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Patrons, clients, and friends : the role of Bosnian ulama in the rebuilding of trust and coexistence in Bosnia and Herzegovina
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PATRONS, CLIENTS AND FRIENDS

The Role of Bosnian Ulama in the Rebuilding of Trust and Coexistence
in Bosnia and Herzegovina

PROEFSCHRIFT

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op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof. mr. P.F. van der Heijden,
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FENA	Federation News Agency
FIN	<i>Fakultet Islamskih Nauka u Sarajevu</i> (Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo)
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IVZ	<i>Islamska Vjerska Zajednica</i> (The Islamic Religious Community)
IZ	<i>Islamska Zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini</i> (The Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
JMO	<i>Jugoslovenska Muslimanska Organizacija</i> (Yugoslav Muslim Organization)
MM	<i>Mladi Muslimani</i> (Young Muslims)
MNO	<i>Muslimanska Narodna Organizacija</i> (Muslim National Organization)
MNS	<i>Muslimanska Napredna Stranka</i> (The Progressive Muslim Party)
MRV	<i>Međureligijskog vijeća u BiH</i> (The Inter-religious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
NDH	<i>Nezavisne Države Hrvatske</i> (Independent State of Croatia)
OHR	The Office of the High Representative
OSCE	The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RS	<i>Republika Srpska</i> (Serb Republic)
SDA	<i>Stranka Demokratske Akcije</i> (Party of Democratic Action)
UDB	<i>Uprava Državne Bezbednosti</i> (State Security Administration)
WRCP	The World Conference of Religions for Peace

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INTRODUCTION

Sarajevo was portrayed on TV screens during the 1984 Winter Olympic Games as “a Balkan-Oz – sweet, surreal and dreamlike”(Johnson, 1984: 16). However, just a decade later, it was replaced by concentration camps that had revisited the ‘modern’ world after a 50 years hiatus. This inevitably raised many questions to understand how a country, previously remembered as a land of harmony for several ethnic groups and religions, could change in such a tragic way. How could the same people that had lived for decades under the ethos of Titoist Yugoslavia [i.e., “*bratsvo i jedinstvo*” (*brotherhood and unity*)] display such xenophobic intolerance towards each other, even introduce the concept of “ethnic cleansing”? When the war *officially* ended with the Dayton agreement on 14 December 1995, one of the main questions was now the issue of rebuilding the broken inter-communal relations.

Religious factor has been a common element in attempts to answer both of these questions. Religions and religious actors have been the subject of several scholarly works published in the last fifteen years to examine the outburst and dynamics of the inter-communal conflict. This was primarily due to the role of religions in drawing the boundaries of ethno-national identities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some of these works demonstrated the increasing visibility of religious actors in public realm in post-Tito era; others have interpreted their role as a part of nationalist political strategies (see, Mojzes, 1994, 1998; Perica, 2002; Perić, 1998; Powers, 1996; Velikonja, 2003). They have also been analyzed in relation to their increasing role in post-war Bosnia within the broader framework of peacebuilding initiatives (see, Goodwin, 2006; Mojzes, 1998; Mojzes, Swidler and Justenhoven (Eds.), 2003; Steele, 1994; 1996, 1998, 2003; Little, 2007; USIP, 2003).

The inter-relationship between *the religious* and *the political* has been a common element in these analyses. Hardly any, however, have focused on how the religious actors attempted to define the everyday life of ordinary believers through resources peculiar to them outside the political sphere. This attempt to construct the identity of the believers of respective religious communities through internal resources has largely been omitted.

Related to the second body of research focusing on peacebuilding efforts, trust has generally been regarded as a crucial element for sustainable inter-communal relations.

However, increasing religious belongings have generally been considered to strengthen in-group trust while they maintain distrust towards `the other` (Knack and Keefer, 1997). An alternative, positive approach, on the other hand, maintained either a generalized presentation of the religious actors (Winslow, 2002), or specific cases rather than representing the broader picture (Oršolić, 1998; Steele, 2003).

I aim to fill these empirical and theoretical gaps due to over-generalization of oversimplification by providing a comprehensive analysis of the role of the Islamic leadership on the construction of Bosniak Muslim identity and determining the course of inter-communal relations. Thus, the title of my dissertation basically refers to my analysis on the relationship between ulama, acting at as patrons, aimed at shaping the perceptions and attitudes of Bosniaks, i.e. clients, in their relationship with fellow non-Muslim Bosnians. The latter has been remembered as friends in socialist Yugoslavia and is subject to repositioning in present and future prospects. I chose the Islamic leadership because of three reasons representing their role in changing power equilibrium. The first is the commonly accepted position of Bosniaks as the victim of broken inter-communal bonds. The second one is Bosniaks' increasing role on the political developments in present Bosnia. The third is the increasing role of an independent Islamic Community (*Islamska Zajednica/IZ*)¹, when compared with the Yugoslav period.

My work's empirical originality is based on comprehensive use of internal instruments of the official religious institution, the IZ. The theoretical contribution, on the other hand, is based on my interpretation of the IZ's involvement in several peacebuilding initiatives, as well as its role in inter-communal relations. The study includes an interpretation of initiatives both at the conceptual and practical level. I maintain this focus in light of several discursive instruments used by the IZ. These are mainly religious advisory opinions (*fatwas*), religious education materials, official resolutions and commemoration speeches.

My fundamental argument is that the IZ has generally been in favor of multi-religious coexistence and mutual tolerance of religious communities. Here, I maintain three main mechanisms attributed to Islam and Muslim religiosity to define a neo-ethnic identity and

¹ Hereinafter called IZ.

determine the perceptions and attitudes of Bosniaks on inter-communal relationship. These are faith (here, Islam) as (a) a nationalizing agent, (b) a moral catharsis, (c) as a counter-discourse. These have been mainly constructed in relation to the international community, non-Muslim Bosnians and non-Bosniak origin Muslims.

At the theoretical level, I adopt a critical approach to the current literature on the problem of trust. I propose that the process of rebuilding trust in post-war Bosnia cannot be solely understood through a strategic calculation of the motives of other persons or communities. Similarly, it cannot be considered as a leap of faith in which individuals are expected just to trust to avoid confusion and feel secure. To de-essentialize such abstract conceptualizations of trust, I basically propose a social-psychological approach to trust. This is done by including the dimension of self-perception discursively constructed by the Bosnian ulama through the mediation of social representations.

Furthermore, despite the prevailing emphasis on the idea of rebuilding of trust in post-conflict settings, I propose that trust may not have the unique role in the achievement of reconciliation. I maintain that reconciliation may actually be achieved through alternative mechanisms, which do not only address the self and the other but also the mediating processes between them to achieve a sustainable reconciliation. I present how these alternative mechanisms can re-construct the social-psychology of the Bosnian Muslim community. In the present case, I examine how these mechanisms operate through the Muslim religious elites' (*ulama*) discursive construction of the boundaries of the Muslim Bosniak ethno-religious identity, non-Muslim fellow Bosnians and a common identity of Bosnianhood. These discursive constructions highlight the role of the Muslim ulama in healing collective trauma and overcoming the sense of powerlessness on the side of the so-called victim. They also serve to deconstruct the realms of coexistence, thus providing a viable ground for the maintenance of stable inter-communal relations.

I maintain that such focus will provide more plausible explanations of (a) the possible choices that communities have to establish inter-communal relations, (b) the meaning that they attribute to that relationship, and (c) the construction of the processes or the contexts through which those relationships can be established.

The field and the research undertaken

This research was primarily guided by the fundamental question of how broken trust can be restored in Bosnia. However, my personal acquaintance with the ethno-religious dynamics of Bosnia during my preliminary fieldwork from February to May 2006 not only strengthened my primary critical approach toward the current literature on the problem of trust, but also confirmed the need for alternative mechanisms to be taken into consideration. The discursively constructed self-conception of Muslim Bosniaks' religious and national identity alongside the idea of Bosnia as a common homeland potentially seemed to provide the channels to establish these mechanisms.

My research is based on both empirical data obtained through interviews and observation of religious commemorations, as well as library-based research. I primarily focus on the narratives of the *official ulama* (Zaman, 2002; Zeghal, 1999).² Their role has been of crucial significance with their official power, as well as historical legacy, in shaping the structural and relational framework of inter-religious dialogue through sermons, commemoration speeches and inter-religious dialogue initiatives. However, my analysis further extends to the *peripheral* ulama. They are the Bosnian Islamic scholars adopting an alternative approach, namely Salafi-oriented Islamic views while being involved in particular institutions of the IZ. These actors have generally transmitted their ideas through their publications and sermons. The third part of my analysis has been drawn on the narratives of *oppositional* ulama, who is not affiliated with the religious establishment and adopted a more critical approach in the traditional religious doctrines as well as a more rigorous critics on political issues.

In principal, these interviews and observation of religious rituals provided me a comprehensive understanding of the role of religious elites, who had experienced the war and later involved in the construction of post-war dynamics of inter-communal relations in Bosnia, either at conceptual or practical level. Analyzing the ulama's discourse presented at religious commemorations or in their textual materials allowed me to highlight the rhetorical

² Zaman (2002) adopts a two fold categorization by differentiating establishment and oppositional ulama. Here, I use a three-fold category by combining Zaman's (2002) and Zeghal's (1999) categorization to differentiate non-establishment ulama in terms of their affiliation with the religious establishment.

strategies used by Muslim ulama to influence the Muslim Bosniak community. They particularly served to shape their attitudes and behavior in terms of identity construction and establishing inter-communal relations.

Before elaborating on the structure of the interviews, I would like to stress that during my two fieldworks (preliminary fieldwork conducted between February and May 2006 and the latter carried out between February and June 2008), I involved in as many different situations as possible and tried to interact with as many people as I could. While participating in the *Diploma Program in Islamic Studies*³ during the period of February-May 2006, I had contacts with several Muslim Bosniaks, mainly through participation in several religious meetings. In general, my Turkish-origin was a facilitating factor to arrange my interviews and continuing contacts with ulama and Muslim Bosniaks in general. Some I only met and talked to a few times; others, I had the chance to interact with on a regular basis. The latter included local religious officials and students at the Faculty of Islamic Studies. As my methodological focus is not based on an ethnographic fieldwork, these do not form a significant part of the cited debates or sources in this thesis. However, personal accounts of their experiences and interpretations of the past, present and future of Bosnia have contributed to my understanding and helped me to clarify the framework of my research.

During my fieldwork, I conducted thirteen interviews with members of Muslim ulama, most of which were conducted between February and June 2008. Four of the interviewees held significant positions in the official hierarchy of the IZ (Reisu-l-Ulema Mustafa Cerić; representative for inter-religious dialogue affairs Ifet Mustafić; head of the department of religious education of the IZ Muharem Omerdić; director of the Radio BIR of the IZ Remzija Pitić); five were professors at the faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo (Ahmet Alibašić, Samir Beglerović, Dževad Hodžić, Fikret Karčić, Džemaludin Latić); another four held posts at different levels of educational and research institutions of the IZ (senior researcher at Gazi Husrev Beg library Osman Lavić; director of Gazi Husrev-beg Medresa Zijad Ljevaković; former dean of the Islamic Pedagogical Academy in Zenica Šukrija Ramić; main librarian of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo Asim Zubčević). The basic criterion in choosing my

³ This program is offered by the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo.

interviewees has been their prominent role in the branches of the IZ in charge of inter-religious dialogue initiatives or identity-building processes, namely participating in inter-religious dialogue initiatives (Cerić and Mustafić), determining the structure of religious instruction at primary and secondary schools (Omerdić), and teaching prospective ulama at high school (Ljevaković) or graduate level (Alibašić, Beglerović, Hodžić, Karčić, Latić and Ramić). While some of them are entrusted with administrative tasks in religious establishment (Alibašić, Cerić, Mustafić, Ljevaković), the others could profess a more independent position. I particularly included these, relatively independent, interviewees to examine the possibility of a standardized approach within the IZ and how the policies and narratives of the top level officials are interpreted by other representatives of the IZ functioning at different levels.

While these figures present plurality and fragmentation of religious authority in Bosnia, their profiles also mark the crystallization of the *Bosnian* Islamic thought. While Al-Azhar was the main channel for higher religious education before the establishment of the Faculty of Islamic Theology in 1977, significant figures of the IZ, including my interviewees (Beglerović, Hodžić, Latić, Lavić, Mustafić and Omerdić), are graduates of the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FIN), including those with MA (Beglerović and Omerdić) and PhD (Beglerović and Latić) degrees.⁴

However, plurality also refers to secular education in ulama's career. Hodžić, for instance, received his MA and Ph.D. from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Sarajevo. Similarly, Latić got his MA from the same faculty on Yugoslav Literature following his undergraduate study at the FIN. He got his second MA on World Literature at the University of Zagreb. Moreover, the recent war diversified their educational choices (either Islamic or secular studies) abroad. In addition to his Diploma in Arabic Language at King Saudi Arabia University in Riyadh, Alibašić obtained his BA in Islamic Studies (Islamic Law and its Methodology) and Political Sciences, and his MA in Islamic Civilization at the International Islamic University of Malaysia.⁵ Mustafić concluded his graduate degree at the Department

⁴ Beglerović and Omerdić got their MA in Sufism and Islamic theology (*aqida*). Beglerović and Latić did their Ph.D.s at FIN on Sufism and the style of Qur'anic expressions in 2008 and 1999 respectively.

⁵ He is currently a Ph.D. Candidate at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Sarajevo.

for Asian Languages at Melbourne University. Pitić, on the other hand, got his theological education at Dokuz Eylul University in Turkey.

I planned to meet with two more Islamic scholars, one professor at the Faculty of Islamic Studies and one prominent independent intellectual, writing from a religious point of view. However, the two rejected to meet and referred their published texts as the representation of their views on the subject of my research.

In addition to members of the Bosnian ulama, I conducted two interviews with Catholic origin Bosnians who had positions related to the activities of the IZ. These were Andreja Dugandžić, who worked at the Goethe Institute in Sarajevo, and was responsible for the organization of the subject of *Culture of Religions (Kultura religija)* at public schools. The second was the director of the Center for Religious Dialogue, Vjekoslav Saje. Most of the interviews were conducted in English. While one of them was conducted in Turkish, three were conducted in the Bosnian language. In both cases, a local religious education and English teacher assisted me in arranging the interview and translation into English and Turkish when necessary. Without exception my interviewees were quite helpful in providing information and insights to improve the course of my research. This sometimes included additional meetings and introducing new contacts.

Although relevant modifications were made to the interviews in relation to the position of the interviewee, the interviews were maintained on seven fundamental questions:

1. The social relationships in former Yugoslavia were mainly determined by the dominant state ideology exercised by the unchallenged state apparatus. In the post-war period, we neither see a powerful state structure nor a uniting ideology, either accepted or imposed. Within this framework, what do you think the basis of the new Bosnian society can be in terms of an inter-communal coexistence?

2. Rebuilding trust between the previously warring peoples of Bosnia has generally been considered as an essential component of overcoming this destructive conflict, which includes as well, the transformation of the fragile structures of the country through economic and structural reconstruction. Where do you situate the idea of trust or the rebuilding of trust, as well as related notions such as truth, justice, regard and security, within the post-war scene? Related to that, what does promoting trust involve in practice? In other words, in what practical things should communities engage in order to cultivate trust?

3. Within this framework, how has the IZ participated in inter-religious dialogue and cooperation in terms of rebuilding trust? This question pertains to both the perspective of Muslims whose trust was breached and non-Muslim Bosnians who are anxious about rising Islamic awareness as a threat to their existence and the possibility of rebuilding coexistence.⁶

4. Any discussion of inter-religious dialogue is meaningful to the extent that it is embodied in the harmony between the adherents of these religious faiths. Here, a two-fold problem emerges: (1) the willingness of ordinary citizens to accept suggestions from the religious clergy and (2) the extent to which the discourses or messages have an influence on them. Taking it into consideration that the IZ is one of the active actors in promoting inter-religious dialogue in Bosnia, to what extent can it influence such moral and social attitudes among the Bosnian Muslims, in terms of rebuilding broken social trust?

5. What lessons do you draw from the Yugoslav period in terms of coexistence by referring to (a) the dominant drive for secularization in Bosnia and (b) the position of the IZ in shaping attitudes towards other ethno-religious groups and promoting coexistence? What are the benefits or drawbacks of this period? For instance, what role has the Communist past played in establishing nationalist ideology through the marginalization of religion and religious actors? How has this been transformed during the recent war and after Dayton?

6. Where do Bosnianhood and Bosniakhood stand in all these discussions? What role did IZ have in the identity-building process of Bosnian Muslims (given their position in the discussions leading to the recognition of “Muslims in the sense of nation” in 1971 and the ensuing debates)?

7. From the possible role of Bosnia in current and future discussions of Euro-Islam to the presentation of a Wahhabi threat towards a moderate Bosnian interpretation of Islam, one of the main problems is the ambiguity of the definition of so-called Bosnian Islam. What are the characteristics or political and cultural content, such as values, customs and religious norms, defining the Bosnian Muslims, the Bosnians and the experience of coexistence in Bosnia?

⁶ While this question primarily included sub-themes questioning the sensitivity of the IZ on the losses of non-Muslim Bosnian communities, my preliminary fieldwork provided me considerable amount of data on the perception of Bosniaks as the primary victim of the recent war and their interpretation on injustices to the IZ and Bosniaks when compared to non-Muslim communities. Not to be interpreted as biased, and trying persuade my interviewees on questioning the indifference of the IZ towards losses of non-Muslim, I revised this question. Some of my interviewees, such as Pitić, already referred such issues in response to that question, which enabled us to talk more on that issue immediately afterwards his critics.

The answers given to these questions in the interviews served as the basis for the second cluster of the integrated quantitative and qualitative discourse analysis I conducted. Within the framework of the general problematic of (a) *how the broken social and inter-communal relations*⁷ *can be rebuilt* and (b) *what the actual and potential role of Muslim religious leaders are in this rebuilding process*, my research focuses on three interrelated processes, which I frame in the following research questions:

1. How and in what ways does the IZ (presented in this study at three levels of leadership, i.e. *Reisu-l-Ulema*⁸ as the head of the IZ, muftis as the religious leaders at regional level, and imams as local religious leaders) interpret, support or challenge current attempts of peacebuilding at conceptual and practical levels?

2. What are the initiatives that these leaders individually undertake or involved in to facilitate the rebuilding of social and inter-communal relations?

3. How do they influence the positioning of the Muslim Bosniak community in establishing inter-communal relations through discursive construction of “identity frames?”⁹ What strategies have been used to achieve this? What have been the preserved, transformed or eliminated elements?

To examine the role of ulama in these three processes, I conducted an integrated analysis of spoken and written discourse. The first cluster of data is composed of formal speeches delivered in religio-national commemorations. I chose such four commemorations, which mark turning points in the construction of Muslim Bosniak collective memory:

1. *Ajvatovica Pilgrimage*, marking the Bosniak’s conversion to Islam celebrated in Prusac in Central Bosnia during the last week of June;

⁷ Here I use the terms social and inter-communal separately so as not to omit the *individual* dimension of the question.

⁸ For such religious terms, originally Arabic or Turkish, I adopt the orthography that is accepted and used by the Bosnian Muslims.

⁹ Gardner (2003) defines identity frames as “the various ways in which people view themselves in the context of specific conflicts” (para. 1). I adopt this conceptualization as it clarifies the link between self-perception and interpretation of the dynamics of the conflict. For an analysis of how collective identity is defined in relation to the other, see, e.g., Waisman (1998).

2. *Srebrenica* Remembrance Day, held at Potočari Memorial on 11th of July;
3. *Martyrs Day (Dan Šehida)*, commemorated on the second day of the Eid-ul Fitr (*Ramazan Bajram*);
4. *Mosques Day (Dan Džamija)*, commemorated on May 7, marking the day Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka was destroyed by the Serb forces of Radovan Karadžić;

The second body of data is compiled from the texts of these “power elites,” indicating their hegemonic order (Donhoff, 1978; as cited in Ricento, 2003, p. 615). These are:

1. *Fatwas* and fatwa-like non-binding religious advisories, mainly published in the periodicals of the IZ, e.g., the quarterly *Glasnik* (The Herald) and the bi-weekly *Preporod* (Renaissance);
2. *Friday and Feast Sermons (hutbas)*, delivered by Reisu-l-Ulema, muftis, and imams;
3. Declarations and Resolutions of the organs of the IZ;
4. Textbook for religious education at public schools (*Vjeronauka*) and *mektebs* [religious schools on the premises of mosques].

My decision to exclude other sources, such as interviews of ulama published in external sources or papers that mainly Reisu-l-Ulema presented in several conferences outside Bosnia, is mainly based on my aim to reflect the rhetorical strategies which particularly aimed to influence and shape the attitudes and behaviors of Muslim Bosniak community on inter-communal relations.

Thus, I chose the written sources particularly among texts published in periodicals of the IZ, i.e. *Glasnik*, *Preporod*, *Takvim*, and *Novi Muallim*, as well as *Novi Horizonti* and *Saff*, presenting the views of peripheral and oppositional ulama.¹⁰ Where appropriate, reviews from other non-religious press such as the daily *Oslobođenje* and *Dnevni Avaz*, and the weeklies *Dani* and *Slobodna Bosna*, were also analyzed. These sources have been collected during my two fieldworks in 2006 and 2008 mainly from three libraries in Sarajevo - the library of the Faculty of Islamic Studies and Gazi Husrev-beg library of the IZ and the

¹⁰ These periodicals are published since 1933, 1970, 1951, 1910; 1999 and 1997 respectively under various titles.

privately-owned library of the Bosniak Institute of the Foundation of Adil Zulfikarpašić. I mainly focused on post-war sources. However, special historical periods were also analyzed where necessary. These included issues of *Glasnik* published during the Second World War and between 1969 and 1971, presenting the debates on the nationalization of the Muslim community; and the issues of *Preporod* presenting conflicts within the IZ and democratization process leading to an independent Bosnia during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

With two different, though related, corpus of data representing different modes of legitimization and delegitimization, my research is based on an integrated methodological basis drawing on discursive psychology and discourse-historical analysis. Analyzing the negotiated discursive practices allow us to reveal the forms and processes through which the Muslim ulama not only represents but also constructs attitudes, behavior and collective memory in general through rhetorical strategies of legitimization and delegitimization (Chilton, 2004, pp. 46-47).¹¹ By adopting critical discourse analysis, I further maintain the dynamics of inter-communal relationships entwined in between the text, speech and power¹²

Chapter outline

The thesis consists of three main parts: theoretical, historical and the empirical. I introduce the theoretical and methodological elements of my research in Chapter 1. My research is based upon a critical reading of current literature on trust and takes a narrowed down approach on trust-building within the context of post-war reconciliation. My fundamental argument is that an approach to trust drawing on the decisions of an isolated autonomous individual based on (a) strategic calculation of the motives of “the other,” (b)

¹¹ Chilton (2004) emphasizes discursive strategies aimed at the articulation of “reasons for being obeyed” in terms of legitimization *of the self* (pp. 46-47). He elaborates delegitimization as the counterpart, namely negative presentation *of the other*. For the founding debate on collective memory, see Halbwachs (1992).

¹² See, Van Dijk (1993, p. 253).

knowledge about “the other,” or (c) past experience cannot provide us a relevant theoretical tool in understanding post-war dynamics of trust building. I argue, instead, that a social-psychological approach to trust can serve to clarify how individuals are influenced by “information entrepreneurs” in terms of their choices in establishing - or not establishing - relations with members of other communities. It also points out the potentiality of the same dynamics influencing the individuals’ choices towards a peaceful coexistence between ethno-religious communities.

In Chapter 2, I outline the historical background of my case. Here, I examine how religious actors positioned themselves toward the state, the Muslim community and non-Muslim Bosnians from 1882 to the democratization process of early 1990s. The developments in 1990s reveal the revival of the IZ, which regained its role in defining the boundaries of Muslim Bosniak nation as it had at the very beginning of that historical process.

The empirical core of my research is laid out in chapters 3, 4 and 5. In Chapter 3, I focus on the concrete peacebuilding initiatives in which the IZ, with its reorganized structure, took part. Its interpretation of the peacebuilding initiatives of the international community is analyzed mainly through the discourses presented in the interviews and official texts of the IZ, as well as news and interviews presented in daily press. Here, I analyze the strengths and weakness of the IZ in addition to the opportunities and threats provided by other actors. In chapter 4, I focus on the conceptual level of post-war reconciliation where the idea of peace, truth, justice, respect and trust are imagined and situated in the discourse of the ulama on post-war Bosnia. I first conducted a content analysis of the discourse of the ulama to present emphasis put on the related notions of peace, reconciliation, truth, trust, justice, respect, forgiveness, security, tolerance, and equality. In addition to a significant emphasis on political messages at top-level religious leadership, justice and truth appeared to be the two main concepts presented by the ulama as the preconditions of reconciliation and peace.

These notions have been expressed mainly by referring to the Serb nation and the international community. While the former is seen as having to face the truth of crimes committed in the name of the Serb nation in order to be freed from collective guilt, The Hague has been constructed as the medium through which material and psychological benefits for the victims of the war could be obtained. Here, while the mental constructs of

justice signified both Bosniaks' determination to seek justice and call on the international community to fulfill its obligations, Srebrenica has particularly been used as a commemorative practice providing religious and psychological guidance to Bosniaks.

When compared to the discourse of top-level leadership, we see that the difference not only involves a change in emphasis of the aforementioned notions in terms of frequency, but also in use of more subjective judgments or labeling used by other members of ulama. Furthermore, while the former discourse reflected a more future-oriented projection, the latter represented a greater emphasis on questioning of the past. Consequently, I maintain four main trends through which the ulama discursively constructed their image of post-war Bosnia and situated the idea of trust within it. These are: (a) emphasis on truth as a social catharsis for the victim and the offender; (b) emphasis on justice as legitimization and delegitimization of reconciliation; (c) faith as a counter-discourse to trust; and (d) respect as a hallmark of peace.

In chapter 5, I focus on how sermons and ceremonial speeches have been used by the ulama to cultivate peace through the negotiation of identity. These included both reaffirmation of the Bosnian tradition of the unity of differences and formulation of loci and practices where "the others" can present their "good will and intentions." They are proposed to identify themselves as Bosnians and carriers of that spiritual tradition, with the tradition of neighborhood as one of the key components. In terms of the construction of self-concept, Islam has been recognized as a fundamental paradigm determining the distinctiveness of Bosniaks as a nation. It has had an influence in all aspects of their life, ranging from faith to their culture, as well as tradition and way of life in general. Moreover, it has been presented as a key to their survival. In this context, Ajvatovica, marking Bosniaks' conversion to Islam has been used for the formulation of that inseparable link between national and religious identity. This idea has been further strengthened by the other important religious commemorations such as Mosques Day and Martyrs Day. These have also been used in the interpretation and critique of the past socio-political factors influencing the characteristics of Bosniakhood and their fate in the last century. In attempt to deconstruct the Muslim Bosniaks' collective memory, the IZ strengthened its position as the guardian of Muslim Bosniaks' national and religious interests through not only deconstructive, legitimizing strategies but also by delegitimizing the position of politicians and the international

community. This chapter is concluded with the analysis of religious advisories and the texts of religious education, where the boundaries of the Muslim Bosniak identity was determined with a moderate approach towards non-Muslim Bosnians, particularly in the realm of social relations.

It can be concluded that the ulama have increasingly emerged as an important factor in interpreting and determining the characteristics of inter-communal relations in Bosnia. This is due not only to the identification of religious and national identity, but also to a lack of a strong and unified Bosniak political leadership, mainly when compared to the Bosnian Serb leadership. This is further mobilized by the failure of the international community to fulfill its promises during the past 14 years. While there are critical issues where the responsibility lies in the political realm, I argue that religious communities and the IZ in particular can play a constructive role in conflict prevention and transformation to peacebuilding. Their common-value-generating role allows them to deconstruct the message of peace and provide a moral justification by deconstructing the images of the self and “the other” drawing on respect. This can ensure an overarching common space to be shared for peaceful coexistence. Here, rather than an overemphasis on the intrinsic value of trust by the international community, it would be better to provide suitable ground whereby the structures rewarding exclusivist ethno-politics are eliminated and active cooperation promoted, thereby laying the groundwork for the generation of inter-communal trust.