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A disclosure of Austria-Hungary's imperial "cultural mission" in Bosnia – Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska's views on gender, religion and nation

Abstract: the author argues that Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska participated in the deployment of the idea of Europeanization of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but not strictly as part of a broader politics of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to integrate this newly acquired territory more easily into its borders. On the contrary, she rather displayed a sense of disdain toward the inefficient mechanisms of power of the imperial state which allowed a flow of corruption and nepotism in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Austro-Hungarian period, which intersected with gender, nation and/or religion, that she felt compelled to criticize.

Key words: Belović-Bernadzikowska, Austria-Hungary, gender, religion, nation, "cultural mission".

Apstrakt: Autorica tvrdi da je Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska učestvovala u proširivanju ideje evropeizacije Bosne i Hercegovine, ali ne isključivo kroz kontekst šire politike Austro-Ugarske da lakše integriše u svoje granice BiH kao novu priključenu teritoriju. Upravo suprotno, Belović-Bernadzikowska je prvenstveno ispoljavala osjećaj prezira prema neučinkovitim mehanizmima moći carske države koji su olakšali protok korupcije i nepotizma u BiH tokom austrougarskog perioda, pri čemu se taj problem presijecao sa konceptima roda, nacije i/ili religije, a Belović-Bernadzikowska je to kritikovala.

Ključne riječi: Belović-Bernadzikowska, Austro-Ugarska, rod, religija, nacija, "kulturna misija".

Introduction

Some women intellectuals in late 19th century Europe and the US criticized the societal norms based on religion which enabled the conceptualization of women as

inferior and their subjugation in society.[1] According to criticisms by feminists, religions which silenced women often enforced the separation of the spaces between the public and the private ones and, through religion, a powerful message was implied: "absolute power is male;" "maleness itself was divinized," and "is the absolute value."[2] Nonetheless, there are examples in history that demonstrate the actions and roles of some women who did not act according to the principles set by the religious communities in which they lived. One such example is the female teacher, Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska, whose ideas about politics, nation, gender and religion in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the neighboring countries show not only defiance to the "absolute male power," but also to the conceptualization of women as inferior. Belović-Bernadzikowska's opinion about the position of middle-class women working as teachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina is relevant for the analysis of the ways the Austro-Hungarian state used gender, nation, education and religion to communicate its power to her subjects.

When analyzing the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina (further, Bosnia), one can hardly find a topic that is not related to religion, for it is a concept present in almost every aspect of this country's past and which determines the consciousness of its' people even today. The period that I analyzed for this article encompasses the years from 1894 to 1907 that respectively fit the Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia (1878-1918), which were Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska's years of teaching in Sarajevo's and Banja Luka's schools. Hence the justification to use the term Bosnia throughout the paper, rather than Bosnia and Herzegovina, mainly because Belović-Bernadzikowska lived and worked in Sarajevo and Banja Luka in that period.

Mainstream research has usually followed the practice of analyzing the link between religion and national identity development in Bosnia and in the Balkans, and I also will use that approach in this article. In relation to that, I analyze what Fabio Giomi calls "women's role in the imperial civilizing mission and the nature of that mission in itself," more specifically the role of Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska in Austria-Hungary's attempt to "Europeanize" Bosnia. I use the word "attempt" because Bosnia being part of the Balkans has been conceptualized in the 19th century as "wild"[3] and that concept survived long after the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire while Western European travel writers continued using the term throughout the first part of the 20th century, too.[4] The change of Ottoman with

[1] Schwartz 2014, 428.

[2] Ibid.

[3] See Jezernik 2004.

[4] Todorova analyzed the concept of "wild" Balkans in depth researching mainly travelogues and literature, as sources in which "wild" Balkans were created in the first place; in Todorova 1997, 235-274.

the Austro-Hungarian rule in 1878 can clearly be followed in the establishment of new educational practices in Bosnia, the new schooling system and the role of teachers and individual intellectuals who actively participated in the, so-called, "cultural mission" of Austria-Hungary toward Bosnia. I understand religion as a historical concept which needs to be approached to with careful analysis and that is aptly resonated in Ursula King's words: "Religion cannot be understood without its history and the multi-layered pluralism through which it has found complex social and cultural expression."[5] In my view, the study of religion in Bosnia is entangled with other concepts such as nation, education, and gender. Nationalism in Bosnia had been restrained by the Habsburg Monarchy, but it was deployed in more subtle and covert ways, which is evident in Belović-Bernadzikowska's critical thinking about the society that she was living in.

My research question is how Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska, as an educated and intellectual woman, coming to teach from neighboring Croatia to Bosnia, pondered upon gender in relation to religion and national identity in Bosnia in the context of a multi-religious country occupied by a Christian Empire. This article places Belović-Bernadzikowska's reflections upon gender, nation, and religion at the center of the analysis with the goal to explore how she understood the concept of "modern woman" and what role religion, nation and empire (Austro-Hungarian, namely) played in the development of that concept. This article is a valuable contribution to the existing historiography on female teachers in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Austro-Hungarian period (1878-1918), because research on Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska represents a highly relevant case in which the Europeanization and modernization of Bosnia through the personal viewpoints of this woman can be examined.

Short ovewview of the "cultural mission", edudation and schooling-system in Bosnia (1878-1918)

When the Habsburg Monarchy occupied Bosnia, it arrived in a region that, according to Western or Central European standards, was highly illiterate.[6] These standards implied mandatory knowledge of both Latin and Cyrillic alphabets in schools, since they were given an equal position,[7] which, on an institutional level, was a novelty because of the long Ottoman rule and presence of Ottoman-Turkish language (though, not widespread, due to high illiteracy). This set the basis for

[5] King 1995, 4.

[6] The official records of the 1910 census in Bosnia rate 77,45% of illiterate Catholics, 89,92% of illiterate Orthodox Christians and 94,65% of illiterate Muslims, in Vukšić 2007, 84.

[7] Papić 1972, 13.

Austria-Hungary to slowly introduce the mechanisms of the so-called "cultural mission" in Bosnia and the fastest way to do that was through education. The term "cultural mission" was part of the imperial discourse deployed by Austria-Hungary to convey the task of civilizing Bosnia and create a new model of citizens in this country that would be acceptable to the (Western) European culture.[8] The Austro-Hungarian Empire, as a state which relied heavily on its' administrative structure, developed in Bosnia a network of new cultural institutions, which represented one of the foundations of the Monarchy's "cultural mission" in Bosnia. These new cultural institutions, such as newspapers, journals and museums, revolved around the new state-school system, which was officially interconfessional and was open to girls and boys alike.[9] Female education therefore became an important step forward on the path of Bosnia's modernization. Aside from interconfessional state-schools, there were confessional ones, too, and they were set on the same political positions upon which the conception of state-schools was built.[10] The confessional schools correspond to the four main religious communities in Bosnia: Orthodox Christian, Muslim, Roman Catholic and Jewish, and, apart from the latter, national identity in Bosnia and in the region was built on the basis of the first three religions. The official imperial regime aimed all forces to mute the national streaming in the entire school system in Bosnia, which was usually coming from either Serbia or Croatia, influencing the Orthodox Christian population in the first and Catholic in the latter case. That is, Austria-Hungary designed the new schools and their curricula so that children were taught patriotic feelings and glorification of the Monarchy, which was supposed to stop the diffusion of nationalist activism among the religious groups in Bosnia.[11] The Muslims, on the other hand, did not follow the same national development, for they still identified with the Ottoman Empire to which they felt they belonged in a civilizational, cultural and religious way.[12]

Robin Okey wrote about the opening of middle schools in Bosnia for girls after the occupation by Austria-Hungary, in which they were "offered general education alongside specialist instruction in housework, music and modern languages."[13] In a similar context, Leila Ahmed[14] argued that Western European (mainly British) colonization of Egypt in the 19th century prepared Egyptian Muslim society for new (modern and European, A. P.) political developments stemming from state and

[8] Okey 2007, Preface, VII.

[9] Giomi, 2015a, 278.

[10] Papić 1972, 17.

[11] Giomi 2015b, 3. See, also, Kraljačić, 1987, 74-75.

[12] Imamović 1997, 103-104.

[13] Okey 2007, 67.

[14] Ahmed 1992, 133.

economic reforms which impacted the evolution of the educational system in this country. Though Bosnia and Egypt have different historical contexts, both countries were controlled and/or occupied by a European state eager to maintain an imperial status for a long time, particularly working its power mechanisms through education which was part of the broader "cultural mission" elaborated to civilize the occupied populace. Female and male education in Bosnia in this period was still faced with inequality, and this was the result of not only patriarchal social norms, but of the changing political position of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian social elites. For example, the Muslims of Bosnia were no longer first-rate citizens as they used to be in the Ottoman Empire, and they were afraid of sending their children to the new-established state schools. That is, as Fabio Giomi wrote, "Muslims generally saw these state-led interconfessional schools as places secretly intended to convert Muslim children to Christianity."[15] The state-school system of primary education that was established in Bosnia within Austria-Hungary, from 1885 existed under the official name of "interconfessional National Elementary Schools."[16] The Muslims were not keen on sending their children to mingle with non-Muslim ones, because they were afraid of proselytism if they were to send their children in a mixed and non-Muslim environment. After the appointment of the Sarajevan archbishop of the Catholic Church, Josip Stadler in 1881 who was also in charge of the Catholic confessional schools, there were several cases of forced conversions of Muslims to Catholicism, which worried the imperial government.[17] Austria-Hungary reacted against the archbishop several times, because it was important to keep the Muslims safe and in peace with the Catholics, for there was a fear that Muslims will get closer to the Orthodox Christians and that would disturb the political situation in Bosnia and the control of the Empire over the occupied territory.[18]

In this tense atmosphere, the national movement based on religious affiliation developed and it will become a question of significant interest to Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska, especially how it intersected with gender. I think that, arriving to Bosnia as a young middle-class female teacher, she understood that this was her opportunity to contribute to the Europeanization of Bosnia by her own example as a female intellectual which made her role as a teacher more purposeful. That is, she would have an active role in the public life of Bosnia's society. As Ahmed wrote for the Egyptian context, "The questioning and rethinking of the role of women prepared the ground for the gradual expansion of educational opportunities for women

[15] Giomi 2015a, 279.

[16] Okey 2007, 65.

[17] Imamović 1997, 98.

[18] Ibid.

and, eventually, professional opportunities as well,"[19] thus I argue that a similar idea of having new opportunities in Bosnian society drove women like Bernadzikowska into pursuing teaching as a form of social activism.

Some general thoughts on Bosnia's national and religious dynamics from Jelica Belović Bernadzikowska's perspective

As I previously described, Bosnia was a region with low numbers of literacy among its population, therefore, it can be imagined as a challenging place to live in if one is highly educated. It might have been even more difficult for a young and single woman arriving to a country in which public space was claimed by men. This was the situation that Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska (1870-1946) found herself in when she moved to Bosnia in the mid-1890s. She was born in 1870 in Osijek, Croatia and what singled her out as a woman is that she was highly educated in a time when that was not very common, especially for women (not even middle-class women) in the region and in Bosnia, a country in which the illiteracy rate was around 90 per cent.[20] The education of Belović-Bernadzikowska was thorough, starting from primary school, lower gymnasium, the Sisters of Charity Teachers' School (*preparandija Samostana sestara milosrdnica*) at Zagreb, and the Higher pedagogical schools in Vienna and Paris.[21] Such excellent results in school were accomplished thanks to Belović-Bernadzikowska's own endeavors and personal inclination toward studying, as well as often encouragement from her parents.[22]

Sonja Dujmović researched Belović-Bernadzikowska's unpublished memoirs, and the reader can learn from Dujmović about the highly critical viewpoints of this woman toward the attitudes and everyday practices of her family members, colleagues and friends from the time when she lived in Croatia and later in Bosnia. Belović-Bernadzikowska was critical toward her contemporaries on the basis of work ethics, morality and, above all, personal intelligence and education. Another important characteristic of her criticism, as is possible to read in Dujmović's article, was a strong bitterness toward society provoked by the general unequal position of women in society that this peculiar woman felt on an everyday basis. She played an acclaimed role in pedagogical work and schooling in Bosnia and the region. Another thing that made her singular among her contemporaries was her knowledge of

[19] Ahmed 1992, 133.

[20] Among the Muslims, over 80 % of men and 90 % of women were illiterate at the end of the Austro-Hungarian period in Bosnia, in Giomi 2015a, 279.

[21] Vujković 2009, 128.

[22] Dujmović 2011, 487-489.

seven foreign languages.[23] It is considered that she published around 30 books and written over 800 articles[24] in various fields, for which she is thought to be one of the most prolific teacher writers among men and women of the South Slavs.[25] The topics she researched in her work were pedagogy, children's psychology, folklore, ethnology, literature, but also feminism. Some authors characterize her feminist essays as moderate liberal feminist.

When it comes to her work in Bosnia during the Austro-Hungarian period, she lived and actively worked in cities like Ključ, Banja Luka, Sarajevo, and Mostar. The most important period for this article is her professorship from 1894 to 1907 at the Trade school in Sarajevo, after which she became head of the Higher Girls' School in Banja Luka from 1907-1909.[26] Her opinion on religion in Bosnia and how it related to national identity was, mainly, developed through the interaction she had with her colleagues during the abovemention period, which makes it relevant to analyze. In 1909, she was forced to retire, though with great reluctance. This was most likely the consequence of the new command of the Provincial Government that forbade female teachers to marry and it was brought in 1908. In other words, marriage for female teachers automatically meant abandonment of their vocation, unless they marry a male teacher colleague.[27] This new state order that was decreed came in the year of the annexation of Bosnia by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, after which political stability in Bosnia was overtly disturbed.

Belović-Bernadzikowska was from an "educated Roman Catholic milieu,"[28] but she wrote in her Memoirs that she was not brought up in a religious home. On the other hand, since she went to the Sisters of Charity Teachers' School, her schedule was also filled with activities related to religion. It was important to her to stress that the sisters in the School did not act as if piousness was a matter from the heart, but rather a vocation, and that piety in her school was neither a grand nor a deeply nurtured practice.[29] This information reveals the earliest encounters she had with religion and that she quickly learnt that her environment was more devoted to the concept of modernity and citizenship rather than by rules of the faith. Religion was a mechanical practice to her. However, it would be too naïve to completely dismiss the concept of religion and how it affected Belović-Bernadzikowska's

[23] Dujmović 2011, 484. Some authors argue that she could read and write in nine languages; in Vujković 2009, 128.

[24] Vujković 2009, 128. Dujmović writes that she published 48 books in Dujmović 2011, 485.

[25] Papić 1972, 81; Zdero 2006, 51.

[26] Dujmović 2011, 484. Zdero claims that she was given that position in 1898, in Zdero 2006, 51.

[27] Papić 1972, 75.

[28] Vujković 2009, 128.

[29] Dujmović 2011, 488, footnote 33.

political viewpoints, as can be seen from her writings about the Sarajevan Catholic archbishop, Josip Stadler, for example: "Stadler (archbishop) does not pay the workers and he has ten houses in Sarajevo, which are built for him "ad maiorem Dei gloriam" by these workers."[30] The other reason why religion as an analysis concept is important for this article is that she will come to Bosnia, a place where religion not only played an important role in politics and education, but was directly connected to the development of the category of nation. This entanglement of religion and nation will make things more difficult for her because she was a Croat woman who showed sympathies toward some Serbs and Muslims (on the basis of their personal, intellectual and work merit) and, according to her opinion, such support was contrary to the political conformism displayed by many of her peers.

Belović-Bernadzikowska often thought of the society she was living in as patriarchal and ruled by men. In her opinion, women in Croatia and Bosnia had a very difficult time to succeed in their professional life by themselves, unless helped by a man. For example, when she graduated from the convent, she wanted to write for a "woman's magazine" and here is what she wrote in her Memoirs: "I had to meet men, and at such encounters I was never met without their sympathies. Each is so selfish, that he will not help a woman who is completely indifferent to him. I have experienced that so many times, even later."[31] It is clear from this that she was repulsed by the lack of correctness in manners and peer professionalism on the basis of gender. Such experiences were one of the reasons which motivated her to seek protection in the form of marriage.

Shortly after she arrived to Bosnia, she married a young Polish civil servant of the Habsburg Monarchy, Janko Bernadzikowski, in 1896, but she was not rewarded with love and protection "from men's lust" that she sought.[32] Dujmović writes an interesting episode from Belović-Bernadzikowska's married life, namely, in arguments with her husband, he would insult her by saying that "female teachers are the biggest baggage and worse than immoral street women, and that he was ashamed to have a wife from that branch."[33] This is very interesting information that clearly demonstrates the gendered nature of the public schooling system and how society conceptualized women's roles whether they were hired or not. This is also relevant because female teachers in Bosnia were often perceived as prostitutes, mainly because they had access to education and moved in the urban public sphere, which enabled them to interact with men more frequently and independently, an

[30] Ibid, 492-493, footnote 54.

[31] Ibid, 489.

[32] Ibid, 499-500.

[33] Ibid, 500.

attribute usually associated with prostitutes.[34] This attribution was usually given by the Muslims, especially the Islamic religious officials, but here the insults of Belović-Bernadzikowska's husband demonstrate that it was a prevailing opinion among other religious groups in Bosnia, too. Such complaints from the patriarchal local populace encompassed a much deeper fear from the newly established Austro-Hungarian authority which brought seemingly more progressive values and opinions about marriage, relationships and, even, divorce, so there was a risk that the youth of Bosnia would be seduced by these novelties.[35] Additionally, in the archival materials of the Provincial Government of Bosnia there are sources which indicate that female teachers were heavily criticized till the end of the Austro-Hungarian rule:

> "Because they are not married... our young female teachers are subjected to severe criticism from their social environment. People in Bosnia and Herzegovina still follow the old principles, and especially Oriental customs, according to which the woman should never be seen in public or considered a free creature. So when our female teachers, thanks to their culture and awareness of their rights and freedoms, begin to move freely among the people, they lose the confidence of the people. No one believes in their moral integrity, and everywhere people speak of them with contempt, even while they are at school. For these reasons, their authority is weakened and respect towards them is lost, which causes them not to be able to fulfill their educational mission effectively."[36]

That Belović-Bernadzikowska was sensitive to what is going on with Muslims and Orthodox Christians in Bosnia is clear from her condemning opinion about several highly positioned (male) Croat intellectuals who worked in the schools in Banja Luka and were spying for the Austro-Hungarian government among Serbs and Bosniak Muslims. She bitterly notes that these school supervisors "helped in the persecution of Serbs and Turks [Bosniak Muslims] in the whole county" and that "hundreds of Mohammedan families moved these years, so the regions are deserted, while the cheaply bought land was sold to German colonists (year 1899/1900)."[37] Apart from that, she is quick to observe critically that the moral behavior of her mentioned colleagues was appalling to her and that they were often visiting a "brothel of Banja Luka" in which they "would ensure that new women were often brought" and which they visited "industriously."[38] This is a very interesting observation made on her part, because she, too, was insulted of being immoral, even by her husband, but what made her so bitter

[34] Giomi 2015a, 286.

[35] Kasumović 2007, 177.

[36] Giomi 2015a, 287.

[37] Dujmović 2011, 495, footnote 64.

[38] Ibid.

was that Bosnian society never accused her male colleagues of being "prostitutes." Besides, these are descriptions of the world she was living in, "different from the official discourse of male "high politics,""[39] and in which male and female teachers' roles were clearly gendered. Her observation can be used as an argument for better understanding the fears of Muslims to send their children to state schools, because they believed that state schools were places in which girls were turned into immoral women.[40] This fear included boys, as well. The government, for example, often expressed worry for the low numbers of Muslim boys in the trade schools and the reason for this decrease was due to the fear of their families that their sons will lose devotion to the moral principles set in their religious tradition.[41] Bosnian Muslims were slow and reluctant to accepting state schools, because they were afraid that their children will step out of Islam in those schools, and girls were supposed to stay at home and get ready for taking care of the household and childrearing.[42]

It is through men and women's political attitudes in Banja Luka that she also realized the entanglement of religion with nation. There are many relevant examples through which she remarked about the political alterations of her colleagues from the Banja Luka schools:

"For the reasons of Bosnian diplomacy, all the female teachers at my college were Serbs – apart from me. But what kind of Serbs! They assured everyone that they feel completely Catholic, that they speak only "German" and that they think only "Bosnian." Speaking of which, whenever it was due to go with our female pupils to the Serb church or a procession, they were all ill; so that the pupils would not go unaccompanied (there were 113 of them), I had to take them there, for which I have earned the odium of "einer serbenfreundlichen Person"[43] among my superiors."[44]

I argue that this critique can be read as her personal cry for a dismissal of fake intellectualism and that the intellectual elite in Bosnia needed to be "civilized." It is clear from the example that Belović-Bernadzikowska did not call herself Serb, as some authors categorize her.[45] Nonetheless, she often expressed opinions on the South Slavs as peoples that have more things that unites rather than divides them,

[39] Ibid, 495.

[40] Giomi 2015a, 286.

[41] Kasumović 2014, 128.

[42] Kujović 2010, 73.

[43] A Serb-friendly person (my translation).

[44] Dujmović 2011, 494. Belović-Bernadžikowska also often complained of never being paid enough for her work, especially for her published writings, ibid, 490, footnote 46.

[45] This is the case with authors of the acclaimed feminist magazine *Književnstvo: magazine for studies in literature, gender and culture*, where Belović-Bernadzikowska's nationality is "Serbian;" http://knjizenstvo.etf.bg.ac.rs/sr/authors/jelica-belovic-bernadzikovska (accessed 7 August 2018).

which indicates that she was aware of the developing Yugoslav idea.[46] There is one example that shows her aversion of one of her co-worker's behavior. She criticized a male Serb colleague that he openly shows devotion to the Serbian national political ideology and cause, but secretly he acts as the imperial spy and gives the government information on subversive elements among the Serbs of Bosnia.[47] I think that this reveals a strong connection between the mutual development of the concepts of nation and religion in the 19th century in Bosnia. Namely, Mitja Velikonja argues that "the Serbian Orthodox Church is 'the heart' of the Serbian national identity," which has roots in the Serbian medieval history when the Serbian Orthodox Church became autocephalous, and after which came the idea that all Serbs must be "inevitably Orthodox Christians and thus permeated with the Orthodox tradition."[48] In a similar manner, the construction of Croat national identity occurred in the 19th century by enforcing the myth of Croats being "the last bastion of Christianity" against the Muslim Ottomans coming from the East. Therefore, as Velikonja explains, these religious-national myths were taken by religious groups in the 19th century and were conveniently used as an "integrative force" in the Serb and Croat nation-building process in Bosnia.[49] When the occupation of Bosnia started in the summer of 1878, one of the recommendations from the imperial military office to the commanders in charge of the military actions was to pay particular attention to religious questions in the land, most of all, the conduct toward the Catholic population, because of its friendliness toward the Monarchy.[50] Because the Austro-Hungarian Empire namely took care of its own political interest which can be more conveniently understood through the nurturing of imperial patriotism, Belović-Bernadzikowska, who was plainly aware of the Monarchy's political course, criticized so many of her Serb and Croat co-workers. Interestingly, in Sonja Dujmović's research, Belović-Bernadzikowska did not display condemnation of Muslims in Bosnia, but she was very critical about Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs. Belović-Bernadzikowska interacted with Hamdija Kreševljaković (a Muslim), who is one of the most important and prolific historians of Ottoman history in Bosnia and one of the most often cited. She writes about this "intelligent, educated and chaste [nineteen year old] young man,"[51] and is very intrigued by his maturity, seriousness, refinement and tranquility, qualities she thought were characteristic of the Bosniak Muslims. She concluded about Kreševljaković: "It will be a shame if this young man

[46] Dojčinović at http://wcww.knjizenstvo.rs/magazine.php?text=16 (accessed on 7 August 2018).

[47] "The leader of Serbs in Sarajevo is at the same time the Government's spy against the Serbs. That was an exemplary! ... they sell their people and deceive it for money," in Dujmović 2011, 495.

[48] Velikonja 2001, 221.

[49] Ibid, 223.

[50] Imamović 1997, 96.

[51] Dujmović 2011, 497-498.

fails and is prevented from further studying, because nobody [of the school authorities] wants to help him. And here, in the newspaper and everywhere they shout 'Das einheimische Element hat den Vorzug...'[52] – To delude the plain ones! An honest worker in Bosnia cannot advance! Only the one who sells his convictions – that one!"[53] She often contemplated about the uneven integration of all three religious groups within the Austro-Hungarian political and social circles, especially the elites in which she circulated and was able to see their actions, motivated by political hypocrisy. Her own national and religious sentiments were subdued with more personal, therefore, more relevant issues, such as the role she could and wanted to play in society as a woman, even though she was most often reprimanded for that.

Nonetheless, the role of Belović-Bernadzikowska in Austria-Hungary's "cultural mission" in Bosnia is more complex than one might think at first glance. As a teacher, she took part in the schooling-system, an important foundation for the Empire's further political and social development, but at the same time Belović-Bernadzikowska was aware that Austria-Hungary's control over Bosnia was not as careful and controlled as it deemed it will be once the occupation took place. It is possible to see her disillusionment about the real functioning of the Monarchy's "cultural mission" in Bosnia as a place where the highest political officials and cultural leaders are completely, consciously and freely surrendering to acts of corruption: "This is how Austria's cultural mission looks like in Bosnia: it's price is immorality and the poisoned youth of my people."[54] Even though her constant and strong disagreements with such practices were most likely not voiced out in public, teaching, research and writing were activities that she decided were more relevant to focus on.

It was already mentioned that Belović-Bernadzikowska was an expert in folklore and ethnography, and her most prolific work is on embroidery, which was a dearly cherished practice among women of all three creeds in Bosnia. In her texts, "The Croat embroidery style in school"[55] and particularly "Association of female teachers"[56] it is clear that Belović-Bernadzikowska wrote in a Croat national language, which is also evident in the title of the text. This is not surprising, however,

[52] 'The local element [she refers to the Muslims] has an advantage;' (my translation).

[53] Ibid, 498.

[54] Dujmović 2011, 492-493.

[55] Belović-Bernadžikowska 1906, 78-80. at http://library.foi.hr/m3/pregled.aspx?z=100&zad=&sql=SD2DD3%28C9D6%28DDDD6-DDD-SSDD78&od=&do=&B=1&vrsta=&grupa=&H=METELGRAD&X=S02003 (accessed on 7 August 2018).

[56] Belović-Bernadžikowska 1908, 44. at https://library.foi.hr/m3/pregled.aspx?z=100&zad=&sql=SD2DD3(C9D8(DDDD3-DDD-SSDD42&od=&do=&B=1&vrsta=&grupa=&H=METELGRAD&X=S02003 (accessed on 7 August 2018).

Croatia being her native land. What is important for this paper's purpose is that she analyzed the presence of Christian motives in the Croat ornaments in embroidery, church signs such as the cross in many variants, and other Christian symbols, like doves with olive branches, lambs, grails, and Jesus' or Mary's names.[57] This was a very valuable way in which she tried to locate the religious source of influence, that is, Christianity to the particular Croat ornaments style.[58] Reading the end of her article more carefully, it is possible to conclude that Belović-Bernadzikowska sought and found ways not only to include the Croatian national identity into the community of (South) Slavs but to express it in a positive light, too.[59]

As I indicated earlier, embroidery or female handiwork (ženski ručni rad) was prevalent in the entire region. In female schools in Sarajevo, both Muslim and non-Muslim girls were taught the handiwork necessary in civic households, but the emphasis was put on exclusively Bosnian techniques and patterns of embroidery.[60] There is little indication in the analyzed literature to the possibility that boys also learnt handiwork, but rather some other subjects. For example, in trade schools in Sarajevo subjects that were taught were mathematics, history, geography, physics, chemistry, technology and organic chemistry, geometry and geometric drawing, spatial drawing, trade accounting.[61] The given information indicates the direction in which boys (public sphere) and girls (private sphere) were being brought up. Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska herself pointed out in her monograph *Serbian national embroidery and textile ornaments* (1907) that embroidery was most often a female craft "for how can we expect a man to manage and understand the numerous embroidery techniques which are unknown to many women, as well."[62]

Belović-Bernadzikowska's monograph *Serbian national embroidery and textile ornaments* generally shows that each religious group developed handiwork as characteristic of women's everyday practice of that particular community. This, also, demonstrates that her interests in research on embroidery was above all scholarly, about achieving expertise and was not a tool for her to point out, for example, superiority of one national idea (Croat) over the other (Serbian). Dujmović notes that her retirement in 1909 might have been related to her expressions of sympathies toward Serbs (srbovanje),[63] which indicates that she was not a nationalist. Handiwork

[57] Jelica Belović-Bernadžikowska 1906, 78.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid, 80.

[60] Kujović 2010. 76.

[61] In Kasumović 2014, 127.

[62] Foreword in Belović-Bernadzikowska 1907, 9. available at: https://archive.org/details/srpskinarodnive00bergoog/page/n9

[63] Dujmović 2011, 497, footnote 80.

was also one way in which women were continuously directed by society to remain in the house, a tradition that was propagated by the religious communities, girls' parents and the schools, perpetuating thus the split of the spheres.[64] In the "Association of female teachers," Bernadzikowska openly complimented Serbian female teachers on their popular (among women) magazine "Ženski svet" (Female world) and, at the same time, criticizing the low engagement of her Croat contemporary female colleagues in issuing their magazine "Domaće ognjište" (Local hearth).[65] It is evident that Belović-Bernadzikowska used concepts of religion and nation to promote patriotic feelings among her readers, addressing the Slavic elements that bind them together but above all to single out women as important players in nation building. She was trying to send a message of women's irreplaceable role in that extremely relevant socio-political and cultural process.

Celia Hawkesworth puts Belović-Bernadzikowska in the group of "the most prominent Serbian women in the region,"[66] which is somewhat confusing due to the lack of information which would strengthen that claim. Hawkesworth does not specify the reasons why Belović-Bernadzikowska would be called "Serbian" nor offers source facts to support such a statement. This attribute, on the other hand, creates the possibility to think that Belović-Bernadzikowska was inspired by the idea of unification of the South Slavs, though I was unable to find sources or information which explicitly indicate that. Belović-Bernadzikowska was highly aware of the political and social movements in the world, and especially of the modernization of the region, which, in her opinion, was quite relevant for women, too: "Modern woman is a completely developed individual, who is able to distinguish good from evil, and who is capable of being good and just. And the more educated she is, the more decisive and constant she is, and the greater is her strength in making judgments and her respect for duty."[67] It is quite clear from the previous sentence and the words she wrote in *Narodna prosvjeta* that Belović-Bernadzikowska used concepts of nation, religion, and education in order to promote the modernization and amelioration of women's position in Bosnia, and in the neighboring countries. She did so by stressing the values states and state-building (in this case, the Austro-Hungarian Empire) can gain if they trust women to be responsible and independent political subjects and agents. Through such argumentation, one can interpret her own desire to be understood and seen as a modern and above all intellectual woman, a model to others, capable of independent thinking, writing and creating a reality in which women have the potential to actualize themselves.

[64] Giomi 2015a, 284.

[65] Belović-Bernadžikowska 1908, 43.

[66] Hawkesworth 2000, 137.

[67] Ibid, 120.

Conclusion

The analysis of concepts like religion and national identity in Bosnia during the Austro-Hungarian period exposes their intertwinement with gender and education, through practices of schooling, which was gendered, because of smaller numbers of girls attending schools, the different subjects taught there and the stereotypes that were generated around female teachers in Bosnia.

On the other hand, the case of Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska is helpful to understand how an intellectual woman, who was the opposite of the desirable model of woman in Austro-Hungarian Bosnia, perceived national development and its relation to religion. Moreover, I argued that she was aware of the unequal position of women in society, which she experienced herself. Her ideas namely revolve around her conceptualization of modern woman and what such a woman ought to be, i.e. above all educated, out of which other values emerge, such as morality. It can be concluded that she did not find these characteristics to necessarily originate from religion, which opposed her contemporaries' viewpoints, but rather from education and that educating both men and women will produce a healthy moral society. She was most of all conveying a new model of woman through her own example, one who actively writes and takes part in the public life of a society. Apart from that, her notions of modernity can be interpreted as going in line with the nation building of the South Slavs, that is, the new Yugoslav idea, as is evident from her texts on embroidery. Her notions on religion, however, did not occupy the primary position in her political viewpoints, which offers a new perspective for the examination of the Austro-Hungarian period in Bosnia, one that is not strictly confined to religious causes. This is an example in which the concepts of nation and religion in the eyes of an individual were reshaped and treated flexibly, as it should be, for this analysis showed that religion and nation as historical concepts cannot be approached to as if they were a given. Belović-Bernadzikowska was very sensitive to the gendered issues that stemmed from the religious traditions, which permeated the world of women in Bosnia. As Ursula King wrote on what the study of gender and religion mean, I agree that it "is a self-reflexive process which leads to a new, more differentiated consciousness on the part of those undertaking it."[68] I believe that this idea can be recognized in how Belović-Bernadzikowska conceptualized religion and nation through her viewpoints. What is most important, she demonstrated tolerance toward Orthodox Christians and Muslims, in a period when Catholicism in Bosnia was in an advantageous position. The Muslims of Bosnia were often at the center of the debate of "cultural mission," but through her thinking it is discovered that "cultural mission" aimed at all elements in the occupied territory, women among them.

[68] King 1995, 26.

Leila Ahmed made a sharp observation on the gendered nature of the intellectual and social changes happening in Egypt in the first part of the 19th century, with the imperial and colonial politics of the Western European powers in the Middle East and the Maghreb:

"Progress or regress in the position and rights of women has often directly depended on which side of the debates over nationalism and culture the men holding or gaining political power espoused."[69]

Ahmed analyzed the colonial context of Egypt, that is, the discourse on women and their position in Egyptian society, which revolved around the colonial and imperial idea that women's position ought to be changed in order to follow Western European model of modernity and civilizational progress. In a similar manner, the discourse on the improvement of the position and rights of women (especially Muslim ones) in Bosnia started with the arrival of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The main difference was that Bosnia had been perceived not entirely as an Oriental space but one that was supposed to be incorporated again into the European civilizational circle, after long centuries of Ottoman occupation.[70] It is clear from Belović-Bernadzikowska's ideas that, regardless of religion, nation, or gender, the lights of enlightenment in Bosnia were equally conspicuous as its darkness.

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Razotkrivanje austro-ugarske "kulturne misije" u Bosni – Pogledi Jelice Belović-Bernadzikowske na rod, religiju i naciju

Summary

U ovom radu se istražuju polazišta tzv. "kulturne misije" Austro-Ugarske prema Bosni, odnosno, način na koji je taj politički poduhvat Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska doživljavala tokom svog rada i života u Bosni u periodu 1894-1907. Autorica navodi osnovne podatke vezane uz uspostavu austrougarske uprave u Bosni, naročito u pogledu školstva i planova u pogledu "kulturne misije" te kako je ta promjena utjecala na vjersko-nacionalne i rodne skupine u ovom dijelu monarhije. Poseban osvrt u radu dat je razmišljanjima Jelice Belović-Bernadzikowske o njenom ličnom iskustvu u radu sa koleg/ic/ama učitelji/ca/ma srpske i hrvatske nacionalnosti te, u manjoj mjeri, prilagođavanju muslimanskog stanovništva novoj vlasti. Istaknuto je da je Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska kritikovala austrougarski model uprave u Bosni, a bila je i svjesna tada aktuelne jugoslovenske ideje što se provlači i kroz njene pisane radove. Osim navedenog, Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska se zanimala prvenstveno za obrazovno i intelektualno uzdizanje žena u Bosni, ali i šire. Autorica se u radu konkretno oslanja na analizu postojeće literature te dostupnih online izvora Belović-Bernadzikowske.