

THE MAIN ENDOGENOUS AND EXOGENOUS SOURCES OF RELIGIOUS CONFLICT OF THE ROMANIAN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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Abstract: Romania is a Christian-Orthodox majority religious country, with the highest number of believers in the Southeast of Europe. Romania becomes a member of NATO in 2003 and of the European Union in 2007. The common European space and the advancement of religious modernity towards Eastern Europe accelerated the phenomenon of secularization in Romania and caused the Romanian society to respond to the challenges specific to the Western European religious space. The major Orthodox Christian religion is confronted, in the new European globalizing context, with the freedom of movement of persons and ideas as well as with the religious competition specific to pluralism, all these aspects creating the premise of the emergence of conflicting approaches of modernity by the religious institutions. These conflicting aspects were the main focus of study for this analysis. More specifically, we wanted to identify the endogenous and exogenous sources of religious conflict in the Romanian contemporary society. The reorganization of the Romanian society after the communist era and the challenges posed by the NATO and EU memberships, as well as the economic shocks generated by the 2009 global economic crisis and the crisis of the Syrian refugees in Europe, create a sense of social and economic development that is too slow, unlike the expectations of the population. Despite the natural resources and the important economic opportunities that Romania has, it has not seen an attractive economic development until now. The standard of living is low and European Union membership has made a large part of the Romanian labour force to emigrate in countries

from Europe or across the ocean in America or Canada. This phenomenon of Romanian emigration has created a large network of Romanian religious communities in the European space, especially in countries with a linguistic cultural affinity similar to that of Romania, of Latin origin, such as Italy, Spain or France, but also in other European countries. The activity of these Romanian communities in the Diaspora contributes actively not only to the economic development of the countries of adoption, but also to the revitalization of the European religious life, by diminishing the evolution of the phenomenon of indifference and religious secularization that characterize the European common space.

Keywords: Religious conflict, religious modernity, Romania, The Orthodox Church, contemporary society

The domain of religious life knows the most varied forms of contestation and conflict. Whether we are talking about endogenous sources of conflicts specific to religious life, or about exogenous sources, we are wondering what causes such conflicts or conflicting behaviours. Can we identify such causes in the specificity of the social modernity that characterizes the contemporary societies? Or rather are they identity reactions of the Romanian religious behaviour in the face of the globalizing tendencies of the European common space? Can they be identified in conflicting religious behavioural reactions, different forms of self-isolation of the cultural or spiritual religious traditions, mostly Orthodox, or are they explicit signs of the advance of the secularization phenomenon? These are just a few of the questions that will guide our analysis of the endogenous and exogenous sources of religious conflict within the Romanian contemporary society.

For the research methodology, we focused on the main sources of bibliographic study and the social and media documents specific to the Romanian contemporary society. Also, the participatory observation and the qualitative discussions as well as the participation in occasional or official public debates constituted important sources of bibliographic information. For an easier analysis of the endogenous and exogenous sources of religious conflict in the Romanian contemporary society, we used the typological method of Max Weber, which proposes the creation of general categories of social research (Marshall G; Scott J; 2014, 827-829).

Such an analysis of the endogenous and exogenous sources of religious conflict in the Romanian contemporary society is considered to be a particularly useful academic approach for the researchers in the sciences of religion, especially in the context of scientific analysis characterizing the specificity of the current year when we celebrate 100 years of history of the modern state of Romania. Within the Romanian society, in this period of the last century, the religion, especially that of Orthodox Christian confessional expression, played a particularly important role in the coagulation of the national identity and especially in the socio-historical definition of the Romanian people. We note that Religion is equally important for modern, contemporary times. The elements of religious conflict can affect the social cohesion and balance, so a careful knowledge of the sources of religious conflict becomes a particularly important concern for defining the place and role of religion in today's and the future Romanian society.

The conceptual definition of conflict

Without claiming conceptual completeness, I want to point out that when we analyze the notion of conflict, it is necessary to specify carefully the direct meanings. From a sociological point of view, the analysis of the conflict in society is a mark of social organization (Dortier; 2013, 63). Whether we look at labour conflicts, social conflicts or family or political conflicts, all these forms of sociological analysis are an important approach for the social knowledge. The analysis of social conflicts helps us to understand especially the social dynamics of the changes that can be generated by the acceleration of the conflicting consequences, consequences that may generate the social rupture and can lead to social reorganization. The analysis of conflict, in the present case, from the perspective of religious life, equally represents an approach of responsibility and social equilibrium. A conflict can fuel the accumulation of dormant tensions that, if not known and carefully controlled, can give rise to particularly serious social tensions. When we carefully analyze the notion of conflict, we observe four main directions to which the dissatisfaction generated by a conflict can be directed:

1. Conflict with self or psychological conflict, with one's own conscience - moral consciousness, a conflict that is expressed through neurotic behaviour (Chemana, 1997;66-67 ; 234-238) ;

2. Conflict with close relatives or family members;

3. Conflict with neighbors and with other members of the society; as space position

4. Total conflict, with everyone, that is, a conflict with the entire society that you consider unworthy of your attention.

This Weberian analysis scheme can be successfully applied when we analyze religious conflicts also. By the same model we can have:

- Religious conflict with our own moral conscience, which we can consider in the broad sense of the term as a conflict with God;
- Conflict with members of the own religious community;
- Inter-confessional conflicts (with the near neighbor);
- Inter-religious conflicts (with the distant neighbor);
- Religious conflicts with the entire society.

It is hard to believe that a Religious Denomination or a Religion triggers all the types of conflict identified above, at the same time. The administrative and missionary activity of religious denominations contains, in potentiality, all hypothetical directions of conflict. It is necessary for the sources of religious conflict to be carefully known and understood because often they conceal not only misunderstandings and social frustrations but mask institutional development and mass manipulation strategies.

For example, the religious actors, particularly the minorities, for reasons of public communication strategy and especially for the interest of horizontal social development, trigger profound events and campaigns of social conflict. They have enough arguments to understand that such a conflict cannot be a winner immediately, for example in the case of a confrontation in court. However the conflict is preferred and fuelled because it favours public victimization campaigns. They generate, in a subsidiary way, in the collective mentality, a public compassion. But it also feeds a massive media advertising, even if negative, but at a lower cost than if it was pursued as an entrepreneurial goal for promoting the public image. So religious conflicts can often conceal not only frustrations or social or institutional failures but also, true marketing

and advertising strategies, well thought out and mediated. This is the first source of religious conflict, an atypical source, *generated by the entrepreneurial interest of promoting in the public opinion an image of religious victimization*. Such a practice is often encountered in cases where minor religious movements, often new in history, sue a State for abuse and non-observance of the fundamental rights of religious freedom.

Let us remain, however, in the typological analyzes in order to present the sources of religious conflict of exogenous and endogenous nature, following in the first place the specificity of the Romanian society:

I. Exogenous conflicts

a) *Conflict between Religion and Social Modernity* (expressed through religious secularization, religious indifference, atheism and secular humanist tendencies), which can also be considered as a conflict between Religion and the Romanian contemporary society. This type of conflict can be divided into three subcategories:

- *social contestation conflict*, generated by the perception of historical urgency between the religious denominations and the public opinion;
- *economic conflict*, generated by the institutional and investment priorities of the Religious Cults and by the urgency considered as priority by the civil society,
- *educational conflict*, generated by the educational priorities promoted by the Cults and the priorities considered important by the public opinion

b) *Conflict between various religious denominations caused by doctrinal differences* and by public legitimacy. This conflict has as a public contestant the religious proselytism considered aggressive and an understanding deformed by the Cults of the logic of religious pluralism and of the free market of religious ideas and competition specific to the religious pluralism.

c) *Inter-ethnic conflict*, generated by religious considerations, caused, for example, by the intention to build a mosque or by the arrival of Muslim refugees

II. Endogenous conflicts

a) *Internal conflict between believers, clergy and bishops, for reasons of interpretation of institutional power relations*

- *Contestation by the believers of the hierarchical decision-making authority,*
- *Contestation by the clergy of the administrative decisions and of the subordination to the bishop,*
- *Contestation of the moral authority of the bishop because of suspicions of tax fraud or immorality (homosexuality).*

So, the religious conflict is not just the one directed at someone who has a different opinion or behaviour than yours, someone who challenges you to an adverse reaction. Conflict can also be with you, with yourself, with your chimeras, with your non-fulfillment, with your innocent memory. In this sense, to express the need to heal the conflict with one's own memory, the expression «vindecare a memoriei – healing of memory» is used.

The relationship between the Religious Cults and the Communist Totalitarian Regime; source of conflict of historical clarification between Religious denominations and society

In the case of recent history studies (Abraham, 2017), there is much talk about the recent memory. This type of analysis is particularly characteristic to the studies of historical analysis of the communist period, in order to clarify the recent past, in order to reconcile the present with the recent past and thus to heal the recent memory. Also, the religious denominations that have lived through the communist era are in conflict with their own recent memory, which they have to heal.

Here is the first source of endogenous religious conflict - clarifying the recent past and healing the traumas of the communist period, which forced many representatives of the Churches to collaborate with the communist totalitarian regime, thus indirectly supporting the preservation of the communist political power in Romania for almost 50 years (Abraham; 2017, 84-86). Even though there has been an important period since the fall of the communist regime in December 1989, Romania still has a series of questions about that period to which it has not yet found an answer. For example, the archives of the Communist Security are still

being studied to prevent former security officers and their collaborators from returning to Romanian politics. No responsible has yet been identified for the hundreds of deaths during the Revolution in December 1989 and the history page of the communist period cannot yet be closed because the security officers who have committed horrors and excess zeal during the totalitarian period, are only now judged for the abuses committed in the totalitarian regime prisons. For now we can only mention the cases already tried of the former security officers Ion Fecior or Alexandru Visinescu, sentenced to dozens of years of imprisonment for their torturing activity during the communist period.

Romania has yet another important ground to cover in order to heal the recent memory over the communist period. At a distance of 27 years since the fall of communism in 2017, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church decided to dedicate a series of public events (conferences, debates, symposiums and university studies), to clarify the relationship between the totalitarian regime and the Orthodox Church, under the title: *"The Commemoration Year of Justinian Patriarbul and of the Defenders of Orthodoxy during the Communism in the Romanian Patriarchate"*. Unfortunately, the researchers involved in this approach consider only the aspects of the religious persecution to which a large part of the Orthodox clergy was subjected in the first part of the communist regime's establishment in Romania, called by historians and specialists as "the Stalinist period", and who has seen the arbitrary sentences and detentions of hundreds of priests, mostly Orthodox, but also Greek Catholics, Catholics or other confessions, between 1948 and 1964, a period during which the Communist Party and Romania were led by Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej. Although the approach of the Orthodox Church is commendable by the extent of the importance it has devoted to the event, it was necessary to have a much wider official clarification of the whole period of the communist regime in Romania and of the often collaborative relationship that took place between all the representatives of the Religious Cults and the Communist Totalitarian Regime (Abraham; 2017, 85).

But we are asking ourselves: why it is important to mention for our analysis this aspect of the healing of recent memory and the relationship between Religion and the Communist totalitarian regime? Because

it explains an important cause of an *endogenous conflict that can now be identified between the civil society in Romania and the representatives of the Orthodox Church*, especially, who are accused of not trying sufficiently convincing to clarify the relationship that existed between the Orthodox Church and the totalitarian communist regime. Such a public prosecution has for years tied the relationship between the public opinion, expressed through the media and the representatives of the Orthodox Church. In our opinion, the silence that the representatives of the Religious Cults display in the relation with the public opinion and the management of answers only in a marginal key, can be considered an *important source of religious conflict in the Romanian contemporary society*. However, it is necessary to specify that a number of religious cults, such as the Protestant Cults (Lutheran, Evangelical and Unitarian), but also the Neo-Protestant Cults, especially the Pentecostal or Baptist and Adventist Church, paid more attention to the clarification of the recent memory of the collaboration with the communist regime in Romania and even took administrative decisions to remove from the church structures the pastors or servants whom they suspected of collaboration with the totalitarian regime.

In order to continue our analysis of the sources of religious conflict within the Romanian contemporary society, and in order to introduce other directions of analysis, I consider it necessary to answer an absolutely mandatory question for understanding the current social context in Romania, namely: *how Important Is Religion to the Romanian Contemporary Society? Does Religion today have an important share in the Romanian society??*

The Importance of Religion for the Romanian Contemporary Society

The identity and religious practice are very important in contemporary Romania. After the fall of the totalitarian communist regime, Religion actively returned to all sectors of the public life. The religious education is present in public schools, there is legal religious assistance in hospitals, military units or penitentiaries, and the Religious Cults develop numerous activities of social work and philanthropy. The Bible or the Qur'an is used in public law courts, and at major public events and historical commemorations, representatives of the Cults are invited to the

protocol, where specific religious ceremonies are held. In the Romanian Parliament, the Cross is represented in the plenary hall as a religious symbol specific to the spirituality and Christian identity of Romania. The cultural and spiritual identity of Romania is strongly influenced by Orthodox Christian religion.

In the official statistics, the trust in the Orthodox Church is very important for the citizens of Romania, and more than 86% of Romanians declared their Orthodox identity within the National Censuses, and 99% of the country's citizens said they had an important religious identity. Only a weak percentage of less than 1% of the country's population declared themselves without religious identity or religiously indifferent (Tanase, 2008). The Orthodox Church has an important public communication network. It has its own television, Trinitas television, a Radio and a daily national newspaper, and also a news agency. In Romania there is also another religious television of the Adventist Church, Speranta TV, and a religious channel with a general neoprotective identity called Alpha and Omega. There are numerous national or local religious radio stations. On social networking sites and on the Internet, religion is an important concern for mass communication.

But the religious aspects that define the Romanian contemporary society are particularly complex. As is the reality in the whole common space of the European Union, mentality and religious behaviour is also influenced in Romania by the phenomenon of globalization, secularization, atheism or religious indifference. Despite some aspect of religious vitality, often superficial, one can notice the diminishing of the role of Religion in the everyday life of Romania and the decrease of trust in God as the effects of the secularization phenomenon. The phenomenon of secularization accompanies the equation of the relationship between religion and modernity and has the complementary effect of degrading relations between individuals, non-observance of moral principles, increased crime, excessive moral liberty, multiplication of corruption acts, political irresponsibility, etc. Such anti-social manifestations are not in any way caused by secularization, but are largely collateral effects of the secularization and loss of the influence of religion in the contemporary society. But, at the same time, they feed, directly or indirectly, the causes of religious conflicts.

The religious pluralism is an important component of the contemporary society. The religious pluralism defines the diverse multi-religious structure of the modern democratic societies. The pluralism is therefore a shared responsibility of the whole society and of all the institutions that constitute it. The pluralism gives substance, balance, and dynamism to a society. It creates values and objectives of social development.

The existence of several different religious identities at society level embodies practically the modern structure of the contemporary society, and the modern contemporary societies are exploiting their function precisely from the respecting of the individual rights and pluralism in all fields. The example of multiculturalism or European cultural diversity can be another interesting example for highlighting the functioning of the cultural pluralism. According to religious pluralism, the religious power in a society, more precisely in the relationship between the State and the Church, is not held by only one Church or religion. The existence of religious pluralism implies that religious power is distributed according to certain criteria of historical seniority, spiritual cultural visibility or numerical representativeness between different competing groups. None of the religious groups have the absolute monopoly of the relationship with the State, but each of them has sufficient influence, hence religious power, to attain their own legitimate interests.

When we analyze the existence of religious pluralism, we also understand implicitly that there is religious competition. And when there is competition, we can identify various forms of potential religious conflict. The presence of various ethnic-religious identities or the emergence of new religious movements within the same society, according to the logic of respect for freedom of conscience and religious manifestation, diversity and religious pluralism, generates an attitude of relativization of the religious truth and creates the premises of inter-religious confrontation on a free, competitive market (Berger; 1971, 214). More specifically, in the logic of pluralism, the non-negotiable religious truth of a denomination goes into competition with the revealed truth of another denomination. Who will win? The truth of the strongest will prevail, but the outcome of the competition will later feed the accumulation of social tensions that may degenerate into religious conflicts at some point. Thus, a fundamental component of the modern structure of the

contemporary societies, the pluralism can equally become a source and cause of exogenous religious conflict. However, the modern organization of the European space pays special attention to the cultural pluralism which helps to overcome the barriers of cultural individuality in order to highlight the cultural aspects that enrich the cultural matrix of the new European Union space. Through intercultural and interreligious dialogue, satisfactory results of social collaboration can be achieved if the dialogue partners have accumulated enough religious and human values and developed skills based on a long learning experience, on school, on research, and on personal experience. So we begin to understand that potential inter-religious conflict can be defused by concrete actions to protect religious pluralism, multiculturalism and fundamental human rights. The pluralist, multi-religious and multicultural structure of the Romanian and European society equally creates the prerequisites for collaboration, not only the sources of conflict. In the contemporary society, the ethnic and religious identities are no longer strictly outlined, as they were in the past. I mean, not all Polish in Romania are just Catholics, as not all Muslims in Romania are just Turks or Tatars, or all Ukrainians are just Orthodox. More specifically, within each minority there are one or more religious groups of another religious identity than the group as a whole. It is precisely these micro-minority groups that diminish the potential for conflict and inter-religious confrontation and foster the culture of dialogue and the premises of functional pluralism. In addition, the modern logic of economic and social development of modern societies, the globalization and the secularization as well as the technological mobility and the global communication, create common interests for all citizens, regardless of the aspirations or political identities during the nationalist confrontations. So, social modernity in its relation to Contemporary Religion can equally become a solution of social equilibrium and collaboration and not just a potential source of exogenous conflict.

Diminishing of the public authority of religion - the potential source of challenge and religious conflict

The religious subjects and press scandals aimed at the moral or economic slippages of the representatives of the various Cults are closely monitored by the secular media. There are more and more numerous public positions

challenging the church activity or the behaviour of the various religious denominations in Romania. If we look closely at the signals transmitted by the secular media in Romania, we notice that Religion in Romania is losing speed and public authority. The visible moment of regress was represented by the years 2014-2015, so at a distance of 25 years from another landmark of the Romanian contemporary history, the year 1990, i.e. the moment of the fall of the totalitarian communist regime. After 1990, Religion has seen an important return to the forefront of the public opinion and has enjoyed a tremendous prestige, paradoxically, say the experts, after more than 45 years of communist propaganda hostile to religion as a result of the Marxist ideology and the atheism promoted by it. Why do we consider 2014-2015 as a moment that marks a visible regression of Religion as importance and public perception in the Romanian contemporary society? And as a consequence, can this moment be considered as a possible source for the many types of religious conflicts that can be observed in the Romanian society?

Several media milestones that identify sources of religious conflict in Romanian contemporary society

I base my assertion on the analysis and interpretation of the conclusions of four important events that have taken place during this period, which involved also the Public Authority of the Religion at the highest level of public exposure and visibility. The limited space of this study on the sources of religious conflict only allows us to recall the four events that I am considering, with just a few details of identification and analysis. But they base our theory on the source of the public contestations of Religion in contemporary Romania and therefore one of the main sources of exogenous conflict between Religion and modernity of the Romanian society. Moreover, it allows us to consider that we have a number of forms of explicit public expression of the evolution and manifestation of the phenomenon of religious secularization in contemporary Romania.

The first of the public events that caught our attention is represented by the electoral campaign for the presidential elections that took place in 2014. The main candidates are two political leaders with a carefully outlined public profile that leave no room for equivocal interpretations or political approximations. A candidate is supported by the left-wing

political party, the Socialist Party, and occupies the post of Prime Minister, Victor Ponta. His entire electoral campaign will be focused mainly on two important political concepts, namely the highlighting of his religious identity, Orthodox Christianity as an Orthodox practitioner, and his belonging to the Romanian ethnic group, the majority in Romania. His counter-candidate, Klaus Johannes, is supported by the political right, the liberal party, and is a German ethnic minority and of Lutheran Protestant minority religion. In spite of the support of representatives of the majority Orthodox Church of the political left-wing candidate, because he is a faithful Orthodox practitioner, the election was won by his counter-candidate, Klaus Johannes, who is currently the President of Romania, despite the expectations of political analysts who considered that the national and religious identity will be the strongest electoral argument for the vote of most voters. The result of the vote contradicts the expectations of the specialists in political strategies. Victor Ponta remains Prime Minister of Romania until his resignation in November 2015.

Another important event is related to contesting the teaching of Religion in public schools. In the spring of 2015, the Constitutional Court in Romania adopts a decision stipulating that Religious classes are taught only to those students who opt in writing, under the parents' signature, to wish to receive religious education in State schools. Until then, Religion was mandatory in the primary and secondary education plan, under the condition of observing the religious freedom option which provided that the student who does not wish to receive religious education should withdraw from Religious class by a written request. In order to implement the decision of the Constitutional Court with the Law on Education, a national campaign was re-enrolled for students to participate in Religious class in State Schools. As a result of the administrative approach at national level, approximately 11% of the total number of children did not enrol in Religious classes. The national statistics on pupil options are not known for the years following the school year 2015, but the number of options for the Religion class is steadily decreasing, according to the perception of the media and of the teachers teaching religion. Public communication campaigns to support or not the teaching of Religion in public schools has highlighted the profound contestations towards religion in general and has highlighted

an important source of conflict between Religion and the contemporary society, especially from the perspective of separating the relationship between the State and the Church.

The third important event for our analysis took place in the autumn of 2015 when, on the night of October 30, 2015, there is a catastrophic fire at a club in Bucharest, called Colectiv, where hundreds of young people participated in a hard rock concert. 64 young people died, the night of the fire or later because of the burns. The public emotion was huge. It has generated street demonstrations that led to the resignation of the government led by Victor Ponta. The protesters, mostly of young age, shouted slogans against the Government, but also against the Orthodox Church and especially against Patriarch Daniel, whose resignation they demanded. Some of the protesters in Bucharest, but also from other localities in Romania, such as Iasi or Galati, threw stones towards the churches they found along the route of the public street protests. The main accusation brought to the Orthodox Church and to the Orthodox priests was that on the night of the fire no priest came to the scene of the catastrophe to offer counseling and religious services to those who died in the fire. The source of the public protests was fuelled by the opinion of some priests who considered that satanic rituals would take place at the show and that the music was not suitable for youth education.

Interestingly noteworthy is the fact that the young protesters who have expressed their public dissatisfaction with the Orthodox Church are in fact the main beneficiaries of religious education in public schools after 1990. This shows that the public prestige and the institutional authority of the Orthodox Church begin to be questioned. An important argument in support of this conclusion is also the protest through music, of dozens of prestigious intellectuals of the Romanian society against the project of building an impressive Orthodox Cathedral in Bucharest, near the Parliament Palace, built by Ceausescu during the communist period. The protest took place in April 2016 and had the name: « God loves wood and small spaces », a reference to the beautiful Orthodox wooden churches in Northern Transylvania.

Finally, the fourth event that is interesting for our analysis of the sources of religious conflict in the Romanian contemporary society took place also in 2015, in the first part of the year, when the believers of an

Orthodox parish in Focsani, located in the east of Romania, solidarized with their priest and refused to apply an administrative decision of the bishop who intended to move him to another parish. The argument of solidarity was that the priest together with the believers built the church after the fall of communism, with great financial efforts. That is why they felt they had the right to decide what priest serves in their parish. Beyond the arguments of canon law or other legal nature, the local bishop made the decision to sanction harshly 11 protesters. 8 of them he stopped from receiving the sacraments of the Church and three of them he removed from the religious community through ex-communication. Such a radical decision of ex-communication has never been taken by the Orthodox Church in modern times, at least in the past 100 years. The conflict situation has calmed down in that parish, but the radical gesture of excommunication and exclusion of Orthodox believers from the Church raises a great question mark on the relations of collaboration and communication between the hierarchy of the Church and the believers.

I consider that the decision of excommunication diminishes the interreligious dialogue options and creates real sources of endogenous administrative religious conflict and accelerates the phenomenon of religious self-secularization.

If we bring our research so far in the Centenary year of 2018, and we pay more attention to aspects of contesting Religion at the level of Romanian contemporary society, we will notice that the list of religious contestations, as a consequence of the endogenous and exogenous causes of conflict religious, is much larger. Just to pinpoint some of the most important religious contestation topics, up to date, we recall the lasting talks on the religious identity of the waves of Muslim refugees in Europe, on the contesting campaigns in some major Orthodox countries, on the discussions and decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Synod of Crete in 2016, on the canonical consistency conflicts between the Patriarchate of Moscow and Constantinople concerning the recognition of the canonical authority of the Orthodox communities in Ukraine in 2018, contestations with an important exogenous component. Internally, that is to say, in the context of endogenous contestations of religious life in Romania, and more precisely among believers, are the complaints about the construction costs of the Cathedral of the Salvation of the Nation

in Bucharest or the recent Referendum on 6-7 October for redefining the traditional family in the Constitution of the country, Referendum invalidated by people's vote.

Conclusions

Such endogenous contestations, which have the source of conflict in the disbelief of believers and equally in the lack of concern of religious leaders to give adequate responses, fuel and accelerate the phenomenon of religious self-secularization and that of public contestations of the religious institutions, favouring the emergence of social movements and of fundamentalist or aggressive secular attitudes. But all these religious contestation topics require in-depth analyzes and at this time insufficient social conclusions are being decanted to advance conceptual interpretation assumptions.

So we mentioned above that it is necessary «to pay more attention to aspects of contesting of Religion», if we want to study the causes of conflict within the contemporary society. And we say this because Religion is not a major and explicit theme of social interest or sociological research, and the studying of the contemporary religious phenomenon is less interesting in the priority areas of contemporary research. The study of contemporary religious behaviour is a marginal issue of interest, both for the academic and university environment and for the political or diplomatic environment. In Romania there are no independent University Departments or Research Institutes of the Romanian Academy that use scientific means or modern methods of social investigations and research to study the contemporary religious phenomenon and to propose public policies in this field, useful to both the State and the Religious Denominations.

Unfortunately, studying Religion is still a preoccupation of the public common sense, dominated by religious subjectivity and by identity-confessional emotion. It seems that to study Religion in contemporary Romania is only the responsibility of schools and faculties of theology that cannot escape the logic of dogmatic, conservative confessional subjectivity, often conflicting with both social modernity and other religious identities. Studying the religious phenomenon in Romania is therefore an urgent need for the academic and university

environment, especially from the perspective of sociology of religion, religious anthropology or political sciences. Because of this, the lack of correct and credible information on the values and historical and cultural contribution of Religion to society, I believe that there is a risk that many other fundamentalist or secular humanistic or atheistic movements or trends than those that have manifested so far, may be generated. More precisely, *we advance the hypothesis that the directions of contesting Religion in the Romanian contemporary society, and thus the religious conflict, will continue to diversify, especially in the context of advancing of the phenomenon of globalization and the free movement of any kind (cultural ideas, socio-political and military influences, capital, labour force, etc.) – generated by the modernity of the contemporary society.*

Whether we analyze the potentially conflicting institutional relationships between the different religious denominations, or we study the tense relations between the religious institutions and the modern contemporary society, we observe that religion, involuntarily, feeds many sources of social conflict, subordinated to different social levels. Our analysis is incomplete and we intend to develop this research in future analysis. We have not brought into discussion the well-known classical religious conflicts generated by doctrinal misunderstandings or institutional or cultural religious monopole within a society. Neither have we analyzed the issues of interethnic conflict motivated by religious considerations, so present and visible in the Balkan and South-Eastern European space, especially between the Christian and the Islamic communities. We limited our analysis only to the subsidiary aspects of the relationship between Religion and the modern contemporary society in order to provide a comparative study for analysts in the field of religious life and to emphasize that by analyzing the religious conflict within a contemporary society it is necessary to take into account the historical, social, cultural and especially the geographic characteristics that define the field of research.

What we have been able to observe in the above analysis is that the issues that define religion in the Romanian contemporary society *are in logic of asynchrony with the changes that define Western European space. And Religion is a contradictory, even controversial research variable in its relationship of linear predictability with social evolution.*

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