

Safet Mušić, Ministry of Defense, Bosnia and Herzegovina, musicsafet@yahoo.com

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON MODERN SECURITY CHALLENGES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Abstract

This paper deals with issues that link the influence of religion on security, with an emphasis on modern security challenges such as violent extremism, terrorism, migration, cyber security and hybrid warfare. This paper will explore the impact of religion on security and how this influence is manifested. The aim of the research is to confirm the hypothesis about the true influence of religion on security in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In recent years, the security situation in the world has been burdened with a series of new phenomena that are associated with social change, as well as technological advances in the world. The connection of religion from security is no longer related to undeveloped and undemocratic states, but more and more religions influence security, both in terms of using the religious aspect of those who threaten peace and security, as well as those in the security system, those who are opposed to security challenges and threats. Although religious communities in B&H, declaratively advocate for political separation, but their actions in practice demonstrate opposite of that thesis, and there are noticeable links between political options and religion. This connection implies that religion can also affect security, as an important segment of each country. Especially when we have in mind that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a society with a pronounced socio-political injustice and various social divisions that cause dissatisfaction and frustration, to which neither religions are immune. Methodological techniques have explored legal documents, various reports from international organizations, research papers by other authors, media writing on this subject, and interviews with religious officials, police investigators, and radicalized people. In this way data was collected, compared and analyzed, to find answers to research questions related to the influence of religion on security in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Keywords: religion, security, Bosnia and Herzegovina, extremism, politics.

1. INTRODUCTION

The state of security, both locally and globally, is today under constant threats from numerous phenomena that are characteristic to the modern age. Occurrences of violent

extremism, terrorism, violence in general, and the use of technologies for the realization of such ideas is on the rise and as such becomes one of the permanent problems of today in the world. A common link to violence-related phenomena, and given its specificity, is religion. Linking, or even abusing religion and religious convictions with justification of violence, brings researchers to new tasks – to define and determine the existence of the influence of religion and religious beliefs on security and stability, and to provide answers to questions of whether religion is (in) directly involved in the destabilization of society, if yes, to what extent, and what mechanisms to use in prevention and abuse of religious principles.

The paper covers the Western Balkans with a special focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina, a post-conflict state, which on the one hand has a difficult legacy of conflict and suffering, and, on the other hand, recognizable multiculturalism, which includes freedom of religion.

The paper seeks to show that the influence of religion on the security is possible, and seeks to offer adequate mechanisms by which religion and religious actors can be used for the purpose of preventing the above phenomena that jeopardize security in society (extremism that leads to terrorism, organized crime, etc.). Although religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, declaratively advocate secularism, i.e., separation from politics, their engagement in practice itself occasionally overthrows this thesis, and there are often noteworthy links between political options and religion. In a way that political leaders meet regularly with religious authorities, especially before elections, and politicians are often in various committees in religious communities. This connection implies that current politics can have influence on religion, which contributes to an easier impact on security issues. Especially when we have in mind that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country with a complex socio-political and pronounced social injustice, where different minority groups are neglected, and there are various social divisions that cause additional dissatisfaction and frustration.

In order to demonstrate arguments, the author will elaborate the context of religion and security specifically in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as foreseen double influence between religious beliefs and religion itself, regarding its influence on the security. Also, referring to other cases and authors, the possible influence of the religion towards stability and peacebuilding will be demonstrated. Therefore, research results will be presented with an aim to accent direct or indirect impact of occurrence of security issues towards religion.

2. THE DEFINITION OF RELIGION AND ITS DUALISTIC IMPACT ON SECURITY

One of the etymological meanings of the word religion originates from the Latin word “religare” which indicates the establishment of a vow, connection or association with a divine being. There are many definitions of religion, and examples of the definition of religion have been evident since the beginning of literacy. The scientific discipline

Philosophy of religion provides a definition of religion, even though they have not come up with a unique definition. Other scholars have also offered definitions of religion, such as sociologists and psychologists. At the heart of all the early definitions of religion is that it is the spiritual connection of a particular group of people with a higher, holy being, that is, God. Religion defined according to Oxford vocabulary¹ is the belief in the existence of a god or gods, and the activities that are connected with the worship of them, or in the teachings of a spiritual leader, thus being religious is believing strongly in a particular religion and obeying its laws and practices. The sociological definition of religion is given by Talcott Parsons as “the totality of beliefs, actions, slogans and religious institutions that individuals have built up among people in different societies.” A much simpler definition Tylor (1891) gave, as “the belief in spiritual beings”, where he argued that this belief exists in all known societies.

Darraz defined religion as the belief in an unseen Higher Power (or powers) which has a sensibility and a will of its own. This Greater Power has absolute dominion and providence over the affairs of a man. It is the belief that one can call upon and seek refuge in this Sublime Essence in times of fear and longing or purely out of submissiveness and praise. In sum, religion is the belief in a “divine being which is worthy of worship and obedience” (Daraz, 1974). Also, Qaradawi (2010) is stating that Islamic scholars have understood the term of religion as “a divine scheme which encourages those with sound minds to make the correct choices regarding the present life and the Hereafter”.

But, according to James (2003), religion is the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude; so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider divine.

Furthermore, Kant distinguished between religion as cult in which people seek favours from God through prayer and offerings to bring healing and wealth, and religion as moral action that commands human beings to change their lives. Kant further defined religion as a ‘reflecting faith’ or ‘moralizing faith’ that compels humans to strive for salvation through faith alone (Turner, 2005). On the other hand, Luckmann (1967) has argued that modern societies have an ‘invisible religion’ that characterizes the transcendence of the everyday world. There is an ‘implicit religion’ of beliefs about spiritual phenomena that are not necessarily Christian or components of formal religion. In modern societies there is ‘believing without belonging’, because religious membership and attendance decline, but belief in the Christian faith is still prevalent (Turner, & Khondker, 2010:89).

3. RELIGION AND SECURITY

The security axiom rests on the idea that societies around the worlds differ greatly in their levels of economic and human development and socio-economic equality – and

¹ Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries. Available at: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/religion> Accessed February 08, 2020.

consequently, in the extent to which they provide people with a sense of existential security (Norris, & Inglehart, 2011:217). According to Norris and Inglehart, the meaning of religion in a given society is determined primarily by feelings of existential security and by threats posed by physical, social and personal risks. In societies where greater existential risks abound, the need for religion is purportedly greater than in societies that wield a higher degree of existential security (Pollack, & Olson, (Eds.), 2012:4).

Abu-Nimmer states that religious beliefs, rituals, institutions are often associated with the initiation and causing of violence, perpetuating the reality of ethnic and cultural divisions among countries, ethnic groups, and even family members. It is no new claim that religious leaders use the faith of their followers to undermine political conflicts and justify new economic, social and cultural policies. Religious identities are used to mobilize support for state and non-state terrorist activities. Al Qaeda is a classic example in Muslim societies, but Christian evangelists, ultra-orthodox Jewish militant groups and Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka have been doing or doing the same, by supporting or legitimizing violence against civilians (Abu-Nimer, 2018).

It is clear that violence as an evil that does not belong to any religion. It condemns it and considers it a distortion of human consciousness. In the theological sense, the source is evil, not God. Religion protects the five fundamental values: the holiness of human life/ God gives life and only He can take it away, the freedom of religion/belief, family, property and honor.²

Ronald L. Johnston emphasizes that religion is “indisputably a social phenomenon and, as such, is in a dynamic reciprocal relationship with – every other social phenomenon and process. Religion both influences them and is influenced by them; religion both acts and reacts, is both an independent variable and dependant variable, both cause and effect.” First of all, social phenomena such as phenomena that lead to violence, as recorded in several European countries during the organization of state structures and relations with religious communities. Thus, the author of this research paper identifies the interactive relation of religion with the appearance of negative social phenomena, which can affect security.³

During the last few decades, questions related to certain religions have become increasingly mixed with questions of immigration, security and safety, polarization, and even terrorism (Niemi, Kallioniemi, & Ghosh, 2019). Thus, Casanova (2009) believes it should seem obvious that such a widespread negative view of “religion” as being “intolerant” and conducive to conflict can hardly be grounded empirically in the collective historical experience of European societies in the twentieth century or in the actual personal experience of most contemporary Europeans.

² Global Analitika. Religijski aspekti fenomena nasilnog ekstremizma. Available at: <http://globalanalitika.com/religijski-aspekti-fenomena-nasilnog-ekstremizma/> Accessed December 10, 2019.

³ Johnston, R. L. (1975). Religion and Society in Interaction. The Sociology of Religion. Engwood Cliffs/NJ. Prentice-Hall. Pg. 8.

Esposito (2001) claims that “religious extremism is a threat even today, to the extent it was in the past, but not limited or inherent to any religion ... The challenge is to make a difference between the beliefs and actions of the majority (whether they were Hindus, Muslims, the Jews, the Christians, the Jews, the Arabs, the Israelis, the Tamils or the Buddhists) and the minorities of extremists who justify their aggressiveness and violence in the name of religion, ethnicity or political ideology. It is equally important to distinguish the aspirations and demands of legitimate opposition political groups from those extreme.” The author makes it clear that the challenge is to find the difference between the beliefs of most believers and a minority that justifies violence against members of another religion, mainly by justifying violence with a historical context or by fears of some other religions. Ignoring the condemnation of violence, some religious leaders tacitly approve attacks aimed at spreading religious intolerance and hatred.

However, religious structures, as institutional forms through which religion functions, often have a special relationship with political powers, depending on the context. These contexts are often related to the issues of members of religious communities, the financing of religious community projects, and in return politicians want to have the right to church structure in order to gain potential voters. Regardless of which political system (which permits religious freedom), religion functions, it always finds ways to position itself as close to power and often influences major political decisions. Such experiences were seen through history, and even in those totalitarian regimes in which religion was banned or suppressed, religion eventually survived and, as a rule, experienced a new flourishing. An example is the Western Balkan countries, which were Communist and Socialist, with a lesser or rigorous ban on religious activity.

In the interweaving of religion and security, it is important to notice the difference between religious belief and the religion itself, especially in the context of the (miss) use of religion. When some terrorist organizations or terrorists send messages to kill members of other religions (examples of ISIS terrorist organizations or right-wing terrorists, such as Timothy McVeigh) or even killing members of their own religion, believing they are not true believers (ISIS). Wolffe notes that religious beliefs are ideas that are characteristic of certain religions. The religions themselves, therefore, include a wide range of beliefs that even their supporters, or most of them, are not familiar with, and vary from area to area, and there are three key beliefs that are especially important in violently divided contexts: “1. The beliefs of the” right “relationship between the church (or religion) and the state 2. The beliefs about pluralism 3. The beliefs of when violence is justified” (Wolffe, 1994:67).

There are certainly numerous examples of situations in which religion can offer stability and importance to reconciliation within conflict situations that tend to jeopardize established stability. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina where the Inter-Religious Council was formed after the war, repeatedly reacting in situations where religious objects or believers were attacked. The Inter-Religious Council of B&H was established in 1997 by a joint effort by reisu-l-ulema Mustafa ef. Cerić (Islamic Community in B&H), Bishop Nikolaj of Dabar-Bosnia (Serbian Orthodox Church), Archbishop of Vrhbosna Vinko

Cardinal Puljić (Roman Catholic Church) and Jakob Finci (Jewish Community of B&H). The original idea of housing the Council, which first came into being under this name in the world, was reconciliation between peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where only a year and a half of the Council's overnight accommodation was raging. The emergence of the Inter-Religious Council in B&H triggers numerous inter-religious projects through which reconciliation and the building of civil society where inter-religious dialogue are initiated - which becomes the guiding principle of the Inter-religious Council in B&H (Nedjelja.ba, 2017).

In report written by Wolfee and Moorhead (2014), David Leonard suggests: "Religion is often a response to the failure of the state to deal with human security... And that if the state experiences religion as a threat to its security, rather than human security, that often is a consequence of its own failures. Once the breakdown occurs, there may become negative consequences for human security more generally, if the state and religious group fall in conflict with one another, as we are seeing with Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria. But Boko Haram arises in a situation in which the Nigerian state has spectacularly failed to provide for the human security of the Nigerian population."

In the above example, it is clearly pointed out the failure of the country that has led to a threat to security, in a way that the religion is used in wrong interference as a justification for violence. Wolffe and Moorhead claim that precisely the security has tendencies to be seen from the perspective of the ruling authorities, "whether it was Ireland in the nineteenth century, Poland in the 1980s, or modern Egypt or Nigeria, everyone is ready to see the roots of religious movements as a security 'threat'.

The problem arises when religion is used with political factors or political intentions, in the desire for divisions, territorial branding or cultural divisions. In the end, it can provide false legitimacy for violent actions by marginalized and / or unbalanced individuals who justify their actions due to being a victim of domestic violence and injustice where they close vicious circle of violence. The use of religion and religious beliefs is increasingly present in those communities facing social difficulties, characterized by social or economic instability.

4. FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina is an example of a state that through the process of democratic transition and transition to capitalism simultaneously passed through the war. The war left behind the crumbled infrastructure of a developed industrial country, with many post-war and social problems.

Annex IV of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which serves as the country's constitution, provides for freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. It stipulates no one shall be deprived of citizenship on grounds of religion and all persons shall enjoy the same rights and freedoms without discrimination as to religion. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is a state law on religion, that guarantees freedom of conscience; grants legal status to

churches and religious communities; and grants numerous rights to registered religious communities, including the rights to assemble, conduct collaborative actions such as charity work, raise funds, and construct and occupy places of worship (United States Embassy to B&H, 2019).

The “Law on Freedom of Religion and the Legal Position of Churches and Religious Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina” (Official Gazette of B&H, No. 5/04) regulates rights and obligations through the framework of the activities of religious communities.

The Law provided in satisfactory level the freedom and independence of the activities of churches and religious communities, and also the role of the state is regulated, and security as a special term in the Law is not mentioned, but is referred to as public security in Article 14, paragraph 7. “Freedom to manifest religion or belief may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and in accordance with international standards when it is shown by the competent authorities to be necessary in the interest of the public safety, to protect health, public morals or for the rights and fundamental freedoms of others. Churches and religious communities shall have the right of appeal against such decisions. Prior to the decision on appeal the appellate body may request from the Minister for Human Rights and Refugees B&H an opinion relating to such case of limitation of the freedom to manifest of religion or belief.”

The presence of religion in the public sphere is mainly a consequence of social changes and the process of democratization of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian society, which is in a state of transition towards liberal democracy. In today’s world, it is noticeable that all religions have a new kind of relationship with politics; the role of religion in public life is not suppressed, despite some opinions in European countries that liberal democracy is in conflict with religion since World War II.

5. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: RELIGION, POST-CONFLICT AND MULTICULTURALISM

Even though the war ended about twenty years ago, Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter B&H) is still struggling to find its way of reconstruction and reconciliation that would result in a better life for its citizens. After so much time, it is clear that the political and institutional design made up by the 1995 Dayton agreement does not work to contribute fully to that aim. In particular, not much has been done to improve social and economic well-being (Koinova, 2014).

Seen by Alicino (2016), it would be wrong to understand the Bosnian war, the main source of the Country’s current problems, only in terms of a religious war: the tragedy in the first half of 1990s was in large part a consequence of the processes taking place in the second half of 1980s, such as a growing economic crisis and a gradual decomposition of the legitimacy of the socialist political system. Yet, it would also be wrong to adopt the explanation that religion had no role in B&H’s catastrophe. Of course, some dimensions of that sort cannot be neglected. But they cannot mask the ethnic-religious aspects of

the conflict. Tozer (2016) also notes that the common Western stereotype of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1990s was that it was the culmination of deeply entrenched, subconscious ancient hatred between the three diametrically opposed and incompatible ethno-religious groups. Thus, Tismaneanu (2009) agrees that the misfortune that occurred in the region during the first half of 1990s was in many respects the result of the abuse of the people's religious identity, relieved through myth and tradition that even today remain important inspirations for the future.

These groups are usually defined as both ethnic and religious, and they are the main actors in this conflict. Croats are defined as Catholics; Serbs as Serbian Orthodox; and Bosniaks as Muslims. The importance of religion in the conflict itself is a controversial factor, in fact, religion has apparently accepted a different understanding of theology and religion, and instead the conflict takes place by referring to ethnicity. This is important for understanding how religion has affected the conflict. The second perception in the West was that the conflict was inevitable because of the orientalist view of the Balkans as a war-hungry region on the outskirts of Europe, where there were ancient hatreds (Tozer, 2016).

Problematizing the influence of religion on security in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is necessary to mention the period of the previous war in which the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) issued a verdict on the committed genocide. Regarding crimes in war and genocide, Tozer noted that during the 1992-1995 war, "Bosnian Serb extremists recruited, primarily face to face. Bosnian Serb leaders - including convicted war criminals - have been documented by directing their militants to conduct ethnically motivated violence and inciting violence against them using anti-Muslim rhetoric. In March 1995, months before the Srebrenica massacre in July 1995, Bosnian Serb political leader Radovan Karadzic instructed his militants to create an unbearable situation of complete uncertainty without the hope of further survival or life. The first day of the Srebrenica massacre in July 1995 was recorded by Bosnian Serb commander Ratko Mladic who said: "We give this town to the Serbian people ... It's time to revenge against Muslims (Tozer, 2016).

From a large number of examples around the world, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina it can be observed that religion, as a common element that gathers certain categories of society, which in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina has suffered the violence and consequences of the war, and uses recruitment for violent extremism, due to a war narrative. Whereas, in the latest example of the terrorist attack on March 15, 2019, in New Zealand, committed against believers in a religious facility – the mosque, we can see what consequences can come when it is often propagated that Islam is guilty of murders, violence, and terrorist acts. A series of terrorist attacks in the West took place on a similar matrix, when members of the right-wing and pro-fascist organizations decided to send a message to the world that the white race and Christianity were endangered by migrants and Muslims. The two most massive terrorist attacks with such a background and the desire to send messages to the world are the latest terrorist attack on the mosques in New Zealand and the terrorist attack in Norway in 2011. Until these attacks, these two countries were known as highly tolerant and secure societies, with very small Muslim communities, suggesting that these

two countries were not randomly chosen as the scene of the massacre and the place of sending messages of fear and hatred to the world.

Barry Hart, a professor for trauma, identity and conflict studies at the Center for Justice and Peace Building at Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia, says: "It is important to understand the root causes of violent extremism, since knowing this helps determine the most constructive response to it. A major cause of extremism is fear-based related to a perceived loss of identity. When an individual or group is threatened at the level of their identity, which is a basic human need, the world becomes unsafe and unpredictable. There is a strong psychological response to this threat and a common and often too quick response is to fight and use extreme measures to protect oneself and one's group." (Mušić, 2019).

For Western Balkan countries, it is characteristic that apart from linking with religion to the impact on security, the following factors are also connected: the existence of large quantities of illicit weapons, the actions of individuals and groups who participated in war crimes during the '90s, then the activities of individuals who joined terrorist and other armed groups in Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, Libya and some other countries, as well as corruption and organized crime. The intertwining of these factors, as well as frequent examples of some of the convicted war criminals as welcomed guests at religious ceremonies and receptions, impact the sense of security, especially from the anger of the victims and witnesses of the crimes. This is particularly evident when war crime perpetrators that are tried before the International Tribunal in The Hague, are received by religious leaders, or are addressing by church institutions. He also noted several examples in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina when war crime perpetrators met with politicians and religious leaders. In Bosnia and Herzegovina there is a Strategy for prevention and fight against terrorism (2015-2020), which specifies tasks for state and non-state actors, by adopting the Strategy, the focus was on the need for Bosnia and Herzegovina to deal with the threats that lead to terrorism, including cyber threats. Thus, the role of the religious community in B&H has played in prevention, however, in practice, the activities of religious communities are not visible enough, because the only preventive activities were implemented by the Islamic Community in B&H, but more consequently than preventive.

NGOs, academics, and government agencies reported the continued association of each of the country's major political parties with the religion practiced by the dominant ethnic group among its membership. The biggest ethnic Bosniak parties continued to align with the IC, the biggest ethnic Croat parties with the Catholic Church, and the two largest ethnic Serb parties with the SOC (the Church of the Serb people and other people of Orthodox religion) (United States Embassy to B&H, 2019).

A research conducted by the Center for Social Research Global Analitika from Sarajevo, addressing the problem of preventing violent extremism, including the role of religion, leads to a similar conclusion: "The planning measures and activities, as well as the timely creation and operation of responsible factors in accordance with the adopted Strategies for the fight and prevention of terrorism, resulted that in 2016 and 2017 there were no

acts recorded that could be connected with terrorism, nor were new cases of joining of B&H citizens to some of the terrorist organizations in the world."⁴

Generally speaking, the influence of religion on security is dualistic, as can be seen from the examples. The misuse of religion can destabilize the region and cause instability, and the proper use of religious values can act on the principles of building peace and security.

Mandaville and Nozell (2017) note that the relationship between religion and violence- as a phenomenon that endangers peace and security- is complex and defies every regular account of direct causality.

The specificity of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian region lies in the fact that it is still in the war narrative and the post-conflict environment, precisely because of its multiculturalism and diversity, which, in the first place, is manifested in the fact that the people of this region are the three most widespread monotheistic religions. The previous war, which has perceived the perceptible consequences, becomes a fertile ground for religion to be considered a problematic element that can lead to violence or a violation of stability and security. Religion, as such, does not call and recognize violence, but the post-conflictism of the B&H society creates additional intolerance.

6. THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE INFLUENCES OF RELIGION ON SECURITY

Shaw (2011) argues that religion – not as a standard of belief, but as a power which drives human behavior – must be at the table if national security policy is to embrace the fullness of the human situation, formulate effective concepts, and yield enduring results. If religion is to enter the discussion, it must not do so in the form of advocacy, promoting one religion over another. But, to understand the interplay between religion and national security, one may either look backwards across history to assess past connections, or forward from today to project future connections, Shaw emphasizes.

Considering the above, one sees the need to not only look at the influence of religion on security in terms of positive or negative elements. On the contrary, the effort should be directed towards the mutual action of religion and various local or contextual factors, economic status, certain socio-political situations and / or crises, local conflicts, disaffection of the population, especially of the youth.

A study by the US Department of State's Office for Conflict Stabilization Operations (CSO), published in 2019, found that respondents generally considered criminal groups to be a much greater threat to their well-being than extreme religious and ethno-nationalist groups (VOA, 2019).

⁴ Global Analitika. Bosna i Hercegovina je položila ispit u borbi protiv terorizma. Available at: <http://globalanalitika.com/bosna-i-hercegovina-je-polozila-ispit-u-borbi-protiv-terorizma/> Accessed November 15, 2019.

The relationship between religion and security in B&H has obviously been fulfilled, especially since the war years of the 1990s, which is worrying, since religious leaders would rarely condemn war criminals coming from their community. In this way, they consciously or unconsciously deepen the gap between religious communities and thus directly affect the security situation, especially when it comes to religiously motivated extremism and violence.

The policy of opposing violence and building stability, according to researchers, both internationally and at home, tended to instrumentalize the religiousness of actors, conclude Mandaville and Nozell (2017).

In the context of peacebuilding and post-war reconstruction, religions in Bosnia and Herzegovina have had a positive impact, especially in the case of refugees returning to pre-war places of life. The presence of religious leaders at the local level instilled confidence in the return of refugees and made positive contributions to the security situation in these local communities.

There are conflicting opinions about the role of religion in the post-war period in B&H, about the negative impact of religion on reconciliation for Radio Free Europe, said Fr. Ivo Markovic: "Religions should be the drivers of reconciliation here in Bosnia. However, they obviously do not work that way. The point is that religions are reduced primarily to the nation and then to power. Religions should be places of confidence building, openness, acceptance of the other, building a positive environment in which all people are brothers and sisters in God. Instead, they are places of exclusion" (Karabeg, 2009).

Also, Alicino (2016) confirms that it is undeniable that religion and religious actors contributed largely to the bloodshed in the former Yugoslavia. For the same reasons, though, it is also unquestionable that, either for the better or worse, they have an important part to play in the existing reconstruction process.

Furthermore, political influence on religion and the interplay of religion and politics, often directly reflects on security in B&H. Thus, Ferid ef. Dautovic, a lecturer at Faculty of Islamic Sciences at University of Sarajevo, says that it is a fact that many politicians take over the responsibilities of religious officials and often speak using religious language in their meetings, and again religious officials in mosques speak political language (Karabeg, 2009).

Ultimately, the influence of religion on security is dualistic, and only action at all levels and understanding of the whole religious context can enable the adequate use of religion with the aim of creating stability and opposing all the phenomena that affect society's destabilization. Bosnian and Herzegovina society is a specific ground in which religious views can be exploited or abused in order to create conflicting situations.

The deterioration of the security situation is primarily reflected in violent actions, often directed against minority groups, which means that security is threatened by violence against different people. Although it is widely known that violence does not belong to any religion because religion condemns violence and presumes it is a distortion of human consciousness, and in the theological sense, a source is an evil man, not God.

7. METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS OF RESEARCH

The data were obtained on the basis of a survey of 50 respondents, of which 20 were religious representatives, 20 police officers and 10 radicalized persons from across B&H and the percentage of people represented in the 1991 census. The survey was conducted from November 2017 to July 2018, through interviews and the organization of five focus groups on the topic.

The basic question in the interviews was whether religion had a positive effect on the security situation in B&H, with the permission to additionally explain the comment. The study found that variables that were considered to have a major religious impact on the security situation (such as poor education, material gain, and war narrative) were not causally related to variables (political influence on religion and extreme religious attitudes and directions). Respondents from the religious community viewed the impact of religion on security with sympathy and in 70 percent of cases considered it justified. In contrast, in 90 percent of cases, non-religious actors believe that religion's influence on security is not positive. In 75 per cent of cases, radicalized persons believe that religion has had a positive impact on the security situation. Such results show all the differences in the views of the society when it comes to the impact of religion on security, and it is clear that those who come from the religious community consider that the influence of religion on all processes in society is justified, and radicalized persons have a similar opinion. While security professionals (who were in the survey as a control group in this survey) are overwhelmingly in the position that undue religious influence on society does not contribute to raising the level of security in society.

In general, research has shown that there are more believers in Bosnia and Herzegovina before the end of the war, as well as in the era of socialism, the same situation in the other Balkan states. According to respondents, the reason is that the state cannot allow every individual to have a quality social program, and this space is filled up with religious communities.

Involvement of religious and security issues is confirmed in practice examples, but also in the opinion of believers and ordinary citizens, as well as experts, sociologists, psychologists, and security experts. The impact of religion on security issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been demonstrated in several examples, and examples of conflict areas in the world clearly show that the conflict with the religious dimension lasts longer and that more time is needed for the process of reconciliation. Precisely because it affects religion in terms of security more pronounced in post-conflict societies, and this influence remains for a number of years, which is noticeable in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The non-acceptance of the truth about war crimes and crimes of terrorism, the non-compliance with the International Court of Justice judgment in The Hague and the absence of convictions of all crimes by religious leaders directly affect the modern security challenges and the ability to engage religion in processes that can endanger security.

8. CONCLUSION

The influence of religion on stability and security is quite pronounced. It can be considered twofold – in terms of including religion and religious views, as well as religious actors in the prevention of conflict situations or through the abuse of religion with the aim of justifying and provoking violence. The interests and space for the involvement of religious actors in the politics of combating violent extremism have increased over the past several years, but the approach to this must start from understanding the way in which religious factors can help, or break into the prevention of violent extremism, cybercrime and other global phenomena. The role of religion as a potential driver of violent extremism and manifest forms is great and important, though it should always be kept in mind that religion is abused in this way in interaction with different factors. These factors are of a wide spectrum and include a number of other circumstances - social, economic, war, post-conflict, etc., so that the very influence of religion is not linear or religion in its pure basis can be the driver of conflict situations.

Considering all the above, examples demonstrate that levels of religious influence on stability provide an overview of the recommendations and opportunities that can be implemented in this regard, drawing attention to the respective roles of religious actors and religions in the prevention of security-related situations. Considering the necessity, in addition to the need to build or supplement the traditional need for the freedom of religion in a free country, it is essential that religious communities contribute to the safety of a society through preventive actions within their religious communities. Furthermore, this includes the constant need to insist on the condemnation of extremism that leads to violence, and any kind of manifest violence, as well as everything that can in any way jeopardize the security of an individual or community.

The specificities of religious relations in B&H that affect political and social relations, and thus security, have been illustrated by the examples given as well as the research itself. That can be reflected in the words of Fra Ivo Markovic: "In Bosnia, there are deep positive mechanisms of religious coexistence. We are aware that we believe in the same God, and that faith, when it functions as faith, produces positive results. This is believed by Muslims for Christians as well as Christians for Muslims. There are many such fundamental values in our Bosnia. However, we also lived under the constant dominance of a party that sought to either Islamize, or Serbicize, or Christianize others, which created and deep and dangerous defense mechanisms as a result of the fear of identity loss. Well, those vicious mechanisms are something that has not yet been sufficiently studied. They have only been developed by national and military leaders who know how to manipulate them, and in my opinion, the peace movement, psychologists and sociologists have failed. That memory must be analyzed." (Karabeg, 2009)

Religious leaders should act effectively in the sense of preventing any conflict and the emergence of violence that may in any way be related to religion. Religion is currently an important issue in most Balkan states, and it is necessary to contribute to the prevention of conflicts, where the greatest responsibility lies with religious leaders, which so far obviously hasn't been understood in the way it should be.

The results of the research indicate that there are links between religion and politics in B&H at the moment, which in turn indicates the existence of an impact on security, especially as shown by the views of members of the religious communities who participated in the interview. Such a situation implies that these research findings may serve as a basis for future research in terms of discussions aimed at representatives of religious communities in B&H in order to understand the need to reduce the influence of religion at the level regulated by legal and religious regulations.

The basic recommendation is a stronger involvement of the Inter-Religious Council of B&H in all extremism-related prevention programs, but continued and systematic support by religious leaders in joint educational projects and initiatives, such as the Master of Inter-Religious and Peacebuilding supported by Catholic Relief Service and USAID.

REFERENCES

1. Abu-Nimer, M. (2018). A Way Forward in Transforming Violent Extremism. Transformative Approaches to Violent Extremism. Available at: <https://www.sfcg.org/transforming-violent-extremism-peacebuilders-guide/> Accessed February 01, 2020.
2. Alicino, F. (2016). Religions and Ethno-Religious Differences in Bosnia and Herzegovina. From Laboratories of Hate to Peaceful Reconciliation. *Stato, Chiese e pluralismo confessionale*.
3. Casanova, J. (2009). The secular and secularisms. *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 76(4), 1049-1066.
4. Daraz, M. A. (1974). *Al-Dîn Buhûth Mumahhadah li Dirâsah Târîkh al-Adyân*. Kuwait: Dar al-Qalam.
5. Global Analitika. Religijski aspekti fenomena nasilnog ekstremizma. Available at: <http://globalanalitika.com/religijski-aspekti-fenomena-nasilnog-ekstremizma/> Accessed December 10, 2019.
6. Global Analitika. Bosna i Hercegovina je položila ispit u borbi protiv terorizma. Available at: <http://globalanalitika.com/bosna-i-hercegovina-je-polozila-ispit-u-borbi-protiv-terorizma/> Accessed November 15, 2019.
7. James, W. (2003). *The varieties of religious experience: A study in human nature*. Routledge.
8. Karabeg, O. (2009). Opasni zagrljaj religije i politike. *Radio Free Europe*. Available at: https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/most_religija_i_politika_markovic_dautovic/1853985.html Accessed on February 03, 2020.
9. Koinova, M. (2014). Conclusions: Building on Regional Trends to Develop New Mechanisms for Political Change. In *Post-Yugoslavia* (pp. 198-203). Palgrave Macmillan, London.
10. Law on Freedom of Religion and Legal Position of Churches and Religious Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Official Gazette of B&H, No. 5/04). Available at: <http://>

www.mpr.gov.ba/biblioteka/zakoni/bs/ZAKON%20o%20slobodi%20vjere.pdf
Accessed December 1, 2019.

11. Mandaville, P. & Nozell, M. (2017). Engaging Religion and Religious Actors in Countering Violent Extremism. In: USIP.ORG: SPECIAL REPORT. Available at: <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR413-Engaging-Religion-and-Religious-Actors-in-Countering-Violent-Extremism.pdf> Accessed on December 15, 2019.
12. Mušić, S. (2019). Feminizam kao odgovor na nasilni ekstremizam. Al Jazeera Balkans. Available at: <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/feminizam-kao-odgovor-na-ekstremizam> Accessed November 30, 2019.
13. Nedjelja.ba (2017). Dvadeset godina Međureligijskog vijeća u B&H. Available at: <https://www.nedjelja.ba/hr/vijesti/B&H/dvadeset-godina-medureligijskog-vijeca-u-B&H/419> Accessed February 10, 2020.
14. Niemi, P. M., Kallioniemi, A., & Ghosh, R. (2019). Religion as a Human Right and a Security Threat – Investigating Young Adults’ Experiences of Religion in Finland. *Religions*, 10(1), 55.
15. Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2011). *Sacred and secular: Religion and politics worldwide*. Cambridge University Press.
16. Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries. Available at: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/religion> Accessed February 08, 2020.
17. Pollack, D., & Olson, D. V. (Eds.). (2012). *The role of religion in modern societies*. Routledge.
18. Johnston, R. L. (1975). *Religion and Society in Interaction. The Sociology of Religion*. Englewood Cliffs/NJ. Prentice-Hall.
19. Qaradawi, Y. (2010). *Islam: an introduction*. The Other Press.
20. Tismaneanu, V. (2009). *Fantasies of salvation: Democracy, nationalism, and myth in post-communist Europe*. Princeton University Press.
21. Tozer, L. (2016). The Significance of the Role of Religion in the Bosnian Conflict of the 1990s: The Town of Foča as a Case Study. U: *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*. Vol. 36 : Iss. 5, Article 7. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol36/iss5/7/> Accessed on February 02, 2020.
22. Shaw, J. E. (2011). *The role of religion in national security policy since September 11, 2001*. Strategic Studies Institute.
23. Turner, B. S. (2005). Talcott Parsons’s sociology of religion and the expressive revolution: the problem of western individualism. *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 5(3), 303-318.
24. Tylor, E. B. (1891). *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology*. J. Murray.
25. United States Embassy to B&H. (2019). *Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018 International Religious Freedom Report*. Available at: <https://ba.usembassy.gov/wp-content/>

uploads/sites/270/2018-B&H-IRF-Report-Final-English.pdf Accessed on February 02, 2020.

26. VOA. (2019). Kriminalne grupe opasnije od ekstremnih vjerskih i etnonacionalističkih grupa. Available at: <https://ba.voanews.com/a/kriminalne-grupe-opasnije-od-ekstremnih-vjerskih-i-etnonacionalisti%C4%8Dkih-grupa/4900871.html> Accessed on January 31, 2020.
27. Wolffe, J. (1994). *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1943*. London. Routledge.
28. Wolffe, J. & Moorhead, G. (2014). *Religion, security and global uncertainties*. Walton Hall: Open University. Available at: <http://www.paccsresearch.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Religion-Security-Global-Uncertainties.pdf> Accessed on February 01, 2020.