia," 139.

465 Troch, "Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia," 139.

466 Kemura, *Uloga Gajreta*, 319.

467 "Kako se osnivaju Državne škole za domaćice," *Gajret* 11 (1930): 236–237; "Rad na osnivanju domaćičkih škola," *Gajret* 11 (1930): 337; "Izveštaj glavnog odbora Gajreta o radu u društvenoj godini 1930–1931," *Gajret* 12, no. 12 (1931): 322.

of the role of mother and housewife into a profession based on scientific knowledge and technical skills.

A specific feature of argumentation found in *Gajret*'s articles is the presentation of education of Muslim women in these public educational institutions as a prerequisite for the national prosperity and development of the common national identity, which was in line with the general integral Yugoslav orientation adopted in this journal during 1930s.⁴⁶⁸ While *Gajret* associated Muslim women's education in 1930s with the issue of integration of Muslims within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the national progress it is important to acknowledge that this argumentation was situated within the general *Gajret*'s viewpoint that education of women is part of the Islamic doctrine. Educating Muslim girls in *Gajret*'s perspective was intended to ensure not only their integration into Yugoslavia, but also the renewal of true Islamic teachings about the education of women.

Due to the fact that basic education of women in domestic skills was generally viewed by reformists as being an integral part of the Muslim renewal, it is not surprising that reformist journals such as *Gajret* and *Novi Behar* regularly provided concise advice regarding a variety of topics related to practical housekeeping for Muslim women. In 1933 *Novi Behar* began publishing a special column titled *For our wives*.⁴⁶⁹ This section, published articles on a range of domestic topics including health, nutrition, child rearing, housekeeping, and hygiene for the purpose of educating Muslim women. These simple and short instructions regarding household tasks may appear insignificant from our perspective, but the editors of these journals undoubtedly considered them not only to be simple advice given to women, but also to be practical tools that would support the enlightenment of Muslim families and wider society.

• *Marriage*

Similarly, to global reformist perspectives, Bosnian reformists argued that education of women was not only necessary to achieve efficient household management and childcare, but also a prerequisite for achieving marital harmony.

The article written by reformist author Šukrija Alagić published in *Novi Behar* in 1933 provides an excellent elaboration of this principle.⁴⁷⁰ The article echoed the global reformist conception of marriage as a community based on love and understanding, emphasizing the

468 More about *Gajret*'s ties with the Yugoslav state regime and its pro-Yugoslav and pro-Serb orientation see: Troch, "Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia," 116.

469 The column titled *For our housewives* appeared first appeared in *Novi Behar* 7, no. 1 (1933): 31.

470 Šukrija Alagić, "Izobraženje žene," *Novi Behar* 6, no. 19/20 (1933): 260–262.

importance of educational compatibility between spouses to the accomplishment of this ideal.⁴⁷¹

Alagić specifically attributed his understanding of the verse 30:21 as a key text that defines the ideal Islamic marriage to discussions on the subject in the Egyptian reformist journal *al-Manār*. Drawing from these insights, Alagić viewed the Qur'ānic verse "And of His signs is this: He created for you helpmeets from yourselves that ye might find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo! herein indeed are portents for folk who reflect" as defining marriage within Islam as a partnership based on mutual support and understanding.⁴⁷²

A similar vision of marriage can be found among other Bosnian reformists who viewed marital relationship based on love and mutual understanding not only as an ideal prescribed by the Qur'ān, but also as an essential prerequisite to the development of moral character in individuals and the establishment of a harmonious environment necessary for the upbringing of children.⁴⁷³ This interpretation of marriage clearly contrasted with the conservative and revivalist Bosnian narratives in which marriage was predominantly viewed as a means to satisfy sexual needs and ensure reproduction.⁴⁷⁴

Reformists' understanding of marriage was closely related to their general stance that educational compatibility between partners is a prerequisite for a successful marriage. The above-mentioned Alagić's text illustrates the common reformist viewpoint that only wife who is nearly as educated as her husband can provide him with the necessary comfort and understanding, thereby ensuring marital harmony.⁴⁷⁵ Alagić's text was not the only text emphasizing the importance of educational compatibility between spouses in achieving the Qur'ānic ideal of marriage. In 1935 *Novi Behar* published an article by non-Muslim publicist Dragutin Hofbauer (1869–1936) to highlight the universal importance of women's education in ensuring educational compatibility between spouses and a harmonious marriage.⁴⁷⁶

The unique interpretation of this perspective was reflected in public debates regarding mixed marriages between Muslim men and non-Muslim women during the 1930s. Namely, there was the rise in interfaith marriages between Muslim intellectuals and non-Muslim women during this period which sparked considerable discussions among Muslims. These marriages

471 Sherry Sayed Gadelrab, *Medicine and Morality in Egypt: Gender and Sexuality in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (London: I.B. Tauris: Library of Middle East History, 2016), 105–107; Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition*, 153 – 187; Alagić, "Izobraženje žene," 261.

472 Alagić, "Izobraženje žene," 260.

473 Pozderović, "Važnost domaćeg odgoja," 223–225; Mehmed Begović, "O braku," *Gajret* 15, no. 13 (1934):174–175.

474 Ali-Riza Prohić, *Šta hoće naša muslimanska inteligencija* (Sarajevo: Štamparija Omer Šehić, 1931), 12–13; Kasim Dobrača, „Jedan vaz (Nekoliko Islamskih propisa o privatnom i društvenom životu čovjeka," *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 4, no. 11 (1936): 419–425.

475 Alagić, "Izobraženje žene," 261.

476 Dragutin Hofbauer, "Čar Orijenta u Bosni," *Novi Behar* 8, no. 24 (1935): 406.

were viewed by conservatives as a sign of religious indifference of secular educated Muslim elites.⁴⁷⁷ Some reformists however argued that these marriages were primarily caused by the low educational level of Muslim women, which led Muslim intellectuals to seek partners among more highly educated non-Muslim women.⁴⁷⁸ Interfaith marriages were believed to arise primarily from the significant educational disparity between Muslim men and women. Consequently, the education of Muslim women was viewed as a key solution to this problem.

5.2.3. Muslim Women Education and Economic Progress of Muslims

While reformists predominantly advocated for modern women's education as necessary for fulfilling their domestic roles, some authors also emphasized the critical role of education in advancing the economic development of the Muslim community.

This argument was particularly used in reformists text published during the interwar period. Muslim reformists responded to the increasing poverty after World War I by demonstrating the close connection between women's education, participation in the labour force and economic growth. They sought to show that by increasing education among women, their participation in the labour force would be enhanced, leading to greater contributions to household income and ultimately reducing poverty in Muslim communities.⁴⁷⁹

The resistance among many Bosnian Muslims to modern education of Muslim women (see sections 5.1.2 and 5.3.) was widely condemned for deepening the economic hardships faced by Muslim community.⁴⁸⁰ A particular focus of reformist criticism was directed at conservative members of class, who were harshly criticized for absolutizing the Qur'ānic concept of the man as primary provider for his family.⁴⁸¹ The interpretation of this concept as the total subordination of women to men and the exclusion of women from the labour force was criticised for failing to acknowledge the reality that many families lack a male provider. Furthermore, this interpretation was seen as detrimental to the welfare of the Muslim community and possibly leading to women in these families turning to prostitution to provide for their families.⁴⁸²

477 For more on the issue of interfaith marriages in the interwar period see: Feđa Burić, "Becoming Mixed: Mixed Marriages of Bosnia-Herzegovina during the Life and Death of Yugoslavia" (PhD diss., University of Illinois 2012), 39–79.

478 Ibro Brkić, "O braku," *Gajret* 18, no. 5 (1937): 82–83.

479 Salih Ljubunčić, "Zaboravljeni i napušteni rod," *Đulistan* 1, no. 2 (1926): 21–23; Ahmed Omerhodžić, "Problem osnovnog školstva i osnovne prosvjete u Bosni i Hercegovini i njegovo rješenje," *Novi Behar* 10, no. 15/16 (1936): 179–183; "Lijep primjer svijesti i razumijevanja prema školovanju naše muslimanke," *Gajret* 19, no. 3 (1938): 56; Ahmed Muradbegović, "O ženi i muslimanskom društvu," *Gajret* 10, no. 1 (1926): 1–3.

480 Omerhodžić, "Problem osnovnog školstva i osnovne prosvjete u Bosni i Hercegovini i njegovo rješenje," 181–182; Muradbegović, "O ženi i muslimanskom društvu," 1–3.

481 Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci*, 86.

482 Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci*, 85–90.

In general, however, women's vocational training and participation in the labour force was not regarded as a right belonging to them as human beings, but rather as a necessity. It should be noted that reformist discourses, as well as later revivalist discourses, took a primarily utilitarian approach to women's employment outside the home. Women's vocational training and participation in the labour force were described primarily as a means of ensuring that unmarried Muslim women and widows would not become a burden to their families.⁴⁸³ This understanding of the purpose of female education was in accordance with global discourses on women's education from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In different cultural contexts the advocates of female education stressed the utilitarian aspect of women's education and employment, stating that it adds economic benefit to the family, community, and nation.⁴⁸⁴

Although some authors acknowledged women not only as recipients of education, but also as enlightenment agents, they attributed distinct educational activities to men and women in accordance with their understanding of the inherent differences between men and women. Educated women in reformist discourses had the primary responsibility of enlightening other women within the Muslim community and their families, particularly their children. They were assigned the task of eradicating religious illiteracy, spreading authentic knowledge of Islam among Muslim women and putting an end to harmful practices.⁴⁸⁵

5.2.4. Women's Education as the Islamic Value

A prominent feature of Bosnian reformist discourses was the belief that women's education was not only a socio-economic necessity, but also an Islamic principle, founded in the core Islamic texts.

This approach to women's education clearly reflects a broader reformist interpretation of Islam as a religion that promotes both religious and secular knowledge acquisition. During the research period, the issue of the authentic Islamic view of education in general was extensively discussed in Muslim reformist journals, where several key characteristics emerged.

483 Zija, "Šaljimo djecu u škole," *Novi Behar* 6, no. 4/5 (1932): 49–50; Muhamed Hifzi Muftić "Nešto o uzgoju," *Behar* 3, no. 18 (1903): 277–278.

484 Karin Baumgartner, "Female Education in Nineteenth-Century Germany: Caroline de la Motte Fouque and the Rejection of Bourgeois Models of Domesticity," in *Dominant Culture and the Education of Women*, ed. Julia C. Paulk (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 82–97.

485 Hamdija Mulić, "Ženska Medresa," *Novi Behar* 10, no. 23/24 (1936): 331–332; Hamdija Mulić, "Problem zaštite djece u nas," *Gajret* 11, no. 13 (1927): 201–202; Salih Udvarlić, "Našim učiteljicama i učenicama," *Đulistan* 1, no. 3 (1936): 38–39.

First, the published articles provided examples of how the Qur'ān strongly encourages not only religious education, but also the acquisition of secular, practical knowledge relevant to the individual's particular socioeconomic and historical situation.⁴⁸⁶

A common reformist reference to the *ḥadīth* "Seek knowledge even as far as China" reveals another characteristic idea of the reformist discourse on education.⁴⁸⁷ Using this *ḥadīth*, they sought to emphasize that the early Islamic community recognized the value of knowledge and science, and that its rise was precisely the result of this recognition.⁴⁸⁸ This *ḥadīth* was also interpreted by reformists as a statement that science and its value are universal, and that Muslims are obliged to educate themselves in a variety of sciences regardless of their origin.⁴⁸⁹

It is evident that both of these proposals were intended to respond to the conservative 'ulamā' and the masses who perceived modern education for Muslims in public institutions to be a threat to Muslim identity. Given that the general population had a particularly negative attitude towards women's education in modern public institutions, it is not surprising that the third prominent idea in these discussions was that Islamic texts impose upon Muslim women, as well as men, the obligation to acquire knowledge and education, not only in religious sciences but also in secular subject, regardless of their origin.⁴⁹⁰

To underline their main thesis that it is a duty of every Muslim man and woman to pursue education they used three main strategies which were consistent with their general distinction between true Islam, as enshrined in Islamic founding texts and its historical realization. These strategies, that will be bellow analysed in detail are: reinterpretation of Islamic foundational texts; the revision of classical historical narratives; and the integration of global reformist ideas into the Bosnian context.

• *Reinterpretation of Islamic foundational texts*

The reinterpretation of core Islamic texts was the primary strategy used by reformists to establish Islamic legitimacy for their advocacy of Muslim women's education. This strategy embedded pragmatic arguments for women's education within an Islamic framework,

486 "Kongres muslimana intelektualaca održan 6. i 7. septembra, prilikom proslave Gajretove dvadesetpetogodišnjice," *Gajret* 9, (1928): 290; Džemaludin Čaušević, "Božija zapovijed," *Novi Behar* 8, no. 17/18 (1935): 289.

487 The full *ḥadīth* reads "Seek knowledge even if it be in China, for the seeking of knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim." Among Muslim theologians since early Islam, the first part about China is generally considered inauthentic, but the second part is considered authentic (see various Islamic scholarly websites:

<https://www.al-mawrid.org/Question/60a204a3923f0b12074d8517/seek-knowledge-even-if-you-have-to-go-to-china;>
<https://islamqa.info/en/answers/13637/seek-knowledge-even-if-you-have-to-go-as-far-as-china-is-a-false-hadeeth>).

488 See: Safvet-beg Bašagić, "Gajret," *Behar* 4, no. 16 (1903): 253–254; I. H. Meginagić "Muslimanskim roditeljima i muslimanskoj mladeži," *Novi Behar* 1, no. 12 (1927): 177; Atif Hadžikadić, "Škola i zanat," *Novi Behar* 3, no. 23 (1929): 361–362; H. M. Handžić, "Nada u budućnost," *Novi Behar* 8, no. 9/10 (1934): 141–142.

489 Hadžikadić, "Škola i zanat," 361–362; Mustafa Mehić, "Uloga Muslimanskog sveštenika na selu, (s pogledom na prošlost i prospektom na budućnost)," *Gajret* 21, no. 11 (1940): 228–230.

490 Osman Nuri Hadžić, *Islam i kultura* (Zagreb: Self-published, 1894), 90–91.

thus making these arguments more persuasive and acceptable to a wider audience. This approach was extensively employed by Muslim reformists globally during the study period and it remains relevant in contemporary discourses regarding the status and rights of Muslim women on a global scale.⁴⁹¹

In general, reformist authors viewed Qur'ān commandments as being egalitarian in nature, advocating and promoting equality between men and women in families and society.⁴⁹²

Prominent Muslim reformist scholar Džemaludin Čaušević (1870–1938) used the following two verses to claim that seeking knowledge is not only encouraged but is considered a sacred duty for all Muslims, irrespective of gender:⁴⁹³

Then exalted be Allah, the True King! And hasten not (O Muhammad) with the Qur'ān ere its revelation hath been perfected unto thee, and say: My Lord! Increase me in knowledge. (20:114)

... We raise by grades (of mercy) whom We will, and over every lord of knowledge there is one more knowing (12:76)

His interpretation of these verses suggested that women were excluded from education in Muslim communities because of patriarchal interpretations of Islamic texts rather than Islamic doctrine. He emphasized that the Qur'ān calls on Muslims, regardless of gender, to pursue knowledge as an essential component of personal development and communal well-being. By emphasizing the egalitarian nature of Qur'ānic teachings, he clearly aimed to demonstrate that Islamic doctrine supports equal educational opportunities for men and women.⁴⁹⁴

The reformist thesis that women should be guaranteed similar rights including the right to education because they are of kindred nature with men found its legitimacy in the Qur'ānic text 4:1 stating: "O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate..."⁴⁹⁵

491 For contemporary uses of this strategy in various Muslim debates about women, see Anne Sofie Roald, *Women in Islam: The Western Experience* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 120–126.

492 Osman Nuri Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 2, *Gajret* 9, no. 19/20 (1925): 301–302.

493 Džemaluddin, "Zajedničko poučavanje," *Novi Behar* 2, no. 1/2 (1928): 2.

494 Džemaluddin, "Zajedničko poučavanje," 2–3.

495 For more on the interpretation of this verse in terms of shared origin of men and women, and the similarity of their rights and responsibilities see: Mustafa Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 1, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 6 (1927): 92; Nuri Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 2, 301–302; Kasim Hadžić, *Položaj žene u islamu* (Sarajevo: Nova tiskara Vrčak i dr., 1940), 11; Mirza Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 12, *Behar* 4, no. 13 (1903):193.

Safvet-beg Bašagić's (1870–1934) views provides a useful example of a modern interpretation, which recognizes equal rights for both men and women in this verse. Although Bašagić's interpretation aligned with traditional interpretations that generally viewed it as evidence of the origin of humankind being man (Adam), he did not suggest that women are inherently inferior or subordinate to men, as was often implied by traditional exegesis. He instead introduced a fresh perspective on gender relations, challenging the conventional exegesis that suggested the inferiority of women.⁴⁹⁶ Bašagić viewed it as a clear statement of equality between men and women, pointing out their shared origin, complementary roles, and inherently similar qualities.⁴⁹⁷

Bašagić's interpretation of the verse is specific due to his selective approach to *ḥadīth* material, a strategy often also used today in discussions on Islamic teachings about women.⁴⁹⁸ It involves selecting and emphasizing certain *ḥadīths* that support particular viewpoints while ignoring or dismissing other *ḥadīths*, which might offer alternative interpretations. Bašagić quotes short statement *ḥadīths* that were in accordance with his view of Qur'ān 4:1, without questioning their historical authenticity. The following *ḥadīths* are mentioned: "The best of you is the one among you who treats his wife the best;" "Be gentle and kind to women;" "Only a man of noble character will honour women, and only a man of base intentions will dishonour them."⁴⁹⁹

This selectivity certainly may be subject to criticism as it does not provide a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings nor addresses the issue of *ḥadīth* authenticity systematically. It is however important to note that this kind of selectivity is an integral component of any reform project, as Khaled Abou El Fadl notes in his study on contemporary approaches to *ḥadīth* literature.⁵⁰⁰ The attempt to provide an objective interpretation is essentially an attempt deeply influenced by the broader perspective of the interpreter. In Bašagić's case, as well as among many other reformists to the present day, it has become clear that only *ḥadīths* that support the egalitarian message of the Qur'ān should be considered credible.

496 Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić] "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 12, 194. For more about traditional understandings of this Qur'anic verse and related *ḥadīths*: Karen Bauer, *Gender Hierarchy in the Qur'an: Medieval Interpretations, Modern Responses* (New York: Cambridge University Press: 2015.): 101–136.

497 Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 12, 193.

498 A similar type of selective approach can also be found in other Bosnian reformists. See: Šukrija Alagić, "Od predrasuda k istini," *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinska Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 3, no. 2 (1935): 79–80; Osman Nuri Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 1, *Gajret* 9, no. 17/18 (1925): 259–260. For more on selectivity in contemporary approaches to *ḥadīths*, Khaled Abou El Fadl, "Modern Rereadings of the *Ḥadīth* through a Gendered Lens," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Women*, ed. Asma Afsaruddin (Oxford Handbooks, 2023), 135; Roald, *Women in Islam*, 220.

499 Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt.12, 194

500 Khaled Abou El Fadl, "Modern Rereadings of the *Ḥadīth* through a Gendered Lens," 135.

The Bosnian reformists' focus on the Qur'ān and selected *ḥadīth* materials demonstrates the underlying proposition of the reformist movement that all reform should be based on revitalizing true Islamic principles found in Islamic foundational texts. Free reinterpretation of these texts, without extensive reliance on classical authorities to support their views on women's education, reflects a larger process. This process involved rejecting previous authorities, the authority of '*ulamā*' and the authority of established institutions and practices, while simultaneously strengthening the authority of the scriptures.

• ***The revision of classical historical narratives***

The second of these strategies, the revision of the classical historical narratives, was used to emphasize how the value of female education had been embedded in Islamic history. As already shown representations of the past have been crucial to discourses about cultural authenticity, including diverse Muslim perspectives on gender relations.⁵⁰¹ In an effort to legitimize their views on Muslim women's education and social participation as authentically Islamic, Bosnian reformers, as well as Muslim reformists worldwide, revised historical narratives about women in early Islam.⁵⁰² By doing this, they aimed to demonstrate that education was not merely modern, foreign concept, but an Islamic value that was deeply rooted and historically realized within their own religious and cultural tradition.

Bosnian reformist authors presented the early period of Islamic history between the 8th to 12th centuries as a Golden Age for Muslim women, during which they genuinely participated in all areas of public life. This allowed reformists to position their advocacy for women's education within a perceived tradition of female involvement and influence in early Islamic society. Advocated modern education of Muslim women in Bosnian context became in their discourse a means of restoring the status that women supposedly had in the early Islamic community.⁵⁰³ Their appeal to early Islam was certainly part of a wider glorification of the early Islamic history and its transformation into an ideal that modern society ought to emulate. They (re)interpreted the first centuries of Islam as an era of genuine equality between men and women, aiming to demonstrate the emancipatory nature of true Islam, reject Western criticism of Islam as being a backward religion, and criticise conservative members of '*ulamā*' class for departing from Islamic teachings on women.

501 Omerika, "Negotiating Modernity through Constructions of History in Modern Muslim Religious Thought," 42.

502 For an overview of how classical historical narratives about Muslim women have been revised in the 20th century by Muslims worldwide to support diverse visions of gender roles see: Matthew Pierce, "Remembering Fātimah: New Means of Legitimizing Female Authority in Contemporary Shī'ī Discourse," in *Women, Leadership, and Mosques: Changes in Contemporary Islamic Authority*, eds. Masooda Bano and Hilary Kalmbach (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012): 345–360; Aisha Geissinger, "Feminist Muslim (Re)Interpretations of Early Islam," in *Routledge Handbook of Early Islam*, ed. Herbert Berg (London: Routledge, 2017), 296.

503 Mirza Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 11, *Behar* 4, no. 12 (1903): 177; Safvetbeg Bašagić, "Žene su ures svojih muževa," *Đulistan* 1, no. 1 (1926): 3; Mustafa Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 3, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 8 (1927) 124; Šukrija Alagić, "Od predrasuda k istini," 80; Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 1, 259–260; Osman Nuri Hadžić, "Žensko pitanje u islamu," pt. 5, *Gajret* 9, no. 24 (1925): 369–370.

The article titled *Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene* (The Life and Social Status of Muslim Woman) published in the journal *Novi Behar* in 1927 is noteworthy in this context.⁵⁰⁴ Its author Mustafa Čelić (1893–1940) compiled a list of Muslim female figures who held scientific, educational, military, and state roles from the earliest days of Islam to the modern age. He placed a special emphasis on educated Muslim women who had contributed to the advancement of science and culture, established charitable, educational, and religious institutions, and held important public roles during the earliest period of Islamic history. Čelić used this list as evidence that women enjoyed equal rights to men in public life during the first centuries of Islam and that educating women was an Islamic ideal. He depicted well-known historical figures from the early centuries of Islam as playing a significant role in transmitting religious knowledge and taking an active part in state affairs.⁵⁰⁵

As Čelić illustrates, the Bosnian reformists envisioned the ideal Muslim woman as an active participant in public affairs who contributed to community prosperity. She was portrayed as embodying true piety, possessing a comprehensive education, and actively participating in community affairs.⁵⁰⁶ The deliberate emphasis on the connection between comprehensive education, social participation, and genuine piety in reformist representations was likely intended to address conservative concerns regarding the impact of education on Muslim women's adherence to their religious and cultural values. In the following pages, I will explore this issue in more detail.

These representations allowed reformists to claim that their perspective regarding the education of Muslim women was founded upon an authentic understanding of Islam, which clearly targeted internal opponents who opposed modern education for women. Moreover, their representation of the past seems to serve the purpose of indicating to non-Muslim critics of Islam that Islam is not a misogynistic religion. An idealized portrayal of the early Islamic community and of prominent Muslim women was used to suggest that Islam greatly improved the status of women in Arabia and that women enjoyed greater rights and privileges during the early Islamic period than Western women during the modern era.⁵⁰⁷ In the following sections I will show how this type of argumentation was later elaborated upon by revivalist authors to emphasize the superiority of Islamic social teachings.

504 Čelić, Mustafa, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 1, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 6 (1927): 91–93; pt. 2, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 7 (1927): 101; pt. 3, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 8 (1927): 124; pt. 4, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 9 (1927): 133–134; pt. 5, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 10 (1927): 150–155; pt. 6, *Novi Behar* 1, no. 14 (1927): 214–216.

505 Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 3, 124; Mustafa Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 4, 133–134.

506 See also: Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 11, 177–178. Safvetbeg Bašagić, "Žene su ures," 3.

507 Halid Buljina, "Kult rada u islamu," *Glasnik islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 6, no. 4 (1938): 157.

• *The integration of global reformist ideas into the Bosnian context.*

Alongside justifying their call for women's education in Islamic history, Bosnian reformist strengthened their position by framing their arguments within broader global reformist perspective on education. The Bosnian Muslim reformist journals played a significant role in acquainting their readership with authors and initiatives from other parts of the Muslim world that advocated for the educational emancipation of women. They closely followed and documented developments in women's education across various Muslim regions and translated and shared articles by Muslim authors from abroad who viewed women's education as an intrinsic right bestowed upon them by Islam.

The reformist journal *Behar* began to address the issue of women's education first by publishing short, informative articles about Muslim women's education in other parts of the world, with a particular focus on the Russian Empire and India. It is clear from these articles that *Behar* sought to demonstrate that not only modern Europe but also Muslims in different parts of the world recognized the crucial importance of female education in promoting economic and cultural advancement of the society. Short reports about the efforts of Indian Muslims to enhance women's education through the establishment of schools for Muslim women exemplify this stance.⁵⁰⁸ *Behar* also paid special attention to Muslims living in the Russian Empire, reprinting articles from the prominent bilingual newspaper *Perevodchik-Tercüman*, which was published by the Crimean Tatar reformer İsmail Gasprinski. These articles shared *Tercüman's* central notion that the modernization of traditional Muslim education systems and the education of Muslims, especially women, were key tools for ensuring the restoration of true Islam and the overall progress of Muslims.⁵⁰⁹

The role of philanthropists from various Muslim regions who provided support for women's education was a recurring theme in *Behar*, and later in the journal *Novi Behar*.⁵¹⁰ These articles were evidently aimed at encouraging wealthy members of the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina to provide financial support for the education of Muslim women.

508 "Islamsko društvo u Lahuru," *Behar* 2, no. 3 (1901): 47; "Muslimanska ženska visoka škola u Aligari," *Behar* 7, no. 18 (1907): 216.

509 Gariba, "Pismo uredništvu," 52–55; Seradž, "Svadbe, suneti, pokopi," *Behar* 1, no. 20 (1901): 323–324; "Početak civilizovanja ruskih muslimana," pt. 1, *Behar* 2, no. 16 (1902): 249–251; "Početak civilizovanja ruskih muslimana," pt. 2, *Behar* 2, no. 17 (1902): 267–268. For more on *Tercüman* central ideas and influence in the Muslim world see: Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*.

510 "Muslimanski dobrotvor u Rusiji," *Behar* 4, no. 9 (1903): 143; H.A.B. "Muslimanska dobrotvorna društva u Rusiji," *Behar* 6, no. 3 (1905): 45; "Društvo Nešri Mearif u Baku," *Behar* 7, no. 16 (1906): 192; "Našri Mearif u Baku-u," *Behar* 7, no. 18 (1907): 216; "Žensko dobrotvorno društvo u Vladikavkazu," *Behar* 7, no. 18 (1907): 215; Čazim [Musa Čazim Čatić], "Poziv na opći islamski kongres," *Behar* 8, no. 15 (1907): 225–227; "Iz života ruskih muslimana," *Behar* 2, no. 7 (1901): 110–111; "Iz života ruskih muslimana," *Behar* 2, no. 8 (1901): 127; Aabida Magmuma, "Ženski mekteb u gradu Baku," *Behar* 1, no. 12 (1901): 190; K. Nihad, "Ženski mekteb u gradu Baku," *Behar* 3, no. 15 (1902): 240; K. Nihad, "Ženska naobrazba," *Behar* 3, no. 19 (1903): 303.

This aligned with the common belief expressed in reformist publications that investing in education was the most noble form of charity.⁵¹¹

In addition, reformist journals played a significant role in acquainting Bosnian Muslims with prominent, educated women from other Muslim communities.

From 1903 onwards, particular attention in journals *Behar*, *Gajret* and *Biser* was devoted to literary works of Ottoman women writers and poets of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The literary works of Fatma Aliye (1864–1924), Nigâr Hanım (1856–1918), Abdülhak Mihriunnisa Hanım (1864–1943), Makbule Leman (1865–1898), Yaşar Nezihe Bükülmez (1882–1934), Güzide Sabri Aygün (1886–1946) were regularly translated and published on the pages of these journals.⁵¹²

Recent Bosnian scholarship generally interprets the prominent place given to these authors in Bosnian Muslim periodicals as a reflection of the Bosnian Muslim community's enduring interest in Ottoman literature, which persisted even after the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵¹³ However, the translation of the literary works of these women, I contend, went beyond a mere fascination with their artistic and intellectual achievements. Translating these women's literary works was a deliberate effort to highlight the active roles that educated women played in the cultural evolution of the late Ottoman society. It was through the circulation and publication of writings by late Ottoman women and works about them written by Bosnian men that a new narrative regarding late Ottoman women emerged, portraying them as central figures in the cultural and social advancement of their community.⁵¹⁴

511 Safvet-beg Bašagić, "Gajretova skupština," *Behar* 4, no. 5 (1903): 67–68. For more about philanthropy as an Islamic value see: Mirza Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 16, *Behar* 4, no. 17 (1904): 257–259. See also: "Naš dobrotvor," *Behar* 6, no. 9, (1905): 143; Hamdija Mulić, "Čuvajmo uspomene iz naše prošlosti," *Novi Behar* 11, no. 12 (1937): 173; Džemaludin Čaušević, "Međusobno se potpomažite u dobrim i pobožnim djelima," *Novi Behar* 7, 1/2(1933): 1.

512 *Behar* serialized Fatma Aliye's novel *Muhadarat* (*Muhâdarât*) under the title *Razgovor- Roman iz turskog života*, spanning *Behar* 4, nos. 1–24 (1903–1904), and later serialized her novel *Udi* (*Üdî*) throughout 1905–1906. See: *Behar* 6, nos. 4–19 (1905–1906). Musa Ćazim Ćatić published an informative article about Nigâr Hanım, describing her as the most important Turkish female writer. See: Ćazim [Musa Ćazim Ćatić], "Turska pjesnikinja Nigjar," *Behar* 8, no. 7 (1908): 104–106. *Behar* published a translation of a poem by Abdülhak Mihriunnisa Hanım under the title "Ja i ćuk," *Behar* 7, no. 17 (1907): 196–197. Ahmed Šerić translated Makbule Leman's short story *Pişmanlık* under the title *Pokajanje*. See: *Behar* 4, no. 21 (1904): 324–326, while Musa Ćazim Ćatić translated her poem *Solmuş Gülüme* as *Majaj uveloj ruži* in 1908. See *Behar* 9, no. 2 (1908): 24. Additionally, Yaşar Nezihe Bükülmez's poem *Tahassürüm* was published under the title *Moja čežnja* in *Biser* 2, no. 8 (1913): 122–123. Finally, *Gajret* serialized Güzide Sabri Aygün's novel *Münevver* under the title *Munevera - ljubavna pripovijest iz carigradskog života*. See: *Gajret* 3, nos. 1–4 (1910).

513 For more about the reception of Turkish literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina see: Alma Spahi, "Recepcija turske književnosti u Bosni i Hercegovni u XX vijeku" (PhD diss., Beograd University 2006); Azra Ibrulj i Eldina Memić, *Turska književnost u bosanskohercegovačkoj periodici 1895–1942* (Sarajevo: Institut "Yunus Emre" Sarajevo, 2017).

514 See: Mustafa Ćelić, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene," pt. 5, 150; Ćazim [Musa Ćazim Ćatić], "Turska pjesnikinja Nigjar," 104–106.

Translated works by Halide Edip (1884–1964), a prolific author and public figure of the late Ottoman and early Republican periods, were extensively published in the magazines *Gajret* and *Novi Behar* in the late 1920s.⁵¹⁵ *Gajret's* and *Novi Behar's* interest in the work of this intellectual was part of a larger trend that emerged during the late 1920s. This trend was characterized by an increasing Muslim interest in institutional and social changes taking place in Turkey, particularly in relation to reforms that affected women. It is worth noting that the Muslim reformist press during this period displayed overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward reforms in the Republic of Turkey that were generally described as aligned with Islamic principles.⁵¹⁶ In the discourses of Bosnian reformists, the “new Turkey” and the “new Turkish woman” were regarded as evidence that Muslims could embrace modernity while still preserving their unique religious and cultural identity. As such they were portrayed as models for Bosnian Muslims to follow. Halide Edip was portrayed in these journals as more than just the new Turkish woman. She was presented as the ideal Muslim woman who was actively involved in the advancement of her society, and as someone who Bosnian Muslim women should emulate.⁵¹⁷

Apart from these female authors, Bosnian journals introduced Muslim readers in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the accomplishments of Muslim women from the late 19th and early 20th century from various regions in the fields of education, culture, and politics. For instance, Bosnian reformist Mustafa Čelić in his article published in 1927 in *Novi Behar* argued that the exclusion of women from public education in certain Muslim societies was not due to Islamic teachings, but rather due to patriarchal attitudes prevalent in these societies. His discussion focused on the range of perspectives on women's education within different Muslim countries, including Turkey, India, Egypt, Russia, Algeria, Tunisia, Afghanistan, Syria, and Iran. According to him, these differences confirm the influence of local cultural traditions on interpretations of Islamic texts regarding women's education.⁵¹⁸ Consequently, he argued for the liberation from local traditions that he believed were hindering the educational status of Muslim women and instead called for a return to the original sources of Islam. Additionally, he presented modern-educated Muslim women who actively participated in their communities as devout Muslims who brought the true message of the Islamic foundational sources and practices to the present. Čelić's references to these women aimed to demonstrate to Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina that modern

515 *Novi Behar* published her novel *Kalb Ağrısı* under the title *Bolja na srcu* in installments beginning with the first issue of the journal in 1927 (*Novi Behar* 1, no. 1 (1927): 9–10) and continuing until 1930 (*Novi Behar* no. 17/18 (1930): 280–81). The same magazine published the novel *Handana* in installments from issue 1 released in 1930 to issue 23/24 released in 1932. Ahmed Rasidkadic translated her poem *Sadaka* under the title *Milostinja* in *Gajret* 12, no. 3 (1913): 56. Safvet-beg Bašagić translated her poem *Dua* under the title *Molitva* in *Gajret* 9, no. 3 (1925): 41–42. The same journal started to publish the translation of her novel *Ateşten Gömlek* under the title *Ognjena košulja* in 1924.

516 Giomi, “Domesticating Kemalism,” 162–164.

517 “Jedna turska ‘Djevoja Orleanska.’ ” trans. Rešida R., *Gajret* 8, no. 18 (1924): 286–287; Halide Edip, “Molitva,” *Gajret* 9, no. 3 (1925): 41–42; Mustafa Čelić, “Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene,” pt. 5, 150.

518 Čelić, “Život i društveni položaj žene,” pt. 5, 150.

education for women was a part of Muslim women's social and religious obligation to participate in the progress of the Muslim community.⁵¹⁹

Apart from Čelić's article, *Novi Behar* also often published brief informative articles on educated Muslim women from various Muslims regions who actively contributed to the progress of their societies. These articles were to reveal to Bosnian Muslims that the education of women and their active participation in the labour force were realities across many Muslim regions.⁵²⁰

Reformist journals also played a significant role in introducing Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the ideas of modern Muslim male proponents of female education from around the Muslim world. As early as 1901, *Behar* published a brief report about Qāsim Amīn's book, *The New Woman*. Also, between 1901 and 1902, *Behar* serialized the book *Woman in the Islamic World* by Ahmet Ağaoğlu (also known as Ahmet Agayev Bey), which advocated the education of Muslim women as a crucial prerequisite for national liberation and advancement.⁵²¹ Safvet-beg Bašagić's article *Sto i jedan hadisi šerif* published in *Behar* in 1903 identifies prominent Muslim intellectuals Ahmed Midhat Efendi, Sayyid Amīr 'Alī and Qāsim Amīn's not only as advocates of women's education but also as authentic scholars of Islam.⁵²² This illustrates that modern discussions about the status of Muslim women were closely intertwined with issues of interpretative authority within Islam. Aware of the profound division and conflict between modern Muslim reformists and the conservative members of 'ulamā' class over the question of religious authority, Bašagić argues that the conservative members of 'ulamā' have no right to criticize these authors for interfering in the work of Islamic religious scholars, since, in his view, the educational background of modern reformists gave them the full right to discuss socio-religious issues. According to Bašagić their modern education, that gave them knowledge of both Islamic tradition and modern sciences and humanities, equipped them with tools necessary not only for understanding properly their own religious doctrine, but also for responding to modern European critics of Islam and Muslim world. Bašagić, in reformists manner blamed 'ulamā' for intellectual ossification of Islam, the spread of religious formalism among Muslims and stagnation of Islamic thought.⁵²³

The strategic incorporation of a wide range of resources from the broader Muslim world into Muslim reformists discussions about women's education elucidates not only the dynamic flow of ideas between Bosnian Muslims and Muslims from other regions but

519 Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj žene," pt. 5, 150.

520 "Prva inženjerka u Turskoj," *Novi Behar* 6, no. 10/11 (1932): 143; "Perzijanka u državnoj službi," *Novi Behar* 6, no. 22 (1933): 315; "Prva advokatica u Egiptu," *Novi Behar* 7, no. 15/16 (1934): 233.

521 "El –mer'etul džedidetu (Nova žena)," *Behar* 1, no. 23 (1901): 369–370; Ahmet Ağaoğlu's book *Woman in the Islamic World* was published in sequels in *Behar* during 1901 and 1902.

522 Mirza Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 13, 210.

523 Mirza Safvet [Safvet-beg Bašagić], "Sto i jedan hadisi šerif," pt. 17, *Behar* 4, no. 18 (1904): 273–274.

also evolving nature of Bosnian Muslim perspectives. While Bosnian Muslim reformists exhibited a keen interest in and maintained cultural connections with Istanbul, they also forged new connections with Islamic reform movements in the wider Muslim world.⁵²⁴ In these discussions they clearly expressed a growing sense of unity with Muslims from other parts of the world, regardless of geographic or cultural differences. These writings demonstrate that the early 20th century was a significant phase in the transformation of the religious identities of Bosnian Muslims as they shifted their focus from historical and regional ties, “to the broader framework of Islamic unity.”⁵²⁵

5.2.5. Reformist Distinction between “True” and “Superficial” Emancipation of Women

The modern Bosnian Muslim reformists’ discourse on Muslim women’s education is characterized by a notable feature of distinguishing between “true” and “superficial” (or even “extreme European”) emancipation of women. I have the distinct impression that the reformists’ distinction between what they saw as “true” emancipation and merely “superficial” emancipation was an effort to counteract negative perceptions of female emancipation that were prevalent in Bosnian society. These negative views that will be discussed in greater detail below often linked emancipation with materialism, sexual liberalism, and secularism which were seen as undesirable or harmful European trends. Reformists used the concept of “true” emancipation to clarify their position on Muslim women’s rights. They aimed to show that their approach was not simply a blind imitation of modern European ideals, as their critics often claimed. They argued that empowering women through education and critical thinking was not only compatible with Islam but essential to its values, offering a model of emancipation rooted deeply in their religious and cultural context.

In his article *Naš ideal* (Our Ideal) Ibrahim Džafčić, a sharp reformist critic of Bosnian society at that time, argued that it was a sacred duty of Muslims to provide modern education to Muslim women. However, he openly criticized adopting modern European trends, drawing a clear distinction between educational advancement and cultural assimilation. His critique of European social trends specifically mentioned the “Bubikopf,” a bob haircut that gained widespread popularity in the 1920s and symbolised a radical shift toward women’s independence. Symbolizing a broader liberation movement among women, this hairstyle was regarded as a radical departure from traditional gender roles. Besides, he also expressed disapproval of several other modern European fashion trends. He criticized the adoption of pointy shoes and modern skirts, viewing these fashion choices as symbols of Western decadence and moral laxity. He also expressed disdain for dancing, which he

524 Xavier Bougarel, “The Diasporic Experience,” 58; Balázs Trencsényi et al., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*, 544.

525 Balázs Trencsényi et al., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*, 544.

saw as another manifestation of Western cultural influence encroaching upon traditional Muslim lifestyles.⁵²⁶

The distinction between true and false emancipation was the subject of the article published in *Gajret* 1931, written by a certain teacher named Vehbija Imamović. His contention was that all Muslim authorities, religious and social, had a responsibility to raise the educational level of Muslim women, as Islam emphasizes equal importance for both men and women. Aside from this, he presented education as the most powerful means of emancipating Muslim women from both; false imitation of the West and complete adherence to old, local traditions that have caused harm not only to women but to the entire Bosnian Muslim community.⁵²⁷ His assertion was that education would not liberate women from their religious heritage and impose westernization upon them. Instead, he argued that education would equip women with fundamental literacy, employment prospects, household and motherhood abilities, as well as essential values and knowledge, necessary to comprehend that emancipation does not entail blindly adopting Western trends.⁵²⁸

Ambivalent attitudes towards European modernity, generally present in the reformist discourse, is perfectly illustrated by a text written by writer and publicist Murat Šuvalić (1897–1936) and published in *Novi Behar* in 1932. This literary-didactic text entitled *Zašto nije i ona kao ostale* (Why Isn't She Like the Others?) features a young, naive female protagonist who, influenced by contemporary trends, falls into decadence, ultimately leading to tragic consequences.⁵²⁹ The article describes the Muslim woman as pure and innocent, but also as imprudent because of the lack of education. It was precisely the lack of formal education, according to the text, that made Muslim women susceptible to superficial, material aspects of European modernity and its vices. The main aim of Šuvalić's article undoubtedly was to encourage the wider Muslim community to pay special attention to the protection of Muslim girls. The reformist component of this text lies in the specific understanding of the very nature of this protection. In this text, there is an understanding that modern education is the fundamental tool for protecting Muslim women from the trivialities of modern European culture. It was to empower Muslim women to consciously adopt only those achievements of European modernity that were consistent with their religious and cultural tradition. In this Šuvalić's text ignorance was considered to be a moral failing and education to be the necessary means to secure the survival of true Islamic moral values.

526 Džafčić, "Naš ideal," 8.

527 Vehbija Imamović, "Prava i loša emancipacija," *Gajret* 12, no. 4 (1931): 85. As a co-author of the dramatic text entitled *Emancipated Woman*, he expressed the same ideas. See: Mustafa Alikalić and Vehbija Imamović, *Emancipovana žena* (Sarajevo: Vlasništvo i naklada Gajreta, 1932).

528 Imamović, "Prava i loša emancipacija," 84–85.

529 M. Šuvalić, "Zašto nije i ona kao ostale," pt. 1, *Novi Behar* 5, no. 21/22 (1932): 295–297, pt. 2, *Novi Behar* 5, no. 23/24 (1932): 322–325.

The same central thesis of this text we also find in the work of Dževad Sulejmanpašić, who considered modern education of Muslim women to be the best shield against negative social trends of modern European societies. He openly criticized both; the expansion of the materialistic worldview and the spread of sexual liberalism among Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the conservative focus on veiling and segregation of Muslim women as a means of protecting Muslims from these negative aspects of modernity. Sulejmanpašić in his text *Prodiranje sveta u život muslimanke* (Penetration of the Secular World into the Life of a Muslim Woman) argued that the conservative insistence on the preservation of traditional practices, such as veiling and seclusion of Muslim women, was a consequence of a lack of understanding of a social reality in which Muslims lived.⁵³⁰ Namely, he held that economic conditions of Muslim families already had compelled many Muslim women to seek for paid employment and that it was impossible under the economic and social circumstances to keep women confined exclusively to the domestic sphere. He also argued that because of the global impact and spread of modern European ideas and customs it was illusory to try to keep women away from them. For him, only education of Muslim women had the power to contribute to the preservation of Islamic morality and values among women by providing them with knowledge necessary to distinguish positive from the negative aspects of European modernity. A genuine threat to Islamic morality according to Sulejmanpašić were not education of Muslim women and their integration into the workforce, but Muslim women's illiteracy that made them susceptible to negative aspects of European modernity. Besides, Sulejmanpašić, like already mentioned by Begović, sought to show interrelatedness of women's lack of education and prostitution. According to him limited employment opportunities for women who lack of education made them particularly likely to seek income in prostitution. Thus, for Sulejmanpašić depriving Muslim women of education was an act that did not contribute to the preservation of traditional morality, but on the contrary, it contributed to the spread of immoral practices among women and had very damaging effect on the entire Muslim community.⁵³¹

Writings of advocates of modern female education, particularly those of female authors, show us that they were fully aware of the negative image the public associated with educated Muslim women and to a certain extent influenced by the negative connotations that had been already attached to the term emancipation, such as sexual promiscuity, denial of tradition, westernization and anti-motherhood. To ensure wider support for their ideas female advocates of Muslim women education reaffirmed motherhood as the highest role of women and have sought to distance themselves against modern European trends and ideas.⁵³² Muslim female writer Nira Bećirbegović Filipović in a text in which she openly advocated education of Muslim women as a means of emancipating them as

530 Dževad Sulejmanpašić, "Prodiranje sveta u život muslimanke," *Gajret* 10 (1929): 285–286.

531 Sulejmanpašić, "Prodiranje sveta u život muslimanke," 285–286.

532 Bećirbegović – Filipović, "Odgovna uloga žene," 24–25.

future mothers from ignorance and all harmful traditions that hindered the community's progress, explicitly writes that she does not consider "extreme" European type of women's emancipation to be a true emancipation and to be a model that Muslim women should follow.⁵³³ Though he does not define this term in the text, it is obvious that she identifies it with promiscuity, smoking, drinking, dancing and entertainment.⁵³⁴

Jovanka Šiljak (1883–1962), a Serb non-Muslim feminist activist and associate of journal *Dulistan*, in her speech delivered at a Congress of Muslim Intellectuals held in 1928 in Sarajevo gave special attention to the concepts of feminism and emancipation. Her speech addressed the fears of those Muslim men that held that emancipation would lead to the disruption of established family structures. She sought to show that feminism is not female supremacy and that emancipation of women, that she advocated, does not lead women to neglect their duties as wives and mothers by establishing clear division between true and false emancipation and by claiming close link between female emancipation and the progress of family and community.⁵³⁵ While, she defined adoption of habits recognized as male such as visiting clubs and coffee rooms as pseudo-emancipation, she depicted authentically emancipated woman as a woman liberated from the ignorance that was truly devoted to the welfare of her family and community. Educated woman was the one who acquired domestic skills necessary for raising family, and vocational skills necessary for her employment, that is to say the one who was able to actively contribute to the progress of her family and the wider community. Muslim women's education in Šiljak speech was presented as a social necessity. The high level of illiteracy and criminality among young Muslims and the miserable economic status of the community in its entirety she attributed to Muslim women's ignorance with an obvious aim of showing that female ignorance and not education was a real threat to community. She insisted that the true recovery of the Muslim community demanded emancipated women able to take an active role in family and community.⁵³⁶

The distinction between "superficial" and "true" emancipation and openly critical attitudes towards some aspects of European modernity, especially the modern inclination towards material luxury and sexual liberalism, present in reformist discourse show us that Muslim reformers selectively accepted those modern European ideas and values that they considered to be an integral part of their own religious and cultural tradition. Female education was primarily meant as an Islamic value and thus as a key for building a modern and progressive Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina that authentically respects

533 Bećirbegović – Filipović, "Odgojna uloga žene," 25.

534 Bećirbegović – Filipović, "Odgojna uloga žene," 25.

535 "Kongres muslimana intelektualaca održan 6. i 7. septembra, prilikom proslave Gajretove dvadesetpetogodišnjice (nastavak)," *Gajret* 9, (1928): 328.

536 Kongres muslimana intelektualaca održan 6. i 7. septembra, prilikom proslave Gajretove dvadesetpetogodišnjice (nastavak), *Gajret* 9, (1928): 328.

its own religious principles. Such a selective and critical attitude towards the material and cultural aspects of European modernity was in accordance with reformist general idea according to which values such as rationalism, progress, human freedom were deeply rooted in the Islamic scriptures and in the history of Islamic civilization.

5.3. Muslim Women's Education in Conservative and Revivalist Discourses on Identity and Moral Order in Bosnia

The changes that occurred from the late 19th century in the field of education and reformist responses about public, modern education of Muslim women triggered opposition from proponents of other intellectual orientations present in Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this section I will show how reformist ideas on female education, particularly their positive attitudes towards Muslim women's education in public institutions, provoked two different types of reactions.

Conservative circles were the first to oppose the reformist ideas on female education, advocating the preservation of traditional institutions and methods of educating Muslim women within the family household. They viewed this type of education as authentically Islamic and a shield against modern European social trends perceived as anti-Islamic. Islamic revivalism which emerged in 1930s introduced the new and distinctive opposition to reformists ideas on female education. This intellectual orientation called for the creation of Islamic educational institutions that would provide Muslim women with modern education while preserving Islamic values. While revivalists accepted the reformist idea that women's education was crucial for community progress, they, like conservatives, advocated for the preservation of traditional gender relations and practices that they believed were inherent to Islamic tradition.

Conservative and revivalist circles opposed modern education for Muslim women in public institutions primarily on the grounds that such education adversely affects the morals and identity of Muslim women, and ultimately the entire community as a whole. The concerns regarding female education, the moral health of the Muslim community, and its identity were all interdependent. This is evident from the press of that time, which identified as one of the fundamental reasons for Muslim resistance to female education a widespread belief that modern education leads to the moral degradation of girls, the alienation from their own tradition and the Westernization of the entire community.⁵³⁷

537 "Lijep primjer svijesti i razumijevanja prema školovanju naše muslimanke," *Gajret* 19, no 3 (1938): 56; Begović, *O položaju i dužnostima muslimanke prema islamskoj nauci* 5.

There was a strong correlation between women's education, moral issues, and identity, not only in conservative and revivalist discourse but also in reformist discourse, as previously shown. What distinguishes these discourses significantly is the understanding of the impact of modern education on identity and morality.

The significance placed on women's morality and identity in discussions regarding their education stems from the prevalent belief—shared by reformist, conservatives and revivalists—that women are custodians and embodiments of moral principles and community identity, a notion present in various religious and cultural contexts.⁵³⁸ Scholars such as Barbara Freyer Stowasser, Ziba Mir-Hosseini, and Afsaneh Najmabadi have demonstrated that in different Muslim communities, women's issues, especially women's education, have served as a focal point for heated intra-Muslim debates about Muslim morality and cultural authenticity.⁵³⁹ The notion that women play a crucial role in the socialization and enculturation of children was embraced not only by reformists but also conservatives and revivalists in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Muslim mothers were commonly viewed as playing an important role in transmitting Islamic values to future generations of Muslims, thus having a major impact on the formation of Muslim morality and identity. The Islamic intellectual community in Bosnia and Herzegovina disagreed, however, as to the effect of modern education on the execution of this important role for women and on the stability and identity of the entire Muslim community.

In addition, the discussion about Muslim women's education was inextricably linked to broader concerns among the Bosnian Muslim population regarding the impact of European modernity on Muslim identity. It should not be surprising that attitudes towards female education were greatly influenced by distinct views of Europe and its modernity, as the introduction of modern European institutions and the penetration of modern European pedagogical ideas into Bosnia and Herzegovina led to the debates over Muslim women's education. Scholars Towns, Thompson, and Göle have demonstrated how, in many modern Muslim communities, the issue of women's education has been inextricably linked to the issue of compatibility between Islam and European modernity. They generally have identified three distinct perspectives on the connection between Islam and modern European civilization in discussions on Muslim woman status: a complete rejection of Western civilization; a division of culture into two spheres—the material and the spiritual—with the claim of Islamic civilization's superiority in the spiritual realm; and an assertion of

538 See: Seid Korkut, "Etika i moral," pt. 2, *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 3 (1939): 43–44.

539 Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an*, 5; Mir-Hosseini, *Islam and Gender*; Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Hazards of Modernity and Morality: Women, State and Ideology in contemporary Iran," in *Women, Islam and the State*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti (Basingstoke [etc.]: Macmillan, 1991), 48–77.

compatibility between Islam and the modern West in terms of women's status, particularly their right to education.⁵⁴⁰

5.3.1. Education, Identity, and the Moral Order of the Muslim Community: A Conservative Perspective

The conservative opponents of modern education for Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina grounded their opposition on two key premises. First, they saw a strong correlation between the modern education of women and the decline of morality, social decay, and anarchy. Second, they argued that education in institutions modelled after European schools would invariably result in the loss of the Islamic identity of Muslim children.

• *Fears of moral and social chaos*

In contrast to Muslim reformists, Muslim conservatives generally viewed modern education as a threat to the “natural” gender order. The brochure written by Sofija Pletikosić in 1911 offers the most perceptive understanding of the conservative viewpoint on the correlation between morality and modern education.

As a central component of Pletikosić's critique of reformist views on education for Muslim women, she asserted that modern education threatens women's “natural” roles, undermining the stability of society as a whole. Unlike reformist authors who viewed modern education as a means for women to successfully fulfil their domestic roles, Pletikosić saw such education as a pathway to the breakdown of the natural order between the sexes. In her critique of modern education for Muslim women, Pletikosić constructed and compared stereotypical images of the ideal Muslim mother and wife—a physically and mentally healthy woman fully devoted to her family and community—to that of the morally corrupt European woman. The latter was depicted as physically and mentally ill, lacking respect for men, and demanding absolute equality between men and women.⁵⁴¹ Pletikosić's stereotypical characterization of modern, educated European woman clearly demonstrates that her opposition to the modern education of women rested on the belief that such a type of education encourages women to leave their natural roles and consequently leads to social anarchy.⁵⁴² She contended that any departure from traditional gender roles, where the wife submits to her husband's authority, would lead to moral decline and ultimately, the downfall of civilization. Thus, she promoted an education for women that consisted of religious instruction, basic literacy and numeracy skills, as well as practical skills required for

540 Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens. Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Towns, “The Status of Women” 681–706; Göle, *The Forbidden Modern*, Towns, “Civilization,” 91–94.

541 Safijje-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja*, 4, 22–24.

542 Safijja-hanum – Sofija Pletikosić, *Polemika o emancipaciji žene. U obranu muslimanskog ženskinja* (Opatija: Self-published, 1911), 37–40; 49; 59–62.

household management, child-rearing, cooking, and sewing.⁵⁴³ This kind of education was understood as something to be done in private or semi-private sphere such as home, rather than in separate educational institution.⁵⁴⁴

Pletikosić's critique of modern education for women adhered to her pessimistic view of modern education as a whole, which she argued neglected the cultivation of students' moral character in favour of vocational training.⁵⁴⁵ In her view, modern schools were the primary cause of the moral and economic decline of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As opposed to Muslim proponents of female education who identified women's lack of education as a major cause of Muslims' economic and cultural underdevelopment, she blamed modern educated Muslim men for all forms of social problems within the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She portrayed them as individuals who had abandoned their traditions and values for a modern way of life and values that hindered the moral and economic well-being of Muslims. Pletikosić attributed social issues like alcoholism, sexual promiscuity, and a lack of respect for traditional authorities to modern educated Muslim men. She argued that these men were responsible for the deterioration of family structures and the overall disintegration of the Muslim community.⁵⁴⁶

Also evident in the work of Muslim male conservatives is their fear that modern women's education would encourage women to participate in paid employment, which was viewed as contrary to the nature of a woman and as a threat to the traditional division of labour that casts men as the primary breadwinner and women as the primary domestic worker. As part of conservative rejections of women's participation in paid labour, the emphasis was placed on natural, biological differences between men and women, claiming that these differences entirely determine both women's and men's different roles and responsibilities in public and private sphere. In conservative perspective, women's participation in paid labour was not only a violation of established social norms, but also a violation of natural, God-given laws.⁵⁴⁷

Based on verse 4:34 of the Qur'ān, Bosnian conservative author Ali Riza Prohić writes that the traditional division of roles is grounded in the Qur'ān itself. The verse, "Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women). So good women are the obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah hath guarded..." he interprets as assigning

543 Safijje-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja*, 9; Safijja-hanum – Sofija Pletikosić, *Polemika o emancipaciji žene*, 55.

544 Safijje-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja*, 9–10; 21.

545 Safijje-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja*, 8–9.

546 Safijja-hanum – Sofija Pletikosić, *Polemika o emancipaciji žene*, 59–62.

547 Mustafa Forto, *Otkrivanje muslimanskog ženskinja* (Sarajevo: Štamparija B. Buchwald i dr., 1925), 5–10.

men the responsibility of managing external, public affairs, while women are primarily responsible for household matters.⁵⁴⁸

Ahmed Lutfi Čokić (1878–1933) argued that a woman's employment outside the home is a form of violence against her domestic nature. Čokić believed that paid work conflicts with a woman's primary responsibilities as a mother and housewife, as well as her physical and intellectual characteristics. He viewed women as innately physically and intellectually inferior beings who needed protection from life's challenges, similar to the views of other conservatives.⁵⁴⁹ From Čokić's perspective exclusion of women from participation in public life and paid work was not a kind of discrimination against women, but on the contrary an act of justice, based on the recognition of and respect for natural differences between men and women.⁵⁵⁰ Thus, it is not surprising to find in his work the assertion that Muslim women who are employed are actual victims of their fathers and husbands, who fail to fulfil their duty as breadwinners. Moreover, he strongly condemned advocates of women's work outside the home, describing them as cowards, sluggers and degenerates who were not truly interested in the welfare of Muslim women and the welfare of the Muslim community at large.⁵⁵¹

Similarly, Muhamed Hifzi Muftić (1872–1920) argued that complete social equality between men and women went against both nature and Islamic teachings. He believed that the exclusion of Muslim women from public life and paid work did not demonstrate that Islam was a misogynistic religion. Instead, he saw it as proof that Islam was the perfect natural religion, respecting the natural laws that established distinct social functions and roles for men and women, as well as a hierarchy of the sexes with men in a position of supremacy.⁵⁵² Muftić cited the exclusion of women from certain professions in modern European countries as evidence that even modern Europe does not fully endorse absolute equality between men and women, recognizing instead the biological differences between the sexes.⁵⁵³

The arguments that Ibrahim Hakki Čokić (1871–1948), the conservative *muftī* of Tuzla, used to oppose the inclusion of Muslim women in paid labour closely resembled those expressed by Egyptian scholar Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī (1878–1954) in his 1901 book *The Muslim Woman*, which was published as a response to Qāsim Amīn's (1863–1908) book *The New Woman*. This book was translated in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1915, after being published in instalments in the journal *Biser* during 1913 and 1914.⁵⁵⁴ Čokić similarly to Wajdī claimed

548 Ali Riza Prohić, *Što hoće naša muslimanska inteligencija*, 23–24.

549 Ahmed Lutfi Čokić, "Islam, nošnja i otkrivanje," pt. 2, *Hikmet* 2, no. 23/24 (1931): 339.

550 Čokić, "Islam, nošnja i otkrivanje," pt. 2, 335–339.

551 Čokić, "Islam, nošnja i otkrivanje," pt. 2, 339.

552 Muhamed Hifzi Muftić, "Šta je naš cilj," *Biser* 1, no. 2/3 (1912):21.

553 Muftić, "Šta je naš cilj," 21.

554 Muhamed Farid Vedždi, *Muslimanska žena* (Mostar: Prva muslimanska nakl. Knjižara, 1915).

that such inclusion would disrupt the “natural” division of labour, which he believed was necessary for the survival of the human race.⁵⁵⁵ Čokić emphasized women’s natural and reproductive functions, arguing that women were primarily and solely responsible for being mothers and fulfilling the duties of childbearing, nurturing, and raising children. Čokić believed that women cannot perform these demanding functions while also competing with men in the labour market. Therefore, he regarded women’s paid work as a danger to their ability to properly fulfil their most important roles, and consequently, as a threat to the survival of humanity.⁵⁵⁶

Although Čokić’s discussion on women’s paid labour—which was part of a broader debate on veiling with his opponent Mehmed Begović—did not explicitly mention Wajdi, it seems apparent that Čokić based himself on the main arguments presented in Wajdi’s book *The Muslim Woman*. The remarkable similarity between their arguments leads to this conclusion. In another part of the mentioned debate about veiling, Čokić praised and recommended Wajdi’s work as an excellent critique of the dangers posed by the European model of women’s emancipation.⁵⁵⁷ This suggests that he was familiar with and appreciated Wajdi’s work. Čokić’s endorsement of Wajdi’s views on emancipation can be attributed to his strong opposition to European type of emancipation, particularly the participation of women in industrial labour, which he regarded as a kind of slavery that was harmful to women’s nature.⁵⁵⁸

Mustafa Forto makes an interesting argument in his book *Otkrivanje muslimanskog ženskinja* (Unveiling of Muslim Women) that reflects the conservative view that women’s employment challenges traditional gender roles within marriages. He opposes women’s employment outside the home, arguing that financially independent women are less likely to be obedient to their husbands since they are no longer dependent upon them. The view reflects a broader conservative concern that women’s economic emancipation threatens traditional family structures and male authority.⁵⁵⁹

• *Muslim woman’s education, Muslim identity, and Europe*

Understanding the sceptical views regarding Muslim women’s education in public educational institutions, as reflected in conservative discourses in Bosnia and Herzegovina, requires also recognizing their perception of the discrepancy between Islamic principles and those of modern Europe.

555 Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, “Zejluttesettur ili odgovor g. Bušatliću,” pt. 2, *Hikmet* 1, no. 4 (1929): 120–125.

556 Čokić, “Zejluttesettur,” pt. 2, 121. For more about Wajdi views on women’s employment see: Sherry Sayed Gadelrab, *Medicine and Morality in Egypt: Gender and Sexuality in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century* (London, New York: I.B Tauris & Co. Ltd: 2016), 93–94.

557 Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, “Zejluttesettur ili odgovor g. Bušatliću,” pt. 1, *Hikmet* 1, no. 3 (1929) 83–84.

558 Muhamed Ferid Vedždi, “Muslimanska žena,” *Biser* 2, no. 14 (1914): 213–214.

559 Forto, *Otkrivanje muslimanskog ženskinja*, 11–12.

An article written by a Bosnian Muslim scholar Derviš Korkut (1888–1969), published in *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* in 1934, gives us good insight into conservative understanding of the relationship between Islam and European modernity. In his article entitled *Naobrazba i moral* (Education and Morality), Korkut did not refer directly to the issue of women's education but discussed a reformist understanding of modern education as a necessary tool for community's progress. There are two main characteristics of Korkut's article. First, Korkut's article places greater importance on religious and moral values than on scientific and technical accomplishments. He utilized the theme of the rise and fall of civilizations to depict the conflict between science and morality. In line with both Muslim and modern European moralists, he argued that great civilizations declined due to the abandonment of moral standards, which occurred following the zenith of scientific and technological progress.⁵⁶⁰ Korkut acknowledged the significance of education in achieving progress and prosperity. However, he strongly believed that the preservation of traditional morality was the most sacred obligation of Muslims, as the survival of the Muslim community according to him depended on it.⁵⁶¹ Second, Korkut closely associated the traditional Muslim way of life with morality, and Europe with scientific and technical progress, as well as with the crisis of morality. Given his views, it is not surprising that Korkut regarded Muslim villages in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were isolated from modern trends, as bastions of authentic Muslim religiosity and identity.⁵⁶² It is clear that morality in his discourse was identified with traditional Muslim values and practices. On the other hand, he considered corruption, moral crisis, perversion, cult of stupidity, loneliness, and ignorance to be the main characteristics of European modernity.⁵⁶³ Thus, he approved the adoption of the scientific and technological achievements of the modern Europe but strongly rejected modern European values seeing them as a threat to authentic Islamic morality.⁵⁶⁴

Sofija Pletikosić's aforementioned work from 1911 features similar arguments. She argued that despite its scientific and technological advancements, modern European civilization is inferior to Islamic civilization in terms of moral and family values. She constructed Islam and modern Europe as opposed to each other, creating binaries between piety and scientific progress, spirituality and vanity as well as harmony and discord in the family.⁵⁶⁵ Pletikosić acknowledged the existence of moral decay and negative social phenomena, including prostitution, among Bosnian Muslims. However, she attributed these social ills primarily to the influence of modern education institutions and modern social theories on Bosnian society. She attributed the loss of faith, morality, and solidarity in the Muslim community

560 Derviš Korkut, "Naobrazba i moral," *Glasnik Vrhovnog starješinstva Islamske vjerske zajednice Kraljevine Jugoslavije* 2, no. 12 (1934): 629–633.

561 Korkut, "Naobrazba i moral," 629.

562 Korkut, "Naobrazba i moral," 633.

563 Korkut, "Naobrazba i moral," 628.

564 Korkut, "Naobrazba i moral," 628.

565 Safijja-hanum – Sofija Pletikosić, *Polemika o emancipaciji žene*, 35–37.

to the influence of Darwinism and Kant's philosophy among Muslim intellectuals.⁵⁶⁶ She established a sharp distinction between traditional Muslim women and modern educated Muslim men. While women in her works are equated with idealized Islamic tradition, modern educated men are equated with the modern, according to her immoral, West. She strongly criticized modern educated Muslims holding them to be responsible for vulgarity, obscenity, and pollution of their own religious and cultural tradition.⁵⁶⁷ She argued that the introduction of modern schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina led to the creation of materialistic and selfish Muslim men who were ashamed of their own tradition and indifferent to the welfare of their community. Pletikosić depicted modern educated Muslims as individuals who "Drink wine, eat pork, mocked the law, abandoned their faith, disregarded their customs and traditional clothing, and desecrated their sacred things."⁵⁶⁸ I argue that this contrast between modern educated Muslim men—generally associated with the perceived vices of the modern West—and traditional Muslim women, seen as embodiment of true morality, served a dual purpose. It was to demonstrate the superiority of the Islamic value system compared to the modern West, but also to establish an internal boundary between "true" Muslims and only nominal, Westernized Muslims within the Bosnian Muslim community.⁵⁶⁹

The didactic articles about Muslim women isolated from moral social trends, as well as stereotypical representations of modern educated men published in the conservative journal *Hikjmet* certainly had same functions. In *Hikjmet's* discourse traditional Muslim woman was an embodiment of true Islamic morality and traditional practices related to women; particularly practices of seclusion and the face veiling were perceived as being of crucial importance for the preservation of the authentic Islamic morality and identity. On the contrary, modern educated Muslim men were condemned for betraying their religion and culture, which illustrates that *Hikjmet* viewed modern, public education as closely related to the weakening of Islamic identity in general.⁵⁷⁰ To my understanding, their insistence on conserving traditional practices and customs related to women was connected with their efforts to maintain the clear distinction between Islam and Western civilization, which were understood to be mutually exclusive. Certainly, such views were not specific to the Bosnian conservative discourse. Chaterjee's analysis of Indian responses to Western colonialism and Gole's examination of the 19th century Ottoman Empire have demonstrated how the preservation of traditional practices and customs related to women

566 Safije-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja*, 17–19.

567 Safije-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja*, 24–25.

568 Safije-hanum [Sofija Pletikosić], *Pisma u obranu muslimanskog ženskinja*, 8.

569 For more about the use of Muslim women's issues for establishing a border to the internal-Other see Kandiyoti, "Introduction," 8.

570 Jahjazade, "Neozbiljna ambicija naše inteligencije," 250–253; Jahić, Husejn. "Pokriti ili otkriti." *Hikjmet* 3, no. 26 (1931): 51–53; Hussein Husin, "Zbog muževne mode," *Hikjmet* 3, no. 27 (1931): 85–87, Muslim, "Žrtva progressa," 232–237; Husejin A. Šehić, "Iza mušebaka i izvan mušebaka," *Hikjmet* 2, no. 15 (1930): 89–91; Husejin A. Šehić, "Jedna šetnja kroz vašar u noći," *Hikjmet* 5, no. 56 (1934): 247–250.

was essential for maintaining a clear distinction from the West.⁵⁷¹ Similarly, conservatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina viewed traditional institutions and practices as a distinctive part of their identity to be safeguarded from foreign influence. In conservative discourses, negative attitudes towards modern education for Muslim women were closely linked to fears that such education would threaten the practice of the face veiling, which was seen and presented as both a religious requirement that protected women's morals and a symbol of distinctive Muslim identity. This fear cannot be fully understood without considering the common premise of reformists that the veiling of Muslim women was one of the main obstacles to their education and the progress of Muslims—a theme that will be elaborated in the following chapter.⁵⁷² Advocates of unveiling among Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina argued that it was necessary for education, employment, and the advancement of the Muslim community. Given the close connection between Muslim morality and the veil Homa Hoodfar has shown that this close association between advocacy of public education for Muslim women and unveiling generally present in global Muslim reformist discourses was a “strategic mistake” that gave conservative groups a chance to justify their opposition to formal education for women by framing it as a moral and religious issue.⁵⁷³ In the next chapter we will see how Muslim conservatives harshly rejected reformists' advocacy of unveiling as anti-Islamic and as a threat to the morals of the Muslim community and its distinctive identity. While Muslim reformist strategically claimed that even traditional scholars had different opinions about the extent to which a Muslim woman should be covered in order to show that full veiling was not an Islamic requirement, but a custom that kept Muslim women in ignorance, Muslim conservatives claimed that all the great authorities of the past defined it as a religious requirement that protects women's morality and that they allowed Muslim women to unveil only in cases of necessity or need. Further, they sought to show that these accepted, trustworthy interpreters of Qur'ān nowhere defined education or women's employment as a need or necessity that may justify the act of uncovering.

The analysis of Bosnian conservative perspectives indicates that their critiques of modern education of Muslim women were not merely product of their ignorance, as suggested by their reformist opponents, but primarily reflected their deep existential concern for

571 Partha Chatterjee, “Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women: The Contest of India,” *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (1989): 622–633; Nilufer Gole, *The Forbidden Modern*, 30–31.

572 Đermana Šeta, *Zašto marama. Bosanskohercegovačke muslimanke o životu i radu pod maramom* (Sarajevo: CNS and CIPS, 2011): 8.

573 Homa Hoodfar, “The Veil in Their Minds and on Our Heads: Veiling Practices and Muslim Women,” in *Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader*, eds. Elizabeth A. Castelli and Rosamond Rodman (New York: Palgrave, 2001): 428.

preserving inherited institutions and practices understood to be of central importance for maintaining moral order and identity of Bosnian Muslims.⁵⁷⁴

5.3.2. The Issue of Muslim Women's Education in Revivalist Perspective

In the late 1930s, revivalist scholars associated with the magazine *El-Hidaje* began to explore the topic of women's education. Articles published in *El-Hidaje* present a unique perspective on the issue of Muslim women's education. The perspective articulated in *El-Hidaje* was critical of both: conservative elements within the 'ulamā' class, and reformists initiatives that were seen as contributing to the Westernization of the Muslim community.

Similar to the reformists, they recognized the importance of Muslim women in the advancement of the Muslim community and held religious authorities accountable for not providing adequate educational opportunities for Muslim women. But unlike the reformists, they were more critical of modern European ideas, especially those related to gender issues.⁵⁷⁵ *El-Hidaje's* articles on Muslim women education characterize generally a deep concern over moral and economic degradation of the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina and an attempt to show that Islam is the only true solution to the social issues facing the Muslim community.

• Moral and economic progress of Muslims

El-Hidaje's interest in women's education was part of a larger concern for the moral development of Muslim youth.⁵⁷⁶ The authors of this journal believed that the economic crisis and social issues faced by Muslims in modern times were primarily indicative of a moral crisis within the Muslim community. Consequently, while acknowledging the need to increase literacy and education levels among Muslims, they argued that public education alone was not sufficient to ensure the survival and progress of the Muslim community. They believed that only education based on Islamic principles could protect Muslim identity and morality, which they believed was under threat from modern Western ideologies.⁵⁷⁷ *El-Hidaje* contributors Tarik Muftić (1920–2013), Mustafa Brkić (dates unknown), and Mehmed Handžić (1906–1944) criticized equally those Muslims who blindly followed their parents' interpretation of Islam, considering them as fatalistic, as well as modern, secular

574 This type of moral anxiety and concern regarding changes in established gender roles was not exclusive to Bosnian conservative discourse of the early 20th century but has appeared across various historical and social contexts. Gender roles have long occupied a central place in the definition of moral order and collective identity—from colonial narratives and policies to contemporary debates on modernity, identity, and social change. For broader discussions of these dynamics see: Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Clarissa, Adamson, "Gendered Anxieties: Islam, Women's Rights, and Moral Hierarchy in Java," *Anthropological Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (2007): 5–37.

575 For more about their views on Bosnian 'ulamā' see: Muhamed Pandža, "O podizanju moralnog autoritete ilmije," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 3 (1940): 69–71; Dobrača, "Ulema: njena uloga, odgovornost i mogućnosti rada," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 9/11 (1941): 224–233.

576 Mustafa Bajrović, " 'Jedan slučaj za opomenu,' " *El-Hidaje* 2, no. 10 (1938): 152.

577 Mustafa Rešidov Mehić, "Loše strane poslijeratnog života bos.-herc. Muslimana," *El-Hidaje* 2, no. 8 (1938): 116–120; Ibrahim Trebinjac, "Nekoliko riječi o našoj omladini," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 6 (1941): 150–152.

educated Muslims for rejecting and betraying their religious heritage and community. Their texts suggest that that true Muslim for revivalists was educated, moral and self-conscious believer, proud of his own cultural and religious tradition.⁵⁷⁸

A major focus of *El-Hidaje's* authors was the moral and religious education of Muslim women. It resonated with their overarching belief that a Muslim woman's foremost duty is to educate and raise future generations of devout Muslims. Revivalist discourse regarded and depicted mothers as moral agents responsible for transmitting Islamic moral standards to their children, making them an important factor in the moral development of the Muslim community. As a result, their inadequate education in religious matters was condemned as a threat to the entire community.⁵⁷⁹

Revivalist discourse glorified motherhood as a sacred duty for women, while also condemning "modern Muslim women" who were often stereotyped as prioritizing fashion and personal comfort over their children's welfare. This behaviour was believed to be influenced by modern European trends.⁵⁸⁰ The condemnation of modern educated Muslim women as a women who neglected their "natural" roles of housewives and mothers primarily aimed to show negative effects of the adoption of Western lifestyles and ideologies among Muslims. European feminism and emancipation were seen not only as threat to Muslim women's morality but to the health and stability of the entire Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Modern European societies were depicted as grappling with various social problems, including a rise in divorce rates, abortions, infanticide, and the proliferation of prostitution, attributed to what was perceived as the European "unnatural" emancipation. This emancipation was described as a form of rebellion against traditional notions of marriage and motherhood.⁵⁸¹

In 1942, Mustafa Hadžimulić (dates unknown) wrote an article in *El-Hidaje* that illustrated how revivalists drew inspiration from a variety of sources. Hadžimulić used Qur'ānic and *ḥadīth* material, as well as works by Herbert Spencer and Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī, to argue that women's primary area of activity and influence is the home and family. He emphasized the importance of increasing the education level of Muslim women, as they play a crucial role as mothers in the primary education and socialization of their children, and in the development of stable and functional families and society. Although Hadžimulić did not specify the type of education Muslim women should receive, his general views on the role

578 Mladi musliman [Teufik Muftić], "Problem naše omladine," *El-Hidaje* 6, no. 1/2 (1942): 17–22; Brkić, "Uloga vođa i inteligencije," 342–346; Mehmed Handžić, "Obnavljanje islama. Komentar jednog hadisa," *El-Hidaje* 7, no. 11/12 (1944): 340–341.

579 Mustafa Hadžimulić, "Problem odgoja naše djece," *El-Hidaje* 6, no. 3 (1942): 59–60.

580 Muhamed Borić, "Majka," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 3 (1940): 81–83.

581 Mustafa Busuladžić, "Kult golotinje," *El-Hidaje* 7, no. 7/8 (1943): 222.

of women in the family and society suggest that he supported their education primarily in religious and so-called domestic sciences.⁵⁸²

While *El-Hidaje* primarily advocated education of Muslim women in religious and domestic sciences, harsh reality at the dawn of World War II certainly contributed to the fact that it also published articles advocating higher training of Muslim women in crafts, as a means of ensuring economic recovery and development of Muslims.⁵⁸³ In 1939 and 1940 *El-Hidaje* published two articles that openly criticized various Muslim groups because of the neglect of Muslim women's primary and vocational education. There are two common characteristics of these articles. First, both works characterizes utilitarian approach to female education. Authors of these works Alija Silajdžić (1909–1973) and Muhamed Borić (dates unknown) advocated better primary and vocational education for Muslim women, as a means of ensuring economic stability of Muslim families and the wider community in wartime conditions. In these articles, Muslim women vocational training was presented as a key tool that was to contribute to the economic revitalization of Muslim families and communities.⁵⁸⁴ Besides, educating Muslim women was also seen as a way to prevent further moral decay of Muslim women and families, often caused by poverty. Borić explicitly states that low education and illiteracy among Muslim women were major factors that allowed for the exploitation of Muslim women through prostitution and low-paid work in wealthy non-Muslim families.⁵⁸⁵

Unlike conservatives, revivalists generally saw prostitution not only as the result of penetration of Western values, but as closely related to Muslim poverty and misery.⁵⁸⁶ Both authors appealed to Muslims of all intellectual orientations to stop empty talks on Muslim women and to devote their time and energy to the issue of Muslim women education and employment.⁵⁸⁷ Borić argued that Muslims had a responsibility to establish institutions offering primary and vocational education for Muslim women in fields traditionally associated with women and home-based industries. This would enable women to contribute to the economic well-being of their families without compromising their morality.⁵⁸⁸ Borić's and Silajdžić's writings criticized not only modern educated Muslims, but also conservatives for neglecting actual social problems and female education. For them, the moral and economic crisis demanded from Muslims to organize distinct schools for Muslim women that would provide them with skills necessary for the economic recovery

582 Hadžimulić, "Problem odgoja naše djece," 56–60.

583 Alija Silajdžić, "Društveno pitanje muslimanke," *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 6/7 (1939): 75; Muharem Borić, "Za bolju budućnost naše muslimanke," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 6 (1941): 154–156.

584 Silajdžić, "Društveno pitanje muslimanke," 75; Borić, "Za bolju budućnost naše muslimanke," 154–156.

585 Borić, "Za bolju budućnost naše muslimanke," 154–156. A similar argumentation is present also in the following article: Muhamed Pandža, "U borbu protiv prostitucije," *El-Hidaje* 1, no. 4 (1937): 62–63.

586 "U borbu protiv prostitucije," *El-Hidaje* 1, no. 4 (1936): 62.

587 Silajdžić, "Društveno pitanje muslimanke," 75; Borić, "Za bolju budućnost naše muslimanke," 154–156.

588 Borić, "Za bolju budućnost naše muslimanke," 154–156.

of Muslims and moral and religious education necessary for the moral renewal of the community.

These articles are characterized by a clear revivalist tone, depicting women's education as an ideal that had already been fully realized in the early Muslim community. This is especially evident in Alija Siljadžić's text, which highlights the early Islamic community as the reference point towards which everything should be oriented. Conversely, the Bosnian Muslim attitude towards girls' education is depicted as a betrayal of Islamic principles and an embodiment of pre-Islamic Arab values and traditions.⁵⁸⁹

These articles that advocated organization of distinct modern educational institutions for Muslim women that were to be both modern and Islamic one show us that revivalist authors although aware of deep moral and economic problems were sceptical towards existing modern educational institutions and that they tried to offer Islamic solution for existing social problems.

• *The glorification of the early Muslim community*

The revivalist texts focused on the early Islamic period as the epitome of women's liberation. While this approach was similar to that of reformists, the revivalists' main objective was to demonstrate Islam's superiority over other religions and cultures. Mehmed Handžić's (1906–1944) discussion on the education of Muslim women is a particularly illustrative example in this regard. While Handžić saw as the ideal Muslim woman the one who focuses on her responsibilities as mother and housewife, he glorified educated women from the early Muslim community and their contributions to the field of science and culture. The references he made to prominent female figures from early Islamic history served to confirm the enlightening and human character of Islam, as well as the superiority of Islamic social teachings over those of other faiths and the modern Europe.⁵⁹⁰ In a time when women's emancipation became a measure of civilization, Handžić wrote about Islam as a religion of liberation that brought true emancipation for Muslim women. He argued that in the early period of Islamic history, women attained rights and freedoms that were not achieved by Western women until centuries later.

There are two fundamental characteristics of Handžić's discourse on women's education in the early Muslim community. First, he held that women in the early Muslim community were given education with an aim of enabling them to fulfil their "natural" roles of wives and mothers and to contribute to the development of Islamic culture and the spread of Islam. This suggests that he viewed women's work outside of the home as acceptable, as long as it was directed towards the advancement of Islam and the progress of Muslims.

589 Siljadžić, "Društveno pitanje muslimanke," 75.

590 Mehmed Handžić, "Položaj žene u Islamu," *El-Hidaje* 2, no. 2/3 (1938): 21.

Second, Handžić described prominent women from the early Muslim community as adherents of the veiling practice. Handžić's aim was to demonstrate that veiling had its roots in the early history of Islam, which was a response to reformist circles who believed that veiling was a result of the absorption of other cultures into Islam and who regarded veiling as one of the main obstacles to their modern Muslim women's education. In contrast, Handžić argued that veiling was a required Islamic behaviour and that it did not pose any obstacle to women's education.⁵⁹¹ Handžić's belief that veiling and seclusion, as well as traditional family structures where women are subordinate to men, were necessary to maintain chastity and prevent social chaos led him to emphasize the importance of educating Muslim women in religious and domestic sciences.⁵⁹²

Several of Handžić's texts about exemplary women from the first centuries of Islam highlight their virtues, morality and full commitment to family. They were depicted as gentle mothers, devoted wives who unconditionally served their husbands, enlightened pious women and as such true models for Muslim women.⁵⁹³ Handžić's texts about prominent Muslim women from the early Islamic centuries served the primary purpose of demonstrating that the early Islamic period, rather than the modern West, serves as a model of genuine and authentic emancipation for Muslim women.

• *Self-sufficiency and superiority of Islam*

The revivalists' critical attitudes towards modern Europe and its institutions, as well as their efforts to establish a unique Islamic education for Muslims were closely linked to their understanding of Islamic self-sufficiency. In their discourse Europe was primarily identified with technical achievements and moral decline, while Islam was described as superior as regards both, science and morality. Although both revivalist and reformist circles in Bosnia and Herzegovina shared an understanding of Islam as a religion of science, they significantly disagreed on the relationship between Islam and modern Europe. Revivalists' general understanding of Islam as essentially different from and superior to the Western culture was closely linked to the fact that they were much more than reformists "sweeping in their indictment and condemnation of the West and their assertion of the total self-sufficiency of Islam,"⁵⁹⁴ as Esposito points out in his discussion on Islamic revivalism.

591 Handžić, "Položaj žene u Islamu," 21.

592 Mehmed Handžić, "Vaz o ulozi muža i žene u braku i njihovim dužnostima," *El-Hidaje* 1, no. 9 (1937): 145–147; Handžić, "Položaj žene u Islamu," 18–19; Mehmed Handžić, "Ummul-Benin, jedan primjer odgojene žene iz prvih doba islama," *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 7/8 (1941): 192–194.

593 "Majka pravovjernih Hadidža kći Huvejlidova," *El-Hidaje* 1, no. 6 (1937): 99.

594 John L. Esposito, "Traiblazers of the Islamic Resurgence," in *The Contemporary Islamic Revival: A Critical Survey and Bibliography*, eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, John Obert Voll, John L. Esposito (Westport: Greenwood Press: 1991): 38–39.

Muslim revivalist in Bosnia and Herzegovina understood Islam not only as a religion, but as “the most perfect universal ideology.”⁵⁹⁵ Reform and renewal of Islam in their perspective meant primarily a deep purification of Islam from foreign accretions and a creation of a society based purely on the foundations of Islam and the example of the first centuries of Islam. Such a renewal of Islam was to protect Muslims from modern European values and ideologies that were perceived to be contrary to Islam.⁵⁹⁶ Their understanding of Islam and the relationship between Islam and the West played a crucial role in their pursuit of creating genuine Islamic cultural and educational institutions. These institutions were intended to equip Muslims with the skills and knowledge required for their economic and cultural survival, while also instilling them with authentic Islamic values. It is evident that the Bosnian revivalist authors of this period supported the adoption of modern European innovations only if they were integrated with what they deemed as perfect Islamic values. They not only acknowledged the scientific debt that Europe owes Islam, but also contended that the true unity between knowledge, i.e., science and morality, was embodied only in the first centuries of Islam. According to their perspective, the adoption of modern European sciences and achievements was not enough to ensure the progress of Muslims as modern sciences developed with little regard for the demands of morality. In order to establish the superiority of Islam in science and education, they argued that Islamic science developed in the first centuries of Islam never separated facts from moral values and always remained at the service of humanity. In contrast, modern European sciences were seen as primarily interested in financial gain. Thus, according to their perspective, it was not the modern West and its institutions, but the first centuries of Islam that provided the ideal upon which Muslims were to model not only their private lives, but also their social institutions.⁵⁹⁷ Eminent Bosnian scholar Kasim Dobrača (1910–1979) in an article published in *El-Hidaje* argued that scientific knowledge and technological achievements detached from moral values and spiritual needs of people despite their importance for material development cannot ensure true development and survival of people and nations. According to Dobrača the real progress of Muslims and all of humanity demanded moral rejuvenation. In his discourse Islam is presented as a comprehensive guide to a happy, balanced and prosperous life, since on the one hand it encourages critical observation, research and innovation, while on the other hand it gives moral principles necessary for a correct and useful application of scientific knowledge.⁵⁹⁸

We find similar ideas in the articles of one of the most prolific authors in the journal *El-Hidaje*, Mustafa Busuladžić (1914–1945), who placed a strong emphasis on the role of

595 Mladi musliman [Teufik Muftić], “Kompromisni islam i kompromisni muslimani,” *El-Hidaje* 6, no. 4 (1942): 93.

596 Mladi musliman [Teufik Muftić], “Kompromisni islam i kompromisni muslimani,” 94.

597 Kasim Hadžić, “Islam i kultura,” *El-Hidaje* 4, no. 9/11 (1941): 249–258. For more about the importance of science in Islam see: “Muhamed Alejhisselam o nauci i prosvjeti,” *El-Hidaje* 8, no. 2/3 (1944): 123–125.

598 Kasim Dobrača, “Vjersko i moralno učenje islama,” *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 1 (1939): 3–6; Seid Korkut, “Etika i moral,” pt. 1, *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 2 (1939): 24–29.

morality in civilizational progress. Busuladžić emphasized the strong correlation between civilizational and moral progress, as well as the link between civilizational decline and moral decay. He argued that the failure of past civilizations, despite their economic power, was due to their moral, social, and cultural degeneration.⁵⁹⁹ Busuladžić's references to past civilizations aimed to prove that the modern West, which was seen as morally decadent and superior in material civilization, could not provide a solution to the crisis in the Muslim world. Although he had a favourable attitude towards the adoption of modern Western scientific and technological achievements, Busuladžić argued that the true progress of Muslims depended mainly on the moral revival of the Muslim community.⁶⁰⁰

The Bosnian Muslim debates on women's education reveal that the matter was much more complicated than a simple conflict between supporters and opponents of Western ideas and concepts. The analysis of reformist advocacy for women's education within the modern institutions that emerged in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the late 19th century indicates that this was not simply a replication of Western trends. It was an attempt to find a solution to Muslims' economic, political, and social decline, drawing inspiration from their immediate surroundings, Europe in general, and their own religious tradition. Furthermore, these discussions reveal that the conservative negative attitude towards modern education was not simply a consequence of conservative scholars' ignorance or their inability to understand Muslim needs, as their reform-minded colleagues argued. In my view, their attitudes were closely related to their understanding of the potential of women's education to effect sociocultural change. Considering the socio-political context in which Bosnian Muslims faced numerous civilizational and assimilation efforts aimed at challenging the survival of a distinct Muslim identity, it is not surprising that some members of the community viewed any intrusions into their traditional way of life as a threat to their collective identity.

599 Busuladžić, "Predavanje održano prilikom el-Hidajinog mevluda," *El-Hidaje* 3, no. 12 (1940): 148.

600 Busuladžić, "Predavanje održano prilikom el-Hidajinog mevluda," 148.