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DISCOURSE ON MODERN TERRORISM

Abstract: In this paper author discusses the characteristics of discourse on modern terrorism. When it comes to the terrorism ordinary people gain knowledge mostly through media. The influence of specific image of terrorism is not limited to citizens who live in countries which faced with a terrorist threat or concrete attack but goes further to the different part of the world, some of them very far from the possibility of terrorist attack. Demystification of discourse on modern terrorism begins with analysis of the phenomenological dimension of modern terrorism, in terms of being defined and assigned. We can talk about two different approaches: older and newer, in understanding the terrorism. The new approach gains momentum with the events of 11 September and took shape after similar events on European continent. At the core of understanding of modern terrorism is the discourse on religious-based Islamic terrorism. Specific discourse on modern terrorism affects how it is understood by the general public, and it influences, in particular, the creation of stereotypes about a modern terrorists and the spread of fear of terrorism. The formation and maintenance of stereotypes about modern terrorism, which emphasizes the role of Islam and members of the Islamic community in planning and carrying out terrorist actions, creates a growing gap among people, especially in countries affected by terrorist attacks. The discourse on modern terrorism also implies an appropriate perception of the risk of terrorism all over the world. From that point of view risk of terrorism is real and constant. Similar situation is in Serbia and in that sense the results of limited research about perception of terrorism in Serbia presented in work show to a certain extant the existence of such global influence.

Key words: discourse, perception, modern terrorism, fear, stereotypes.

INTRODUCTION

The perception of some phenomena is sometimes more important than their actual characteristics and proportions. Since the possibility of direct knowledge and understanding of such things is limited, we are forced to obtain information indirectly. The most common way of indirect information is media content on a topic that interests us. Terrorism belongs to phenomena that are unknown to most citi-

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zens which create an image of it thanks to media reporting. Although the majority of people do not have direct experience with terrorist attacks it is obvious that terrorism has an explicit potential to alarm the general public. The mere possibility that a terrorist act can be performed has a more powerful impact on the public's perception than an objective risk analysis. Media's interest and overzealous dedication to reporting on terrorist attacks have resulted in catastrophic images in people's consciousness whenever terrorism is mentioned – sudden death of numerous innocent people, usually random passers-by.

Although terrorism is not a new phenomenon, the terrorist attack on the United States of America (hereinafter: USA) that occurred exactly two decades ago (September 11, 2001) marked a turning point in terms of understanding this phenomenon on a global scale. From that moment, the establishment and maintenance of an appropriate global discourse on „new or modern terrorism" began. It is a discourse on a qualitatively new phenomenon in relation to the previous forms in which terrorism manifested itself. Such a turn implied the creation of a pattern of a typical terrorist event in which the roles of attackers and victims were assigned, and the appropriate motive also found its place. The media coverage of primarily Western media has adapted to this pattern and has begun to send appropriate messages to the general public. In other words, a specific discourse on modern terrorism has been established.

In this paper the dominant discourse on modern terrorism will be discussed in a way how Michel Foucault defines that term: as a group of statements that makes up the language, that is, the way of presenting knowledge on a certain topic, at a certain historical moment[1]. The existence of a certain discourse means that there is an established way of thinking about a specific topic in a given social community, which is manifested through numerous statements, texts or sources[2]. Understanding the dominant discourse on terrorism is connected to understanding of media reporting on terrorism. In order to analyze and understand media reporting on terrorism, special attention should be paid to the definition of discourse, which is the verbal expression of ideology, or one of the battlefields where power struggles take place. Identifying dominant ideologies should help analyze the way the media reports on terrorism[3]. The power inherent in discourse mainly belongs to those who at a given moment in society have a dominant position in economic or political terms[4]. That means the discourse is not only a bearer of meaning, but also a geopolitical and strategic tool.

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1   S. Hall /1992/: The west and the rest: discourse and power – in: *Formation of Modernity* (S. Hall, B. Gieben, eds.), Cambridge, cited according to: K. Tompson /2003/: *Moralna panika* [orig. Tompson K. /1998/: *Moral Panics*], Beograd, pp. 33, 34.

2   A. Ilić /2017/: *Mediji i kriminalitet-kriminološki aspekti,* doctoral dissertation defended at Faculty of Law, University of Belgrade, Beograd, p. 101.

3   A. Ilić: *op. cit.*, pp. 104, 105.

4   L. J. McMullan /2006/: News, Truth, and the Recognition of Corporate Crime, *Revue canadienne de criminologie et de justice pénale*, n° 2, vol. 48, p. 910.

The analysis of the dominant discourse will be done by comparing the traditional and current approach in defining terrorism in order to notice the differences in dealing with terrorism in previous period and today. In that sense, special attention will be given to the discourse on religious-based Islamic terrorism which is being equaled with the „new terrorism" and which targets Western democracy, i.e. the value symbols of Western society. The imposition of an appropriate discourse globally, created numerous consequences like the specific perception of Muslims. On the other hand, although it seems that acts of terrorism in the last two decades on the territory of Europe and North America are more frequent than during the 20th century, the statistics say the opposite. Regardless of the imperfect methodological procedure, the statistical approach is crucial for monitoring and analyzing the phenomenology of terrorism as well as for unraveling the inadequacy of the dominant discourse on new terrorism. The misperception of terrorism in modern terms leads to the neglect of dealing with other types of terrorism which occur almost on a daily basis in different latitudes and which leave grave consequences on the local population, as can be seen through the numerous examples in Africa.

Specific perception of modern terrorism leads to creation of different stereotypes about modern terrorists which influence the behavior of people in everyday life, in different situations and sometimes making lives very hard of those targeted by such stereotypes. Fear of modern terrorism is also one of the consequences of dominant discourse but also connected with the process of globalization of risks.

Globalization of a certain perception of terrorism, and the fear thereof, directly impact the understanding and behavior of people who live in no risk countries when it comes to terrorism although it is not certainly the only factor that manifests the influence. Having in mind all possible limitations, the results of a research conducted on how terrorism is perceived in Serbia and connection between global discourse and that perception will be presented in this paper as a important starting point for further research.

1. TERRORISM – THE TRADITIONAL DEFINITION VERSUS THE DOMINANT DISCOURSE ON MODERN TERRORISM

Terrorism is the central phenomenon for many different scientific disciplines which, each from its own perspective in an attempt of defining, portray certain dimensions important for its understanding. On the other side, a great social danger coming from crime of terrorism in its most general sense[5], along with serious consequences that terrorist acts leave, has influenced certain changes in the sphere of normative regulation of these issues. In modern countries exists the corresponding normative framework for tackling the issue of terrorism, which is defining primarily, as a type of criminality which manifestation is incriminated in the form of various

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5   Terrorism in the general sense encompasses all those criminal acts that refer to the phenomenon of terrorism and which are foreseen in various international documents whose signatory countries are obliged to foresee those acts in their national laws.

criminal acts[6]. It could be said, in that sense, if terrorism is defined mainly as a type of criminal activity, then the expected reaction of the countries is to use the mechanisms of criminal prosecution. However, these matters are not so simple. Regardless of the general readiness of the countries to tackle the issue of terrorism, achieving greater progress towards a better control of this phenomenon is made harder by the fact that a universal definition of terrorism does not exist, first and foremost within the United Nations (hereinafter: UN). Beside that terrorism is an explicitly political occurrence which always arises with political intentions and always exists in the domain of politics[7]. The symbiosis of politics and terrorism affects, to the greatest extent, the possibility of establishing a unique, universal definition of terrorism which would make everyone content. However, the main issue with defining terrorism does not lie in potential difficulties to reach a consensus about important elements of this occurrence, but in the application of the definition, i.e. in recognizing or not recognizing actual manifestations of terrorist activities.

Regardless of the multidisciplinary approach to terrorism analysis, various theoretical and normative definitions, and different levels of problem observation (the national and international framework), it is possible to identify certain characteristics which can be noticed in most definitions and which, connected in such a way, attribute a special quality to this occurrence, making it different from other similar phenomena (such as terror or guerrilla movements). If we were to define terrorism from the point of view of criminology, then we would treat it as a type of political crime in the broad sense, i.e. a type of criminal activity which tends to use unpredictable violence in order to accomplish changes in the society[8]. Thus, we do not provide a definition which would define terrorism in a specific manner and make it recognizable in comparison to similar phenomena.

One of the most significant authors in this field – Paul Wilkinson, points out that terrorism is the systematic use of injury, murder and destruction, or threat of same, so as to create a climate of terror, to publicize a cause and to intimidate a wider target into conceding to the terrorists' aims[9]. In a similar manner Brian Jenkins suggests that terrorism refers to the use or threat of violence to create an atmosphere of fear and alarm and, thus, bring about a political result[10]. Somewhat of a different definition of terrorism can be found in Erin McLaughlin's definition which indicates that terrorism is essentially a premeditated political act whose in-

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6   As many modern criminal laws, Serbia's Criminal Code („Official Gazette of the RS", n° 85/2005, 88/2005 – corrigendum, 107/2005 – corrigendum, 72/2009, 111/2009, 121/2012, 104/2013, 108/2014, 94/2016 and 35/2019) foresees, within the chapter XXXIV which regulates criminal acts against humanity and other goods protected by the international law, the following criminal acts which can be classified under terrorism in the general sense: terrorism (Art. 391), public incitement of a terrorist act execution (Art. 391a), recruitment and training for a terrorist act execution (Art. 391b), use of deadly equipment (Art. 391c), destroying and damaging a nuclear facility (Art. 391d), compromising a person who is under international protection (Art. 392), financing of terrorism (Art. 393) and terrorist association (Art. 393a).

7   D. Simeunović /2009/: *Terorizam*, Beograd, p. 66.

8   Đ. Ignjatović /2019/: *Kriminologija*, Beograd, p. 129.

9   P. Wilkinson /2005/: *International terrorism: the changing threat and the EU's response*, Paris, p. 9.

10   E. Carrabine et al. /2009/: *Criminology: A sociological introduction,* Abingdon, p. 436.

tention is to influence policy by creating an atmosphere of fear or threat, generally for a political, religious or ideological cause[11]. These are just some examples of defining terrorism, which indicate to what would be the key elements of this type of crime: use of violence (or the threat thereof), public intimidation and the accomplishment of a certain political objective. Only one definition portrays explicit reasons for committing a terrorist act (a political, religious or ideological cause), which does not decrease the value of their existence, but rather indicates that when analyzing the nature of a certain event which is suspected to be of a terrorist background, the most important thing is not discovering the „why", but necessarily shifting focus towards accomplishing a certain political objective by using the aforementioned mechanisms (violence and intimidation).

Based on these singled out definitions, it is possible to conclude that, apart from their mutual characteristics, they are set apart far enough so as to encompass different manifestations of terrorism. Such an approach was characteristic for terrorism analysis in the 20th century, however, the end of the past millennium and the beginning of the new one were marked by the development of the academic debate on the creation of *new* or *post-modern* form of terrorism. Although academic debates predate the events of 11 September, the expression *new terrorism* began to be used from that event as a popular currency among journalists and politicians seeking to distinguish between the activities of Islamic groups such as Al Qaeda and those of traditional terrorist organizations which have operated locally under united ideological objectives and strict hierarchies (such as Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (hereinafter: ETA) or the Irish Republican Army (hereinafter: IRA))[12].

A difference between the old-style and new-style terrorism is made in the mainstream (conventional) academic circles, where the latter one is defined as the child of the globalization era. In that sense Anthony Giddens points out that the old-style terrorism is less violent and tied to local objectives, usually linked to nationalist separatist tendencies[13]. Old-style terrorism can become more violent and destructive where it shades into something closer to civil war, as in Israel/Palestine or Sri Lanka. On the other hand, new-style terrorism is, according to Giddens, more extensive in regards to its objectives, characterized by better organization and technology, which altogether makes its potential far greater when it comes to causing damage, most of all in the sense of human casualties. Other authors also compared different terrorist activities such as those that IRA members executed on one side and those of Islamic terrorists on the other side, and have underlined a more obvious difference between these two types of terrorism is the modus operandi; suicide bombings, for example, as a tactic that was never employed by the IRA[14].

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11   E. Carrabine et al.: *ibid.,* p. 436.
12   G. Mythen, S. Walklate /2006/: Communicating the terrorist risk: Harnessing a culture of fear?, *Crime, Media, Culture*, n° 2, vol. 2, p. 125.
13   A. Giddens /2005/: Scaring people may be the only way to avoid the risks of new-style terrorism, *NewStatesment*, https://www.newstatesman.com/node/161244, 07. March 2021.
14   M. Clement, V. Scalia /2012/: The Strategy of Tension: Understanding State Labeling Processes and Double-Binds, *Critical Criminology,* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612–020–09494–5

However, if statistical data on the number of deaths caused by terrorism in the period from 1970s to 2017 is analyzed, different conclusions can be drawn. According to the data from the Global Terrorism Database (2018)[15], between 1970–1980 in Western Europe, a trend of a couple of hundred death cases per year (as a consequence of terrorism) is noted (and some years are even marked by over 400 deaths, mostly in Great Britain because of IRA's increased activity in those years). The new millennium is characterized by a far lower number of deaths caused by terrorism. Although large terrorist attacks have somewhat changed the statistical picture of the effect of „modern terrorists" (planting a bomb in a train – Madrid (2004), like the attacks in London (2005), Norway (2011), Paris (2015), Nice and Berlin (2015), Manchester and Barcelona (2017), significantly disturbed not only the European public, but also the international one), the fact is that it was still a small part within the global framework, e.g. the death toll from terrorism in Western Europe amounts to 0.3% when compared to the total number of deaths caused by terrorism during 2017. When taking a look into the period between 2000–2017, one can draw the conclusion that the total number of deaths caused by terrorism in Western Europe is less than 1000 – which corresponds to the death toll from the period of two or three years during 1970s, in the same area[16]. Other authors have dealt with the analysis of statistical data and came to similar conclusions – the threat of terror has increased in certain areas of the world (e.g. on the Middle East, South Asia and the post-Soviet area), while in other places, it significantly decreased (in the USA, East Central Europe and also in Western Europe)[17]

Having in mind all the above-mentioned statistical data[18], it can be concluded that the basic issue is that, in fact, the concentration to the so-called modern types of terrorism in the new millennium has caused the whole phenomenon of terrorism to equate with what is understood as *new terrorism.* Thus, a far broader definition is being narrowed down to the framework which is sufficient to analyze only one possible type of terrorism.

Although within that kind of definition all the traditional key elements of terrorism are also present, it introduces another one which qualitatively changes the perspective of dealing with terrorism in this day and age. This new element is not of a general character in comparison to the traditional elements, which leads to level replacement error in meaning of generality, so something which is just one

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15   Global Terrorism Database 2018, https://www.start.umd.edu/data-tools/global-terrorism-database-gtd 01. July 2021.

16   Past years have been marked by the same trend, while a constant decline of the total number of terrorist attacks is noticed within the global framework. More information on this can be found at: https://www.start.umd.edu/publication/global-terrorism-overview-terrorism-2019 and https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTI-2020-web-1.pdf

17   L. Köhalmi /2016/: Terrorism and human rights, *Journal of Eastern-European Criminal Law*, n° 1, pp. 161, 162.

18   Regardless of the shortcomings of statistics as a methodological approach, it represents the most significant source of information when terrorism is concerned, especially because of the fact that this type of crime is characterized by a small dark figure considering the terrorists' tendency to be noticed, i.e. receive the corresponding media attention.

of the possible types is represented as terrorism in a general sense. No one will, certainly, declare that there are no other types of terrorism, but clear insistance on an explicit type of terrorism by various participants (politicians, journalists and academics) followed by corresponding narration will create an impression in the public, i.e. discourse on new, comprehensive terrorism. This new terrorism belongs to the category referred to as religious-based terrorism, which is just one manifestation of this occurrence[19]. The religious aspect of the religious-based terrorism is further narrowed down by pinpointing solely Islamic terrorism as a global threat for the survival of many countries, especially those that belong to the democracy of the West. Thus, Islamic terrorism becomes the paradigm of modern terrorism.

New terrorism is usually connected with strategic terrorism attacks which are of high importance because the media coverage and political discourse about them determines the terrorism perception of the average citizen. Our image on terrorism, similar to security, is formed by subjective (media, political discourse) and objective (data, facts) factors. It is important that the two approaches do not diverge significantly"[20].

Establishing the aforementioned discourse did not begin with the demolition of the „Twin Towers", it already then emerged to the surface in its full capacity, i.e. that event served as the turning point for raising the level of interest to the highest extent possible[21]. On the other hand, new terrorism has a somewhat different meaning for Europe. Although the events of 11 September influenced, without any doubt whatsoever, the perceptions of modern terrorism in Europe, local terrorist attacks have, in particular, shaped the European view of new terrorism. Tragic incidents such as the London bombings by radical Muslims, three of whom were British born, and the killing of the provocative Dutch film-maker Theo van Gogh by a young Dutch Muslim, were interpreted explicitly as *home-grown terrorism*. Terrorism was explicitly linked with problems that have deeper roots in modern western societies, a reading that generated fierce discussions about radicalization, the integration of Muslims and the role of religion and (radical) Islam in modern western societies[22].

The issue of discourse on modern terrorism affects how it is understood by the general public, and it influences, in particular, the formation of stereotypes about a modern terrorist, which changed the lives of many people, among which most have no contact with terrorism in any way.

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19   Apart from religious-based terrorism, it is possible to single out the following categories as well: ideologically motivated terrorism and ethno-separatist terrorism. See more in: (D. Simeunović: *op. cit.*).

20   F. Kaiser, P. Tálas /2016/: Political Violence and Terrorism, *Defence review: The Central journal of the Hungarian defence forces*, n° 1, vol. 144, p. 33.

21   G. La Free, L. Dugan /2009/: Research on Terrorism and Countering Terrorism, *Crime & Justice: A Review of Research*, vol. 38, p. 423.

22   E. R. Kleemans /2008/: Terrorism, Organised Crime and European Criminology, *European Journal of Criminology,* n° 1, vol. 5, p. 7.

2. STEREOTYPES ABOUT A MODERN TERRORIST

Directing America's and Europe's attention towards new terrorism lead to strengthened sensitivity towards it along with excessive affiliation of Islam to terrorism. Such perception, i.e. stereotypical understanding of new terrorism exclusively in the context of Islam vs Christianity, i.e. West world, resulted in a plethora of consequences. One of them is attaching labels and stigma to members of the Islam community in the context of terrorism, no matter whether in the USA or another West-European country. The fact remains that many of those who have been labeled or stigmatized were born/raised on the territories of the above-mentioned countries and that a large number of them are, most probably, out of touch with the world of extremism and terrorism. Regardless, how new terrorism is perceived shapes the attitudes towards them in different ways, be it formal or informal, with numerous examples, starting from how differently and harshly they are treated at the airport control compared to how „non-Muslims" are treated, or even when certain relations undergo some changes, although they should be freed from those labels, such as friendships or romantic relationships.

The outcome of insisting globally on an omnipresent and constant danger from religious-based Islamic terrorism resulted in the formation and maintenance of stereotypes about the Islam community members, marking them as potentially risky individuals with high odds of taking part in terrorist activities. The assumption is made that such individuals are suspicious *a priori* and that certain measures should be taken so as to remove or, which is the more common case, confirm the suspicion (the latter action being a more probable one). This kind of „special" treatment is not given to members of other communities, at least not when the general public is concerned. According to the research conducted in the USA and according to official data after 11 September, the number of hate crimes towards members of Islam community rose (even 1600% between the year 2000 and 2001, according to the information of Federal Bureau of Investigation – FBI)[23]. It can be said that Islamophobia has occurred, which can be defined as unnecessary and groundless culture of fear against Muslims and Islam religion. Namely, the term Islamophobia may be defined sociologically as the fear that the Western society has against Muslims[24]. The idea of Islamophobia makes fear, hatred, or discrimination against Islam religion or Muslims, and includes a kind of racism[25].

The corresponding discourse of the Islam world is not altering significantly, not even when, in reality, the labeled participants and victims shift their roles[26].

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23   D. L. Oswald /2005/: Understanding Anti-Arab Reactions Post-9/11: The Role Of Threats, Social Categories, and Personal Ideologies, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology,* n° 35, p. 1176.

24   That fear, subconsciously ingrained in Westerners, was formed for the first time in the areas of Asia Minor known as the „frontier" where Muslim and European Christian armies confronted during the Crusades.

25   A. Bordbar et al. /2020/: Globalization and Islamophobia: Critical View at Globalization's Impact on Expansion of Islamophobia, *Journal of Politics and Law*, n° 4, vol. 13, p. 76.

26   A. Maluf /2016/: *Ubilački identiteti* [orig. Maalouf A. /1998/: *Les Identités meurtriéres*], Beograd, pp. 38, 39.

A great example of this is the terrorist attack which took place in March 2019 in New Zealand, in the city of Christchurch, where 49 people lost their lives in the attacks on two mosques. Based on the allegations that appeared in the media (Radio Free Europe 2019), the messages which were heard from the local officials after the attack were: „I believe that the reason for targeting us is an intentional decision to target our city and our country, as we are a safe city and country" (madam mayor of Christchurch), while the Prime Minister of New Zealand referred to the perpetrators of the terrorist act as „violent extremist right-wing terrorists". In principle, it has not been clearly conveyed to the public that there was a religious-based motif behind the attack, which was not even covered up by the perpetrators, yet the whole event stayed in the shadow of the dominant discourse on the modern religious-based Islamic terrorism. However, the fact remains that the attack differed from many recent terrorist attacks because they highlighted that terrorists are not always Muslim, and that victims of terrorism can be Muslim. The results of public opinion research after the attack in Christchurch have shown that the relationship between perceiving Muslims as threatening and support for the punitive counter-terrorism policies changed after that attack. An interaction effect revealed that the strength of the association between the two variables was weaker among participants surveyed[27]. Recently, there was another terrorist attack in New Zeland, in an Auckland. Media reported that police shot and killed a „violent extremist" after he stabbed and wounded at least six people in an Auckland supermarket. The officials announced very quickly that attacker was supporter of the Islamic state and he was under the police surveillance for a while[28]. We can see here two different narratives from the first moment, in the first situation the negation of terrorism and in the second the emphasis on that circumstance. The conclusion is that nothing really has changed in discourse of modern terrorism.

The relationship between the Muslims and Christians has never been ideal, it can even be said that there was always a certain dose of tension, thus the tiniest incentive was sufficient to make the matters worse. However, the question of consequences resulting from understanding new terrorism through different treatment of Islam community members in West Europe and the USA is not as simple. Seeing individuals as Muslims, and in such a way potential terrorists, sometimes it is completely arbitrary. Let us discuss the example of the aforementioned issue of airport control all over the world, which became significantly different after the events of 11 September. Those countries which have had direct experience with terrorist attacks by new terrorists, pay the most attention to this control. Airport security officers, logically, do not have enough time to get into deep analysis of each individual passenger who goes past them. Therefore, in order to bridge the resource limitations, and still conduct a more „thorough" control, they hastily choose who to check thoroughly. This means, most frequently, that passengers will be singled out because of their name and surname and/or nationality, i.e. citizenship. Quick visual

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27   H. Williamson, K. Murphy /2020/: Animus toward Muslims and its association with public support for punitive counter-terrorism policies: did the Christchurch terrorist attack mitigate this association?, *Journal of Experimental Criminology.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292–020–09450-x

28   (BBC, 3 September 2021), https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/svet-54788245, 10. May 2021.

„identification" based on the assumed appearance of Islam community members, i.e. specific anthropological characteristics (facial features, skin color, etc.) plays a significant part, as well. It is always about the stereotypical categorization of an individual in these cases, so it often happens that someone is, wrongfully labeled as a Muslim, solely based on those characteristics, while being, for example, a Christian[29]. For example, European countries rely on terrorist profiles that include factors such as nationality and place of birth, while the USA subjects citizens and residents of 14 countries (13 of which are predominantly Muslim) to enhanced security checks[30]. In a broader context Sarah Kaufman and Hanna Niner point out that in USA self-identified black, white and Hispanic Muslims with no visible marker of their religion do not experience anti-Muslim harassment, while non-Muslim Christians, Hindus, and Sikhs who embody an imagined „Muslim look", cope with fear and aggression from strangers on a daily basis[31]. These examples clearly portray the issue of unnecessary identification of terrorism with certain religious or sometimes even national affiliation, thus treating those labeled individuals as second-class citizens, i.e. potential terrorists. Bearing all of it in mind, it is important to publish information through media that increases the public's awareness of the differentiation between terrorists and Arabs in general, and thus may be effective in reducing anti-Arab reactions[32].

A special problem, which stems from discerning the connection between Islam and terrorism, is that certain members of new terrorism insist that their fight, among all else, implies the tendency towards promoting their own true faith, i.e. the need for reaching true, pure Islam. It is questionable to what extent a proclaimed Islamic terrorist has anything in common with original Islam, as it is underlined within the dominant discourse. The fact is that new terrorism can be portrayed, at best, as the revolt of the jihadist movement's younger generation, mostly grown up in the West, because their ancestors, usually parents, moved to those countries. The said revolt is directed towards everything their parents symbolize: humiliation, accommodation to the society and what young people see as their ignorance about religion. Young people see themselves as teachers of truth, so they even try to convert their own parents[33]. In regards to that, another dimension to the conversion of new members can be noticed, as it highlights the importance of reaching true Islamic religion and points towards the goal of gathering as much of unsatisfied youth of the West (so not only Muslims born and/or raised in the USA or in the West-European countries, which is, certainly, the most frequent case, but also those who aim to

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29   We can use the Egyptian Copts as an example because they are Orthodox Christians. The fact that most Egyptians are Muslims, does not diminish the issue of the one-sided understanding of matters.

30   B. Hasisi et al. /2016/: Mitigating the consequences of invasive security practices: a quasi-experiment in an international airport, *Journal of Experimental Criminology,* https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292–020–09424-z.

31   S. Kaufman, H. Niner /2019/: Muslim Victimization in the Contemporary US: Clarifying the Racialization Thesis, *Critical Criminology,* vol. 27, p. 485.

32   D. P. Oswald: *op.cit.,* p. 1795.

33   O. Roa /2017/: *Džihad i smrt* [orig. Roy O. /2016/: *Le djihad et la mort,* Paris], Novi Sad, p. 40.

move away from their lives). In order to accomplish that, jihadists use the narrative of the necessity for the younger generations to confront their forefathers, regardless of their faith and nationality, because those forefathers are not able to represent authority to their children.

2.1. Stereotypical understanding of the connection between Islam and terrorism in France

Based on the example of France, we can also analyze the public's relation, particularly their political attitude towards Muslims within the context of terrorism. After 11 September, especially the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks, the religious extremism-terrorism nexus started solidifying and becoming a common, established form of knowledge and that narrative has concretized (radical) Islam's position in its the most extreme manifestations – as the enemy of France[34]. As a consequence of such discourse in France, the least serious criminal act, committed by any member of the Islam community, will be explored in the light of any possible connection to terrorism, with the main hypothesis that such a connection, most probably, exists. Even if that connection is not noticed, belonging to the Islam community represents on its own, from the point of view of the French state, a significant factor within the context of radicalization which leads to the ultimate scenario where terrorist acts are committed. This process can be called „Islamization of criminal behavior"[35].

An active process of social separation – polarization, has been taking place in the French society for the past few decades, driving a wedge further between the living conditions and fate of different social categories[36]. Somewhere around the end of 1980s and at the very beginning of 1990s, a shift occurred in the radicalization of the discourse and the spread of fear in the French society. Three dates should be mentioned here: 1989 was when the first affair broke out – „the Muslim headscarf" (*foulard islamique*); 1990 gave birth to what is known as an urban unrest (*émeutes urbanies*), a phrase which spread fear from the „Americanization" of the French society, such as the presence of ghettos, street gangs, drug-deals and omnipresence of firearms; and last, but not least, 1991 was when, due to the first Gulf War, fear from population which would soon be labeled as Arab-Muslim, among which some create the illusion of anti-French feelings, was amplified. These three events resonated with the whole French society, so much so that even the residents of the suburbs (*banlieues*) (economically depressed neighborhoods) gained the reputation of being dangerous[37]. These fears, under the influence of the international context, have not stopped deepening in the following 15 years, thus pure Islamophobia, which the said population understood directly and which could have been understood as the

34   D'S. Amato /2019/: Islamization of criminal behaviour: The path to terrorism? Terrorist threat and crime in French counterterrorism policy-formulation, *European Journal of Criminology,* n° 3, vol. 16, p 341.

35   D'S. Amato: *ibid.,* p. 342.

36   M. Filipović /2018/: *Društveni žigovi – sociološki eseji*, Beograd, p. 85.

37   L. Mucchielli /2011/: *L'invention de la violence: Des peurs, des chiffres et des faits,* Paris, p. 97.

victim of global racism, made a return[38]. Amato points out that there are two specific domestic hubs of radicalization that are predominantly discussed: prisons and *banlieues* as spaces of social exclusion and marginalization[39]. Simultaneously with the development of marginalization within *banlieues* some young people turned to religion in hope that it would support their identity affirmation and be a source of individual and collective dignity. Within the new international context, this move backfired, causing them to seem suspicious and get rejected by the rest of the society[40]. Any geopolitical or social event involving persons of Arabic or Muslim background inevitably triggers stigmatising comments on Islam and its place in France as if all Muslims formed a distinct and homogeneous community[41].

3. FEAR OF MODERN TERRORISM

War against terrorism fueled the climate of fear which, on its own, undermines our freedom[42]. Living in constant fear has a self-limiting effect on people, so further particular civil rights limitations imposed by officials externally are unnecessary, because individuals suspend their own rights out of fear. The battle against the cause of fear, itself, gives birth to fear, but that means that, in principle, the occurrence of political freedom negation implies life without fear[43]. Matt Clement and Vincenzo Scalia[44] point out that the climate of fear, which has been created, appears to justify the sort of suspicion and panic driving many citizens to accept a range of measures that curtail civil liberties and demonize radicalism. To achieve that goal states employ deceit, threats, and acts of violence in order to maintain control across society through fear of the consequences of challenging the government of the day. Namely, this refers to the application of „tension strategy" which certain countries, dealing with the issue of terrorism, have been using ever since the 1960s. If the public does not have reliable information about an unknown issue, it is expected that different assumptions will be made. Unknown situations usually produce fear among people[45].

The globalization of risk from terrorism and the discourse on new terrorism fit in the concept of a risky society that presented Ulrich Beck, a German sociologist. His view is that the globalization creates risks that are affecting everyone, regardless of which class they belong to. Beck considers that modern age risks are socially constructed and that, therefore, the perception of some risks is unsuitable, having in mind that their danger is augmented because of media reports, just like in the

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38   L. Mucchielli: *ibid.,* p. 98.

39   D'S. Amato: *op. cit.,* p. 342.

40   L. Mucchielli: *op. cit.,* p. 97.

41   A. Bila /2017/: *Working Paper 8: Dominant Islamophobic Narratives – France*, CERS, p. 33.

42   L. Fr. H. Svensen /2008/: *Filozofija straha* [orig. Svensen L. Fr. H. /2007/: *Frykt,* Oslo], Beograd, p. 131.

43   L. Fr. H. Svensen: *ibid.*, p. 131.

44   M. Clement, V. Scalia: *op. cit.,* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612–020–09494–5;

45   A. Ilić /2018/: Media Reporting on Refugees and Related Public Opinion in Serbia – in: *Refugees and Migrants in Law and Policy: Challenges and Opportunities for Global Civic Education* (H. Kury, S. Redo, eds.), Cham, Springer Nature, p. 145.

case of terrorism[46]. Perceiving terrorism as a threat to oneself serves as perhaps the most abstract form of fear of violence, at least from the premise of it being the least likely form of violence victimization[47].

After 11 September uncontrollable risk is irredeemable and deeply engineered into all the processes that sustain life in advanced societies[48]. For example, the globalization of risk from terrorist attacks after 11 September influences the lives of all people who travel by plane all over the world. The world was in shock after that even though many countries, like United Kingdom – UK, experienced terrorist attacks long before[49]. However, the response of the USA was so dominant that it led to global anticipation of risk from terrorist attacks. A certain code of conduct was enforced, regardless of different circumstances which exist in some states. One of the main characteristics of risk societies is that no one is safe – absolutely everyone can be targeted, regardless of their social status[50]. Media representation of terrorist acts and everyday reports lead to the globalization of fear of terrorism, which is usually associated to living and staying in cities. As a consequence, cities are perceived as uncertain areas, which then affects individuals' decision-making regarding journey planning and staying in urban environments[51]. Media speculation about possible terrorism immediately arose surrounding other acts of violent crime in urban area, and was quickly discarded when the violence was linked to traditional street criminals or determined to be „tragic accidents". The assertion that „there is no evidence of terrorist involvement" accompanying „newsworthy violence" became a strangely banal component of the media lexicon[52]. The dominant discourse is that it is not a case whether a major city will be targeted but where, when and how – a situation that often requires pre-emptive anticipatory planning[53].

The results of individual research on fear of terrorism and perception of risk of terrorism have indicated that there are some patterns. Females report greater fear of terrorism and judge the risk of terrorism to be significantly higher than males do. This is consistent with the findings for fear of crime, but it contradicts the interpretation that women fear crime more than men due to their fear of sexual assault. Older participants were less worried about the terrorism but did not perceive the

46 U. Bek /2011/: *Svetsko rizično društvo: u potrazi za izgubljenom sigurnošću* [orig. Beck U. /2007/: *Weltrisikogesellschaft*: *Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Sicherheit*, Frankfurt am Main], Novi Sad.

47 M. Näsi et al. /2020/: Crime News Consumption and Fear of Violence: The Role of Traditional Media, Social Media, and Alternative Information Sources, *Crime & Delinquency*, p. 20.

48 U. Beck /2002/: The Therrorist Threat: World Risk Society Revisited, *Theory, Culture & Society*, n° 2, vol. 19, p. 46.

49 A. Brigs, P. Berk /2006/: *Društvena istorija medija: od Gutenberga do Interneta* [orig. Briggs A., Burke P. /2005/: *A Social History of the Media,* Cambridge], Beograd, p. 436.

50 L. Fr. H. Svensen: *op. cit.,* p. 56.

51 A. Ilić, B. Banović /2018/: Urbanization of the Fear of Crime – in: vol. 1 of *Urbana bezbednost i urbani razvoj* (S. Stanarević, A. Đukić, eds.), Beograd, p. 58.

52 D. Rothe, S. L. Muzzatti /2004/: Enemies everywhere: terrorism, moral panic, and us civil society, *Critical Criminology,* vol. 12, p. 337.

53 J. Coaffee /2009/: Protecting the Urban: The Dangers of Planning for Terrorism, *Theory, Culture & Society*, n° 7–8, vol. 26, p. 344.

risk of future attacks to be lower than younger participants[54]. Within the context of research on how risk of terrorism is perceived on the example of Israel, authors Keren Cohen-Louck and Inna Levy[55] determined that the reaction to danger from terrorism depends on various factors, whereby significant role have previous exposure to dangerous situations, living in continuous risk and gender. On the other hand, media reporting is one of the most influential factors when it comes to sowing fear of terrorism. Media reporting in Western countries is usually one-sided, corresponding to the characteristics of the dominant discourse on modern terrorism, which means that it is not comprehensive and complete. However, there are noticeable difference when it comes to reporting done by traditional and social, i.e. generally alternative media. Matti Näsi et al.[56] point out that findings of the research in Finland indicate that perceiving terrorism as a threat to oneself was linked with the consumption of social media and particularly alternative information sources on violent crime. Media reports that are one-sided and thus do not mention the potential motives of the perpetrators are rather counterproductive in calming down the public because focusing on both the victims' pain as well as the potential reason of the perpetrators might be a better way in limiting the undoubtedly negative psychological consequences of terrorist threat[57].

3.1. Research on how risk of terrorism is perceived in Serbia

Having in mind all mentioned aspects of discourse on modern terrorism it is important to analyze the relationship between discourse and perception of terrorism risk on the example of research conducted in Serbia, in order to open further research questions regarding the manner and intensity of the impact of global discourse on terrorism risk perception and the relationship of real and perceived risk under the influence of global discourse which is not a simple task.

A research on how risk of terrorism is perceived and fear thereof was conducted among a limited sample of third year students of the Faculty of Security Studies (106 students) in October 2019, where the test method was used. A questionnaire was used as the data collection method for the realization of this research and it consisted mostly of close-ended multiple-choice questions. The last question was open-ended, with the aim of getting a better grasp on understanding students' attitude towards the basic subject of this research. A number of close-ended multiple-choice questions were asked with the aim of gathering basic information regarding the participants' habits when following different media content is concerned, based on the hypothesis that the perception of risk of terrorism and fear thereof are influenced to the largest extent by corresponding media reporting. Among the general questions, there were some on the wider issue of violence in the society and media's

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54   M. A. Nellis, J. Savage /2012/: Does Watching the News Affect Fear of Terrorism? The Importance of Media Exposure on Terrorism Fear, *Crime & Delinquency*, n° 5, vol. 58, p.762.

55   K. Cohen-Louck, I. Levi /2020/: Perception of a chronic threat of terrorism: Differences based on coping types, gender and exposure, *International Journal of Psychology*, n° 1, vol. 58, p. 121.

56   M. Näsi et al.: *op. cit.,* p. 20.

57   P. Fischer et al. /2011/: The Meaning of Collective Terrorist Threat: Understanding the Subjective Causes of Terrorism Reduces its Negative Psychological Impact, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence,* n° 7, vol. 26, p. 1442.

influence on creating the image of violent crime. Another part of the questions referred to the participants' previous victimization experience in regards to violent acts, while they also analyzed the presence of fear of violent acts in general. This part will not represent the analysis of answers to those general questions, however, it will state the results gathered from the participants' answers to the concrete questions about terrorism.

In order to gain insight into the characteristics of how terrorism is perceived by the participants who made up the sample, we asked questions that refer directly to the main subject of this research. The first question concerned the participants' attitude on the existence of danger from terrorism in the Republic of Serbia. Most of the participants, over two thirds of them (70.8%) believe that the danger from terrorism is present minimally, while one tenth of them thinks that this danger is present to a full extent (Table 1).

Table 1: risk of terrorism

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	doesn't exist	6	5,7	5,7	5,7
	exists to a lesser extent	75	70,8	70,8	76,4
	exists to a greater extent	14	13,2	13,2	89,6
	completely exists	11	10,4	10,4	100,0
	Total	106	100,0	100,0	

The aim of the following question was to determine the scope of fear of terrorist attacks which could occur in Serbia. Over a half of the participants stated that they were not afraid, but rather worried, while a small number of them (3.8%) admitted to being afraid (Table 2).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not frightened	45	42,5	42,5	42,5
	not frightened but worried	57	53,8	53,8	96,2
	Frightened	4	3,8	3,8	100,0
	Total	106	100,0	100,0	

Table 2: fear of terrorism

Participants' attitudes on basic characteristics of media's reporting on terrorism are divided. Slightly less than one third of the participants (30.2%) deem that media's reporting on terrorism is not realistic, 28.3% of them think that media di-

minish the importance of this issue, while 26.4% of them, contrary to the previous attitude, deem that media augment the issue of terrorism (Table 3).

Table 3: media's report on terrorism

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	realistic	16	15,1	15,1	15,1
	media exaggerate the problem	28	26,4	26,4	41,5
	media minimise the problem	30	28,3	28,3	69,8
	not realistic at all	32	30,2	30,2	100,0
	Total	106	100,0	100,0	

As far as the correlation between the fear of terrorism and traveling is concerned, first and foremost in the context of traveling abroad, almost half of the participants of this research have stated that they are afraid whenever they go to countries with high risk of terrorist attacks (although this part refers rather to the perceived than the actual risk). One third of the participants are not afraid of traveling whatsoever, whereas it is interesting that almost every tenth of the participants has never traveled abroad (where that percentage would be higher if the countries of former Yugoslavia are not taken into account) (Table 4).

Table 4: fear of terrorism and traveling abroad

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	never	34	32,1	32,1	32,1
	only in countries where there is risk from terrorist attack	47	44,3	44,3	76,4
	only in major cities or places where are large number of people	15	14,2	14,2	90,6
	always	1	,9	,9	91,5
	not travel out of my conutry	9	8,5	8,5	100,0
	Total	106	100,0	100,0	

Similar answers have been given to the question that made a correlation between the fear of terrorism and airplane travel, considering that in this case, as well, about a third of the participants has never developed any fears of such kind. However, the fact that almost a half of the participants (47.2%) has never traveled by plane represents a significant difference and at the same time a devastating piece of information when analyzed from the point of view of the economic position of the participants. Due to that circumstance „only" 17% of the participants fear terrorist attacks when traveling by plane, and in that sense, it was not possible to get a completely valid response to this question (Table 5).

Table 5: fear of terrorism and aeroplane travel

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	never	35	33,0	33,0	33,0
	only in countries where exist such risk	18	17,0	17,0	50,0
	always	3	2,8	2,8	52,8
	never travelled by plane	50	47,2	47,2	100,0
	Total	106	100,0	100,0	

In regards to the previous question, we should highlight that any possible presence of fear of terrorism did not, to a large extent, demotivate the participants to give up traveling abroad overall, considering that over 50% of them stated that this fear never affects their decision on traveling. One third of the participants underlines that fear of terrorism influences this decision sometimes and only a tiny per cent of them is under such influence that affects their decision-making to a large extent or completely (Table 6).

Table 6: fear of terrorism and decision on traveling

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	never influences	61	57,5	57,5	57,5
	influences sometimes	36	34,0	34,0	91,5
	mostly influences	7	6,6	6,6	98,1
	influences always	2	1,9	1,9	100,0
	Total	106	100,0	100,0	

At the very end of this analysis of how risk of terrorism is perceived, the participants' attitude towards the issue of terrorism in the Republic of Serbia was investigated. Most of the participants have either not answered this question or indicated that they have not been given enough information based on which they could form their own attitude towards that issue. Two basic trains of thought can be noticed among the given answers. The first one refers to the attitude that there is no actual danger from terrorism in Serbia and that the potential risk is augmented in the public from time to time. On the other hand, some participants believe that there is an actual danger from terrorist attacks, connecting it usually to the situation in Kosovo and Metohija, along with the area of Sandžak and South Serbia, and believe, in that sense, that this problem is not discussed enough in public.

CONCLUSION

Thinking about perception is probably one of the most important activity today in analysis of various phenomena. On the one side is reality and on the other side is

perception of that reality. The question is what is more important? If we want to discover the real characteristics of some phenomenon we will be interested in reality and we will find sources which are reliable. Sometimes regardless of our willingness to find out the truth it is not possible because the construction of reality is stronger than reality. That is the case with modern terrorism. Specific discourse dominate perception of modern terrorism and as it was underlined a few times in this paper is largely constructed under the influence of media reporting, i.e. actions done by different subjects which have a reach in the media and use this circumstance to affect the creation of the image of terrorism at the present moment.

Dominant discourse on modern terrorism influences negatively the attempts to reach one universal definition of terrorism. In order to avoid arbitrariness in the interpretation of events and their treatment as an act of terrorism, it is necessary that the definition of terrorism be clear and universal. Although at first glance it seems indisputable how terrorism should be defined and that there is a consensus on key issues, the lack of a universal definition shows that the reality is different. In the past few decades, the terrorism is being identified as religious-based Islamic terrorism, which created the distorted image of terrorism which more fits to a constructed reality then real-life events. That kind of a perception pulls along a stereotypical observation of terrorism in all elements, especially when possible modalities of manifestation and also participants (the perpetrators and victims both) are concerned. Such imposed discourse affects the appearance of fear, and sometimes even panic, within an ordinary people.

With all this in mind, the main question is what can be done so as to demystify the phenomenon of terrorism. The answer is easy to find, demystification should be done through the media. Another way does not exist because, terrorism is not a crime which is directly visible to most people, and that means without media's assistance that process cannot be realized successfully.

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DISKURS SAVREMENOG TERORIZMA

REZIME

U ovom radu autor razmatra karakteristike diskursa o savremenom terorizmu. Kada je u pitanju terorizam, ljudi o njemu saznaju uglavnom preko medija. Imajući to u vidu, čini se važnim analizirati dominantni diskurs o terorizmu koji oblikuje percepciju javnosti o savremenom terorizmu na globalnom nivou. Uticaj specifične slike terorizma nije ograničen samo na građane koji žive u zemljama koje su suočene sa terorističkom pretnjom ili konkretnim napadom. Demistifikacija diskursa o savremenom terorizmu tj. proces utvrđivanja karakteristika dominantnog diskursa počinje analizom fenomenološke dimenzije savremenog terorizma, u smislu definisanja i njegovog označavanja. Poređenje starijeg, tradicionalnog pristupa u razumevanju terorizma i savremenog, otkriva neke konceptualne razlike koje bi mogle imati ozbiljne posledice u oblasti percepcije i borbe protiv terorizma. Novi pristup dobija na zamahu sa događajima od 11. septembra i formira se nakon sličnih događaja na evropskom kontinentu. U srži razumevanja savremenog terorizma je diskurs o islamskom terorizmu zasnovanom na religiji. Mnogi drugi poznati oblici terorizma su nekako postali nepotrebni, van fokusa, uprkos njihovom prisustvu širom sveta, u oblastima koje nisu deo brige zapadnog društva. S druge strane, terorizam koji privlači pažnju zapadne javnosti prenaglašen je načinom medijskog izveštavanja čiji je cilj da izazove paničnu reakciju. Specifičan diskurs o savremenom terorizmu utiče na to kako ga shvata šira javnost, a posebno na stvaranje stereotipa o modernom (savremenom) teroristi i širenje straha od terorizma. Formiranje i održavanje stereotipa o savremenom terorizmu, koji naglašava ulogu islama i pripadnika islamske zajednice u planiranju i sprovođenju terorističkih akcija, stvara sve veći jaz među ljudima, posebno u zemljama pogođenim terorističkim napadima. Uticaj stereotipa je vidljiv u svakodnevnom životu, u različitim situacijama, a utiče i na ljude koji su rođeni i/ili odrasli na teritoriji zemalja pogođenih terorističkim napadom i koji su pripadnici zajednica koje su označene kao sumnjive u kontekstu terorizma. Takve osobe su *a priori* sumnjive, čak i bez ikakvih dokaza, direktnih ili indirektnih, o svom učešću u terorističkim aktivnostima. Posle 11. septembra i nekoliko terorističkih napada u Evropi, strah od terorizma je na visokom nivou u pomenutim delovima sveta, tj. ljudi koji žive u tim oblastima ili po njima putuju su pod uticajem medijskih slika terorizma. Diskurs o savremenom terorizmu takođe podrazumeva odgovarajuću percepciju rizika od terorizma. Izveštavanje medija utiče na percepciju visokog rizika pojedinih zemalja ili područja u kontekstu terorizma. Iako donošenje zaključaka o riziku od terorizma zavisi od analize koja se mora sprovesti posebno u svakoj zemlji ili regionu, i ovaj segment je pogođen procesom globalizacije, pa javnost širom sveta rizik od terorizma doživljava kao realan i konstantan. Slična situacija je i u Srbiji i u tom smislu rezultati ograničenih istraživanja o percepciji terorizma među studentskom populacijom u Srbiji, prikazani u radu, u izvesnoj meri pokazuju postojanje ovakvog globalnog uticaja.

Ključne reči: diskurs, savremeni terorizam, percepcija, stereotipi, strah.

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