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Spoilers in Religion-Based Reconciliation: Case Study of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

In times of secular advancement, religious organisations began with widespread creation of common ground for a defence of religious and spiritual values worldwide. Ecumenism and interreligious dialogue became a norm for almost every denomination and world religion, focused on theological discussions, forms of unity, religious diplomacy and religious peacebuilding and humanitarian aid. Religious institutions act as an important societal stakeholder and clergy enjoys authority and legitimacy in an overwhelming number of countries.

This comes as an important addition to peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict societies, particularly if those societies are multi-ethnic and multi-religious.

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Such cases can be seen in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Syria, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, and many other places in the world where religion is being misused for political and nationalistic goals.

Empirical research of such activities should also focus on spoilers in those processes. Spoilers are persons or institutions who believe that peace emerging from negotiations or dialogue threatens their power, worldview and interests, while violence, negative peace, status quo or lack of initiatives are used to undermine achievements of peacebuilding. In a religious sense, many spoilers think of ecumenical and interreligious tendencies as a betrayal of key values or disadvantage of their position in society. Spoilers may seem very interested in peace processes, they may be part of interreligious councils and play a role in various initiatives, but are insincere in their commitments, have various strategies and tactics to avoid true reconciliation and may have been positioned from their respective institutions.

This paper is a result of in-depth research of interreligious peacebuilding initiatives in the Bosnia and Herzegovina and suggests ways to discover spoilers and challenges local communities face with them in the process.

Keywords: Spoilers, Religion-based Peacebuilding, Interreligious Dialogue, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Spoilers in the Faith-based Peacebuilding Processes

In many violent conflicts in the world, efforts for peacebuilding include not only the various political and diplomatic means, but also other ways of managing a conflict. Religion is among them. As a system that can both contribute to and solve a violent conflict, religious institutions and communities play a significant role in modern peacebuilding. A peace process may be envisioned as a three-scale activity.

The Track I include mandated discreet and publicly known diplomacy, which aims at framework agreements and roadmap understanding between stakeholders of a violent conflict. They are assisted by advisory boards, sceptic opponents and supports, together with mediators and/or facilitators. Additionally, the peace process may include insider mediators and peacemakers, usually at the level of experts and multipliers at the Track II level. They are the ones who generate ideas for compromises and deal with the past and reconciliation, humanitarian issues and sometimes transitional justice.

One can easily find religious institutions here. Religious actors, moreover, are present also at the Track III level, which includes local and grassroots communities.

They empower the civil society, give public support of peace processes, and care for human rights and legal issues, governance reform, education, culture and language, and developmental issues.

The active role of the religious institutions and communities is much more easily seen and legitimised in societies where secularism is not a mandatory norm. For instance, in many African, Asian and Latin American countries, religious actors are seen as welcoming addition to solving or managing the internal and international violent conflicts.

Due to a different understanding of the role of religious institutions in the countries of liberal democracy, where secularism exists as a norm, their role is a bit different but nonetheless important. This is particularly evident in times of post-secularism. Post-secular is "the factual blurring of the boundary between the secular and the religious (…) includes a fundamental dimension of power that has often been neglected in recent scholarship (with the) emergence of new forms of community, where the issue is not just the inclusion of the other, but a more complex set of questions concerning the secular and religious sources of authority, legitimacy, and power" (Mavelli and Petito, 2014: 7).

The first part of this definition mentions the boundary between the secular and the religious, which brings us immediately to a problem of defining what is secular in theory and practice.

Secularisation is understood in its classic way of privatisation of religion in modern societies: “The principal thrust in secularisation theory (…) has been a claim that in the face of scientific rationality, religion’s influence on all aspects of life – from personal habits to social institutions – is in dramatic decline” (Swatos and Christiano, 1999: 210).

Post-secularism if furthermore coupled with post-democratic environment. If we look at modern political systems, a clear democratic deficit is visible. Fewer and fewer people go to the polls, more and more are politically alienated citizens, and the decision-making process is becoming more and more mechanistic.

British political scientist Colin Crouch explained these social phenomena in 2000 in his book "Coping with Post-Democracy", where he uses the new term post-democracy as a name for countries that have a fully functioning democratic system in the form of regular and free elections, peaceful change of government, arrival and the departure of governments, the functioning of a multi-party system, the existence of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Nevertheless, Crouch believes that liberal democracy in these countries is limited and that the influence of small decision-making elites and co-opting with democratic institutions is progressively increasing.

In other words, there is a certain aristocratic stratum that influences the very foundations of liberal democracy and deprives citizens of their place in the political system.

If we look at Crouch's theses, we see that in post-democracy there is a lack of common goals and a lack of clearly defined political parties; globalization undermines national economic policy settings; there is a privatization of public space and state services; and consequently, the influence of small and powerful groups grows, along with the populist, far-right or far-left, narrative in society.

Crouch's theses are accompanied by the idea of procedural democracy of the Canadian political scientist Frank Cunningham, who believes that decision-making in institutions has been reduced only to form and that decisions are made in a completely different place.

Religious actors, moreover, contribute in many ways to a peacebuilding process. Apart from these diplomatic measures, religious actors can go deeper into the social psyche and may contribute to reconciliation on the practical, everyday and individual level. In these levels, religious actors may contribute to reviving the restorative justice in peacebuilding. The Eastern Mennonite University has developed a trauma healing journey which stresses the importance of integrating a trauma into new

self/group identity without the necessity of repeating violence and aggression (Zehr, 2009).

Psychological changes that occur after realisation of a loss in a conflict, evidenced in feelings like grief and fear, are often suppressed. Rising anger and additional spiritual questions over what happened leads to the need of justice and fantasies of revenge, which may in some cases lead to a renewed aggression or a more substantial and durable Good versus Evil narrative.

Such narrative is a breeding ground for the act of "justified aggression" in the name of self-defence which again leads to the protracted violent conflict. In many ways, the need for justice is a focal point where religious actors may help develop a healthy and durable path to reconciliation. As all religions in the world profess peace as a major spiritual goal for our worldly life, Mennonites summarise a possible path of religion-based peacebuilding.

It begins with mourning and grieving, as a legitimate state of affairs in a violent conflict. Through it, one can accept the reality of a loss and can reflect, understand the root causes of recent conflict, maybe even acknowledge the enemy's story and pace their shortcomings in some cases. This is followed by an act of memorialising (forgive, but do not forget).

Particularly in internal conflicts, in cases of multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies, such a path requires committing to taking

risks, to tolerate coexistence and engage the offender or victim in society. A choice to forgive leads to restitution or "creative justice" and gives possibilities for solutions. Only then can a possibility of reconciliation appear. Mennonites envisioned an ideal-type model, which is necessarily aligned to a type of conflict at hand but includes a strong religious message.

To take the path of true religion-based reconciliation and peacebuilding is not an easy task, it has many shortcomings and may not succeed at all. Foremost, religious communities themselves may not support it, many stakeholders (particularly victims) may feel offended, and the process may go on for generations. From the theological point of view, this approach is a command and religious institutions cannot opt not to follow the pursuit of peace, without seeking vengeance.

This is very clear in two major religions in the world, Christianity and Islam. The Holy Bible is very clear in forbidding revenge: "Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honourable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans, 12: 17.21).

The Holy Qur'an is equally clear in its message: "If you retaliate, then let it be equivalent to what you have suffered. But if you patiently endure, it is certainly best for those who are patient" (Qur'an, 16: 126).

It is, therefore, contrary to the religious teachings when some clergy calls for revenge and calls for use of arms, except in clearly defensive measures. Aggression as an act is indeed a grave sin.

Among those elements that challenge peacebuilding in general, including the faith-based processes, is the element of spoilers. Every diplomatic or peacebuilding manual mentions spoilers in one way or the other, but the phenomenon of spoilers has not been researched systematically and academically in large volumes. Two significant studies made an important step forward. First is the work of Stephen John Stedman "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes" (1997).

He defines spoilers as "leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it" (Stedman, 1997: 5).

In this regard, clergy may be also spoilers, in times when they feel excluded from the peace process or think of it as a betrayal of key values. Stedman develops a typology of spoilers in an international violent conflict and sees them from the perspective of foreign peacebuilder or mediator.

In his article, Stedman differs between spoilers inside or outside of the peace process, in terms of their position. Inside spoilers use strategies of stealth, while outside spoilers are prone to violence. Also, there may be a various number of spoilers and dealing with them might ask for different strategies.

Stedman's typology goes further and includes types of spoilers with different commitments to their goals. He differentiates limited, total and greedy spoilers. A limited spoiler has very specific and limited goals; a total spoiler seeks total control and hegemony over a situation; while greedy spoiler is somewhere in between these two, with flexible goals. These goals are largely achievable if a spoiler has strong support, i.e. power base.

Related to the amount of power, a mediator may use three major approaches: inducement, socialisation, and coercion. Inducement is "taking positive measures to address grievances of factions that obstruct peace".

If spoiler acts out of fear, inducement will introduce physical protection; if a spoiler is obstructing peacebuilding due to a sense

of fairness, inducement will be done through material benefits. The spoiler may also act according to a sense of justice when inducement includes recognition and legitimacy. Stedman calls inducement the easiest strategy; however, he warns it may backfire and do more damage than good, as he recalls cases in Cambodia and Angola. Socialisation strategy calls for "a set of norms for acceptable behaviours by parties that commit to peace or seek to join a peace process".

It is a long process which involves the material and the intellectual components. The former are sets of carrots and sticks to reward or punish spoilers; the latter is regular persuasion by custodians of the value of the desired normative behaviour. Consistency of norms and behaviours is paramount for socialisation strategy to succeed. Such is the case with the management of RENAMO in Mozambique. Lastly, there is coercion or punishment strategy.

It calls for effective destruction of spoilers, including by force. Stedman calls it a departing train strategy, where spoilers have to realise that the peace process is ongoing and they can either choose to board the train or vanish. Such was the UN strategy in Cambodia with Khmer Rouge, but if the spoilers choose to withdraw, this can lead to a tragedy such as the Rwandan genocide. Stedman stresses it is vital to recognise an effective strategy tied to a type of spoiler

because this can lead to a sustainable peace or a failure of the peace process.

Major answer to Stedman's classification of spoilers came in an article by Kelly M Greenhill and Solomon Major "The Perils of Profiling: Civil War Spoilers and the Collapse of Intrastate Peace Accords" (2006).

For the most part, this is the single deep critique of the Stedman's highly influential work. Two authors examined in-depth three case studies Stedman mentions Angola, Mozambique, and Cambodia. The main criticism is that Stedman's model is too static and strategies for deterring or defeating spoilers are not among the best course of action "because context-specific and actor-specific measures tend to affect diplomatic instruments only at the margin and because, while spoiler type does not change over time, actors' commitment to fulfilling the provisions of peace accords often does".

They propose a capabilities-based model and favour possession and exercise of the material power to coerce or co-opt the spoilers, "rather than in the capacity to discern their true character or personality type".

When reading Stedman, one has to think also of what kind of peace we talk about. His strategies are mostly connected to protracted violent conflicts and immediate peacebuilding efforts by international actors.

This gives a situation of negative peace which, according to Johan Galtung, is a mere absence of violence or fear of violence (Galtung, 1996).

It is a stage when there is practically no shooting, when demobilisation is successfully done and former fighters are in process of (re)integration in society, and when disarmament was successful. However, in most such cases, the durable negative effects of a conflict still exist and may develop further. This is a point when societal forces may act more strongly, including the religious institutions.

If there are (religious) spoilers, this process may indeed end in a renewed aggression and violence. Following remarks made by Stedman and Greenhill & Major, and adjusting it to a level of religious actors in peacebuilding processes, there persists a challenge of religious spoilers.

Despite religious convictions and outright commands, some religious actors stand against peace processes. Following Stedman's differentiation, limited religious spoilers would act in a very specific political-social environment, where a religious community has durable historical goals, mostly connected to an extensive majoritarian presence in society.

The total religious spoiler would be one that is a one-sided opponent of ecumenism and interreligious cooperation, with a

desire to become a single source of morality politics. The greedy religious spoiler would be recognisable by a passive attitude to cooperation in peace processes but with a possibility of incentives such as financial support of peacebuilding through religion.

When one looks at peace processes in 2019, one may also focus on religious stakeholders in various countries and societies and focus on the possibility of religious spoilers. This table shows only general outlook at possible spoilers in these conflicts.

PEACE PROCESS	**ENGAGEMENT OF A RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION**	**RELIGIOUS SPOILERS**
AFRICA		
Democratic Republic of Congo	Congolese Episcopal Conference Catholic Church	Various syncretic political-religious movements undermine peace efforts
Eritrea-Ethiopia	Ethiopian Orthodox Church Islamic Affairs Council World Council of Churches	Possible ethno-political ties of high religious leaders may favour political goals
Ethiopia	Ethiopian Orthodox Church World Council of Churches Association of Member of Episcopal Conferences in East Africa	Possible nationalistic clergy among Tigray Orthodox
Libya	Dar al-Ifta League of Libyan Ulema Libyan Ulema Authority	Political fractions within ulema challenges peace processes; Salafi and Wahhabi imams call for continuation of fight

Mali	Islamic High Council Catholic Church Association of Evangelical Protestant Church Groups and Mission in Mali	Salafi and Wahhabi preachers and Touareg extremists
Mozambique	Community of Saint' Egidio Catholic Church	None
Nigeria	Religions for Peace Nigeria	Extremist preachers
Senegal	Community of Saint' Egidio	Imported extremist preachers with little effect
Somalia	Loose network of Islamic Community and Sufi Tariqats	Extremist preachers
South Sudan	South Sudan Council of Churches	Tribal religious leaders may continue with divisions and influence politicians
Sudan	Loose Christian-Muslim network	Extremist preachers and politically-biased preachers
Togo	Togolese Peace Association	None
LATIN AMERICA		
Colombia	Colombian Episcopal Conference	Some Colombian Protestants
Nicaragua	Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua	Politically-biased clergy
ASIA		
Afghanistan	None	Extremist teachers
India – Assam	None	Hindu extremists
Myanmar	Religions for Peace Myanmar	Buddhist extremists

Thailand	Religions for Peace Thailand	Buddhist community promotes royalist policies in South of Thailand
EUROPE		
Armenia – Azerbaijan	None	Armenian Apostolic Church and Islamic Community of Azerbaijan encourage conflict
Cyprus	The Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process	Greek Orthodox clergy supporting Enossis and Muslim leaders supporting the Turkish policies
Georgia	None	Possible (but mild) difference in views between Georgian Orthodox Church and Russian Orthodox Church
Serbia - Kosovo	Serbian Orthodox Church Islamic Community of Kosovo Union of Sufi Tariqats Catholic Church	Nationalistic clergy
Ukraine	Loose support of various Christian churches	Russian Orthodox Church and Orthodox Church in Ukraine support nationalistic and conflictual policies
MIDDLE EAST		
Israel – Palestine	Various national and international faith-based organisations	Jewish and Islamic hardliners

Syria	Religions for Peace, Pax for Peace and many other organisations	Political biased clergy and opposing communities; extremist preachers
Yemen	International Centre for Peace and Diplomacy	Extremist preachers

As one may see in the above table, religion-based peacebuilding and reconciliation, as well as religious spoilers in the peace processes are very much tied to local circumstances and conflict context and history. Apart from some very extremist and straightforward preachers, most clerics do not expose their feelings and thoughts against the peace processes openly and publicly. It is a behavioural analysis which may point to elements of spoilers in the religion-based peacebuilding. This method is tested in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Religious Spoilers in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has a complex history spanning from the medieval Christian/Bogomil kingdom, over the part of the Muslim-dominated Ottoman Empire and Catholic-dominated Austro-Hungarian Empire, to the constitutive element of Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia in the 20th century.

Throughout this time, Bosnia and Herzegovina was a country populated by Muslim Slavs and Turks, Serbian Orthodox and

(majority Croat) Catholics, as well as (majority Sephardic) Jews and other smaller denominations.

Everyday life in Bosnia and Herzegovina evolves around meetings with the Others, with whom there were extensive relationships developed, but within a certain boundary. During the Ottoman times, Christians and Jews had their laws and customs preserved through a millet system.

After pogroms in Spain, Sephardic Jews inhabited Sarajevo and other bigger cities, establishing trade routes. Catholic population gathered around the Franciscan order, while Orthodox priests were the centre point of life in Orthodox communities. The demise of the Ottoman Empire was coupled with the rise of national ideas of Serbs and Croats. Conflicting nationalisms were evident in the Second World War and it returned in the Bosnian War in 1990ies.

BiH is populated by Bosniaks (50,11%), Serbs (30,78%) and Croats (15,43%), while other ethnic communities number 2,73% of population. Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats have a position of constitutional nations, and according to the Dayton Agreement, only they can be presented at the highest levels of political authority, whereby all three present their respective ethnic community (Kapidžić, 2017: 11).

This has been challenged by Jewish and Roma population, who won the case against BiH at the European Court of Justice in

Sejdić-Finci case, but the ruling was never incorporated in the constitution (Gavrić et al, 2013: 27, 28; Majstorović and Turjačanin, 2013: 12).

Three constitutive nations also diverge among themselves in religious terms. High-level religiosity in BiH translates in the ethnic-religious mix where most Bosniaks are Muslims, most Serbs are Orthodox Christians and most Croats are Roman Catholic, as seen also by statistics from 2013: Islam (51%), Serbian Orthodoxy (31%), Catholicism (15%) and Others/None (3%).

This all exists in a country which survived through the Dayton Agreement in 1995, which is used as a constitutional framework, and which divides the country in two major parts: (Serb dominated) Republic of Srpska (RS) and (Bosniak-Croat) Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH).

Contemporary conflict in BiH has its cause in the long power disbalance between the ethnoreligious communities in the past, shifted through time. Opposing nationalisms and power disbalance led to five major conflicts in the 20th century, where state border changes, nationalistic failures and successes, and totalitarian regimes flourished. The consequences of these conflicts were not dealt with and generational conflictual positions were transmitted through the whole century (Palmberger, 2016).

Proximate causes to the contemporary conflict in BiH include also the destabilising role of neighbouring countries, Croatia and Serbia. They are constitutionally bound to protect the dividing Dayton Agreement and use the divisions for their internal political battles, particularly in times of elections as the major triggers.

At the same time, the Serbian political parties in RS threat with secession and uniting with Serbia (Keil, 2013: 120); Croatian political forces ask for third (Croatian) entity or also unity with Croatia (Friedman, 2003: 118); while Bosniaks would gladly see a Muslim state even without the other two regions.

Due to many insecurities, BiH ranks 81st of 163 countries in the Global Peace Index 2019, and 34th of 36 places in Europe, followed only by Kosovo and Turkey IEP, 2020).

Among the factors that contribute to prolonging the conflict, is the misuse and co-optation of major religious institutions. Large symbolic capital and connection to major ethnic communities helped to position the Islamic Community, Serbian Orthodox Church and Roman Catholic Church as the major resource of nationalistic values, but the source of the conflict is not in diverging theologies. During the war, religious groups were mobilising the group identities, and some clerics still expose counter-religious ideas and nationalistic aims (Kotzen and Garcia, 2014; Čekrlija and Đurić, 2015; Palmberger, 2016; Bougarel, 2017).

In it, they are closely associated with the major national political parties. This case study tries to address this situation and show the possibility to decrease the role of religion as conflict-driven phenomena to the increase of religious actors as peacemakers, and points to the fact that war in BiH was not a religious war, but a clash of old grievances and constant power imbalances, as well as the will to break away from unitary BiH and join neighbouring countries.

As a major grievance is a constant atmosphere of mistrust among the communities, often coupled with stereotypes, diaspora influences, discrimination and suspicion. The paper is based on more than 50 semi-structured interviews with priests and imams used for PhD research at the University of Regensburg.

Stakeholders in BiH may easily be divided into the top level, middle level and grassroots key actors. At the top level are the major religious institutions in BiH: Islamic Community of BiH; Serbian Orthodox Church; and Roman Catholic Church. Islam in BiH belongs to Sunni Islam of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence and with a particular traditional allegiance to tassawwuf mystical practices.

It is headed by Grand Mufti in Sarajevo, with nine additional muftis in the country, and with authority over the Muslims in Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Hungary and Bosniak diaspora. The Serbian Orthodox Church is one of the autocephalous Eastern Orthodox Christian churches.

It operates in BiH as the Metropolitanate of Dabar-Bosna, a metropolis with a seat in Sarajevo, and with four additional eparchs, all members of the Holy Synod in Belgrade and their official leader is the Patriarch of Serbia.

The Roman Catholic Church in BiH consists of Archdiocese of Vrhbosna, headed by archbishop and cardinal; and additional two bishops, who work also together in special bishopric body with bishops in Croatia. There are also two Franciscan provinces in the country: the Franciscan Province of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Herzegovina) and the Franciscan Province of Bosna Srebrena (Bosnia).

As seen, the religious institutions in BiH have profound trans-sovereign possibilities and are strongly connected to the outside forces. There is also the Jewish Community of BiH, which is not part of the conflict but acts more as a bridge-maker.

Top-level actors also include political parties, media, and the Interreligious Council of BiH. The middle levels are local Interreligious Boards and local branches of religious organisations, while the grassroots level is focused on individual clerics and populace. Political parties and media, together with co-opting clergy, are the key mobilisers of conflict and they actively mobilise people and resources, particularly in times of elections.

Key mobilisers of faith-based reconciliation are engaged priests and imams, together with civil society.

Religious institutions were at the same time supporters of national causes and peacebuilders, with a multitude of evidence for both (Frazer and Friedli, 2015).

After the Dayton Agreement in 1995, religious institutions began to work on durable peace. Under the auspices and support by the World Assembly of Religions for Peace, an UN-based and faith-based organisation, the Interreligious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina was created in 1997 (Merdjanova and Brodeur, 2009: 64).

It gathers representatives of four traditional religions: Roman Catholic Church (represented by the Episcopal Conference of Bosnia and Herzegovina with Sarajevo archbishop and two additional bishops in Banja Luka and Mostar); Serbian Orthodox Church (represented by the Metropolitan bishop of Sarajevo-Dabrobosna and episcopes of Banja Luka, Bihać-Petrovac, Zahumlje-Herzegovina and Primorje, and Zvornik-Tuzla); Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina (led by the Reis-ul-ulema and Muftis of Bihać, Zenica, Tuzla, Travnik, Sarajevo, Mostar, Goražde, Banja Luka and military mufti); and the Jewish Community (centred around Ashkenazi synagogue in Sarajevo and smaller communities in Zenica, Doboj, Banja Luka, and Mostar).

The Interreligious Council works as a non-governmental organisation and was historically important in accusing hate crimes and hate speech, led reconciliation initiatives, peace projects (Bokern et al, 2009: 46). It maintains work with youth and women, involves young seminarians and priests, leads a monitoring project of attacks on religious symbols and sites.

Quite a recent development is the creation of Interreligious Cooperation Boards in local levels. Currently, such boards exist in multiethnic and multiconfessional towns of Zenica, Bijeljina, Banja Luka, Bihać, Novi Travnik, Livno, Goražde, Foča, Trebinje, Žepče, Orašje, Bugojno, Tuzla, Doboj, and Brčko.

Apart from the Interreligious Council, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are other religion-based peacebuilding initiatives, foremost the Franciscan interreligious dialogue for peace which stands on the strong foundation of the Franciscan historical interaction with Islam in the Balkans. Several Catholic and Muslim theologians are vocal in academic and public circles about the need for religious communities to cooperate deeply in the peace process.

The method of power-sharing or consociational democracy, which was used in BiH under the Dayton Agreement, is often misunderstood. An idea that involves the division of power between warring parties, with models of veto, grand coalition, and

proportionality, is a temporary solution to a society facing divisions (Lijphart, 2004).

Several times, the Catholic Church has explicitly demanded that BiH be divided not according to the ethnic key, but according to regions that would have one ethnic majority, but not large enough to be able to make overpowering decisions. These would be large units of Banja Luka, Mostar, Sarajevo and Tuzla (KTABiH, 2005).

The international community has accepted a strict ethnic division based on the principle of war conflict, which has certainly not led to the revival of an effective state union. BiH is an internally unfinished country (comp. Bieber, 2006: 44, 45).

It is known where the borders of BiH are, the constitutional order has been created as it is and is not being implemented, only adheres firmly to the line of division between the entities. BiH is not built from the inside, and the question is whether there is any will for that at all or whether the political ideas of all three nations are directed towards some former goals that were not achieved in the war. Even if all parties come to value peace, they rarely do so simultaneously, and they often strongly disagree over the terms of an acceptable peace (Gavrić et al, 2013: 72).

Although the representatives of all three constituent peoples have stated that they support the revision of the Dayton Accords, their political parties still do not allow more serious amendments to

the Constitution, as politics of divisions are proven to be the best appeal to voters.

This gives tremendous challenges for the long-term development of the country, which is now in a state of negative peace, that is, in a state where there is no violent conflict or fear of it. If we look at BiH through the prism of positive peace (and its indicators are efficient government, equal sharing of resources, free flow of information, good relations with neighbours, high level of human capital, acceptance of the rights of others, low level of corruption and healthy business climate), then we see that the country failed to move forward.

When the author visited Banja Luka in summer 2019 and talked to a priest there, when asked how to describe today's BiH, the priest replied: "There is permanent temporality and temporary permanence here". Such a description fits well with the real situation in BiH.

Spoilers in religious peacebuilding in BiH are mostly determined in the local majority-minority nexus. In most areas, minority religious community and their clergy show interest and are active in religion-based peace initiatives.

There are a few notable exceptions, like Foča and Zenica, but also in those cities, the initiative rests upon very engaged individuals and not with the religious congregation in its totality.

In other cases, clergy with whom the author talked to testify that the majority religious community is usually largely absent from the initiatives, they do not take regularly part in the interreligious meetings or avoid them entirely.

Several major reasons may be proposed here. First is ideological-theological. Connections between the religious communities inevitably call for theological reasoning.

Projects developed by the Interreligious Council of BiH involve interreligious gatherings, learning about each others' faith and religious customs, religious culture, visits to various places of worship, visits to a mass grave and crime sights, monitoring religious hate speech and attack on the religious property (MRV, 2020).

All activities are directed to the message that religious support peace and cooperation, while they refuse and violent conflict. Yet, within the Interreligious Council and local boards, there is seldom a discussion about the theological background of such activities. Only a handful of interviewees support an idea of deeper theological connections, while others confirm that theological conversation is completely avoided.

Additionally, they talk about their brethren who disapprove theological closeness with other denominations. In terms of ecumenism between Roman Catholic and Serbian Orthodox

churches, both show a relevant dose of scepticism and doubt over this process.

While Catholics mostly think it is something very dangerous and not relevant, Orthodox follow the idea of early 20th century Serbian theologian Justin Popović who thought that ecumenism was a common name for Pseudo-Christians and Pseudo-Churches of Western Europe, transformed into philosophical humanism and became heresy upon heresy (Ikić, 2013: 654). In the interreligious dialogue, all sides are wary of syncretism.

Second, there is a danger of passivity and self-sufficiency, particularly in the case of the majority community. In such circumstances, there is less incentive and interest for power-sharing and minority groups are seen as something foreign, although they have been constituting ethnic and religious landscape of a region for centuries.

Under the aegis "we rule here and we do not need anyone else", there is also a political-religious co-optation, where religious domination dictates a homogenous religious rule and religious expression in public. This translates in a specific cityscape, public space policies, and visual connection between clergy and politicians. The self-sufficient feeling among the clergy is often tied to lack of a law on restitution of religious property after Communism (Andrijić and Pšić-Andrijić, 2018).

After WWII, new socialist Yugoslavia introduced nationalisation of property as a way of removing class relations in society. Yugoslav government used measures of confiscation, expropriation and nationalisation to that end.

Changes in ownership of property in the period from 1945 to 1966 were based on the Law on Confiscation of Property and Execution of Confiscation of 1945, the Law on Agrarian Reform and Colonization of 1945, the Law on Nationalization of Private Business Enterprises of 1946 and its amendments from 1948, the Basic Law on Expropriation from 1947, and the Law on Nationalization of Rented Buildings and Construction Land from 1958. The very process of confiscating property from the religious communities in Yugoslavia was significantly influenced by political relations between them and the state, and they were very tense.

In these, very unfavourable circumstances, agrarian reform, confiscation, expropriation and nationalization of the property of the religious communities were carried out. The religious communities were particularly hard hit by the implementation of agrarian reform.

Agricultural land was one of the most important sources of income from which the religious communities lived. BiH is the only country in the Western Balkans that has not yet passed a law on restitution of this property after the fall of Communism and demise of the Yugoslavian federation.

Although nowhere exists an official estimate of the property in question, the figure is usually between 15 billion and 80 billion marks worth of property confiscated after World War II that has not been returned to private individuals or religious communities, mostly to the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Jewish community, the Islamic Community and To the Roman Catholic Church (Boračić-Mršo, 2010; Šajinović, 2020).

Although Bosnia and Herzegovina pledged to pass a law on restitution in 2010, this has not happened to this day. In the meantime, the EU emphasized that this will be one of the conditions for the continuation of the European integration process, and recently the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling on BiH to resolve this issue urgently, to return the property to religious communities and other private individuals.

The European resolution pays special attention to the issue of restitution of the Jewish community, having in mind the Holocaust and the mass seizure of Jewish property in all European countries.

They also remind of the Terezin Declaration from 2009, which was adopted by the EU during the Czech presidency of the EU, in which 46 countries, including BiH, were called upon to compensate the confiscated property to the victims of the Holocaust.

One might expect large cooperation of religious communities in BiH regarding the pressure on the government and possible lobbying.

Instead, what is seen is massive co-optation of religious institutions and individual clerics with the political parties. As religious communities are not financially independent from the state or region where their local hierarchy exists (muftiates, bishoprics), they engage in legitimisation of local political leaders, mostly nationalistic ones, which includes support of their political interests, including corrupt ones, and support of discriminating policies, such as building church towers and minarets which are higher, only to provoke the citizens of different faith by creating a specific cityscape.

In such a way, politicians are discouraging clergy to enter wide interreligious dialogue for peace. Clientelism has clear contours in this case. As there is no law on restitution and religious communities are dependent on local political forces, a leading political party supplies financing and demands in return relevant set of strategies and activities in support of this political party. This resembles the traditional definition of clientelism (Hicken, 2011).

This relationship includes two basic moments. First are the elections. As patrons, political parties expect official or unofficial support by the relevant religious community.

This is evident in narratives of the higher and lower clergy, who may not point directly to the political party, but may call for a special obligation of believers to vote and to vote for "those who care for their religious community".

Politicians use religious events and holidays for their campaigns and clergy mostly co-opt. At the same time, politicians oblige themselves publically to support a religious community upon arrival or resuming the power in their region. The second moment is a continuous relationship.

This pertains mostly national parties who have to continuously repeat their narratives and mobilisation of the population, through politics of history and identity, but also politics of conflicts and divisions. It is expected from the religious communities to be loyal to their ethnic kin and thus to these "national" political parties. This is seen in vehement denial of war crimes, where clergy mostly defend their ethnic kin in cases of major crimes.

The most visible case is the Serbian Orthodox Church's denial of Srebrenica Genocide, but the same goes for Muslims and Catholics who denied there were planned war crimes in other parts of the count

Those clergymen who do not follow a prescribed way of clientelism face sanctions. An interesting case took place in the town of Doboj in 2019.

Chief Imam of the Islamic Community in Doboj, which is in the Republic of Srpska, was present at the January manifestations of Day of the Republic of Srpska and Christmas party and was even honoured by an award from the town hall.

Islamic Community in BiH viciously attacked this imam, accusing him of betrayal. In conversation with him, he said to the author that a person sitting in Emperor's Mosque in Sarajevo cannot understand the need for Muslims to survive in the Serbian entity and this requires cooperation with the local authorities.

In other cases, clergymen mostly spoke against the political clientelism or made criticism of the political behaviour; they are regularly sanctioned by the religious institutions themselves.

This pertains mostly Bosnian Franciscans, among whom are several who are forbidden to speak in public, but they still issue their statements. Because of lack of priests, many of them have to continue teaching at the seminaries or being part of the liturgies and pastoral care, although they are officially under sanctions. In Serbian Orthodox eparchies which did not want to follow the political narratives of Serb political parties, many rebuilding projects have been halted.

In the case of the Jewish Community, there are no patrons, as the Jews are not seen as part of the BiH conflict. They have extremely small funds, mostly private ones and ones from Israel.

Concluding Remarks

Apart from the numerous interviews and press releases, there is no clear definition of religious spoilers in the peace process in case of BiH. Passivity is a clear feature of many clerics who focus more on the issues and challenges of their respective communities.

This would make religious spoilers in BiH the greedy spoilers, according to the Stedman's typology. Interreligious Council did a progressive thing, but a number of clerics who are involved in its work is basically shrinking, and the Council is charged with elitism and clientelism as well.

Without inducement, in terms of substantial financial means, the Council's work is in jeopardy. Furthermore, the dividing political system does not want to give free hands to the religious communities, which translates mostly in the co-optation of religious institutions with party politics.

In a wider sense, the case of BiH shows one should focus significantly on the spoilers within the religious institutions who are officially part of a peace process in a post-conflict society.

While Stedman's typology is still among few that describe the spoilers, there is no such in-depth research in religion-based reconciliation. Faith-based organisations, such as Religions for Peace and World Council of Churches, would gain more strength if they would focus on how to approach the spoiler phenomenon in religious communities.

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