

THE 9TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

# Religion in the International Conflicts of the Modern World

6–7 September 2024

Srebrno jezero



**ORGANIZED BY**

**The Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade**  
Forum for Religious Issues and ISS Center for Sociological and Anthropological Research  
and  
**The Center for Empirical Research of Religion, Novi Sad**



## RELIGION IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS OF THE MODERN WORLD

**Published by International Program Committee**

Institute of Social Sciences  
Institute of National Significance  
for the Republic of Serbia  
Belgrade, 2024

Mirko Blagojević, Ph.D. Head of FOREL, Principal Research Fellow, ISS, Belgrade;

Goran Bašić, Ph.D. Director of the ISS, Principal Research Fellow, ISS, Belgrade;

Suzana Ignjatović, Ph.D. Senior Research Associate, ISS, Belgrade;

**Publisher**

Goran Bašić

Zorica Kuburić, Ph.D. Full Professor, Center for Empirical Researches of Religion, Novi Sad;

Zlatko Matić, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Belgrade, Belgrade;

Željko Pavić, Ph.D. Full Professor, Research and International Cooperation Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia;

**Organizing Committee**

Nataša Jevtić

Milan Blagojević

Ljiljana Ćumura

Vladimir Bakrač, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Faculty of Philosophy, Nikšić, Montenegro;

Ružica Cacanaska, Ph.D. Principal Research Fellow, Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research Ss. Cyril and Methodius, University in Skopje, Republic North Macedonia;

Sergey Lebedev, Ph.D. Professor, Institute of Social Sciences and Mass Communication, Faculty of Theology and Social Sciences, Belgorod State and Research University, Belgorod, Russian Federation;

Sergey Trofimov, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Faculty of Journalism, Lomonosov Moscow State University;

Nonka Bogomilova, Ph.D. Principal Research Fellow, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Sofia, Bulgaria;

Krasimira Teofilova Marulevska, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Faculty of Pedagogy, South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria;

Ivan Cvitković, Ph.D. Full Professor, member of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Emil Hilton Saggau, Ph.D. Research Fellow, Lund University, Lund, Sweden;

Paul Mojzes, Ph.D. Retired Full-Time Professor, Rosemont College, PA, USA;

Danica Igrutinović, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Faculty of Media and Communications, Singidunum University, Belgrade;

Ana Vuković, Ph.D. Research Associate, Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade;

Dejan Masliković, Ph.D. Research Associate, Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade.

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
BELGRADE

# RELIGION IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS OF THE MODERN WORLD

(ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL  
SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE)

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



Silver Lake, Veliko Gradište, 6–7 September 2024



**BOOK OF ABSTRACTS\***

FORUM FOR RELIGIOUS ISSUES  
OF THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
**RELIGION IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS  
OF THE MODERN WORLD**

(Silver Lake, Veliko Gradište, Serbia)

Organized by

The Forum for Religious Issues and Centre for Sociological and Anthropological Research of the Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade in co-organization with the Center for Empirical Research of Religion, Novi Sad.

\* The book of abstracts was prepared under the Research Program of the Institute of Social Sciences for 2024, supported by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia.



**RELIGIONS AND  
CONFESSIONS IN THE  
CURRENT MIDDLE  
EASTERN AND EUROPEAN  
GEOPOLITICAL CONFLICTS**

**Yuri Stoyanov**

University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies  
London, UK

**CURRENT MIDDLE EASTERN CONFLICTS IN  
MIRROR OF RADICAL MODERN APOCALYPTICISM**

The evolving re-religiofication of political conflicts with the modern state and inter-state relations in the post-Cold War era has been also accompanied by intensification of politicized prophetic and apocalyptic currents in modern religions, especially in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Combined with the growing counter-secularizing forces and discourses, these politico-apocalyptic trends and movements have started exercising impact in the mainstream political sphere, as well as on conflict-generating politics. Politico-apocalyptic narratives, notions and scenarios focused on the Middle East (and especially on Israel, Palestine and Jerusalem) have predictably enjoyed much popularity and currency during the outbreak and escalation of Middle Eastern conflicts. The social and socio-political manifestations of these apocalyptic and utopian agendas have contributed to and underpinned many of the current antagonistic and mutually exclusivist religio-political paradigms defining the new stages of strife and hostilities in the region.

**Key words:** Middle East, conflict, apocalypse

**Marko Jovanović**

Institute of Social Sciences  
Belgrade, Serbia

## **THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION AND FOREIGN POLICY ATTITUDES OF ARAB PEOPLE**

The struggle for sovereignty and statehood for the Palestinian people has long been a central issue in the Middle East. Many Arab states are deeply invested in the Palestinian cause, navigating a complex landscape of political interests, historical solidarity, and strategic alliances. The Palestinian question has been continuing to shape foreign policy views within the Arab world for decades. This paper explores the significant impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on foreign policy attitudes in Arab public opinion, using data from regional surveys. By analyzing this data with regard to the historical context and recent developments, the paper elucidates how the unresolved conflict continues to resonate deeply among Arab people, shaping their perceptions of international relations.

**Key words:** Palestinian Question, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Arab Public Opinion, Foreign Policy Attitudes

**Amra Halilović**

“Al Mustafa” International University

Qom, I. R. Iran

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND MODERNISM ON THE EXAMPLE OF IRAN AFTER THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION**

Religion in the modern world can be subjected to different research models. The period after the Persian Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911) in Iran marked numerous reforms precisely in the field of the relationship between religion and modernism. Some traditional models of understanding religion were brought into question under the influence of the European Enlightenment. The political system was changed a lot, the totalitarian regime of the Qajar sultanate was weakening under great pressure of the public, which aspired to establish a parliamentary system that gave more and more responsibility to the deputies. At the same time, the Iranian public was slowly getting acquainted with the modern currents of thought, literature and philosophy in the West. Also, in those years, the world was facing the consequences of the First World War. It was expected that in such circumstances, the foundations of the collective consciousness of Iranian society, which until then had been considered a distinctly traditional and religious society, would be significantly changed. We can see similar elements even today in some European countries, especially in the Balkans. Therefore, in this paper we will try to examine the cognitive platform on which social and thought reforms in Iran were based immediately after the Constitutional Revolution at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Key words:** Religion, Modernity, Islam, Iran, Persian Constitutional Revolution, Qajar Dynasty

## Olga Smolina

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Balkan Studies  
Sofia, Bulgaria  
V. Dahl East Ukrainian National University  
Kyiv, Ukraine

### CHURCH IN THE SITUATION OF RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

As far as the Ukrainian Church is concerned, we can speak about its many years of struggle to get out from under the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church and to create a single local Orthodox Church.

The idea of a united Ukrainian local Orthodox Church has been perceived in Ukrainian society as a necessary condition for the unity of the people, and building a strong state. However, at present the church in Ukraine is immersed in a situation of confrontation:

- **Church and secular world pictures:** on the one hand there is the concept of 'Holy Russia' in the understanding of Patriarch Cyril as the unity, including state unity, of Ukraine, Russia and Belarus. On the other hand there is the struggle of Ukraine for national and state independence.
- **Historical interpretations:** Russian view of history: Russia as the heir to the Kievan Rus', and Ukraine as a marginal territory in which the "purity" of Russian culture has been 'corrupted' by the Polish and generally Western influence. Ukrainian view of history: Ukraine is the only direct heir of Kievan Rus', and Russia is a multinational state, mostly consisting of non-Slavic nationalities and having very little in common with the culture of ancient Rus'.
- **Spheres of values:** In the axiosphere of the Orthodox Church, national independence is not a value, unlike the perceptions of a secular democratic society.
- **Church chronologies:** The Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) remains committed to the Julian calendar, while the newly established Orthodox Church of Ukraine has reported a switch to the New Julian calendar.

**Key words:** the Ukrainian Church, Russia's war against Ukraine, historical interpretations, spheres of values, church chronologies

**Dimitrije Teodosić\***

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Geography  
Belgrade, Serbia

**A DEEP SPLIT IN EASTERN ORTHODOXY AS  
A RESULT OF THE CONFLICT IN UKRAINE:  
GEOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The paper will analyze the crisis which Orthodoxy has been dragged into due to the conflict in Ukraine. The paper will deal with the depth of the crisis of the Orthodox world and how Orthodoxy is used for geopolitical purposes. The first problem that arises in the relationship between Orthodoxy and war is the principle of *“protecting the weak and powerless”* and the relationship of that principle to warfare, where on the one hand we have a defensive war, while on the other we have taking a human life. Another problem arises in the concrete example of the conflict in Ukraine, because both warring parties refer to the aforementioned principle. The third and the biggest problem is that the two most populous Eastern Orthodox countries are in conflict and their people are bearing the biggest sacrifice in achieving their geopolitical goals. These indicated problems result in polarization, fragmentation and deepening of the crisis within the Orthodox Church, which threatens to endanger the essence and purpose of Orthodoxy. This paper seeks to provide an analytical overview of the aforementioned problems and present potential answers and/or solutions to end the crisis in which the Orthodox civilization finds itself.

**Key words:** Orthodox Church, conflict in Ukraine, war, geopolitical goals, crisis in Orthodoxy

\* PhD student at the Faculty of Geography in Belgrade.

**Виктория Н. Ряпухина**

Белгородский государственный технологический университет  
им. В. Г. Шухова,  
Институт сербского языка и коммуникаций  
Белгород, Российская Федерация

**ПОДГОТОВКА СЛУЖИТЕЛЕЙ  
И РЕЛИГИОЗНОГО ПЕРСОНАЛА  
РУССКОЙ ПРАВОСЛАВНОЙ ЦЕРКВИ  
ДЛЯ МИССИОНЕРСКОЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ  
В УСЛОВИЯХ МОЖДУНАРОДНЫХ  
КОНФЛИКТОВ**

В современных мировых политических процессах все более активную роль играют религиозные организации. Они становятся влиятельными участниками международных отношений в глобализирующемся мире, оставаясь, порой в тени, «за кадром» событий, разворачивающихся в межстрановых или внутригосударственных связях и противоречиях [Церпитская, 2003]. Миссионерская деятельность как одно из направлений миссии Русской Православной Церкви (РПЦ) имеет внешнюю, внутреннюю и апологетическую направленность. В рамках внешнего направления особое место занимает зарубежная миссия, то есть миссия за пределами канонической территории РПЦ. Международные конфликты как эскалация противоречий интересов определяют условия реализации внешней, в частности, зарубежной миссии РПЦ, но также и других ее направлений. При этом важным фактором международной деятельности РПЦ является ее сотрудничество с государством. Образовательная деятельность является одной из точек соприкосновения религиозных организаций и государства. Крайне важно обеспечить актуальный и адекватный подход в образовании молодежи и, в частности, при подготовке служителей и религиозного персонала, с перспективой участия в миссионерской работе. Православная духовная семинария в Белгороде является единственным подобным учреждением с миссионерской направленностью. Интервью со студентами и преподавателями семинарии позволяют собрать и проанализировать материал по нашей теме и обосновать целесообразность укрепления основ подготовки для миссионерской деятельности в условиях повсеместного роста напряженности. Опыт миротворческих усилий РПЦ позволяет

пересмотреть возможности религии в созидании мира и урегулировании международных, в том числе военных, конфликтов.

**Ключевые слова:** миссионерская деятельность, зарубежная миссия, Русская Православная Церковь, международные конфликты, Белгородская православная духовная семинария (с миссионерской направленностью).

**Mirjana Dokmanović, Marijana Maksimović**

Institute of Social Sciences  
Belgrade, Serbia

## **DOES RELIGION MATTER IN GEOPOLITICS? A FUSED PERSPECTIVE TO CONTEMPORARY CONFLICTS\***

To contribute studies of the nature and tendencies of contemporary violent conflicts, the authors turn attention to the linkages between religion and critical geopolitics. Classical geopolitical thought is based on rational, materialistic and state-centred thinking and explains international relations in terms of territorial aspirations and geographical positions of states, considering them as secular actors. Classical and neoclassical geopolitics neglect culture, religion, and values as factors in international relations, although geopolitical studies show that territorial aspirations of states include tendencies to influence culture, religion and ideology of population in targeted countries.

On the other hand, critical geopolitics pays attention to the linkage between religion and geopolitics, particularly in efforts to understand and explain contemporary violent conflicts. The first part of the article presents new terms that have emerged in the theory, such as 'religious geopolitics', 'geopolitics of religion' and 'religeopolitics'. An overview of the literature in this field indicates rising interests of authors to contribute to this approach. Some methodological and analytical challenges are also set out. The third part of the article provides examples of 'religious geopolitics' approaches to contemporary conflicts and on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The authors conclude that religion is to be considered in the daily landscape of international relations in order to shed more light on international conflicts.

**Key words:** geopolitics of religion, critical geopolitics, international relations, religion, international conflicts

\* The paper was written as part of the Research Program of the Institute of Social Sciences for 2024, which is supported by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia.

## Сергей Трофимов

Факультет журналистики

МГУ имени М. В. Ломоносова

Москва, Российская Федерация

### НЕОПРЕДЕЛЕННОСТЬ РОЛИ РЕЛИГИИ В МОЖДУНАРОДНЫХ КОНФЛИКТАХ

Несмотря на значительную секуляризацию политических и социальных отношений, существенным образом изменившей характер религиозных отношений во всем мире, а также религиозный субъективизм и индивидуализм, царящий в современном западноевропейском обществе, процессы десекуляризации на рубеже XX – XXI веков сопровождаются ростом уровня религиозности и нарастанием конфликтного потенциала в этой сфере. Религия оказывается в современном мире в равной степени интегрирующим, так и дезинтегрирующим фактором. Вместе с тем, сама религия не выступает в исторических процессах ни единственным, ни, тем более, основным фактором разделения на соперничающие сообщества, порождая конфликтогенные ситуации. Необходимо учитывать сложную систему национальных, исторических, геополитических, экономических, политических, социальных особенностей общностей, защищающих в конфликте свои интересы. Хотя социально-культурные изменения, происходящие под влиянием глобальных тенденций, приводят к трансформациям поля религии, но одновременно, «застарелые» проблемы, несущие в себе проблемы «исторической памяти», геополитических, территориальных и социо-культурных противостояний и исторических экспансий, легко воспламеняются, окрашиваемые религиозным подтекстом.

Такая сложная ситуация требует тщательного социологического и религиоведческого анализа для понимания паттернов конфликтов с влиянием религии.

**Ключевые слова:** религия, секуляризация, историческая память, религиозные конфликты, неопределенность.

**Nemanja Vukčević**

Belgorod State National Research University  
Belgorod, Russian Federation

## **THE FORGE OF FAITH: REVEALING THE DUALITY OF RELIGION IN GLOBAL CONFLICT**

The intersection of religion and international conflicts persists as a perennially relevant subject within scholarly discourse, gaining heightened significance in the modern era. A general agreement has been reached regarding the dual nature of religion, drawing on various fields of study such as sociology, political science, history, and religious studies. This consensus acknowledges that while religion can indeed act as a catalyst for international conflict or exacerbate pre-existing tensions, it simultaneously harbors the potential for fostering reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts. By scrutinizing the genesis of this dichotomy and meticulously examining the intricate interplay between divergent perspectives, this article seeks to unravel the complexities inherent in delineating the demarcation between religion and politics. Upon conducting this investigation, it becomes apparent that the contradictory nature of the responses provided is not only unavoidable, but also intellectually legitimate within the scope of scholarly examination.

**Key words:** religion, conflict, construct, interpretation, salvation

**Neven Cvetićanin**

Institute of Social Sciences  
Belgrade, Serbia

**RELIGION BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE  
– THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL VERSUS  
METAPHYSICAL THEOLOGY**

The paper distinguishes two concepts of the application of religion in social life – political and metaphysical theology, which are different with regards to their causes and consequences. Political theology is a concept that belongs to the political field and in it, religion is a function of political groupings according to the friend-enemy principle, while this concept encourages social and political divisions and conflicts. Against this concept stands the concept of metaphysical theology, which is normative and ethical, not political, because it reckons with the unity of humanity, and this concept is the source of tolerance and consensus between different religious traditions, and has a beneficial effect on social life, especially in multi-confessional and multi-ethnic societies, even though its range is limited by real political power relations. The first concept is political, realistic, “Old Testament” and belongs more to the earth, while the second concept is ethical, normative, “New Testament” and belongs more to the “heavens”, and depending on which concept is dominant in the perception of religion, religion can be a factor of peace or war, conflict or reconciliation.

**Key words:** religion, political theology, metaphysical theology, war, peace

## Jane Trpkovski

Center for Sociological Research and Development PRIZMA  
Skopje, North Macedonia

### APPLICATION OF THE METHODOLOGY OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN THE ANALYSES OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FACTOR OF RELIGION AND THE PHENOMENON AND PROCESS OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

The paper will emphasize the importance of the precise application of models and methodological procedures in the academic research and analysis of the influence of religion as a factor and the additional parameters – demographic movements, global challenges, political science, mass media, and public opinion on the formation and course of current and potential situations and global processes followed by the phenomenon of conflict.

The first part of the paper will clarify the similarities and differences from the etiological and phenomenological discourse of the constitutive sociological terms. The supporting part contains an elaboration of the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the analytical and logical component in the preparation of professional texts from sociology of globalization: power, conflicts, media, population, diplomacy and peace, global risks, and inequalities. The possibilities for the application of methods, techniques, and software packages in collecting, processing, and analyzing data and information in sociological research and analysis have been specifically considered. The summary resembles a sociological discussion of the role of religion as an institution and as an ideological instrument in the modern world being a risky, unequal, and uncertain place to live.

**Key words:** methodology, quantitative analyses, qualitative research, global phenomena, religious conflicts



**ORTHODOX,  
CHRISTIANITY AND  
MODERN SOCIAL  
CONFLICTS**

**Zlatiborka Popov Momčinović**

University of East Sarajevo, Faculty of Philosophy  
East Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**PRAVOSLAVLJE AND CONTEMPORARY  
CONFLICTS****THE POSITION OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX  
CHURCH ON WAR AND PEACE**

The article aims to analyze the position of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) regarding contemporary conflicts. Given the critical role of the SOC in the public sphere in Serbian-dominated areas, which is addressed in the theoretical section of the article, the position of the religious officials towards these conflicts is of significant interest to understanding how the attitudes and relations regarding the conflicts are framed and circulating in the public sphere. The author has conducted a qualitative thematic analysis based on open and in vivo coding of more than 100 recent articles, statements, and press releases, all of which are available in the online issue of *Pravoslavlje*, the official journal of the SOC. The analysis shows the prevalent general understanding of war and conflict as a result of human fallen nature and alienation from God, as well as SOC's condemnation of violence of any kind. Such an approach leads to neglecting the (potential) religious causes/dimensions of the conflicts, avoiding clear side-taking when it comes to contemporary wars, such as the war between Russia and Ukraine, while completely ignoring some of them. The primary attention in *Pravoslavlje* is still on the wars in former Yugoslavia, and the essential themes regarding the Yugoslav wars are the significance of re-establishing good neighborly relations, safeguarding the cultural and religious heritage of the Serbian people, and remembering (Serbian) war victims. The SOC's position is also to foster the unity of the Serbian people and advocate for excellent and brotherly relations between Orthodox Christians. Messages of peace centered around good neighborly relations with religious others, and the brotherly ties with Orthodox Christians are the bedrock of the SOC's position in the analyzed data.

**Key words:** religion and conflicts, Serbian Orthodox Church, *Pravoslavlje*, war, peace

**Dragana Radisavljević Ćiparizović**

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy  
Belgrade, Serbia

## **CONFLICT OVER SACRED PLACES: THE CASES OF HAGIA SOPHIA AND SERBIAN MONASTERIES IN KOSOVO AND METOHİJA**

In the introductory part of the paper, we discuss some of the key aspects that stand out in the sociological and political studies of religion at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These are: globalization, identity antagonisms and violence in the name of religion. Then we deal with holy places that have always offered the possibility of meeting between people and religions, but were also scenes of (potential) great conflicts (the case of Hagia Sophia). In the second part of the paper, we write about the exceptional cultural heritage of Serbia, which has been confirmed by the UNESCO list of world heritage to which the monasteries of Dečani, Gračanica, Bogorodica Ljeviška and Peć Patriarchate belong. Nowadays, the spiritual, historical and cultural heritage of the Serbian people in Kosovo and Metohija is at risk of being abducted. One of the conclusions of the paper is that political circumstances and their important upheavals lie in the background of interreligious conflicts and determine their outcome.

**Key words:** religion, globalization, holy places, monasteries of SOC, religious conflict

**Zlatko Matić, Nebojša Stevanović\***

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Orthodox Theology  
Belgrade, Serbia

**MONOTHEISM VS. MONISM: QUESTION OF WAR AS A FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGE TO THE CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF GOD IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

The aim of this paper is to examine the relationship between monotheism and war, particularly in the context of current conflicts. Is monotheism responsible for intolerance towards others and for the conflicts with them because they threaten my mono-paradigm? Therefore, after introductory considerations, the analytical part of the paper begins by highlighting the clear difference between monotheism and monism, while focusing on the basic elements of the Christian *Trinitarian* monotheism. Based on this, the authors direct the research towards the analysis of war as an essential consequence of an individualistic view of man and God. The culminating chapter of the analysis is dedicated to the comparative examination of the contemporary encounter of Christian (*koinonia*-based) and individualistic (militaristic) views of man as a person. The mentioned elements of the research aim to answer the crucial question: is the Christian understanding of One God as the Holy Trinity and man as his icon (image) compatible (because it involves One God) with the question of war, or does it completely reject such a question (because God is Trinity)?

**Key words:** monotheism, monism, person, war, God, Holy Trinity, *koinonia*, individualism, Christianity

\* PhD candidate.

**THE BALKAN CASE:  
DEVELOPMENT  
UNDERSTANDING,  
DIALOGUE AND  
RELIGIOUS  
RECONCILIATION**

**Zorica Kuburić**

University in Novi Sad  
Novi Sad, Serbia

**RELIGION AND NON-VIOLENT CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION**

At the foundation of all religious teachings are the theoretical concepts of conflict resolution and the path to peace and reconciliation. In this paper, I try to highlight the religious teachings and practices that contribute to the non-violent resolution of conflicts. The concrete examples that I will pay attention to are related to the Istrian period between the two world wars and the conflict between "God worshipers and God fighters". The most effective ways of overcoming conflicts are those that are applicable in practice and that result in peace. The strategy of neutralizing contradictions and opposites in the idea of "middle way" is one of those strategies that is based on fundamental religious beliefs that influence concrete behavior that contributes to peace. That "upright walk" in war and peace is only possible if freedom is the greatest value to which man himself attaches importance, the freedom by which he decides which empire he will please in continuous conflicts that eat away at the soul of the man in himself, as well as in group and intergroup conflicts.

**Key words:** religion, conflicts, non-violence, Godworshippers, Godfighters

**Ivan Blazhevski, Ruzhica Cacanoska**

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Institute for Sociological,  
Political and Juridical Research  
Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

**Aleksandar Grizhev**

Goce Delcev University Stip, Military Academy "General Mihailo Apostolski"  
Skopje  
Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

**THE SHARED MORAL VALUES IN ORTHODOXY  
AND ISLAM – A BASIS FOR DIALOGUE AND  
CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Religion has been used many times throughout history to achieve political goals. In international conflicts, many times the original teachings of Christianity and Islam were distorted and selectively interpreted. Today, amid the complex landscape of global disputes, religious affiliations often emerge as influential factors, shaping people's individual and collective perceptions, motivations, and actions. Hence, the danger of creating prejudices and imposing a religious ideology among the members of different religious and ethnic communities is clearly perceived, for which, in turn, one of the main reasons is insufficient knowledge of one's own religion, as well as the religion of other ethnic groups. With this, instead of being one of the bases for starting dialogue and overcoming disagreements, religion is more often a basis for division and hatred.

This paper aims to highlight common moral values in Orthodox Christianity and Islam, which is of particular importance in determining their common characteristics, because they have a significant place in the original teachings of both religions. The values imposed by Orthodox Christianity and Islam are grounded in the Holy Books that form the basis of the teachings for the two religions. Hence, through the determination of the common moral values that have a significant place in the teachings of the two religions, the commonality of one of the most significant characteristics of the two religions is determined. Benevolence, equity and moderation are determined as basic values in Orthodox Christianity and Islam, and their characteristic manifestations are also indicated. When determining them as basic values in both religions, the views of prominent theologians regarding the essential

values required by the specific religion, as well as their interpretation of texts from the Bible and the Koran, are indicated.

**Key words:** conflict, religion, Orthodox Christianity, Islam, moral values

**Vladimir Ilić**

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy  
Belgrade, Serbia

**THE SOCIAL BASIS OF THE DISPUTE BETWEEN SERBIA AND ROMANIA REGARDING THE DIOCESE OF DACIA FELIX**

Geopolitical changes affect the behavior of the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC). In Moldova, there is a division between Metropolitanate of the ROC, and the majority Metropolitanate of the Moscow Patriarchate. In Ukraine, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine accepted the creation of a special vicariate for ethnic Romanians, with divine service in the Romanian language. The ROC decided in 2024 to encourage the creation of a separate church for ethnic Romanians in Ukraine. In Serbia, the existing ROC Vicariate in Banat was transformed into a diocese in 2001. This diocese was registered in the Ministry of Justice in 2009, but one Rulebook, adopted by the Ministry of Religion, limited its activity to Vojvodina. Thus, a request by the Serbian Orthodox Church was granted via an act by the state authorities.

Since 2009, the ROC has been establishing parishes and building temples south of the Danube. Its priests influence the Romanianization of the Vlach population by dumping the prices of services. This is connected to the using of the minority Vlach/Romanian language, in worship and in general. Serbia's orientation towards close cooperation with the government in Budapest reduced the possibility of Romania and the ROC to influence the population south of the Danube.

**Key words:** Romanian Orthodox Church, Serbia, language

**Svetlana Janković**

Center for Encouraging Dialogue and Tolerance  
Čačak, Serbia

**CONFLICT IN THE BALKANS THROUGH THE PRISM OF RELIGION – THE BASE OF THE INVALUABLE VALUE OF PEACE**

In the modern society, religious conflicts rarely occur in their pure form and often have a political and ethnic form, content, and background. This has been the cause of a significant change in the theoretical and political reception of religion as a factor in social conflicts, so at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the essential question became that of the relationship between religion and politics, religion and society. In the initial causes, contents, and motives of the conflict on the territory of the SFRY (Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo and Metohija, Macedonia), the religious component was slightly present. These conflicts were not fought because of religion. Still, religion primarily served as the only visible difference through which ethnically related peoples could articulate deeper and more complex reasons for their conflicts more easily. And after every conflict comes a truce (current state), or peace (a more permanent state). Although three decades have passed, the contemporary activities of peacebuilding, reconciliation, and dealing with the past have been gaining importance today. We encounter practices of war veterans' group visits to places of suffering, and places of detention, marked (but also unmarked), regardless of who the victims and who the perpetrators were. The culture of remembering the victims, regardless of ethnicity, and acknowledging the suffering of every person is the primary function of those events. They are organized in different environments, of different religions and cultures. They are regularly accompanied by appropriate religious rites. Their goal is to continuously point out the importance of the culture of dialogue and tolerance in the context of growing national and religious affiliation. And it is crucial to spread the message that every conflict can be overcome, that diversity in faith is an asset, not a deficiency, and that peace is an inestimable value.

**Key words:** conflict, reception of religion, culture of memory, victims, dialogue and tolerance, peace

**Danica Lazović, Đurđica Stanković**

Institute of Social Sciences  
Belgrade, Serbia

## **HETEROGENEITY OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES AND ITS INFLUENCE ON ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS**

The Western Balkans is a region inhabited by people of various faiths. In the region, Orthodox Christian, Islamic and Roman Catholic religions are dominantly present among the population. The challenging geopolitical position of this region is reflected through the historical presence of great powers and their aspiration for influence, which had a significant impact on changing the demographic image of the region, but also on mutual relations between the peoples of the region. The complex history of mutual ethnic relations and the collective memory of historical conflicts between different ethno-religious groups significantly affects the future of the peoples of the Western Balkans and the possibility of their peaceful coexistence. The authors' goal is to answer the key research question: *Are religious identities a possible source of new ethnic conflicts in the area of Kosovo and Metohija and Bosnia and Herzegovina?* In order to answer the research question, the authors will employ several methods: case study method, discourse/content analysis and historical method.

**Key words:** Western Balkans; religious identity; ethnic conflicts; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Kosovo and Metohija

**Kjell Magnusson**

Uppsala University (retired)

Uppsala, Sweden

**RELIGION AND CONFLICT: THE WAR IN BOSNIA**

The presentation will discuss the role of religion in the Bosnian conflict, based on empirical data on the attitudes and behavior in Bosnia and Herzegovina, collected by a sociological survey undertaken in 1999. Due to a specific history, nation-building in former Yugoslavia was largely determined by religious and cultural differences. Although Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs spoke the same language, a common identity never developed. Therefore, religious affiliation was an obvious identity-marker during the Bosnian war in the 1990s, and symbols of religious heritage were also military targets. However, an important question is to what extent religion – understood as individual religiosity – actually did shape people's attitudes related to the conflict. For example, were religious people more prone to nationalism and xenophobia than others? The discussion will center on views on the break-up of Yugoslavia and the atrocities occurring during the war, as well as the character of the Bosnian state after Dayton. Besides descriptive methods, structural equation modelling will be used.

**Key words:** religiosity, national identity, xenophobia, war, Bosnia

**Davor Žabarac\***

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Orthodox Theology  
Belgrade, Serbia

**PEACE, VIOLENCE AND THE SACRED:  
WHAT CAN RELIGION DO?**

This paper explores the role of religion in the context of peace and violence, particularly focusing on the problem of revenge in wartime conditions and its connection to the concept of the sacred. It analyzes how the concept of sacredness can complicate the control of revenge and how religious principles can be utilized to channel violence towards constructive goals. Additionally, it examines violence as an inherent part of human nature and how religious doctrines and practices can promote peace and suppress violence in society.

Violence is a complex phenomenon often associated with war and conflicts. One of the key challenges in managing violence is the control of revenge, which can be extremely destructive and difficult to contain, especially in wartime situations. Revenge is often associated with the sacred, further complicating the process of peaceful resolution.

In wartime conditions, revenge can become a central motivator for violence, and concepts such as territory, faith, or ethnic identity are often associated with sacredness, intensifying the desire for revenge. Religious doctrines can legitimize revenge and create deeply ingrained behavioral patterns that hinder the achievement of peaceful conflict resolution.

Violence is an inherent part of human nature, but religion can play a crucial role in channeling that violence towards constructive goals. By promoting values such as love, compassion, and forgiveness, religious institutions can transform violent impulses into constructive activities aimed at building peace and harmony in the society.

**Key words:** Violence, sacred, religion, tolerance, pluralism

\* PhD candidate

**Ljiljana Ćumura**

Vice-Chairperson, Malta Sociological Association (MSA)

Msida, Malta

**Vladimir Bakrač**

Faculty of Philosophy

Nikšić, Montenegro

**INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE:  
A PATHWAY TO PEACE**

Interreligious dialogue has emerged as a crucial and powerful tool in the pursuit of peace, reconciliation, and social cohesion in diverse societies. At its core, interreligious dialogue involves respectful and open-minded communication that transcends religious boundaries, allowing participants to explore shared values, common concerns, and areas of collaboration. This abstract explores the multifaceted role of interreligious dialogue in mitigating conflicts, promoting understanding, and building bridges between individuals and communities of different faiths. Through an interdisciplinary approach, it examines the theoretical frameworks underpinning interfaith engagement and delves into case studies illustrating successful applications of interreligious dialogue in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts worldwide. Moreover, the abstract investigates the challenges and opportunities inherent in interfaith initiatives in post-conflict societies, including the role of interreligious dialogue in healing and reconciliation processes by facilitating truth-telling, forgiveness, and the rebuilding of social cohesion. By bringing together survivors, perpetrators, and bystanders from different religious backgrounds, dialogue initiatives provide opportunities for acknowledging past injustices, addressing grievances, and fostering empathy and reconciliation. By working together on common goals, religious communities can transcend divisive narratives and build partnerships based on mutual respect and solidarity. Through joint initiatives in humanitarian aid, community development, and advocacy for human rights, interfaith efforts can contribute significantly to the promotion of peace and reconciliation at local, national, and international levels.

**Key words:** interreligious dialogue, faith, peace-building, reconciliation process, conflict resolution

**Marko Pišev**

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, Dept. of Ethnology and Anthropology  
Belgrade, Serbia

**ANTROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY OF ISLAM:  
DISCIPLINARY DISTINCTIONS ON A COMMON  
GROUND**

Sociology and anthropology have been researching Islam as a religion, civilization and culture in their own distinct ways for more than a century. For the purpose of the present paper, I will highlight a number of key paradigms in the two disciplines, and delimit their similarities, as well as differences, especially in the period after the postmodern turn. I will start my analysis with the general assumption that sociology focuses more on social structures, and anthropology primarily on cultural meanings, while examining sociocultural phenomena related to Islam and Muslims. The aim of this presentation will be to describe the disciplinary specifics of the anthropology and sociology of Islam, as well as the advantages and eventual limitations of their collaborative integration within this extremely heterogeneous area of scientific problems.

**Key words:** Islam, anthropology, sociology, postmodern turn, social structure, cultural meaning



**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS  
WAR AND PEACE**

**Aleksandar Milanković\***

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy  
Belgrade, Serbia

**PEACE EDUCATION AND THE THEOLOGY CURRICULA IN THE REGION OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA**

Examination of the curricula of the traditional religions theological faculties in the former SFRY region indicates there are no courses explicitly dedicated to the culture of peace. If present, these topics are mainly covered incidentally by other subjects. We hold that peace education in post-conflict societies should be an indispensable element of the curricula of all theological faculties, through subjects focused on the psychological, legal, ethical and spiritual dimensions of reconciliation and peace building. Why? The culture of peace requires long-term educational and social cultivation. Its transfer to social spontaneity easily leads to marginalization, due to the "gravity" of war traumas, victories or defeats. Religious communities have a tremendous influence on societal beliefs, prejudices and stereotypes about parties in former conflicts. The study of oral histories of war victims can enrich the experiences of future teachers and priests in understanding existential transformations in traumatic situations. The comparative study of conflicts in different societies can enrich the perspective of interreligious cooperation. Finally, the metaphysical, ethical and axiological value of peace and reconciliation are on the margins of public narratives, often trivialized by media manipulations. By fostering peace education in the curricula, religious communities can be influential advocates of an authentic, non-trivial culture of peace.

**Key words:** reconciliation, peace building, religion, education

\* PhD student at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade.

**Petya Pachkova**

SWU "N. Rilski"

Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

## **EDUCATION, RELIGIOUS OPPOSITION AND INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS**

The article analyzes the interrelationship between the influence of various factors of people's socialization – including their religiosity – and their attitude towards international conflicts and their participation in them. More specifically, the influence of the Bulgarian legislation, the holiday system in the country, and actual discrimination are examined. One of the conclusions is that, supported by religiosity, discrimination against people of Muslim religion helps to stimulate social conflicts. Cultivating disrespect for other religious systems and hatred for the people who profess them, is a means of softening people's negative attitude towards using violence against such religious minority groups, towards maintaining or initiating military conflicts.

**Key words:** Education, religion, discrimination, hatred, international conflicts

**Boris Kashnikov**

University of Cambridge

UK

**RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY OF IVAN ILYIN  
(1883–1954) ON WAR, EMPIRE (AND FASCISM?)**

Ivan Ilyin has been cherry picked for the role of official philosopher in Russia. It may not be the final point in the Russian partition from liberal democracy. Alexander Dugin (born 1962), a far more radical philosopher, may be up a notch. It is high time to reconsider military, religious, ideological and political trends in Russia and the whole world in the light of this transition. The most important issue at the starkest display is *Fascism*. Ilyin evidently was giving much credit to fascism of his time. Some of his fellow émigré philosophers, most notably Berdyaev, were accusing him not only of fascism, but also of playing into the hands of Soviet special service – OGPU. His military ethics may be falling far short of full-fledged Christian ethics of war and peace. He was and enemy of Ukrainian self-determination. Nevertheless, Ilyin is no doubt Christian, European and Russian religious philosopher while Dugin's scores in these areas are dubious. The latest political developments in Russia, may be regarded in the light of Ilyin's alleged fascism. Putin and his inner circle are positioning themselves as Christian redeemers. The war in Ukraine was acclaimed by the Russian patriarch as a sacred war in close affinity with Ilyin.

**Key words:** Ivan Ilyin, Russian transition, Fascism, Christianity, Military ethics

## Веска Гювийска, Красимира Марулевска

Юго-западный университет „Неофит Рилски“

Благоевград, Болгария

### ФИЛОСОФСКИЕ ПРОЗРЕНИЯ НИКОЛАЯ БЕРДЯЕВА – ПРОЕКЦИИ В СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ПРАВОСЛАВНОЙ ОБЩИНЕ БОЛГАРИИ

Самое главное суждение в православии как религии заключается в том, что православным не становишься, им рождаешься. Это и важнейший вывод в трудах великого русского философа Николая Бердяева (1874-1948). Его идеи о православии оказываются чрезвычайно своевременными даже в то время, в котором мы живем. В этом тексте мы ищем проекции этих идей на православную общину Болгарии в XXI веке и, в частности, на некоторые решения Православной Церкви в Болгарии. Большинство из них напоминают политику, которая может служить правящей элите, но отходит от православия и его традиций. Идеи Н. Бердяева подтверждают тот экзистенциальный минимум, без которого православие не только отклоняется от себя, но и теряет свою специфику вероучения и религии. Мы, миряне, не можем равнодушно наблюдать за этим процессом, ведь и государство, и церковь должны служить народу. Православие вступает в свою последнюю битву, потому что оно не является религией индивидуальной веры, как протестантизм, и не является религией власти и иерархии, как католицизм. По словам Бердяева, это религия «внутренней традиции, литургичности, конгрегационализма, свободы и эсхатологии». Сможем ли мы все, как православные, защитить право быть такими и довериться Святому Духу, посланный Христом после Воскресения как дух истины?

**Ключевые слова:** православие, внутренняя традиция, литургичность, конгрегационализм, свобода, эсхатология

**Aleksandra Dimitrijevic\***

Belgrade, Serbia

**AT THE BEGINNING OF CREATION**

In addition to numerous reasons, the conflicts that exist today in the everyday world can be the result of destruction that is reflected in psychological and orthodox pathology. In psychological pathology, man is a divided being from the beginning of his nativity: from the first days he is dominated by ambivalence, then during his growing up he later learns to love and create, but on the other hand to destroy. Today, the rise in mental illness is higher than ever before. In orthodox pathology, today's man is a man of various passions. Thus formed and with everything he acquired in the primary family, he becomes a part of the group and the nationality. In addition to the individual, many groups today include inherent destructive processes. This paper discusses how to turn the destructive energy that exists in each individual and in the group, very often manifested in conflicts that exist around the world, such as centuries-old wars and social conflicts, into a new creative energy that has existed since the first creation of the world.

**Key words:** conflicts, individual, group, society, creation

\* Clinical psychologist and psychotherapist under supervision in group analytical education.

**Красимира Марулевска, Блага Джорова**

Юго-западный университет „Неофит Рилски“

Благоевград, Булгария

## **МОРАЛЬНО-ЭТИЧЕСКИЕ ЦЕННОСТИ В РЕЛИГИОЗНОМ ОБРАЗОВАНИИ И ИХ РОЛЬ В ГУМАНИЗАЦИИ ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКОГО ПРОЦЕССА В ДЕТСКОМ САДУ И НАЧАЛЬНОЙ ШКОЛЕ**

Морально-этические измерения социальной реальности, частью которой мы являемся, характеризуются динамикой, которая находится под влиянием различных объективных и субъективных факторов. Резкий прогресс в развитии современного мира уже в третьем десятилетии XXI века доказывает необходимость опираться на непреложные человеческие ценности. Это способ противостоять разрушительным силам межличностных и международных конфликтов, преступности и бездуховности. Только так можно построить правильные стратегии эффективного поведения в условиях непредсказуемых поворотов развития личности и общества в целом. С особым вниманием в настоящем докладе рассматриваются конкретные содержательные и процессуально-технологические особенности религиозного образования детей дошкольного и младшего школьного возраста. Цель – раскрыть образовательный и развивающий потенциал религиозных ценностей для гуманизации педагогического процесса.

**Ключевые слова:** религиозное образование, этика, мораль, морально-этические ценности, гуманизация педагогического процесса.

**Yuliana Kovachka, Maria Mladenova**

South West University "Neofit Rilski"

Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS AN ELEMENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL CULTURE AND TRAINING OF SOCIAL PEDAGOGUES**

The paper analyses the relationship between religious education and the professional training of social pedagogues. The primary research method is a content analysis of the curricula in higher education, specifically in the field of social pedagogy, with the aim of differentiating courses of study that are conducive to enriching the professional culture of social educators.

**Key words:** religious education, professional training, social pedagogue, tolerance, curriculum

**Krasimira Marulevska, Stanislava Kostadinova**

South-West University "Neofit Rilski"

Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

## **BUILDING MORAL VALUES AMONG PRIMARY EDUCATION STUDENTS IN THE PROCESS OF STUDYING RELIGION**

The report represents pedagogical and moral-ethical problems related to the teaching of religion in the initial stage of primary education in the Bulgarian educational system. The results of an empirical study were analyzed, which aims to reveal the current state and tendencies in the implementation of the overall educational activity of religion teachers in primary school classes, as well as the moral attitude of the Bulgarian younger generation towards the Christian teaching. The subject of analysis is also the educative potential of the educational content, as well as the specific pedagogical and methodological features of the religious education. A special attention is paid to the role of the family in the complex process of the overall education of modern child and to the building of his/her spiritual and moral essence.

**Key words:** religious education, Christian teaching, moral values, moral education

**Vyara Tsvetanova**

South-West University "Neofit Rilski"  
Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

**COMMUNITY AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN IN BULGARIA**

The refugee waves passing through Bulgaria are part of the country's history, given that the country is on a route to Western Europe. In recent years, we have witnessed a constant migration of people coming from nearby or distant countries where there are conflicts of various kinds. The ongoing conflicts, leading to the flight of families and individuals, and consequently to some of them remaining on the territory of Bulgaria, raise the serious question of their integration into the society. One of the main ways to make this happen is to use community and educational support mechanisms, both for refugee children and their parents or relatives. The aim of this article is, on the one hand, to outline the national policy for the protection of refugee children and, on the other, to clarify the practical possibilities for support through social services and educational inclusion at the local level. Within the study, the views of professional foster carers highlight the capacity of the protection system to respond adequately to unaccompanied refugee children. The consultation of educational professionals confirms the need for inclusion, through involvement in the educational process of the country.

**Key words:** community support, educational support, refugee children, Bulgaria, foster parents

# OTHER TOPICS

**Robert Cilia**

Migrant Learners' Unit (Migrant Induction Hub Secondary)

Ministry of Education

Malta

**THE EFFECTS OF RELIGIOSITY PATTERNS AND  
MIGRATION PROCESS ON YOUNG STUDENTS  
IN MRC NIH MALTA**

The characters of young people created by Charles Dickens in his novels have become household names in world literature. Translations from the original English have made characters such as Oliver Twist and David Copperfield from the eponymous novels, or Pip from *Great Expectations* popular even in countries where English is not widely spoken. These characters *lived in* a time of social, economic, and political upheaval in Great Britain. Dickens' style of imaginative urban reporting, managed to bring to the forefront of the political agenda of the time, the widespread exploitation and even abuse of children and young people. Although the prevailing *zeitgeist* of the time excluded the stage that is today usually referred to as adolescence, the novels by Dickens managed to convey how unjustly young people were being treated. People became more sensitive to the needs of youth. Their rights to education, to play, or to being protected from unscrupulous employers became more acceptable. This led to legislation that improved their lives.

Writers such as Dickens, Baudelaire, Hugo, Mayhew, spurred a debate that ultimately led to the development of a new demographic concept, the concept of adolescence. First used by G. Stanley Hall, the term is generally assumed to refer to the years between 13 and 19 years of age. He also identified this stage in life as the time of *storm and stress*. The students attending the Migrant Induction Hub in Malta, from academic years of 9 to 11, fall within the parameters of this classification, since their age ranges from thirteen to sixteen. If one assumes that *storm and stress*, affects the lives of adolescents even under routine and average circumstances, it is plausible to argue that migrating from one's home country to another is bound to increase the element of instability in the adolescent. Such instability is even greater in those instances, which seem to be majority of the cases, where the adolescent is not consulted by the parents/guardians regarding moving to another country. Emigration can therefore add to the already high doses of

*storm and stress* that the adolescent already faces in this stage of his/her life. A person facing trauma can react in ways that span a spectrum of emotions ranging from dejection to anxiety, from a feeling of helplessness to aggression. It is pertinent at this stage to ask if religiosity can offer to adolescents a sense of stability and spiritual wellbeing to address the issues raised by periods of change and uncertainty. My study will therefore gather evidence in relation to the following: Emigration is necessarily a time of upheaval: does religiosity among adolescents present a point of reference in their lives in the country of destination? This research question will be addressed by using a quantitative approach that will focus on establishing the religiosity patterns of the students when they were still residing in their countries of origin and their behavior once they started residing in Malta. Since the Migrant Induction Hub is a multi-faith learning environment, the study will also establish the impact of this environment on the religiosity of the students.

**Key words:** religion, faith, stress, behavior, migrants, Malta, country of origin

**Michael Briguglio**

University of Malta, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts  
Malta

**Alan J. Fiott**

University of Malta  
Malta

**THE ABUSES OF RELIGION IN THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER**

Contemporary atheist Richard Dawkins has relegated the realm of religion to delusion, but agrees that by the term delusion he doesn't necessarily mean that it is bad. Most times, it is benign (good): Like the pilgrims at Lourdes or Međugorje where he went to do a documentary on what happened at such places. What Dawkins and the sceptics are afraid of is that this 'delusion' of religion can turn catastrophic, as is evidenced by the clashes in the Holy Land in the middle-ages between Christians and Muslims (the crusades), as well as the clashes between Muslims and Jews in the same land today (the new crusades).

For indeed Dawkins is right to say that to an impartial and atheist observer, when Muslims invoke Allah to fight Christians who invoke the Trinity to fight over the piece of Land which coincidentally happens to be of maximum importance to all three monotheistic religions, is strange and religion can easily be blamed for this. But we can't remove religion from man argues Karl Rahner (Theologian) because, as he argues, human openness to transcendence is *a priori* not *a posteriori* to man. In other words, you can't remove God from man. This is evidenced by archaeological, historical, sociological, and anthropological studies of man across the millennia starting from the Neolithic man which built numerous Neolithic Temples in Malta, to contemporary studies of man and religion in Malta which happens to be primarily Christian, but due to the Gig Economy and multiculturalism introduced lately, has experienced an increase in Muslims and Hindu emigrating there.

**Key words:** Abuse, Religion, Delusion, War, Man

## Zorica Mršević

Institute of Social Sciences (retired)  
Belgrade, Serbia

### EUROPEAN INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS AGAINST ANTISEMITISM

From the centuries-old religiously-based hatred towards Jews, in modern times, political intolerance has remained in the form of constructed representation of Jews who hiddenly strive “to rule the world”. In Europe, one of the answers is the consensual adoption of documents against anti-Semitism. The analysis of international documents makes it possible to differentiate what is and what is not anti-Semitism, and separate anti-Semitism from anti-Israelism, anti-Zionism, anti-Judaism and thus enables the practical application of public communications, as well as sanctioned anti-Semitic acts. The beginning of the international legal response against anti-Semitism was the Stockholm Declaration from 2000, the founding document of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, which states that humanity is still scarred by anti-Semitism and xenophobia and thus the international community has a responsibility to fight against these evils. The Stockholm Declaration was created in that spirit. In 2017, the European Parliament adopted the Resolution on combating antisemitism. In the same year, the ODIHR’s practical guide *Understanding Anti-Semitic Hate Crimes and Addressing the Security Needs of Jewish Communities* was published. The most comprehensive is the *EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021–2030)*, which contains three directions of action, preventing and combating all forms of antisemitism, protecting and fostering Jewish life in the EU, as well as education, research and Holocaust remembrance. This strategy provides legal and political instruments to fight against all forms of hatred, discrimination and racism, but it is also an important part of the EU’s efforts to be a leading force in the global fight against anti-Semitism.

**Key words:** IHRA, working definition of anti-Semitism, Stockholm Declaration, EU Parliament Resolution on combating anti-Semitism, Practical guide on Understanding Anti-Semitic Hate Crimes

**Bojan Godina**

Friedensau Adventist University, Germany

Bogenhofen Castle Seminary, Austria

**REINCARNATION THEORY AS A LICENSE TO KILL?**

The introduction to the Bhagavad Gita speaks of an impending war between two neighboring peoples. The king's son and army commander Arjuna hesitates to enter the war due to prosocial or conscientious reasons. But his charioteer Krishna, who is an incarnation of the god Vishnu, ultimately motivates Arjunah to go to war through the religious theory of reincarnation. In the first two chapters of the Bhagavad Gita, the army commander Arjuna seems to come closer to the biblical ideal of love of neighbor and enemy than Krishna. This example from a Hindu holy book shows how holy books of world religions have been able to legitimize wars between nations throughout world history. This war-motivating ideology was not only used in ancient times, but also in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Key words:** Reincarnation, Bhagavad Gita, Hinduism, religious war

**Bojan M. Tomić**

University of Belgrade, Institute for Multidisciplinary Research  
Belgrade, Serbia

**Nebojša Radovanović**

Branko Radičević Elementary School, Belgrade, Serbia  
Digitizer Ltd, Belgrade, Serbia

**RISKS AND IMPLICATIONS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USAGE**

At the time of conflicts flaring up in different parts of the world, the potential and actual dangers caused by the developed artificial intelligence (AI) are also a worrying factor. AI is a technology that comes with serious and hard-to-predict risks for which society is not sufficiently prepared. This paper delves into the entangled aspects of the problem, such as the theological and sociological ones. Such a discourse overcomes technological determinism with the aim of revealing directions for deeper ontological and epistemological research. Relying on such insights, the paper examines the ethical implications of the artificial intelligence potential to challenge the fundamental principles of human being. Social disturbances and transformations caused by the pervasive influence of artificial intelligence on work, management and interpersonal dynamics are analyzed. The merger of religious and sociological discourse is emphasized, and also the designing of holistic understanding of moral imperatives and social limitations that should be a part of the artificial intelligence mastery.

**Key words:** Artificial Intelligence, Society, Ethics, Danger, Risks

## Igor Ustyuzhyn

V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University  
Kharkiv, Ukraine

### R. DANEEL, ELIJAH, JEZEBEL ET AL. IN *THE CAVES OF STEEL*: BIBLICAL (RE) INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION IN ISAAC ASIMOV'S NOVEL

Dr. Isaac Asimov (Ph.D. in Chemistry from Columbia University, 1948) was both a great science-fiction writer and a valued contributor to the world of science. He wrote dozens of topical books on the subjects ranging from the Bible to Human Metabolism, coined the word "Robotics" and invented the three laws of it which have also been "the essential guiding principles of a good many of the world's ethical systems".

In his novel *The Caves of Steel* (1953) Asimov outlines "what is yet to be" projecting "the history of the future" (Walt Whitman). He shows the overpopulated Earth which is running out of uranium and other essential resources and the social conflict that is consequently brewing in the "caves of steel". To make the matter worse, the Spacers (humans that were born on the colonized planets) undermine Earth's social order by the widespread introduction of robots. As a result, even qualified humans lose their jobs and get "declassified". The revolution (or even the war) is about to break out, but the situation is saved by "two strong men that come from the ends of the earth" (Rudyard Kipling): self-learning and highly advanced R[obot!] Daneel Olivaw (representing Spacers) and Elijah Baley, a detective from the New York City Police Department. Unlike his famous namesake (Eliyahu ha-navi), Elijah Baley is not only courageous and moral, but also enduring and flexible. His hermeneutics made Jezebel Navodny ("on the waters", Russian) his loyal wife and R. Daneel, a Spacer *par excellence*, his friend.

The conflicts (and their resolutions) described by Dr. Asimov can change from fiction to fact and that is why they are worthy of scholars' attention.

**Key words:** Isaac Asimov, Biblical (re)interpretation, C/Fe, Laws of Robotics, social conflict

## Irina V. Lyutenko

Institute of Demographic Research – a separate unit of the Federal State Budgetary Institution of Science of the Federal Research Sociological Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IDI FNISC RAS) Moscow, Russia

### **SOCIO-CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS OF INDIGENOUS AND VISITING YOUTH WITH NON-TRADITIONAL RELIGIOSITY (ON THE EXAMPLE OF STUDENTS)**

In 2022, employees of the Department of Ethnodemographic, Religious and Integration Processes of the IDI FNITS RAS conducted sociological studies in Moscow, the Belgorod Region and the Republic of Tuva. Two typological groups have been formed.

The first typological group with unconventional religiosity was built on indicators of unconventional religious consciousness and religious behavior (“practitioners”). The second typological group was built only on indicators of non-traditional religious consciousness (“non-practicing”). Survey data in the analysis of typological groups recorded a certain impact of non-traditional religiosity on the orientation of student social orientations:

1. In the field of national relations, Moscow and Belgorod students in “practicing” groups were slightly more tolerant of interethnic marriages compared to the “non-practicing” group. At the same time, in Moscow, the level of tolerance for interethnic marriages in both typological groups was much lower compared to the typological groups of the Belgorod region and Tuva. In the studied regions, groups of “practitioners” had more benevolent perceptions of interreligious marriages than “non-practitioners”. 2. It should be noted that Moscow students (indigenous people and migrants) mainly planned to emigrate Russia and go to another country. In the Belgorod region and Tuva, in typological groups, students preferred internal migration, choosing to move to another region or metropolis.

Monitoring studies shows that students with non-traditional religious ideas are young people trying to achieve spiritual self-improvement and find solutions to many worldview problems. Young students, possessing the desire to obtain extensive knowledge, are trying, through studies of Eastern and non-traditional religions, to open a way to learning the essence of the world and achieving an internal harmony with it.

**Key words:** non-traditional religiosity, religion, youth, migration

**Elena A. Kublitskaya**

Institute of Demographic Research – a separate unit of the Federal State  
 Budgetary Institution of Science of the Federal  
 Research Sociological Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences  
 (IDI FNISC RAS)  
 Moscow, Russia

## **MIGRATION AND SOCIO-POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS OF RELIGIOUS AND NON-RELIGIOUS STUDENTS IN THE REGIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

One of the factors of the demographic crisis in Russia is an uncontrolled migration process causing the outflow of the younger generation of Russian citizens. The emigration of the most active part of the population is a problem, as it leads to national security risks. To study the problem, a sociological study was carried out in 2022, among students in Moscow, the Republic of Tyva, and the Belgorod region of the Russian Federation by the Institute of Physics and Technology of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Two typologies were formed in terms of indicators: attitudes towards religion and atheism: “religious”/“non-religious” and attitudes towards projective emigration: “settled”/“regional migrants”/“emigrants”. Based on the set goal, the migration, socio-political orientations and value attitudes of these typological groups were determined.

Comparative analysis of typologies showed:

- students of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation are more secularized compared to young people in general;
- the highest level of religiosity is among Tuva students. The second position belongs to the students of the Belgorod region. Moscow students are the most secularized: 1.5 times more “non-religious” than “religious” students;
- socio-political positions and assessments of the groups of “religious” and “settled” students largely coincide. They are distinguished by large shares of positive assessments in relation to: state policy, religious organizations, greater patriotism and optimistic sentiments on the revival of Russia;

- religious, socio-economic, political and value positions of the groups of “non-religious” and “emigrants” are also close. They are more concerned about socio-economic problems, to a much lesser extent they are proud of belonging to Russian citizens, and are more critical of the possibility of a process of uniting peoples around Russia. The ideological and patriotic values, from the point of view of these groups, do not play a significant role in the life of a society.

The studies show that the religious representations of young people directly related to religious traditions and spiritual and moral values play a significant role in the patriotic, civic position in relation to Russian society and the state.

**Key words:** Religiosity, emigration, migration, student body, student body, typological groups, indigenous population

**Danica Igrutinović**

Singidunum University, Faculty of Media and Communications  
Belgrade, Serbia

**A PORTRAIT OF THE PATRIARCH:  
+PORFIRIJE IN ONLINE MEDIA DISCOURSE**

Patriarch +Porfirije has ascended to the throne of the Serbian Orthodox Church at a time of increasing geopolitical tensions caused by the war in Ukraine and mirrored in the 'culture wars' of the post-socialist, post-secular, post-non-aligned Serbia. Relatively young and well versed in popular culture, he is the first patriarch to have an online presence on various social media. In three short years, his words and actions have occasioned a surprisingly substantial volume of commentary, much of it difficult to neatly classify. In this paper I hope to offer a short overview of the representation and reception of the figure of the new Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in online media discourse with special regard to how it features in the symbolic struggles surrounding identity.

**Key words:** Serbian Orthodox Church, symbolic struggles, religio-sexual nationalism, sexuality and gender, media discourse analysis

**Сергей Лебедев, Людмила Шаповалова**

Белгородский государственный национальный исследовательский университет  
Белгород, Россия

**К КОНЦЕПЦИИ ВИТАЛЬНОСТИ РЕЛИГИИ  
В СОВРЕМЕННОМ МИРЕ**

Сегодняшние обстоятельства, когда, по словам П. Л. Бергера, мир вновь оказывается «ярко религиозен», ставят перед социальной наукой больше вопросов, чем дают ответов. Пожалуй, главный «нерв» проблемной ситуации и вытекающего из неё комплекса исследовательских проблем заключается в неопределённости перспективы отношения между религией и тем долговременным и кардинальным по глубине мегатрендом социальных изменений последних трёх столетий, который получил название «проекта Модерна». Будут ли религия и религиозность в своём мейнстриме адаптироваться к сформированной Модерном матрице социальных отношений, в духе веберовского «приспособления к миру», или же дадут жизнеспособные и влиятельные идеи её трансформации? Сведётся ли, во втором случае, это трансформирующее влияние к архаизации современных обществ, или же поможет найти «тесный путь» прорывного развития, интегрирующего лучшие культурные и общественные достижения настоящего и прошлого? И какие именно комбинации идей, практик и возможностей будут способствовать и сопутствовать разным путям социальной эволюции в условиях «множественных современностей»?

В теоретическом и методологическом плане нам представляется перспективным эвристический потенциал используемого М. Благоевичем (Сербия) концепта «витальность религии». Социологическое видение витальности религии в контексте перспектив формирования религиозной ситуации в мире Модерна связано с развитием взаимодействия религиозной компоненты социума с её системным контекстом. Применительно к значительной части «множественных современностей», включая российскую, этот вопрос может быть поставлен в ключе ревитализации религии, в той или иной мере ослабленной модернизационными изменениями. Витальность религии предлагается рассматривать через вовлечённость в неё социокультурных активов (социального потенциала) в рамках исследуемого фрагмента социальной

реальности и определять по критерию адаптированности к условиям вмещающего социокультурного контекста. В свою очередь, перспективную адаптацию к контекстам поздней Современности, характеризующую витальность религии на уровне социума, предлагается определять через соответствие проявлений религии комплексу диспозиций массового сознания, задающих основные критерии религии, которая могла бы сформировать интегральный мейнстрим будущего общества. Речь идёт о предположительно устойчивых долговременных установках, обуславливающих возможность принятия современным человеком религиозных смысложизненных ориентиров без ущерба для его социализации и уровня культуры сообщества. К таким идеально-типическим ожиданиям, определяющим содержание, форму и перспективную логику развития «религии будущего» в первом приближении следует отнести: «духовность», как стремление к идеалу осознанного радикального постматериализма, рефлексивность как осмысленный выбор религиозной идентичности на основе объективированного «образа религии» и «конструирование традиции», значимыми свойствами которой представляются интеллектуализм и ориентация на приоритет человеческих отношений.

**Ключевые слова:** витальность религии, Поздний Модерн, духовность, рефлексивность, конструирование традиции

**Ненад Бойков**

Православная епархия (Вранье) СПЦ  
Вранье, Сербия

**ГЕНЕТИЧЕСКИЕ ВЫЗОВЫ КАК ВОПРОСЫ  
БИОЭТИЧЕСКОГО ЗНАНИЯ: ПРАВОСЛАВНЫЙ  
ВЗГЛЯД**

В данной статье рассматриваются вопросы применения генетической терапии, генетической диагностики и генетического редактирования человека в дискурсе православного понимания данной проблемы. Вмешательство в внутренний состав человека и использование технологии геномного редактирования, напрямую является угрозой индивидуальности и неповторимости каждого человека. Такое положение дел, прежде всего вызывает настороженность общества. С стремительным ростом и развитием современных биомедицинских технологий, все острее стоит вопрос этического осмысления всех технологических процессов которые имеют прямое отношение к человеку, его достоинству и качеству его жизни, а также к духовной безопасности и духовной целостности человека.

**Ключевые слова:** биоэтика, православие, геномная терапия, геномная диагностика, этика

**Ognjen Stanković\***

Faculty of Philosophy  
Niš, Serbia

**THE CONNECTION OF THE MODERN USER WITH MEDIA IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL CAPITALISM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CONFORMIST BEHAVIOR – SPIRITUALITY AS EMOTIONAL STABILITY**

The roots of human tendency toward socialization are very deep and layered. Throughout the history of mankind, social skills have significantly influenced the development of humans in cognitive, emotional, and even physical (organic sense) – the human desire for connection, association, and belonging has largely determined the course of human progress. Digital media mark an era of unification and globalization, but also an era of participation, fragmentation, and fragmented virtual reality – the consumer is becoming an increasingly active link in the information and communication system! New media, through demassification and personalization, are shaping an increasingly active individual who participates (un)critically in the “newly created media reality”; in accordance with the content, pages, and topics tailored to their needs, desires, and interests. His competence, education, and communication skills are increasingly coming to the forefront. However, simultaneously, alongside digital literacy, emotional literacy plays an important role in understanding new media content. It also marks his social orientation towards other users in the digital arena. In my paper, I will endeavor to determine how the modern media user adopts conformist patterns, how their inner resolve – spirituality as emotional maturity and intellectual adaptability – helps maintaining a utilitarian environment within their community. I will explore the negative and positive social behaviors of the modern individual in the consumerist, hyper-consumption environment imposed by capitalism.

**Key words:** media, conformism, spirituality, emotions, digitization

\* A doctoral student at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, studying in the Media and Society program, and a group psychotherapist under supervision.

## AUTHORS' EMAIL ADDRESSES

Bakrač Vladimir, [bvladimir@t-com.me](mailto:bvladimir@t-com.me)

Blaževski Ivan, [ivan.blazevski@isppi.ukim.edu.mk](mailto:ivan.blazevski@isppi.ukim.edu.mk)

Bojkov Nenad, [nenadvranje02@gmail.com](mailto:nenadvranje02@gmail.com)

Brigugli Michael, [michael.briguglio@um.edu.mt](mailto:michael.briguglio@um.edu.mt)

Cacanoska Ružica, [r.cacanoska@isppi.ukim.edu.mk](mailto:r.cacanoska@isppi.ukim.edu.mk)

Cilia Robert, [bertcil@gmail.com](mailto:bertcil@gmail.com)

Ćumura Ljiljana, [ljcumura@gmail.com](mailto:ljcumura@gmail.com)

Cvetičanin Neven, [nevencveticanin@gmail.com](mailto:nevencveticanin@gmail.com)

Dimitrijević Aleksandra, [aleks10dimitrijevic@gmail.com](mailto:aleks10dimitrijevic@gmail.com)

Dokmanović Mirjana, [mirad@eunet.rs](mailto:mirad@eunet.rs)

Džarova Blaga (Джарова Блага), [blagadzhorova@swu.bg](mailto:blagadzhorova@swu.bg)

Fiott J. Alan, [alan.fiott@gmail.com](mailto:alan.fiott@gmail.com)

Godina Bojan, [Bojan.Godina@thh-friedensau.de](mailto:Bojan.Godina@thh-friedensau.de)

Gržev Aleksandar, [aleksandar.grizev@ugd.edu.mk](mailto:aleksandar.grizev@ugd.edu.mk)

Gyuviyska Veska (Гювийска Веска), [v\\_guviiska@swu.bg](mailto:v_guviiska@swu.bg)

Halilović Amra, [amra\\_halilovic90@hotmail.com](mailto:amra_halilovic90@hotmail.com)

Igrutinović Danica, [danica.igrutinovic@fmk.edu.rs](mailto:danica.igrutinovic@fmk.edu.rs)

Ilić Vladimir, [vilic@f.bg.ac.rs](mailto:vilic@f.bg.ac.rs)

Janković Svetlana, [centardijalogtolerancijacacak@gmail.com](mailto:centardijalogtolerancijacacak@gmail.com)

Jovanović Marko, [marko.slavko.jovanovic@gmail.com](mailto:marko.slavko.jovanovic@gmail.com)

Kashnikov Boris, [bnkashnik@gmail.com](mailto:bnkashnik@gmail.com)

Kostadinova Stanislava, [stani.kostadinova@abv.bg](mailto:stani.kostadinova@abv.bg)

Kovachka Yuliana, [yuliana\\_k@swu.bg](mailto:yuliana_k@swu.bg)

Kublickaya Elena, [eakubl@yandex.ru](mailto:eakubl@yandex.ru)

Kuburić Zorica, [zoricakuburic@gmail.com](mailto:zoricakuburic@gmail.com)

Lazović Danica, [dlazovic@idn.org.rs](mailto:dlazovic@idn.org.rs)

Lebedev Sergej (Лебедев Сергей), [serg\\_ka2001-dar@mail.ru](mailto:serg_ka2001-dar@mail.ru)  
Lyutenko Irina, [blodrein@mail.ru](mailto:blodrein@mail.ru)  
Magnuson Kjell, [kjellbirgermag@gmail.com](mailto:kjellbirgermag@gmail.com)  
Maksimović Marijana, [mmaksimovic@idn.org.rs](mailto:mmaksimovic@idn.org.rs)  
Marulevska Krasimira, [krasimira\\_marulevska@swu.bg](mailto:krasimira_marulevska@swu.bg)  
Matić Zlatko, [zlatkomatic@yahoo.com](mailto:zlatkomatic@yahoo.com)  
Milanković Aleksandar, [radujtesetrgovi@gmail.com](mailto:radujtesetrgovi@gmail.com)  
Mršević Zorica, [zorica.mrsevic@gmail.com](mailto:zorica.mrsevic@gmail.com)  
Pachkova Petya, [pachkova@swu.bg](mailto:pachkova@swu.bg)  
Pišev Marko, [identitetisaznanje@gmail.com](mailto:identitetisaznanje@gmail.com)  
Popov Momčinović Zlatiborka, [pozlata75@gmail.com](mailto:pozlata75@gmail.com)  
Radisavljević Ćiparizović Dragana, [dcipariz@yahoo.com](mailto:dcipariz@yahoo.com)  
Radovanović Nebojša, [nebojsa.radovanovic@gmail.com](mailto:nebojsa.radovanovic@gmail.com)  
Rjарuhina Vikotrija (Ряпухина Виктория), [viktorer\\_r@mail.ru](mailto:viktorer_r@mail.ru)  
Šarovalova Ludimila (Шаповалова Людмила), [camerton@yandex.ru](mailto:camerton@yandex.ru)  
Smolina Olga, [laprimavera555@gmail.com](mailto:laprimavera555@gmail.com)  
Stanković Đurđica, [djstankovic@idn.org.rs](mailto:djstankovic@idn.org.rs)  
Stanković Ognjen, [ogisha9444@hotmail.com](mailto:ogisha9444@hotmail.com)  
Stevanović Nebojša, [stevanovicnebojsa@gmail.com](mailto:stevanovicnebojsa@gmail.com)  
Stojanov Yuri, [ys3@soas.ac.uk](mailto:ys3@soas.ac.uk)  
Teodosić Dimitrije, [teodosic.dimitrije@gmail.com](mailto:teodosic.dimitrije@gmail.com)  
Tomić M. Bojan, [bojantomic@imsi.rs](mailto:bojantomic@imsi.rs)  
Trofimov Sergej (Трофимов Сергей), [troph@mail.ru](mailto:troph@mail.ru)  
Tsvetanova Vyara, [viara23@swu.bg](mailto:viara23@swu.bg)  
Trpkovski Jane, [trpkovskijane.docs@aol.com](mailto:trpkovskijane.docs@aol.com)  
Ustjuzin Igor, [ustyuzhyn@karazin.ua](mailto:ustyuzhyn@karazin.ua)  
Vukčević Nemanja, [nemanja.vukcevic2021@gmail.com](mailto:nemanja.vukcevic2021@gmail.com)  
Žabarac Davor, [davorzabarac81@gmail.com](mailto:davorzabarac81@gmail.com)



The Forum for Religious Issues (FOREL) is a research group at the Institute of Social Sciences that explores contemporary religion from an interdisciplinary perspective by bringing together researchers from the Institute of Social Sciences and external scholars from the fields of sociology, philosophy, anthropology, political and legal studies. The Forum informs the scientific and general public about its findings based on research evidence, and organizes international scientific meetings, conferences, roundtables, and panel discussions.

Center for Sociological and Anthropological Research specializes in the fields of sociology, gender studies, sociology of religion, political sociology, and political anthropology. The Center has a long tradition of research in the sociology of religion and religious studies, focusing on religion in post-conflict and post-transitional societies, secularization and desecularization, religious identity, and religious organizations.



[www.idn.org.rs](http://www.idn.org.rs)