

## **Abstract**

This dissertation examines educational practices concerning Muslim girls and women in Yugoslavia from its formation to its dissolution. It starts by exploring the dynamic interaction between rising nationalism and religion in the newly unified Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later known as Yugoslavia, during the interwar period, and its impact on educational reform. It also looks at the emergence of new Muslim elite, and their influence on the education of Muslim girls and women. The education policies are examined within the broader context of heated debates about the emancipation of Muslim women in general, while showing how the education gap remained during the entire interwar period. The second part of the thesis examined educational and emancipatory opportunities that arose through the involvement of Muslim women in the National Liberation Movement of the Yugoslav Partisans. It showcases the continuation of the modernist trends from the interwar era, grounded in a new ideological model. Many Muslim girls and women used this opportunity to participate crash courses and obtain basic literacy level. In the final part, this thesis sheds light on the educational reforms implemented by the Yugoslav Communist Party after the war, in a new social, cultural and political context. It examines the party's relationship with Muslim communities and universal changes to education that affected Muslim girls. These reforms had provided fresh educational prospects for Muslim girls while aligning with the party's agenda of assimilating Muslim women into a modern, socialist society. The dissertation also shows that many Muslim women used these opportunities for social mobility and careers unimaginable before.

This dissertation contributes to current academic debates by illuminating the struggles of Muslim girls for educational opportunities in three distinct periods. The research delves into the evolution of educational systems and policies, also showing continuities and discontinuities of prevailing narratives regarding Muslim women in general. Therefore, a key aspect of this study is the exploration of media messaging and its consequential impact on societal perceptions, particularly regarding the representation of women. The thesis shows the influence of transnational factors on shaping domestic perspectives and policies. Ultimately, the research illustrates the struggle of women for inclusion, equality, and recognition in Yugoslavia, with a special emphasis on the indispensable role played by Muslim women and girls in advancing these endeavours.