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IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS INSTITUTE
DEPARTMENT OF CIVILIZATION STUDIES

MASTER'S THESIS

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN THE PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: THE CASE OF BOSNIAN *IMAMS*

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Thesis Advisor: Prof. Dr. Recep ŞENTÜRK
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

_____

Neira OMEROVIC

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore the role of Muslim religious leaders in reconciling the divided society in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their contributions to the process of peacebuilding. Even though religion had been misused for nationalist causes during the war in Bosnia, research conducted in societies with histories similar to that of Bosnia, suggest that religion can be a powerful source in peacemaking and religiously based individuals impactful peacemakers. Inspired by the organic peacebuilding framework (Lederach, 1997, 1998), this research defines *imams* as middle – level leaders and examines their position in the overall reconciliation processes. Based on nine in – depth interviews with *imams* from the cities of Banja Luka, Srebrenica, Bratunac, Kiseljak, Orašje and Prozor this thesis's central argument is that local *imams* are effective religious peacemakers. Compared with the top – level leaders of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ICBH), these local religious representatives have more opportunities to contribute to the reconciliation process in their communities. *Imams* at the local level utilize religious values and use three types of strategies to reconcile local communities: the individual, relationship or structure – centered approach. They affirm the importance of cooperation, relationship building, and rapprochement for the Bosnian society and act upon the improvement of economic and religious conditions, as well as inter – communal relations between Bosniaks, Bosnian Croats and Serbs.

Key words: Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, reconciliation, Organic Peacebuilding Framework, religious peacemakers, *imams*

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INTRODUCTION

Bosnia is a society of fragile peace and stability. The Dayton Peace Agreement has ended the war but peace has yet to break out. A society divided by human rights violations, carnage and forceful migration is not united and unified by itself after the conflict is settled. Moreover, when the perpetrators are neighbors and war criminals continue to serve as policeman and politicians the level of mistrust and injustice increases and engender more entrenched positions. At the end a paralyzed society is created. How to deal with memories of murder, rape and other atrocities and still imagine a common future? The formula of "forgive and forget" is readily dismissed, while "remember and repent", "remember and forgive" and "remember and change" are more likely to be accepted. In an ideal state victims are entitled to full justice, namely punishment of the perpetrator and truth – finding processes which disclose "the truth and nothing but the truth". In the ideal state the sufferings are mutually acknowledged and responsibility for crimes and war atrocities accepted by the guilty side. However, this ideal can almost never be reached in most of the societies. There are too many perpetrator and too many victims which paralyses the legal system. Because the accounts of what has happened are contested, truth – finding commissions, official judgements, punishments and reports do not lead to reconciliation. For these reasons, these societies have to find other ways to deal with their troubled past.

Reconciliation is predominantly discussed within the conceptual framework of transitional justice which developed in three periods. Transitional justice of the first generation, symbolized by the Nurnberg trails, was concerned with the establishment of the rule of law, democratic institutions and procedures. Transitional justice procedures focused on delivering retributive justice through international courts and the international community. In the second stage countries responded to the shortcomings of the previous model by emphasizing the importance of truth over justice. Truth commissions and truth – seeking procedures of the Argentinian model were established. However, the Latin American approach to dealing with the past was termed national amnesia and blanket amnesty. In the third phase, however, the most significant shift

from the legalist, institutions – centered and procedural conceptualization of transitional justice took place.[1]

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission replaced these old concepts of justice and truth with restorative justice. Restorative justice, instead of focusing on punishments, emphasized the need to bring perpetrators and victims together and heal their wounds. The Rwandan *Gacaca* courts presents another trend in the third wave of transitional justice: the institutionalization of traditional practices. While the classical transitional justice literature ignores the cultural and religious potentials in reconciliation processes and assumes that democratic institutions, a powerful civil society and political reconciliation are sufficient means to bring about social reconciliation these two trends recognized the significance of cultural (*ubuntu*) and religious (Christian) values and how they can be utilized for the sake of reconciliation.

Parallel to these new developments in the transitional justice literature, several authors argued for a deeper understanding of reconciliation that will consider psychological, cognitive, emotional, cultural and religious aspects. Louis Kriesberg (1998, 2004) and Herbert Kelman (1999, 2004, 2005, 2006) contributed extensively to the socio – psychological approach to reconciliation while John Paul Lederach (1997, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2015) and Daniel Philpott (2007a, 2007b) brought to our attention the religious dimension of reconciliation. Philpott argues that reconciliation is what religion brought to the literature of transitional justice. Thus, religion offers a new paradigm and an alternative approach to deal with the past.

Religions can be used both to divide and unite civilizations. I will demonstrate in this thesis how religion serves as a uniting force in intercivilizational relations. This thesis explores if and how faith and religious leaders can contribute to peacebuilding in the Bosnian society and in more particular to the reconciliation processes in post-conflict societies. Specifically, this research focuses on the reconciliation initiatives in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina and how *imams* of the Islamic Community of Bosnia define reconciliation and envision the reconciliation process. Moreover, how do *imams*

[1] Ruti G. Teitel, "Transitional Justice Genealogy," *Harvard Human Rights Journal* Vol. 16 (2003): 69–94.

contribute to peacebuilding and reconciliation, can they be called religious peacemakers and if yes what is characteristic about their approach?

In the case of Bosnia the legalist approach has had minimal success in reconciling the Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks. The transitional justice procedures, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia being its epitome, are far – removed, contested by the ethnic groups and perceived as imposed. While the impact of religion in the Bosnian society is often assumed to be negative, the role of religion and religious institutions in the Bosnian reconciliation efforts is not thoroughly researched. Specifically, the Islamic perspective on reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is rarely voiced. The aim of this thesis is to address this gap by allowing representatives of the Islamic community to present their perception and experiences on reconciliation. In this way, this research builds on the previous literature that researched the role of religious actors in peacebuilding efforts in South Africa, Latin America, the Balkans and Europe.

Instead of focusing on the activities of faith – based non – governmental organizations or highly visible religious leaders I chose to focus on *imams*, who I define as important middle – level actors in the process of peacebuilding. Specifically, this research presents the perspectives and activities of nine *imams* who live and work in regions that were specifically targeted during the war and cities in which the Muslim population today does not exceed 40% of the overall population. Kiseljak, Prozor and Orašje are the cities in which Bosnian Croats are the majority population and Srebrenica, Bratunac and Banja Luka cities in which the majority population is Bosnian Serbs. I pay attention to the (religious) values that inform their reconciliation efforts, investigate their personal experiences and perceptions of reconciliation in their particular settings.

My research is composed of three chapters and a conclusion section. In chapter one, I give a brief outline of the religious background in Bosnia and describe three dominant interpretations of the religious factor in the conflict. Reviewing the different interpretations of the religious factor in the Bosnian war is crucial because these different accounts have different implications on how religion is understood to contribute to reconciliation today. Further, I define intractable conflict and describe the

characteristics of divided societies that apply to the Bosnian social reality as well.

Chapter two offers an overview of the different conceptualizations of reconciliation in the literature and a set of elements connected to this process. This section discusses reconciliation from a structural approach, socio – psychological approach and spiritual approach. In this thesis reconciliation is understood as a peace – building tool that is crucial in deeply divided societies and as a process at which center is the building of relationships and social healing. Lederach's (1997, 1998) comprehensive peace – building framework serves as the basic analytical framework to determine the role of *imams* in the overall peacebuilding framework and Lederach's pyramid of leaders.

In the third chapter the research design and approach that were used to collect the empirical data is discussed and the reasons for employing them explained. Translations of the verbatim interviews are presented and findings discussed. I organize the findings under following questions: how do *imams* understand reconciliation, what kind of strategies do they use to reconcile their local society, what are the religious and cultural values and principles that inform them, and what kind of obstacles thy face in their work. Further, this chapter discusses the empirical data with reference to Lederach's peacebuilding framework. I specifically analyze to what extent *imams* can be defined as middle – range leaders and what kind of advantages they have compared to top – level leaders of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina because of their position in the peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts.

CHAPTER ONE: THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

In this chapter I discuss briefly the nature of the Bosnian conflict with respect to the function of the religious factor during the 1992 – 1995 Bosnian war. This chapter gives a broader context for the relationship between peacebuilding, reconciliation and religious communities and is important for the understanding of the specific socio-political circumstances in Bosnia. In addition, the discussion of the role of religion in the conflict should be the first step towards answering the question: Can religion be part of the solution? I outline the three main accounts of the function of religion during the war and the linked assumptions about the role of religion is in present Bosnian society. This reflection on the historical role of religions in Bosnian society is significant because successful religious peacebuilding can only take place in settings in which the religious factor played a prominent role during the conflict and where religions are a vital social force. Further, I define the characteristic properties of intractable conflicts and divided societies and compare the Bosnian conflict and society to these attributes.

1.1. THE DESTRUCTIVE AND UNITING ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE BOSNIAN WAR

In the Bosnian society historically ethnic and religious identities overlapped and Bosnian people in everyday conversation use these identities interchangeably. Since the 19th century national identity is based on religious identity and not territory: "The majority of Bosnian peoples considered religion and confessions a fundamental element for determining identity and individual and collective consciousness".[2] More than this, religious identity became even more important source of communal and personal

[2] Dino Abazović, "Religious Claims during the War and Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Borderlands E-Journal* Vol. 14, no. No. 1 (2015): 1–23.

identification with the waves of nationalism, the related campaigns beginning with the end of 1960's and the dissolution of Yugoslavia. At the political level religious institutions identified with the political programs of the new nationalist parties. The emergence of the nation – building religious actors in the public sphere with their specific rhetoric, symbols, rituals and myths replaced the old communist ideology.[3] The religious rhetoric, the growth of the religious leaders in the media, mass pilgrimages and religious rituals merged with nationalist movements which revived the memory of their great nations through these religious tools. Religious institutions were supported financially and rhetorically by the emerging nationalist political leaders. At the level of society, when threatened by the new situation, individuals started to seek stability and security in their own religious groups. This quest for identity and rising nationalism encouraged each group to search for its lost "great nation". As religion was one of the few identity markers, groups designed their identities around them and when threatened "embraced [religion] explicitly and even aggressively using religious symbols in their act of violence against those not of their own ethnoreligious identity."[4] The religious identity was the most distinctive marker of all three ethnic groups and the new national identity was built on this particular element. But what was the function of religion during the Bosnian conflict? Analyst give three different answers to this question: "religious war", "ethno-religious war" and "the paradise lost" accounts.[5] In their reflections authors have focused on the actions and rhetoric of religious institutions, governments, political parties, groups, and prominent individuals who identify themselves with a certain religion or justified their causes in religious language.

1.1.1. Was the Bosnian War a "Religious War"?

The first groups of historians and analysts are clearly in the minority and view

[3] Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
[4] Paul Mojzes, *Balkan Genocides: Holocaust and Ethnic Cleansing in the Twentieth Century* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2011), 148.
[5] I used the categorization according to Powers, but included in addition other characteristics that the three different accounts on the Bosnian war have based on my own analysis of the literature. Gerard F. Powers, "Religion, Conflict and Prospects for Reconciliation in Bosnia, Croatia and Yugoslavia," *Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 50, No. 1 (1996): 221–52.

the Bosnian conflict through a "religious war" lens. They argue that previous to the war the Bosnians were not religious but with the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the Bosnian people rediscovered their religion, aligned with coreligionists and started to fight other religious groups. Accordingly, the historical religious bigotry, hatred and intolerance led to the Bosnia war. Several authors directly link the eruption of conflict with the religious revivalism which emerged in the form of religious fundamentalism. How deviant their approach is can be seen from the argumentation that Alija Izetbegovic, the first president of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in his book *The Islamic Declaration* laid down a program for the Islamization of the Bosnian state. Even more unfounded is their claim that Bosnian Muslims considered Izetbegovic as their "religious leader" and "not only as a martyr but almost as a prophet, next to Mohammed."[6] These authors point to the presence of clergy and *imams* in the battle field, religious education among soldiers, their cloths and prayer as examples of how religious revival was connected to religious homogenization, mobilization and finally war.[7] Following this line of argument, it is assumed that "ancient hatreds" based on religious differences, fear, intolerance and hatred and reoccurring armed conflicts are inevitable in the region of the Balkans.[8] The origins of "ancient hatreds" are found and explained through historical religious encounters and injustices inflicted by the dominant religious group upon subjected groups. One of the main justifications for this recurring violence based on injustice is the *devshirme* system during the Ottoman rule. While he acknowledges other elements that contributed to the conflict (political, economic, psychological and social) Mojzes stresses that "ancient hatreds" were an important cause. The different nationalities lived in such an environment that "tolerance was often the result of rule by foreign powers, which forcefully prevented groups from fighting each other."[9] Henry Kissinger

[6] Sergej Flere, "Was the Bosnian War a Full Fledged Religious War...?," in *Demitologizacija Religijskih Narativa Na Balkanu: Uloga Religija U (Post)Konfliktnom Društvu I Procesima Pomirenja* (Novi Sad: Centar za istraživanje religije, politike i društva, 2012), 19.
[7] Lenard Cohen, "Bosnia's 'Tribal Gods': The Role of Religion in Nationalist Politics," in *Religion and the War in Bosnia* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1998), 43–73.
[8] See for example: Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York: Picador St. Martin's Press, 2005).
[9] Paul Mojzes, *Balkan Genocides: Holocaust and Ethnic Cleansing in the Twentieth Century* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2011), 163.

represents this account with all its main points. In his article, written in December 1995, he argues that "the [Dayton] agreement will indeed mark a watershed in the bloody history of relations between the Muslim, Catholic and Eastern Orthodox groups making up Bosnia-Herzegovina".[10] According to Kissinger, the Bosnian conflict is about religion and not ethnicity, as the three "historical adversaries" are of the same ethnicity. The political solutions, reached at by the end of the war, created a precarious and instable environment – "a time bomb, not a stable political entity" – and "a mythology of Bosnian national reconciliation."[11] He posits that history has shown that foreign observers could not "[restrain] the blood lust of the parties" and would only be drawn into "the bottomless morass of Balkan passions."[12] Thus, Bosnia is notorious for its "ancient hatreds" which are causes by nothing else but religious differences. This line of argumentation sees religion as the problem and as an obstacle to the resolution of present day issues.

However, there are several problems with this "clash of civilization" hypothesis. In the first place Bosnian war does not fit the traditional definition of "religious war". Esad Ćimić, one of the first sociologists of religion in the Balkans, gives arguments against treating the Bosnian war as a religious war. First, while a religious war assumes that two religions fight against each other in the Bosnian war Christians fought against each other, moreover Christians together with Muslims fought with another group of Christians.[13] Second, he posits that all religions have a common moral framework that stipulates respect for human dignity, human rights and freedoms. Therefore, extreme behavior, which has been witnessed during the war, can only be attributed to individual members of religious communities but not to a religion *per se*.[14] He posits that the absence of democracy, nationalism, and exclusively political motives and profane interests were the real sources of the Bosnian war. Religious leaders and justifications

[10]Henry Kissinger, "Bosnia: Reasons for Care," *Washinton Post*, 1995, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1995/12/10/bosnia-reasons-for-care/4d99c734-5e28-4188-bf87-5d10b5793f33/?utm_term=.dfb0359045ce.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Esad Ćimić, "Bosanska Raskrižja," *Društvena Istraživanja : Journal for General Social Issues* Vol. 3, No. 6 (1994): 611–28.
[14] Ibid.

were used to conceal the aggression and the aggressor.[15] It is insufficient to claim that based on the fact that soldiers were wearing religious symbols this war should be characterized as a religious war. These signs were not worn because of its religious importance but for the sake of expressing cultural belonging to a national community.[16] On the other hand it needs to be said, that condemnation of the war by the religious representatives is not evidence enough that religions were not utilized for the war aims because other religious leaders have given ritual support for war campaigns.

1.1.2. The Ethno – Religious Account

The second account states that the Bosnian conflict was an "ethno – religious conflict"[17] which means that the conflict was not about religion *per se* but religion served as a justification for the war. Ethno – religious conflicts are primarily characterized by: 1) the centrality of the identity which is based on ethno-religious lines, 2) the significant role of religion and religious institutions in legitimizing or justifying war objectives, and 3) the use of religious texts and images in mobilizing the populace. As religious identity is significantly related to nation identification, religion indirectly contributes to the eruption of the conflict. The Bosnian conflict can be treated as an ethno – religious conflict as it overlaps with Kadayifci – Orellana's elements that constitute these conflicts.[18] The Bosnian conflict was an ethno – religious conflicts because it involved parties that defined themselves along religious lines; it occurred in societies where religion is an integral aspect of social and cultural life and where religious institutions represent a significant portion of the community, possess moral legitimacy, and are capable of reaching and mobilizing adherents. They are called ethno – religious conflicts because it is impossible to separate the religious component from the ethnicity.

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[15] Ibid., 615-616.
[16] Peter Palmer, "The Church and the Conflict in Former Yugoslavia" in Ken R. Dark, *Religion and International Relations*, first edition (Wiltshire: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2000), p.85.
[17] Paul Mojzes, The Yugoslavian Inferno.
[18] S. Ayse Kadayifci - Orellana, "Ethno - Religious Conflicts: Exploring the Role of Religion in Conflict Resolution," in *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2009), p. 265.

However, the relationship between religion and ethnicity is different from conflict to conflict and from party to party involved. In some conflicts leaders use religion to exploit ethnic hatreds and in other cases religion is a peacebuilding factor. Digressing from the primary topic here it is helpful at this point to remember what Johan Galtung defines as "cultural violence" in order to be able to fully understand how religion is utilized in these conflicts. "Cultural violence" refers to the utilization of one or more of the six aspects of a culture – religion, ideology, language, art, empirical and formal science – for the sake of legitimizing direct or structural violence.[19] Cultural violence legitimizes acts of violence on the bases of these cultural dimensions and renders acts such as killing or rapping morally acceptable. Similarly, scientists explain this new form of conflict with "primordial violence" which refers to a "destructive conflicts originating primarily from cultural differences."[20] Primordial violence is motivated by primordial sentiments which "may arise from language, customs and traditions, race, ethnicity, religion or region". Furthermore, "peace in the political and economic sense is not desired by the initiators of primal violence because their interest is in total domination of territory, resources, and people, in being able to control the future of the loser's world."[21] The authors explain that "children learn that the values, norms, and procedures of their people are natural and therefore better than other people's values, norms, and procedures."[22] One's own culture and people are felt to be superior, while other peoples are seen as inferior. In this account religion is conceptualized as a conflict – galvanizing factor, not because as compared with the previous account religion is *per se* violent or automatically induce violence and conflict, but because it is misinterpreted and represented in a way that it suits the political goals. Religion, or any other dimension of culture, is used to legitimize goals that are not related to religion and do not spring from religion, such as the nationalist aspirations of the ethnic groups in the Bosnian conflict. Mojzes writes that the unsolved ethnic questions in combination with "ancient

[19] Johan Galtung, "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 27, No. 3 (1990): 291–305.
[20] Wolf B. Emminghaus, Paul R. Kimmel and Edward C. Stewart, "Primal Violence: Illuminating Culture's Dark Side," pp. 126-149, in Eugene Weiner, ed., *The Handbook of Interethnic Coexistence* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1998).
[21] Ibid., 128.
[22] Ibid., 141.

hatreds" and political ambitions culminated in the Yugoslav wars.[23] Within this school the phrases "politization of religion", "nationalization of the Churches and religious communities" and "sacralization of the national" are frequently used to explain the relationship between religion and the war in Bosnia. In the process of "nationalization the Churches", a particular nation is assigned to a religion and sometimes this nation is given a special role in the history of that religion.[24]

Elaborating on this concept in more detail Peter Palmer gives the Serbian Orthodox Church as a case in point. The "nationalized" Orthodox Church saw itself as the protector of Serbia identity and nationalism was channeled through the Church institution because it was the most traditional and persuasive source of legitimacy.[25] For the Serbian Orthodox Church, hierarchy, clergy and believers, the Serbian cause in the war was just because it was presented as a defensive war that will protect the Serbian people from a new genocide.[26] Palmer gives specific instances and statements of Church leaders which reflect their extremely nationalistic and aggressive stances. The example of Patriarch Pavle stating that "a war of self – defense must not become a war of conquest, by which one would gain territory but lose morality"[27] shows the ambiguity embedded in the Church position in the Bosnian war. The patriarch does not question the legitimacy of the Serbian cause but emphasizes that it should not be achieved by immoral means. At the end of his analysis of the activities of the Serbian Orthodox and Catholic Church during the Bosnian war, Palmer concludes that members and leaders of the Churches were "among the most vociferous supporters of the nationalist cause" which made it difficult for them "to disentangle their devotion to the cause of their nation from their devotion to the cause of God" and question the war.[28] Vrcan argues that the war has been a political war, which erupted in the century long unstable multireligious, multicultural and multinational society. Religious and political leaders

[23] Paul Mojzes, *Balkan Genocides: Holocaust and Ethnic Cleansing in the Twentieth Century* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2011), 137.
[24] Peter Palmer, "The Church and the Conflict in Former Yugoslavia," in *Religion in International Relations* (Wiltshire: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2000), 84.
[25] Ibid., 91–93.
[26] Ibid., 93.
[27] Ibid., 94.
[28] Ibid, 97.

realized that they could benefit from each other in the new political setting. With the breakup of Yugoslavia the emerging nationalist political elites realized that religious groups were the potential advocates of their politics, while the religious leaders saw an opportunity in benefitting from a positive relationship with political parties. The new political parties identified dominantly with one of the religious communities and sought to strengthen their position by identifying with the established religion of the nation.[29]

In addition to these developments, national memories and myths were used to glorify and transmit alleged victimization of one's own group while at the same time they were utilized to demonize the other religious/ethnic groups. "In the former Yugoslavia, nationalism does not appear and become more and religion somehow declines, but an upsurge of nationalism goes hand in hand with a religious revival."[30] Vrcan argues that the most cruel and brutal aspects of war are consequences of nationalist political strategies that inflamed religious hatred: "It was not hatred that produced nationalist politics but nationalist politics deliberately generated and inflamed hatred."[31] The primary involvement in the war events by religious institutions was by giving confessional legitimacy to the nationalist strategies of the dominant parties which was possible through the parallel processes of previous "politicization of religion" and "religionisation of politics".[32] Churches and religious communities, more or less, encouraged the war in Bosnia and identified closely with its aims, failing to condemn publicly this violent conflict. They have not used their potential in promoting peace and reconciliation because of their close identification with the respective nationalist cause of their people. Religiosity in this account is described as "belonging to the tribe" which refers to strong affiliation with a religious group but weak religious knowledge and practice. Surveys of religiosity carried out in the 1980's in every ethnic group, 80% and

[29] Paul Mojzes, "The Camouflaged Role of Religion in the War of Bosnia and Hercegovina," in *Religion and the War in Bosnia* (Atlanta, Georgia: The American Academy of Religion, 1998), 81.
[30] Srdjan Vrcan, "The Religious Factor and the War in Bosnia and Hercegovina," in *Religion and the War in Bosnia* (Atlanta, Georgia: The American Academy of Religion, 1998), 117.
[31] Ibid., 117.
[32] Srdjan Vrcan, "The War in Former Yugoslavia and Religion," *Religion, State and Society* Vol. 22, No. 4 (1994): 373-374.

more of its members that regard ethnic and religious identity as identical.[33] Only 60% of those considering themselves religious or associate themselves with a religious institution practiced religion regularly and had knowledge of fundamental religious tenets and doctrines.[34]

This account acknowledges the complexity of the war, religion being one among other factors contributing to the war. However, religion had a divisive function in the conflict because religious leaders made false decisions. Defenders of this perspective on the relationship between religion and the Bosnian war do not argue that religious differences *per se* are the cause of conflict but they state that religion needs to be depoliticized and "the national" desacralized for harmonious and tolerant coexistence.

1.1.3. The Paradise Lost Account

The third account, "manipulation of religion" or "paradise lost" explanation, contends that religious symbols and arguments have been misused to justify violence but downplay the role of religious leaders in the formation of nationalism or the significance of religious differences in instigating conflict.[35] Thereby, the advocates of this account distance themselves from any violence. Advocates of this perspective underscore the presence of periods of ethnic harmony and religious tolerance and stable intergroup relations. In favor of this approach is the anthropological research of a Central Bosnian village conducted by Tone Bringa in 1987 – 8. It depicts how Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats lived harmoniously with each other, maintained their distinct religious identities but at the same time saw themselves as members of the same village community. She noticed that the concept of neighborhood took an important place in interethnic communication and conduct.[36] Bosnian Muslims and Croats visited their neighbor regularly, celebrated and mourned together. Aware of their differences and similarities, engaging with each other on the daily bases they moved between social

[33] Vjekoslav Perica, "Religion as a Factor in Yugoslav Wars and the Peace Process," in *Uloga Religije U Pomirenju I Tranzicionoj Pravdi* (Novi Sad: Centar za istraživanje religije, politike i društva, 2013), 35.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Powers, "Religion, Conflict and Prospects for Reconciliation in Bosnia, Croatia and Yugoslavia," 222.
[36] Tone R. Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton, New Yersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 54–55.

context of unity and closeness at one hand and separateness at the other.[37] An example of strict separateness between the ethnic communities is that villagers highly disapproved mixed marriages. Bringa however gives examples of deep friendships, affection and care between Croats and Bosniaks. Whom the villagers let in their homes gives another example of the closeness and separateness of the community. While they socialized and frequently visited each other in their homes in their immediate neighborhood they would not visit villagers of another ethnicity or religion if they lived far from their own houses. At other contexts, such as for example the building of a house all villagers regardless of the proximity and ethnic or religious affiliation would unite to help. Further, to do justice it needs to be mentioned that religion and religious representatives did not only play a destructive role during the Yugoslav crises. Individuals from all religious communities envisioned a peaceful resolution of the conflict and resisted the nationalistic propaganda. Representatives of religious institutions met during the war and in 1997 all four representatives of the religious communities signed the "Statement of Shared Moral Commitment" in which they condemned hatred based on ethnicity or religious differences, the obstruction of the free right of return, acts of revenge and the abuse of the media with the aim of spreading hatred."[38] Like the first group, these writers are in the minority, especially because it is difficult to explain the role of the religious factor during the period of Yugoslavia's dissolution and the ensuing violence when the role of religion and religious leaders is idealized. While their argument that religion was manipulated is legitimate and important, these writers often lack to address the issue that some religious leaders have contributed to violence or at least stayed silent. Prevalently, religious leaders emphasize this explanation of events. The Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina states: "In this war, religion was misused, but it was not a religious war because it was not lead for the sake of conversion but to destroy, primarily Muslims."[39]

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[37] Ibid., 66–73.
[38] *Glosar Religigijskih Pojmova* (Sarajevo: Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1999), 7.
[39] Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Draft of the Platform of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Hercegovina for Dialogue," December 5, 2015, http://vijecemuftija.islamskazajednica.ba/index.php/2015-12-08-13-41-32/fetve-i-rezolucije/156-nacrt-platforme-islamske-zajednice-u-bih-za-dijalog.

Political scientists and historians acknowledge that the most simplified explanations for the Bosnian war are the "religious war" and "ancient hatreds" accounts. Causes for the Bosnian war were multiple and complexly interlinked, religion being one among other sources for the conflict and one among other legitimization instruments. Powers argues that of the three accounts the "religious war" is the least tenable because it exaggerates the role of religion as much as it underestimates the role of other factors.[40] Instead, he states that the conflict erupted due to the failure of the Yugoslavian idea and the successive incompatible claims of self – determination. In his personal account of the Bosnian war, Powers states that the involvement of religion and religious leaders in the conflict was to a lesser extent than suggested by the "ethnoreligious war" account and greater than defined in the "manipulation of religion" account.[41] The war should not be understood as a classical religious war, but more correctly as a religious war by non-religious people.[42]

It is noticeable that analysts assign to the religious communities different amounts of responsibility in complicity during the conflict. Vrcan, for example, states that the position of the Bosnian Muslims in regard to legitimizing the nationalist political strategies was initially weaker compared to that of the Serbian Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church[43] and Perica's research shows that the calls for an Islamic religious nationalism was less aggressive compared to its counterparts in the former Yugoslavia and that "[u]ntil the mid-1990's Yugoslav Islam was still relatively the least nationalistic and militant organized religion in Yugoslavia"[44]. Michael Sells speaks explicitly about Serbian and Croatian religious nationalism and states that "the Serbian Orthodox Church became a direct servant of Serbian religious nationalist militancy"[45]. Sells introduces the concepts of "religious nationalist militancy" and "religious genocide" to explain the causes of the conflict and to present the role of religion and its effects in the Bosnian

[40] Powers, "Religion, Conflict and Prospects for Reconciliation in Bosnia, Croatia and Yugoslavia," 224.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Mojzes, *Balkan Genocides: Holocaust and Ethnic Cleansing in the Twentieth Century*, 146.
[43] Vrcan, "The War in Former Yugoslavia and Religion," 119.
[44] Perica, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*, 88.
[45] Michael Anthony Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 79.

war.[46] It is a more serious attempt to address the religious nature of the Yugoslav wars but he does not offer a clear exploration of the role of religion. The religious aspect of the war is tightly bound to violence and the notion of nationalism. "Religious violence", "religious genocide" and "religious nationalism" occurred as they were religiously motivated and religiously justified. The clergy supported those who carried out the genocide, programs of ethnic expulsion and the destruction of mosques.[47] A complex religious ideology – Christoslavism – was created based on the Serbian religion, history, mythology, literature, art and culture, used for the Serbian nationalism and utilized to justify the crimes, violence and the Bosnian genocide.[48] According to Sells, the Croatian Christoslavic religious nationalism was more subtle and its nationalism was based on a different ideological background. Tudjman's religious ideology, who was the first president of the Croatia after the independence from Yugoslavia, was that Muslims are a contamination of the Orient and that the Europeanization of the Bosnian Muslims was necessary.[49] Thus, the link between religion, violence and nationalism is differently intense for the two Christian groups, while Sells does not mention Islamic religious nationalism at all.

Table 1.1.3.: **The Religious Factor in the Bosnian War**

	The relationship between religion and conflict	The role of religious institutions and leaders in the conflict	Assumptions and Implication for reconciliation
Religious War/Clash of Civilizations Account	Religion *per se* is the reason of conflict	Because of "ancient hatreds" that are based on religious differences and intolerance war broke out	Religion cannot be a factor in reconciliation
Ethno – Religious War Account	Not religion but the "politization of religion" and "sacralization of the national" are the reasons for war	Active role in supporting nationalist political programs and the justification of war	Religious interpretation and religious leaders have to change, "denationalization of Churches, "desacralization of religion"

[46] Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia*.
[47] Ibid., 79.
[48] Michael Anthony Sells, "Serbian Religious Nationalism, Christoslavism, and the Genocide in Bosnia, 1992-1995," in *Religion and the War in Bosnia* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1998), 196–206.
[49] Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia*, 95.

Paradise Lost Account	Religion was manipulated for the sake of the conflict	Religious leaders and institutions have nothing to do with violence	Religious institutions need to break the silence in case of misuse of religion

Today, the citizens of Bosnia identify themselves more with religious institutions than they did during Yugoslavian regime and religious representatives are frequently present in public debates shaping national policies and public opinion.[50] Religious representatives and institutions are more trusted than politicians by Bosnians and they represent themselves as defenders of their religious communities' national interests. While religiosity in all religious groups of Bosnia has increased, authors claim that religion is experienced as "belonging rather than believing and/or practicing."[51] Religiosity in post – communist Bosnia when mentioned is connected either to religious illiteracy or religious intolerance. However, surveys show as well that a significant portion of individuals in Bosnia who call themselves religious are active in their religious communities, regularly visit the church or mosque, and have knowledge about the doctrines and teachings of their religion. More specifically Bosnian Muslims when it comes to the level of religious commitment are above the average level of the South Eastern Europe.[52]

Concluding from what has been said so far, it is evident that the Bosnian war was an identity – centered conflict in which religious institutions were involved by either supporting or cooling the conflict. Religion, religious symbols, myths and images were used to justify and legitimize the nationalist strategies and the war. To be active players in social change, religious institutions need to denationalize their Churches and desacralize the national. Nevertheless, the discussion shows that is wrong to equate the Bosnian war with a religious war and false to conclude that religion *per se* hinders peacebuilding and reconciliation. To reject the active involvement of religious representatives on the other hand is not feasible because there are various examples that prove the fact. Therefore, if religious institutions and leaders want to contribute to

[50] Branislav Radeljić and Martina Topić, eds., *Religion in the Post - Yugoslav Context* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), xv–xvi.
[51] Ibid., ix.
[52] Luis Lugo, "The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity" (New York: Pew Research Center, 2012).

peacebuilding efforts they need to acknowledge the wrongs and break the silence. The examples given here show as well that different religious communities to different extents aligned themselves with the nationalist cause.

1.2. CHARACTERISTICS OF "INTRACTABLE CONFLICTS AND DIVIDED SOCIETIES"

Armed conflicts in the post – Cold War period have changed profoundly. At the end of the Cold War era violent conflicts have new properties which challenge the traditional conceptualizations of war[53] but also require new approaches to successful conflict resolution in these specific contexts. Contemporary conflicts are nonmaterial and identity – based conflicts, intranational in scope but internationalize as parties to the conflict seek military, financial or any other support from other countries.[54] In civil war contexts two sides to a conflict live next to each other and have more complex and interdependent social and economic relations than is the case in international conflicts. Consequently, this has influence on the intergroup relations and the overall society that emerges in the post – conflict period. In this section we give more attention to clarifying the terms "intractable conflict" and "divided society" and how they are related to the Bosnian society.

The term "intractable conflicts" is used since the 1980's "to describe settings that combine cyclical violence, with long-standing identity-based animosities and social division."[55] These conflicts[56] are historical conflicts, persisting for at least one generation, and resist all resolution attempts. They take place within the context of a long history of social division and conflict. These conflicts emerge from contexts of

[53] Peter Wallensteen and Karin Axell, "Conflict Resolution and the End of the Cold War, 1989-93," *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 31, No. 3 (1994): 333–49.
[54] John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 11–18.
[55] John Paul Lederach, "Spirituality and Religious Peacebuilding," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 546.
[56] Other writers refer to the same phenomenon as "protracted conflicts", "enduring rivalries", "deep - rooted conflicts" or "ethno-political conflicts". See David O. Sears, Leonie Huddy, and Robert Jervis, Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 711.

great injustice and instability and revolve around irresolvable issues.[57] Members to the groups experience "generational and transgenerational division and animosity"[58] and often have "direct personal experiences"[59] with violence and its consequences. According to Kriesberg intractable conflicts are 1. protracted, 2. extremely violent, 3. irreconcilable, and 4. require huge economic, military and psychological investment.[60] In addition Bar-Tal suggests other conditions that complement the above mentioned: a) intractable conflicts are total wars, b) of a zero-sum nature and c) central to the individual's psychological life and the life of the community as a whole.[61] In a protracted conflict individuals live with a constant threat that their life is in danger. Because of the moral, cognitive and behavioral dynamics of these conflicts protracted conflicts are highly intense and perceived as intractable.[62]

The proximity of the perceived enemy and the dynamics of protracted conflict create a deeply divided society with its specific characteristics. Stereotyping, ethnocentrism and selective memory, dehumanization, moral exclusion, feelings of hatred and animosity develop and become imbedded in the social interaction. In order to endure and comprehend these conditions of intractable conflict Bar – Tal notes that societies develop beliefs that form the society's psychological infrastructure. Societal beliefs are "society members' shared cognitions on topics and issues that are of special concern for society and contribute to their sense of uniqueness."[63] Societal beliefs form the reality to a social group, give meaning to the conflict and motivate them for its continuance. Eight societal beliefs are central and they form the psychological state of the divided society. These societal beliefs are about:

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[57] Peter T. Coleman, "Intractable Conflict," in *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 534–38.
[58] Atalia Omer, Appleby R. Scott, and David Little, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ervin Staub and Daniel Bar - Tal, "Genocide, Mass Killing and Intractable Conflict: Roots, Evolution, Prevention, and Reconciliation," in *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 711–12.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Morton Deutsch, Peter T. Coleman, and Eric C. Marcus, eds., *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006).
[63] Daniel Bar - Tal, "From Intractable Conflict Through Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation: Psychological Analysis," *Political Psychology* Vol. 21, No. 2 (2000): 353.

1. The justness of one's own goals: beliefs that justify the righteousness of one's own goals and the causes behind the conflict;
2. Security concern: concerns about the survival of the nation and personal safety and how safety is achieved;
3. Delegitimizing the opponent: through negative comparison to one's own group, dehumanization and characterization with extremely negative traits;
4. Positive self – image: societal beliefs that represent the in-group with positive attributes, traits and behavior;
5. Victimization: the focus is on the harm, injustice and immoral deeds of the adversely whereby the complete responsibility for the conflict is given to the opponent;
6. Patriotism: that generate attachment to the society and country and propagate love, loyalty and sacrifice;
7. Unity: these beliefs underscore the importance of ignoring internal differences and disagreements during a conflict for the sake of survival;
8. Peace: peace is presented as the ultimate desire and end result.[64]

These beliefs form the "conflictive ethos" that underlie the attitudes, behavior, perceptions and motivations of the group. These processes of intractable conflict divide societies and trap them in a circle of violence which is hard to cease by any means. The consequences of protracted conflicts are that they completely impair the well – function of the society from the personal up to the governmental level. Exposure to this type of conflict results in trauma, which is in essence "the loss of trust in a safe and predictable world."[65] The communal trauma of a society and the way it is addressed is highly related to the intractability of a conflict.[66] Another consequence and at the same time a significant element that fosters a protractive conflict is the normalization of hostilities and violence.[67] The status quo is accepted and furthermore perceived as the only solution. Moreover, due to the fact that realities are constructed by the different groups to the conflict and the various members of the post – conflict society justify historical atrocities and rationalizes future violence in different terms, accepting the outer group's sufferings and standpoints is less likely. Parties involved in these conflicts develop a relationship that is mutually exclusive, i.e. members of one group isolate themselves and

[64] Daniel Bar - Tal, "Societal Beliefs in Times of Intractable Conflict: The Israeli Case," *International Journal of Conflict Management* Vol. 9, No. 1 (1998): 25–30.
[65]Ibid,. 540.
[66]Ibid.. 540.
[67] Deutsch, Coleman, and Marcus, *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*.

eschew contact with the members of the outside group.[68] In addition to this, the violent circle cannot be escaped:

> What seems apparent in the former Yugoslavia is that the past continues to torment because it is not the past. These places are not living in a serial order of time but in simultaneous one, in which the past and present are a continuous, agglutinated mass of fantasies, distortions, myths, and lies. Reporters in the Balkans wars often observed that when they were told atrocity stories they were occasionally uncertain whether these stories had occurred yesterday or in 1941, or 1844, or in 1441.[69]

In this context trust, faith and future possibility for cooperation among groups is destroyed. Because the social interaction between out – group and in group is dead the state of a divided society becomes inescapable.

1.3. THE POTENTIAL OF RELIGIOUS ACTORS IN BOSNIAN PEACEBUILDING AND RECONCILIATION

When it comes to the potential of religion in contributing to the reconciliation process the broader political situation needs to be considered. The Dayton Peace Agreement established a fragile political system that discourages cross – ethnic cooperation.[70] To the contrary, the political arrangement of Bosnia and Herzegovina rather institutionalizes ethnic discrimination and division. The DPA created two entities, the Bosnian Federation and Serb Republic, in Bosnia that are almost clearly divided on ethnic/religious bases. (See map 1.3.1. and 1.3.2.) The society is not only divided by territory. Food and water that one finds in the Federation cannot be found in the Serb Republic and bus lines between the two entities are not connected. Fear and division is daily promoted by Bosnian political leaders, specifically by the president of Serb Republic who calls for the separation of Serb Republic from Bosnia and argues that Bosnian Serbs should turn to Belgrade and not Sarajevo. These circumstances have

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[68] Ibid.
[69] Michael Ignatieff "The Elusive Goal of War Trails" pp. 16-17 in Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide and Mass Violence* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1998), 13–14.
[70] Valery Perry, "A Survey of Reconciliation Processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Gap Between People and Politics," in *Reconciliation(s): Transitional Justice in Postconflict Societies* (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2009), 207 – 231.

socio – psychological effects discussed in the previous section.

As the political structure are ineffective in this process, religious communities can fill the gap and be leaders of post – conflict reconciliation. A professor of Islamic Sciences from Sarajevo notes:

> There is no other actor that can be involved in the reconciliation process. I think that the political institutions do not want to get involved in this, the constitution of Dayton is designed so that it promotes extremist and nationalist positions rather than peaceful ways. Unfortunately, this political reality is like this. We cannot expect that a politician will appear who will lead this process and because of this I think that he Islamic Community is the one who could lead the process.[71]

Recent opinion surveys on the necessity of reconciliation in thirteen different cities of Bosnia indicate that the higher the level of importance given to religion by the participant the higher is the probability that the person will respond positively to the question on the necessity of reconciliation as an important social process.[72] In the same survey respondents stated that religious leaders compared to political leaders, are more important actors and should be included in the reconciliation process. Abazović argues that religious actors rather than political leaders have the opportunity to bridge the ethnic divide and therefore should be active promoters of post – conflict reconstruction.[73] If the Churches used their prestige and their strong connection with their nations by defining reconciliation to be a national interest, Churches and religious groups could play a significant positive role in the process of reconciliation.

Authors skeptical of the role religious communities can play in the process of peacebuilding and reconciliation point to several developments that limit the influence of religious communities in peacebuilding and reconciliation. Philpott defines two characteristics of influential religious actors that the religious communities in the state of Former Yugoslavia lack: existence of a political theology of reconciliation and

[71] Personal interview, 16.02.2017, Sarajevo
[72] George R. Wilkes et al., "Factors in Reconciliation: Religion, Local Conditions, People and Trust Results From A Survey Conducted in 13 Cities Across Bosnia and Herzegovina in May 2013" (Fojnica: The University of Edinburgh, 2013).
[73] Dino Abazović, "Reconciliation, Ethnopolitics and Religion in Bosnia-Herzegovina," in *Post-Yugoslavia New Cultural and Political Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 35–56.

institutional autonomy or differentiation.[74] A well – developed political theology of reconciliation defines clearly a set of principles and norms that animate and inform the religious actors in their position to transitional justice, their core doctrines about political authority and justice. The second characteristic, differentiation, means that religious actors and institutions were independent from the regime during the war or during its authoritarian rule and maintained their autonomy during the transitional period. Based on the lack of these features in the countries of former Yugoslavia, Philpott concludes that religious communities could not play a big role in influencing their governments' transitional justice process. We can mention several features specific to the Bosnian religious communities that might explain the moderate influence of the Islamic Community in the transitional period. All religious communities in former Yugoslavia were subjected to the Communist regime that did not allow for genuine religious activities and the development of religious thought. Not only did many high religious leaders align with the regime and acted according to the regime's interests but many of those who acted differently were labeled fundamentalists, a threat to the system and were imprisoned. Therefore their overall influence on the society was weak before the war and remained so in the immediate aftermath.

Further, it cannot be argued that in the transitional justice processes religious communities were fully empowered by the international and domestic community. One reason for this lack to consider the religious actors might be the recent experience of the war and the common understanding that religious actors were engaged in the war and therefore cannot be part of effective solutions. Another reason might be the secular approach many of the international organizations adopted in dealing with the past. Consequently, domestic religiously motivated initiatives were not fully empowered by international actors while the religious communities were not fully mature nor financially powerful to have any influence in their societies. The greatest internal obstacle to positive religious contributions to peace and reconciliation remain the nationalist tendencies within religious institutions, as Friar Ivo Marković notes: "[O]ur

[74] Daniel Philpott, "What Religion Brings to the Politics of Transitional Justice," *Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 61, no. No. 1 (2007): 101–2.

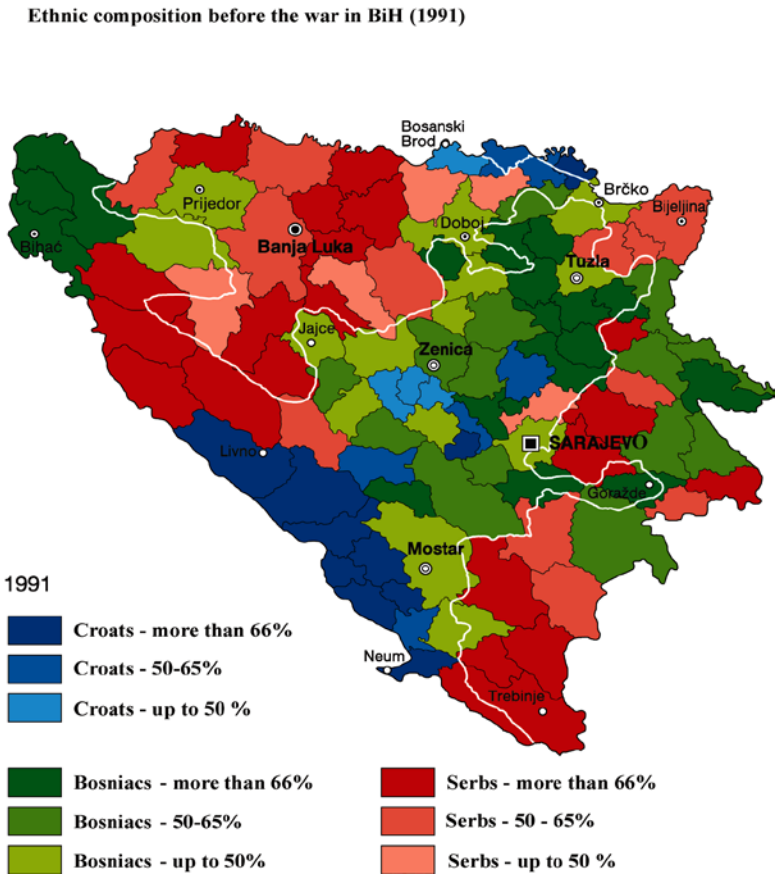
traditional religions cannot reconcile people in the Balkans because they are too nationalistic and they coordinate their actions according to national interests."[75] These are main factors why the Islamic Community are less likely to develop a political theology of reconciliation, or in other words a strategy for reconciliation based on religious principles.

On the other hand, there are many promising developments that illustrate that religion and religious leaders can be unifying forces. International faith – based organizations are frequently described to have contributed to the rapprochement between religious leaders and initiated interreligious dialogue. Such organizations were the World Conference for Peace that tremendously contributed to the foundation of the Interreligious Council in Sarajevo or the activities of *Pax Christi* on similar projects in Banja Luka or Zenica. However, despite the disadvantages that religious communities in Bosnia have experienced during the past there were local religious leaders and indigenous efforts to resolve the conflict peacefully or through relief work, development and social services. The predominant example of peaceful involvement of religious leaders during the war came from the Bosnian Franciscan order. Friar Ivo Marković for example tried to prevent and resolve conflict through interreligious work between Serbian Orthodox, Catholics and Bosnian Muslims. At one point of the Bosnian war he and an *imam* are reported to have approached a Bosniak village by crossing the Croat line of fire.[76] Active during the war, he continues his activities in an non – governmental organization that he founded in war years in Sarajevo, "Oci u Oci" (Face to Face), which is an inter – religious service, and a project of a multi – religious and multi – ethnic choir that developed from this organization. However, not only individuals from the Franciscan order have established valuable peacebuilding initiatives in the war and post – conflict period. *Charitas*, *Merhamet*, Women to Women, *Dobrotvor*, and *La Benevolencia* are three local humanitarian organizations that were established by members of the Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities and provide help for their

[75] David Little, ed., *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 114.
[76] Ivo Markovic, "'Would You Shoot Me, You Idiot?,'" in *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 97–119.

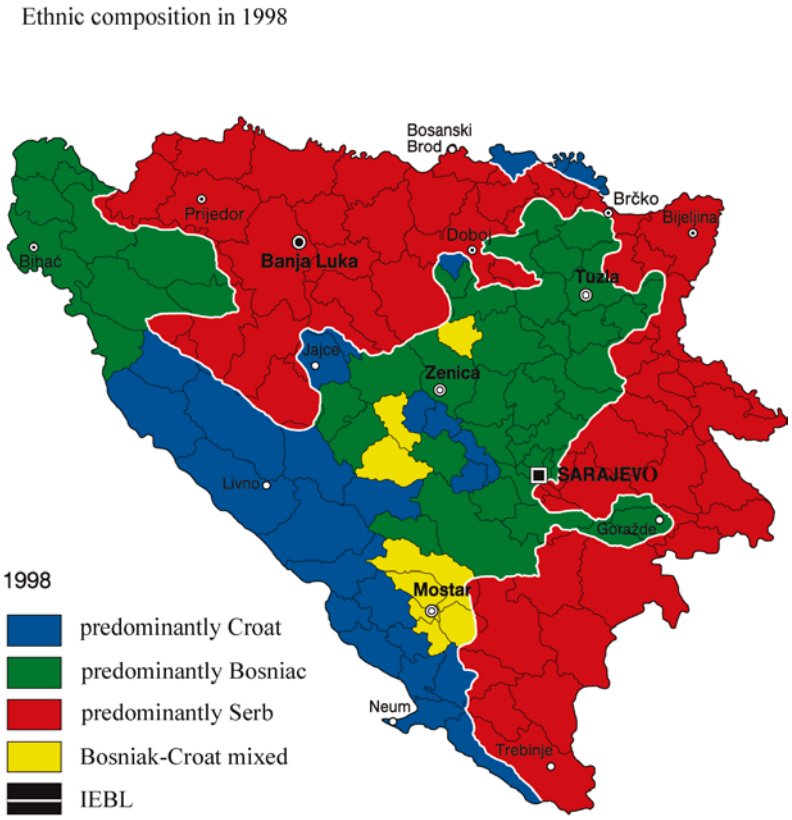
own communities but also help other needy people regardless of their religion, ethnicity or gender. While faith – based these organizations' work is limited to humanitarian aid. In addition to the aforementioned initiatives by Ivo Marković, other more significant initiatives for interreligious dialogue, the development of trust and coexistence include the Interreligious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the International Multireligious and Intercultural Centre, and *Abraham*.[77] Minor initiatives as well can be considered as evidence that religious leaders are open and ready for interreligious dialogue and cooperation that would lead to more stable interreligious relationships. The new publication *The One* by Pavle Mijović from the Catholic Theological Faculty in Sarajevo and Muhamed Fazlović from the Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Sarajevo under the initiative of Mirnes Kovač a Bosnian journalist and political analyst, is a common endeavor to give answers to pressing religious and profane questions. The authors focus on issues that unite both religions and try to show how both religions share the same norms and values on important issues. Another recent example is the Declaration "A Step Ahead" that was signed by the Catholic cardinal Vinko Puljić, Muslim religious leader Husein Kavazović and the religious leader of the Jewish community Valentin Inzko at the beginning of the International Summit on Peace and Reconciliation in Banja Luka.[78] The representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church, however, abstained from signing the declaration and chose instead to be present as observers.

[77] These organizations are discussed in more detail in: Zoran Brajovic, "The Potential of Inter - Religious Dialogue: Lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina," in *Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia - Hercegovina: Ten Years After Dayton* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2006), 149–79.
[78] M. M., "Korak Naprijed: Deklaraciju Vjerskih Poglavara U BIH Nisu Potpisali Predstavnici Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve," *Blijesak Info*, June 10, 2017, http://bljesak.info/rubrika/kultura/clanak/deklaraciju-vjerskih-poglavara-u-bih-nisu-potpisali-predstavnici-srpske-pravoslavne-crkve/11135/ispis.



Map 1.3.1. Ethnic Composition Before the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1991[79]

[79] Relief Web. "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ethnic Composition Before the War (as of 1991)." Relief Web. http://reliefweb.int/map/bosnia-and-herzegovina/bosnia-and-herzegovina-ethnic-composition-war-1991 (accessed April 24, 2017)



Map 1.3.2. Ethnic Composition After the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1998)[80]

[80] Relief Web. "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ethnic Composition in 1998." Relief Web. http://reliefweb.int/map/bosnia-and-herzegovina/bosnia-and-herzegovina-ethnic-composition-1998 (accessed April, 24, 2017)

CHAPTER TWO: RECONCILIATION, PEACEBUILDING AND RELIGION

"No survival without a world ethic.
No world peace without peace between the religions.
No peace between the religions without dialogue between the religions"[81]

This study starts from the assumption that peacebuilding is a comprehensive process which includes reconciliation as its central element.[82] Stable peace does not consequently follow the negotiation of the peace agreement, but is a complex and long – lasting process that should involve all social levels. The contemporary nature of violent encounters require new methods and approaches, unknown to conventional diplomacy, that address human relations. The former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali in *An Agenda For Peace* identified four different areas of action in the aftermath of contemporary conflicts: preventive democracy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post – conflict peacebuilding. Peacebuilding as defined by the Secretary – General is the support of efforts to consolidate peace, to reconstruct the state structure, to advance economic development and democratic institutions and values. However, peacebuilding used here as understood by Lederach and others[83] is more than post – conflict reconstruction but "a comprehensive concept that generates and sustains the processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships."[84] Thus, while peacebuilding includes institutions building, development of democratic governance and socio – economic development peacebuilding addresses the root cause of the conflict, damaged relationships. The term "post-conflict" indicates that conflict has not disappeared but has taken a different form which is constantly

[81] Hans Küng, *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic*, trans. John Bowden (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publisher, 1991), xv.
[82] Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Malden, MA : Polity, 2005).
[83] Brandon Hamber and Kelly Gráinne, "Beyond Coexistence: Towards a Working Definition of Reconciliation," in *Reconciliation(s): Transitional Justice in Postconflict Societies* (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2009), 286–310.
[84] Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, 20.

changing.[85] In some cases the post – conflict lasts for several decades. The post – conflict is a phase in which the entire political, social and economic system is changing with promises of a better future. However, at the same time, the people who emerged from circles of violence stay committed to what is known to them.[86] Therefore it is necessary to create an "ethos of peace" a psychological infrastructure that supports peace and a web of actors that cross – cut all social levels. Central element to this comprehensive understanding of peacebuilding is therefore reconciliation and social reconstruction.[87] Religions and religious actors are essential not only because they are central to the individual and communal identity of parties to the conflict but because they bear a positive potential in their resolution through reconciliatory action and religious values that support these processes.

2.1. A MODEL OF PEACEBUILDING

The understanding of and approach to peacebuilding in the present study is influenced by Lederach's peacebuilding framework. Lederach has several important observations about protracted conflicts based on which he designs his peacebuilding approach. Contemporary conflicts are identity conflicts (community, religion or nation) that tend to be internal but internationalized, are long - term conflicts, usually involve deep-rooted and long-standing animosities that are "reinforced by high levels of violence and direct experiences of atrocities so that psychological and even cultural features often drive and sustain the conflict more than substantive issues."[88] At the same time, as they are internal cannot be addressed effectively by the international community and need to be addressed in different ways. Peacebuilding activities can begin at the top – level and "trickle down" to the general population or start at the bottom and progress to the higher levels. The first is the top – down and the second the bottom – up approach. Lederach

[85] John Paul Lederach, Beyond Violence: Building Sustainable Peace, p.236. Weiner, *The Handbook of Interethnic Coexistence*.
[86] Ibid., 239.
[87] For a detailed discussion of this comprehensive peacebuilding framework outlined by Lederach see: John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997)
[88] Ibid., 11–18.

also refers to the first as the hierarchical and the second as the organic method in peacebuilding. The overwhelming efforts in peacebuilding are driven by a hierarchical focus, from a top-down approach, involving top-level leaders and activities.[89] The assumption is that aggreements at the highest level will move down through the population.[90] However, political accommodations are necessary but not sufficient for stainable peace in these societies. Successful peacebuilding in deeply – divided societies requires new methods, strategies and approaches that are more innovative than the tools of traditional diplomacy. Intractable conflict "is a system, a system that can be transformed only by taking a comprehensive approach to the people who operate it and to the setting in which it is rooted."[91] Therefore, peacebuilding must address social, economic, socio – psychological and spiritual changes at all social levels. The final result of these changes is a reconciled society.

The three central elements of the proposed peacebuilding framework can be summarized as: the time consideration, the pyramid of actors and the web of reconciliation. First, Lederach argues that peacebuilding activities should be understood from a long – term perspective. Instead of focus on short – term emergency oriented activities peacebuilding must be planned and conducted within an overall strategy and vision for sustainable social change. This means that peacebuilding must be understood as a long – term project which nevertheless responds to the immediate needs in a way that will support the overall social reconstruction.[92]

Second, Lederach criticizes the hierarchical approach to peacebuilding and advocates instead for the organic model. Peacebuilding should be understood as an interwoven process a "web of interdependent activities and people" that "links and cuts across levels, types of activities, and time" and "creates a binding effect, holding people and processes together."[93] Because Lederach understands protracted conflicts as a

[89] John Paul Lederach "Beyond Violence: Building Sustainable Peace" in Weiner, *The Handbook of Interethnic Coexistence*, 240.
[90] Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, 45.
[91] Ibid., 18.
[92] John Paul Lederach, "Remember and Change," in *Transforming Violence : Linking Local and Global Peacemaking* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1998), 179–81.
[93] Ibid., 185.

system he advocates for the "nested paradigm" which is an approach that will deal with immediate minor issues and the broader systemic issues of a society in conflict simultaneously at all levels of society.[94]

In comparison, the hierarchical focus on peacebuilding is a top – down approach that involves only top level leaders. This top – down approach often utilizes structural or experiential methods and agents implement policies that generate a common identity, decrease structural inequalities, create democratic institutions and punish perpetrators.[95] In this approach to peace-building there is a gap between those at the tables and ordinary people. The international community sets the standards, develops reconciliation projects and establishes international courts. In this model people have no access, participation and responsibility in reconciliation processes. Moreover, the top-level, "official" process, is far removed from the socio-political and cultural context of a particular society and often has not the capabilities to deliver on its own. The top – level agreements often do not trickle down to the general population.

International non – government organizations and international organizations that establish offices in local societies in order to build civil society and contribute to reconciliation fall predominantly into this top – down model as well. While empowering the civil society sector is a significant dimension of their reconciliation projects foreign actors tend to misunderstand or not fully comprehend the social reality. Moreover, they create dependence on the international community's funding rather than facilitate genuine indigenous initiatives. Belloni's evaluation of the international community's role in empowering civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina is sobering and underscores the main disadvantages of foreign actors: the lack of a comprehensive strategy. He argues that the international initiatives failed to take into account how the understanding of civil society by the Bosnian actors is different from the Western conception of the term. Further, he points to the paradox that instead of creating a stable and independent civil society that would give fruit to indigenous projects, the international projects increased the non-governmental organizations', grassroots' and local leaders'

[94] Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, 55–60.
[95] Weiner, *The Handbook of Interethnic Coexistence*. 194 (Kriesberg)

dependence on international support. Primarily because local leaders lack the experience, financial resources and influence in the Bosnian society they remained highly dependent on the international actors.[96] The top – down approach is not able to explain how negotiations from the highest level can be translated to the overall population that lives in the post – conflict setting. While top level leaders negotiate the agreement the population at the lower level are caught in dilemmas caused by the post – conflict environment.

To the contrary, the organic model involves the broader constituency and is as "a web of interdependent activities and people", which links people from different levels. An organic approach to political processes "creates a genuine sense of participation, responsibility, and ownership in the process across a broad spectrum of the population."[97] The organic model has a more systemic view and understands that the process of peacebuilding and its various components, levels and actors are interlinked and dependent on each other. Changes at one level influence changes at other levels and no one component controls the process of change and can bring about social change in the whole system as suggested by the top – down model. Therefore, Lederach suggests that an "infrastructure for peace" is needed that will cut across the levels and engage everyone.[98] Similarly, Tutu argues that successful reconciliation should be understood as a "mass movement" that effects and involves everyone and changes the hearts and minds of the larger population.[99] Peacebuilding should "[create] a genuine sense of participation, responsibility, and ownership across a broad spectrum of the population". The whole society must take a proactive role in the process and define it according to their needs. Peacebuilding should be understood as "an open, accessible system that rests on a broad base of participation". Accordingly, it is understandable why the organic model is necessary for sustainable peace.

In particular, Lederach offers a pyramid of peacebuilding actors and approaches

[96] See: Roberto Belloni, "Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 38, no. No. 2 (2001): 163–80.
[97] Weiner, *The Handbook of Interethnic Coexistence*, 242.
[98] Lederach, "Remember and Change," 185.
[99] Desmond Tutu, foreword to *Reconciliation in Divided Societies: Finding Common Ground* by Erin Daly and Jeremy Sarkin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), x.

to peacebuilding that identifies three levels of actors: the top – level, the middle range and grassroots actors (Figure 2.1.).[100] Each of these levels of leadership represent a certain number of people and they have their own peacebuilding approaches. In the organic approach top, middle and grassroots agents are interdependent and create peace together as leaders at the different levels cannot generate sustainable peace by themselves. The top – level leaders represent the fewest people of a society and activities at this level involve a handful of key actors. The local middle range agents involves a higher number of actors who are religious leaders, community leaders, politicians and artists. These leaders can use workshops, conferences, artistic work and intercommunal meeting groups as methods for peacemaking. They primarily focus to create a place and venue for communities to interact and communicate. External mid-level agents include non-governmental organizations providing humanitarian aid and development assistance, advocating human rights and contribute to direct peace building efforts. The grassroots level activities affect the largest number of people and grassroots leaders are local leaders who wish to achieve greater justice for their community. Their activities aim at eliminating discrimination, permitting autonomy for local communities and compensation for injuries and material losses. Particularly, the organic model emphasizes the importance of mid – level and grassroots leaders who take responsibility and ownership in the process. In his peacebuilding framework Lederach gives priority to the bottom – up approach because it involve the greatest number of people and sees middle – range level leaders as the central figures in the peacebuilding activities. This is primarily because they are strategically significant and connect the two other levels. These leaders have direct access to a larger population and they can connect the top – level to the grassroots affectively:

> the middle range holds the potential for helping to establish a relationship – and skill based infrastructure for sustaining the peacebuilding process. A middle-out approach builds on the idea that middle-range leaders (who are often the heads of, or closely connected to, extensive networks that cut across the lines of conflict) can be cultivated to play an instrumental role in working through the conflicts.[101]

[100] Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, 37–60.
[101] Ibid., 51.

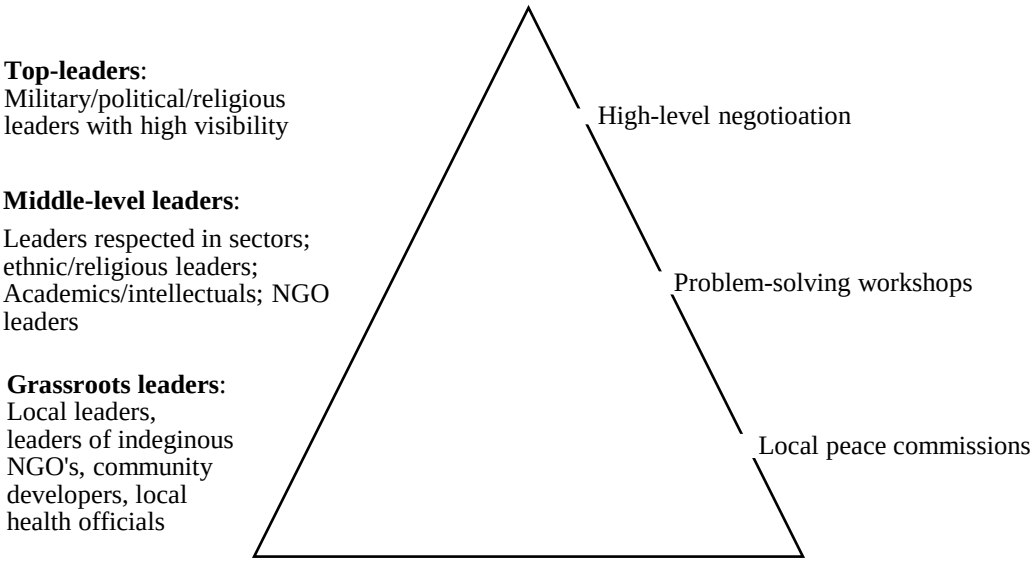


Figure 2.1. Actors and Approaches to Peacebuilding[102]

Third, Lederach explains that post – conflict peacebuilding is not only about smooth political transition but is the processes of social transformation and reconciliation which are comprehensive, multifaceted and multidisciplinary (Figure 2.2.).[103] Most peacebuilding projects focus on technical task of political transition that are related to socio – political or socio – economic concerns. However, this approach does not give sufficient attention to transformative and relational dimensions of peacebuilding which are socio – psychological and spiritual concerns.[104]

Lederach envisions peacebuilding as a process that includes four interwoven processes.[105] The first process is setting the agenda. It refers to the peace accords and the agreements that result from negotiation which can involve a variety of actions that move from conflict to the redefinition of identities. When implemented, these objectives are the political transition process that can include socio – political dimensions such as the process of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration and socio – economic processes such as financial aid or professional trainings to give groups involved in the

[102] Ibid., 39.
[103] Lederach, "Remember and Change," 186–89.
[104] Ibid., 187–88.
[105] Jacob Bercovitch, Victor Kremenyuk, and I. William Zartman, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2009), 186–89.

conflict an opportunity for a new start. This transition process which is purely technical is embedded in a broader process called transformation which is concerned with deeper questions. While the technical task of transition is to remove guns, in the process of transformation the concern is how to define the place and role of military in the new context. The final and broadest process is the process of reconciliation. It is built on the other three but includes the process of building broken relationships. The population is understood as individuals with accumulated emotions and trauma. In addition to this comes the spiritual dimension of reconciliation that sees the people not only as individuals with psychological needs but "as humans on a journey of healing and encounter to restore relations with others within a society that seeks the same.[106]

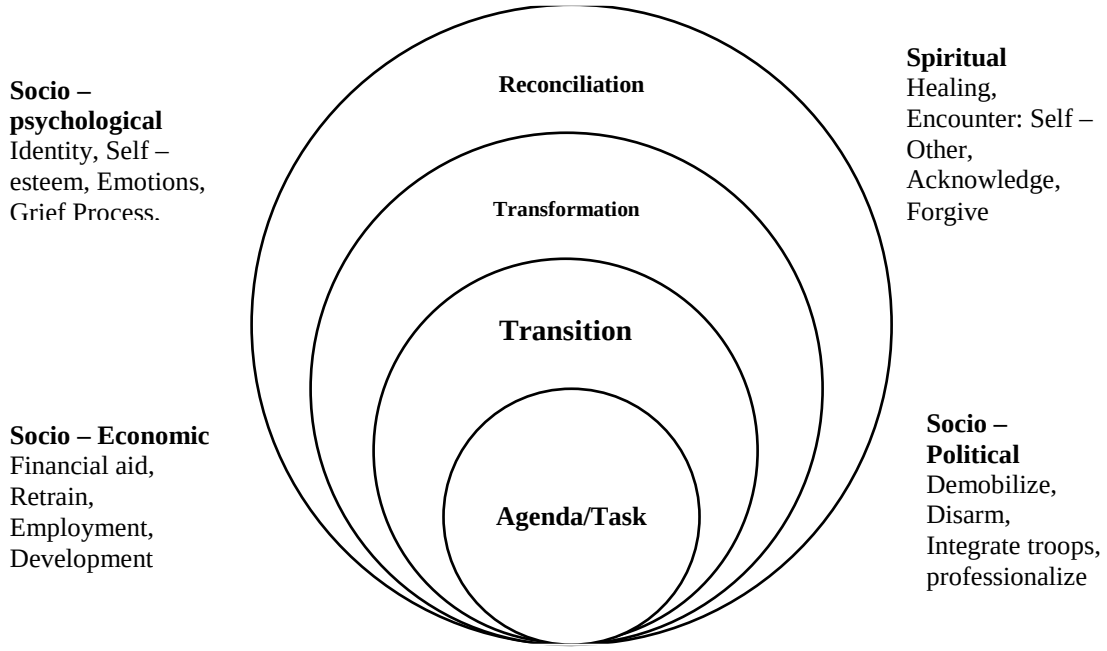


Figure 2.2. The Web of Reconciliation[107]

2.2. THE MEANING(S) OF RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation is the key element of peacemaking[108] and peacebuilding and some

[106] Lederach, "Remember and Change," 189.
[107] Ibid., 187.
[108] Joseph V. Montville, "The Arrow and the Olive Branch: A Case for Track Two Diplomacy," in *The*

authors see it as the most important factor for stable peace.[109] Reconciliation has emerged as a concept and gained importance as an approach in "the age of peacebuilding" and in post – conflict societies.[110] In this literature reconciliation is used interchangeably with "peacebuilding" and "peacemaking". However, reconciliation is more than peacemaking and peacebuilding because it denotes a long – lasting process aimed at changing hostile and suspicious relations between people in a fragmented society. Johan Galtung's famous distinction between positive and negative peace is useful for our discussion of reconciliation. "Negative peace" is defined as the absence of direct violence while positive peace is "the presence of symbioses and equality in human relations … and [the] absence of structural and cultural violence."[111] Most importantly, "positive peace is the best protection from violence."[112] The majority of authors agree that reconciliation is a process of relationship – building between individuals, groups and states: "a process through which a society moves from a divided past to a shared future."[113] Reconciliation develops and expands after direct violence has stopped, political settlement reached and a space for further social transformation created and it is "the heart of deep peacemaking and cultural peacebuilding."[114]

The concept of "reconciliation" is interchangeably used in the transitional justice, conflict resolution, and peace studies literature. In the transitional justice literature the traditional focus is on the themes of truth – telling, justice and reparations. The scholarship refers to this conventional approach as "thin" transitional justice mechanisms because this understanding is unidimensional and dominated by legalism.[115]

Psychodynamics of International Relationships (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1991), 112.

[109] Arie M. Kacowicz et al., eds., *Stable Peace Among Nations* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000).
Kenneth Boulding defined stable peace as "a situation in which the probability of war is so small that it does not really enter into the calculations of any of the people involved."

[110] Daniel Philpott, *Just and Unjust Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 10.

[111] Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), 15.

[112] Ibid., 32.

[113] David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, and Luc Huyse, eds., *Reconciliation After Violent Conflict A Handbook* (Stockholm, Sweden: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance IDEA, 2003), 12.

[114] Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, 231.

[115] Kieran McEvoy, "Letting Go of Legalism: Developing a 'Thicker' Version of Transitional Justice," in

In this legal thinking and practice the rule of law, implementation of respect for human rights, and state or institution – like actors are assumed to deliver justice and the argument is that these actors will satisfy the demands of all parties involved in the conflict. However, gradually the limitations of translating this legalist thinking to societies that have experienced mass violence, unthinkable atrocities and grave human rights violations were recognized and acknowledged. Even whit truth commissions, international and national courts and reparation programs the societies remained divided and peace unstable.

Therefore, the need for community building, dialogue, mutual acknowledgment and other processes that constitute a "thicker" version of transitional justice were recognized and included in the transitional justice literature. Thereby, the theme reconciliation became to be pronounced as the highest goal of transitional justice mechanisms. Researches and practitioners brought to attention the existence of a wider group of actors other than lawyers and politicians, bottom – up approaches and traditional/local initiatives that likewise contribute to transitional justice.

Reconciliation is a complex process because it means that the divided society learns to live together, restore broken relationships, define a common future and accommodate radical differences non-violently. Reconciliation as a phenomenon gained prominence in the field of conflict resolution and peacemaking primarily because of the nature of ethnoreligious conflicts. The discussion on the characteristics of modern conflicts in the previous chapter aimed to highlight the necessity for an innovative approach in bringing peace to contemporary post – conflict societies. Reconciliation is an important dimension of the overall peace – building initiative, particularly necessary in context of extreme violence and a past that involved excessive human rights violations, as conventional diplomacy and peacekeeping operations do not longer fit the needs of these conflicts.

Reconciliation as a concept remains very complex and ambiguous because it refers simultaneously to different levels of relationships, is defined by a variety of

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Transitional Justice from Below: Grassroots Activism and the Struggle for Change (Oxford and Portland: Hart Publishing, 2008), 15–47.

disciplines and is conceptualized and promoted in a variety of ways. One reason for the lack of clarity is that reconciliation is related to a plurality of types and levels of relationships with different levels of intimacy and inclusiveness. Reconciliation is used simultaneously to describe the reparation of political/national and social/interpersonal relations as well as relationships between friends and former antagonists. Each of these levels has requirements and ask for certain measures and focuses on different agents of reconciliation. While political reconciliation focuses on top – level political leaders and on the elements of truth and justice, at the center of societal reconciliation are citizens and groups, their relationships and the processes of healing and forgiveness. Because of this, reconciliation needs to be understood as a multi – level process that encompasses all these different levels and its actors. Further, reconciliation is a concept "laden with theological and political and historical legacy"[116] which means that each society based on its social context and historical legacy has its own definition of what reconciliation means. Even within one society or group, reconciliation has multiple possible meanings. Hamber and Van der Merwe, for instance, identified at least five ways in which the different groups in South Africa based on their concerns, interests and orientations understood reconciliation.[117]

2.2.1. Approaches to Reconciliation

There are various models for the process of reconciliation after conflict and the strategies for transforming divided societies into reconciled ones. Experts in the various branches of sciences such as political and moral philosophy, psychology, political science and international relations, conflict resolution and peace studies, as well as theology engage in the definition of the concept and the correct approach. For De Gruchy reconciliation is an interwoven process of processes at the theological, interpersonal, social and political level.[118] Chapman states that the goal of reconciliation is to transform two distinct relationships: 1. between former enemies at the individual

[116] John W. De Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 14.
[117] Brandon Hamber and Hugo Van der Merwe, "What Is This Thing Called Reconciliation?," *Reconciliation in Review* Vol. 1, No. 1 (1998), http://www.csvr.org.za/wits/articles/artrcbh.htm.
[118] De Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*, 26.

level and communal level so as to enable them to live peacefully with one another, trust and cooperate with each other and 2. between the state and the citizen which involves the process of transforming political institutions, promoting the rule of law and respect for human rights.[119] Valerie Roseaux classified the numerous approaches to reconciliation into three groups: structural, socio – psychological and spiritual approaches.[120] Each one of these emphasizes different aspects that need to be considered and addressed for the sake of reconciliation and defines respectively different elements of reconciliation.

This thesis focuses on the underpinnings of the socio – psychological and spiritual approach to reconciliation. Therefore, I will very briefly outline the main characteristic of the structural approach to reconciliation to turn more extensively to the relationship centered reconciliation approaches. The structural approach envisions that reconciliation is facilitated and emerges with security, democratic socio – political structures and the building of common institutions in divided societies. The socio – psychological approach emphasizes the importance of emotional and cognitive aspects in the process of reconciliation. While the spiritual approach underlines the healing and rehabilitation processes of victims and offenders. Roseaux states that the structural approach deals with interests and issues while at the center of the socio – psychological and spiritual approach are the relationships within the society.

2.2.1.1. The Structural Approach

In this approach to reconciliation the goal is to build political relationships. Murphy defines how political reconciliation is achieved:

> .. processes of reconciliation cultivates forms of interaction premised on the equal respect for individuals and their agency; a commitment to the reciprocal sharing of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation; and an institutional structure is based on rule of law and on political, economic, and social institutions in which all individuals have a genuine opportunity to participate.[121]

[119] Audrey R. Chapman, "Approaches to Studying Reconciliation," in *Assessing the Impact of Transitional Justice* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2009), 142–72.
[120] Valerie Roseaux, "Reconciliation as a Peace - Building Process: Scope and Limits," in *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2009), 543–63.
[121] Colleen Murphy, *A Moral Theory of Political Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

This type of conceptualization of reconciliation focuses on the political level and reconciliation is identified with efforts to further national unity and nation building. This model emphasizes the importance of socio – political institutions and democratic processes, the respect for human rights and the rule of law for the reconciliation processes. Sides that need to be reconciled are citizens and primarily perceive and interact with each other on the bases of this level of identity. Thus, the process of reconciliation brings together political advisories and is successful when all sides recognize each other as equal citizens who respect the principles of a democratic state and accept the political institutions. In their work *Reconciliation in Divided Societies: Finding Common Ground* Daly and Sarkin assert that a structural understanding of reconciliation is of greater benefit for societies in transition. Instead of focusing on the individual their approach suggests that successful reconciliation programs and strategies must focus on the society as a whole where the focus is on the relationship between the state and individual and not the relationship between individuals.[122]

The main actor of reconciliation is the state which is responsible to create social and political structures that will promote reconciliation. Passing inclusive policies, protecting human rights and establishing the rule of law, democratic institutions, a common identity, shared values and principles among the populace are at the center of this approach. Political and economic reforms are the metastructures which create the framework for peaceful coexistence and reconciliation. "The key is not necessarily that the groups are getting along better with each other, but rather that various groups are committed to the same or similar values."[123] In this approach reconciliation is closely linked to democracy and understood as nation – building and the establishment of moral order: "For many deeply divided societies the ability to disagree respectfully in the context of a political structure is the most that can be expected from reconciliation."[124] Thus, the process of reconciliation is understood as creating good governance and political environment and not social or individual healing nor the transformation of

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2010), 34.
[122] Daly and Sarkin, *Reconciliation in Divided Societies: Finding Common Ground*, 187.
[123] Ibid., 199.
[124] Ibid., 238.

relationships between former enemies. Policies that create linkages, democratization, new structures of governance, economic processes, economic interdependence and cooperation, policies institutions and mechanism that restore justice. Institutions and policies are essential to peace – building efforts, but interpersonal reconciliation gains less importance. The model for this kind of reconciliation through political and economic initiatives is the restoration of relationships between Germany and France through the joint project of the European Union.

This approach to reconciliation can be termed "minimalist" because it promotes mere coexistence between former antagonists. Reconciliation is identified with activities that encourage national unity and nation – building. At the center of this approach are institutions, policies and political and economic reforms and to a lesser extent relationships and individuals. Other representative of the minimalist or "thin" approach to reconciliation are Bhargava and Gibson.[125]

Reconciliation according to Bhargava requires only the formation of a "minimally decent society" which is based on the rules and norms of procedural justice. He does not believe that "minimally decent" societies have to overcome hostility or estrangement but only have to agree upon a moral consensus that prevent excessive wrongdoings and endanger procedural justice. Only through those means can a defeated barbaric social formation gradually be transformed into a "minimally decent society".[126] Within this minimalist structural approach to reconciliation James Gibson identifies four factors of successful reconciliation: interracial reconciliation, creation of a human rights culture, political tolerance and acceptance of the legitimacy of political institutions. [127] According to these authors, elements such as forgiveness, apology or acknowledgment are not necessary factors for successful reconciliation.

2.2.1.2. The Socio – Psychological Approach

[125] James L. Gibson, *Overcoming Apartheid: Can Truth Reconcile a Divided Society?* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2004).
[126] Rajeev Bhargava, "Restoring Decency to Barbaric Societies," in *Truth v. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions* (Princeton, New Jersy: Princeton University Press, 2000), 45–67; Rajeev Bhargava, "The Difficulty of Reconciliation," June 1, 2013, http://www.resetdoc.org/story/00000022254.
[127] Gibson, *Overcoming Apartheid: Can Truth Reconcile a Divided Society?*

Other writers acknowledge that structural reforms are facilitators of reconciliation but underscore that effective conflict management address not only interests of the parties as proposed by the structural approach but also threats to identity and feelings of victimization.[128] Moreover, while structural economic and political reforms are significant facilitators of reconciliation, reconciliation as the restoration of relationships and psychological processes are necessary particularly in societies with long histories of intractable and deep-rooted conflicts.[129] The socio – psychological approach to reconciliation focuses on the transformation of previously adversely relationships and on the processes of individual transformation. Thus, at the center are interpersonal relations between the perpetrators and victims, rather than the relation between the state and the citizen. Accordingly, stable peace and successful reconciliation depends on emotional and cognitive processes at the personal and social level. According to this approach, reconciliation starts with the psychological processes and "when the parties in conflict start to change their beliefs, attitudes, goals, motivations, and emotions about the conflict, each other, and future relations—all in the direction of reconciliation."[130] Thus, in this approach, cognitive and emotional transformations are at the center of reconciliation efforts. Bar – Tal and Bennink write:

> We suggest that it is the process of reconciliation itself that builds stable and lasting peace. Reconciliation goes beyond the agenda of formal conflict resolution to changing the motivations, goals, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions of the great majority of the society members regarding the conflict, the nature of the relationship between the parties, and the parties themselves. These changes take shape via the reconciliation process, promote thepeace as a new form of intergroup relations, and serve as stable foundations for cooperative and friendly acts that symbolize these relations.[131]

Reconciliation according to the socio – psychological view is "a societal – cultural process that encompasses the majority of society members, who form new beliefs about the former adversary, about their own society, and about the relationship

[128] Marc H. Ross, "Ritual and the Politics of Reconciliation" (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 199.
[129] Daniel Bar - Tal and Gemma H. Bennink, "The Nature of Reconciliation as an Outcome and as a Process" (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 13.
[130] Ibid., 26.
[131] Ibid., 12.

between the two groups."[132] Reconciliation is primarily a psychological process that involves the change in "societal beliefs". Bar – Tal considers reconciliation as a necessary process for societies afflicted with intractable conflict during which time animosity, hatred, and prejudice gradually developed into "societal beliefs". This psychological condition of intractable conflicts is called the "conflictive ethos" of the society. Therefore, the key task of the reconciliation process is to change five core societal beliefs – the psychological infrastructure of the society – and consequently transform the entrenched "conflictive ethos" into an "ethos of peace". The five societal beliefs that need to be changes are beliefs about the justified cause of conflict, the perception of the in – group and views about the out – group, beliefs about intergroup relationships and beliefs about the future.[133] In the focus of this model of reconciliation cognitive and psychological processes which should take place parallel to the democratization and political and economic reforms in post – conflict societies.

2.2.1.3. The Spiritual Approach

Writers who approach reconciliation from a spiritual lens focus as well on restoring and building relationships but the focus of the spiritual dimension moves the intensity of peacebuilding a step further and emphasizes elements of healing and forgiveness. Above this, authors use arguments that are rooted in religion or morals for the importance of reconciliation. This third approach to reconciliation represents the maximalist understanding of reconciliation because it does not only argue for the establishment of a "minimally decent society" but for more profound individual change that affects the whole society. Lederach uses the term "spiritual" to describe the dimension of peacebuilding that goes beyond the political, economic and psychological concerns and is concerned with the restoration of relationships. Because of the nature and motivation behind contemporary conflicts, such as the proximity of the enemy and immediacy of hatred and animosity, Lederach emphasizes the significance of socio –

[132] Bar - Tal, "From Intractable Conflict Through Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation: Psychological Analysis," 356.
[133] Ibid., 357–59.

psychological and spiritual dimensions in resolving the conflict.[134]

Lederach describes in his other work turning points in the process of conflict resolutions that he attended and he defines these moments as part of a "moral imagination".[135] He thinks that these instances are more important for social change than the application of professional skills. He states that they "make possible process of constructive change in human affairs and constitute the moral imagination without which peacebuilding cannot be understood and practiced."[136] These instances he gives, altered peace building attempts tremendously in various settings and were neither planned nor initiated by professional peacebuilders. Thus, changing a conflict does not require a learned skill, but something else. In the example he gives from Ghana, a word ("father") was sufficient to transform the power relationship between two, for centuries, hostile tribes and resolve the conflict.[137] This simple act transformed the relationship between long-time adversaries and changed the direction of the conflict.

The "moral imagination" is "the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist."[138] As for the example given above, the young leader used the word "father" to show his respect to the older leader of the opposed party with whom his group has been in conflict for several years and with this small gesture achieved that the opposite party opened for resolution talks. I think that Lederach wanted to define with "moral imagination" those moments in which individuals become aware that one small change in their own attitude has great impact on the outcome. The moment they realize this, they become and change their acts and sayings in a way that parties in conflict would not be expected to, they have contributed to the "moral imagination".

Reconciliation for Lederach is a journey and an encounter. The journey goes towards the self, enemy, and God and is "a journey that God calls us to set out on."[139]

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[134] Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, 29.
[135] John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[136] Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, 29.
[137] Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, 7–10.
[138] Ibid., ix.
[139] John Paul Lederach, *The Journey Toward Reconciliation* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1999), 10.

Accordingly, to build relationships and to reconcile has religious values.

Philpott states that the theme of reconciliation is the "distinctive features of religious involvement in transitional justice."[140] He differentiates between two distinct paradigms in the approach to dealing with the past: the liberal human rights paradigm of transitional justice and the paradigm of reconciliation which is embedded in the religious tradition.[141] These are not however excluding or opposing groups. They converge and agree on most of the assumptions but have important differences in their viewpoints. Philpott points out three elements that differentiate this religious approach from a secular understanding and focus in transitional justice. First, the religious approach to transitional justice focuses on building relationships and are "fuller… they include the confession and repentance of perpetrators, the forgiveness of victims, the empathetic acknowledgment of suffering on the part of other citizens, and the overcoming of enmity."[142] Second, the sources for reconciliation are different than from the transitional justice tradition because they are not based on the liberal human rights tradition and philosophy but try to reflect the "vertical relationship" between human beings and God into the "horizontal" reconciliation with other individuals.[143] Third, the most distinctive feature of the religious approach to transitional justice is it's emphasize on restorative justice and forgiveness. Philpott argues that religion has a distinct understanding of justice and forgiveness that can enrich the theory and practice of transitional justice. By itself reconciliation is a form of justice. The spiritual dimensions of reconciliation are often explored from a Christian perspective with its traditional understanding through the notions and symbols of forgiveness, covenant and creation, sin, guilt, grace, salvation of Christ, redemption, love, power, justice and hope.[144] However, other major religious traditions – Judaism and Islam – have their own understanding of reconciliation and have very different approaches to reconciliation.[145] In this context,

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[140] Daniel Philpott, "Religion, Reconciliation, and Transitional Justice: The State of the Field," *Social Science Research Council*, 2007, 4.
[141] Philpott, "What Religion Brings to the Politics of Transitional Justice."
[142] Philpott, "Religion, Reconciliation, and Transitional Justice: The State of the Field," 17.
[143] Ibid., 18.
[144] De Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*.
[145] Dan Bar-On, "Reconciliation Revisited For More Conceptual and Empirical Clarity," in *Darkness at*

forgiveness has different warrants in Judaism and Islam. Counterparts to the Christian understanding of reconciliation can be found in Gopin's work for the Judaic tradition and Abu Nimer for the Islamic understanding of reconciliation.

2.2.2. Elements of Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a process of the search for justice, reparations, truth, healing and forgiveness. These are understood as the main components of reconciliation but it is debated how these instruments are effective in contributing to reconciliation. Book and chapter titles use phrases such as "truth versus justice", beyond "truth versus justice" or ask "Can justice/truth bring reconciliation?" to indicate how ambiguous the relationship between these elements and reconciliation is and the paradoxes reconciliation involves.[146] It is important to realize that there is no ready – made way to reconciliation. Case studies and analysis of different societies have shown that every society has to apply a home – grown solution. There is no single tool that will bring reconciliation everywhere nor is one tool enough to match with the complexity of reconciliation. Based on her review of the literature Santa-Barbara names several elements necessary for reconciliation that she encountered most frequently: truth about the past, acknowledgment of the harm done, remorse expressed in apology, forgiveness, justice, prevention of future atrocities or violence, and trust – building.[147]

Because this thesis starts from the assumption that the Bosnian society is a divided society that is marked by most of properties of intractable conflict as outlined before, the author views reconciliation as a processes that is able to address the socio – psychological issues typical for intractable conflicts. We therefore define the readiness for a change in identity so as to include the other and regard or empathy to the suffering of the out – group as important elements of reconciliation. In addition to this, because the central focus of this thesis are religious leaders of the Islamic Community attention

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Noon: War Crimes, Genocides and Memories (Sarajevo: Center for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies, 2007), 68.

[146] Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*.

[147] Joanna Santa-Barbara, "Reconciliation," in *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 173–86.

is given to elements that are derived by religious traditions. These are restorative justice and forgiveness, but in this thesis I will only focus on the second element.

2.2.2.1. Victimization, Rehumanization and Accommodation of Identity

According to Montville there are three main elements of victimhood which are: a history of violent, traumatic aggression and loss; a conviction that the aggression was unjustified by any standard; and an often unuttered fear on the part of the victim group that the aggressor will strike again at some feasible time in the future."[148] Victimhood is an element that maintains the conflict and only through cognitive and emotional changes can this circle be stopped. Changing the way groups within a divided society perceive and define the in – group and the out – group and their mutual relationship is an important dimension of reconciliation. Overcoming victimization in the in – group and rehumanizing the out – group are challenging but crucial reconciliation elements. During a conflict parties develop an image of the "threatening other" and uphold this sense of the other in order to be able to have a stable sense of oneself.

Herbert Kelman, relying on the conceptualization of Nadim Rouhana, defines reconciliation as one of the three types of peacemaking in interethnic or international conflicts: conflict settlement, conflict resolution and reconciliation.[149] While all three processes teach societies how to live together and negotiate their social environment, he sees reconciliation as a distinct process of peacemaking that has a distinct goal unmet by conflict settlement and conflict resolution but still related to the two other process.[150] Reconciliation focuses on the "accommodation of identity" and is defined by him as a process of negotiating identity:

> While conflict settlement involves a mutual accommodation of the parties' interests, conflict resolution involves an accommodation in their relationship and

[148] Joseph V. Montville, "The Healing Function in Political Conflict Resolution," in *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice Integration and Application* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), 113.
[149] Herbert C. Kelman, "Interests, Relationships, Identities: Three Central Issues for Individuals and Groups in Negotiating Their Social Environment," *Annual Reviews* Vol. 57 (2006): 1–26.
[150] Herbert C. Kelman, "Reconciliation as Identity Change: A Social- Psychological Perspective," in *From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 114.

reconciliation an accommodation of their identities.[151]

In the process of conflict settlement parties discuss a common agreement of their interest and their power positions. Conflict resolution creates a durable and pragmatic relationship between the two groups in which they accommodate each parties' needs and fears recognizing that peace and cooperation is in their interest. During this process, the relationship has changed but is not internalized in the respective worldviews and behavior of parties.[152] However, reconciliation goes beyond this. Kelman connects the internalization of the new relationship to the transformation of each parties' identities which he states is a central feature in the process of reconciliation.

Therefore, reconciliation, conceptualized in this way, goes beyond strategic partnership and is understood as the internalization of the other, the new relationship and behavior in one's own identity. Moreover, the primary characteristic of that change in identity is removal of the negation or exclusion of the other as a central component of each party's own identity.[153] While in the context of protracted conflict, antagonist groups define their own identity in a way to delegitimize the identity claims of the opposed group and shape the national identity of the other that it supports their own identity claims. An example of how identity manipulations serve the legitimization of the conflict and enduring antagonism, is the claim that Bosnian Muslims are Serbs/Croats, who converted to Islam during the Ottoman conquest. Thus, the important elements of successful reconciliation "is that each party revise its own identity just enough to accommodate the identity of the other"[154] which is a huge task for parties in divided societies. During the process of reconciliation former enemies come to accept each other not only diplomatically but psychologically.[155] This leads to a certain level of acceptance of the other and the acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the others narratives. That is why Kelman argues that the quality and durability of change in the

[151] Kelman, "Interests, Relationships, Identities: Three Central Issues for Individuals and Groups in Negotiating Their Social Environment," 22.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid., 23.
[154] Kelman, "Reconciliation as Identity Change: A Social- Psychological Perspective," 119.
[155] Kelman, "Transforming the Relationship Between Former Enemies: A Social-Psychological Analysis", p. 198.

relationships and attitudes between and towards former adversaries is highest in the peacemaking process of reconciliation.

Similar to this element of reconciliation which involves the transformation of identity so as to accommodate the identity of the adversary group, Kriesberg regards as important what he termed "showing regard". He uses the term "regard" to capture all the actions and expressions that recognize the humanity and identity of the opposed group.[156] The three major types of actions that demonstrate regard are respectful recognition of the other, friendly social interaction, and apology by the perpetrator and forgiveness by the victims.[157]

2.2.2.2. Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the component that carries spiritual – moral meaning and is one of the most challenging dimensions of reconciliation. Forgiveness is a religious phenomenon present in all Abrahamic religions but when it comes to conflict resolution and reconciliation literature most insight about the theme of forgiveness comes from the Christian tradition.[158] Proponents consider forgiveness as the central element in genuine reconciliation due to its restorative, transformative and healing functions. Forgiveness is the opposite of vengeance or resentment and is considered to be directly related to reconciliation processes.[159] However, there should be good reasons to forgive.

Murphy defines forgiveness as the overcoming of resentment on the basis of moral grounds which are consistent with self – respect, respect for others and the moral order.[160] In addition to this, Hampton claims that forgiveness is "the decision to see a wrongdoer in a new, more favorable light" based on a revised "judgement of the person himself - where that person is understood to be something other than or more than the

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[156] Louis Kriesberg, "Comparing Reconciliation Action within and Between Countries," in *From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 84.
[157] Ibid., 102.
[158] Donald W. Shriver, *An Ethic For Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
[159] Ervin Staub, "Genocide and Mass Killing: Origins, Prevention, Healing and Reconciliation," *International Society of Political Psychology* Vol. 21, No. 2 (2000): 367–82.
[160] Jeffrie G. Murphy and Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

character traits of which she does not approve."[161] Thus, the wrongdoer should be understood separate from his act. A new way of understanding forgiveness thus is related to the offended person's ability to see the offender and the past in a new perspective. In this process of forgiveness the offended alters his understanding of the other side. The accent is at reframing and understanding the past, not forgetting. The goal is to differentiate between the deed of the offender and the person and forgive the person without forgetting the evil he committed. Forgiveness is primarily a matter of changing how one *feels* with respect to a person who has done an injury and not treating him less harshly for what he has done.[162] Overcoming the feeling of resentment is forgiveness, while acting less harshly given an evil act is mercy:

> Because I have ceased to hate the person who has wronged me it does not follow that I act inconsistently if I still advocate his being forced to pay compensation for the harm he has done or his being forced to undergo punishment for his wrongdoing - that he, in short, get his just deserts.[163]

Another advantage of forgiveness is its orientation towards the future and not the past. As Bishop Desmond Tutu claims that "in the act of forgiveness we are declaring our faith in the future of a relationship and in the capacity of the wrongdoer to make a new beginning."[164]

In *Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* Shriver writes about the need for forgiveness in the political domain. He identifies the following steps as necessary for forgiveness and reconciliation: (1) the open naming of wrong, (2) the drawing back from revenge, (3) the development of empathy for the wrongdoer, and (4) the extending of a tentative hand toward renewed community still in the future.[165] For Auerbach forgiveness is an important and in cases of mass atrocities a necessary condition for full and genuine reconciliation. However, forgiveness is only possible when the two sides agree upon the identity of the perpetrator.[166] Similarly, Tutu argues that confession is

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[161] Ibid., 84–85.
[162] Ibid., 162–67.
[163] Ibid., 33.
[164] M. Tutu Desmond, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 273.
[165] Donald W. Shriver, "Is There Forgiveness in Politics? Germany, Vietnam, and America," in *Exploring Forgiveness* (London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 136.
[166] Yehudith Auerbach, "The Role of Forgiveness in Reconciliation" (New York: Oxford University Press,

sincere and true forgiveness can be achieved only if it comes along with material reparation.[167] At the center of the transformation of the South African society from apartheid to democracy stood the Truth and Reconciliation Commission built on the two principles of forgiveness and reconciliation. According to Tutu the cycle of reprisal and counter reprisal could only be broken via these elements because with forgiveness victims give away their right to pay back what was done to them.[168] Forgiving has a therapeutic function for the victim and offers a chance to repair the broken relationship as well. While there are good reasons to forgive, forgiveness needs to be deserved by offenders and other conditions fulfilled.

Critiques do not regard forgiveness as a necessary dimension of the reconciliation process while others question the consecutive relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation. Even though in theory the act of forgiveness does not advocate the absence of punishment for inflicted pain, Minow asserts that when translated into practice forgiveness produces exemption from punishment and when adopted by governments institutionalizes forgetfulness and sacrifices justice.[169] Correspondingly, forgiveness, mentioned in the context of reconciliation, is put at the same footing with a culture of impunity, amnesia, and "cheap reconciliation". Therefore, these authors emphasize the importance of acknowledgment and apology as necessary steps before forgiveness.

2.3. RELIGION AND PEACEBUILDING

The religious factor neglected by policy – makers, and if considered predominantly understood as a divisive force in global politics, gained prominence in the last two decades as a positive force in conflict settlement and conflict transformation. While it has been extensively reported about prominent religious figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King or Archbishop Desmond Tutu who contributed to

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2004), 157.
[167] Desmond, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 208.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide and Mass Violence*, 15–16.

socio – political changes, other religiously inspired actors who have contributed to peace are less well known. The groundbreaking work *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* emphasizes the need for the reevaluation of the role of religion in politics and extensively examines case studies in which faith – based initiatives and their spiritual dimensions contributed to the resolution of conflicts. In the second part of the book the authors outline contributions of religious networks such as the Moral Re-Armament, *Pax Christi*, World Council of Churches or International Fellowship of Reconciliation contributions to the Franco – German reconciliation, the Quaker conciliation activities in Nigeria or the role of the Churches in revolutions of 1989 East Germany, the Philippines or Apartheid South Africa and their peaceful settlement. Authors outline the values, focuses and strategies typical to the "religious response" to conflicts. Another influential work on the role of religion in conflict and peace, written more from a theoretical perspective is *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*. The link between religion and violence is *ambivalent* and not straightforward because religious actors are capable to stir conflict and violence under certain circumstances but at other times successfully mitigate violence. Appleby uses the terms "religious militants" when he refers to religious extremists who instigated violence but as well for religious peacemakers who dedicate their lives and wellbeing to the peaceful resolution of conflicts, harmony and tolerance in their societies. Appleby uses the language of "strong" and "weak" religion to make a point about the relationship between religion and violence.[170] He uses these attributes in two ways. In the first usage, "strong" religion refers to a religion that has well developed and stable institutions and its adherents are "literate" in the doctrinal and moral teachings and devoted to its practice. "Weak" religion is one in which the people

> retain meaningful contact only with vestiges of the broader religious worldview and network of meanings and resources, in which they are isolated from one another and from education and spiritual – moral exemplars and in which ethnic, nationalist secular – liberal and other worldviews and ideologies have free rein to shape the meaning of those vestiges.[171]

In this way, "weak" religious communities are vulnerable for external

[170] R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred : Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 77–78.
[171] Ibid., 77.

manipulation such as nationalists who use the symbolic meaning and social force of religion to justify their cause. Apart from the religious literacy, interpreters of religion can make religion "strong" or "weak". Religious fundamentalists are not weak when it comes to literacy, but they weaken the full capacity of religion because they legitimize intolerance and violence against others. In this way they are weak religions. Therefore religion and religiosity cannot be *per se* the root cause for conflicts but the interpretation of religion influences the relationship between religion and violence. While Appleby acknowledges the role of religion in conflict he focuses more on positive contributions of religion to peacebuilding and sees it as a new form of conflict transformation that needs greater attention and encouragement.

Peace building and reconciliation are among the concepts in social sciences that are deeply rooted in theology. The relationship between religion and reconciliation and the religious conception of reconciliation application to the political and social life has been analyzed and studied extensively from a Christian perspective. In fact, the most salient authors on reconciliation have a religious background and propose reconciliation as a form of conflict resolution informed and inspired by reconciliation as a theological theme. Reconciliation is at the center of all religions and in essence it means overcoming alienation and estrangement between God and man, man and man, and man with all other creation. Consequently, De Gruchy concludes, reconciliation understood in this way has political and social implications and argues "if there was ever a theological theme that had to be developed in relation to the world […] reconciliation is the theme."[172] The arguments for reconciliation in the Abrahamic religious traditions are based on the attributes and actions of God as related through the Holy Scriptures. Moreover, religiously inspired actors utilize the "vertical relationship" between God and humanity as a model for the "horizontal" relations and conduct between human beings. The two most sophisticated reflections on reconciliation from a theological perspective are *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* by Miroslav Volf and *Between Armageddon and Eden: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking* by Marc Gopin.

[172] De Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*, 1.

2.3.1. Characteristics of Religiously Motivated Peacebuilding

Religion, religious values and religious tools and instruments to deal with conflict become more prominent among scholars and leading not-for-profit organizations and institutes researching, investing in related education and training, and publishing on the role of religion in conflict transformation.[173] This emerging literature does not understand religion as a divisive but primarily as a unifying factor in post – conflict societies. The presence of religious values and principles promoting peace in all major religions, specifically in the Abrahamic religions, and the potential of religious teaching and practices to inspire religious leaders was noted in several works.[174] They underscore that the relationship between religion and peacebuilding is central to every religion.[175] Religion has a source of values, principles and mechanism to resolve conflicts peacefully. Case studies[176] from different countries illustrate how religion and spirituality, inspiring organizations[177] or motivated groups and individuals[178], contributed

[173] See: The Salam Institute for Peace and Justice http://salaminstitute.org/portal/, The Unites States Institute of Peace https://www.usip.org/ and The Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding https://tanenbaum.org/

[174] See: Harold Coward and s. Gordon Smith, eds., *Religion and Peacebuilding* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).

[175] For the case of Islam and Buddhism see: Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Malden, MA : Polity, 2005), 303–15; In addition an overview of Hinduims, Sikhism, and Judaism: Harvey Cox, "World Religions and Conflict Resolution," in *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 266–82.

[176] Away from the case study approach, a conceptual framework for theorizing the relationship between religion and peacemaking in conflict societies and comparing cases studies is provided in John D. Brewer, Gareth I. Higgins, and Francis Teeney, "Religion and Peacemaking: A Conceptualization," *Sociology* Vol.44, No.6 (2010): 1019–37.

[177] "Can Faith-Based NGOs Advance Interfaith Reconciliation? The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina," *United States Institute of Peace*, Special Report 103 (2003): 1–11; "Faith-Based NGOs and International Peace Building," *United States Institute of Peace*, Special Report, No. 76 (2001); Bill Sterland and John Beauclerk, *Faith Communities as Potential Agents for Peace Building in the Balkans* (Norwegian Church Aid Balkans, 2008); Tsjeard Bouth, Ayse S. Kadayifci-Orellana, and Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Faith-Based Peacebuilding: Mapping and Analysis of Christians, Muslim and Multi-Faith Actors* (Washington DC: Salam Institute for Peace & Justice and the Clingendael Institute, 2005); Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Ayse S. Kadayifci - Orellana, *Muslim Peacebuilding Actors in the Balkans, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region* (Washington DC: Salam Institute for Peace & Justice for the Clingendael Institute, 2005), http://salaminstitute.org/portal/publications/; Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Ayse S. Kadayifci - Orellana, "Muslim Peace-Building Actors in Africa and the Balkan Context: Challenges and Needs," *Peace and Change* Vol. 33, No. 4 (2008): 549–81.

[178] Little, *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*; Sheherzade Jafari, "Local Religious Peacemakers: An Untapped Resource in U.S. Foreign Policy," *Journal of International Affairs*

to the resolution of conflicts and social transformation in diverse settings. They recognize the potential of religion as a meaning and value creating social fact and of the powerful role of religious actors in their societies. Thus, the emerging interest in the contribution of religion to peace processes generated relevant literature and new terms such as "faith – based diplomacy", "religious peacebuilding", and "religious peacemakers" which aim to conceptualize the specific characteristics, functions and approaches of religion and religious actors to conflict transformation.

Religious peacebuilding refers to "the range of activities performed by religious actors and institutions for the purpose of resolving and transforming deadly conflict, with the goal of building social relations and political institutions characterized by an ethos of tolerance and nonviolence."[179] Religiously inspired individuals and groups make the central difference between religious peacebuilding and other types of peacebuilding. Further, this definition of peacebuilding is more comprehensive and inclusive of activities generally referring to all efforts by religious actors in addressing structural issues, social relationships and building supportive infrastructure for peace. Thus, religious peacebuilding in the broadest sense refers to the variety of activities contributing to a peaceful environment and transformation of conflict conducted by religious actors with approaches and methods inspired by their own religions. While this definition includes activities in conflict management and resolution our primary focus is on the role of Bosnian *imams* in the structural reforms, that refers to activities with the goal to reform institutions that generate hate and violence into institutions and long-term practices that promote peace and non-violence and promote leadership in the religious, political and civic sphere.[180] Johnston coined the terms "faith-based diplomacy" and "faith – based diplomats" to refer to this new approach to peacemaking as a form of track – two diplomacy and the specific category of people involved in it. In faith – based diplomacy peacebuilding is not understood as the absence of violence but as the effort to

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Vol. 61, No. 1 (2007): 111–30.

[179] David Little and R. Scott Appleby, "A Moment of Opportunity? The Promise of Religious Peacebuilding in an Era of Religious and Ethnic Conflict," in *Religion and Peacebuilding* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 1–23.

[180] Ibid., 13.

restore healthy and respectful relationships between the parties. Faith – based diplomacy is guided by the principles of unity in diversity, inclusion, peaceful resolution of conflicts, forgiveness and social justice as essential for the restoration of relationships.[181] Moreover, the faith – based diplomat is equipped with certain skills and tools. The efforts of these diplomats is guided by their scriptures and they are inspired by religious principles, draw legitimacy from their religious authority, they appreciate and respect differences in religious traditions, search for transcendent means of conflict resolution and see reconciliation and peacebuilding as a religious calling.[182] Nevertheless, religious peacemakers are unfortunately underutilized or ignored as track-two diplomats who assist official diplomacy.

How do we recognize religious peacemakers and what is special about religious peacebuilding? In several cases it is difficult to make a distinction between secular and religious peacebuilding actors. Bouth et al. faced this difficulty in the case of Muslim peacemakers in the Balkans.[183] Not all religious actors and institutions are visible as religious actors often do not use religious language explicitly. Some are less visible as religious peacemakers and resemble other secular actors because they use secular language.[184] As a response to the second part of the question Abu Nimer states that "religion can […] bring social, moral, and spiritual resources to the peacebuilding process. The spiritual dimension in religious peacebuilding can create a sense of engagement and a commitment both to peace and to transforming a relationship […]"[185] and in this way can contribute to conflict transformation with different tools. He further argues: "Framing the intervention within a religious context and deriving the tools from a religious narrative have made it possible for interveners to gain access and increase

[181] Johnston Douglas and Cox Brian, "Faith-Based Diplomacy and Preventive Engagement," in *Faith-Based Diplomacy : Trumping Realpolitik* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 16.
[182] Ibid., 16–17.
[183] Bouth, Kadayifci-Orellana, and Abu-Nimer, *Faith-Based Peacebuilding: Mapping and Analysis of Christians, Muslim and Multi-Faith Actors*, 6.
[184] Leslie Vinjamuri and Aaron P. Boesenecker, "Religious Actors and Transitional Justice," in *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 125–54.
[185] Mohammad Abu-Nimer, "Conflict Resolution, Culture, and Religion: Toward a Training Model of Interreligious Peacebuilding," *Journal of Peace Research* Vol.38, No.6 (2001): 686.

their potential impact on the parties."[186] David Little gives three possible answers: (1) religion provides the "hermeneutics of peace" for religious leaders that guides their vision and provides them with motivation and perseverance for their efforts; (2) the religious identity provides actors with credibility as they are perceived as both empathetic leaders and detached from partisanship; (3) and they can address the religious dimensions of conflict with religious actors particular attention to and advocacy for religious freedom and equality.[187] Religions are therefore socio-cultural forces that have specific resources, qualities and approaches.

2.3.2. Islam, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation

The Islamic tradition has peacemaking qualities, promotes peacebuilding teachings and values as well specific practices of conflict resolution that encourage peaceful settlement of disputes for the sake of social harmony. While it can be argued that *sulh* is the closest in meaning to the English term "reconciliation" in the Islamic religious tradition a direct comparison between reconciliation as used in the Christian tradition and promoted by peace and conflict resolution scholars and the Islamic legal literature cannot be made. Islam as a religion is rich on teachings and applications about peaceful resolution of conflicts, but it needs to be translated into the social and political context.

Moreover, an elaborate reflection on how *sulh*, forgiveness or other peacebuilding Islamic values should be understood and applied in the complex settings of post – conflict societies that involve a variety of actors and religions is not available. One possible reason for the lack of the discussion of an Islamic perspective on peaceful conflict settlement is given by Abu Nimer who argues that the overwhelming literature written on the relationship between nonviolence, peace and war in Islam interpret Islamic teachings using the "jihad lens" or are guided by the "war and peace"

[186] Ibid.
[187] Little, *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*, 438–42.

hypothesis.[188] These research assumptions apply for orientalist, conflict resolution scholars who are interested in cultural specificities as well as Islamic scholars alike.

Scholars who are guided by the assumption that *jihad* is an integral religious principle in Islam. They overemphasize the presence and importance of *jihad* in Islamic religion and history, describing violent *jihad* as the ultimate method of the conflict settlement in Islam. Thereby, they ignore Islamic principles of nonviolence and peace.[189]

The second group of scholars argue that the use of violence is justified in Islam under certain well – defined circumstance. Their focus is on discussing and elaborating the circumstances and conditions under which violence is justified as outlined in certain verses of the Qur'an. Therefore, nonviolence if defined as unconditional pacifism is not viewed as an authentic Islamic teaching. These scholars "put the highest emphasize on the struggle for justice and perceive the discussion of nonviolence as a means to an end."[190] Nonviolence is perceived as secondary in importance because when necessary to defend Islam, justice and peace nonviolence cannot be the means to an end. In comparison to the first group, these scholars do not assume a direct link between Islam and violence but argue that nonviolent means are natural and well – known principles in Islam. However, these scholars conclude that Islam is not a pacifist religion and that a limited amount of force is necessary if Islam or Muslims are endangered.[191]

The third group of research on the relation between Islam, violence and peace is guided by the assumption that peace and nonviolence is inherent in the Islamic teaching.[192] These scholars assume that there are important elements that can be used in the definition of an Islamic nonviolence framework and a "theology of reconciliation". A pioneer in this group of studies is Satha – Anand who defined a list of eight theses of nonviolence that are based on Islamic principles:

> (1) For Islam the problem of violence is an integral part of Islamic moral sphere; (2) Violence, if any, used by Muslims must be governed by rules prescribed in the Qur'an and Hadith; (3) If violence used cannot discriminate between combatants

[188] Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Non-Violence and Peace Building in Islam: Theory and Practice* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 18–47.
[189] Ibid., 25–26.
[190] Ibid., 222.
[191] Ibid., 26–37.
[192] Ibid., 37–47.

and noncombatants, then it is unacceptable to Islam; (4) Modem technologies of destruction render discrimination virtually impossible at present; (5) In the modem world, Muslims cannot use violence; (6) Islam teaches Muslims to fight for justice with the understanding that human lives, as all parts of God's creation, are purposeful and sacred; (7) In order to be true to Islam, Muslims must utilize nonviolent action as a new mode of struggle; and (8) Islam itself is fertile soil for nonviolence because of its potential for disobedience, strong discipline, sharing and social responsibility, perseverance and self-sacrifice, and the belief in the unity of the Muslim community and the oneness of humanity.[193]

Mohammed Abu – Nimer himself is one of these scholars who has contributed to this approach with his *Nonviolence and Peace Building in Islam: Theory and Practice*. He names a plentitude of Islamic values and principles that together establish "the framework of non-violence and peacebuilding" in Islam and compares these values and principles with the established principles of peacemaking. The author underscores how these values can aid the peace process. This set of Islamic values that constitute the Islamic ideals, assumption and beliefs of nonviolence and peacebuilding are as follows:

- the imperative for social and economic justice,
- good acts,
- universality and human dignity,
- equality,
- sacredness of human life,
- quest for peace,
- encouragement of peacemaking among Muslims and between Muslims and non – Muslims,
- forgiveness,
- emphasizes on the practice of Islam and individual responsibility,
- patience,
- the centrality of collaboration, solidarity and inclusion,
- and the respect for pluralism and diversity.[194]

In addition to this, in the Islamic tradition the method of *sulh* stands for a specific approach to conflict resolution and symbolizes a specific relationship between justice, truth and peace and the idea of peace and reconciliation in the Islamic law and practice.

[193] Chaiwat Satha-Anand, "The Nonviolent Crescent: Eight Theses on Muslim Nonviolent Action," in *Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam: Precept and Practice* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2001), 209.
[194] Mohammed Abu-Nimer, "A Framework for Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam," *Journal of Law and Religion* Vol. 15, No.1/2 (2001 2000): 217–65.

Linguistically, *sulh* means peace, reconciliation, amicable settlement and agreement. Technically, *sulh* has two meanings within the framework of Islamic law: 1) the method through which a resolution to a dispute is attempted and 2) the outcome of the negotiation in the form of a contract entered into by the two sides, outlining the terms of their settlement.[195] *Sulh* is the practice of peaceful settlement or conciliation and peacemaking between two parties and the purpose of *sulh* is to end conflict and hostility between believers so that they can reestablish their relationship. The contract that is the result of negotiation is binding for all members who signed the contract and their respective communities. Through the practice of *sulh* the offender will not be punished by the rules stipulated in the Islamic law but can be subjected to a punishment of a lesser degree. Historically, this practice is found in the pre-Islamic Arab society and was applied by elders, chieftains, soothsayers and healers who acted as arbiters or mediators within the tribe or between two tribes.[196] *Sulh* is a "settlement grounded upon compromise negotiated by the disputants themselves or with the help of a third party."[197] These third parties' goal was to establish peace and order when two disputants could not resolve their issue by themselves. *Sulh* signifies a balance between ethical and religious principles of peace, truth and justice. Through the method of *sulh* Islam gives an opportunity for offenders and victims to resolve offences peacefully outside the court. It encourages the two parties to compromise, reconcile and forgive rather than resolve the issue in a trail. Several verses and traditions directly state that the goal of conflict resolution should not be to "seek the dichotomous, imposed decision by a judge and to insist upon one's legal rights."[198] Peaceful settlement is legitimated by for example *surah al Hujurat* verse 9, 10 or *surah al Shura* verse 40 that encourage peace and forgiveness among believers after conflict has emerged among them. In addition to this the practice and sayings of the Prophet promote the application of *sulh* as well. Thus, in the Islamic tradition it is preferable to settle a conflict peacefully without making use of the judicial

[195] Aida Othman, "'And Amicable Settlement Is Best': *Ṣulḥ* and Dispute Resolution in Islamic Law," *Arab Law Quarterly* Vol. 21, No. 1 (2007): 70.
[196] Ibid., 65–66.
[197] Othman, "'And Amicable Settlement Is Best': *Ṣulḥ* and Dispute Resolution in Islamic Law," 68.
[198] Ibid.

procedure, but to reconcile and negotiate in order to maintain relationships in the family and the community. The aforementioned Qur'anic verses use the term "believer" and the examples from the Islamic tradition urge for the peaceful settlement of conflicts between Muslims *sulh* is not limited to peaceful settlement and reconciliation among the Muslims. The Islamic tradition reveals examples of peaceful settlement of conflict between non – Muslims and Muslims. The Madinah Declaration, the peaceful conquest of Mecca and the *Sulh al – Hudaybiyah* are cited as examples of peaceful agreement between non – Muslims and Muslims. In several countries the practice of *sulh* is part of the legal system[199] while in other societies religious leaders and individuals practice it in their local communities.[200] The most common use of *sulh* in practice is for the resolution of marital disputes, in the case of divorce, or disagreements that emerge because of property or monetary issues. These disputes are offences against the rights of individuals and individuals are affected personally. Opinions of Islamic scholars on the applicability of *sulh* in disputes that involve the breach of rights that are fixed by the Islamic law (*hudud*) and are considered as a breach of the rights of God. These cases are adultery, false accusation, theft, robbery, drinking alcohol and apostasy. However, agreement exists among Muslim scholars that in the case of false accusation, theft and robbery the victim and offender can settle the dispute through the method of *sulh* if the case was not brought before the court. In offences that infringe both the rights of individuals and the right of God such as murder, bodily injury, breach of trust, false testimony, defamation, taking interest and cheating, *sulh* is applicable. *Sulh* can be understood as a form of restorative justice.

2.3.3. Characteristics and Roles of Religious Peacemakers

Religious leaders possess extraordinary qualities that make them specifically suitable to act as mediators, advocates and educators in societies inflicted by conflict.

[199] For the case of Malaysia and Pakistan see: Hanis Wahed, "*Sulh*: Its Application in Malaysia," *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science* Vol. 20, no. No. 6 (2015): 71–79; Norjihan Ab Aziz and Nasimah Hussin, "The Application of Mediation (*Sulh*) in Islamic Criminal Law," *Shariah Journal* Vol. 24, No. 1 (2016): 115–36.
[200] George E. Irani and Nathan C. Funk, "Rituals of Reconciliation: Arab-Islamic Perspectives," *Arab Studies Quarterly* Vol. 20, No. 4 (1998): 53–73.

Based on Kadayifci's observations among the major three qualities of religious peacemakers is that (1) they have legitimacy and authority in the society they live in; (2) they have the adequate resources to heal trauma and injuries through religious texts, values and beliefs, and (3) religious leaders have access to community members, institutions and schools that enables them to approach a wider audience and motivate them to reconciliation.[201] Due to their characteristic qualities and social position religious peacemakers have greater access to the communities and thereby can reach individuals more easily than political leaders. The fact that religiously motivated peacemakers live among and often belong to the peoples and groups involved in conflict gives them an entry point to the conflict. In some failed states, where centralized authority has broken down altogether, organized religion has remained intact as "the only institution possessing a measure of credibility, trust, and moral authority among the population at large."[202] The Churches and other religious institutions are the most effective when they have institutional stability and moral authority, the capability for empowering individuals to act and a commitment to non – violence.

The faith-based diplomat contributes to peacemaking by: 1. Offering a new vision of the past and reality, 2. Building bridges, tangible and intangible relations between individuals and offering a pluralist vision of community, 3. Healing conflict (bring an end to hostilities, resolve the issues underlying the conflict and restore the relationship) and 4. Healing the wounds of history.[203] The new diplomat is among the best equipped to heal the society as there are "resources within religious traditions that can enable adherents to (1) reflect on their history in a redemptive manner, (2) bring meaning and dignity to the suffering, and (3) hold out the promise of genuine healing."[204] However, agents of reconciliation must (a) demonstrate empathy for victims on all sides, (b) have a profound commitment to the nonviolent management of

[201] Kadayifci - Orellana, "Ethno - Religious Conflicts: Exploring the Role of Religion in Conflict Resolution," 277–81.
[202] Cynthia Sampson, "Religion and Peacebuilding," in *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques* (Washington DC.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 273–326.
[203] Johnston Douglas and Cox Brian, "Faith-Based Diplomacy and Preventive Engagement," in *Faith-Based Diplomacy : Trumping Realpolitik* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 18–19.
[204] Ibid., 19.

differences, (c) political insight, (d) extraordinary quantities of "grace" – forbearance, patience, dedication, and the sacrifice of ego, and (e) must be able to speak a second-order language that transcends religious and ethnic boundaries and fosters collaboration with secular and governmental agencies and representatives and judge the appropriate time and place for reconciliation.[205]

There are different types of religious actors and they respectively assume various roles and functions during conflict resolution and conflict transformation. Appleby speaks of three different modes of religious peacebuilding: the "crisis mobilization mode", the "saturation mode" and the "interventionist mode".[206]

Religious peacemaker acting in the first way oppose authoritarian regimes during the conflict but these actions are crisis oriented and aim to address immediate issues. While this type of involvement in the conflict is common place the "saturation model" is fairly rare and best exemplified by the Northern Ireland case. As the term says, in the "saturation model", religious peacemakers are historically involved, well – established and acknowledged in all institutions and levels of the society. They are an essential part of the institutional and religious landscape and offer comprehensive and multifaceted strategy in resolving conflict and achieving reconciliation. However, not all social settings and historical legacies are a fertile ground for the evolution of a saturated mode of peacebuilding.

The most promising mode of religious peacebuilding is the third type, the "interventionist mode", refers to the situation in which external religiously motivated actors engage in the conflict as mediators. A Bosnian example for this kind of peacebuilding is the World Council of Churches that brought the leaders of the four religious communities to one table and assisted them in the establishment of the Interreligious Council immediately after the war.

Another categorization of religious peacemakers is offered by Cynthia Sampson categorizes and she divides their activities in: advocacy, mediation, observation,

[205] Little and Appleby, "A Moment of Opportunity? The Promise of Religious Peacebuilding in an Era of Religious and Ethnic Conflict," 14–15.
[206] Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred : Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*, 230–43.

education and interfaith dialogue.[207] In addition, other activities of faith-based actors towards peace include relief and development work[208] or direct involvement in transitional justice mechanism. Carter and Smith offer fourteen ways religious leaders can be involved in promoting peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.[209]

David Little identifies two types of peacemaking particular to religious actors: institution-and-capacity building and agreement – making.[210] When religious actors build institutions and capacity they design and create institutions and engage in practices that enforce social harmony and civil unity over hostility and violence. Hereby, religious actors promote commitment to respect for religious pluralism and respect for other communities. Agreement – making refers to activities that contribute or engage in official peace negotiations directly. Some religious actors contribute to the process of peacebuilding by directly involving into the truth – finding and justice – seeking mechanisms of transitional justice. Especially in the creation and the conduct of truth and reconciliation commissions, religious agents have been active and successful.[211] In Chile, Brazil, Guatemala, South Africa, East Timor, Peru, Sierra Leone, and Germany religious communities have lobbied for a truth commission or established it by themselves. Once established, religious actors assisted the process of truth finding through logistical support, encouraging victims, organizing hearings and counseling victims during and after the hearings. In addition, religious communities shaped the process by defining key terms and giving meaning to the concepts of truth, justice or forgiveness.

The example that stands out is Desmond Tutu's engagement in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa which made reconciliation its central theme. The whole South African process was colored in the Christian religious tradition. The themes of justice, reconciliation and forgiveness have been highly influenced by this

[207] Sampson, "Religion and Peacebuilding."
[208] "Faith-Based NGOs and International Peace Building," *United States Institute of Peace*, Special Report, No. 76 (2001); "Can Faith-Based NGOs Advance Interfaith Reconciliation? The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina," *United States Institute of Peace*, no. Special Report 103 (2003): 1–11.
[209] Judy Carter and Smith, S. Gordon, "Religious Peacebuilding: From Potential to Action," in *Religion and Peacebuilding* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 294–97.
[210] Little, *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*, 442–47.
[211] Philpott, "Religion, Reconciliation, and Transitional Justice: The State of the Field," 27.

religious perspective. The final report of the TRC gives particular importance to restorative justice and forgiveness. In his contribution to this discussion Desmond Tutu sees truth commissions as the appropriate place and way to seek justice.[212] He rejected amnesia and argued for a concrete encounter with the past. However, for him justice in South Africa could not be met through ordinary judicial processes and through the "victor's justice" mechanisms as exemplified in the Nurnberg trails. Tutu describes the TRC as the third way, a middle way between two extremes – amnesia and criminal trails such as the Nurnberg trails.[213] The Commission recognized the complexity of the concept of justice and defined four distinct types of truth: 1. factual or forensic truth; 2. personal or narrative truth; 3. social or 'dialogue' truth and 4. healing and restorative truth.[214]

The healing truth is the personal truth – "the truth of wounded memories" and it is a heling truth with therapeutic effects on witnesses.[215] However, the Commission challenges the understanding of justice as retribution and considered restorative justice as a viable alternative: "This means that amnesty in return for public and full disclosure suggests a restorative understanding of justice, focusing on the healing of victims and perpetrators and on communal restoration."[216] Tutu also applied the concept known as *Ubuntu*, and defined it as the *Weltanschaung* of the African people.[217] At the center of *Ubuntu* stand the values of showing humanity and forgiveness.[218] The South African experience thus stands out for the direct involvement of Christian actors and potential of Christian values in shaping the process of peacebuilding.

In other countries, such as Rwanda, Argentina, Czech Republic or the former Yugoslavia had little influence on the international and national efforts in truth – finding and justice – seeking. However, we will see in more detail how Bosnian Muslim

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[212] Desmond, *No Future Without Forgiveness*.
[213] Ibid., 35.
[214] See *Final Report*, Vol. 1 (Cape Town: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998). ch. 5, par. 30-45.
[215] Desmond, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 25.
[216] *Final Report*, Vol. 1 (Cape Town: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998), ch. 5, par. 55.
[217] *Ubuntu* is the essence of being human. It refers to multiple positive characteristics such as generosity, hospitality, friendliness, care and compassion, an individual's humanity is connected to and conditioned by in some way his relationship with other follow human beings.
[218] Desmond, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 206.

religious leaders engage more frequently in the institution – and – capacity building activities at their local communities.

Two points need to be mentioned here. First, several authors correctly point out that religious actors must not be understood as a substitute to official state initiatives, but rather as a crucial supportive force. Religious peacemakers and religiously motivated groups cannot be effective enough by themselves. They are a crucial part of the wider civil society interacting and coordinating with other secular peacemakers within the society. Jafari notices that not all religious actors are consequently religious peacemakers. In order to be effective, religious peacemakers have to have on the ground knowledge of the society and complex dynamics of the conflict as well as the know-how to address the complex role of religion, be committed to the process and lead their co-religionists with personal example.[219] For Brewer et al. religious actors are one crucial part of the general civil society and are specifically effective in their peace efforts if they occupy key social spaces: the intellectual, institutional, market and political spaces.[220] The effectiveness of religious actors depends on the relationship they have with the state. The majority or minority status of the religious group and official or unofficial character of religious intervention facilitate or constrain religious peacebuilding efforts. That said, it becomes apparent that the state is important in linking religion to peacebuilding. Second, it needs to be said that faith – based diplomacy is relevant and makes a difference in societies in which religion was the determining or supportive factor in conflict and in which religion is an essential part of the society.[221] Only in societies in which religion is a present social force, religious actors gain importance.

2.3.4. Interreligious Dialogue: The Special Tool of Religious Peacemakers

Interreligious dialogue is a powerful tool in conflict resolution and peacebuilding because it directly engages and confronts participants with the beliefs, concerns and

[219] Jafari, "Local Religious Peacemakers: An Untapped Resource in U.S. Foreign Policy."
[220] Brewer, Higgins, and Teeney, "Religion and Peacemaking: A Conceptualization."
[221] R. Scott Appleby, "Retrieving the Missing Dimension of Statecraft: Religious Faith in the Service of Peacebuilding," in *Faith - Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 238–39.

fears of their opponents. Abu Nimer argues that a religious approach to peacebuilding has important features that secular tools lack. He identifies three characteristics that that are specific to religious peacebuilding and that surface in the context of interreligious dialogue.[222] The foundation of religious peacebuilding is the spiritual motivation and religious identity of its participants which gives these actors the opportunity to connect on deeper level. This motivation that has its source in religiosity, distinguish this tool from other intergroup encounters. Further, the source of vision is the sacred text of every religious group which additionally enriches this approach. Holy texts enrich the process as they can become a foundation for the deconstruction of social reality. Furthermore, religious traditions offer rituals and a specific language that can be utilized for peacebuilding. Rituals can become powerful ways of communication between the participants and the common religious language can help in discovering similarities and developing trust.

Interreligious dialogue can be describes as a tool of second – track diplomacy that is specific to religious peacebuilding and is most effectively used by religious based actors. Authors have elaborated on the opportunities this peacebuilding tools has and how they can be applied.[223] In the process of peacebuilding and reconciliation, interreligious dialogue opens the opportunity for participants to build relationships, to rehumanize the other and change personal attitudes towards the other group.[224] However, interreligious dialogue should not be mistaken with interfaith dialogue that is done at the highest level of the religious communities and that focus on theological issues.[225]

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[222] Mohammed Abu-Nimer, "The Miracles of Transformation Trough Interfaith Dialogue: Are You a Believer?," in *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2002), 16–21.

[223] See: David R. Smock, ed., *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2002); Abu-Nimer, "The Miracles of Transformation Trough Interfaith Dialogue: Are You a Believer?"; Mohammad Abu-Nimer, Amal Khoury, and Emily Welty, *Unity in Diversity: Interfaith Dialogue in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007); Muhammad Shafiq and Mohammad Abu-Nimer, *Interfaith Dialogue: A Guide for Muslims* (London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2011).

[224] Sarah E. Bernstein, "Is 'Interreligious' Synonymous with 'Interfaith'? The Roles of Dialogue in Peacebuilding," in *Peacebuilding and Reconciliation: Contemporary Themes and Challenges* (London: Pluto Press, 2012), 109–10.

[225] Sarah E. Bernstein discusses the difference between these terms in more detail in: "Is 'Interreligious' Synonymous with 'Interfaith'? The Roles of Dialogue in Peacebuilding," in *Peacebuilding and Reconciliation: Contemporary Themes and Challenges* (London: Pluto Press, 2012), 105–18.

Interreligious dialogue refers to the activities people who are of different religions undertake with the aim to build and improve their relationship and thereby work for change and justice in their societies. Interreligious dialogue's focus is on building bridges and changing attitudes between the groups involved to the conflicts. Because of its focus interreligious dialogue can be most effectively utilized in the contemporary conflicts that are identity – based. To be effective, Bernstein argues that that participants in the interreligious dialogue interact as individuals, not as representatives of religious institutions. Participants should discuss issues concerning "the individual people – their loves and hates, their thoughts, beliefs and feelings."[226] Interreligious dialogue groups engage in issues concerning all groups equally and try to solve problems together. The interpersonal encounter of opponents is more important than the issue at hand as "their views and perceptions of the conflict and the enemy change [as] participants realize, acknowledge and understand their mutual fears and concerns."[227] Thus, successful interreligious dialogue should be relationship – centered and its ultimate goal social change to the extent that altered attitudes about the other are translated into practice.

Paying attention to the use of "primary" or "secondary" religious language is important for this kind of encounter. A well planned interreligious dialogue will utilize secondary religious language.[228] When participants use primary religious language they focus on beliefs, symbols and language characteristic to their particular group and elements that are usually not used by others. Therefore, the reactions by the outside group might become defensive. Instead, interreligious dialogue has to use the framework of secondary language. "Secondary language" utilizes universal values and principles shared by all religions.

Because of the centrality of the interreligious dialogue as a tool in religious peacebuilding the interview questions that were designed for the interviews with *imams* included a set of questions related to interreligious communication and cooperation.

[226] Ibid.
[227] Abu-Nimer, "The Miracles of Transformation Trough Interfaith Dialogue: Are You a Believer?," 15.
[228] Ibid., 30.

CHAPTER THREE: RELIGION AND RECONCILIATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

In the first section of this chapter I discuss the research design and the assumptions that guided me in conducting in – depth interviews and in analyzing my findings. In the second part I review and analyze the actions and official statements toward peacebuilding and reconciliation by the religious communities in Bosnian and Herzegovina, focusing specifically on the role of the top – level and local religious leaders of the International Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In my review of the ICBH, I divide the analysis in two sections. The first part is devoted to the official statements of the highest religious representatives while the second part is left for the personal experiences and perspective on peacebuilding and reconciliation by *imams* who live in localities in which Bosnian Muslims are a minority. In the analysis part I set to answer the questions: How is the approach to reconciliation of *imams* different from the public statements of the ICBH? Can local *imams* in Bosnia be characterized as religious peacemaker? What are the values motivating them and strategies they apply towards peacebuilding and reconciliation in their communities? What are the strengths and obstacles in their work?

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Before analyzing the public statements of top – level leaders of the Islamic Community and the interviews with local *imams* that I have conducted I would like to explain in more detail the research method and the assumptions that guided me while conducting this qualitative study. In the first part of this section more general issues relating to the process and approach to the interviewees and conversations in this study are addressed and dealt with.

3.1.1. Scope

This research is a qualitative study[229] and is based on semi – structured interviews conducted in six different cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period between January and February 2017. The interviews seek to answer a set of questions:

- How do *imams* within their communities understand and define reconciliation and its most important components? How do they define themselves and the out – group? What is their perception of the level and progress of reconciliation in their local communities? How do they define a reconciled society?
- Can *imams* act as local reconciliation and peace makers? How do they connect reconciliation to their work and define their role in the processes of peacebuilding and reconciliation? Do they take responsibility and action for the reconciliation process in their communities?
- What kind of initiatives are *imams* taking to promote peacebuilding and reconciliation among their members and in the wider society?
- What are the underlying assumptions guiding their action and reconciliatory practices they employ in their communities?

In the second part the verbatim translations of the interviews are presented and compared to the official statements made by religious leaders of the Islamic Community. The two levels and approaches to peacebuilding and reconciliation are compared based on how they define reconciliation and the required elements for true reconciliation. Further, I enlist the different steps *imams* take to promote peace and reconciliation and the values and principles that motivate reconciliatory acts are discussed. I compare strategies, values and principles to the literature on religious peacemaking and peacemakers to evaluate to what extent *imams* can be called religious peacemakers. I also enlist obstacles *imams* face in their efforts.

3.1.1. Research Methodology

The methodology applied in this study is a qualitative research method, in –

[229] I was primarily influenced by: Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods* (London: SAGE Publications, 2011); but consulted as well: Svend Brinkmann, *Qualitative Interviewing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Jennifer Mason, *Qualitative Researching Second Edition*, 2nd edition (London: SAGE Publications, 2002).

depth interviews. The topic of my study is context bound and *imams* were chosen because they are able to offer a local perspective on the process of reconciliation and peacebuilding. Local religious leaders are among the most involved individuals in social issues and have insight in all social issue that influence the individuals, interpersonal relations and the whole community. I intended to learn about these experiences and *imams'* practices trough in – depth interviews. The official statements I evaluate here are derived from interviews with the representative of the Islamic Community to the Interreligious Council in Sarajevo and a professor at the Faculty of Islamic Studies who as well serves as a representative of the Islamic Community in another function. Also I have used the draft of the "Platform for Dialogue" designed by the Islamic Community and statements on peace and reconciliation by the highest representative of the Islamic Community, the Reis ul Ulema, during TV interviews. In my evaluating of the public statements of the Islamic Community and the experiences of the local *imams* I use the methodology called Critical Discourse Analysis that was developed by Fairclough. This methodology is interpretative and exploratory. CDA analysis how statements that are given relate to the wider social reality. Specifically, CDA analysis how utterances are related to power relations within a society. Moreover, CDA implies that the way something has been said creates social reality, that it continues discrimination, suppression/dominance, and prejudice. The aim of CDA is not only to analyze and criticize the discourse but to explain how it fits in the existing reality and in what way it contributes to the maintenance of such reality. It is an attempt of explaining how it relates to other elements of social reality such as power relations, ideologies, and social institutions. However, "being critical is looking for explanations"[230]. By recontextualizing the discourse we aim at looking how statements of the different actors relate to the person's state of mind, their fears or anxieties. While normative critique of discourse identifies internal contradictions within arguments it is the explanatory critiques which is making a critique of the existing social order.[231] Critical discourse analysis is oriented towards "transformative actions", which are actions that change the

[230] Norman Fairclough, "What Is CDA? Language and Power Twenty-Five Years On," n.d.
[231] Ibid.

existing social order towards the better.[232]

3.1.2. Contact with *Imams* and Professors of Islamic Studies

My insight in the issue is obtained from interviews with nine *imams* from six different cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and three professors of Islamic Studies working at the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo. In the first place I obtained the written permission of the Islamic Community's Directorate for Religious Questions and the dean of the Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Sarajevo for contacting the *imams* and professors. Their permissions were in the form of recommendation for all *imams* and professors to participate in the study (Appendix 3). Then I contacted several professors of Islamic Sciences and inquired who is the most knowledgeable on the topic of reconciliation. Three particular professors were recommended to me by the stuff of the Faculty of Islamic Studies as experienced in the issue of reconciliation. All of them were ready to speak with me on the topic. Prior to the formal and recorded interview I presented myself and the research. During our conversation the work and activities of the Interreligious Council were mentioned frequently and I decided to include one of the representative of the Islamic Community in my research. Their experiences were valuable and important and I decided to use them in the discussion of the Islamic Communities official statements and initiatives for reconciliation.

The *imams* included in this study were primarily selected according to the locality in which they live and work, and their readiness to participate in the interview. Due to the fact that all of them live in different cities in Bosnia it was impossible to have pre – interview conversation but had to select them according to the localities and contact them with a phone call. The first group of *imams* are living and working in the majority Bosnian Croat municipalities. These *imams* are from Kiseljak, Prozor and Orašje. The second group of *imams* are active in majority Bosnian Serb municipalities and are form the following cities: Banja Luka, Srebrenica and Bratunac. In the city of Prozor, Orašje and Banja Luka the *imams* I have initially contacted at short notice were

[232] Ibid.

not available but found replacement but in the cities of Orašje and Prozor only one *imam* in each case was available. *Imams* in Kiseljak, Orašje, Srebrenica and Bratunac are secondary school or university collogues of my father-in-law and some of the *imams* said that they trust me because of this fact. In the cities of Banja Luka and Prozor the *imams* were very welcoming and we were able to establish rapport easily.

3.1.3. Semi – Structured Interviews

I used the semi-structured and in-depth interview method combining open – ended and close – ended interview questions. The interview questions were designed so as to offer the respondents the best possible way to express their views, assumptions and approaches.

The interviews with the professors were conducted in their offices. The interviews with the *imams* were conducted in the local mosque or in their offices. In one case I have visited the *imam* in his home and conducted the interview there. It was important to me to visit every city personally and experience the social environment, atmosphere and see how people live in these different localities. For example, I was surprised by the poverty of the city in which Bosnian Serbs are the majority but also the bad infrastructure and poor condition of the houses in its surrounding area. The fact that Bosniaks and Bosnian Serbs live in separate villages is underlined by the image of only one religious building per village. On the other hand intermingling of churches and mosques in the city of Banja Luka and the restoration of almost all mosques (fourteen out of fifteen) in the city and surrounding conveys the opposite meaning. Prozor is a small but very nice city that we reached very slowly due to the mountainous natural environment. Therefore, Prozor seems to be very isolated from the different centers surrounding it.

All interviews were tape – recorded, transcribed, translated and edited. The interviews with *imams* started with a more general question about their city and community and how war events affected the social relations within the community. This question gave me general knowledge of the suffering and losses, but also some insight in the various war experiences, war front lines within the community, social interaction and

immediate experiences and narratives about the post – war period.

I prepared different sets of interview questions for interviews with *imams* and professors of Islamic Studies. I have used different question in order to first obtain answers from the right levels and second to obtain a broader and deeper picture of the reconciliation processes at the different levels of the Islamic Community.

A more detailed description of the social and demographic reality in the cities I visited and interview questions can be found in the appendix. In the following the translation of the interviews is presented. I use the word "imam" for all the *imams* without specifying the name of any one of them.

3.2. THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND RECONCILIATION

Before discussing the statements of top – level and local religious leaders of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina it is necessary to provide an overview of the organization, position and activities of this religious community. The Islamic Community in Bosnia and Hercegovina (ICBH) is defined as a "single and unique community of Muslims in Bosnia and Hercegovina, Sandžak, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Bosniaks who are living abroad and other Muslims who accept its authority."[233] Defined according to its organizational structure, the ICBH is a non – profit, non – governmental organization which is recognized by the state as a historically established religious community with enjoying a legal entity status. The history of the Bosnian Muslims and the Islamic Community as their official representative is full of suppression and foreign control.[234] The Austro – Hungarian and the Yugoslavian leaders used the ICBH as an instrument to control the Muslim community and often to stabilize and bring balance to the region. The regime co – appointed the leaders of the ICBH and consequently had influence on the public statements and policies of the ICBH. Since the end of the war,

[233] Constitution of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2014, available athttp://www.izb.se/files/Ustav_IZ-e_precisceni_tekst_2014.pdf, accessed 3/23/2017.
[234] For a detailed history and transformation of autonomy and structure of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the different regimes see: "Religions in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Profile of Religious Communities and Churches" published by the Interreligious Council, Sarajevo 2012, pp. 19 – 31; pp. 36 – 49.

the ICBH is more independent from the political regime. However, the Islamic Community has the status of a non – governmental organization that has no legal and binding contract signed with government actors like the other religious communities in Bosnia.[235] Because of the fact that for now the ICBH has not signed a contract with the state it is restricted in its opportunities and decision – making power.[236] Beginning with the liberations of religious policies in the 1960's and the reconstruction of religious buildings after the war the ICBH today counts 1.985 religious buildings (mosques, *masjids* and *tekkes*) in which the religious service is actively performed, 3 higher education institutions (Islamic and Islamic – Pedagogic faculties), 8 secondary education institutions (*madrasas*) and 1.771 primary education institutions (*maktabs*) with a membership over 672.958 members (households) and 1.368 religious employees who serve at various levels of the ICBH structure.[237] The ICBH's role is not restricted to religious issues but it is also involved in discussion of many socio – political issues among them the identity, language, displacement and refugee questions, elections and other significant political events concerning the Muslim community and their economic and political wellbeing. The religious representatives see themselves as the protectors of the Bosniak people and the interest of the Bosnian Muslims, foremost in territories where the Bosniaks constitute a minority.

3.2.1. The Official Statements of the Islamic Community

Here I evaluate the official statements of the Islamic Community on reconciliation based on the "Platform for Dialogue", and statements of top – level leaders. In the draft form of the "Platform for Dialogue"[238] composed by the ICBH it is

[235] For the discussion on the current legal framework and relationship between the Bosnian state and ICBH see: Ahmet Alibašić, "Osnovni Sporazum Između Islamske Zajednice I Države Bosne I Hercegovine," *Preporod*, 2015, Osnovni sporazum između Islamske zajednice i države Bosne i Hercegovine.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ifet Mustafić, ed., *Religions in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Profile of Religious Communities and Churches* (Sarajevo: Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2012), pp. 31 – 35, on education: pp. 53 – 58, information and publishing activities: pp. 60 – 63.
[238] Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Draft of the Platform of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Hercegovina for Dialogue."

stated that: “The Islamic Community in its relationship with other religious communities follows the Qur’anic guidance on life in peace, justice and goodness with all people of good faith”, based on the verse: “God forbids you not with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with for God loveth Those who are just.” When it comes to reconciliation, coexistence and interreligious dialogue the draft states:

> Reconciliation, dialogue and coexistence in multicultural Bosnia has no alternative and the role of religious communities and churches in this respect is huge. Dialogue and coexistence are not our tactic for academic delight but it is a strategic choice because we see in this the only means of survival.[239]

The officials of the Islamic Community understand reconciliation as a “means of survival”. Several *imams* similarly refer to reconciliation processes in the same way. This way of conceptualization is rather a minimalist understanding of the more complex and comprehensive process. The representatives of the ICBH understand that they are under threat and reconciliation is a mean to protect the Bosnian Muslims.

Further, the draft reveals that reconciliation has to be achieved by the mechanisms of retributive justice, truth – finding, acknowledgment of war crimes and compensation: “Only the just punishment of crimes can disrupt the circle of violence which is repeated every few decades and for the sake of the future the crime of the past needs to be punished.”[240] Truth is an important elements for the establishment of true reconciliation: “For the establishment of stable peace and justice, truth needs to be satisfied even if peace can be established before the satisfaction of justice and complete acknowledgement of the truth.”[241] The *Platform* further states: “Oral apology is not sufficient for reconciliation. It needs to be preceded or accompanied by the compensation of victims, the return of the displaced, the return and restoration of taken and destroyed property and religious buildings.”[242] Similarly, a professor states that the acknowledgment of truth and justice are important precondition for genuine reconciliation. He underscores that objective but not subjective truth about the events of

[239] Ibid.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Ibid.

the recent past that were determined by the court must be acknowledged.[243]

When it comes to forgiveness it is evident that the ICBH fears that promoting forgiveness would lead to forgetting: "Reconciliation and forgiveness must not harm the right to remembrance. Because of this the request to remove the pictures of the destroyed Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka and the Aladža in Foča from the textbooks for religious education are disgraceful."[244] In the interviews I conducted with representative of the Islamic Community the interviewees emphasized that there are two distinct processes. The first process is the process of distributing justice and determining and acknowledging the truth. A separate process is the process of forgiveness. Only after truth and justice the process of forgiveness can be started:

> The Islamic Community based on the Islamic theology insists on justice. In order to achieve justice you need to know the truth. The ICBH has full credit for the sequence and the maxim behind the statement "truth, justice and reconciliation". When you listen to the Catholic theologians they invert the order and say that forgiveness should be at the first place. You can tell so in a theological discussion but you cannot relate it to reality. It has no logic. You cannot forgive something that you do not know. First, you need to know what someone has done so that you can forgive him. Secondly, that person needs to ask for forgiveness. No one has asked us to forgive. You cannot forgive when no one is asking for forgiveness.[245]

However, even if the leaders of the ICBH do not promote forgiveness until the crimes are acknowledged and justice determined, it does not mean that Muslims need to hate the others. The *Reis ul – Ulema*, Husein Kavazovic, states in this respect: "I would like to say this to the Bosniaks: no to hatred. Hatred is the same way that lead us to this evil in Srebrenica. This was, nevertheless, hatred and it is the cause for all this."[246]

When it comes to interreligious dialogue the Islamic Community stresses that dialogue among religions is important and that the ICBH is open for these activities. However, the *Platform* does not link interreligious dialogue directly to the theme of reconciliation.

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[243] Personal Interview, 9.02.2017

[244] Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Draft of the Platform of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Hercegovina for Dialogue."

[245] Personal interview, 9.02.2017

[246] Sanela Prašović-Gadžo, "Interview 20: Reis Ul Ulema Husein Ef. Kavazović," *Interview 20* (Sarajevo: BHTV, June 24, 2015), 20, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YEsLJ8Ny3U.

One who search for answers in these statements about how people should live with each other in multiethnic societies when objective truth is not acknowledged, when there is no repentance or adequate punishment or compensation is disappointed. Neither does the "Platform for Dialogue" nor the statements of the top – level figures answer these important question. A helpful digression here is how Lederach conceptualizes reconciliation inspired by Psalm 85 verse 10. He posits that reconciliation is a process of paradoxes or put in other terms a process of finding a balance between four core elements: Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace.[247] It is paradoxical because for example on the one hand Truth longs for the acknowledgment of past sufferings while Mercy encourages letting go off the past and searching for a future. Reconciliation opens the space for people to deal with the painful past and simultaneously urges them to envision a more hopeful future. Reconciliation involves dealing with justice but at the same time encourages forgiveness and healing. The process in an ideal way should make a balance between what happened in the past and the future. Remembrance and justice should be conceptualized in a way that they will help individuals be at peace with the past. The official position of the Islamic Community is that truth and justice need to be determined and acknowledged before the Bosnian people can reconcile. There is no theological framework for discussing reconciliation nor is the reconciliation topic frequently mentioned in the official discourse of the Islamic Community. The *Platform* presents Bosnian Muslims as the victims of the war but does not mention in any way the atrocities that were conducted by Bosnian Muslims during the war. Reconciliation is envisioned by the top – level leaders of the ICBH in minimalist terms and understood from a legalist perspective. In other words, they advocate and promote tolerance and coexistence that needs to be realized through the truth – finding, justice – seeking and retributive mechanisms. Lederach asserts that top – level leaders, due to their high visibility and public role, are careful to maintain a position in the conflict that is expected by the in – group.[248] By virtue of these characteristics leaders with high public profiles are locked into certain positions and they are constrained in activities, decisions

[247] Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, 29.
[248] Ibid., 38–40.

and official statements. Because of the role the ICBH plays in the Bosnian society as the highest authority for Bosnian Muslims, the ICBH's reluctance to open up a more dynamic discussion on reconciliation can be explained.

This brief analysis of the official statements confirms what Lasić, Kristić and Knežević have found in their broader research on the public statements of religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Lasić notes that religious debates and writings published by the three religious communities in their official gazettes do not deal enough with the topic of reconciliation and have not developed a theological framework nor institutional strategy in this respect.[249] Based on his findings he suggests that religious institutions must establish four conditions for a more effective contribution to reconciliation. First, he notes that all religious institutions justify current and recent conflicts with historical reasons. Myths are overemphasized in all religious communities and all institutions present their own believers as the main victims of the war, while victims from other groups are ignored or mentioned to justify one's own acts. To counteract, Lasić argues that religious institutions should engage with these myths and a fact – based history. Second, the author mentions structural and institutional preconditions. He observes that all institutions are preoccupied with internal differences, political issues and the protection of religious rights restitution of property of their own communities. Other issues are in the second plan and remain declarative in nature as all actors wait for the other to make the first step. Most importantly, no academic framework exists that deals with peacebuilding and reconciliation. Third, Lasić sees that the authority of religious institution is primarily used for political and national interests. Fourth, religious institutions have internal issues and other more important (often political) events that decrease their peacebuilding and reconciliation potential.[250]

In congruence with Lasić's observations, Kristić identifies eight features of

[249] Ivan Lasić, "Pomirenje I Vjerske Zajednice U Bosni I Hercegovini: Koncepti Pomirenja U Službenim Glasilima Katoličke Crkve, Pravoslavne Crkve I Islamske Zajednice U Bosni I Hercegovini," in *Uloga Religije U Pomirenju I Tranzicionoj Pravdi* (Novi Sad: Centar za istraživanje religije, politike i društva, 2013), 117–28.
[250] Ibid.

religious communities' public speeches that negatively affect the reconciliation process in Bosnia. He proposes that religious institutions are unable to accept critique and develop self – criticism, instead they propagate a false sense of belonging which is not in cohesion with authentic religion, are silent about their own wrongs but emphasize wrongs done to them, which together culminates in the stubborn denial of guilt.[251]

Knežević sees many obstacles to the full capacity of religion in the process of reconciliation and identifies as the major issue the selective approach towards the victims and the past by all three major religions. His main argument is that support for reconciliation is weaker where religions are representing majority and where they are strong holders of national identity. In these contexts they are reluctant to change their views about the past and their position in the transitional justice process.[252]

The ICBH does not define a strategy of reconciliation and focuses more on the losses of its own religious community. This confirms our previous conclusion that reconciliation as described by the top – level leaders of the ICBH is a minimalist understanding. In other words, they advocate and promote tolerance and coexistence rather than deep reconciliation. In his critical assessment of the position the ICBH has towards the process of reconciliation, a professor teaching at the Faculty of Islamic Sciences compares the ICBH insistence on the truth and acknowledgment of the crimes to a stone that is a hurdle on the path that leads to the future. He argues that there are many reports, judgments and commission reports that are evidence and one more judgment or report will not make perpetrators change their mind and acknowledge past wrongs. Instead, he states, new ways should be searched for:

> What should we do? Should we wait or should we search for alternative ways, ways of forgiveness maybe? As far as I can see the atmosphere is that we wait but I am not sure if we are going to see that moment, that this rock will move. But Bosniaks should direct their attention to some other points. Planning the future. Instead of waiting or trying that the perpetrators admit their crimes of the past we do nothing to prevent that it repeats to us in the future. There are a lot of ways

[251] Alen Kristić, "Vjerske Institucije U BiH: Govor 'Razrokosti'?," in *Opasna Sjećanja I Pomirenje: Kontekstualna Promišljanja O Religiji U Postkonfliktnom Društvu* (Rijeka: Ex Libris, 2012), 33–72.
[252] Nikola Knežević, "Religion, Politics and Transitional Justice in the Western Balkan," in *Religija, Odgovornost I Tranziciona Pravda* (Novi Sad: Centar za istraživanje religije, politike i društva, 2014), 39–45.

that it can be done, from educations to economic development. I think that we should be more creative in finding ways to get from perpetrators what we want which is that they give up their plans. I think there are alternative ways outside the court. I think that we got from the courts what we could.[253]

3.3. INTERVIEWS

In the following I categorized the responses of *imams* according to how they conceptualize reconciliation, how they relate their work to reconciliation, what they do to contribute to the process and what values and principles motivate them to act in this process.

3.3.1. Conceiving Reconciliation

What kind of reconciliation?

This section evaluates the responses to the following questions: What does reconciliation mean to you? How should the process of reconciliation develop and how should a reconciled society look like? *Imams* that are included in this study showed themselves ready to talk about the topic of reconciliation in their communities. Each of them had different understanding of what reconciliation means and ideas about the best approach to achieve genuine reconciliation. All *imams* regarded reconciliation as a crucial process for their local communities and perceive that reconciliation is still ongoing process. Almost all *imams* assume that the ICBH and the *imams* in particular have a central role in these processes.[254] The responses varied from very minimalist to maximalist definitions of reconciliation. Reconciliation according to *imams* refers to:

- a necessity for survival of Bosniaks: "we cannot live by ourselves"
- establishing the truth, delivering justice and acknowledging crimes that were determined by international courts
- peaceful coexistence and nothing more: "living next to each other"
- not hating each other, giving less space for nationalistic thoughts and not hurting each other

[253] Personal interview, Sarajevo, 16.02.2017
[254] The *imam* in Kiseljak stated that he does not think that the ICBH or he himself can do something about the reconciliation process.

- giving someone the right he has as a human; reconciliation is not about loving or trusting someone
- economic cooperation, trade and work
- living with each other but accepting certain limits: “we should develop relationships but be cautious”
- acknowledgment of wrongs by both sides
- respecting each other and tolerance
- getting to know each other
- talking about the past with each other
- having a constant dialogue and communication with each other
- breaking stereotypes and prejudice about each other and listening to the story of the other side
- living in harmony and cooperation with each other
- being good neighbors: “living with each other”
- being friends

I ordered the various conceptions of reconciliation by *imams* from the most minimalist to the most maximalist understanding. In both minimalist and maximalist conceptions reconciliation is understood as building more stable and positive relationships between former enemies. However, in the minimalist conception relationships are defined narrowly and often very superficial and distant relationships are meant. According to my analysis I classify minimalist conception of reconciliation the following statements: “We need reconciliation because of the survival of Bosniaks”, purely legalist understandings of the process, “living next to each other”, “not hating and hurting each other”, “reconciliation is not about loving or trusting each other” and reconciliation as a purely economic activity. These minimalists understandings of reconciliation expect the first step to be made by the other side, see themselves as victims and are the *imams* take a defensive stance towards the other. The relations that need to be rebuild are between the victim and the perpetrator and often defined negatively as “not hating each other” or “not hurting each other”. *Imams* who advocate this kind of reconciliation are backward – looking and understand the future from the prism of the past. In this way the statement that “reconciliation is necessary for the survival of Bosniaks” should be understood. In comparison, maximalist conceptualizations of reconciliation are forward – looking and see reconciliation as a process that requires both parties to engage and approach one another. While they

underscore the importance of caution in their future relations their perception of the future is more positive and less laden with the past. Relationships that need to be rebuild are relationships between humans. Both sided need to understand each other and acknowledge each other, show interest for the other's story and suffering. These *imams* depict the other side in more human terms and do not define them as perpetrators or bystanders. Deeper relationship are envisioned and hoped for through the process of reconciliation by this group of *imams*, good neighbor relations and even friendship is mentioned. The *imam* in Bratunac and one *imam* in Srebrenica understand reconciliation in minimalist terms, in Kiseljak and Orašje in rather maximalist terms while in Prozor and the other *imam* in Srebrenica in maximalist terms.

The *imams* in Bratunac and Srebrenica defined reconciliation in legalist terms:

> Reconciliation is a long – lasting process and it must be based on the truth, facts and proofs. Primarily, it is based on respect towards the judgments of the International Court of Justice and the national courts. Everyone must acknowledge his own responsibility and guilt. It means also that the neighboring countries, I think before all on Serbia and Croatia, should acknowledge what has happened, that they have helped their people and that the Bosniaks were the greatest victims of this war. When all things are ordered in the right way and named as they should be and when all are held responsible and brought to the court for genocide and other war crimes, only then we will be able to feel true reconciliation and I think for this to happen we will need a lot of time.[255]

In Bratunac the *imam* says:

> They claim that everything that happened came from the outside, that none of them has participated in all this but that people from outside have set us against each other. However, we continue to search for some 300 people that are still missing. No one wants to show us the mass graves. We have until now not met one person who admits and says yes, we are responsible for the destruction of your mosques, yes we did war crimes, yes, we killed your religion leader. No, they are totally silent. They would like to get over what has happened. They think that we should look in the future without looking at the past.[256]

In these two quotations truth, court, facts, evidence, acknowledgment, responsibility, guilt, punishment are key themes. True reconciliation can only be established by delivering justice and acknowledging crimes determined by national and

[255] Personal interview, Srebrenica (2), 20.02.2017
[256] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017

international courts, that is, through the legal procedure that determines the truth about the past.

The *imam* in Bratunac sees economic cooperation as the best way to advance the process of reconciliation:

> So I am trying… people work with each other, they cooperate… but I am not telling them to… as before the war… people were visiting each other in their homes, they have attacked when they saw that we have nothing to defend ourselves with. I think that the economy has the primary role in reconciling people. Existence is giving the direction. Of course, genocide has recently happened, heavy crimes have been committed and people have shot at one another… you cannot accept now, never in the future that this process will be something special. You cannot expect brotherhood and unity. But reconciliation can happen to the extent that the state exists, that the local community exists. For me economy is dictating plurality.[257]

In addition to what has been said before, the *imam* argues that the relationships between the Bosnian Serbs and Bosniaks in Bratunac should be based on economic cooperation rather than intimate personal relationships. In his opinion economic cooperation will help the local citizens to improve their livelihoods and at the same time keep them safe as "they [the Serbs] have attacked when they saw that we have nothing to defend ourselves with." Almost all *imams* that were interviewed explicitly state that trust is not present in the interethnic relationships and argue that reconciliation is important but it should be approached with caution:

> The Prophet said that a Muslims must not allow himself that he is beaten from the same hole (by a snake) a second time. A Muslim must be cautious. We have to keep in mind that we need to build trust but with a certain measure of caution.[258]
>
> However, as our neighbors wanted to eliminate us from this region we do everything that we do with sincerity but also with cautions towards those who have done what has happened to us. The relationships are slowly normalizing but we cannot have relationships as they were before the aggression. Before mixed marriages between Bosniaks and Serbs were common, even an *imam* who worked and continues to work here, married a Serbian women and has today children with her. We cannot talk anymore about this kind of relations.[259]

Here, the *imams* mention episodes of the recent war or examples of difficult

[257] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017
[258] Personal interview, Banja Luka 21.02.2017
[259] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017

social interaction and the fragile political situation as reasons for caution in dealing with the "other" and as obstacles for trust – building among them.

In Prozor, Orašje, Banja Luka and Kiseljak reconciliation is perceived as a form of restoring relationships through dialogue and frequent encounter. While they regard truth and justice as important components of genuine reconciliation they perceive reconciliation as the process of developing relationships. In Prozor, Banja Luka and in the case of one *imam* in Srebrenica the religious leaders expressed the readiness for very close and intimate relations such as friendship and close interreligious neighbor relations.

> There is nothing in the world that is worth that I turn my head away from my neighbors, the Catholics or that I do not greet them in the city. They say, we live next to each other. I say that we live here with each other. I live 12 km from the city center and my house is the only Muslim house among Catholics. But no Christmas or Easter can pass, or one Eid or the other that we do not visit each other. The daughter and son of my brother, they are very small and have two Catholic friends Ivo and Catarina. They eat with us every day for lunch.[260]

As this example from Prozor shows, the *imams* in these cities have very close relationships with the members of the other community and regard real friendship and trust between the two communities as possible. While the *imam* in Prozor states to have very intimate relationship with the Catholic priest and his Croat neighbors, the *imam* in Srebrenica has several good friends among the local Serb community but no contact with the local Orthodox religious leaders. Compared to the experiences of the *imam* in Bratunac and the other *imam* in Srebrenica these two *imams* from Prozor and Srebrenica do not preclude intimate relationships between the two local groups. The position of *imams* in Orašje and Kiseljak can be positioned at the middle of the two attitudes previously mentioned. These *imams* do not see the necessity of developing very intimate relations between the two groups but do not exclude the possibility of close and intimate relationships. Primarily, they argue that reconciliation can be achieved by better relations in terms of interreligious dialogue, common cultural projects and other kind of cooperation. The following statement from the *imam* in Orašje makes clear the

[260] Personal interview, Prozor, 18.02.2017

importance he gives to constant interaction and communication over intimate relationships.

> Living together with each other is more important than reconciliation. The most important thing in reconciliation is to work together on projects which are uniting us, on projects that are of the common interests of everyone. We need to avoid things that further divide us or can cause misunderstandings. These terms "reconciled society" and "reconciliation" have become crude phrases or to say it in a better way they have become impossible. Nowhere in the world you have a "reconciled society", everywhere you have people who are not satisfied and obstruct things. In our context, where we have so many victims, reconciliation has a different meaning. A reconciled society needs to be a society that is tolerant, nothing else. Sometimes it means to tolerate and sometimes to respect the other. We need to respect the rights of the other who lives next to you. So we need to respect each other and give the other the opportunity to live with each other.[261]

Contrary to the case of the *imam* in Prozor, in his view reconciliation does not necessarily require the establishment of intimate relationship between Croats, Bosniaks and Serbs. Instead, reconciliation should be understood as a state in which the three groups interact with each other while respecting the others' rights and tolerating their differences.

Forgiveness

Imams regard forgiveness as an important value and principle in Islam and the act of forgiving is perceived as very honorable. However, all of them emphasize that forgiveness is an individual process and that no one can forgive in the name of somebody else. In addition, they underscore that forgiveness requires true repentance by those who conducted war crimes and that forgiving makes sense only when asked to forgive. Some of them argue that forgiveness without repentance as promoted by Christian theology is not based in Islam. A more detailed discussion on forgiveness can be found in the section "Religious Values and Other Principles".

Victimization, Rehumanization and Accommodation of Identity

In Srebrenica and Bratunac *imams* depict Bosnian Muslims as the main victims of war more readily than in other cities. They do not see Serbs as victims of the war but

[261] Personal interview, Orašje, 21.02.2017

as perpetrators and bystanders. The *imam* in Bratunac describes Bosniaks as the historical victims and Serbs as the perpetrators throughout history:

> throughout generations we have the same people killing people from the same houses and families. We as responsible human beings have to stop this and we do everything so that new generations of Bosniaks do not experience what is happening through generations. In 120 years they have gone through the same for several times. It is the duty of all of us, Bosniaks throughout the world and those here, that new generations do not experience the same things.[262]

Imams in these cities see reconciliation as a means to ensure the "survival of Bosniaks" in these territories rather than as a model for building relationships. A reason for this is certainly that these are the two cities that have experienced the greatest damage in human lives and material destruction during the last war. In the cities of Prozor, Orašje, Kiseljak and Banja Luka the sufferings of one's own people are described but at the same time the losses of the other ethnic group are mentioned. They also acknowledge that the other side has suffered, that individuals from the Bosnian Muslim community have also done crimes and that everyone, no matter from what ethnic group should be taken to the court if responsible.

While describing the atrocities and losses all *imams* are careful to make a difference between perpetrators and those who are not engaged in the crimes. Thus, they do not describe the Serbian/Croat people as genocidal and they do not generalize the crimes of individuals to the whole community. No matter what individuals have done, the whole community must not be blamed.

> If a person has done crimes or something that is wrong then it is different, you should isolate him. But you cannot characterize a whole nation based on your opinion about a few of them. I advise them to be a good human, to be just and I tell them that if the person has not done anything wrong you cannot take away his rights.[263]

> They have never admitted that they have committed genocide but it is impossible that a whole nation has committed genocide, it is always about individuals. It is wrong to say that they are a genocidal people.[264]

> We cannot generalize everything. I have witnessed that other people have

[262] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017
[263] Personal interview, Orašje, 21.02.2017
[264] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017

rescued humans the deeds crime has we have

Bosniaks. That is why I say that not all Serbs are war criminals. There are and non – humans. Some people are not conscious of this difference. But of individuals belongs to them and not the whole community. Every war a name and surname. We have to nurture good relations among ourselves, to live with each other, cooperate and help each other.[265]

They also acknowledge that many Serbs were manipulated by the Serbian media and politicians and deceived to go into war:

I know that the Serbian people were manipulated by the media that was broadcasted by Serbs. I can tell this by the example of a woman from Orašje who lived in Belgrade with her husband who was a Serb. She came after the war to Orašje to visit her family. She did not let say that they started the war and that they had to talk long with her to tell her our story. This is the result of the propaganda. This propaganda presented us as the dark part of the war and presented us as the war criminals who have supposedly killed and persecuted the Serbs and destroyed their churches. All their war crimes they have ascribed to us. In this way they created a misguided mass. Slowly this will go away.[266]

Rehumanizing, which is giving back human characteristics the one who was my enemy during the conflict, is an important aspect in the process of reconciliation. The interviews that I have conducted show a mixed account of the rehumanization of the other ethnic/religious group. I will give two examples that are at two extremes. In the city of Bratunac the *imam* compares and contrasts the Muslim population, religion and history to the Serbian people, religion and history. Thereby he presents Islam and Muslims in very positive terms and Serbs in negative terms: the Serbian Orthodox Church misuses religion, they did not help us during the war as our people helped them, and he gives an examples of the war events where 40 children were killed in the kindergarten by the Serbian army. He also asks:

why do they not tell me where the mass graves are? The communal utility was involved in this. Everyone knows this. Why do they not tell us where they have buried them? Why do we have to pay a Serb to tell us where our fathers are buried? Is this human, that he asks for money to tell us where they are buried? This is not civilized.[267]

The *imam* in Bratunac argues that all the Serbs know what happened during the

[265] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017
[266] Personal interview, Orašje, 21.02.2017
[267] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017

war but do not want to acknowledge the crimes or help them find those Bosniaks who are missing. In contrast to this, the *imam* in Banja Luka perceives and depicts the Bosnian Serbs of his city in very positive terms. He gives several instances in which his Serbian neighbors show compassion and care for their fellow Muslim citizens.

> We have a lot of beautiful things going on. When for example a Serb comes and gives us a Qur'an. He says that the Qur'an was given to him by his neighbor who has left the holy book with him, so that he preserves it. After 20 years he has come to give us this Qur'an or for example a prayer rug. They show that they care. Or for example they come and say that they have cried the day (that the Ferhadija was opened). They, the Orthodox, say we are happy because today a part of us has returned. Because the Ferhadija is the symbol of our city, of our life. Everything started at the Ferhadija, we would meet at the Ferhadija and everything would start from the Ferhadija.[268]

When it comes to the "accommodation of identity" as was discussed by Herbert Kelman, I will mention two examples that positively surprised me. The first is the example of an *imam* in Srebrenica who said that the Serbian, Croat and Macedonian folk dance are dances of the local region and that one of his daughters dances the Serbian and the other the Bosniak dance. This is an excellent example of how this *imam* has included the other in his own identity. He does not neglect the Serbian heritage but regards it as the heritage of his country and his people:

> One of my daughters was playing the Bosniak folk dance and my other daughter the Serbian dance. And people from outside would be very surprised when they see my daughter dancing the Serbian dance. These are all dances of our region, this is our culture, all the Serbian, Croat, Bosniak and Macedonian dance. This was perfect.[269]

The other example of how an *imam* accommodated the identity of his Croat fellow citizens in his own identity is from Orašje. I originally visited Orašje to interview the local *imam* about the reconciliation process between the Bosnian Muslims and the Bosnian Croats. But in our conversation he would use the pronoun "we" to refer to Bosniaks and Croats and "they" when he talked about the Serbs in the next village. So while I prepared myself to evaluate the reconciliation process between Bosnian Muslims and Croats, the *imam* from the very beginning understood that the reconciliation process

[268] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017
[269] Personal interview, Srebrenica (2), 20.02.2017

under discussion was between the residents of Orašje and the Serbs in the next village. When I asked him in more detail he answered the following:

> "We" always have been 'we'. I just have given you the example of the mosque. I say "we" because we never experienced inconveniences from Croats even during the war. During the war I also regularly met with the Catholic priest and they are very welcoming. We do not meet so often nor are we so close to each other but we live here together, sometimes sit down and drink coffee and we have no problems. They never made any problems as the majority population to us. And no one of them ever has done anything to our women. We felt secure and no one was afraid of being here.[270]

3.3.2. Reconciliation Acts

I categorize reconciliatory activities that were mentioned by the interviewed *imams* into three distinct groups according to what kind of focus the *imams* had in their approach to reconciliation. Their efforts are oriented towards the individual believer/the community, the communication between the groups or the structure in their society. Each approach will be explained in more detail in the following.

Those *imams* who stress that individuals are the focus of their attention understand that the obstacles to reconciliation and harmonious coexistence are found in the deeds and thoughts of individuals. Because the individuals do not apply to moral standards problems occur and persist. Therefore, their mission is to improve the understanding of religion and it correct application in the community. The second category of *imams* understands that the improvement of dialogue and communication between the two communities is crucial for peace and reconciliation. They point out that lack of communication, dialogue, and unbiased knowledge of the other maintain the unwanted status quo. The third category of *imams* claims that political and economic structures hinder peacebuilding and reconciliation. According to what kind of problem the *imams* define as most pressing and urgent they apply different reconciliatory activities. It does not mean that all *imams* focus only on one type of problem and therefore fall in one of these categories, but often their focus on one issue let them apply one particular kind of activity.

[270] Personal interview, Orašje, 21.02.2017

1. Individual – Oriented Reconciliation Strategies

As mentioned the *imams* who understand that individual believers should be the focus of attention in reconciliation therefore apply strategies that are aimed to contribute to the personal development of their coreligionists as individuals and as a community. Improvement of the personal religious life is related to better intercommunal relations as this quote from the *imam* in Banja Luka illustrates:

> My Leitmotif is the following. A good believer, no matter if he is a Jew, Christian or Muslim cannot do any evil to another person. The cure is that you neighbor has faith. If your neighbor is a believer everything can be handled. When I say believer I think that the Christian and Jew are also believers. I do not enter into theological discussions, but he believes in God. That is why believers are brothers. However believes in one God we need to respect and accept him and be friends with each other. We should not feel threatened by these people. Faith should be a kind of indicator about the neighborhood you are in.[271]

Imams in this category stress the importance of religious education and teaching their own children from an early age about other nations and religions in a "right" and "healthy" way. Also, they argue that it is important to include other children and explain Islam to the children of other faiths. Another individuals – focused reconciliation strategy is to encourage the members of their local religious community to personally develop and change their own perspectives and attitudes. In addition to this, they argue that it is important for the process of reconciliation that they as leaders of their religious community lead with good example. An important other type of reconciliation strategy is that they emphasize the importance of good neighborhood relations and the universality and inclusiveness of Islam during the *khutba*.

a) Religious Education

The *imam* in Banja Luka pays a lot of attention to educating the children in a way that they will respect other faiths and their neighbors.

> We went with our children in the kindergarten to visit an Orthodox and Catholic Church. This cannot be foreign to our children. That they have passed by the church and do not know how it looks like inside. In this way we learn our children to cherish, respect and accept each other. This is our tradition and this is

[271] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017

the way we have lived. A church, mosque, synagogue is part of me. I have grown up next to them. It is important for us to teach our children and teach other children. We had a war here and it is difficult to get rid of this toxin in the older generations. If you poison a child from the very beginning then maybe will grow up prepared for worse things. Our children have to grow up in a healthy environment and healthy thoughts. We hope that our children will in this way with this approach learn that every human is important regardless of who he is. When our children learn that every human should be accepted and respected as he is we will have a healthy society. Until then we have a lot of work to do.[272]

Educating children from other religious groups is also important: "We have a lot of visits by children who are Orthodox coming as groups from schools and it is important for us that they have a good impression of what they see here. This is their first encounter with Islam."[273]

b) Personal Improvement of Every Believer

A different method through which *imams* aim to change the society and contribute to reconciliation is by altering attitudes of their coreligionist.

We have here a very young religious community. 90% of people are young people. I try to talk with them and advise them how to live their lives and that do not get involved with the wrong people. I tell them that they would find a problem in a night club at 11 o'clock even with a Bosniak, you do not need to go to a night club in a place where 90% are Catholics to find a problem. So we try to educate the members of our community about religion, through the work in the *maktab*, in the school education, tomorrow when they grow up that they know how to behave.[274] I advise them to care for them. They ask me: "Can I go to their funeral?" Of course I say they are not going to become Christians if they go to a funeral. You are not becoming a Christian but a better man because you went for your neighbor. When your neighbor needs help you have to help him because the neighbor has big importance in the life of a Muslim.[275]

Giving advice and religious guidance are methods that *imams*, as leaders of their religious communities, use to improve the religious life, attitudes, and behavior of their coreligionists. This religious guidance contributes to more respectful behavior towards fellow citizens.

[272] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017
[273] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017
[274] Personal interview, Prozor, 18.02.2017
[275] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017

c) Providing Personal Example

The *imams* mention as well that they are responsible in the way their coreligionists behave: "It is very important how an *imam* deals with his *jamah* and other people who are not in the *jamah* and are not of the same religion. People look at our example and behave accordingly and experience Islam through us."[276] Thus, *imams*, fully aware of the importance of their own conduct and its impact on the believers, aim to influence the way their coreligionists behave and think towards the religious/ethnic other through their personal example and behavior towards other religious/ethnic groups.

d) The Messages of the *Khutba*

Another individuals-oriented tool to contribute to reconciliation and that was mentioned by *imams* is the Friday sermon. According to them the *khutba* is the most important channel to transmit the universal message of Islam to their communities.

> We transmit the message of peace and the universal message through this medium. We are explaining Islam and the Qur'an. The Qur'an is a universal book which does not only belong to the Muslims but to all people. In the Qur'an Allah talks to all people because there is often mention "O, people…" Through the Friday sermon, our advices and personal example we transmit this Qur'an's universal message. People hear and accept this universality of Islam and know that Islam does not only include a certain group of people but all humans regardless of faith or nationality.[277]

Thus, through this regular public preaching *imams* aim to transmit values important for harmonious coexistence and future reconciliation.

2. Communication – Oriented Reconciliation Strategies

Imams utilizing this type of strategy explain that their focus in contributing to reconciliation is in improving communications, participating in common meetings, symposiums and manifestations. The silence that exists between the communities is an obstacle for true reconciliation. *Imams* who see this as the main obstacle to genuine reconciliation try to establish meaningful contact with members of the other community either through interaction with the other religious leader or the members of the other

[276] Personal interview, Banja Luka (2), 21.02.2017
[277] Personal interview, Banja Luka (2), 21.02.2017

religious community.

a) Daily Communication and Personal Relationships

Personal relationships between the *imams* and the other religious community members are perceived as very important and high on the agenda.

> I know every Serb in the town and all of them know me. And with all of them I have at least drunk a coffee. With many of them I drink coffee at the daily basis and among them, I do not want to mention names maybe they do not like it, I have some really good friends. With several of them I meet weekly, with one Serb I play tennis and meet daily with him. I know hundreds of Serbs who in the beginning did not want to talk with me at all but today they are my friends. I did not do this through talk but through personal example. We had no opportunity to talk, but through my personal example in daily situations they started to communicate with me, to open up and talk. In this way the prejudice they had towards me has gone, and we continue to talk with each other.[278]

By way of their personal example and personal interaction with the members of the other group *imams* aim to open new communication channels and reduce tension and biases. In addition to their personal efforts to establish meaningful communication and intercommunal relations, *imams* also encourage their coreligionists to communicate with their neighbors and help each other:

> We should not allow ourselves that we talk about how nice we should be towards our neighbors and at the same time build a wall of five meters height. We invest a lot into the walls and fences and less in the human interaction. When we have healthy relationships we do not need fences. I advise my community member that the neighbor is holy and that they should build good relationships with them. Sometimes a neighbor will help you before anyone else. For us Bosnian Muslims the neighborhood was always holy. I tell them to return to this and practice this.[279]

b) Meetings with Religious Leaders

According to all interviewed *imams* equally important for reconciliation is the regular communication with the leaders of the other religious community. In Orašje and Prozor *imams* have personal or institutional communication with other religious leaders:

> Well, we do not have a cooperation on the administrative level, we do not organize seminars or symposiums. But we drink coffee on the daily basis. We do

[278] Personal interview, Srebrenica, 20.02.2017
[279] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017

not have an official communication. But for example I have been with the priest in Rumbuci a few nights before and I stayed with him almost the whole night. This is very normal. We have a good communication and we sit down and drink coffee all the time. For example, the priest came recently here to the mosque and we play billiard together. For our people it is very normal because they see us interacting on the daily basis. For example, recently the two of us… we walk almost every night between evening and night prayer a few rounds around the city, the priest waits for me at the church after the evening prayer and then we make our rounds. After that we usually go to drink a coffee in a motel that is close to here and that has a coffee as well. But we do a lot together, me and the priest. It has also effect on the people around us.[280]

In Kiseljak the *imam* reported that he invests a lot of efforts to realize some kind of communication with other religious leaders:

> A month after I was appointed as the chief *imam* in the *majlis* of Kiseljak which was in September 2015 I went to the Church together with the president of the *majlis*. We went there to talk with them, to drink some coffee. We want to relax the life in Kiseljak and we want to have cooperation. I have invited them to come and see us so that we can start with some kind of cooperation. This has not yet happened. I did the first step. Then a young Franciscan invited me and some of my colleagues to a celebration dinner. There were around 2000 of the representatives of the Catholic Church and we were there in our official religious clothing and I have even had a speech. I have also suggested to the mayor that he invites all the religious leaders of the communities present in the municipality of Kiselajk, because we also have an Orthodox Church here so that we get to know each other. I think that we do everything that we can to establish a contact. I also have been in the Monastery as they are keeping the Firman of 1463 and the cloak of Sultan Fatih. We have also invited them to the Milodraz, a conference that we are organizing to remember the days of Firman.[281]

In Srebrenica, Bratunac and Banja Luka no communication exists between the religious institutions despite the fact that *imams* are willing to establish regular interaction with the Orthodox religious leaders.

c) Organization of and Participation in Interreligious Dialogue

The interreligious dialogue was discussed in the previous chapter as an important tool that specifically religiously based actors can utilize. In cities in which religious leaders communicate with each other they have some form of organized interaction

[280] Personal interview, Prozor, 18.02.2017
[281] Personal interview, Kiseljak, 17.02.2017

among the communities. In Orašje the *imam* gives an example of how the groups from Orašje, Tolis and Zabar – Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox – organized an interreligious program for the broader community:

> In Orašje we organized a meeting for all people here but we also went to that village as well. We went together with the Croats to their [Serbian] village, Zabar. They welcomed us and we visited first their local church. After that we had lunch and a kind of meeting with them. And there was a number of youth and women who would return with us to Orašje and visit our city. So these women for example before the war visited every week the local market in Orašje, they bought there what they needed, their children were going to school in Orašje and many of them were employed here. After the war they never came and we also never went to their village. When we arrived at Orašje we also first visited the mosque and for most of them it was the first time that they visited a mosque. So we also went to the Catholic Church and after that we visited Tolis. After that we had dinner in a big saloon with a capacity of 500 people here in Orašje. We had a nice meeting. We sang, danced and talked together. With respect that it was the first time, the people and youth easily harmonized. Later it would repeat.[282]

This and similar meetings between people who have shoot at one another are important and necessary if they are to live in peace with each other in the future. It can be noticed from this quote that the interreligious dialogue is an interaction as individuals as is considered specifically important by Bernstein for the success of the encounter.[283] These meetings open the space and offer the general population opportunities to open up and share thoughts, feelings and experiences. As was reported by the *imam*, the program offered some participants for the first time to visit the city they used to travel to frequently. These projects are crucial channels and one of the best strategies for peacebuilding and reconciliation as they give opportunity for participants to build relationships, rehumanize and change personal attitudes.[284]

3. Structure – Oriented Reconciliation Strategies

Imams who focus on structural reforms within their communities argue that unjust economic structures and political institutions are the main obstacle to true

[282] Personal interview, Orašje, 21.02.2017
[283] Bernstein, "Is 'Interreligious' Synonymous with 'Interfaith'? The Roles of Dialogue in Peacebuilding," 109–10.
[284] Ibid., 109–10.

reconciliation. They understand that economic and political factors have important effects on the road reconciliation is going to take. The *imam* from Bratunac argues: "Who gives the people salary and money has the opportunity to direct all processes and thoughts of people. I think that the economy has the primary role in reconciling people. Existence is giving the direction."[285] He also asserts that *imams* need to be political actors, involved in political processes and positive changes. Both *imams* in Srebrenica that I have interviewed were involved in the politics of their local community. This group perceives that better institutions are the primary way through which they can act on the reconciliation process at the local level. This can be linked to what was previously discussed by David Little. In his opinion one role of religious actors in peacebuilding is institutions and capacity building. Acting in this way they design and create institutions and engage in practices that enforce social harmony and civil unity over hostility and violence.[286] Building capacities means that they teach other individuals about these principles. These interviews present that *imams* were building institutions that encourage unity and harmony. Some of the *imams* have actually acted while other plan to put these ideas into action.

a) Open Institutions

An excellent example of institution-building efforts comes from Banja Luka. The *imams* reported that the ICBH has opened a kindergarten that is open to all children. On purpose the founders did not include any religious content in the daily program of the kindergarten so that it would not discourage Orthodox residents to enroll their children:

> We have opened a kindergarten and one third of this children are Orthodox children. It is based on *halal* diet and it is open to everyone. We opened this kindergarten with a diet plan that suits our Muslim customs but we do not have any religious content. Religious content is in the *mektab*. People have recognized that the diet plan is good and that it is healthy and they have no problem to enroll their children here. Even if the founder of the institution is the ICBH. We plan to open other education institutions as well.[287]

[285] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017
[286] Little, *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*, 442–47.
[287] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017

It needs to be note that project of this scale require high levels of financial support. In the case of Banja Luka the kindergarten was supported by the Islamic Community. Otherwise, in Banja Luka and in other places it would have been impossible to establish such an institution. Another example where *imams* from Banja Luka have included other religious groups in their activities is the following:

> During the last two Eid days we build up a small theme park for our children to amuse themselves a bit. Last year we announced that the park is open to all children. And many children who are not Muslims came with their parents. They wanted to pay but we explained that the Islamic Community is organizing it for the children because of Eid and that nobody has to pay. A woman came and she was so thankful. She said that she has three children and that she had no money to offer them this. And she said that today we have fulfilled her children's dream. A lot of people came. This has left such a positive effect on all the people. It was a very small gesture but they can help us in creating a harmonious environment.[288]

Like the previous example of an open institution this also signifies to the other religious/ethnic group that the Islamic community is an open community, ready to receive others and welcome them in their midst.

b) Common Cultural Activities

In other cities the *imams* together with other religious leaders organized activities that bring communities together. In the city of Orašje Catholic religious leaders together with the *imam* organized an exhibition of handicraft, a poetry night and a night of music. In Srebrenica, however, the citizens united and established a mixed folklore association named "Vasa Jovanovic". While active the association counted fifty members, Bosniak and Serb children, and had international appearances. Common cultural activities, of which *imams* are part, contribute to more frequent encounter and hopefully to deeper understanding in the future. Thus, among other institution-and-capacity building activities shared cultural activities have an important role.

c) Open Mosque

Another crucial aspect of the structural approach to reconciliation are open religious objects. *Imams* in Banja Luka and Bratunac reported that they organize open

[288] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017

days and specifically in Banja Luka *imams* welcome frequently Orthodox visitors:

> What I find interesting and what I have witnessed myself is the great number of visitors to the Ferhadija Mosque by Catholics and Orthodox Christians. People who believe and practice their religion. They come with a certain image of Muslims and Islam. But after they see a mosque from inside, see what real Islam is and what Muslims do, they leave with a different opinion and they are often very fascinated. I have witnessed these situations. I think that the mere presence of the mosque contributes to the improvement of the relationship between the people here in Banja Luka. I think that the mosque in itself is a transmitter of peace.[289]

As the *imam* already indicated, open religious institutions can serve to correctly educate and reduce biases.

d) Economic Cooperation

Other *imams* argue that the most important structural activities that they perform for the sake of future reconciliation are economic.

> We have managed to bring ROBOT markets and the BBI bank to this town. We started to sell agricultural products. But we have also started to open different services. We opened a car mechanic service. Almost all kinds of services we have here in Bratunac. If we do not create anything here in the eastern part of Bosnia there is no perspective for Serbs nor Bosniaks. Who controls the economy, controls the minds of people.[290]

At a smaller scale *imams* from Banja Luka report that they have opened a gift shop which acts as:

> an opportunity for all the citizens of Banja Luka to cooperate with each other. We cooperate with them in all possible ways. We want to be citizens of this city and we want to be equal to all others. But nothing will happen if we do not do it ourselves and if we do not raise our voice.[291]

3.3.3. Religious Values and Other Principles

In our discussion in section 2.3. on the characteristics and strengths religious peacebuilding and peacemakers have, compared to other peacebuilding approaches, we explained that peacebuilding by religious peacemakers involves special resources and values. These values and resources are important motivations for religious actors and

[289] Personal interview, Banja Luka (2), 21.02.2017
[290] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017
[291] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017

encourage them to act in ways that will contribute to peacebuilding. Not only that these values encourage *imams* to act in a certain way, but *imams* also teach others in their community to adopt these values and apply them in their life. Abu – Nimer mentioned several Islamic values that can be utilized for peacebuilding. This section enlists the religious values *imams* from the six Bosnian cities included in this research mentioned. Most of these values overlap with Abu – Nimer's list that constitute a framework of peacemaking and non – violence in Islam. The following are some of the most important values and principles *imams* mentioned that guide them in their daily work and their reconciliation efforts.

1. The Holiness of the Neighborhood

The concept of the neighborhood traditionally is highly respected in the Bosnian society. The *imams* I interviewed consider respect a special care for one's neighbor no matter of what creed as a principal that is based in Islamic teachings:

> The Prophet said: Your neighbor, your neighbor, your neighbor. I advise them that a neighbor is holy. We talk a lot about religion but we should show in practice what religion is all about. If my neighbor is sick I should ask if he needs something.[292]

2. Pluralism is a Wealth

The *imams* pointed out that pluralism – religious, national or ethnic – is the "destiny" of Bosnia and that accepting this fact is unavoidable. Besides this, they see pluralism as an opportunity and an enrichment. The following quote illustrates how the *imam* in Orašje thinks about the presence of the religious/ethnic other in midst of the Bosnian war:

> In 1994 a European delegation came with 7 bishops and a Jew from Brussel and an Orthodox archbishop from Vienna. And they visited many places throughout Bosnia. They asked me for the situation in Orašje, about the people and about reconciliation. I told them that every person is unique and that everyone has his own skills and capacities. No one can replace the other. I told them to imagine a garden with flowers and every flower is nice in its own way. Every of them adds to the beauty of the garden. If there were only roses in the garden, who are said to be the queens among the flowers, it would be very monotonous. It is better that

[292] Personal interview, Banja Luka 21.02.2017

we have a garden full of different flowers. The same is with us people. It does not matter if someone is an Orthodox Serb, Catholic Christian or Bosnian Muslim. It does not matter, we are all humans."[293]

3. Special Bond Between the People of the Book

The *imams* point to the special bond between the Abrahamic religions which is a principle that encourage them to establish communication and engage in common activities. The *imam* in Bratunac states that the following verse is a motto guiding him in his daily activities: "The Qur'anic verse says 'O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you (3:64)"[294] Similarly, the *imam* in Orašje says: "We have a lot of Qur'anic principles that advise us to gather around the common word, to advise each other and talk with each other etc. these are universal principles that we all have to take care of."[295]

4. Do Good (Khayr) and Be an Example in Goodness

Another values that was included by Abu Nimer in his framework of non-violence and peacebuilding in Islam is the principle of doing *khayr*:

> Our religion teaches us to be an example in all aspects of our life. We should be good examples in our belief, the practicing of our belief, daily encounters, in all aspects of life and among other things it advises that we should behave nice to our neighbors.[296]

5. Respect others and Give Them their Rights

According to the *imam* in Orašje explains that according to the Islamic teachings God has given to everyone certain rights and that believers need to respect those rights regardless of the context. In the context of post – conflict Bosnia and the reconciliation process he states that a believer must follow these guidelines given by God.

> The question here is not about loving or not loving someone. The crucial question is to give the person who is in front of you the right that belongs to him. The crucial point under this topic is to establish human relations and to give people the opportunity for what God has given them rights and what He commands us to do. We have to value and respect people because they are humans. Value him as a

[293] Personal interview, Orašje, 21.02.2017
[294] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017
[295] Personal interview, Orašje, 21.02.2017
[296] Personal interview, Srebrenica, 20.02.2017

> human and give him his right but the question of whether you like him is not important.[297]

Thus, even if it is difficult and hard to deal with those who have been your enemies during the conflict, Islam requires that individuals respect every human being and fulfill their duties towards others. The following Islamic values are particularly important in the way that the past is remembered and dealt with. *Imams* inspired by these values can provide alternative interpretations that make more sense to religious men and women who have lost family members.

6. No Revenge

Revenge is not approved of as an option to deal with the past by *imams* that I have interviewed. Instead, *imams* follow and preach that patience and forgiving is better than revenge:

> Respecting the Qur'anic instruction to accept people as they are, as members of other religion, and respecting the practice of our Prophet and the Qur'anic verse that we do not have a right for revenge, we have a right for revenge but we are advised that it is better to forgive and be patient.[298]

Imams underscore that God is merciful and that believers should internalize this attribute in dealing with the past: "Forgiving is human. Look how God is merciful to humans, despite everything that they are doing. He created us, why should we not forgive?"[299] Similarly, in Banja Luka the *imam* explains that the hope of every believer is that God will be merciful when it comes to one's own wrongful acts. He adds that God has given to human beings this ability to forgive and that believers should be aware of it and apply it.[300] The *imam* in Bratunac states that he is encouraging others to forgive: "I am maybe not the one who has right to forgive in someone's name, but I will always encourage others through my lecture and by personal example that those who forgive are better."[301] However, *imams* emphasize that full forgiveness should be realized only after repentance and they point out that forgiving should never be equated with forgetting:

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[297] Personal interview, Orašje, 21.02.2017
[298] Personal interview, Srebrenica, 20.02.2017
[299] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017
[300] Personal interview, Banja Luka 21.02.2017
[301] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017

> Forgiving for the sake of reconciliation, yes. But forgiveness that will lead to forgetting, never. What has happened to the Bosniaks should never be forgotten. They started to say: what happened, happened. Even if we are not going to progress a centimeter, we should never forget. I will always be the one who offers his hand to the others.[302]

> My personal opinion is that we do not have to forgive someone who has done crimes and not repented nor should we ever forget. If someone repents he asks for forgiveness and gets the opportunity to be forgiven. Everyone can make mistakes but if he does not repent he shows that he is ready to this again in the future. It makes no sense to forgive someone who has not asked for forgiveness.[303]

7. Absolute Justice is in the Afterlife

In their interpretation of justice, *imams* utilize what Santa – Barbara calls "metaphysical retribution"[304], i.e. God will punish wrongs in the afterlife justly. While justice is important and needs to be realized, a more satisfactory version of justice awaits believers in the afterlife:

> A believer is well aware that absolute justice is with God and that he judges justly. He judges according to what is right. There is no punishment on earth that can bring a mother any satisfaction. Even if the person is punished with hundred years of prison or even if he gets the death penalty. This will not give this mother any satisfaction, it will not bring back her child. But it is important to have this earthly satisfaction. Everyone strives to see that justice is satisfied but he is also aware that absolute justice is with God.[305]

8. Give Meaning to the Past and Sufferings

In their work and engagement with the members of their communities *imams* often discuss the past. I asked the *imams* how their community should remember the war and how they as religious leaders help them deal with the losses. *Imams* pointed out that religion is the force that keeps people endure these losses and gives them hope for the future. They, as religious leaders, aim to interpret the past and the sufferings in the light of religious texts and in this way reduce the burden and pain.

> We try to explain to people that what has happened can either be a punishment for what we have done or a trail from God to see how we will act. Everyone has individually to ask themselves whether it is a punishment or a trail. Whether he is

[302] Ibid.
[303] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017
[304] Santa-Barbara, "Reconciliation," 181.
[305] Personal interview, Banja Luka 21.02.2017

> already doing good and this is another trail to prove himself or is it a punishment for wrong acts that he has done. We try to direct their thoughts in this way.[306]
>
> her and belief
> I am often in such a situation to talk with people who have lost their family members. Just recently I was in the situation to talk with a mother who has lost family members. I advise them to make invocation. I advise them to be patient to hope for paradise together with their martyrs. This kind of life filled with makes this mother happy to wait for her return to her Lord and to her son. In this way even though she has lost her son, she is honored to be a mother of a martyr. We know at what kind of level the mother of a martyr is, that her son has the right to *shefaat*, and in what way she is honored.[307]

Specifically in the second example it becomes clear how religious beliefs give meaning to the losses and relieve sufferings of a mother who has lost her son during the war.

3.3.4. Obstacles

I observed that more obstacles and context specific difficulties were mentioned by *imams* who live in the Serb Republic. All *imams* living and working in the Serb Republic report that they have unstable and fragile contact with the religious leaders of the Church but good and stable relations with the general Serb population. They state that the main obstacle for better communication and dialogue are the strong hierarchy in the Orthodox Church that controls all the actions of the local priests and a leadership that ignores common projects and inhibits already established projects. Discrimination in education and employment are as well mentioned frequently as obstacles to an advance in the reconciliation process. More general obstacles mentioned to the progress in reconciliation were politics, media, fear for existence and lack of knowledge about the other.

An important observation is that in general the *imams* who I have interviewed were very positive and optimistic in their perception of the relationship and reconcilability between the general population, i.e. members of the different religious communities but less optimistic about the institutional communication. This can be particularly observed in cities where the Serbian population is in majority. In the Serb

[306] Personal interview, Kiseljak, 17.02.2017
[307] Personal interview, Banja Luka 21.02.2017

Republic between the religious representatives of the ICBH and the Serbian Orthodox Church there is a total lack of dialogue. In these same cities *imams* report that they have stable communication and relations with the general Serb population. The complete avoidance of dialogue and communication, even negligence is typical in all cities of Serb Republic. The reasons for a poor interreligious dialogue in this entity is attributed by the *imams* to the hierarchical structure, a lack of interest by the leadership of the SOC and general political circumstances that influence this process. In Srebrenica and Bratunac the ICBH initiated activities which were not answered by the other side. In the majority Croat cities the communication between religious leaders was reported to be very stable. However, in the city of Kiseljak *imams* reported a lack of vivid communication between religious institutions, too. In contrast to other majority Croat cities in Kiseljak the communication is weak.

The obstacles for better communication and reconciliation mention by *imams* in Serb Republic are the hierarchy and leadership of the Orthodox Church that hinder or obstruct interreligious communication and common projects as well as the political situation and human rights violations in Serb Republic.

1. Obstacles Specific to the Serb Republic

a) Hierarchy in the Serbian Orthodox Church

All *imams* living in the Serb Republic and *imams* who have direct contact with the Serbian Orthodox Church mention that the hierarchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church is reluctant to communicate with them and that it forbids local priests to establish communication with local *imams*.

> They have a huge centralization in their Church and they do not have any freedom to act. We have invited the local Orthodox priest to our meetings not as a religious leader but a civil person but he said that he is not allowed and that there would be harsh repercussions if they found out that he came. The ordinary Orthodox priest have no problems with it and they would like to participate in our activities but they are not allowed to. What I would like to emphasize is that every one of us in the religious community has their own superiors and they are directing the community. However, I think that *imams* and Catholic priests have greater

freedom and space to act.[308]

> I will tell you an example from Bosanski Brod (where he used to work before). I went to one of my friends and colleagues who works as an Orthodox priest there. I wanted to invite him to the opening of the Ferhadija mosques. And he told me in tears that he would like to come but that he cannot. He said that I should send him an invitation and he will respond that he is busy. Thus, the situation is very complex.[309]

b) The Leadership of the Serbian Orthodox Church

Other *imams* give examples of the leaders of the Orthodox Church who hinder cooperation. In Srebrenica the two *imams* explicitly mention the local religious leader from the Orthodox Church as an obstacle to communication.

> I would like if we had a cooperation with the Orthodox Church but we do not have. It was better during the mandate of the last Orthodox priest, but the new one is very nationalistic. With him all common projects and cooperation have stopped. He is very nationalistic and he does not allow any common project and destroys every new attempt."[310]

> You have a pope who darns everyone who wants peace and coexistence. He writes about it and publishes it. Whenever he sees that something normal is going on, he destroys it. We had a folklore association and even its name was "Vasa Jovanovic" and there were Bosniak and Serb children together, around fifty children. But when this pope came he notices our activities and he established an exclusively Serbian folklore association. And he transferred all the Serbian children to this new association, made a one – national association. We also have the situation that when in schools the new staff is elected an Orthodox priest has condemned publicly via his facebook account all those Serbs who have voted for the Bosniak teachers. All these are messages that complicate interaction, trust – building and coexistence in this territory.[311]

Similarly, in Bratunac the *imam* mentions that the Orthodox Church ignores invitations to common projects. The *imam* interprets this reluctance to participate in common projects as disrespectful to the Muslim population and the goal of creating a shared future.

> The American organization Pro – Life organizes every year a competition on multi-confession and multi-culturalism. We have always answered this call.

[308] Personal interview, Orašje, 21.02.2017
[309] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017
[310] Personal interview, Srebrenica (2), 20.02.2017
[311] Personal interview, Srebrenica, 20.02.2017

> Unfortunately, our colleagues from the Orthodox Church, our neighbors have not appeared to this session. Just to show with their presence that they are for this project, it would for the beginning be enough.[312]

In Orašje the *imam* thinks that because of the close relationship between the Orthodox Church and the political establishment the Church ignores common projects. He notes that recently the representatives of the SOC have stopped responding completely to invitations for shared projects.

> I think that the Orthodox Church is also involved in the politics and that they continue to have this dream of Greater Serbia. I have the feeling that several religious leaders of the Orthodox Church strive to contribute to the separation of Serb Republic and that their cooperation or as now their non-cooperation in the activities of the Interreligious Council follows this main goal. The Orthodox Church is an agent in this as well. The Church is connected to the Serbian state and the Church leaders have this intention. But I think that the ordinary priest are open and willing to cooperate and meet.[313]

c) Political Issues and Violations of Basic Human Rights

The *imams* notice that it is meaningless to talk about reconciliation in settings where the most basic laws and human rights are violated. In Bratunac the *imam* points to unlawful actions:

> Churches are built upon waqif and private property. One church was built in the yard of Fata Orlovic. It is illegally built. We cannot speak of religious and cultural plurality. However, even though the International Community acted until these days we have this Church. We cannot do anything. They are still waiting for something. Bosniaks in the Republika Srpska do not have their basic rights such as the right on property, employment, freedom of expression and life."[314]

In addition to this, the *imam* in Srebrenica points out: "In Srebrenica we also have in schools the language of the Bosniak people, they do not accept the Bosnian language."[315] And the other *imam* emphasizes that since the Serbian party got majority in the municipality the communication has even become worse:

> Interfaith communication and cooperation is very low. This is especially felt now in the situation where Bosniaks have lost in the last local elections. The daily power demonstration they show is very negative and very terrifying. Even things

[312] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017
[313] Personal interview, Orašje, 21.02.2017
[314] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017
[315] Personal interview, Srebrenica (2), 20.02.2017

> that are not in the domain of the Orthodox Church their representatives are involved in. For example it was previously not practiced that the Orthodox take part in a liturgy, make a tour through Srebrenica with crosses, icons of the Orthodox Church, the Serbian garb, Church banners and etc. This kind of performances was unknown in Srebrenica.[316]

It can be concluded from what has been said so far that in the Serb Republic because of the difficult political structure and discrimination in school and employment, *imams* have additional hurdles to overcome on their way to reconciliation. Thus, the *imams* report that it is extremely difficult to strive for such a complex social change, as reconciliation is, when most basic rights are denied. Other obstacles mentioned by *imams* in Federation and Serb Republic alike were politics, media, fear for existence and lack of knowledge of each other.

2. More General Obstacles

a) Political Leaders

Imams point out that the political elites make local situation and reconciliation more difficult but that ordinary people want all peace and harmony. One *imam* even says: "This is a struggle between good and evil, or put differently between the ordinary people with the political institutions which do not want change."[317]

> If there were no politicians we would very easily solve our issues. The ordinary people they all want the same. But every election brings the same worries and problems, the same negative rhetoric. We as an Islamic Community are trying not to fall into this trap, we are trying to build relationships with our neighbors. This human interaction is very important. We need our government but we do not want them to disturb what we have built. We ask them to consult with us and ask us for our living conditions. But they visit us and leave us with problems and we who are left behind have to deal with it. What we built for a decade they destroy it in one day.[318]

> It is a lot of easier when ordinary people talk with each other and when people who believe talk with each other. They meet more frequently and talk more easily and sincerely. They easily agree upon common things.[319]

[316] Personal interview, Srebrenica, 20.02.2017
[317] Ibid.
[318] Personal interview, Bratunac, 21.02.2017
[319] Personal interview, Srebrenica (2) 20.02.2017

b) Media Coverage

Imams identified the media as a big hurdle to peace and reconciliation because media coverage focuses on shocking and negative stories that will attract a lot of attention but pays no interest to positive stories. “Mass media is as it is. People are guided by emotions, usually by nationalism. They are guided by statements such as ‘they are a threat to you’. This is happening for 20 years, they are telling us this the whole time. Why?”[320]

One *imam* also contends that they as religious leaders are incapable of counteracting the powerful influence of the media in their communities:

> I think that media is the greatest problem in this topic of reconciliation. Everyone agrees on the same point: that in the near future we will have war. They only disagree in what extent and in what kind we will have war. If a person is permanently surrounded by this of cause he will be afraid, the crimes are very recent. I think that the media is creating the collective attitude. Unfortunately, our people create their thought based on the TV and internet, he comes to the Friday prayer to sleep.[321]

c) Fear for Existence

Another important point is that people in many cities of Bosnia fear for their financial existence. This fear influences whom they are going to support and how they are going to act towards the other in their community. The *imam* from Banja Luka points out that everything depends on the financial security and existence: “If you fear for your existence nothing else can function. When people live at the edge of existence and when they get employment on the basis of their political affiliation, they stop to think with their own head.”[322] Similarly, the *imam* in Bratunac states that “in this territory, who gives the people salary and money has the opportunity to direct these processes (of reconciliation) and thoughts of people.”[323]

d) Lack of Knowledge

A central reason in poor interreligious communication is the lack of knowledge

[320] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017
[321] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017
[322] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017
[323] Personal interview, Bratunac, 21.02.2017

about each other's religion and religious practices. He is concerned about the ignorance and lack of interest of local people to learn more about their neighbors and links this attitude to the growth in prejudice and disrespect.

> I think that one of the reasons for the current situation is that we generally do not know each other to a necessary degree. I asked other *imams* and a lot of other people if they know how the Catholic Church is organized. Nobody knew the answer. It was awkward to me and at that moment I realized that we have no idea about each other. We have the situation that people live 50 – 80 years here and do not know the name of the Church. When people do not know elementary things, you have to imagine how ignorant they are towards the other. Among these people prejudice is common. It is a shame and it is really bad that I do not know the priest of the Church next to our mosque and he also does not know me.[324]

Moreover, the *imam* in Bratunac pointed out that religious education at the Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Sarajevo does not prepare its students enough for the settings in which Muslims live with other religious communities. He explains that during his higher education in Sarajevo he learned about Buddhism but nothing in more detail about the Orthodox Church that would be useful for his practical work in his city.

In addition to these obstacles that *imams* face, they also perceive that they are not supported enough by the ICBH when it comes to reconciliation. They point out that there is no strategy, guideline by intellectuals nor proper education about these theme at the Faculty of Islamic Sciences.

Table 3.3.1. and 3.3.2. offer a short overview of the responses by *imams* discussed above.

Table 3.3.1. Overview of Responses to questions on the Conceptualization of Reconciliation, Forgiveness, Victimization and Rehumanization

	Conceptualization of Reconciliation	Forgiveness	Victimization (The Past)	Rehumanization (The Other)

[324] Personal interview, Kiseljak (2), 17.02.2017

Public Statements of the IC		Legalist conception of reconciliation, minimalist	Truth and justice and then forgiveness	Bosniaks are victims	Aggressors
Responses of *imams* in majority Serbian region	BL	Relationship building, maximalist	Forgiveness is human but it is forbidden to forget	Both sides are responsible	Neighbors in an intensive sense
	B	Trade and economic interaction, minimalist	Forgiveness = forgetting	Bosniaks are the victims	Neighbors in a narrow sense
	S	Legalist conception, minimalist and Relationship building, maximalist	Forgiveness to the ordinary people but not the political and religious leaders	Bosniaks are the main victims	Neighbors and friends
Responses of *imams* in majority Croat regions	K	Dialogue, communication and learning about each other, minimalist	Important but repent is a precondition	Both sides	Neighbors in a narrow sense
	P	Dialogue and relationship building, maximalist	Both sided need to forgive	Both sides have black taints	Neighbors and friends
	O	Living with each other and dialogue	Individual forgiveness	Both sides	Neighbors

Table 3.3.2. Overview of Responses to questions about Reconciliation Activities, Interreligious Dialogue and Obstacles

		Interreligious Dialogue	**Reconciliation activities by religious leaders**	**Obstacles**
High – level ICBH representatives		- good communication with the Catholic Church and almost no with the Orthodox	Declarations, conferences, the Interreligious Council and other common projects	Denial of genocide
Responses of *imams* in majority Serbian regions	BL	- no institutional communication with Orthodox rel. leaders but vivid Communication with general population	Structure: mosque as a meeting point, kindergarten and gift shop; Individual: advices and education	- Silence about the past - Hierarchy of the SOC - Leadership of the SOC - Political situation and violation of basic human rights - Media
	B	- irregular communication with general population, no meetings with Orthodox rel. leaders	Structure: Trade and other economic projects	

	S	- frequent dialogue with general population	Structure and Processes: Cultural activities and personal friendships	
Responses of *imams* in majority Croat regions	K	- irregular meetings with Catholic leaders, almost no communication with general Croat population	Processes: Conferences, celebrations; Individual	- Media - Lack of Knowledge - Politics - Fear for one's existence
	P	- frequent communication with general population and Catholic rel. leaders	Processes: Personal friendships; Individual: education	
	O	- frequent communication with general population and Catholic rel. leaders	Processes: Cultural activities; Individual: education and advices	

3.3.5. *Imams* as Middle – Range Religious Leaders

I argued that the brief analysis of selected ICBH official statements and the "Platform for Dialogue" comply with the findings of Lasić, Kristić and Knežević and there conclusion that the religious leaders in general and Islamic leaders in particular should be more active when it comes to reconciliation. However, I assert that the official statement and public speeches of top – level leaders in the ICBH cannot be taken as the complete evaluation of all religious leaders in the Bosnian reconciliation process. Therefore, in addition to the official statement of the ICBH I chose to elaborate in this study the perspective and experiences of *imams* on the processes of peacebuilding and reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina because this specific category within the ICBH structure has a strategic position and a perspective that top – level leaders do not have. Further, they have specific strengths as religious peacemakers.

In the first place, *imams* have deeper insight and more intimate relationships with local communities because they operate at the most basic unit of the overall structure, the local religious community. What I have been arguing and what I sought to show with this research is that a bottom – up organic approach to reconciliation and peacebuilding, actively engaging local *imams* has a lot to offer to the peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Local religious leaders are the leaders who have insight in the local dynamics, can most effectively initiate dialogue among the population, address and solve context specific problems. They give us a new perspective

that is not present in the official statements and activities of the ICBH. Additionally, because they live and work in proximity with Bosnian Croats and Serbs they are more sensitive to the issue of reconciliation. Thus, within the structure of the ICBH *imams* have the most direct influence and provide guidance for religious communities on the ground. They live with their community and share the same social and economic challenges and misgivings. The local *imam* is often responsible for a whole village and sometimes only for several hundred Muslim households in a bigger city. In this way cities have often multiple *jamahs* while villages fall under the responsibility of one religious leader and form one *jamah*.

Important to note is that *imams* chosen for this research are those who live in the city and have a higher function than an ordinary local *imam*. Most of my interviewees are the chief *imam* in their city which means that they are responsible for a number of other *imams*. At the same time it means that they have more connections to the higher structures and can more easily issue changes. Many of the *imams* pointed out that the position they have in the hierarchy of the ICBH gives them certain responsibilities but at the same time opportunities to act more freely and more effectively. Because of the connections and links to the higher structures of the ICBH the *imam* in Bratunac, for example, was able to attract a bank to open its office and a big market chain one of its markets in Bratunac. At the same time however the *imams* underline that they are free in their actions and do not have to ask for permission when they are called for a conference or meeting with the religious leaders of the other religious community.

Put into the perspective of Lederach's model of peacebuilding actors and approaches we can define the *imams* in this study as middle – range leaders. This position allows them to act freely without pressure that top – level leaders experience. At the same time they benefit from direct connection with the upper level and have direct connection to the grassroots.

Further, the local *imam* has a variety of tools he can use to transmit the message of peace and reconciliation. His responsibilities include: leading the five prayers of the day, preparing and leading the Friday prayer, teaching children the reading/reciting of the Qur'an and elementary knowledge in Islamic sciences (these activities are called

maktab), organize and perform other religious activities. Among his community members he enjoys respect, he is consulted in matters of religion and often for important life decisions. He is invited at the most far – reaching events such as funerals, marriage ceremonies and naming the newborn child. *Imams* living and working in municipalities which dominant residents are Bosnian Croats or Serbs face more challenges and responsibilities. In these areas they see themselves as protectors and defenders of the interest of the Bosniak people and hold themselves responsible for the economic development of the region. An indicator of the significant role *imams* have in these specific areas is that refugees would only return when the *imam* has previously returned. All these responsibilities and functions that the local *imam* fulfills, ensure a constant contact with the members of his local community and occasions to speak about reconciliation and the universal values of Islam supporting it.

Local *imams* are educated in the Islamic sciences and are representatives of the ICBH. This gives them the opportunity to act as religious peacemakers. They are aware of religious values, derive inspiration and legitimacy through religious principles, have authority, enjoy respect among their own community and can transcend the ethnical/religious divisions with their universal messages.

I see three particular reasons why *imams* within local communities do particularly well serve as religious peacemakers in the process of reconciliation. In the first place, *imams* enjoy a lot of trust within their religious communities and are often respected by the broader society. Religious leaders are listened to and their guidelines are respected. Because of this strategic position of religious actors they are well – equipped to lead and direct their coreligionists towards peace. With small personal acts religious leaders set examples for their religious community how to behave.

Based on the interviews we have reviewed in this chapter I conclude that *imams* have developed important strategies to unite and offer a space for reconciliation in their local communities. While the *imams* focus on different problems and developed different strategies all of the actions they undertake lead towards peace and reconciliation.

Further, *imams* are responsible for the religious education of the youth and other

community members. Religious education that emphasizes respect for the other and openness for different points of views and beliefs is able to assist the reconciliation process tremendously. We have seen that *imams* use religious education and Friday sermons as tools to transmit the universal message of Islam and teach respect for plurality.

In addition to this, especially because of the religious values that are present in every religious tradition, *imams* are suitable to promote peacebuilding and reconciliation. Because religious and national identities intersect in the Bosnian context, religious leaders are perceived as biased and as protectors of their community. Particularly in Bosnia where religious and ethnic identity overlap with each other, religious leaders are not only representatives of the religious interests but as well national interests. In this direction, *imams* could use the link between religious and national affiliation and turn it to the advantage of peacebuilding. Religious leaders who promote and put into practice universal religious values are more likely to be perceived as neutral by all community members. In this way religious peacemakers and their messages can transcend national divisions.

I conclude that because of the strategic position of *imams* as middle – range leaders and the resources and tools that they employ as religious peacemakers they are particularly suitable to lead the process of reconciliation. Nevertheless, the obstacles that the *imams* encountered underline the point that religious actors cannot by themselves contribute to reconciliation and stable peace. The media, political leaders, and other religious communities need to support these efforts if they are to succeed. Most importantly, as previously underlined religious leaders are a crucial part of the civil society but should not be understood sufficient for the success of reconciliation.[325] Their effectiveness is largely dependent on the relationship and support they have with the state. Thus, the true potential of imams in peacebuilding and reconciliation will only achieved when they are properly assisted by the state.

[325] Brewer, Higgins, and Teeney, "Religion and Peacemaking: A Conceptualization."

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to research the role of religion and *imams* as religious leaders in the reconciliation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The discussion in chapter one on the role of the religious factor during the war shows that religion was an important element in the Bosnian society. Today, religion remains to be an important factor in the Bosnian society as well and specifically for the process of reconciliation offers a rich source. Religious thinkers and doers with their specific perspectives and approaches have a lot to offer to societies troubled with enduring conflicts. Previous research demonstrates the significance of this kind of peacemakers and their ability to shape and contribute to these important processes. Religious peacemakers can contribute to the processes of peacebuilding and reconciliation by using their specific resources,

values and position in the society and this thesis presents that *imams* make use of their religious knowledge to contribute to reconciliation and peacebuilding in Bosnia.

As seen from the second chapter, although there are many approaches to reconciliation, the focus in this thesis was on the socio – psychological and spiritual approach and victimization, rehumanization, accommodation of identity and forgiveness as important factors in the reconciliation process. The socio – psychological approach to reconciliation gives importance to the transformation of relationships and cognitive and emotional processes. Overcoming victimization, rehumanizing the members of the out – group and accommodating one's own identity to the extent that it includes "the other" are all crucial in the way that the in-groups perceives the out-group and how both of them interact with each other. The spiritual dimension to the process of reconciliation includes elements such as healing, restorative justice and forgiving. The spiritual approach to reconciliation is a religiously inspired approach that perceives human beings as creatures that should be viewed not only from a psychological but as well spiritual dimension. Both of these approaches focus on relationship – building.

Religious peacemakers have been discussed in this thesis as important actors who with their special characteristics, resources and tools can tremendously contribute to the resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding and reconciliation processes in post – conflict societies. Specifically, within Lederach's peacebuilding framework, *imams* were identified as middle-range religious leaders who are particularly important for the reconciliation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

When it comes to the engagement of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina directly in initiatives of transitional justice and peacebuilding the record shows a minimal engagement of high officials. There are no examples in which the high level leaders of the Islamic Community engaged in truth – finding or justice – seeking initiatives. Partially successful, however, in the reconciliation process are representatives of the ICBH at the Interreligious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nevertheless, the ICBH failed for now to offer a "political theology of reconciliation". Thus, an overall strategic framework that is directing the reconciliation process is missing, even though highly needed.

In my research I explored to what extent Bosnian *imams* living and working in geographies in which Bosnian Muslims are in the minority, can fill this gap within their communities. To what extent can they be characterized in general as local religious peacemakers and do they act as contributors to the reconciliation process?

Reconciliation is defined in various ways by the *imams* at different localities. In the Serb Republic predominantly a minimalist reconciliation is promoted. While *imams* encourage reconciliation, they neither support very close relationships between the members of the different communities nor do they think that trust between the communities will ever be possible to build after the war. In contrast to this, in cities in which Muslims live together with a majority Croats population *imams* considered more readily close neighborhood relations and friendships as possible. These findings can be partially explained by the fact that the Bosniak population suffered more in regions of today's Serb Republic during the war. On the other hand, the findings can as well be related to the specific challenges that Bosniaks face in the Serb Republic and that further complicate the process of reconciliation. The political situation in Srebrenica or human rights violations in Bratunac municipality are examples of this aggravating circumstances. An additional obstacle is the lack of institutional interreligious communication in these territories. However, even under these circumstances the *imams* in Serb Republic try to establish communication with the general population, engage in the general social life of the city and seek to contribute to the economic development of the city.

In the Federation, which is in societies in which Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks live together, the prospects for reconciliation are much better. *Imams* face less obstacles in communicating with the Croat Catholic religious leaders and can more actively implement their reconciliation strategies. While their colleagues in Serb Republic communicate almost exclusively with the general Serb population, in the Federation *imams* have generally more frequent communication with the highest representatives of the Church. Because interreligious dialogue is important, in cities in which institutional communication between religious leaders was impossible, local *imams* have found other ways to engage with the local population.

The *imams* within their local communities have developed three types of strategies through which they contribute to the reconciliation process: individuals, communication and structure – oriented reconciliation strategies. *Imams* who understand that the behavior and attitudes of individuals are the main obstacle to reconciliation focus on strategies that educate the individuals and change negative behavior and attitudes. They, as religious leaders, strive to give guidance and advice, and encourage tolerant and peaceful behavior between the groups. Some of the *imams* mentioned that they give special attention to the Friday sermon where they sometime address the importance of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. *Imams* promote religious values and principles that support peace and reconciliation in order to shape the attitudes of their coreligionists. Through their personal example and religious education they encourage individuals in their own religious community to behave according to these principles.

The in – depth interviews have also revealed a set of other important strategies. These reconciliatory acts often include the general population of the city regardless of religion. Structure – oriented initiatives show that the goal of *imams* is to create an open and inclusive society with shared institutions and common projects. The establishment of a kindergarten by the ICBH in Banja Luka that is open to all children of the city, small initiatives to which *imams* invite the members of the other religious/ethnic group, and open mosques which welcome everyone, create a place and time where a shared future can be discussed. In other cities *imams* focus on building economic cooperation between the Muslim and Croat/Serb population. The economy is defined by these *imams* as the most influential dimension in the citizens' lives and therefore can be used in such a way that it will support reconciliation among the Bosnian people. Other institution and capacity building initiative are the organization of common cultural activities and the establishment of shared cultural associations.

In addition to these two types of reconciliation strategies, in their communication – oriented projects *imams* pay specific attention to develop stable and frequent communication and interaction with individuals outside their religious group as well as Catholic and Orthodox religious leaders. This category includes activities such as daily

contact with the general population, meetings with other religious leaders and the organization of interreligious dialogue projects.

The majority of the values and principles that motivate their work and were mentioned by *imams* in this study correspond with values mentioned by other researchers who investigated the contribution of religious peacemakers in other settings. Among the values that were referenced most frequently are forgiveness, patience, the respect for the humanity of all individuals, respect for pluralism, doing good to others and being a good example for others. Some of the values are particularly important for how *imams* interpret the past to their coreligionist and advise them to deal with loses and sufferings. The belief in the absolute justice in the afterlife and the rejection of revenge were given as the most significant and helpful principles in this respect. All these values identified by *imams* are found in the Islamic non-violence and peacebuilding framework outlined by Abu-Nimer. However, a value that was mentioned specifically by Bosnian *imams* is the special status and care that they are obliged to show for their neighbors regardless of their neighbors' creed or ethnicity. These *imams* are guided by these religious and cultural values and principles in their work with the local society, but also show effort to teach the members of their own group about these values.

However, in their efforts to reconcile the local community *imams* face difficult obstacles that hinder or even make completely impossible reconciliatory work. *Imams* in the Serb Republic reported obstacles to reconciliation that were not mentioned by *imams* living in majority Croat cities. *Imams* in the Serb Republic have very irregular communication with the Orthodox religious leaders. Also they mentioned that the strong hierarchy within the Orthodox Church hinders local priests and the general population to engage in common projects. These obstacles, in addition to the generally difficult economic situation and the discrimination that Bosniaks experience in education and employment, makes genuine work towards reconciliation in theses territories almost impossible. Other more general obstacles for successful reconciliation were nationalist political elites, negative media coverage and a predominantly weak knowledge of the other religion and believers.

The most important conclusion in this study is that *imams* desire reconciliation

and offer alternative ways in dealing with the past and "the other". The discussion on their contributions to the de – victimization of the self and re – humanization of the other religious groups shows that the majority of *imams* interviewed create an "ethos of peace" and deconstruct the societal beliefs of the "conflictive peace". All the *imams* who were interviewed regard reconciliation as an important factor in the future of Bosnian society and they show themselves open and ready to discuss and contribute to shared future. Reconciliation work is easier in areas in which Bosnian Muslims live with Bosnian Croats and in cities in which communication is more frequent with the other group and their religious leaders. Further, financially supported religious communities and their *imams* are more innovative in their reconciliation work. State institutions and international organization should support and train this group of leaders more and create an environment in which they can act for effectively.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX ONE: DESCRIPTION OF MUNICIPALITIES, LOCAL *IMAMS* LIVE AND WORK

This description of the social setting is based on the description given by the *imams* I interviewed in the cities of these municipalities, data on the ethnic/nation and religious affiliations that provided here are based on the population census conducted in 2013 and data on the death rates in these municipalities are based on the publication *The Bosnian Book of Dead* by the author Mirsad Tokača. The author and his team after 10 years of work identified and enlist 95, 940 dead and missing individuals with name and

surname. Out of this number 62, 013 were Bosniaks, 24, 953 Serbs, 8, 403 Croats and 571 “others”. The civilian losses during the war which were in total 38,239 are especially high among the Bosniak population 31, 107. In the case of Bosniaks the number of civilian causalities was higher than that of the Bosniak soldiers which was 30, 906. Serbian civilians 4, 178, Croat civilians 2, 484 and 470 “others” suffered.

Bratunac

The causalities of Bosniaks during the war were higher in the territories of Serb Republic. During the war in the municipality of Bratunac in total 3,533 died and out of this were 2,076 Bosniak civilians and 127 Serb civilians. In the municipality of Bratunac out of 20,340 today 7,803 are Bosniaks. Compared to the population census in 1991 when Bosniaks made up 64% of the overall population. 7,807 are members of Islamic religion. The *imam* explains that because of the destruction, killings and sufferings that have changed dramatically the demographic picture the interethnic relations are disturbed. He understands that the last war was just one of the many attacks on the Bosnian Muslims:

> We have 2.180 people from Bratunac who are missing since 1992 and 1995. 6 or 7 skeletons were found here in the place Adema close to Drina and with the DNA analysis of these victims we found that those excavated were in reality the grandfathers of those we were searching for. They were killed by the Partisans in 1946. So, throughout generations we have the same people killing people from the same houses and families.[326]

Further, he states that the discrimination of Muslims in the Serb Republic and the lack of basic human rights (education, employment, illegal construction of Churches and language issues) hamper the normalization of relationships.

Srebrenica

During the war in Srebrenica 7,243 people lost their lives, out of which 5,233 were Bosniak civilians compared to 158 Serbian civilians. In Srebrenica live 13,409 people and 54,1% are Bosniaks by ethnic/national affiliation which is 7,248. In 1991 the ration of Bosniaks living in Srebrenica municipality is 72,2%. 7,258 declared themselves

[326] Personal interview, Bratunac, 20.02.2017

as members of the Islamic religion. Both *imams* that were interviewed in the city of Srebrenica refer to the genocide and its consequences: "When we consider that many families have lost all their members, families that have lost 5 – 6 members, mainly male, genocide has left lasting marks on these families, on their health but also on their relationship towards the other side."[327] They also point out that the silence and negation of genocide repeat every day and that this deepens the wounds already cause by genocide. One of the *imams* mentions that since the elections in 2016 when Mladen Grujičić became the new mayor of the municipality they endure provocations.

Banja Luka

During the war 1,772 people lost their life in the municipality of Banja Luka. Banja Luka is the fifth municipality in this region when it comes to the number of Bosniak civil losses which is 96. In Banja Luka municipality live 185,042 citizens out of which 7,681 are Bosniaks. Today Bosniaks made 4,2% of the population in this municipality while in 1991 14,6% lived in Banja Luka municipality. 7,528 declare themselves members of the Islamic religion. The *imam* identified employment issues and the status of refugees as the most pressing problems in Banja Luka but states that since the opening of the Ferhadija Mosque the interreligious relations have revived, intensified and improved.[328]

Kiseljak

In the war period 421 individuals lost their lives. According to the results of the last population census in Bosnia and Herzegovina out of 20,722 living in the municipality of Kiseljak 7,838 are Bosniaks by ethnic/national affiliation which is 37,8 % of the population. In the census of 1991 40,5% declared themselves as Bosniaks. According to the last census 8,099 declare themselves as members of the Islamic religion. When it comes to the personal experiences of one *imam* living in Kiseljak he says that he has "accustomed to some things, to discrimination and to some injustices"[329]. He gives examples from discrimination in employment and mentions

[327] Personal interview, Srebrenica, 20.02.2017
[328] Personal interview, Banja Luka, 21.02.2017
[329] Personal interview, Kiseljak, 17.02.2017

problems in the education system that is structured to accommodate "two-schools under one roof":

> You can tell the difference between the two schools by just looking at them. The Croat's school has a nice façade and they have nice furniture and equipment. In our Bosniak school the furniture and equipment is from the 1970's and our children when they come back home they have teared up trousers because the nails are coming out of the chairs.[330]

He adds:

> We do not have in the high school the national group of subjects. They learn the Croat language and they learn about the Croat geography, at the beginning of the school year they have the Croat anthem playing and things like this. There is no Bosnian flag in the city, nowhere at the state institutions, even though we are 38% according to the last census.[331]

Prozor

During the war in Prozor municipality in total 450 lives were lost. 196 is the number of Bosniak civil causalities and 135 of Bosniak soldiers. The number of Croat civil losses is 39 and soldiers of the Croat nationality 77. Today, in the municipality of Prozor out of a population of 14,280 3,525 are Bosniaks which is 24,7% of the population. In 1991 the ratio of Bosniaks living in Prozor municipality was 36,6%. According to the latest census 3,514 declared themselves members of the Islamic religion. The *imam* from Prozor recounts the difficulties in 2002 when he returned to the city of Prozor:

> Across this central mosque here in Prozor was the municipality court. Next to the mosque was the room in which we prepare the body for the funeral. So when we were taking the body from this room and passed the building of the municipality officials would open the windows and spit on us. They would call us with pejorative names.[332]

He mentions that Prozor has gone through great suffering but that "both sided have black taints" and both are still missing people from their communities. Today, however the situation is relaxed and the *imam* himself has great relations with the Croat community in his city.

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[330] Ibid.
[331] Ibid.
[332] Personal interview, Prozor, 18.02.2017

Orašje

In this municipality in the period 1992 – 5 372 people lost their lives. In Orašje out of 19,861 population in the municipality 2,015 declared themselves Bosniaks by ethnic/national affiliation. Today Bosniaks make 10,1% of the population in this municipality which is slightly higher than before the was with 7,8%. 2,032 of them are members of the Islamic religion. The *imam* of the city of Orašje describes the interethnic relations between Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats as very harmonious and peaceful. He attributes this to the following factors: Muslims were during the war part of the Croatian Defense Council and did not establish their own army, the Muslim population felt safe and secure during the whole war period, there was not one incident of rape or murder, and when differences in opinion emerged they were resolved peacefully.[333] Important to mention for the perceptions of Muslims living in this municipality where they are a small minority is a very specific episode in the war. Namely, it was ordered from Mostar that Bosniaks should be arrested and taken away to the camps but Croats "our people here"[334] as the *imam* says, would not believe them and they were suspicious of their political games. In this way Bosnian Croats and Muslims preserved their good relationships.

APPENDIX TWO: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL *IMAMS*

Conducted by: Neira Omerovic

Introduction

Thank you for accepting to talk with me. I hope that this experience will be pleasant and interesting for both of us. The aim of this research is to find out how Bosnian Muslims think and feel about reconciliation. We would like to explore if and how Islam motivates Muslims to act toward reconciliation with the other ethnic groups. We would like to know their experiences around reconciliation and events related to this

[333] Personal interview, Orašje, 21.02.2017
[334] Ibid.

process. The reason why I asked you for this interview is that you live in a locality where interaction with the members of other communities is inevitable and maybe sometimes challenging. You are at the spot where reconciliation is mostly needed, if we can say so. At the same time you are the local *imam*, head of a religious community and responsible for their religious education and daily religious practice. How reconciliation is put into practice. Is there a specific religious approach to reconciliation?

The interview is expected to take 40 minutes to one hour. Before we start I would like to check some things with you. When I called you before you agreed to have this interview with me. Do you still agree to talk with me? I also want to let you know that you can stop the interview anytime to take a break. Also, if I ask you a question that you do not feel comfortable to answer or do not want to answer, please just say so, it is absolutely fine.

This interview will be used for research purposes only. I would like to record the interview in order to be able to focus on what you are saying more closely. I will transcribe this record and go through it to identify some themes and see what we can learn from it. I do not ever identify the names of who spoke to me and I will not identify the site. We use this information to help to put together a picture about what is going on. So I would like to ensure you that your name will not be associated with this. I am doing this because I want you to be candid and open as much as possible. I take seriously this responsibility to protect your identity. Do you want me to share with you the final version of the research? Before we start, do you have any questions for me?

Interview Questions

1. Can you describe the city/community in which you live? In what way did the last war influence interpersonal relations in your city?
2. What means reconciliation to you?
3. What do you think about the process and level of reconciliation between the three people of Bosnia and Hercegovina and what are your experiences regarding this in your city/community?
4. What are the most important elements for successful reconciliation (truth, justice, forgiveness…) or How should a reconciled society look like?

5. Do you think that forgiveness is an important aspect of reconciliation?
6. How do you build trust between your religious community and the other?
7. Do you think that there will come a time when the three people of Bosnia will live together without fear? What needs to happen to realize this future?
8. What is the main obstacle to reconciliation in your city/community/area?
9. How do you connect you work as an *imam* to the reconciliation between Muslims/Bosniaks and Croats/Catholics or Serbs/Orthodox?
10. What are the principles and values that guide you in your efforts of rapprochement with Bosnian Croats/Serbs?
11. Do you have cooperation with members of the other religion? How would you describe this relations?
12. Do you have common projects that you together engage in? Can you describe these activities?
13. How do you advise the members of your religious community (jamah) to deal with the members of other religion or ethnic group?
14. Should your religious community members remember the war and in what way should they remember it?
15. How do you help them to deal with the war and its consequences?
16. Do you speak with your *jamah* about reconciliation? What do you emphasize in these conversations?

APPENDIX THREE: CONSENT AND RECOMMENDATON BY THE DIVISION FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AT THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH WITH LOCAL *IMAMS*

ISLAMSKA ZAJEDNICA U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI
RIJASET
Uprava za vjerske poslove

Broj: 02-08-2-666-2/17

Datum: 10. džumade-l-ula 1438. h.g.

07. februar 2017. godine

Predmet: **Preporuka za učešće u naučno-istraživačkom projektu**

Poštovani,

Upravi za vjerske poslove Rijaseta Islamske zajednice, se obratila studentica Neira Omerović-Đozić, sa molbom da joj se pomogne u realizaciji naučno-istraživačkog projekta kojeg realizira u okviru svog magistarskog rada. Riječ je o radu koji će prikazati ulogu Islamske zajednice i njenih predstavnika u procesima pomirenja u Bosni i Hercegovini.

S tim u vezi gospođa Neira je već izradila koncept i plan svojih aktivnosti na tom polju, ali da bi rad bio potpun neophodna joj je podrška predstavnika i uposlenika Islamske zajednice.

Ovim putem, iz domena svojih nadležnosti, preporučujemo onima kojima se gospođa Omerović-Đozić obrati da joj shodno svojim mogućnostima pomognu u ovom projektu.

Želeći Vam svaki hajr primite naše izraze poštovanja!

Esselamu alejkum!

Direktor
mr. Nusret-ef. Abdinegović

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