IS THERE AN ACCIDENT OF COMMUNICATION WHERE RELIGION TURNS INTO A SOURCE OF VIOLENCE?

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ABSTRACT

Most of the people who are educated enough may predict that religion has potentiality to turn into a source of violence under convenient conditions. All bloody holy wars among different religions throughout the history and also in today’s world seem to be the clearest proofs of this fact. However this study was challenged by some groups of people who identified themselves as religious. According to them, particularly Islamic religion does not justify violence in any case. When they are reminded about the case of some radical movements like ISIS, Al-Qaida and Boko Haram, they say that those movements couldn’t understand the real Islam.

The followers of Christianity, Judaism and other big religions say similar things in this matter when they are told about the holy wars in history like Crusaders. On the other hand, various scholars in different parts of the world argue that the roots of those so-called religious violence are economic and political, not religious in essence.

This study examines the main causes of religious violence in two categories. One of them is semantic factor and the other one is economic one. The reason of this approach is the fact that all those causes and resources of violence based on religious ideas and feelings can be gathered and contracted in those two categories. In this context, this study casts a strong light on the most important and influential sources of current and historical religious violence in the world.

STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

If a problem influences a great many of people’s lives, it will automatically excite a world-wide interest. It is no doubt that there is such a problem on the agenda of the world for a long time. It is the problem of world-wide religious-originated violent terrorist actions.

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The purpose of this work is to cast light on that problem of why religion is increasingly turning into a source of violence in some parts of the world, threatening and frightening all humanity. The work tries to find out the causes and effects of the problem in question and also expose if there is an accident of communication where religion turns into a source of violence.

The work was carried out through the method of literature review. In this context, a great number of books and scientific articles relating to the issue have carefully been examined.

According to some scholars, violence in the name of religion is a lasting universal property of religious life. This case is clearly visible in various traditional religious ceremonies such as legendary tales of great battles, martyrdom and rituals of sacrifice. On the other hand, some others claim that religions usually have a peaceful face and every beautiful face may some nevuses or pimples. Most religious teachings are based on the concept of peace. They not only preach love, respect, tolerance and understanding of those who are from other beliefs but also advocate compassion, grace and forgiving in the face of opposition. So the notion of killing the ones who are different is disgusting to all religions.

To put it in another way, the violent images in religion are greatly misunderstood or misinterpreted by the some people or groups. Accordingly, religion itself is not violent. It is always a voice of peace. However, the misuse of religion has generally led to violence throughout the history. A lot of examples can be given as regards the holy wars or religious-originated ones in general. Today, various religion-based radical organisations or movements can also be counted in this context.

In the study, the point whether the religious violence especially in today’s world emerges from the Holy Books or misinterpretation of them was discussed in detail. In the meantime, the fact that the articles and books written and published on this issue were mostly timid work because of the extreme sensitivity of the subject was a great and serious challenge from the beginning. This condition can be described as one of the weak points or restrictive elements of the study.

The problem was taken in hand on two bases. One of them is semantic factor, in other words misinterpretation and misuse of religious beliefs. The second one is economic factor that is a common variant for most of the developments in the world.

At the end of the study, the fact that there is a great accident of communication between some radical or fundamental religious groups and holy books and also wide believer masses was inferred in general. However, there is no doubt that at least well-known holy books like Qoran, Bible and Torah include some verses which are inclined to be understood as provoking violence in particularly uneducated people to a certain extent. As a matter of fact, those verses can be tolerated in the general pieceful context of the holy books. But it is obvious at the same time that they are misused and manipulated by some people to provoke and direct the masses for realizing their personal interests.

At this point, the questions below are on the table to be examined at full length:
“Is the religion in people’s minds the same as the religion that the God declared?”

“Is it religion itself that advises all of those violent actions against infidels? Does religion itself have some elements that provoke religious people to some sort of violence or do the believers, especially Muslims twist the teachings of the Quran so as to justify committing the terroristic acts against unbelievers?”

“Is there a problem or accident of communication between religious people and God, or in other words between religious groups and the Holy Books and also between some religious groups and crowded believers?

As to the target of the work, throwing a new light on those matters will help the readers understand the sources of the problem and the ways of solutions in the light of the new findings and approaches in this study. It is also expected that the study will be a good reference for the new researchers who want to do researches in the same field and open new ways and horizons in front of them.

In the study, the subject was examined on two bases. They are semantic and s-economic factors. Likewise, the books and articles written in this regard so far have usually focused on these two factors.

At the end of the research, it is clearly understood that there are various problems and accidents of communication between some internationally well-known radical religious groups and Holy Books that they believe and also traditional perception of religion.

Keywords: Religion, violence, holy book, holy war, semantic, economy, communication

DİNİN ŞİDDET KAYNAĞINA DÖNÜŞTÜĞÜ YERDE BİR İLETİŞİM KAZASI VAR MIDIR?

ÖZET

INTRODUCTION

This work was done through the method of literature review. The purpose of the work is to shed light on the point how religion can be turned into a source of violence. That a field research couldn’t be done in this regard can be accepted as restrictiveness for the work.

At the beginning of this work, some definitions on religion were noted down briefly. Then, the purpose of religion was evaluated roughly. After that, the conditions that turn the religion into a harmful factor for others were examined in two categories: The nature of religion and semantic reasons. Semantic factor is a sort of humane factor at the same time because it is strictly related to human nature. Semantic or humane factor arises from the gaps between the religion in individuals’ minds and the real religion in holy the scriptures. In other words, do the believers understand God’s demands just in a right way or does God want believers to kill the non-believers (infidels) or the ones who don’t believe just as He desires?

The questions here are probably as follows:

“Is the religion in people’s minds the same as the religion that the God declared?”

“Does religion itself have some elements that provoke religious people to some sort of violence or do the believers, especially Muslims twist the teachings of the Quran so as to justify committing the terroristic acts against non-believers?”

The one who looks at some Moslems and Islamic organisations around the world may tend to think that Islam is a religion of violence. To examine the teachings of the Quran carefully can no doubt provide a considerable amount of information about that problem. In this context, the point if the source of the present violence in Islamic geography is the holy book itself or Moslems themselves who misunderstand, misuse or manipulate some teachings of the holy book seems to be a vital matter. At this work, this point was researched and analysed at full length as much as possible.

The purpose of this work which was carried out by the method of literature review is to seek for answers of the questions mentioned above.

1-WHAT IS RELIGION?

Academicians and writers have made lots of definitions of religion so far. Here, it would be useful to bring a few precise definitions and explanations together at the beginning of the work.

After describing how confused and stuck his students become when he asks them to write a definition of “religion”, Kimball claims that those bright students know what religion is in fact; they just have some trouble only while they are defining the notion (Kimball, 2008: 15).

For instance, while J. M. Yinger defines the notion of religion as “a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggle with the ultimate problems of human life. E. B. Tylor says it is just a belief in spiritual beings (Crawford, 2002: 1). Religion is commonly understood to be a system of beliefs and values associated with some practical forms of worship.
However, some Asian religions do not turn around a single God and are inclined to live around various specific philosophies of life (Skidmore, 2007: 4). According to Odumuyiwa, religion is the recognition of all our duties as sacred commands which were bestowed upon the society by God (Odumuyiwa, 2006: 2). However, Martin Marty counts seventeen different definitions of religion. He claims that scholars will never agree on the definition of religion (Marty, 2000: 12). In the same way, Timothy Fitzgerald argues that there is no a consistent notion of religion; the term should be accepted as a sort of mystification (Fitzgerald, 2000: 56). On the other hand, Ardelt sees the notion of religion as quest of a good meaning which intensifies particularly when the person gets older and older. He says that a search of meaning and purpose of life appears to be particularly important during the later years of life when people are faced with inevitable social and physical losses and the approach of death (Ardelt, 2003: 58).

Despite the absence of a universal definition, it is possible to make a number of ways of understanding religion by lightening some key terms. In other words, there is a group of key terms which should be highlighted or perceived clearly before defining the notion of “religion” in a right way. They are “sacred”, “belief”, “transcendence”, “sense of belonging”, “spirituality”, “religiosity”, “culture” and “tradition”. What is more, some of these terms are sometimes used synonymously with the term of “religion”. However, they have different meanings. The concept of “religion”, like secularism, is a recent social and intellectual construction of the Western civilization, and furthermore, it can be described as a fruit of the movement of Reformation (MacCulloch, 2004: 5).

As it is seen the definition of religion changes a lot from one person to another according to their fields of study and research. At this point, John Hick’s opinion seems worth being so significant. He says that religion is one thing to the anthropologist, another to the sociologist, another to the psychologist, another to the Marxist, another to the mystic, another to the Zen Buddhist and yet another to the Jew or Christian. As a result there is a great variety of religious theories of the nature of religion. Hence, there will never be a universally accepted common definition of religion (Crawford, 2002: 3).

2- WHAT IS THE MAIN PURPOSE OF RELIGION?

It must have been clearly understood so far that all religions essentially aim to set up and develope the sense of goodness on humans’ minds. In the meantime, they give good answers the human being’s unchangeable existential pains and desires such as an eternal youth and an ever-lasting life in Paradise versus aging and death in this mortal life. So it gives a pleasant meaning and a noble purpose to life. In this context, Wong says that people discover the meaning and aim of life and also see a better life beyond it when they get older and older. What is more, this kind of perception of life and death diminishes their existential suffers and makes them happy in the later days of their aging (Wong, 2000: 29). Donahue found that genuine religious way of life is closely related to a feeling of purpose in life (Donahue, 1985: 407). Similarly, Bolt reported a greater sense of purpose in life for religiously oriented undergraduates (Bolt, 1975: 122), and likewise, Tomer discovered that religious devotion was positively related to a sense of meaning in life (Tomer and Eliason, 2000: 143). Also, a sense of meaning and purpose in life, are tightly related to happiness and general psychological well-being among people of all age groups (Reker, 1994: 52; Shek, 1992: 191; Zika and Chamberlain, 1992: 138).

In essence, religion is positively associated with life satisfaction and recovery from grief following deprivation (Ulmer, Range, and Smith, 1991: 283), and negatively correlated with fear of death (Rappaport et al., 1993: 374).

However, the religion may turn into a soruce of violence in some cases. The whole human history and today’s world, particularly today’s Islamic geography witness the fact in question.
Here, in the first place, the possible resources of violence in the common natures and the scriptures of public religions will be laid out and analysed in a general viewpoint.

3-TWO IMPORTANT FACTORS THAT PROVOKE VIOLENCE IN RELIGIOUS CIRCLES

In his book titled "The End of Faith", Sam Harris claims that millions of people have died in a number of conflicts in the last ten years and religion has been the explicit cause of all those disasters. But we should proceed with caution when someone presents a causal thesis as "self-evident". So it is not so easy to say that religion alone inspires cruelty and ferocity because for example overwhelming majority of Muslims in the world think and behave in a more moderate way. There may have been plenty of people who believe that blaspheming the Koran is worthy of death but who are unwilling to engage in such mortal judgment because of differential emphasis and experience (Harris, 2005: 29). However, In Purzycki and Gibson’s opinion, one of the primary jobs of any scientist is to establish and explain causality in correlated phenomena. The claim that religion causes violence is as deserving of such a causal explanation as any other empirical observation. Violence is as old as human history and it has so many different causes (Purzycki and Gibson, 2011: 22). For instance Erich Fromm argues that "frustration" and "envy" are the most important and influential causes of violence (Fromm, 2000: 22), and this argument is also strictly related to "economic factor" which constitutes one of two fundamentals of this article.

There are lots of factors that provoke violence depending on religious beliefs in many parts of the world. But the most influential factors can be analysed under two headings: The major of them is religious semantic factor and the minor one is economic factor. Hence, there is one group of scholars convinced that religion causes violence, and another group of scholars think that there is not such a thing in "religion" in general.

3.a) Semantic Factor

First of all, a well-known general fact should be reminded: Everybody understands the same text in different ways and many deeper differences also come out of the same doctrine in time. This can be defined as “semantic factor” and it is the most important factor in diversity of perception even in the same religion. In the meantime, it should be underlined that semantic factor involves the parts of the holy scriptures concerning absolutism, exclusion and violence. Are they really just as what they are or are they just misinterpreted by the believers? These questions need to be clarified.

It should be pointed out in the beginning that the violence wasn’t invented totally by religion itself. For as long as man has existed, there has also been violence on Earth. In the human world, there has never been a paradisiacal society in which violence plays no part (Küng, 2005: 254). But it should honestly be confessed that there are some elements which might be interpreted for justification of violence towards the others in the most well-known holy scriptures like Qoran, Bible and Torah doesn’t seem to be denied easily. In other words, some scholars have always alleged or at least accepted that religions have some common features that are likely to provoke violence and social conflicts. For example Marty argues that religion has a particular tendency to be divisive and therefore violent (Marty, 2000: 25).

The fact that there is a connection between religion and violence is beyond doubt in today’s world. But what is that uncomfortable connection although all of religions have always advised love, peace, tolerance, and reconciliation?

According to Juergensmeyer, one of the probable answers of this question is that general statements about the connection between religion and violence are false by definition. Religion seems to be a powerful contributor to violence as well as a unique source of reconciliation and peacemaking.
because it includes both of those elements. When the complex relationship between these two elements is unraveled, the variety in and between religious traditions, the different effects of dimensions of religions, and many causes and effects of violence may be explained in a more reasonable way (Juergensmeyer, 2003: 67).

Secondly, religions imposes the individuals and society a one-sided viewpoint. The teachings in religious scriptures, proclamations in religious books and pamphlets and Internet sites do not always convey a message of love, respect, peace, toleration or reconciliation. There are some fundamentalist currents that support hate, discrimination, and violence in nearly every religious tradition. Today the well-known examples of this case are right-wing evangelicals who support anti-abortionist violence, Islamic fundamentalists who draw on the language of Jihad in their cultural conflict with western Christianity, Hindu extremists who have been found to destroy churches and attack Muslim minorities in India, and Zionists who engage in militant action for the Promised Land. Each of these religious extremes not only refutes the image of peaceful religion, but also claims all the ways out of theirs would a betrayal of real religion (Appleby, 2000: 39).

Another possible explanation of the relationship between religion and violence is the dimension of individual differences which is is no doubt tightly related to the semantic factor. In the case of violence, this implies that we have to distinguish between the various positions involved (Twemblow, 2000, 756).

Marty gives a list of five “features” that mark a religion and explain the relationship between religion and violence slightly. Religion requires followers to behave in certain ways, and politics and governments also demand certain behaviours. Marty draws a conclusion from the point mentioned above that it becomes luminous that religion carries risks and can be perceived by others as something dangerous. So it can cause lots of troubles in the public space (Marty, 2000: 25). Likewise, according to Parekh’s approach, religion is very harmful to political life in some ways although it can make a valuable contribution to it. It can be deleterious and destructive inasmuch as it is generally dogmatic, absolutist, self-righteous and naturally impatient of compromise. It arouses powerful and sometimes irrational impulses and can easily destabilize society, cause political chaos and devastation within a country and bring about a real hell on earth. It often breeds intolerance of other religions as well as of internal dissent, and has a propensity towards violence (Parekh, 1999: 72).

Absolutism in religions seem to set up a barrier in front of an active communication among individuals, groups of people and nations of different religions. In Richard Wentz’s opinion, one of the instincts leading the person to violence in religion may be absolutism because it cuts off communication first of all. People create absolutes out of fear of their own limitations. Absolutes are projections of a fictional limited self, and people react with violence when others do not accept them. The truth is that religions have a peculiar tendency toward absolutism (Wentz, 1993: 37). Therefore, religion enhances the liability to divide the things good and evil, sacred and profane and in the same way people into “us” and “them”, friends and enemies, by associating divisions with God and an eternal other world. What makes religious violence particularly savage and relentless is that it puts worldly conflicts in a context of “cosmic war” (Juergensmeyer, 2003: 146). This case makes the problem clearer when the authors in question attempt to explain why religion is so prone to violence. In short, all those mentioned views can be sorted into three categories theoretically: Religion is absolutist, irrational and divisive (Cavanaugh, 2007: 4).

After all those counted factors which degrade or cut off the communication among different communities of the same societies and among different nations, Küng mentions some results of the fact that he already analysed. He says that ones who claim the opposite have to show the real reasons of the endless holy wars from the early ages of the world up to today (Küng, 2005: 257).
Cavanaugh has an interesting approach with regard to the war itself. According to him, war itself often turns into a kind of religious practice. In other words, war provides a reason to kill, to be killed and to be violent in one way or another in the name of God. Hence, war itself is a ‘philosophy’ or ‘worldview’ in the eye of nearly all religious communities (Cavanaugh, 2007: 6).

The instinct here to enhance the violence in the name of religion is to face some risks in the worldly life for reaching at the bigger advantages in the hereafter.

As to the second point regarding the resources of violence in religion, there have been some allegations to prove that the theoretical elements of violence are not only in the Quran but also in the Bible and Torah. Some of them argue that the recent acts of violence in the name of Allah against the “infidels” hostile to Islam, are not different than the use of violence by ancient Israel or by Medieval church leaders. For example Woodward refers to the stories of violence in the Bible and claims that the Bible tells violent stories which are used in the name of the God. It is highly enthusiastic in his support of the Israelites warriors who drowned their enemies in the ocean (Woodward, 2002: 55).

In these instances, it is obvious that violence was used to kill people who were supposed to be God’s enemies. However, some scholars severely refuse this kind of generalization on religions and religious people. According to Bacchiocchi, who is one of them, it should be accepted that it is not right to judge Islam as a violent religion on the basis of some terrorist acts done by those who claim to follow its teachings or behave and act in the name of God. If those allegations are true, the same things must be said about Christianity in a way because everybody knows that the Catholic Church became a formidable ‘terroristic organization’ that organized crusades to eradicate Muslims, Jews, and so-called “heretics” during the Middle Ages (Bacchiocchi, 2002: 24).

At this point, it should be underlined that human beings have different levels and forms of mental structures to interpret every concept and event according to his/her intellectual level, worldview and cultural backgrounds. So the holy scriptures have always been interpreted in different ways and this fact caused different kinds of forms in religions to come out through time. This case refers both to humane and semantic factor. To put it in another way, humane factor is also explained while semantic factor is being evaluated. However, there are some verses called “sword verses” in the Quran which advises to combat against the enemies and also may be taken as references for some kind of violence by bad-intentioned people or uneducated masses. Some of them are as follows:

“Fighting is prescribed for you, and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you, and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But God knoweth, and ye know not” (The Holy Quran: 2: 216).

“Truly God loves those who fight in His cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure that ye believe in God and His Apostle, and that ye strive (your utmost) in the cause of God, with your property and your persons. That will be best for you, if ye but knew! He will forgive you your sins, and admit you to gardens (Paradise) beneath which rivers flow, and to beautiful mansions in gardens of eternity. That is indeed the supreme achievement. And another (favor will He bestow), which ye do love—help from God and a speedy victory. So give the glad tidings to the believers” (The Holy Quran, 61: 4-11-13).

“But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practice regular charity, then open the way for them: for God is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful (The holy Quran, 9: 5)”, this order is specifically current in case of being under a violent attack and besides not only one option is presented or offered to
Moslems in that case. Yet, it is obvious that those verses are inclined to be misunderstood or interpreted by the ignorant masses as if they show a general rule for all times. The following verses also should be taken into consideration in this respect: For example, the Koran says: “Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: For thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His path, and who receive guidance” (The holy Quran, 16: 125). “Nor can goodness and evil be equal. Repel (evil) with what is better” (The holy Quran, 41: 34). In another place, it says: “Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed. Allah does not like transgressors” (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2: 90).

The prophet Muḥammad is also credited with saying: “The best jihād is [speaking] a word of justice to a tyrannical ruler.” The qualifying phrase in the path of God specifically distinguishes the activity of jihād as furthering or promoting God’s kingdom on earth. It can be done, for example, by simply striving to behave ethically and by speaking without causing harm to others, to put it briefly, by being a good-hearted, merciful, understanding and helpful to all people with no exception (Reuven, 1992: 17).

Religious conflict and violence such as religious nationalism, religious civil wars, or religious terrorism sets them apart from other forms of conflict and violence because they have a special logic, divine meaning and purpose or causal texture of their own. Hence, they need to be evaluated and analysed on a different terminological ground (Brubaker, 2015: 2). When the issue is evaluated from the perspective of social learning theory, a basic theoretical framework for those who have exploited religion in perpetrating criminal acts and violence can be seen clearly. They are brainwashed into believing that some form of eternal reward and bliss (like young girls in the Paradise) waiting for them if they continue their activities (Gwamna, 2011: 11). Beyond doubt, one of the main factors which negatively influence the image of Islam and Muslims in the West is the acts of violence of members of some extreme Islamic political movements. In this regard, some violent events which have predominated the media in the last thirty years were taken as reference, for instance the attack on the World Trade Centre in the United States of America in 2001, the Algerian civil war, the Iranian revolution, the Rushdie affair, the revolution in Afghanistan (Shadid ve van Koningsveld, 2002: 183). In this context, some so-called violent political Islamic organisations like Boko Haram and ISIS which generally flourish in poor and low-educated Moslem societies are some typical movements of the misinterpretation and misuse of the religion. This is a sort of accident of communication between people and the holy books. People, especially religious ones usually perceive the teachings of the holy books insufficiently, fairly superficially and wrongly. According to Omomia, for example Boko Haram has killed numerous people in God’s name in Nigeria (Omomia, 2015: 62).

3.b) Economic Factor

Some thinkers and philosophers think that economy has always been a bigger determining factor for everything including religion and traditional culture. Karl Marks is one of them. According to him, instead of making cultural history material, which was the next radical move, it was made dependent, secondary, ‘superstructural’: A realm of ‘mere’ ideas, beliefs, arts, customs, determined by the basic material history (Williams, 1977: 19). Some social scientists put an emphasis on a linear causal relationship in which structural strains, such as modernization, industrialization, or an economic crisis, cause psychological discomfort, which, in turn, produces collective action (Viktorovicz and Kaltenthaler, 2006: 297).

Kimball clearly assures us that religion is a central feature of human life and many indications of it can be seen in everyday life acknowledges the problem, but he does not describe the
problem as merely semantic. He says that the most important factor in religious violence is obviously the economic one (Kimball, 2008: 15).

Additionally, it would be useful to remind Erich Fromm’s views on violence at this point. He argues that one of the variations of violence is “reactional violence” which includes “frustration” and “envy”. What is more impaotant here is that these sorts of violent behaviours are mostly based on economic conditions (Fromm, 2000: 22).

As is is seen clearly, poverty and socio-economic inequality have always fostered the violence and conflicts everywhere in the world from the beginning of history. Economic inequality and deep indigence in Islamic world has been a well-known fact for centuries. If there is a deep inequality and poverty somewhere, love, respect and fraternity vanish there sooner or later because poor economic conditions have a great influence on people’s way of understanding life and religion. Socio-economic contexts are very important for understanding these movements, but they hardly provide a full explanation for them.

The majority of research done in this regard as yet argues that many people, especially intellectuals in Islamic world thinks that the underlying impetus for Islamic activism derives from the crises produced by failed secular modernization projects in the Middle East (Waltz, 1986: 259). In this context, rapid socio-economic transformations and manipulated economic policies concentrated wealth among the Westernized elites. In contrast, large swathes of the population faced insufficient municipal services and infrastructure, housing shortages, declining real wages, rising unemployment and prices (Ibrahim, 1980: 430). This also means that these processes often have a socio-economic dimension. The conjunction of identity problems and economic exclusion creates a fertile ground for radicalization and violence. Just at this point, Islamisation brings a sense of existence to them and radicalization gives them a new dignity as warriors of a fair cause against a corrupt government and a ruthless society. Particularly inhabitants of poor suburbs can be easily manipulated under these conditions. Obviously, individuals under these conditions usually reacted to the situation by seeking to re-anchor themselves through a religious nomenclature and also tending to join the promising radical movements and religious political parties (Olesen and Khosrokhavar, 2009: 11).

According to some sources, for example various radical Islamic movements in Central Asia took some violent actions from time to time in order to blow up the economy of the state and thereby exacerbate the worsening of the lives of the common people, thus causing their increased dissatisfaction with the state (Olcott, 2007: 29). In outward show, huge numbers of unhappy young people are a major threat to internal stability throughout the Muslem world today. The Siren Song of fanatics is increasingly becoming most enticing when economic, political, social, and cultural crises come together, and when people feel that they have been scorned. Moreover, many policies of the governments in the region which increase the feelings of humiliation of the people are going on throwing gasoline on the fire (Richards, 2002: 24).

**CONCLUSION**

In this work, the origines of religious violence were examined and analysed on two bases as semantic and economic factor. In other words, the fact that religion fosters the violence particularly in the Middle East and wider Islamic world moves on these two factors. However, it should be pointed out from the beginning that more predominant and determinative factor here is semantic one.

Although religions have a propensity towards absolutism and violence and there are also various elements in some religious scriptures that provoke religious people to some sort of violence, all of them advise and promise the Earth a better and more peaceful life substantially. In this instance,
it is clearly understood that the current violence in some parts of the world emerges partly from the misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the available scriptures. To put it in another way, it can be said that practical reflections of religion in the course of life partly depend on the way the person perceives or the way he/she wants to perceive the teachings of the Scripture in terms of his/her mental capacity, intentions and culture particularly when the words of violence in the Scriptures are detached from the context.

Normally almost all religions are based on the common universal humanitarian values. What is more important here is that the scriptures of all religions are accepted “holy” because they are believed to be bestowed upon the humanity directly from God. A person who believes a holy book has to accept and bow its verdicts without any question. So he/she can easily be cheated and manipulated on religion may slaughter even his parents because religion doesn’t promise him only a brilliant future in the world but also an eternal life in the Paradise for his/her religious practices. So the effect of religion on individuals is always much stronger than anything else. However, this property of religion makes it the most suitable means of exploitation at the same time. The masses and individuals could easily be cheated and led to dangerous places through the misinterpretation or utilization of some flexible statements of the religious scriptures. In today’s world, it is said that there are lots of examples of this kind of utilization such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaida and ISIS.

At this point, the stunning fact which comes into the open should be put forward clearly anymore: Communication accidents like misunderstanding or misinterpretation do not happen only among people, but also between people and God, or in other words, between religious people and their own holy books. This case has always caused a great deal of violence among people, groups or nations of different religions throughout the history. What is worse is that those kinds of nasty incidents did not remain in the past. They are unfortunately going on in different parts of the world today.

General absolutist character of all religions should be added here as another element of semantic factor which cuts off communication to a certain extent among individuals, groups of people and nations.

The second big factor, the economic one, is as important as the first one. If the people are very poor in an area, they are not usually educated enough at the same time because poverty is always hand in hand with ignorance all over the world. It means that nobody should expect them to understand the complicated holy scriptures as they should be understood. Thus the famous religious organisations mentioned above which have always flourished in the poorest parts of Islamic world seem to verify this rule practically.

From the economic point of view, the violence partly arises from Islam’s worldview which wants to shape and order the whole world from the individuals’ lives to the international relations. It offers a better economic order, too. On the other hand, the problem partly seems to be a sort of misuse and exploitation of religion by some evil people.

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