

MIGRANT AND REFUGEE CRISIS IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD:
RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESPONSES

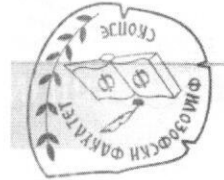
МИГРАНТСКИТЕ И БЕЛГСКИТЕ КРИЗИ ВО ГЛОБАЛИЗИРАНИОТ
СВЕТ: ОДГОВОРНОСТИ И ОДГОВОРИ

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INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE



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Religious Exclusivism and Refugee Crisis in a Globalized World

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Abstract: The pseudo-democratic processes in Europe, the Balkans and R. Macedonia are a

means of ruling the majority, wherein the leaders of those processes succeed in manipulating the unthinking masses using Christian scripture. This research is trying to answer the question: If and when is a religious worldview a foundation through which the masses are mobilized and the fascistization of society, in which Christian and Islamic values become simple commodities in the neoliberal capitalism, is carried out? Does denying the right of others to be different from you means you are moving into the space of open and concealed violence? This problem arises when a so-called overlap between right-winged political forces and their ideologies is established. The problem is that original Christianity and Islam are falsified and used by the political right in the western Balkan states to define society as an organic national, ethnic and racial whole, which is primarily oriented towards national and patriarchal values. In the case of the Republic of Macedonia, the division of people between "us" and "them"; Macedonians and non-Macedonians; believers and atheists, breeds violence which is founded on a totalitarian understanding of faith. The idea that God is one, and the belief in Him is differently placed in different religions, can lead some individuals, religious and political organizations to the false notion that we are "us" because we are not "them" and the only way to remain "us" is to exterminate "them". Because of this, religious exclusivism leads to a violent ideology and religious extremism.

Keywords: religious exclusivism, religious values, religious extremism, refugees

Introduction

Every person has a lasting and complex need for a sense of security and protection. In the period of childhood, the need for security is satisfied by the parents. Later, hierarchical power



is transferred to a creature more powerful than man. That is why the man of the higher powers, through various rituals and prayer-loves, seeks help, well-being and mercy. But he also performs a series of rituals with which he returns to the higher powers. Thus religion becomes symbolic communication between man and God. Religion is a very complex and complex phenomenon that is present in all societies from prehistory to the present. Starting from totemism as a typical feature of the original society to contemporary world religions (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism) as a feature of modern social systems, we can see that their number and diversity are immense.

But the consequences of religious beliefs and actions are not only religious but also social. To the extent that religion causes social consequences, to that extent it becomes the subject of sociological research. And vice versa, to the extent that social change causes changes in religious experience, belief and behavior, they are of interest to sociologists of religion. If we want in the simplest way to define religion, we would do it with the determination that it represents a belief in the supernatural. The majority of religions are based on belief in an innate, supernatural being (in monotheistic religions) or outlandish supernatural beings in hierarchical religions, as well as special religious feelings towards it or those supernatural beings. Man imagines the extraordinary being as something dominating, omniscient, and unlimited (Davie, 2013).

For centuries, major universal world religions such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam offered their supporters an exclusive and generalist set of values that stood above the state and the economy. In the medieval world, Christianity was regarded as the Kingdom of God on earth, and Islam has always been regarded as a social community of material and political interests that exterminates the state. These two theocratic units in the 13th and 14th centuries came to a conflict over the control of one of their common religious places. Those religions had a mission in a globalizing sense in which they sought to replace those religions that were defined by them as ungodly and pagan with any pressure. They were to be merged with expansive empires that have global ambitions (Arab Empire, Roman Empire, and Ottoman Empire).

The theory of globalization leads to the conclusion that religion in different societies should be understood in the context of changes in the world as a whole. But everyone is based on the assumption that the boundaries between societies are becoming less important, and that social life in individual societies is increasingly influenced by events in other parts of the world, and that some certain changes are obvious throughout the world, and not only limited to certain places. The idea of the Jews that they are chosen people of the Lord and that God gives them an edge over all other nations and that only they will have a part in

eternal bliss) and universalism (aspiration to encompass the world, theological teaching of the decadence of God extends to the whole human race).

Globalization involves a situation in which peoples, cultures, states and civilizations that were earlier isolated or isolated more than one are now unceasingly and inevitably acting on each other. It has two opposite effects. On the one hand, there is a growing threat of conflicts between different cultures, which are now in the same society, as it can lead to misunderstandings and hostility. On the other hand, all closer contacts between different cultures and religions can reduce the differences between them, and thus reduce the possibility of collisions (Beyer, 1994). The global society characterizes the clash between particularism and universalism. Particularism emphasizes the importance of the characteristics of individual social groups. These differences can be national, regional, cultural or religious. Universalism emphasizes the importance of similarity between people, particular societies and values systems.

Religious Exclusivism

If we wish to define religious exclusivity according to the example of Christianity we can do it in this way. Christianity is a religion which excludes when it calls for its believers to dedicate all of their lives towards God, and not to the polytheistic gods. On the other hand, Christianity doesn't exclude when it urges its followers that if they can't accept the God of their neighbors, then they should accept their neighbors. If they can't accept their faith, they can accept that they are faithful. However, religious institutions frequently endeavor to exclude other believers from Earth and Heaven because they are different from them. They have distorted history for this purpose. Their ideas are clear: we have an exclusive historical right to a certain religion which is unavailable to you.

For example, Jews on the foundations of Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Jacob and David were the blessed nation of God, who were supposed to spread the truth of the one God, (Jehovah), but instead of using this blessing and spread the truth to all peoples of the world, as time passed they made an unbreakable wall between them and other peoples. They simply told the neighboring people: I am sorry, but we are the historical descendants of Abraham, Moses and David, and as such our God is not your God.

With the appearance of Christianity, the first problem that early Christian communities needed to solve was, do they accept the Jewish religious tradition, for which the Council of Jerusalem was held. In this council it was decided that the only spiritual foundation on which this religion will be founded will be Jesus Christ; all peoples of the world are welcome

to be christened and convert to Christianity; the only parts of Judaism that are accepted are the prophets who prophesized the coming of the Messiah. The idea that all Christians are equal lasted till the first schism. Then, the western Roman Catholic Church called upon the idea of apostolic succession. Namely, according to this church there is an uninterrupted connection between St. Apostol Peter, the Roman Bishops and the current Pope. The message to the other Eastern Orthodox Churches was clear: We are sorry, but we are the only ones who have a direct line to Heaven according to the heredity of the apostolic authority. At that time, the Roman Catholic Church started excluding the Eastern Orthodox Churches, even though the founder of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople was St. Apostol Andrew, the founder of the Armenian Church was St. Apostol Bartholomew, the founder of the Alexandrian Patriarchate was St. Apostol Marco etc. The same process happened in Protestant Christianity (the only inheritors of Heaven are the followers of Martin Luther and Jean Calvin) and Islam, where the Sunni and Shia have the exclusive right of religious truth.

From then on this has been the rule, not the exception. Because of this, religious exclusivity, without undermining other forms of exclusivity, has generated the biggest problems in the world. Faced with this, religious leaders have tried to overcome this state, which at worst can lead to bloody conflict. In one interview Pope Francis said: "A secular state, unlike other states where religion is imposed on everyone, can allow any believer a chance to believe in his God. All people are equal as God's sons and daughters and creators of their own dignity. Everyone has to have the freedom to practice his or her own religion, within the religion he or she belongs to";

Certain Islamic leaders have clearly made it known to the world that the Prophet Mohammad had seen in his visions the so called Islamic nation as a pluralist religious society, which grants every citizen religious freedom. In the period between 622 and 632 AD he made an alliance with the Christian monastic community on Mt. Sinai, with the Christian Najrana community, the Persian Christian community as well as all Christians around the world. The letter sent to the monastery St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai, considered the oldest monastery in the world, said that anyone who limits the religious freedoms of Christians is going to be considered an apostate and betrayer of God who deserves God's damnation. The idea that states should be secular where religious freedoms will be protected stems from these attitudes of the Christian and Islamic dignitaries. Theocratic states with a state religion can have serious problems.

Pseudo democratic processes in Europe, the Balkans and R. Macedonia are a means to rule the (un)thinking majority, and the leaders of these processes succeed in manipulating

the majority under the auspices of Christian values. The religious outlook of the world is a platform on which masses are mobilized and a fascization of society is performed in which Christian values are a commodity in neoliberal capitalism. The love towards God and people close to you are the foundations of Christian ontology, anthropology and social engagement. It can be said that the political ideas of the orthodox left and the real social democratic parties for social justice, gender, ethnic and class equality, are clearly defined for the first time in the New Testament. When we speak of the political left who is clearly for: social justice; healthcare for all; equal educational opportunities; livable wages for all; affirmation of democratic values and the rule of law, then we can freely say that those are values close to the Christian understanding of our attitude towards the other.

Religious Perception of Refugees

Religion has become the primary characteristic by which refugees are imagined and understood, resulting in three main false assumptions. Since the majority of refugees are from countries where Islam is the dominant religion, they must therefore be Muslim. Not only are all refugees assumed to be predominantly Muslim, but they are all Muslim in the same way, ignoring the numerous variations in beliefs, rituals, and practices across understandings of what it means to be Muslim. The concurrent rise of mass displacement and violent extremism (stereotypically associated with Islam) has resulted in a complicated entanglement where "refugee" equals "Muslim" and "Muslim" equals "terrorist" in public discourse and consciousness. This contributes to the belief that all refugees are potential terrorists and prompts narrow policy responses primarily concerned with security rather than solidarity and humanitarianism (Maveili and Wilson, 2016).

The dominant discourse that emerged regarding Islam does not just emphasize the connection between Islam and terrorism but also urges us to distinguish "good Muslims" from "bad Muslims". Good Muslims are peaceful and law-abiding and abhor acts of violence that threaten the authority of the secular Western state. Bad Muslims commit acts of violence and, according to political leaders like George W. Bush and Tony Blair, blaspheme the name of Allah and do not adhere to the proper teachings of the Koran. While these statements could be cast as attempts to de-essentialize Islam by emphasizing that violence is not an endemic feature, this good Muslim/bad Muslim narrative has contributed to constructing good Muslims as devoid of agency, as potential victims of a growing "radicalised and politicised view of Islam whose only hopes rest on external salvation from the West (Mamdani, 2009).

Immigration and Islam are almost synonymous. The overwhelming majority of immigrants in most European countries [excluding immigrants from other European countries] are Muslims and the overwhelming majority of Western European Muslims are immigrants. This entails a superimposition of different dimensions of "otherness" that exacerbates issues of boundaries, accommodation and incorporation. The immigrant, the religious, the racial, and the socio-economic disprivileged "other" all tend to coincide (Casanova, 1994). While the majority of immigrants in the United States are not Muslim, President-elect Donald Trump's anti-Islamic stance, including his proposal to end Muslim immigration, suggests that the "superimposition of different dimensions of otherness" described by Casanova has also been taking place in the United States.

Considered in their overlapping dimension, the good Muslim/bad Muslim and good refugee/bad refugee divide contribute to explaining the growing importance of religious identity in the politics of migration in Europe and the hierarchization of refugees according to religious-racial attributes. At the top of the hierarchy are Christian refugees, ideally victims of religious (Muslim) persecution. This is evidenced in statements from politicians in Eastern Europe, that only Christian refugees should be accepted. Next are Muslim refugees who wait patiently in camps for Western salvation and the "woman and child" or child refugees who symbolize the quintessence of vulnerability. At the bottom of this hierarchy are the "bad refugees", mostly represented by those who escape the victim script by taking matters into their own hands, venturing to the North across dangerous and illegal routes (Starkens and Varmeer, 2015).

Current Religious Situation in the Republic of Macedonia

Religion in the Republic of Macedonia is increasing its role in public life. It is no longer a private affair of the individual and it creates a potential to affect society and politics to become an important factor in political and public life. What is most concerning is the increasing influence of the church on the public sector, which should be secular and free of religious influences. There are 2000 churches and 600 mosques in this country. This means that there is one church for every 800 inhabitants. According to the results of the survey conducted by the Konrad Adenauer foundation last year, the majority (74,2%) of the Orthodox Christians surveyed believe that there are enough churches in this country, while 20,4% believe that there are too many churches. Also 44,6% of the surveyed Muslims believe that there are enough mosques, while 43,1% believe that there are too many mosques (Божиновски и Николовски, 2017). However, the two largest religious organizations in the

country, the Macedonian Orthodox Church – Ohrid Archbishopric and the Islamic Religious Community believe that the number of religious objects is too little to satisfy the real needs of the believers. They constantly condemn each other for their aggressive attitudes and the disrespect of the rule of law when constructing religious objects.

At the same time as MOC – OA accuses IRC of conquering traditional ethnic spaces of Orthodox Christians, they are building crosses, parables and churches *en masse* in an attempt to defend their ethnic space from the 'aggressive actions of Muslims. The construction of churches, parables, mosques and minarets gives out a chaotic picture. The greatest dynamic of constructing such religious objects is in the municipality Aerodrom. In 5 years' time, a church has been built at each crossroads, with 8 churches present at the center of the municipality which, from what I can see, are rarely visited.

In the last ten years 350 mosques have been built in Macedonia, 88 of which have been built in the Skopje, Tetovo and Gostivar region and the villages under Shar Planina Mt. These are markers for territory conquered by the ethnically defined political parties. For them, religious objects have long ago stopped being only temples of faith, but also tools for accomplishing and manifesting political power, with which all homogenization on a religious basis only serves to harm the country. According to MOC – OA the churches are being built to serve as a defense mechanism against the 'conquering tendencies of Muslims', who are starting to inhabit traditional Christian spaces. They believe that the construction of religious objects should never serve as markers of conquered national territory, because doing so loses the essence of religion. However, according to them the real situation shows that Muslims are constructing religious objects and conquering territories where they do not have the majority. "As an answer to this, we are building churches and crosses and we are defending our territory from invaders. We are protecting our territory and we are trying to secure conditions in which all Christians can express their religious feelings with dignity", stated father Boban Mitevski, a professor at the Theological Faculty in Skopje and head of the cabinet of the archbishop of MOC – OA, Stefan.

We can rightfully say that the state often meddles in religious questions under the guise of protecting national interests. The state puts MOC – OA in a privileged position, directly disrupting the secular character of the state. On the other hand, considering the bi-nationality of Macedonia, the same is asked by IRC in the territories it has marked as its own, which leads to a religious divide between inhabitants, which is helped by the state. In R. Macedonia a strong symbiosis is created between religion and politics which is strengthened by the fact that religious exclusivity often follows ethnic exclusivity.

If we are talking about interreligious tolerance between Christians and Muslims, we are seeing two ends of a spectrum, which in the end serve the same purpose. For example in the Muslim nation, societal tolerance is often governed by religion. If you steal, your hands are cut. If you commit adultery, you are stoned to death. The West sees these practices as barbaric. On the other hand, many Muslim believers see Christianity as decadent. Often practicing sex, marijuana and rock n' roll. The thing that matters most is how tolerant are they to each other. Although Muslims have different values and a way of life different to the West, they do not differ much from the peoples of the West. They have the same aspirations and ambitions in life. Those who have misinterpreted the Quran are the ones intolerant of all non-Muslims, just like those who have misinterpreted the Bible, the Christian fundamentalists, are intolerant of all non-Christians.

If we have already demonstrated the "two component structure" of Islamic terrorism, the question remains: Will it remain so? And if so, which component will have the leading role? This problem has been widely debated in discussions of political Islam, with opposing views. Some Islamic intellectuals firmly hold the belief that Islam has no connection to terrorism and it is a religion of peace, tolerance and understanding. This belief contradicts the reality of frequent clashes between different denominations of Islam, which is frequently connected to the antagonism towards western values and an impure life, which leads some opponents to equalize the fight against terrorism to a fight against Islam (especially after 9/11). The problem lies in the fact that both of these viewpoints, in different versions, can be verified in the historical practices so far, as well as life today. Islamic fundamentalism has given terrorism a brutality and fanaticism, apothecosis to the sacrifice with a belief in reincarnation. Something that can be easily noticed in "suicide bombers", but also in the cruelty of the loss of innocent lives (Jettic, 2008).

Modern civilization rests upon secular ideas, which have moved religion to the private sphere of the individual. We cannot speak of elements of religious fundamentalism as long as the expression of religious feelings remain in the private sphere and it does not disrupt normal life and freedom of believers from other faiths to express their religious feelings. A religion transforms in a fundamentalist religion at the moment when, according to the interpretation of a religious commandment, societal relations are formed where the rights guaranteed by the general declaration of human rights are jeopardized. Fundamentalist tendencies exist in a certain number of believers of all faiths. The one thing that characterizes followers of religious fundamentalism, no matter if it is a Christian or Islamic fundamentalist is the fact that their identity is not built on the basis of nationality, but religion. The basic idea that is imposed on the believers is that religion and

religious communities cannot be separated from state and politics. Fundamentalist teachings highlight the doctrine of rejection of modernism and its followers and fundamentalists are intolerant towards members of other religious groups and their world views.

These are the indicators of fundamentalism

- A belief in the literal unmistakable truth of the sacred texts;
- Rejection of all modern, scientific and technological achievements, if they are not in concordance with the beliefs laid out by the sacred texts;
- Those who do not follow the previous two principles are not true believers;
- All policies that are not in concordance with the fundamental religious principles are rejected (Bruce, 2008)

Conclusion

Religion as a subsystem of a global society has no clearly defined role. While in the past religious rituals were used because they were considered necessary for successful crops, better health and military success, now this is not the case. Without a global role, only the task of dealing with personal issues and problems, such as the meaning of life, is left to religion. Following such a path, religion is losing its role in the public and the privatized religion continues to develop in countless pluralistic directions, using a range of possibilities. Individuals choose sect, cult, denomination or one of the major world religions that they want to follow. However, religion does not necessarily have to be confined to the sphere of the private. The main subsystems of modernity and globalization create problems. The global economy, global science and the global political system can offer very little to the individual or social groups for identity confirmation. Identities are more and more relativized: people lack an unambiguous definition of what they are actually.

They have a series of individual roles, but they lack only a sense of identity. In a pluralistic world, in which different cultures and religions are firmly intertwined and in closer contact, it is difficult to say that a particular culture is better than another. Religion can play an important role and help people to deal with such problems. Individuals and social groups can reach religion in order to ensure their unique sense of identity. They can use it to confirm the superiority of the individual or the social group over others. It can mobilize (make them movable) social groups, with a desire to exercise power and influence in a globalized society in which they feel marginalized or they think it is a threat to them. Religions that try to emphasize special differences that are very often closely related to nationalism.

Therefore Balkan countries are examples in which conservative (the one who is against novelities, with outdated understandings) or fundamentalist religions (religious fundamentalism is a name for the various political ideologies and movements that seek the entire social life to harmonize it with a consistent interpretation of a certain religious doctrine (learning). Religious fundamentalism is a relatively new phenomenon that was noticed until the last quarter of the 20th century. It most often binds Islam and the Middle east, and to a lesser extent with Protestantism in the United States. Religious fundamentalism is often manifested as a total or partial rejection of modern ideas, whether religious tolerance, secularization, various achievements in science and technology, which for various reasons are not in harmony with a particular religious doctrine). Therefore these religions are often associated with nationalism (i.e. a cult for its own nation, which creates a chauvinistic attitude (spreading hatred) towards other nations).

The third option is for religions to try to achieve a more universal approach. In this case, religion is trying to achieve ecumenism (a movement to bring together all Christian churches, Greek ecumenias, the inhabited part of the world, the whole world), so it seeks to bring together and unify different faiths and beliefs. Instead of embarking on the emphasis on diversity, it emphasizes common values and beliefs that should become global, common to the whole world. The belief in universal human rights or a certain conception of social justice can serve as an example. Beyer sees the liberation theology as a good example of development. Although the theory of liberation is based on Catholicism, its interests are political and religious, with concern for the poor in Latin America. Many of the problems of the poor can be attributed to the functioning of the capitalist system. The second example of a universalist approach is religious environmentalism (according to this theory, human behavior is shaped exclusively by the influence of the environment, that is, society and culture, and not from some congenital factors).

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