

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOSITY AND PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS ON THE ATTITUDES ABOUT ABORTION

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SUMMARY

Background: A major public health problem is illegal abortion and its consequences and reliable data on abortions is globally unavailable. The Catholic Church advocates the protection of the human right for life that begins with conception. Religion was proven as an important predictor in forming abortion attitudes. Low points on openness and experience scales correlate with social prejudices and conservative orientation.

The Aim: To determine the impact of religiosity and personality dimension on abortion attitudes using Questionnaire of Religion, Abortion Attitudes Questionnaire and Big Five Questionnaire.

Subjects and Methods: An in - depth study was conducted on a sample of 310 citizens of Herzeg - Bosnian County in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The instruments used in the research were: a short questionnaire with socio - demographic features, a questionnaire of religiosity, an abortion questionnaire and a Big Five questionnaire.

Results: Citizens of Herzeg - Bosnian County, 89.1% of them, believe that abortion terminates life. For legal prohibition of abortion 73.1% of the respondents' advocate, and Catholics are the most rigorous. Catholics mostly do not agree with the attitude that only a pregnant woman can decide on abortion in comparison to Islamic religion ($\chi^2(4)=16.36$; $p<0.01$). Only 13% of citizens are against the interference of the Church in the matter of abortion. The most insecurity can be seen in the attitude about the father's participation in the abortion decision. Almost half of citizens who oppose abortion would still leave it as an option for women.

Conclusion: Citizens of Herzeg - Bosnian County support the legal prohibition of abortion and see it as a termination of life. Orthodox respondents are the least opposed to abortion and they also see themselves the least as believers. In Catholic and Islamic religions, religious identity and condemnation of abortion are expressed. Younger and mature people and male gender are important predictors of abortion condemnation. The influence of personality dimension on abortion attitudes was also not found in this research.

Key words: religiosity - personality dimensions - attitudes - abortion

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INTRODUCTION

A major public health problem is illegal abortion and its consequences, and reliable data on abortions globally is not available. It is estimated that between 6 and 9 million women in developing countries in the period from 2010 to 2014 had some health complications because of the illegal abortion. Out of the total number of pregnancies in that period, 25% of them were terminated by the intentional abortion. It is important to monitor the estimates of abortion incidence in order to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies, the unavailability of contraception and the consequences of illegal abortion (Sedgh et al. 2016). Abortion is also associated with the disrupted mental health of women. Langston and his associates (2010) found that deliberately induced abortion can have some influence on the development of the women's anxiety. In the former Yugoslavia abortion was legalized in 1977 and until the dissolution of the state it remained the main method of birth control (Dobrivojević 2016). In the Republic of Croatia, a country in which the law from 1978 is still in use, a country in which 84.5% of citizens declared themselves as Catholics, 53.1% of citizens would support

abortion if the family does not want more children (Baloban 2000). Ilišin (2013), in her research on a sample of 1500 young people aged 14 to 27, found that 38.9% of respondents will approve abortion. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the issue of abortion is regulated by the Law which is more than 40 years old. This fact, and the lack of a database about the incidence of abortion, are more than a clear proves of the carelessness and disfunction of all institutions that are responsible for the women's and unborn children's life and health and families as the basis of every society.

The Catholic Church advocates the protection of the human right for the life, which begins with conception (Valković 1997). In the research results among Mexican Catholics, Mc Murtrie and his associates (2012) found stigmatizing attitudes towards abortion. Within American Catholics, abortion support increased in the early 1980s especially with younger believers and immigrant families from Italy, France and Eastern Europe. The greatest opponents of abortion were Catholics of Irish and Mexican origin (Smith 1984). Religiosity has been proved to be the most important predictor of negative attitudes towards abortion among Turkish students (Sumer 2015). Islam has a very positive attitude towards

sexuality, which is considered a gift of God, but attitudes towards abortion are the same as in Catholicism (Masters 2006). Only recently have Orthodox churches made statements regarding the bioethical issue of abortion. Based on the statements of the American, Russian, Greek and Romanian Orthodox Churches, it is possible to conclude that these churches condemn abortion as murder and grave sin, but allow it when a woman's life is in danger. In that case, the American Orthodox Church leaves the decision to the woman. The Romanian Orthodox Church recommends giving birth to a child suspected to have deformities, but leaves the final decision to the family (Sardaryan 2008). Cifrić and his associates in their research (2007) identify the connection between religiosity, lower educational level, old age and male gender with the attitude about the prohibition of abortion. Religion is also one of the most important predictors of attitudes towards abortion within health care professionals (Rehnstrom 2015). There are significant evidences that religiosity is related to the dimensions of personality (Unterrainer 2014). More open - minded people tend to be more liberal about sexuality (Allen 2018). Can we also expect more liberal attitudes towards abortion? Low points on openness and experience scales correlate with social prejudices and conservative orientation (Von Collani 2009). Ho and Penny (1992), in results of their research which was done within 168 Australians, also prove that there is a significant connection between disapproval of abortion and conservative orientation. Understanding of abortion is largely affected by the mindset of the place in which people live. Most of the Croatian citizens hold that abortions terminate human life, so they agree that abortion is murder. On the other hand, the most of the population do not support its legal prohibition. There is awareness that abortion is moral evil, but it is left as a possibility of choice? When we talk exactly about abortion, there is a big gap between what ordinary man "knows" and the scientific achievements in that area (Baloban & Črpić 1998). Researching attitudes towards abortion, it is possible to access to the foundations of citizen's judgments and to create a starting point for taking concrete steps in adopting a new law that will partially respect the voice of citizens.

The aim of this study was to determine the influence of religiosity and personality dimensions on abortion attitudes using the Religiosity Questionnaire, Abortion Attitudes Questionnaire and Big Five Questionnaire.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Subjects

A cross - sectional study was carried out in the area of Herzeg-Bosnian County in Bosnia and Herzegovina, from July to September 2018 on a suitable sample of 310 subjects (N=310). The criteria for inclusion were citizens from the area of Herzeg-Bosnian County.

Exclusion criteria were: juveniles, people with psychiatric diagnosis, incomplete and/or illegible questionnaires. After the data had been collected, 9 respondents were excluded from the survey because their questionnaires were incomplete, 7 participants declared as atheists, were also excluded from the data analysis due to sample size and distortion of results. In the final analysis were included 294 subjects, out of which 67.8% (95% CI=62.8-73.1%) were women and 32.2% (95% CI=26.9-37.2%) men. The highest percentage of female respondents (27.5%) belonged to the age group 37-45 years, and the highest percentage of the male (27.8 %) belonged to the age group of 26-36 years old. There was also higher percentage (84.5%) of the married men compared to married women (77.9%). In both genders, the highest percentage of respondents (37.1% and 45.1%) had high school degree. The majority of respondents in both genders had two children (male 36.1% and women 34.8%). More than the half of the respondents (59.8%) live in the urban area. Also, the most numerous were Catholics (61.2%). There were no differences between genders concerning socio - demographic characteristics as well as religious orientation (Table 1).

Measures

The instruments used in the research for the purpose of data collection were: a short questionnaire with socio - demographic features, a religiosity questionnaire, an abortion attitudes questionnaire and a Big Five questionnaire.

Socio - demographic questionnaire was specifically designed for this research and consisted of 6 questions (age, gender, marital status, education level, place of residence, number of children). The variable age is ranged from 18-25, 26-36, 37-45, 46-54, 55 and more.

The questionnaire of religiosity (Ljubotina 2004) is the instrument of 24 particles estimating the degree of religiosity. The questionnaire contains 24 particles, which make the three subscales of this instrument: the scale of spirituality, the ritual scale and the scale of the influence of religion on behavior.

With the agreement of the researchers, for purposes of this research, 4 claims from the questionnaire of religiosity were chosen to reduce the load of the participants. Participants responded to the chosen claims by choosing a response on the Likert's scale (0 - I disagree, 5 - I completely agree). Responses "do not agree at all" and "disagree" were interpreted as "disagree" for a simpler review of the results. The answers "I agree", "I generally agree" and "I completely agree" were interpreted as "I agree" (Addition 1).

Table 2 shows the answers to the surveyed claims about the religiosity of respondents. Catholic and Islamic respondents are more convinced that many things in life depend on God's will compared to Orthodox respondents ($p<0.001$). Respondents of the male gender,

Table 1. Socio - demographic characteristics of the surveyed population in Herzeg-Bosnian County

	Men (n=95)	Women (n=199)	Total (n=294)	p
Age				
18-25	9 (9.5)	22 (11.1)	31 (10.5)	0.365
26-36	27 (25.4)	49 (24.6)	76 (25.9)	
37-45	18 (18.9)	54 (27.1)	72 (24.5)	
46-54	22 (23.2)	48 (24.1)	70 (23.8)	
55>	19 (20)	26 (13.1)	45 (15.3)	
Marital status				
Single	12 (12.6)	34 (17.1)	46 (15.6)	0.687
Married	80 (84.2)	156 (78.4)	236 (80.3)	
Divorced	2 (2.1)	5 (2.5)	7 (2.4)	
Widowed	1 (1.1)	4 (2)	5 (1.7)	
Educational status				
Lower-skilled	2 (2.1)	9 (4.5)	11 (3.7)	0.321
High school graduate	35 (36.8)	90 (45.2)	125 (42.5)	
Advanced (Vocational school)	27 (28.4)	48 (24.1)	75 (25.5)	
University graduate	31 (32.6)	52 (26.1)	83 (28.2)	
Residence				
City	62 (65.3)	113 (56.8)	175 (59.5)	0.166
Village	33 (34.7)	86 (43.2)	119 (40.5)	
Children				
None	23 (24.2)	43 (21.6)	66 (22.4)	0.738
One	15 (15.8)	42 (21.1)	57 (19.4)	
Two	34 (35.8)	70 (35.2)	104 (35.4)	
Three and more	23 (24.2)	44 (22.1)	67 (22.8)	
Religion				
Catholic	51 (53.7)	129 (64.8)	180 (61.2)	0.070
Islamic	33 (34.7)	44 (22.1)	77 (26.2)	
Orthodox	11 (11.6)	26 (13.1)	37 (12.6)	

Table 2. Absolute and relative frequencies and the significance of the religiosity analysis of the population surveyed in Herzeg-Bosnian County

Religiosity		Catholic	Islamic	Orthodox	Total	χ^2^*
I feel as a believer	1	4 (2.2)	2 (2.6)	0 (0)	6 (2.0)	0.074
	2	29 (16.1)	12 (15.6)	13 (35.1)	54 (18.4)	
	3	147 (81.7)	63 (81.8)	24 (64.9)	234 (79.6)	
Many things in my life are determined by the God's will	1	14 (7.8)	9 (11.7)	11 (29.7)	34 (11.6)	0.001
	2	166 (92.2)	68 (88.3)	26 (70.3)	260 (88.4)	
	3	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	
I am ready for a lot of sacrifice because of my religion	1	6 (3.3)	1 (1.3)	2 (5.4)	9 (3.1)	0.178
	2	40 (22.2)	23 (29.9)	14 (37.8)	77 (26.2)	
	3	134 (74.4)	53 (68.8)	21 (56.8)	208 (70.7)	
I am against non-marital partnership	1	62 (34.4)	24 (31.2)	12 (32.4)	98 (33.3)	0.720
	2	73 (40.6)	34 (44.2)	19 (51.4)	126 (42.9)	
	3	45 (25.0)	19 (24.7)	6 (16.2)	70 (23.8)	

* χ^2 -test; 1 - I agree; 2 - I don't know; 3 - I don't agree

Table 3. Results of the analysis and the significance of the Big Five questionnaire concerning religion of the population surveyed in Herzeg-Bosnian County

Big five	Catholic	Islam	Orthodox	p*
Extraversion	27.2±4.2	28.2±4.4	28.3±4.2	0.117
Agreeableness	34.1±6.2	35.2±6.3	33.8±6.8	0.395
Conscientiousness	32.6±5.7	33.6±6.3	32.7±6.8	0.466
Neuroticism	24.0±4.9	24.0±5.8	23.4±4.4	0.793
Openness	34.1±4.5	35.0±4.7	33.8±5.5	0.296

* one-way ANOVA

in a slightly higher percentage, agree with the Catholic and Islamic respondents (52.9% and 42.4%) compared to the female members of same religions (42.6% and 34.1%). The difference in religiosity depending on the religious orientation between male and female respondents was significant in all claims ($p < 0.001$), except in the claim about the opposition to the non-marital partnership, where no difference in the respondents' responses was found depending on the religious orientation between the male ($\chi^2(12) = 11.23$; $p < 0.05$) and female gender ($\chi^2(12) = 9.18$; $p < 0.05$).

Big Five questionnaire

The BFI (Big Five Inventory) was used to measure the five factor personality line. The questionnaire consists of 44 particles in the form of short phrases. It is made of five personality domains: extraversion (E), agreeableness (A), conscientiousness (C), neuroticism (N), and openness (O). Respondents were evaluated on a Likert type scale of 5 degrees (1 - I do not agree; 5 - I completely agree) (Addition 2) (John & Srivastava 1999).

There was no statistically significant difference in the personality dimensions between the observed religious orientations of the examined population in Herzeg-Bosnian County (Table 3).

Questionnaire about abortion attitudes

The questionnaire was entirely taken from the study "Abortion and mentality in society" by Baloban and Črpić. Respondents responded to the claims on the Likert scale (I disagree - 1 to completely agree - 5) (Baloban & Črpić 1998). For a simpler review and interpretation of the results, the answers "completely agree" and "agree" are shown as "I agree", while the responses "disagree" and "totally disagree" are shown as "disagree" (Addition 3).

Statistical analysis

SPSS 23 and Microsoft Excel 2010 were used in data processing. The data distribution was tested by the histogram and the Kolmogorov - Smirnov test. Qualitative variables were presented with absolute and relative frequencies, whereas quantitative variables were presented with arithmetical mean and standard deviation. The significance between the qualitative variables was tested by the Hi square test. The significance of quantitative data was tested by an independent Student t - test (for two groups), and one - way ANOVA (for three groups). The level of significance in all tests was $p < 0.05$.

Table 4. Results of the analysis and significance of the attitudes towards abortion of the population surveyed in Herzeg-Bosnian County

		Catholic	Islamic	Orthodox	Total	P*
Abortion is necessary evil that should stay as a matter of the choice for women	1	80 (44.4)	36 (46.8)	21 (56.8)	137 (46.6)	<0.01
	2	46 (25.6)	31 (40.3)	14 (37.8)	91 (31.0)	
	3	54 (30.0)	10 (13.0)	2 (5.4)	66 (22.4)	
Abortion terminates already conceived life	1	161 (89.4)	71 (92.2)	30 (81.1)	262 (89.1)	<0.01
	2	18 (10.0)	6 (7.8)	4 (10.8)	28 (9.5)	
	3	1 (0.6)	0 (0)	3 (8.1)	4 (1.4)	
Father of the child has also the right for decision	1	74 (41.1)	30 (39.0)	12 (32.4)	116 (39.5)	0.269
	2	78 (43.3)	40 (51.9)	22 (59.5)	140 (47.6)	
	3	28 (15.6)	7 (9.1)	3 (8.1)	38 (12.9)	
Abortion leaves permanent psychological consequences on women's health	1	160 (88.9)	68 (88.3)	33 (89.2)	261 (88.8)	1
	2	15 (8.3)	7 (9.1)	3 (8.1)	25 (8.5)	
	3	5 (2.8)	2 (2.6)	1 (2.7)	8 (2.7)	
I would never accept abortion	1	163 (90.6)	66 (85.7)	28 (75.7)	257 (87.4)	0.089
	2	12 (6.7)	10 (13.0)	7 (18.9)	29 (9.9)	
	3	5 (2.8)	1 (1.3)	2 (5.4)	8 (2.7)	
I consider abortion justified in some cases	1	118 (65.6)	58 (75.3)	31 (83.8)	207 (70.4)	0.151
	2	28 (15.6)	9 (11.7)	4 (10.8)	41 (13.9)	
	3	34 (18.9)	10 (13.0)	2 (5.4)	46 (15.6)	
Abortion should be legally prohibited	1	136 (75.6)	53 (68.8)	26 (70.3)	215 (73.1)	0.757
	2	22 (12.2)	14 (18.2)	6 (16.2)	42 (14.3)	
	3	22 (12.2)	10 (13.0)	5 (13.5)	37 (12.6)	
Abortion is not a problem that Church should deal with	1	19 (10.6)	16 (20.8)	4 (10.8)	39 (13.3)	0.126
	2	50 (27.8)	14 (18.2)	12 (32.4)	76 (25.9)	
	3	111 (61.7)	47 (61.0)	21 (56.8)	179 (60.9)	
Only pregnant woman has the right to decide	1	26 (14.4)	20 (26.0)	5 (13.5)	51 (17.3)	<0.01
	2	74 (41.1)	42 (54.5)	21 (56.8)	137 (46.6)	
	3	80 (44.4)	15 (19.5)	11 (29.7)	106 (36.1)	

* χ^2 -test; 1 - I agree; 2 - I don't know; 3 - I don't agree

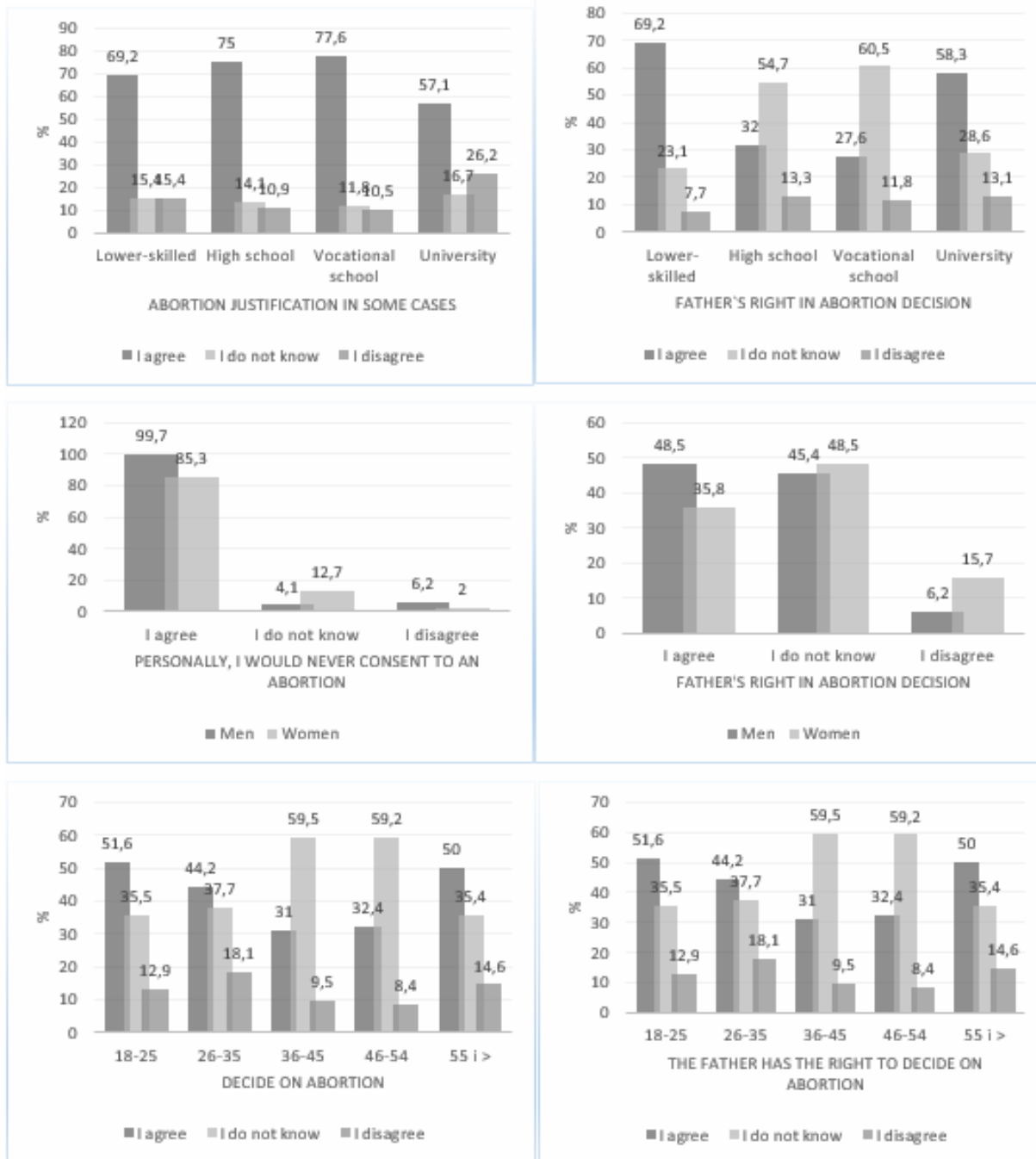


Figure 1. Relative frequency of answers of the respondents comparing to the more significant correlation depending on age, gender and educational status

Ethical Principles

Each respondent was verbally informed about the aims, purpose of the research and the anonymous use of the given data just for the purpose of this research. Respondents were given the opportunity to give consent or refuse to participate in this research.

RESULTS

Table 4 shows the frequency of responses to the examined attitudes depending on the religious orientation of the respondents. The frequency response variation is

determined in the following three claims: 1) abortion is a necessary evil that should still be left for women to choose, 2) only women have the right to decide about abortion, 3) abortion terminates already conceived life ($p < 0.01$). With a more detailed analysis it is found that Catholic respondents agreed less with the statement that abortion should be left to women to choose compared to the Islamic ($\chi^2(4) = 14.29$; $p < 0.01$), as well as Orthodox respondents ($\chi^2(4) = 11.28$; $p < 0.05$). Differences in attitudes about already mentioned claim, between Islamic and Orthodox respondents, were not significant ($\chi^2(4) = 2.23$; $p > 0.05$).

Orthodox Christians agreed less with the claim that abortion terminates already conceived life compared with Catholics ($\chi^2(3)=12.60$; $p<0.01$), while the Islamic respondents agreed more with the same claim compared to the Catholics ($\chi^2(3)=8.20$; $p<0.05$). Catholics, compared to the Islamic respondents, also did not agree with the claim that only a pregnant woman can decide about abortion ($\chi^2(4)=16.36$; $p<0.01$). Differences between answers on the same claim were also not so different between Catholics and Orthodox Christians ($\chi^2(4)=5.20$; $p>0.05$), as well as Orthodox Christians and Islamic respondents ($\chi^2(4)=7.24$; $p>0.05$).

The difference in attitudes towards other socio-demographic characteristics was determined in the claim that the child's father has the right to decide about abortion, especially with the variable of age group and gender ($p<0.05$), and educational status ($p<0.001$). Respondents' attitudes, depending on age and gender group, were also different, especially in the question "Would you personally choose abortion as a solution?" ($p<0.05$). According to educational status, respondents have different views on the justification of abortion in some cases ($p<0.05$). According to marital status and place of residence there were no significant differences in attitudes ($p>0.05$).

Younger and older age groups, as well as men, were more likely to agree with the right of the father to decide (51.6%, 50% and 48.5%) compared to the adults and women where the higher percentage of the respondents were hesitant (about 60% of adults and 48.5% women). According to the educational status, lower-skilled respondents agreed the most with the claim that the father of the child has legal right to decide about abortion (69.2%), and the same percentage of respondents considered abortion justified in some cases. More than half of the university graduate respondents agreed with the father's right for decision about abortion. High school and vocational school graduate respondents were more hesitant about this attitude (54.7% and 60.5%). University graduate respondents justified less abortion in some cases. Men agreed more than women in the attitude that they would never accept abortion as a solution (men 99.7%, women 85.3%), and with this attitude, respondents of the age group 18-25 and 46 to 54 (96.8% and 91.5%), agreed the most (Figure 1).

DISCUSSION

With this research, attitudes about abortion among the citizens of Herzeg-Bosnian County were identified, as well as their connection with religion, but were not proven the influence of the personality dimensions on attitudes about abortion. In available bibliographic databases similar research from this geographic area was not found. In the examined sample of the population of Herzeg-Bosnian County, Orthodox respondents felt the least as believers and they also agreed the least that

many things are determined by God's will. Catholic and Islamic respondents equally felt like believers, and religious identity was more expressed with in men respondents. Orthodox respondents were the most hesitant in the questions connected to the religion.

Abortion as a life termination

Citizens of Herzeg-Bosnian County, 89.1% of them, believe that abortion terminates life. Orthodox respondents agreed the least that abortion terminates life. Considering that the sample examined had a significantly smaller number of Orthodox respondents than the other two religions, it is not possible to fully conclude that Orthodox respondents justify abortion more than other respondents. For a more precise answer, it would be necessary to expand the sample to include equally all three religious groups, but due to historical war events in the territory of Herzeg-Bosnian County and displacement of the population this was not possible. For the legal prohibition of abortion was 73.1% of the respondents; Catholics were the most rigorous and showed the least hesitation about this claim. Only 1.4% of respondents think that abortion does not terminate life. Marinić and Pozaić in their research (2017) among students of the University of Zagreb showed that abortion as a life termination was significantly less experienced than in our respondents, among whom the youngest age group was the most agreed with the view that they would never personally consent to abortion. According to a research from 2004 (Cifrić 2007) in the Republic of Croatia 30% of citizens advocated for legal prohibition of abortion, in the same research most respondents declared themselves religious. It is concluded that there was significant deviation from the value of traditional religious morals. In the 1990s, the views of citizens of the Republic of Croatia on abortion as life termination (Baloban & Črpić 1998) were consistent with the findings of our research. Orthodox Christians were also the most hesitant in this claim and they claimed in reduced number that they would never accept abortion as a solution. Rašević (1995) claims that in Serbia, a large number of gynecologists in the 1990s were against to certain forms of contraception and were more for abortion, especially in less developed regions. Using Vestof's model to calculate the rate of total abortions in Serbia in 2006, Rašević (2008) concluded that the available data on the number of abortions were not realistic because they did not include abortions performed in private institutions, and record keeping was seen as unnecessary and imposed. But also the results of the following two researches (Milosavljević 2015, Sedlecky 2008) confirmed that a significant number of gynecologists in Serbia do not have adequate knowledge for women's counseling, and they are expected to play an important role in ending abortion culture as family planning method. The vast majority of respondents of all religions agreed that abortion leaves permanent psychological consequences on the woman's health.

Influence of religious authorities on attitudes on abortion

Appreciation of religious authority is proven by the fact that 60.9% of respondents agreed with the need for interference of the Church with the problem of abortion. Orthodox respondents were the most hesitant about this attitude. It is evident that in the territory of the former Yugoslavia the communist system and the absence of any development of religious identity during this period left the strongest influence on the population of Orthodox religion, which does not rule out abortion as a method of fertility regulation through all its research at different epochs, nor does it view it from a religious point of view as strictly as members of other religions. Catholic and Islamic respondents equally support the need for religious authorities to participate in abortion. Very few respondents are against the Church's interference (13.3%), while three times more of the citizens of the Republic of Croatia in the 1990s were against the interference of the Church in the matter of abortion (Baloban & Črpić 1998). Evidence of the role of the religion in the life of Herzeg-Bosnian County citizens is that almost 80% of respondents consider themselves as believers, equally Islamic and Catholic respondents, and they are also ready to sacrifice, mostly Catholics. In the overall sample of this study, only 9 respondents were not prepared to sacrifice because of their religion. Unlike citizens of the Republic of Croatia who declare themselves to be believers but also approve abortions if the family does not want more children (Baloban 1999), our respondents were consistent in answering questions about the status of believers and personal consent to abortion. In Islam, abortion is the most widely used term related to ethics. The answer from the Turkish Presidency for Religious Matters on over 2500 questions about abortion is that the embryo is life from the beginning and that father and mother cannot decide on their own about the life of the unborn baby. Priority is given to the preservation of the community in the relation to the women rights (Ekmecki 2017). In the research within the Canadian Muslims from 17 countries, abortion attitudes were so different and it was impossible to get a single stand. For many women, religion is a starting point for both, comfort and guilt (Wiebe 2011). Poland, as a Catholic country, and in the political sense, creates an atmosphere of stigmatization of abortion, so abortion services move to an uncontrolled area of the private offices. Church and politics dominate with the women rights and their reproductive health (Chelstowska 2011). But 90% of Polish women do not consider abortion for medical reasons as sin (Zareba 2017).

Abortion as a women's right

Abortion as a possibility of choice for women would leave almost half of the respondents, mostly Orthodox. Islamic respondents were hesitant the most, whereas

Catholics were mostly against. But among Catholics, abortion as a choice option was by far a more common answer and that is half of those Catholics who consider it a murder or a termination of life. The moral consciousness of the interviewed citizens of Herzeg-Bosnian County obviously shapes the scale of values on the basis of desirable social norms, not on their own reflection and sense of justice. Catholics also agree the least that abortion is justified in some cases, while Orthodox Christians justify it the most. In the Republic of Croatia, citizens' attitudes on this issue were considerably more liberal in the 1990s, so abortion as a possibility of choice would be left by 64.4% of citizens (Baloban & Črpić 1998), unlike our respondents who, more than thirty years later, have a more conservative attitude. In Sweden, 72% of politicians consider abortion as a woman right because they obviously do not want to devote themselves to abortion from the ethical and political point of view (Sydsjo 2012). So far, the politicians of the Republic of Croatia have not shown enough will and interest to change the current law on abortion left as a socialist legacy. Two attempts (1995 and 1996) to amend the law failed. Abortion issues and problems continue to be in the gray area marked by inadequate state regulation, deficiencies in monitoring and records, cases of medical corruption and abuse of office, and the frequency of call of conscience (Bijelić & Hodžić 2014). Obviously, there are different perspectives on looking at abortion in which women's rights are once her own rights, and when necessary, those same rights are taken away without clarity of opinion and given preference to the community. The greatest dilemmas and uncertainties between respondents were with the matter of making decision about abortion and the rights of the woman and father of the child. Almost half of the respondents, mostly Orthodox, doubted whether father has the right to participate in the abortion decision. Father's involvement in decision - making was mostly supported by Catholics, but they were most opposed compared to others. The most uncertainties could also be seen with the question whether only a woman should decide about abortion. Catholics were mostly against that, whereas Islamic respondents were the least against. The Orthodox respondents were the most hesitant about this matter. Islamic respondents supported women to make the decision by themselves the most. In 2004, 61.9% of Croatian citizens thought that woman should decide alone about abortion, while in the 1990s less citizens thought the same 47.5% (Cifrić 2007, Baloban 1998). The results of our research show that the citizens of Herzeg-Bosnian County have a significantly more conservative attitude on this issue than the citizens of the Republic of Croatia in both periods. Male respondents from our research support the right of a father to participate in an abortion decision. More than half of the university graduate respondents as well as lower - skilled, agreed that father has the right to make decisions.

Younger and older respondents gave the father the same right. One of the victims of abortion is also the father of a child to whom in most European countries and the United States is not given any right to make decision (Mavroforou 2010). Men in Herzeg-Bosnian County, mostly 18-25 and the 46-54 years old, would never accept the abortion as a solution in a larger number than women.

Personality features have predictive value in important measurements and are associated with social and political attitudes. Openness as a personality dimension has a negative connection with conservatism (Ozer 2006). Conscience is in a positive correlation with religious identity. European Christians have less significant openness than American Christians (Vassilis 2010). In our research differences in points in the dimension of personality were without any statistical significance between all religions. Therefore, no connection has been found between the individual dimensions of personality of certain religion and abortion attitudes. Equal points lead to the conclusion that the dimensions of personality of our respondents are largely determined by mentality, long lasting coexistence in this area, common historical circumstances and affiliation with the monotheistic religion.

Abortion remains the current bioethical issue in modern society. With this research it is possible to conclude that religion significantly determines the moral attitudes of citizens of Herzeg-Bosnian County, but it is also necessary to consider the extent to which "desirable" answers are given that do not reflect actual opinions but are influenced by social norms.

There is no unique point of view about abortion, and the key issue is understanding the moral status of a human embryo (Cifrić 2007). A better insight into the moral standpoint of the research sample may be given by the inclusion of the question "When does human life begin?" which responded, would surely show the results of this research under a different light.

CONCLUSION

Citizens of Herzeg-Bosnian County, mostly Islamic, see abortion as life termination. Over 73% of citizens, mostly Catholics, are for the legal prohibition of abortion. Very few of them is against the interference of the Church in the matter of abortion. However, a large number of abortion opponents find it justified in some cases and would leave it as an option for women. This indicates a split in the opinion of the citizens of Herzeg-Bosnian County. Abortion is the least justified by Catholics and mostly by Orthodox Christians. Half of the respondents have doubts in whether the father should be involved in the abortion decision. Islamic respondents showed the most support for women to make the decision themselves. Men, who in this research have a more prominent religious identity, would never accept the abortion as a solution, and are more for the father's right to an abortion decision. Younger men have the

same attitude as the mature men. Religious identity is an important parameter in shaping abortion attitudes among Catholic and Islamic respondents. Orthodox respondents have more liberal views about abortion than Catholic and Islamic respondents, and they are also the most hesitant. There was no connection between the personality dimensions of certain religion and abortion attitudes. The issue of abortion requires solutions that are equitable and reliant on clear evidence and free from hypocrisy, practical morality and false humanism.

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Contribution of individual authors:

Roberta Perković: participated in the design of the study, methodology and draft of the study, conducted data entry and participated in the interpretation of data and the formulation of data analysis;

Gabrijela Dujčić: conducted a survey of respondents;

Marina Ćurlin: conducted a survey of respondents, administrative and technical support;

Antonija Hrkać: carried out statistical processing and interpretation of data, technical support;

Branko Krišto: participated in the design and methodology of research, critical revision of the study.

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