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The Ethical-Religious Dynamics in the Context of Europe's Globalization

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Abstract

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The present study aims to analyse the current dynamics of the ethical and religious dimension subtended by the human being involved in the context of the socio-economic relations from this beginning of the millennium. In order to achieve this predetermined objective, we intend to use a conceptual device structured on the paradigm of the relationships between continuous and discontinuous in the evolution of the ethical-religious relations within the current European communities. At the same time, we intend to verify the hypothesis that the economic dynamics of the European Union standardises the ethical and religious behaviours of European citizens, in the sense of internalising the common set of values accepted by state integrated in the European Union and/or the Euro-Atlantic one. Despite the resistance generated by the ethnic and religious particularity, we believe that the economic and socio-political phenomena require a set of behaviours consistent with the current values, accepted and acceptable by the citizens of the united Europe. Preliminary observations lead to the complementary hypothesis according to which we are dealing with a complex, difficult and lengthy process, inclusively requiring partial measures and gradual implementation. Simultaneously with the deployment of our research, we constantly relate to at least one independent variable that we consider relevant to the final conclusions: the dominant economic factor, supported and stimulated by the information society, etc. It shapes up the conclusion that the progressive societies work together, but they face distortions and malfunctions, surmountable only by engaging the decision-makers, both at community and intra-community level.

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Keywords: Dynamic of socio-economic relations; ethical and religious dimensions; accepted or acceptable behaviours and values

1. Introduction

Third millennium Europe's geopolitical and cultural space is implemented with unique ethical-religious elements, generated by a complex reality in which economic and social phenomena and processes have a strong dynamic. We live in an age in which everything is fast-forwarding, involving the most diversified processes. In the present study, we capture as well the economic determination, in the last resort, of man's religious desacralization and desalienation processes, in the general framework of the European multi-ethnic and multinational integration. In this situation dominated by dynamism, we find that without a consistent economic and financial support of the areligious modern men's emancipation processes would not be possible and neither feasible the modern condition of homoeconomicus, which aspires to the status of the total man (Friedman & Barbara, 2015). Against the background of these social realities, the diversity of opinions is a natural one; but we must have an active attitude: the critical spirit should not disappear, the contesting state should be in moderation, within some desirable equilibriums. The concrete reality shows us the fact that we take over models, theories, strategies, without passing them through our own filter, without a thorough analysis and without applying them to our natural needs.

After an analysis of the phenomena determined by the changes of the current Europe, we try to describe from a global and globalizing perspective particular aspects of the interaction of the areligious values with the religious ones, as well as some ethical issues arising from this inevitable interaction, in the context of the changes caused by European Union's enlargement. The European space has proven and proves permeable to extra-European cultures. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to highlight, with a greater degree of clarity, the functional correlation between the independent variable configured by the areligious values and the dependent variable shaped by the religious values, correlation which turns out to be a strong positive one in the current context of consistent and inconsistent cultures' communion from the Europe space.

2. Socio-economic premises of some current transformations

A lucrative, efficient and profitable economy can be none other than the market economy, which underpins the progressive companies. Such an economy has its own objective laws, which govern its phenomena and processes. But, the economic activity, of any kind, is motivated in the highest degree by surplus value, by the profit understood as a transformed form of the surplus value (Nica, 2015). The fundamental law of the free market economy is exactly the art of obtaining a surplus value as big as possible. Here appears the problem-question: how does the desire for increased profit reconciles with the moral desire to help people, i.e., the employees. This problem is the central axis, which establishes an axiological order in the universe of the problems that are the object of the business ethics (Machan, 2015).

In the context of the current transformations we notice that education (as essential element of the skills training required by the current society) is made for competition and less for cooperation. We believe that there must be a balance between them, because the competitiveness led to paroxysm is not beneficial to the macroeconomic balances. We should make an art (of stimulating creativity) out of

competition and not a thing in itself. Winning has become a purpose in itself, and this compromises the education and its objectives in the long term (Opie, 2015). At the age of adolescence, our high school students are Google “experts”: from this virtual environment (Popescu, 2015) they take, not critically enough, their information (harmful or not for the evolution of their conduct and behaviour within family and society), models, establish relationships, etc. We notice that reading is largely missing from young people’s concerns. But, the student must be educated in the spirit of exploring and live under the rule of natural questions (Peters, 2015).

Education’s precarious situation leads to the behaviour marked by young people’s desire to accumulate material goods. The education system hardly forms orientation abilities in new situations, due to some inertia and rigidities in adjusting to the requirements of the macro-social. On the other hand, poverty, underfinancing and indifference lead to questionable moral behaviours among young people and to the narrowing of their horizons of expectation.

Therefore, the ethical behaviour and religiosity know mostly form transformations, but, to some extent, of substance as well. Appeared in antiquity, in direct and durable relation with most people’s poverty, religion has not weakened this link even nowadays. Thus, the widening of the gap between rich and poor countries strengthens the religious faith of the poor ones whom are becoming poorer (while the rich get richer). Here it is about not only the absolute poverty, but also of the relative poverty of those from the so-called Third World (Flegar, 2016). The presence of the religious belief at the wealthy ones is the exception that proves the rule, as the rich ones are fewer and fewer compared with the poor growing crowd. We believe that religion continuously springs out of ignorance, innocence and negligence (Hurd, 2016). Thus, an ignorant man is not free, man’s freedom being given, at least in its first phase, by knowledge, by the scientific understanding of the world, by the objective laws, which govern the phenomena. No one can be free if is not informed, unless he does not know the world in which he exists and manifests himself. This is why man’s resorting to invoking the divinity is the first sign of his ignorance and innocence.

Since demography is a topic discussed at European level, we cannot help addressing the issue of abortion, which is a concrete one. It involves some of the most diverse approaches, the ethical approach being pre-eminent and open to the philosophical reflections on morality. Thus, we have in mind the fact that morality springs from the practical life of every human community (Howe, 2015). In the discourse universe of areligious ethics, abortion is allowed, because is carried on a conscienceless person; only the suppression of conscience is immoral and impermissible, immoral and impermissible being including the suppression of the material body of the consciousness bearing person. Religions forbid abortion because they do not understand the spirit or consciousness as postnatal result, but place it as entity that exists even prenatally (Jelen, 2015). The discussion on this subject seems endless and is accompanied by the most diverse pros and cons.

3. Religious interculturality and morality

The interculturality from the current European area, the syncretism of the religious cultures, the successive waves of Afro-Asians (Brown, 2016) migrants within the West European area (Bauder, 2016) are phenomena that diversify the geopolitical reality of the globalism era (Peters & Besley,

2016). In this diversified reality morality's dependence on religion is emerging as well. With regard to this aspect, we are interested in the existence of a religious substantiation of the moral rules and the morally established standards (Machan, 2016). At the same time, we are interested to know if the good and evil exist and manifest in a dynamic independent of God's existence. Our cognitive interest is focused also on the fact that the major religions of the Western culture (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) have answered "yes" to some problem-questions we have configured above. The three major religions with Western location believe that God is the omnipotent and omniscient creator of the world, on condition of creating the guarantee of morality through the supreme divinity. To God's omnipotence and omniscience His full goodness is added, as well as the fact that He is the ultimate foundation of morality in all human communities. This indubitable fact means that without God's existence no laws, no norms and no universal rules can exist, rules by which we would be able to appreciate the morality of our conducts and behaviours. In other words, we can use the argument of God in His quality of supreme criterion for assessing the moral character of the human behaviours. Relating to this, we can validly infer the following logical conclusion: knowing God's demands from us, we know the moral demands that we will necessarily respect throughout our whole life. Briefly: the ultimate and universal standard of our actions' morality is – and should be – the divine law itself; therefore, man's highest moral ideal is represented by the aspiration of living in communion with God or in harmony with the divine law.

Unlike the philosophers that support the above explained point of view, there are also philosophers who argue that the foundation of the moral norms is other than religion, this foundation being the human nature itself or even human society's manner of organization. Here appears also a nuance, in the sense that religion does not establish morality, but only deepens and strengthens people's attachment towards certain moral codes pre-existing their particular existence: all the religious beliefs, practices and attitudes exert a function of justifying the adherence of people to the moral codes they prefer within their groups of belonging. It should also be noted here that the philosophers who deny the religious foundation of the moral norms do not deny the concept of God, a concept in which they see the symbolic personification of the moral idea foundations dominant in the society; at the same time, these philosophers admit that the divine law signifies the socially necessary legitimacy of the moral ideas, legitimacy that confers coherence and cohesion to any social system's resistance structure. Every story about God – consider the philosophers from the category shown above – is nothing more than "a mythological expression" of some basic value of the human society. Seen from the point of view of these philosophers, morality of the deeds committed by people (through commission or even by assumed omission) appears as an entity independent of transcendent or supernatural structures.

If the idea of the existence of a supreme being hypostatized in the omnipotence of God is admissible, the respective idea is nothing more than a useful symbolic representation of the moral code's authority dominant in a certain society, and this authority is coercively exerted on all members of the human community, which has assumed that moral code.

Nearly all the allegations set out above are based on the assumption that God exists. What happens, however, when we deny the existence of God? In God's absence, on what are moral norms based on? Not having God, can we have an absolute criterion for assessing the morality of the acts perpetrated by

us? It is known that God does not allow anything; and, if God did not exist, then everything would be allowed and man would be scarily free. This is also Dostoyevsky's finding (Dostoyevsky, 2014, pp. 98-202) to which Jean-Paul Sartre relates as well: too much freedom for man is a danger to his fellow; therefore, the dosage of freedom and its gradual manifestation is necessary (Sartre, 2007, pp. 385-472). In other words, we can responsibly talk about degrees of freedom for each human individual: total freedom for all people injures the legitimate interests of each of them. Here is involved the complicated problem of the social contract by which people are forced to give the state certain degrees of freedom, in return for the state guaranteeing other forms and degrees of freedom they have left. On the other hand, the problem of the relation between the positive rights and the negative rights interferes as well, given the conditions of the democratic exercising of the supreme secular authority that is the state. This is not about the problem of the state's divine essence, but the state is understood as necessary authority constituted by the human communities who aspire to maintaining their cohesion under any circumstances, including in the conditions of not recognizing the exercise of God's authority.

In the context of the problematic of the relations between divinity and the moral code, we can identify as well the parameters describing the problem of religious man's unacceptance of transcendence. Thus, the religious man does not accept transcendence, and therefore he needs to find a meaning for his own existence, a meaning, a direction and an orientation that would prevent his alienation or disorientation. But, however much he may seek, the religious man finds this purpose only in his own constructive work and in his own history – we conclude together with the philosophers who admit the idea of every individual human destiny's self-determination in the coordinates of the determinism generator of order and predictability in the history of the human societies.

Returning to the condition of the religious man, we notice that he believes in the existence of an absolute reality: the sacred. It is true that the sacred transcends this world, but it manifests in it and through it, making it real. At the same time, the religious man believes that his life and of all beings has a sacred origin. Unlike the religious man, the areligious man denies transcendence and accepts the relativity of "reality", doubting even of the meaning of existence. On the other hand, even if it existed in all societies, throughout mankind's world history, the areligious man has developed and has reached its development peak only within the modern societies or within the so-called progressive society based on industry and on its beneficial effects.

We cannot ignore the fact that there are substantial specific differences between the archaic areligious man and the modern areligious man, the latter assuming a whole new existential status; him, the nowadays areligious man, only recognizes its role as subject and agent of history, denying any participation in the transcendence. In other words, the modern areligious man rejects any model of humanity that does not come from within the human condition. It is not difficult to see that the real and living man, endowed with needs and interests, creating himself, succeeding in becoming a total man if he desacralizes himself while desacralizing the world he lives in. Why? Because the sacred, understood as a hidden, misunderstood and incomprehensible entity is the main obstacle in the way to his freedom. At the same time, man will become an authentic man only if he will radically demystify himself. In connection to this truth to which we remain open with our intellectual, rational and even speculative thinking, we advocate that we agree with Mircea Eliade's conclusion, conclusion according to which

man will be truly free only at the moment when he will have killed the last god (Eliade, 2011, pp. 367-449). Doing so, the modern areligious man positions himself in the world, in the universe that enables the exercise of his free man acts; he takes a philosophical attitude through which he assumes a tragic existence, attitude that is not devoid of greatness.

We find that the modern areligious man is not a given, an entity preexisting the human essence, but is the concrete result of a real process of desacralization. We also find out that: if the so-called Nature is the result of a progressive secularization of the universe in which order has been established, the profane man is the result of a desacralization sustained by nature of the human existence. These aspects that reveal to us at any in-depth research prove yet another remarkable fact: the fact that the modern areligious man was not formed in communion with the archaic man, but in opposition to his archaic fellow, while purifying from any religious determination and of any transhuman significances. Interesting to notice are the masked or degenerated religious conducts, conducts and behaviours that can be recognized including in the self-declared secular or even antireligious manifestations. We underline here the understanding of the religious desalienation as semantic equivalent of the human emancipation concept, the suppression of the religious alienation of man being the last and highest form of human desalienation and man's return (as a citizen) to the condition that defines his essence (Haddad & Wang, 2015).

Deepening the knowledge of the complex relations between moral and modern areligious man's atheism, we capture connections of these relations to the universe of values that revolve around God's Supreme Being. We discover the truth that every human individual finds in God a value or an ordinance that legitimizes his conduct and behaviour, attitudinal and/or practical-utilitarian manifestations. This means that God exists in and through all reality's parties to which man participates through all his instances. This is the factual reality conferred by the exercise of Almighty God, about whose existence is not formulated any doubt. But, what would happen if God did not exist? We have raised this question before and we have already referred to the main alternative response. After this response, we feel the need to appropriately respond as well to the second question-problem: if God did not exist there would be no value and no order, so that all would be lost for the legitimacy of the human behaviour; his behaviour would be deprived of the moral reference points that coordinate his conduct. The assumption that God is the source of all values leads to the conclusion that his suppression by man generates a stringent necessity: the necessity for someone to invent values, and that "someone" is exactly the man. But, to say that man invents values is to say that life has no meaning outside of lived experience: life is nothing before people live and only humans are the ones who give it purpose. The problem is that that purpose is exactly the value that guides human conducts and behaviours. At the same time, it does not mean that people show capricious attitudes when they avoid choosing between pre-established values. In reference to this fact, Sartre infers the idea of man's inability to a priori decide what he has to do based on his experience (Sartre, 2000, pp. 34-65).

4. Conclusions

The cultures are open systems which require exchanges of values. Thus, within the European space, the national cultures are oriented towards the globalizing culture but they preserve their national

identity (Mircică, 2015). In such a context, we notice essentially religious conducts and behaviours present in the self-declared secular and anti-religious manifestations. The religious desalienation realizes man's closeness to his own essence, within the so-called human emancipation. As a matter of fact, modern areligious man's existence precedes the human essence, being a concrete product of desacralization. The progressive secularization of the universe finds its finality in what we call Nature. The man of the 21st century has more time for reflection and no longer takes over ideas without judgment. Young people keep pace with the dynamics of the social life. We can see that young people are open to new and adapt more easily to the rapid changes that take place at society's level and that need an adequate behaviour (Mircică, 2015). In these circumstances, we find that the effects of the religious feeling inculcated in the society are repeatable and durable, indicating the redoubtable obstacles that modern areligious people surmount in the religious desacralization process. Within the structure and dynamics of the relations between the archaic man and the modern areligious man, we notice a strange phenomenon: most of the areligious and not religious self-declared people manifest and develop religious behaviours without being aware of this fact. The most important thing to be underlined is the fact that man has the opportunity to choose his meaning understood as value or axiological reference, without being forced to choose between alternatives represented by pre-established values. Communication, more specifically, the types of communication constitute the basis for configuring and reconfiguring the human spirit. The types of human reflection (scientific, philosophical, religious, through art, etc.) are accompanied by a specific communication and unite people in a spiritual, cognitive and moral togetherness (Mircică, 2016).

We find that education systems must provide a continuous education, permanent, throughout the entire life of man as an individual, social group and community. At the same time, we find that here comes, as acute problem of the contemporary education, the issue raised by the clash of civilizations, by the partly controlled migrations of the ethnic groups from the poor countries (or facing civil war situations) towards the rich countries in Europe and North America. Problems arising from the clash of civilizations are: lack of knowledge or insufficient knowledge of the destination countries' language; the socio-cultural integration issue, while respecting the traditions of the integrated ethnos and of the integrating majority ethos. We mention that here intervenes the related problem of the degree of inter-ethnic, intercultural and interreligious tolerance. We find that the minimum degree of inter-ethnic tolerance is acceptable and beneficial to the social and cultural integration of migrants, despite the acculturation phenomenon in the context of globalization.

We notice that democratic systems present gaps or inadequacies, in the sense that they do not always and sufficiently succeed to effectively manage the phenomena reported in the present study. We mention that it is absolutely necessary the intervention of the state that, through judicial laws, will ensure inclusively the compliance with the moral and ethical laws.

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