Making Muslim Women European

Giomi, Fabio

Published by Central European University Press

Giomi, Fabio. 
Making Muslim Women European: Voluntary Associations, Gender, and Islam in Post-Ottoman Bosnia and Yugoslavia (1878-1941). 
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/89936.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/89936

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=3184944
In the early 1980s, when Senija Milišić outlined a research agenda for, as she put it, “the emancipation of Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” she recommended that future generations of historians begin their inquiries in 1878.1 Even if recent scholarship has shown that the Ottoman period was also a time of deep change in the lives of Bosnian women,2 her suggestion has not lost its relevance. As a matter of fact, the shift from Ottoman to Habsburg rule had major consequences for Bosnia, affecting every domain of political, economic and cultural life. Several generations of historians have drawn up detailed anatomies of the four decades of Habsburg rule in Bosnia. Nevertheless, there are few pages dedicated to the consequences of this transition for Muslim women, and on how they were able to navigate such a transition. The first of two dedicated to the Habsburg period, this chapter will focus on three points. First of all, it addresses Bosnia’s place in the Habsburg Empire, both within its administrative machinery and its imaginary. Secondly, the chapter will address the impact of Vienna’s educational policies on the Muslim female population and how, despite enormous difficulties, by the eve of the Great War they had managed to produce a thin cohort of Muslim women educated according to Habsburg standards. Finally, after the state school, the chapter will focus on another institution deeply associated with the Habsburg period, and which lies at

---

1 Senija Penava [Milišić], “Izvori i literatura,” 273–84.
2 See for instance Hana Younis, Daša Jelić: Pogled u život jedne žene u posljednjim decenijama osmanske uprave u Sarajevu (Belgrade: Everest Media, 2016) and other articles by the same author.
the heart of this book: the voluntary association. Special attention will be devoted to the (albeit limited) role of Muslim women within it.

**A Quasi-Colonial Adventure**

1878 is the year usually associated with the end of the Ottoman era in Bosnia, a region that since the end of the seventeenth century had marked the northern border of the Sultan’s domains in Europe. That year, the Great Powers found themselves up against one of the most complex chapters of the Eastern Crisis. Three years earlier, a revolt started by Christian peasants in Herzegovina had progressively extended to other areas of Rumelia, and been harshly repressed by Ottoman troops.\(^3\) Invoking its role as protector of the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire, in 1877 the Tsarist Empire declared war on Istanbul, and rapidly won. The Russo-Ottoman war led to the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano (March 3, 1878), in which Istanbul was forced to recognize the constitution of an autonomous Principality of Bulgaria extending from the Danube to the Aegean Sea. Two other political entities already substantially under the control of, and close to the Tsarist Empire, Serbia and Montenegro, were recognized as independent states. Alarmed by the rapid advances of Russian influence in the Balkan peninsula, Vienna and London called for an international congress in Berlin (June 13–July 13, 1878), which would radically redefine the relationship between the rival empires. The congress completely redrew the political map of Southeastern Europe; not only was the “Great Bulgaria” that had been established by the Treaty of San Stefano reduced by half, but the Habsburg Empire also received the right to occupy and administer the Ottoman province of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This occupation was not supposed to undermine Ottoman sovereignty, and was explicitly intended to be provisional, with the limited aim of restoring peace and order. For Vienna, the occupation of Bosnia was primarily a measure that aimed to curb the dynamism of the young Serbian state; defining itself as the “Piedmont of the Balkans,” Serbia was at that time actively nurturing plans to unify the South Slavs under a common state. Last but not least, the occupation of Bosnia was

---

\(^3\) For more information on the causes of the 1875 uprising, see Milorad Ekmečić, *Ustanak u Bosni 1875-1878* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1973).
seen in Vienna as a positive move, in the perspective of further penetration into Southeastern Europe—an option that was not to be excluded, given the state of crisis of the Ottoman Empire, presumed irreversible. With these aims in mind, in the summer of 1878 Habsburg troops entered the province, and within three months, after overcoming a few pockets of resistance, had occupied the territory.4

Though of strategic advantage, Bosnia—a somewhat triangular-shaped region covering 50,000 square kilometers—had rather poor spoils to offer. With the exception of the fertile northern plains along the Sava River and the far more arid expanses of Herzegovina, the province was essentially a mountainous forested region. Agriculture, in which the vast majority of the population worked, went little beyond subsistence farming. Except for timber and some mineral resources (the eastern region, particularly around Tuzla and Srebrenica, was rich in silver and salt deposits) Bosnia did not have much economic appeal.5 Additionally, from an ethno-demographic standpoint the province was a veritable headache. Having wavered for centuries between the spiritual authority of Rome and Constantinople, and ultimately conquered by the Ottomans in 1463, the people of Bosnia were distributed across four main religious groups. According to the region’s first population census, conducted by the freshly instated authorities after occupation, the vast majority of the population (approximately 43%, or 571,250 people) were Orthodox Christians, followed by Muslims (38%, or 448,613 people), then Catholics (19%, or 209,391 people) and finally other smaller groups, in particular Jews.6 Thus, no religious group made up an absolute majority within the province’s population. Additionally, on top of this religious patchwork each group was often further divided into socio-economic groups; as had already become evident during the 1875 uprising, the majority of landowning families were Muslim, while the peasants that worked their land were mostly Christians, particularly Orthodox. Any attempt to transform agrarian society therefore ran the risk of shifting the careful balance between the different ethnic groups.

6 Mustafa Imamović, Pravni položaj i unutrašnjo-politički razvitak Bosne i Hercegovine od 1878. do 1914 (Sarajevo: Magistrat, 2007), 123.
The history of the four decades of Habsburg rule over Bosnia (1878–1918) have been approached in very different ways throughout the twentieth century. Some Yugoslav historians considered the region to have been conquered essentially for imperial designs, an attempt to curb the “national awakening” of the Balkan peoples. Conversely, other historians saw the Habsburg period as a true golden age of unprecedented economic, social and cultural development. More recently, a growing number of scholars have asked whether Habsburg rule over Bosnia could be considered to have been a colonial endeavor. Over the past few decades more and more scholars have referred to the Empire’s administration over the region as “colonialism,” “Habsburg colonialism,” or “quasi-colonialism,” and compared it to more classic forms of colonialism, such as the territories under French control and the English in the Maghreb, the Middle East and India.

As a matter of fact, several factors make it possible to describe Habsburg rule over Bosnia as some form of colonial venture. The first is surely its problematic status within the Empire’s constitutional architecture. The 1878 occupation threatened to disrupt the fragile balance that had been achieved between the Habsburg crown and the Hungarian aristocracy in 1867, and which had restructured the Empire around two centers. By virtue of this compromise, the Empire had become “Austro-Hungarian,” composed of Cisleithania and the Kingdom of Hungary, both entities endowed with autonomous parliaments and governments but united under the Emperor and a Common Ministerial Council made up of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, War, and Finances. Each part of the Empire fearing that the other half might stand to gain from the annexation of Bosnia, the two parliaments agreed to assign an entirely new status to the province; Bosnia would be neither an

Austrian nor a Hungarian territory, but instead would become an “imperial land” (*Reichsland*). As a result of taking on this unprecedented status, Bosnia became the only territory of the Habsburg Empire that did not have its own representatives in either of the Empire’s two parliaments, and was therefore the only one to be excluded from the Dual Monarchy’s decision-making—a specificity that, as a matter of fact, recall other more traditional colonial situations. This exceptional constitutional status was maintained throughout the period in which the province was “temporarily occupied,” between 1878 and 1908, as well as after 1908, when Vienna took advantage of the Young Turk revolution to definitively annex Bosnia.9

Another factor that has led some historians to speak of a colonized Bosnia has to do with the Habsburgs’ exceptional approach to governing this region. To avoid conflict between the two halves of the Empire, the region’s administration fell directly upon the Common Ministerial Council, though in practice only the Ministry of Finance was involved. The Provincial Government (*Landesregierung* in German, or *Zemaljska vlada* in Serbo-Croatian) was established in 1878, with its headquarters in Sarajevo, directly under the authority of the Ministry of Finance. Between 1882 and 1912 a high-ranking military officer (*Landesschef*) was placed at the head of the Provincial Government, alongside a civil servant (*Adlatus*). Just as in traditional colonial situations, Bosnia was thus governed by a hierarchy of officials, where the military maintained a predominant role.10

Administering Bosnia turned out to be a delicate task. In 1881, applying military conscription to all Bosnians—a measure that violated the terms agreed upon in Berlin—was enough to trigger an armed uprising in Hercegovina involving both Orthodox and Muslim peasants. The revolt, which took Habsburg troops a month to put down, made it clear to Benjamin Kállay (1839–1903), the new Habsburg Minister of Finance and *de facto* governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina, that the newly-annexed region would need to be handled with care. As a great deal of historical research has already amply made clear, the prevailing idea that lay behind Kállay’s twenty-year rule (1882–1903) was that Bosnia had an eminent vocation for governance

---

along religious lines. According to this view, and in substantial continuity with the Ottoman era, Bosnian society ought to be composed of four main religious communities: Orthodox, Catholic, Muslim and Jewish. The different communities thus delimited were not in any way considered to be nations or proto-nations, but rather flocks to be administered through two complementary institutions: the aforementioned Provincial Government, and religious institutions. Having strengthened the structure of the former, throughout his term Kállay strove to create Orthodox, Muslim, Catholic and Jewish religious hierarchies loyal to, and closely controlled by, the Empire.\footnote{Tomislav Kraljačić, \textit{Kalajev režim u Bosni i Hercegovini: 1882–1903} (Šarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1987), 45–87.}

In the Habsburg strategy of Bosnian rule, the different religious segments of the population played very specific roles. The only group to be generally satisfied with the outcome of the 1878 occupation, the Catholics, were considered to be the group most loyal to the Habsburgs, but too socially marginal and too few in number to provide a solid basis for the imperial strategy. Additionally, a number of the Catholic educated elite were becoming more and more attracted to the sirens of Croatian nationalism, whose proponents at that time harbored the dream of reorganizing the Empire on a trialist basis, i.e. to add a Slavic entity to the existing German and Hungarian halves. On the other hand, the Orthodox relative majority, the most dynamic group from an economic and cultural standpoint, had taken up arms against the 1878 occupation, and continued to look upon the Habsburg presence with a growing hostility. Members of the Bosnian Orthodox elite, religious and secular alike, openly considered their fate to be tied to the neighboring Serbian nation-state, rather than to the multinational Habsburg Empire. In this context of burgeoning nationalisms, the Habsburg authorities turned their interest to the Muslim population in particular. The Muslims, who represented more than a third of the entire population, included a very powerful socio-economic elite composed of small and large landowning families. Earning the support of the large landowning Muslim class (begovat) meant tapping into patronage networks that extended across the entire province. The fact that Muslims were particularly strong in urban centers—Mostar, Travnik, and espe-
cially in Sarajevo, the new “administrative capital” of Bosnia—facilitated formal and informal contacts between the Muslim elite and the administrators. Finally, in a context in which Orthodox and Catholic populations were increasingly identifying themselves in terms of their national identity, as *Srbi* (Serbs) and *Hrvati* (Croats) respectively, the Muslims seemed to be indifferent to this form of self-identification, for the most part preferring to identify themselves as *Muslimani*, “Muslims.” For these reasons, the Habsburg authorities had no reservations about picking out the Muslims as the best group through which they might foster an a-national, pro-imperial patriotism, that could spread from there to the entire Bosnian population.

However, earning the Muslim elite’s trust was not an easy task. Long-standing hostility toward the Habsburg Empire, nourished by at least four centuries of regular military confrontations, had been rekindled by the events of 1878, when Muslim insurgents had been opposed to, and found themselves suddenly repressed by, Habsburg troops. Under the impression that they were a *de facto* minority under the rule of a Christian emperor, part of the Bosnian Muslim population decided to flee Bosnia and to settle in regions still under the Sultan’s effective control, e.g. Rumelia or Anatolia. The stream of *muhadžir*—“religious refugees,” the term usually given to the Muslims who left regions no longer under Muslim sovereignty—was also soon endorsed by the Šejh-ul-Islam, the highest ranking member in the Ottoman Muslim religious hierarchy. According to several estimates, between 1878 and 1918 some 60,000 people left the province. This exodus was particularly alarming for the Habsburg authorities; should the Muslim population be whittled away, the Orthodox population could be lent an absolute majority, thus reinforcing Belgrade’s claims over Bosnia. In order to reassure the Muslim population, Vienna hurried to provide full citizenship rights and religious freedom for the entire Bosnian population. At the Congress of Berlin, Vienna not only guaranteed to fully safeguard Muslim lives

---

14 The figure is difficult to determine with certainty, given the mobility of some populations between Bosnia and the rest of the Ottoman Empire, which continued even after 1878. For an overview of the phenomenon of Muslim emigration from Bosnia between 1878 and 1918, see Imamović, *Pravni položaj*, 139; On the emigration of Muslims from the Balkans in the 19th and 20th centuries in general, see Alexandre Toumarkine, *Les migrations des populations musulmanes balkaniques en Anatolie (1878–1913)* (Istanbul: Isis, 1995).
and properties, but also promised to protect the fundamental institutions regulating Muslims’ everyday lives, e.g. primary and secondary community schools (mekteb and medresa), pious foundations (vakuf) and the courts of Islamic law which had jurisdiction over personal status, family and inheritance rights (šerijatski sudovi).\textsuperscript{15}

In order to overcome the reticence of the Muslim notables, the Habsburg authorities resorted to a variety of different strategies. A preliminary measure involved postponing \textit{sine die} a radical land reform demanded by the Christian peasants, which would have rapidly brought about the ruin of Muslim landowners.\textsuperscript{16} A second tactic was to co-opt the local ruling class, and in particular the members of the landowning families, into state employment. As early as 1880, the Minister of Finance started to appoint “personalities able to exert influence over their flock because of their integrity, education, impeccable conduct, and social status”\textsuperscript{17} as civil and religious officials, in exchange for public demonstrations of loyalty. In reaction to the nomination of a kadija (judge of Islamic law) for Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Šejh-ul-islam, the Habsburg authorities also established a hierarchy of Muslim religious officials which were \textit{de facto} autonomous in respect to Istanbul. Drawing inspiration from Christian institutions, such as the Catholic chapter or the Orthodox consistory, in 1882 Vienna appointed a Reis-ul-ulema, a “Chief of the scholars,” as part of a four-member Ulema-medžlis, or “Assembly of the Scholars,” in charge of religious affairs for Bosnian Muslims. After 1883, the administration of the pious foundations was entrusted to a special Commission, composed of Habsburg non-Muslim officials. Though it had appointed Bosnian Muslim notables to these posts the Empire ultimately did not aim to involve the local population in decision-making.\textsuperscript{18}

Habsburg efforts to garner support from the local elite encountered some success. Several members of the large landowning families rapidly accepted the lure of administrative positions. Among them, Mustaj \textit{beg} Fadilpašić

\begin{flushright}
17 Cited in Donia, “Proximate Colony,” 3.
\end{flushright}
(1830–1892) and Esad Kulović (1859–1917), publicly lent their support to the Habsburg Empire and were successively rewarded with the post of mayor of Sarajevo over the next few years. Muslim notables were co-opted into administrative posts on a tremendous scale; in 1895, out of a total of 91 municipalities there were 77 mayors, 11 deputy mayors, and over 300 city councilmen of Muslim faith, all appointed by the government in exchange for their public loyalty.¹⁹ This co-opting tactic even gained ground among the *ulema*, the Islamic learned men. Sarajevo’s *muftija* (jurist qualified to give authoritative legal opinions) Mustafa Hilmi Hadžiomerović (1816–1895), after having issued a *fetva* (legal opinion) to legitimize military service in the Habsburg army for Muslim men, was appointed *Reis-ul-ulema* in 1882; Tuzla’s *muftija* Mehmed Teufik Azabagić (1838–1893) would later be awarded the same post for having condemned the emigration of *muhadžirs* from an Islamic perspective, and so on.²⁰ Mehmed beg Kapetanović Ljubušak (1839–1902), a member of one of the most important landowning families of Herzegovina, became the most prolific journalist and writer of his generation, contributing to the establishment of a post-Ottoman Muslim public sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1887 and 1896 respectively, Kapetanović published two collections of folk proverbs, “The People’s Wealth” (*Narodno blago*) and “Eastern Wealth” (*Istočno blago*), which were highly popular for decades after their publication. The books, the first to be published by a Bosnian Muslim in the Serbo-Croatian language using Latin script, aimed to popularize the alphabet of the Empire among Muslims.²¹ In 1891, Kapetanović founded the influential political journal *Bošnjak* (Bosniak), which brought together several of his contemporaries, Muslim pro-Habsburg intellectuals. According to the Habsburg agenda, the journal’s main objective was the spread of a Bosnian, pro-imperial and areligious patriotism, in opposition to the growing Croatian and Serbian nationalisms.²²

However, the co-opting policy did not prevent the growth of a faction of the Muslim educated elite openly critical of the Empire. As early as 1885, Muslim landowners from Travnik and Posavina (Northern Bosnia)
brought forward their first complaints to the Habsburg government, asking for the enforcement of their property rights over their land, and for the autonomous administration of Muslim communal schools and pious foundations. In 1899, Muslim criticism of the Habsburg administration took a new turn. That year, a certain Fata Omanović, a sixteen-year-old girl from Mostar, was either abducted or went secretly on her own initiative to Dalmatia, allegedly to escape an arranged marriage. Once outside Bosnia, the young girl was taken to a monastery and baptized. The incident provoked a wave of intense outrage among the Bosnian Muslim elite. They saw in this act an attack against the entire Muslim population, and proof that Muslim survival in a Christian-led empire was always at risk, despite reassurances from the Habsburg administration. In the wake of this event, the majority of the province’s Muslim elite organized into a veritable opposition movement against the Habsburg administration. In 1901, this movement made a strategic alliance with another movement, that of the Serbian-Orthodox elite, in order to make their opposition to the Habsburg authorities more effective. In the face of the constitution of such a hostile Muslim-Serbian coalition, Vienna lost no time; it rapidly adopted strict repressive measures against the movement in Mostar, and meted out a few punishments as an example to the others, culminating with the forced exile of muftija Ali Fehmi Džabić (1853–1918), the leader of the movement.23 Muslim movements for autonomy had clearly pointed out the extent to which Kállay’s vision of a docile, apolitical Bosnian society was far from a reality.

A Habsburg Civilizing Mission

Around the same years in which the Fata Omanović affair drew visibility to the Muslim traditional elite’s sensitivity about the fate, and choices, of Muslim women, the European public began to show a growing interest for Bosnia. Since the mid-1870s, when the Eastern Crisis had hit the front pages of newspapers, the Balkans had been becoming increasingly familiar to larger proportions of the European public. In a few years, thanks to an impressive number of travelogues, articles and novels, what had until then been an ob-

---

23 Nusret Šehić, Borba za vjersku i vakufsko-mearifsku autonomiju i počeci stvaranja prvi političkih organizacija Muslimana u vrijeme austrougarske uprave u Bosni i Hercegovini: naučnoistraživački projekt (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 1978).
scure corner of “Turkey in Europe” became relatively familiar to the attentive European reader. Not surprisingly, most of the ink that was spilt dealt with the subjects living in the core provinces of the Dual Monarchy, who since 1878 had been witnessing the efforts of ‘their’ Empire to rule the province. Of course, the multitude of texts on Bosnia produced and circulated in the Habsburg Empire cannot be reduced to a single narrative; nevertheless, as has been shown by Clemens Ruthner and Stijn Vervaet, apart from differences in political orientations, these texts shared some general ideas. First of all, given the importance of Islam in the country’s urban and social landscape, Habsburg subjects tended to consider this space as more “Eastern” than other parts of Eastern Europe. The visibility of minarets, mosques and people in radically different clothing pushed Habsburg authors to consider Bosnia to be as “Oriental” as other parts of the Muslim world in Asia and Africa. Secondly, that Vienna, as the other European colonial powers were doing overseas, had been vested with the historical mission of bringing “culture” to the Bosnian people. Lastly, that under the tutelage of the Habsburg Empire, Bosnia could leave behind, once and for all, four centuries under the Ottoman yoke, and return again to the path to progress alongside the rest of Europe. Habsburg subjects, who frequently (and proudly!) referred to the newly-conquered province as their own colony, seemed to consider the region’s shift from Ottoman to Habsburg sovereignty, not only as a political, but also as a civilizational change. For instance, while commenting on the 1908 annexation, Croatian political leader Stijepan Radić stated that “Europe had the right and duty to put Bosnia and Herzegovina in order, so as to secure the life and properties of all citizens.”

In the Dual Monarchy, the well-established trope of the civilizing mission was invariably mobilized when commenting on Bosnian rule, an argument that was widely used at that time as a source of legitimation for European imperialism all over the world. References to the “Habsburg man’s

26 Citation from Radić’s Živo hrvatsko pravo na Bosnu i Hercegovinu (1908), quoted in Hrvoje Matković, Povijest Hrvatske seljačke stranke (Zagreb: Naklada P.I.P. Pavičić, 1999), 115, emphasis mine.
burden” in regard to Bosnia can be found primarily in the memorandums and public declarations of the highest-ranking Imperial officials, such as Minister Kállay. In a well-known interview with the British *Daily Chronicle* in 1895, Kállay described the adventure of occupying Bosnia, which he had embarked upon seventeen years ago:

> Austria is a great Occidental Empire... charged with the mission of carrying civilization to Oriental peoples. Administration is our only politics:... to make the people contented, to ensure justice, to develop agriculture, to render communication easy and cheap, to spread education... that is my administrative ideal—that is my politics.  

In an era when the idea of the nation seemed to be triumphing over the imperial idea—Piedmont had unified the majority of the Italian peninsula by 1861, and Prussia did the same ten years later with the German states—the occupation of Bosnia became a precious opportunity for the Dual Monarchy. A rapid and successful modernization of this “neighboring Orient” would prove that Vienna still had its word to say in history, and that the creation of nation-states was not the only way to deal with the Ottoman retreat from Southeastern Europe. In other words, the Bosnian example had to show that an empire, composed of a family of peoples united under the scepter of a benevolent sovereign, could still foster progress and culture.  

At the turn of the century, the Empire attempted to turn Bosnia into an example through which it could showcase its credibility and effectiveness, before both a domestic and international audience. Events like the Budapest Millennium Exhibition in 1896, and especially the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1900, were an opportunity to broadcast globally the success of the Habsburg civilizing mission in Bosnia. For the latter exhibition, the Empire arranged for the construction of a separate pavilion for Bosnia and Herzegovina along the banks of the Seine, between the Austrian and Hungarian pavilions. Visitors entering the site—a bazar-like structure integrating several elements of Ottoman architecture—could contemplate a massive frieze painted by the world-famous Art Nouveau painter Alphonse Mucha, with at

27 The article, which dates back to October 3, 1895, is quoted by Donia, *Islam under the Double Eagle*, 14.
its center an allegory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As eloquently highlighted by Edin Hajdarpasić, “Mucha’s centerpiece was a grand Art Nouveau rendering of the Habsburg imperial fairy tale, depicting a Bosnian Sleeping Beauty roused from centuries of sleep by wise imperial governance”\(^{29}\) (see figure 4).

Imperial administrators were of course not alone in advancing this kind of civilizational rhetoric. Journalists, travelers, ethnographers and politicians who visited the newly-annexed province (sometimes bringing a camera with them) also enthusiastically joined in, in praise of the occupation of Bosnia. As highlighted by Clemens Ruthner, Bosnia was clearly perceived as “a periphery in need of a new center, as the old center [Istanbul] had proven incapable of living up to its ‘obligations.’”\(^{30}\) The pamphlet “Bosnia, Its Present and Near Future,” published in Leipzig in 1886—and which, as we shall see, greatly angered Bosnian Muslim notables—is a good example of this narrative. The author, who remained anonymous, appeared to characterize the occupation of Bosnia as a radically new phenomenon, entirely different from the numerous territorial conquests made throughout the long history of the Habsburg Empire. The Bosnian occupation was of interest for very specific reasons:


For the first time, we can examine an example of a “European power” taking on the reorganization [Reorganisierung] of an “Asian” country, of how it worked over 1.3 million coarse minds that had “never been graced with culture,” [Kultur] all to create a European political entity, to form a civilized people [Kulturvolk].

The role of reorganizing, improving and civilizing the life of the province was clearly assigned to the imperial authorities; only the enlightened Habsburg administration was considered to be capable of guaranteeing the province “a lasting future firmly rooted in the European spirit [Im europaïschem Geiste], without return or regression.”

The Habsburg civilizing discourse rapidly found new and different forms in which it could be framed and circulated. In 1893, the Opera of Vienna presented a ballet entitled “A Wedding in Bosnia.” The ballet was about a group of Viennese tourists traveling in Bosnia, and their fortuitous arrival in a village where peasants were celebrating a wedding. A key moment in the show—which, according to the press of that time, the Court and the Emperor himself found highly amusing—was a scene in which a Viennese woman successfully taught Bosnian peasants how to dance the waltz. In 1896, the German writer Heinrich Renner, drawing on rhetoric consolidated within the societies of the European colonial powers, did not hesitate to describe Bosnia and Herzegovina as a slumbering Oriental princess, waiting to be roused by a kiss from her prince—the Habsburg Empire.

We have established that, according to recent scholarship, Bosnia was generally considered by Habsburg subjects to belong to the Orient. But at the end of the day, what kind of Orient did they expect to find in this land? Some authors, at times, tended to lump Bosnia with regions like Anatolia and the Middle East. This attitude was not of course totally incomprehensible: once the Habsburg visitor crossed the border and entered in Bosnia, he or she was immediately confronted with an abundance of architectural markers usually associated with the Oriental city, such as minarets, bazaars and hammams. In other words, Habsburg travelers were immersed in a

---

32 Anonymous, Bosniens Gegenwart, 4.
34 Ruthner, “Besetzungen,” 221–42.
landscape radically different from the one they had left in the core provinces of the Empire. Passing through the countryside and towns, this same visitor also had the opportunity to witness a kaleidoscope of people dressed in different and (at least to their eyes) exotic ways. Given these circumstances, it is not astonishing that writers and artists, in describing their Bosnian experience, mobilized the same tropes that Westerners developed to narrate the (mostly colonized at that time) Muslim world—i.e., an Orientalist discourse, to put it in Edward Said’s terms.

However, Bosnia was not an Orient like the others. Its location on the European continent, the fact that it lay just beyond the Habsburg border, and not in some removed territory overseas, meant that the Habsburgs’ perception of this region was slightly different. The fact that the overwhelming majority of the local population was light-skinned and spoke a Slavic language, more precisely the same Slavic language to that spoken by Habsburg citizens on the other side of the border, made it difficult for Habsburg subjects to attribute the same degree of “otherness” to Bosnia as, for example, France could for the Maghreb, or England could for India. Thanks to its liminality, Bosnia occupies thus in the Habsburg (and more general, Western) imagination an inherently “ambiguous location,”35 to use an expression that Larry Wolff used to describe the Western perception of Eastern Europe. Not an entirely foreign element, and yet radically different from any other region of the Habsburg Empire, Bosnia shifts in and out of Europe, and in and out of the Orient, becoming an Other within Europe, as Maria Todorova wrote of the Balkans.36

Forging Habsburg Muslim Girls

During the same years in which Habsburg subjects were fostering fantasies of their own proximate Orient and their alleged right to civilize it, a segment of the Bosnian population was gradually beginning to witness the effects


of the Habsburg policies, especially in the domain of education. Immediately after its establishment, the Provincial Government began to set up new Habsburg schools with the goal of preparing a reserve of local educated candidates that could then be employed as civil and religious officials and teachers. As noted by Robin Okey, the Habsburg administration vested the schools with an almost “talismanic power”; in just a few generations, it was believed, the new schools would be capable of fostering economic growth, defusing tensions between the various classes and religious groups, while appeasing growing nationalist sentiment with imperial patriotism. The administrators, particularly Kállay, believed that the state school institution would quickly replace the various Christian Orthodox, Catholic, Muslim, and Jewish community schools in existence in Bosnia since Ottoman times. To discourage the development of distinct religious and national identities among the pupils, Orthodox, Muslim, Catholic, and Jewish students, as well as the children of imperial officials serving in the province, were meant to attend classes together.

The school system that the Habsburg authorities set about creating provided for the education of both boys and girls, consistent with the schooling in other Habsburg provinces in the second half of the nineteenth century. Education for the two sexes consisted of two separate, asymmetrical courses of study. After five years in a state elementary school—and when their families’ economic situation allowed it—boys could choose from a wide range of technical and commercial schools. These schools aimed to prepare students for careers as lower-level administrators or artisans, or for continuing on to secondary school, in particular to the gymnasiums (gimnazija). Founded in the province’s main cities—Sarajevo in 1879, Mostar in 1893, Banja Luka in 1899, and so forth, for a total of eleven establishments before the First World War—these schools opened the door to the Habsburg and European universities for Bosnian students. The course of study open to girls, however,

---

37 This paragraph is mostly based on my reflections developed in a previous article of mine, Fabio Gio-mi, “Forging Habsburg Muslim girls: gender, education and empire in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878–1918),” History of Education 44, no. 3 (2015): 274–92.
38 Okey, Taming Balkan Nationalism, 60–1.
39 Mitar Papić, Školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme Austrougarske okupacije 1878–1918 (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1972), 27.
40 Papić, Školstvo u Bosni, 116.
was radically different; after five years of elementary school, female students could continue their education by attending a five-year secondary school for girls (viša djevojačka škola).\textsuperscript{41} In 1911, the educational possibilities for schoolgirls were further expanded by the establishment of five-year female teacher-training schools (ženska preparandija).\textsuperscript{42} The project of civilizing Bosnia through schooling was thus eminently gendered. The photo series taken by Croatian photographer Franjo Topić, taken at the turn of the century, portraying a series of Bosnian women, shows better than many words the ambition of this pedagogical project: to transform Bosnian Ottoman women into Habsburg middle-class girls (See figures 5, 6, 7 and 8).

\textsuperscript{41} Girls were only permitted to enroll in secondary education like gymnasiaums in special cases, and only for independent study (vanredne učenice); they were admitted to the final exams but could not physically attend lessons. However, this concerned no more than a dozen female students throughout the forty years of Austro-Hungarian rule. Đorđe Pejanović, Srednje i stručne škole u Bosni i Hercegovini od početka do 1941 godine (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1953), 221.

\textsuperscript{42} Alongside these schools, a few private institutions had already previously been founded in the province, established by Catholics and Protestants. On this subject see Papić, Školstvo u Bosni (1878–1918), 117. On Habsburg education in the second half of the nineteenth century, see Gary B. Cohen, Education and Middle-Class Society in Imperial Austria, 1848–1918 (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1996).
Nevertheless, in its civilizing mission, the Habsburg Empire was forced to confront a very different reality. Firstly, tax revenues from the province were far lower than expected, meaning that the Provincial Government was only able to introduce the new school system very gradually. Thus, the new system would only go so far as to coexist alongside the existing community schools, without ever managing to fully replace them. Secondly, the Bosnian people proved to be far more reticent than anticipated, with regard to the new state school system, and therefore to the administration’s plans. The Muslims were the most hostile, remaining mistrustful of the Habsburg schools even after decades of occupation. According to the many reports sent by teachers to the Provincial Government, the reason for such hostility lay in the interfaith character of the state schools. Still traumatized by the loss of their status as first-class citizens in 1878, Muslims generally saw these state-led interreligious schools as places whose hidden agenda was to convert Muslim children to Christianity.

The opposition that Muslim families put up against sending their children to state schools was markedly gendered. Though the idea of submitting boys to a state education was met with distrust by Muslim families, by
Figure 7: Interior of the girls’ school in Sarajevo, with students dressed in traditional clothes, 1906.
Source: ZM, Franjo Topić’s photography collection, 202.

Figure 8: Sarajevo Girls’ School, turn of the century.
Source: ZM, Franjo Topić’s photography collection, 2603.
the end of the century several thousands were already sitting at state school desks. The same, however, cannot be said for Muslim girls. Despite resorting to schemes, persuasion and pressure to convince prominent Muslims to send their children to school, the Habsburg administration did not succeed in attracting Muslim girls to state schools. In 1900 the results were disappointing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>4,874</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>7,488</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>8,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>6,551</td>
<td>1,759</td>
<td>8,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19,503</td>
<td>3,182</td>
<td>22,685</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Number of male and female pupils in state schools (school year 1899/1900).
Source: Vojislav Bogićević, Pismenost u Bosni i Hercegovini (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša 1975), 284.

The Provincial Government set about fostering the education of Muslim girls in two ways. First of all, using its control over the Vakuf Commission, the institution in charge of the administration of pious endowments, it strove to reform the Muslim community schools as much as possible. In 1892, male and female reformed primary schools (mekteb-i-ibtidai), were established. Though the administration’s attempts to introduce non-religious subjects met with resistance from the ulema, they did manage to introduce Bosnian lessons (in the documents of the time, referred to as the zemaljski jezik, “regional language”), both in the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets, and Arabic lessons according to the “new methodology,” (usuli-džedid) which departed from the purely mnemonic method previously used. Unlike the traditional mekteb, which however remained the most common Muslim community schools in the region, the reformed ones required teachers to have completed their training in the Muslim Teachers’ School of Sarajevo (dar-al-muallimin). In the forty years of Habsburg rule over the province, several thousand Muslim girls were able to attend these female reformed
schools and gain familiarity with the Serbo-Croatian writing system, among other subjects.\textsuperscript{43}

However, the Provincial Government did not stop there. In the early 1890s, two distinct mektebs for girls were founded in Muslim residential districts in Sarajevo: one in Džinić Alley in 1891, and another on Bakarević Street in 1894. A noteworthy contribution to the establishment of these schools came from hadži Hasan efendi Spaho (1841–1915), a teacher and judge who had been trained in Istanbul in the 1860s, a period in which Ottoman reformism (Tanzimat) was at its apex. After completing his studies, Spaho held several posts in the Ottoman administration, including as a judge in Sofia, Damascus and Cairo, and as teacher in ruždijas (reformed Ottoman elementary school) in Jajce and in the Belgrade region. After 1878, Spaho managed to reinvest his Ottoman cultural capital in the new political setting: recruited into public education by the Provincial Government, he initially worked as a middle-school teacher of Arabic in Sarajevo, subsequently becoming director of the School for Sharia Judges (Šerijatska sudačka škola) from 1905 to 1912. According to Spaho, who led the joint administration of the institutes between 1892 and 1894, the reformed mektebs for girls had “two hearts: Islamic sciences and handiwork”\textsuperscript{44} (see table 2). It is difficult to say whether Spaho had a specific model in mind for the organization of these two schools. Given his training in, and knowledge of, the Ottoman educational system, it seems reasonable to assume that he was inspired by the steps that the Ottoman government had been taking since the 1860s, when it founded the first weaving school open to girls in Usčuk in 1865.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{43} Vojislav Bogićević, \textit{Istorija razvitka osnovnih škola u Bosni i Hercegovini u doba turske i austrougarske uprave: 1463–1918} (Sarajevo: Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika BiH, 1965), 227–229. In 1876, in the vilayet of Bosnia, there were nearly a thousand mektebs, where 28,445 boys and 12,334 girls attended school. In 1879, in the entire province there were approximately 500 mekteb, providing schooling for 16,000 boys and just under 8,000 girls in separate buildings. If the number of these establishments grew, exceeding a total of 1,000 structures by 1911, they maintained a fairly rudimentary organizational structure, nearly always with a single teacher per school, with an average of forty to fifty children of assorted ages assigned to each teacher. On this topic, see: Hajrudin Ćurić, \textit{Muslimansko školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini do 1918. godine} (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1983), 205–6.


\textsuperscript{45} Husnija Kamberović, \textit{Mehmed Spaho: 1883–1939: politička biografija} (Sarajevo: Vijeće Kongresa bosničkih intelektualaca, 2009), 13. On female education in the late Ottoman Empire, see Yücel Gelişli, “Education of Women from the Ottoman Empire to Modern Turkey,” \textit{SEER - South-East Europe Review for La-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Hours per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local language</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Muzaćera</em> (Co-Repetition)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Akajd</em> (Doctrine)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ahlak</em> (Morals)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tedžvid</em> (Recitation of the Qur’an)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tedbiri menzil</em> (Home Economics)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaving</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Embroidery</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Embroidery</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Embroidery</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patternmaking</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: The Džinić Alley *mekteb* curriculum


Interest for the two schools rapidly grew; by 1900, each *mekteb* had enrolled just under three hundred female students. Encouraged by this success, several years later the Provincial Government decided to go a step further and found an elementary school *exclusively* for Muslim girls in Sarajevo, thus making an exception to the principle that the schools should be open to all religions. It was Olga Hörmann, the wife of the director of the Provincial Museum of Sarajevo Kosta Hörmann (1850–1921), who was assigned the task of exploring this avenue, at her own discretion. As a respected woman,

*bour and Social Affairs* 7, no. 4 (2004): 121–35. For information on the transformation of the Ottoman Empire’s educational system during the second half of the nineteenth century, see Selçuk Aşşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839–1908: Islamization, Autocracy, and Discipline* (Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill, 2001) and Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

A total of 149 female pupils attended the *mekteb* in Džinić Alley (66 in first grade, 36 in second grade, 27 in third grade and 20 in fourth grade), while at the Bakarević street school there were 143 girls (64 in first grade, 24 in second grade, 29 in third grade, 26 in fourth grade). “Ženske ruždije,” *Bošnjak*, July 19 (1900): 3.
Hörmann was indeed in a position to reach out to Muslim families, in particular to its female members, and to make a case to them in favor of female education. In 1894, the Provincial Government was able to set up the first course devoted to Muslim girls that subsequently became a four-year elementary school for Muslim girls in Sarajevo in 1897. In 1901, when the first generation of female students was completing elementary school, the authorities created a three-year (and four-year after 1913) advanced course for girls who wanted to continue their education at a secondary level. Because no Muslim girls had enrolled in the interreligious teacher-training schools, the school opened a separate three-year course to train Muslim female teachers in 1913. Following its inception, approximately 30 to 40 girls every year entered the Sarajevo’s Muslim Girls’ School. Despite the significant dropout rate, before the end of the First World War almost one hundred Muslim girls had completed their primary education, and a few dozen Muslim girls had completed their secondary education. In order to maximize the effects of the Habsburg pedagogy on the education of Muslim women, the Provincial Government succeeded in employing as teachers the girls who completed the advanced course, in mekteb-i-ibtidais throughout the province. During the Great War, the first female students to graduate from the teacher training course obtained certification as primary school teachers; as the Bosnian newspapers enthusiastically remarked, they were “the first female Muslim teachers” (prve muslimanke-učiteljice) a status that gave them access to professional life as state employees. The following year, ten more female students obtained certification.

Thanks to the school registers, which scrupulously recorded the names and professions of the girls’ parents, it is possible to have some idea of the socio-economic background of the girls enrolled. Unsurprisingly, some of these students were the daughters of a number of the province’s Muslim landowning families, especially those that had chosen to cooperate with the Habsburg government after 1878. These wealthy families chose to abandon the traditional Ottoman practice of providing only a domestic

47 ABiH, ZV, 52/211/2, Olga Hörmann to ZV (1894).
education for their daughters, dispensed by private teachers. Almost one third of female students also came from white-collar families, whose fathers were usually officers in the new administration (e.g. Provincial Government, or mail and railroad officials) or in a religious institution (officials of the Ulema-medžlis and of the Vakuf Commission, teachers of Islamic schools or sharia judges). Even the daughter of the Reis-ul-ulema Azabagić was enrolled at the school for one year. For these families, sending their daughters to the school was partly done in compliance with the administration’s desires, which wanted to use their social prestige in order to encourage Muslim families to send their daughters to school. Insofar as it was a clear performance of modernity, female schooling was also seen to be a way for Muslims to become more integrated, at least to a certain degree, within a post-Ottoman, Habsburg society.

Finally, more than half the female students came from small craft and trade families; in particular butchers, tailors and coffee shop and restaurant owners. Though there is little information about this group, it seems probable that the families that had formal or informal contacts with Habsburg officials were more likely to send their daughters to these schools. The well-known Hadžikarić family of tailors, for example, among the first in Sarajevo to tailor clothes in a European style and work for the Habsburg authorities to produce uniforms for the School for Sharia Judges, sent all of their daughters to Sarajevo’s Muslim Girls’ School.

After 1878, being favorably disposed toward female schooling was also of economic relevance; having been rapidly integrated into the Austro-Hungarian Customs Union, Bosnia’s local market was flooded with merchandise from other regions of the Empire, thus making affairs difficult for Bosnian craftsmen and shop-owners. As a result, an education for girls that included modern needlework and embroidery techniques helped to improve the family income and enhance a girl’s prospects for marriage. In a 1903 report to the Provincial Government, the director of the school lamented that, when meeting with the teaching staff, the girls’ relatives only ever expressed

50 Zürmata was enrolled at the Muslim Girls’ School in 1903/1904. See HAS, 34, MŽOŠ, School register 1903–1904.
51 HAS, 34, MŽOŠ, School registers.
concern over their daughters’ aptitude for handiwork: “they do not ask about any of the other subjects.”

One aspect that emerges from the school registers is that for a significant number of female students (varying each year from one third to one half of students) a woman claimed to be their legal guardian, usually their mother or grandmother. Sometimes the names of these women are accompanied in the registers by their profession and/or their social status (e.g., landowner and seamstress), and they are frequently listed as widows. The high number of households headed by a woman in the registers indicates that openness to female education may have been gendered—women were more inclined to send their daughters and nieces to school than fathers or other male relatives. The tendency for widows to send their daughters to school already struck some observers at the time. In 1919, the Muslim social reformer Hasan Rebac wrote: “It is interesting to note that the girls [attending school] are largely without fathers or male relatives, and that schooling has been undertaken thanks to the determination of the mothers, who had to struggle against all kinds of prejudice.”

Whether enrolled at a primary or advanced level, the schoolgirls sitting at the desks of Sarajevo’s Muslim Girls’ School were exposed to an education that was fundamentally new for a typical Bosnian Muslim girl. If we compare the school cursus with what was on offer in the traditional mektebs for girls, the difference is striking. Islamic studies was not the sole subject taught at the state school, although it remained one of the school’s most important subjects at every level (six weekly hours in the advanced course, three in the teacher’s course). The emphasis on Islamic education indicates that the aim of the school was neither to eradicate Islam nor to convert Muslim girls to Christianity. This respect for the religious pluralism of Bosnia was doubtless partly in line with a tradition of religious tolerance in the Habsburg Empire dating back to the late eighteenth century. However, this approach also responded to the specific needs of the Empire’s strategy for control in Bosnia. In order to prevent any change in the ethnic balance of the local population, and in particular any integration into the ranks of

---

53 ABiH, ZV, 57/49/4, Štefanija Franković to ZV (1903).
the potentially hostile Orthodox-Serbian community, Vienna did its best to preserve the Muslim population as the second largest religious group in the region, forbidding de facto conversion and discouraging emigration to the Ottoman Empire. The schools’ central task was therefore to civilize without converting. The importance assigned to religion in the curriculum was also evident in the spatial administration of the school building. Despite the fact that Sarajevo’s Muslim Girls’ School always suffered from a shortage of space, a classroom was regularly reserved solely for religious classes and daily prayer.\footnote{ABiH, ZV, 57/49/4, Štefanija Franković to ZV (1903).}

Given the linguistic and geographical continuity between Bosnia and Croatia-Slavonia, the Provincial Government in Sarajevo used the latter province’s school programs as the main model for Bosnia’s educational system. According to Habsburg educators, who since 1894 had been disseminating their ideas throughout Bosnia in the Školski Vjesnik (School journal, a pedagogical journal for teachers directly financed by the Provincial Government), the main goal of female schooling was to forge “proper mothers”; childbirth and childrearing were assumed to be a woman’s primary and most important contributions to society. In the eyes of the authorities, mothers played a crucial role in the Habsburg civilizing mission in Bosnia: the schooling of future generations of Bosnian children could only be successful if preceded and accompanied by the tireless work of adequately trained mothers. The education of young girls who would one day be mothers was thus an important tool in the effort to transform Bosnia’s semi-Oriental society from within the private space.

As religion was no longer considered to be sufficient for a rounded education for young girls, new subjects entered the school curriculum. The subject that became of major importance in the female curriculum, especially in secondary schools, was female handiwork (ženski ručni rad) This novelty had been imported from the Croatia-Slavonian schools, where since 1883 it had been the most important subject in female education. As Davorin Trstenjak put it in his book Dobra kućanica (The Good Housewife), a best-seller which went through five editions between 1880 and 1906, and was even adopted by the Provincial Government in Sarajevo as the official
textbook for schoolgirls, teaching female handiwork had two goals: to pro-
vide lower middle-class girls with a means to contribute to the family’s in-
come, and to discipline girls and help them develop (supposedly) female
virtues such as diligence, orderliness, devotion and kindness. As has been
shown for the Croatian context, enforcing the link between appropriate
femininity and handiwork had a direct impact in limiting female agency in
terms of space and time; practices such as sewing, embroidery and weav-
ing were supposed to be done in the home for several hours a day, thus bind-
ing women to the domestic space. In this way, both the bourgeois European
and Muslim ideologies of separate spheres were enforced at the same time.\textsuperscript{57}

Interesting differences can be also noted when we compare the pro-
gram of Sarajevo’s Muslim Girls’ School with those of the ordinary inter-
religious female schools in Bosnia. Despite the Provincial Government’s
express desire to provide Muslim girls with the same education as that
which non-Muslim girls received in the province’s interreligious schools,
differences remained. While in the female interreligious schools the teach-
ing of foreign languages—German or French—and civic education were
compulsory, these subjects were optional at the Sarajevo Muslim Girls’
School.\textsuperscript{58} Unfortunately the archives do not mention an explicit motive
for this choice, either on the part of the Provincial Government, or on the
part of the school’s director. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that subjects
that for the schoolgirls could have enabled autonomous interactions with
foreign people or ideas, and with the public authorities, were not consid-
ered worth teaching. According to the school’s curriculum, any interac-
tions for women that transcended domestic, family and community bound-
daries were expected to be mediated by men (see table 3).

Despite having sidestepped the threat of subjecting their daughters to
ordinary interfaith schooling, these schools remained a source of anxi-
ety for the Muslim population. According to the teachers’ reports to the
Provincial Government, one cause for concern was that the school did
not exclusively teach religious subjects. The \textit{ulema}, especially the teach-
ers at the Islamic schools, seemed to have been the most hostile toward

\textsuperscript{57} Dinko Župan, “Dobre kućanice. Obrazovanje djevojaka u Slavoniji tijekom druge polovice 19. stoljeća,”
\textsuperscript{58} Ćurić, \textit{Muslimansko školstvo}, 249.
female education. As observed by the teacher Marija Kulijer in 1903, families often refused to send their daughters to school “because [they] fear the muallim,”\(^{59}\) the Muslim religious teacher. In one of the very rare autobiographical accounts of this schooling, written several decades after she had graduated, one of the first students of Sarajevo’s Muslim Girls’ School, Fata Košarić (née Hadžikarić) recalls the difficulties connected to her schooling. According to Košarić, who following this education became a teacher herself:

parents who sent their children to German schools [švapske škole], as the Habsburg state schools were generally called, were hated by the ignorant and angry people... When Avdaga [Hadžikarić, her father] enrolled his first

\(^{59}\) ABiH, ZV, 57/281/2, Marija Kulijer to ZV (1903).
daughter Sejda in Mrs Hörmann’s school, people in the market [čaršija] started to attack him openly, and for two weeks he couldn’t leave the house; anyway, he never withdrew his daughters from school.⁶⁰

Opposition to female schooling was not only to be found in the city market. Hostility was also prevalent in the residential districts (mahala), situated around the market and extending into the hills of Sarajevo. As Košarić recalls from her childhood:

I studied mostly at night, in the light of the oil lamp, in order not to feed the mischievousness and hatred of the neighborhood [komšiluk], as they often insulted us from their windows as we walked to school. Of course, some women in the neighborhood were glad to visit us with their daughters, and they were very pleased that we read to them some folk poem or stories from Behar [the largest Muslim literary journal, see next paragraphs]. However, there were many ignorant rascals who shouted at us in the street.⁶¹

This attitude was not only one met on the street. In 1911, an attempt by the Provincial Government to give the advanced course its own autonomous Muslim female secondary school was formally opposed by the Ulema-medžlis; the collective body that dealt with Islamic affairs in Bosnia argued that:

the schoolgirls, during their enrolment in this school, will grow up there until the age when sharia requires them to veil—and then to avoid mixing [miješati] or have contact [dolaziti u dodir] with persons who do not belong to their immediate family... Additionally, looking at the curriculum of this school, the Ulema-medžlis is aware that these schoolgirls, once they will have completed their training, will gain access to the state schools as teachers, and this is strictly in contradiction with sharia law. Finally, besides the abovementioned concerns, the establishment of such a school would provoke a great deal of disquiet among Muslims, a point which [the Provincial Government]

⁶¹ Košarić, “Moje školovanje,” 16.
must promptly take into consideration, as already today this disquiet has reached a serious level.\footnote{Ćurić, \textit{Muslimansko školstvo}, 202–3.}

The \textit{Ulema-medžlis}' intervention achieved its goal, and the authorities gave up the idea of establishing a separate secondary school for Muslim girls. The teacher training course met a similar fate; in order to reduce the “disquiet among Muslims,” it remained simply a course, rather than become an autonomous institution.

Aside from the state school curriculum, the most contentious aspect of female education in these institutions was that the teaching staff consisted entirely of non-Muslims. Because the Bosnian population rejected out of hand the possibility of using male teachers in girls’ schools, for fear of impropriety, the Provincial Government in Sarajevo needed to find female teachers. But in the late nineteenth century, no Muslim women possessed the teaching qualifications required by the state. As a result, the teaching staff in Muslim schools consisted of non-Muslims who had been educated in the teacher-training schools of Bosnia or other Serbo-Croatian-speaking regions of the Habsburg Empire. Until the end of the First World War, the schools’ teachers came mainly from Croatia-Slavonia. While most were Catholic Croats, there was a small minority of Orthodox Serbs.\footnote{Kujović, “Ko su bile,” 48–55.} Despite the presence of two teachers of religion—old and thus supposedly sexually inactive, in order to forestall rumors—the Muslim Girls’ School of Sarajevo was still considered to be a cover for converting young Muslim girls. As the director Štefanija Franković put it to the Provincial Government in 1903:

> people spread rumors about the school, continuously splitting hairs about its activities... Many girls are absent because people frighten them by telling them “the German women [švabice, the schoolteachers] will make you become Christians [povlašiti]!”\footnote{ABiH, ZV, 57/49/7, Štefanija Franković to ZV (1903).}

> Although the Provincial Government had promulgated a law in Bosnia expressly forbidding conversion in order to reassure the Muslim popula-
tion, these rumors persisted until the end of the Habsburg period. However, these difficulties aside, thanks to the organization of these experimental schools at the crossroads between state and Muslim religious institutions, a first small cadre of Muslim girls had begun studying and learning to write in the Serbo-Croatian language.

**Domesticating Voluntary Associations**

Like the state schools, another institution associated with Habsburg rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the voluntary association. This kind of organization began making an appearance in Bosnia mostly after 1878; references to an associative milieu before that date are in fact very rare and incomplete. As a great deal of previous research has already suggested, voluntary associations were introduced by the thousands of Habsburg officials that moved to Bosnia from different regions of the Habsburg Empire. In 1883, the Časničko-činovnička kasina (Casino for Civil and Military Officials) was established in Sarajevo, followed in 1885 by the Gospojinsko Društvo (Ladies’ Association).⁶⁵ Even though the information available on these first societies is very limited, it can be confirmed that they greatly contributed, in Bosnian cities, and especially in Sarajevo, to the introduction and visibility of a new set of social practices. A flyer for an event organized by the Ladies’ Association in 1893 in Ilidža, the thermal and leisure resort a few kilometers from Sarajevo, gives an idea of the activities organized “under the high patronage of Vilma Kállay,” the wife of Minister Kállay. The event included an opera concert, men and women exchanging flower bouquets, and public balls—a set of practices implying gender relations hardly imaginable in the Ottoman town.⁶⁶ From the outset, the Bosnian elite of all religions freely participated in these associative events—concerts, theater performances, balls—organized by military and civil officials. Rapidly, however, volunteer activities went beyond the initiative of the Habsburg non-Bosnian administrators, and began to be organized by the local population as well.

---

⁶⁵ Avram Pinto mentions the existence of Jewish voluntary associations before 1878 but he does not mention his sources. See Avram Pinto, Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Hercegovine (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1987), 147. For the first examples of voluntary associations after 1878, see Todor Kruševac, Sarajevo pod Austrougarskom upravom 1878–1918 (Sarajevo: Muzej grada Sarajeva, 1960), 410–1.

⁶⁶ HAS, Poster Collection, 103, Ladies’ Association event in Ilidža, held on July 9, 1893.
The Habsburg authorities’ attitude toward the dissemination of an associational culture among Bosnians was rather ambiguous. Of course, associations represented an opportunity for the local urban population to learn to foster values such as solidarity, individual commitment, a love for culture, and zeal for their fellow citizens—in a word, all of the middle-class virtues that the Habsburg civilizing mission wanted to introduce into Bosnia. In order to encourage the development of associational life, the authorities built in 1897 the sumptuous Društveni dom (Vereinshaus in German), literally the “house of the associations.” Based on plans designed by the Czech architect Karel Pařík, this imposing building in the neoclassical style (today’s National Theater) was built a stone’s-throw away from the Miljacka River, as a solution for the endemic absence of adequate spaces for associational activities. Organized around a sumptuous auditorium, which led into a series of spaces—lounges, corridors, cloakrooms, outdoor terraces, internal balconies—the Društveni dom replaced the Officer’s Club as the center of associational life and of middle-class urban sociability. However, at the same time voluntary associations began to worry the Habsburg administration; as in other parts of the Empire, the association could rapidly become a tool for elaborating and disseminating anti-imperial ideas, and in particular for fostering nationalist sentiments. Thus in order to control the spread of these collective institutions, associations were only able to be established at the discrentional authorization of the Provincial Government.

The Bosnian urban population began experimenting with volunteer initiatives only gradually and, as in most parts of the Habsburg Empire, for the greater part along religious and national lines. In 1888 the Orthodox artisans, teachers and religious figures of Sarajevo established Sloga (Concord), in 1894 their Catholic counterparts founded Trebević (after the mountain overlooking Sarajevo), and in 1900 the Jews followed suit, establishing La Lira (Lyre). While these choir associations can be ascribed to the growing urban middle class, a group of teachers and workers who were sympathetic toward socialist ideas established in Sarajevo in 1905 the choir association

68 Kruševac, Sarajevo, 413.
Proleter (Proletarian), which mainly aimed to speak to the growing working class of Sarajevo. The establishment of choir associations also rapidly flourished in other Bosnian towns, again in these cases along religious-national lines. In Banja Luka for example, two choir associations—the Orthodox-Serbian Jedinstvo (Unity) and the Catholic-Croatian Nada (Hope)—were established respectively in 1893 and in 1898. These associations not only limited themselves to their primary goal—that is, familiarizing the Bosnian population with Croatian, Serbian and more broadly European music—but increasingly claimed to have a clear national stance. After several years of negotiation with the Provincial Government, in 1898 Trebević succeeded in being officially recognized as a “Croat association,” and in 1906 Sloga managed to earn the title of “Serbian singing society.” As stated by Todor Kruševac, these associations “through music propagated and reinforced national awareness, and acted as a breeding ground from which other voluntary associations could grow forth.” In contrast with their fellow citizens, few Muslims chose music societies as a form of expression. Instead of choirs, the urban Muslim population privileged the kiraethana, the Ottoman word for “reading room.” This institution was not a novelty; in the mid-nineteenth century the Ottoman authorities had already introduced reading societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The fact that this activity was not a complete novelty surely helped this form to spread among the Muslim population, at that time fairly indifferent to the new institutions and practices brought by the Habsburgs. The largest Bosnian reading room was probably the one in Sarajevo, established in 1888 in the Bendbaša quarter, rapidly followed by others in the main towns of the province—in 1890 in Banja Luka, in 1898 in Tuzla, in 1899 in Brčko, and so forth. Reading rooms, of which a total of 116 were also established by non-Muslims in 1911, became the first places in Bosnia where it was possible to read books and newspapers, local or from other regions of the Habsburg Empire. The reading rooms rapidly also became a space where Islamic learned men or teachers organized the first public lessons on different topics, gave literacy courses, and sometimes held parties.
Choir and reading societies were not the only associations that began to appear. At the turn of the century, wealthy merchants, landowners and artisans set up organizations whose mission was to care for the urban poor. Philanthropic associations were mostly established along religious lines; the Jews of Sarajevo established *La Benevolencija* (The Benevolence), the Muslims of Banja Luka established the *Muslimansko dobrotvorno društvo* (Muslim Philanthropist Society), and so on. This kind of voluntary association rapidly became at the initiative of a vast array of activities, such as setting up soup kitchens, organizing clothes collections for the poor, taking on the care of orphans, running embroidery courses for urban women, and much more. At the same time, the integration of Bosnia into the Habsburg imperial system also meant tapping into the association networks already flourishing in Central Europe, such as the pan-Slavist gymnastic association *Sokol* (Falcon), which extended its networks into Bosnia. The spread of an associational culture in Bosnia was remarkable; in 1913 there were 123 associations in Sarajevo, with 44,377 members. In Tuzla too, the main city in Eastern Bosnia, between 1883 and 1913 more than 40 different associations had grown up, established along national, religious, and professional lines, with narrow or wide-ranging aims.72

The spread of voluntary associations was constantly being affected by the evolution of political life in Bosnia. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the policy implemented by Benjamin Kállay of not granting recognition to nationalist associations was clearly a failure, and the Habsburg administration was forced to begin recognizing the existence, not only of religious, but also of national groups in Bosnia. István Burián (1852–1922), who became Minister of Finance after Kállay’s death in 1903, abandoned the idea of a Bosnian areligious patriotism that had met with so little success under his predecessor, and openly recognized that local notables needed to be associated, at least to some extent, with the decision-making process.73 In 1902, a group of Orthodox men with a secondary or higher education, in particular


students and teachers, established the Serbian cultural association Prosvjeta (Education), while in 1907 their Catholic counterparts established the Croatian cultural association Napredak (Progress). Both associations had as their main goal the promotion of schooling for Bosnian children, and thus concentrated their efforts principally on collecting money to distribute as scholarships. Awakening the national spirit of the Bosnian population, respectively as Serbs or as Croats, was considered to be a part of their cultural mission. This new emphasis on education, which had become the focal point of both associations, had not gone unnoticed by the Jewish elite. In the same years, the Jewish association La Benevolencija also changed its statutes, adopting the cause of schooling as its main goal.74

In the new political atmosphere of the early twentieth century, Muslims created their own associations as well. In 1903, a few months after the establishment of the Serbian cultural association, the Muslim cultural association Gajret (Effort, in Ottoman) was set up in Sarajevo. The men at the foundations of these cultural associations, and in particular Gajret, deserve special attention. These individuals represented a striking novelty in Bosnian Muslim society. Born in the 1860s and 1870s, they had mostly received their education in the Habsburg school system and in central European universities, in particular in Vienna, Budapest, Graz, and Zagreb. Safvet beg Bašagić (1870–1934) had a leading role in the association; the member of a landowning family from Nevesinje, he had obtained a doctorate in Oriental languages. On his return to Bosnia, Bašagić had become a teacher of Arabic at the secondary school in Sarajevo, and one of the city’s most active cultural entrepreneurs, publishing books, translating, and even participating in political activities. Edhem Mulabdić (1862–1934), after having attended the teacher’s school in Sarajevo, also worked as school inspector and as a professor at the Muslim Teachers’ School of Sarajevo. One of the most important writers of his generation, in 1917 he became direc-

tor of the Sarajevo’s Muslim Girls’ School. Mostly employed by the administration after their state schooling, these men were always proponents of the Habsburg Empire’s role in Bosnia, describing it as a great occasion for a Muslim “cultural rebirth.” This pro-Habsburg stance set them in stark contrast against the vast majority of Muslim notables grouped around the Movement for Autonomy.

Like its Jewish and Orthodox counterparts, the Muslim cultural association Gajret rapidly spread across Bosnia. On the eve of the First World War, Gajret already had a dozen local branches to its name in the principal towns of the province. As for the activists of Napredak and Prosvjeta, the purpose of these associations was to improve the extremely low literacy rates in the province by favoring education through a variety of means—granting scholarships, organizing public lessons and literacy courses, setting up reading rooms and founding newspapers. In order to foster education in the Muslim population, Gajret not only dedicated itself to distributing scholarships to students, but also rapidly established a set of cultural institutions. In 1905 the association founded the Islamic Printing House, linked to the kiraethana of Sarajevo. The printing house was rapidly followed by a gentleman’s club (Muslimanski klub), a male sporting association (El-Kamer), and a journal of the same name. Schooling, sociability and sports were all part of the same pedagogical design. Cultural associations even rapidly assumed the same structure; a central branch (glavni odbor) with its headquarters in Sarajevo, and with local branches (mjesni odbor) throughout the province. Gajret differed from the other cultural associations operating in Bosnia on one particular point, its ill-defined national leanings. Gajret’s founders Bašagić and Mulabdić were themselves disposed toward Croatian nationalism, that is they defined themselves as “Croats of Muslim faith.” However, the influence of Croatian nationalism on Gajret’s early discourse and activities seems to have been very weak. In 1909, the aforementioned Movement for Autonomy, by that time already transformed into

---

75 A BiH, ZV, 84/150/39, Edhem Mulabdić to ZV (1917).
77 Sarić, Mulabdić, 85–90.
79 Imamović, Pravni položaj, 218.
a political party took control of *Gajret*, marginalizing the pro-Habsburg educated elite within the association. Osman Đikić (1879–1912) was appointed as its new secretary, a poet and journalist from Mostar educated in Istanbul and Vienna. Influenced by the growing anti-Habsburg sentiment in Bosnia at the beginning of the twentieth century, Đikić defined himself as a “Serb of Muslim faith.” From this moment on *Gajret* adopted a growing pro-Serbian discourse.

**Early Strategies of Female Engagement**

The volunteering experience followed, in Bosnia as elsewhere, different patterns according to gender. Often neglected by the historiography, women played an important role in the burgeoning local associational culture at the turn of the century. Their engagement took different institutional and practical forms, according to their profession, confessional affiliation and national belonging. One way in which Bosnian women engaged in associational life was by establishing their own associations. This strategy was followed in particular by Orthodox women who could count on several examples from their counterparts in neighboring regions. As a matter of fact, since the 1860s and 1870s Serbian women from Habsburg Vojvodina and Serbia had been establishing their own philanthropic and cultural associations. In 1901 a group of wealthy and educated Serbian women from Banja Luka established the *Dobrotvorna Zadruga Srpskinja* (Serbian women’s charitable society), probably the first female association ever established in the province. The main task of this association was of course caring for the poor, but also reinforcing education and national solidarity between Serbian women. In 1909 there were already nine existing Serbian female philanthropic associations in Bosnia, and an official monthly journal, *Srpska Žena* (Serbian Woman, 1911–1912) served to foster links between the different local chapters. Even if the journal was only published for less than two consecutive years, this case is an eloquent demonstration of how the

---

act of establishing an association and of founding a journal were often linked to one another.\textsuperscript{82}

In any case, separate female associations in Habsburg Bosnia remained confined to the Orthodox population and, at the end of the day, very limited in number. Catholic and Jewish women preferred to volunteer in the community-based associations that were at that time flourishing in Bosnian towns. Female participation followed different patterns. Jewish women in Sarajevo regularly participated in the different activities of the aforementioned associations (for example, \textit{La Benevolencia} and \textit{La Lira}), without establishing specific female chapters.\textsuperscript{83} Conversely, Catholic women engaged in the activities of \textit{Napredak} and, after 1909, they institutionalized their presence through separate local female chapters. Nevertheless, the main Croatian cultural association of Bosnia and Herzegovina was slow to feminize itself. In 1912, out of a total of 34 local chapters, there were only 4 female chapters.\textsuperscript{84}

These networks of voluntary associations, with their rich array of gatherings, balls, picnics, amateur choral and musical performances, became the environment in which a small but vital cohort of Bosnian women gained visibility in the Bosnian towns. As in other regions of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empire, many of the women who invested their spare time in volunteering were primary-school teachers. The two groundbreaking figures who belonged to this teacher-activist corps were Adeline Paulina Irby (1831–1911) and Georgina Muir Mackenzie (1833–1874), two British travelers, suffragists and writers who established a school for girls in Sarajevo in 1869, mostly open to Orthodox girls. Following their example, other teachers became active in the public space. As becomes clear from the numerous journal articles and pamphlets they wrote, their engagement in philanthropic and cultural associations was perceived as an extension of their pedagogical mission at school. Stoja Kašiković (1865–?), for example, a Serbian-Orthodox teacher who volunteered in several philan-

\textsuperscript{82} In 1909, branches of the Serbian Woman’s Charitable Society could be found in Sarajevo, Mostar, Banja Luka, Donja Tuzla, Bijeljina, Bosanska Gradiška, Bosanska Dubica, Petrovac and Prijedor. On this topic, see \textit{Kalendar “Prosvjeta”} (1909): 242. On the activities of this association in the Banja Luka region, see Mikić, \textit{Banja Luka}, 257–66.

\textsuperscript{83} HAS, poster collection, 142, \textit{La Lira Sarajevo}, Nochada de Teatro (November 30, 1912 – Kislev 20, 5673). On Jewish associations and the place of Jewish women in them, see Pinto, \textit{Jevreji Sarajeva}, 82.

\textsuperscript{84} \textit{Napredak}’s local female branches were established in Vareš, Travnik, Fojnica and Sarajevo. See \textit{Kalendar “Napredak”} (1912): 36. The source does not give any information on the socio-economic status of the women involved. On the same topic, see Kecman, \textit{Zene Jugoslavije}, 10.
At the Margins of the Habsburg Civilizing Mission

...thropic associations with her husband, was also among the founders of the prestigious literary journal *Bosanska vila* (Bosnian fairy) and, for a certain period, even its editor (interestingly, under the male pseudonym Stevo Kaluđerović). One could also cite the journalist and writer Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska (1870–1946), who became one of the most active cultural entrepreneurs of her time, using her free hours outside of teaching to tirelessly contribute through volunteering and writing, introducing Western feminist ideas into Bosnia. In the early twentieth century, Bosnian towns were thus witness to an increased visibility of women in the public space, circulating between schools, churches, associations and printing-houses.85

What was the place of Muslim women in such a blossoming associative culture? Scholarship dealing with Muslim associations has repeatedly shown that Muslim women remained entirely untouched by the turn-of-the-century gathering fever. As a matter of fact, Muslim women either did not want to enroll in Muslim voluntary associations, or were prevented from doing so, let alone attempting to establish their own ones. It seems that the wives of Habsburg officials cautiously tried to involve some Muslim upper-class women in the activities of the aforementioned Ladies’ Club, but that this initiative did not meet with any durable success.86 Several hypotheses might be put forward to explain the absence of Muslim women in voluntary associations. Firstly, Muslim women were entirely absent from the teaching corps, where associations usually recruited their most dedicated volunteers. Secondly, the rules of sexual and confessional segregation still enforced in urban spaces prevented proximity and contact between Muslim women and men, with the exception of a few family members. Thirdly, it seems that voluntary associations, at least in the beginning, were negatively perceived among the Muslim population. As stated by a Muslim activist involved in the foundation of *Gajret*, when the association was established, rumors abounded: “the men throughout the market [čaršija] and coffee shops, and the women in the quarters [mahale] started to spread the rumor that *Gajret*’s activists [were] gather[ing] money to organize orgies in the base-

---

85 For a recent overview of the historiography on women and gender in Habsburg Bosnia, see Zlatiborka Popov Momčinović, Fabio Giomi, and Zlatan Delić, “Period austrougarske uprave,” in *Zabilježene: Žene i javni život Bosne i Hercegovine u 20. vijeku*, ed. Jasmina Čaušević (Sarajevo: Sarajevo Open Centre and Foundation CURE, 2014), 16-38.

ment of the Društveni Dom, and that they consume[ed] prohibited [haram] drinks, and that there they [ate] food that [was] even more prohibited."87 State schools and voluntary associations were thus considered to be alien institutions capable of endangering the morality and integrity of the Muslim population. For all these reasons, Muslim women supposedly chose to resort to more discrete methods of supporting Muslim voluntary associations, which did not imply their visibility in the public space, through various forms of financial support for the associations’ activities. The Ottoman Empire, and Muslim societies more in general, abound with examples of this kind: insofar as Islamic law granted them control over part of their holdings, for centuries wealthy Muslim women had been using their wealth to support different kinds of cultural and philanthropic initiatives.

This support initially took the form of the zekijat, the ritual alms mandatory according to Islam. In 1910, Paša hanuma Čugurević, the wife of an important Tuzla landowner, joined the prestigious ranks of Gajret’s benefactors by donating 200 crowns. This gesture, probably the first of its kind to be made by a woman, was enthusiastically welcomed by the association’s journal, which publicly hailed hanuma Paša as a champion “of the cultural rebirth of our millet [religious community].”88 That same year, other women began to dedicate parts of their zekijat to Gajret, even stirring up the enthusiasm of male activists: “our women [naše ženskinje], who until now have done nothing for our association, nor contributed to its economic consolidation, can do a lot for it and we hope that this news, inšallah, will soon spread among our women.”89

In addition to the ritual alms, women also participated in associative life through the vakuf institution.90 According to Islamic law, the vakuf is an in-

---

88 “Novi članovi utemeljitelji,” Gajret, no. 1 (1910): 13
alienable religious endowment, typically a donated building or plot of land, or even cash, which are to be used for religious or charitable purposes.\textsuperscript{91} In 1911, for example, two wealthy sisters from Sarajevo, Zulejha \textit{hanuma} and Hašema \textit{hanuma} Imširović, converted all of their property into a pious foundation and declared that one fifth of its revenue was to be donated in perpetuity to \textit{Gajret}. Another part of the revenue was to be used to support religious girls’ schools in various parts of Bosnia.\textsuperscript{92}

Other wealthy Muslim women chose to support the association financially in more creative ways. An interesting case is that of Hankija \textit{hanuma} Mujbašić-Gazdić. A resourceful widow from Sarajevo, after 1878 she had entrusted her fortune to the Provincial Bank, and accumulated significant interest over the years. Given that Islamic law prohibited the enjoyment of interests, \textit{hanuma} Mujbašić-Gazdić had at her disposal an important amount of technically illicit money cumulated thanks to a non-Islamic institution. In order to resolve this situation, in 1912 she chose to donate the entire sum (over 1,300 crowns) to \textit{Gajret}, relinquishing the fruits of this illicitly accumulated wealth to promote the Muslim “cultural reawakening.”\textsuperscript{93} Thus, though they remained invisible, Muslim women were able to participate through the medium of money in the establishment of Muslim cultural associations.

\begin{center}
\textbf{***}
\end{center}

Bosnia’s shift from Ottoman to Habsburg sovereignty, initiated in 1878 and completed in 1908, was accompanied by a powerful civilizational rhetoric, broadcast by both official and unofficial voices from Austria-Hungary. Passing from the Ottoman to the Habsburg Empire did not simply mean a rule change like any other: it meant moving from the backwards East to the enlightened West, (re)joining the European people on the path to progress and liberty, after four centuries under the Ottoman yoke. This narrative, which assigned the Habsburg authorities with the burden of bringing culture to this

\textsuperscript{91} Selma Avdić Hajrović, \textit{Zaboravljene dobročinitelje: sarajevske vakife} (M.A. diss., University of Sarajevo).
proximate little Orient, turned out to be very close to the same one used, in those same decades, by the Western European powers to legitimize their rule over the colonized world overseas. The educational policy, built around a new set of state schools, and the reform of existing ones, was seen as a tool for ensuring lasting Habsburg rule over the province. A cohort of local Muslims decided to collaborate in this field with the Viennese authorities, and engaged in promoting the education of Muslim pupils in the new schools—both for boys and girls. Their success was greater with the former than with the latter, however: education for girls was perceived as unnecessary, dangerous, or even un-Islamic by a significant portion of the Muslim population. Despite these difficulties, in the early twentieth century a first generation of Muslim girls, mainly from Sarajevo, started out on an educational path of a new kind, centered around handiwork, domestic economy, and taught in Serbo-Croatian. Given the extreme resistance of Muslim society to the education of girls, this path was exclusively pursued in specific structures, segregated according to sex and confession, established through negotiation between the Provincial Government and the religious institutions.

In roughly the same years, Bosnian Muslims, like their other fellow citizens, became ever more familiar with the voluntary association, in particular cultural and philanthropic ones. Like in the other regions of both the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires in those years, associational culture was developing essentially along confessional and national lines, and men and women appropriated this institution closely associated with Habsburg modernity in different ways. While educated and wealthy Muslim men established their own cultural and philanthropic associations, and invested their time and energies in intense volunteering activities, wealthy Muslim women preferred to participate indirectly; that is, in ways that did not imply transcending the boundaries of their domesticity, such as donating money and goods to associations. As they had done for centuries under the Ottoman Empire and in the Muslim world more in general, wealthy Muslim women resorted to Islamic institutions like the zekijat or vakuf as a way to support newly-established voluntary associations, demonstrating both the porosity and continuity between allegedly “traditional” and “modern” forms of philanthropy.