DANUBIUS
SUPLIMENT

XXXIII
2015
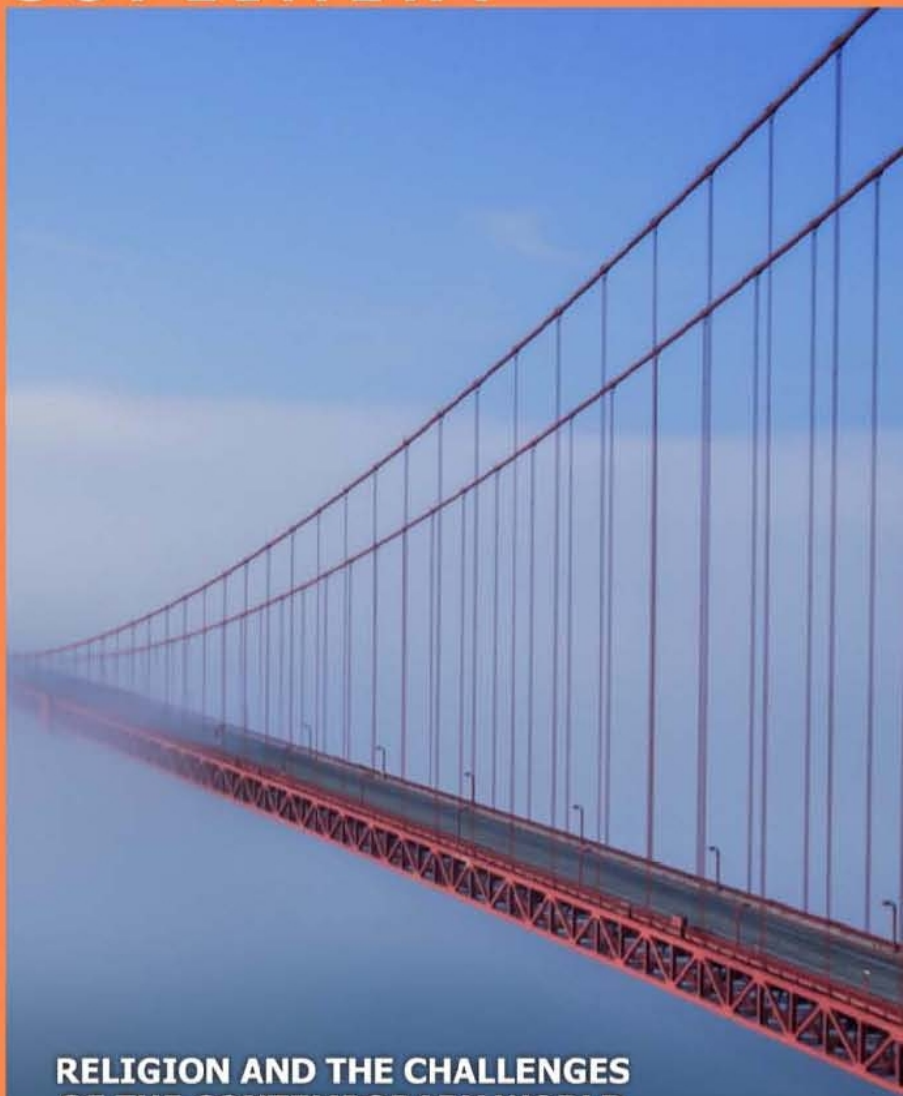
RELIGION AND THE CHALLENGES
OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

MUZEUL DE ISTORIE "PAUL PĂLTĂNEA" GALAȚI

DANUBIUS

XXXIII

SUPLIMENT

RELIGION AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

**The authors hold full responsibility for the entire
content of their articles.**

CONTENT

RELIGION VS. SECULARISM

*Osman Murat DENİZ**

THE POSSIBILITY OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN TURKEY AT THE CROSSROAD OF THE TRADITIONAL AND GLOBAL EXISTENCES

Abstract: As a result of the interaction between religions, globalization has created a new context for various theories of religious pluralism. For the sake of brevity, the beginning of the 21st century witnesses that religious pluralism is one of the most basic challenges for different theologies of various traditional religions. Thence, religious pluralism is one with which all theologies are somehow expected to face.

Understanding cultural religious pluralism requires a high level of knowledge. Individuals or communities who have a sectarian mindset and believe that only their religion or denomination represent the truth have no share in this level. The Muslims, as long as they stay within the borders of Islam, can find no evidence in the Qur'an or in the other sources that supports their claim that they are possessed of the truth to the exclusion of others. Turkey, in respect of both its religious and political culture, has the experience of developing and designating the ideal of pluralism.

It is a necessity for the Turkish intelligentsia in general and for the members of the theology faculties in particular to promote and maintain the ideal of religious pluralism. It is an obligation for the actors above to support and assign this notion on account of the international community and Turkey's geopolitical position. In this paper, I analyse and give a critical definition of religious pluralism in search for the possibility of religious pluralism in Turkey.

Keywords: *Religious Pluralism, Turkey, Philosophy, Religion, Diversity, Culture.*

***

INTRODUCTION

Religious pluralism is one of the most vibrant and moot topics in the contemporary philosophy of religion. This is in part due to the increasingly multicultural (multi-faith, multi-denominational) environment within which the philosophy of religion is now practiced and taught. What is more to the point, it is because thinking about theories of religious pluralism requires that one engage with some of the deepest questions lying at the heart of philosophy, in general. So, questions about philosophical methodology, the nature of truth, logic and language are very vital to examine and criticize the several forms of religious pluralism. Additionally, once we talk about religious pluralism, it seems to me that we need to ask philosophical questions about the truth value of various religions. Besides, it is a fact that globalization has brought about interaction between religions and religious communities. Through such interactions, as John Hick, the distinguished philosopher of religion, rightly points out, some religions, such as Christianity, have started to redefine some of their traditional doctrines whereas some others, such as Islam, have taken globalization as the incentive through which they intend to review their historical identity. As a result of the interaction between religions, globalization has created a new context for various theories of religious pluralism. For the sake of brevity, the beginning of the 21st century witnesses that religious pluralism is one of the most basic challenge for different theologies of various traditional religions. Thence, religious pluralism is one with which all theologies are somehow expected to cope. This explains why the philosophy of religion becomes most relevant in today's skirmish-imposing global ethos which has been the scene of the religious diversity and its emerging questions. This religious and philosophical context imposes and valorizes, covertly or overtly, the validity of other religious views and the integrity of other religious voices thorough the resuscitative "pneuma" of religious pluralism.

1. DEFINING RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

The diversity of religions is a *fact*, but this needs to be carefully distinguished from the idea of religious pluralism which is advanced as a theoretical explanation for such a phenomenon. The question of the diversity of religious beliefs should be evident: each religion puts forward a different set of religious truth-claims ranging from the nature of God to the human salvation. There is, to start with, a significant difference between the theistic religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the non-theistic religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. The most common feature of the theistic religions is their agreement on the *personal* nature of God, a conviction which is not shared by the non-theistic

religions. However, there are further differences within the theistic as well as the non-theistic religions themselves. Thus, for instance, the doctrines of the divine trinity and incarnation, which are essential to the Christian faith, are in sharp contrast to the Islamic concept of deity, which forcefully underlines the absolute unity (oneness) and transcendence of God[1].

I differentiate between two types of religious pluralism. Of course, both have a different implication for religion and life. First, there is a mostly sociological use of the term which I will call the "cultural religious pluralism." It indicates that in a given society there are a variety of religious traditions and the persons identifying with these traditions actively interact with one another in such a way that the traditions themselves are affected by this interaction. Religious pluralism in this usage is more than religious plurality. It is not simply another way to say there are many religious traditions observable in a society. It signifies more than religious diversity. It implies that these traditions are both different and engaged with one another, influencing one another, responding and reacting to one another through their members. Unless one is engaged with persons of other faiths as people of faith, religious pluralism is not an issue. One could just as well believe that only one's faith is the true religion and everything else is false religion. In connection with this usage, religious pluralism has a socio-political meaning too, referring to the fact of the American experiment in democracy. By this I mean the separation of church and state, whereby no particular religious group or set of groups legally represents the minds, hearts and the interests of the citizenry[2]. When it comes to Turkey, I can say that religious pluralism is guaranteed in Article 24 of the Turkish 1982 Constitution. "No one shall be allowed to exploit or abuse religion or religious feelings, or things held sacred by religion, in any manner whatsoever, for the purpose of personal or political influence, or for even partially basing the fundamental, social, economic, political and legal order of the State on religious tenets." I think that in our days, compared to the past, this article of the Constitution is interpreted and practiced in a more democratic and liberal manner, with the help of some reforms, to avoid discrimination and remove obstacles against the exercise of the full set of rights and freedoms by the members of the religious groups. But I must indicate that there are more things Turkey needs to do for assuring the full exercise of freedom of religion and the belief and the equal enjoyment of social, economic and political rights.

In the second place, there is the metaphysical use of the term religious pluralism, which is the claim that each religious tradition as such is a valid way in

---

[1] Mehmet Sait Reçber, "Ibn Al Arabi, Hick and Religious Pluralism," *Asian and African Area Studies* No: 7/2 (2008): 145.

[2] William Skudlarek, *The Attentive Voice: Reflection on the Meaning and Practice of Interreligious Dialogue* (New York: Lantern Books, 2012), 48.

itself for addressing the human condition and connecting those who pursue that way with the ineffably Real and infinite Being, whom members of different religions call "God", "Jahveh", "Jesus", "Allah", "Brahman" and so forth.

The phenomenological use of the term "metaphysical religious pluralism" refers to the existence of a multitude of religious traditions and diversity of denominations within those traditions. In other words, it can be explained by the theory that "the great world faiths embody different perceptions and conceptions of, and correspondingly different responses to, the Real or the Ultimate, and that within each of them independently the transformation of human existence from self-centeredness to reality-centeredness is taking place." So, from that point of view, religions are to be regarded as alternative soteriological ways through which all people can find salvation and fulfillment[3]. This view is now espoused by several authors in the field of the philosophy of religion. They present the result of decades of researches bringing to light the richness of the variety of the religious traditions in the world and the development of a method to explore these traditions, based upon religious experience. The methods of the philosophy of religion and also of the history of religion have revealed much to us about the meaning and the content of the religious beliefs and practices, and have advanced our understanding in the general field of religious studies. The acceptance of these methods does not imply that one has to accept the view that all religions are ultimately valid in themselves, the view that underlies a metaphysical understanding of religious pluralism. It seems to me that such a view involves reducing the diversity of various religions to a single essence or meaning and therefore that this would not be a view of true religious pluralism, but rather the equality of some really distinct religious traditions[4]. This may be the view that all religions are, in some ways, examples of a single form of religion. I have one parting comment about metaphysical religious pluralism. This particular understanding of religious pluralism seems inadmissible in that it does not give any place to revelation, as a special source of knowledge and also it reduces religion to morality[5]. So here, I am not using religious pluralism in a metaphysical sense, though I acknowledge the fact of religious pluralism. In this sense, I would like to use the term "cultural religious pluralism".

---

[3] John Hick, "Religious Pluralism," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 12, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: MacMillan Reference Books, 1986), 331

[4] Muhammad Legenhausen, "A Muslim's Non Reductive Religious Pluralism," in *Islam and Global Dialogue: Religious Pluralism and the Pursuit of Peace*, ed. Roger Boase. (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 52-53. See also: Thomas Banchoff, *Religious Pluralism*, *Globalization and World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 3-4.

[5] Recep Kılıç, "Dini Çoğulculuk Mu, Dinde Çoğulculuk Mu," *Dini Araştırmalar* Cilt 7/19 (2004): 16.

Cultural religious pluralism is based on a perspective which can lean towards the religious truth claims by putting some distance between them and us. This is not a kind of nihilism or skepticism. To put a distance between us and religions or religious truth claims signifies an attempt to look at them from outside. This is a situation that requires the accumulation of deep knowledge and also a high ability of empathy. The individuals or religious groups who have sectarian perspectives are far away from this situation and, for this very reason, they deserve critical analysis[6].

The sociologist Peter Berger wrote that there are "three options that all contemporary religious communities now face: to resist pluralism, to withdraw from it, or to engage with it. None is without difficulties and risks, but only engagement is compatible with liberal democracy. Engagement means that the tradition is carried into the open discourse of the culture and that those who represent the tradition make unapologetic truth claims"[7].

A religious truth-claim, whatever it is, must be duly respected, and should not be simplified or relativized, let alone negated or ignored. Because, from the Islamic point of view, faith in particular and religion in general are matters of conviction and sincerity. Thus, there should be no compulsion in religion. However, it should be added here that that conviction and sincerity meant above are not those of an emotional and uncritical stemming out of sheer desire. Rather, they are meant to be rational and critical, for Islam is a rational religion *par excellence*. In this matter of convincing and being convinced, Islam stringently observes a principle, "let the best argument win"[8].

Turkey has the experience of developing and promoting the ideal of cultural religious pluralism in respect of its religious and political culture[9]. Putting aside the artificial conflicts resulting mostly from the political concerns, many denominations and sects of Islam and even other religions have, for centuries, peacefully coexisted in the Seljuk and the Ottoman Empire as well as in the Republic of Turkey. The strongest aspect of Turkey that can present itself as a

---

[6] Sıddık Korkmaz, "Türkiye'de Kültürel Dini Çoğulculuk Anlayışının İmkânı," *Uluslararası Bilim, Ahlak ve Sanat Bağlamında Çağdaş İslam Algıları Sempozyumu*, Samsun, Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi ve Canik Belediyesi, 26-28 Kasım, 2010, 280.

[7] Peter Berger, "Religious Pluralism For a Pluralist Age," *Project Syndicate* April 28, 2005, accessed July 15, 2014, http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/religious-pluralism-for-a-pluralist-age.

[8] Anis Malik Thoha, "Religious Plurality: Myth or Reality?," Discussion Paper, Unissula Institutional Repository, 2005, accessed July 15, 2014, http://repository.unissula.ac.id/id/eprint/14.

[9] Carool Kersten, "Urbanization, Civil Society and Religious Pluralism in Indonesia and Turkey," in *Religious Pluralism, State and Society in Asia*, ed. Chiara Formichi (New York: Routledge, 2014): 13.

model to the Turkish and Muslim world is its rich heritage of critical thought and scientific knowledge. If we, as the heirs of this rich history, want to have positive expectations from the future, we should improve the pluralist world view and introduce it in the favor of Muslims, along with humanity.

The respect for religious pluralism begins to shake when people advocate that only their religious principles are valid and their religious views should be codified as an eternal law. Of course, the followers of many religious traditions may have this kind of attitude. For instance, in Islam, the Neo-Salafî interpretation of Islam frequently declares *takfir* (accusing Muslims of being infidel), which certainly poses a threat to religious pluralism. Indeed, no Muslim, as long as he stays within the "authentic" borders of Islam in its broadest sense, can find any evidence in the Qur'ân supporting his / her claim of *takfir*. Hence, religious pluralism is to be internalized and turned into a collective ethos, thorough inner sincerity, cognitive and emotive construction, and outer praxes and expressions.

It is a necessity for the Turkish *intelligentsia* in general and for the members of the theology schools in particular to promote and maintain the ideal of cultural religious pluralism. It seems to me that it is an obligation for the Muslim scholars to support and promote this view, keeping in mind the international community and Turkey's geopolitical position. Thus, unique religious groups can co-exist side by side and also consider the qualities of other religious groups as traits worth having in the dominant religion or culture.

I believe that, with the rise of neo-Salafism, the Islamic World stands in the borderline between religious totalitarianism and religious pluralism. It appears that the current political situations in the Middle East feed from neo-Salafism and, consequently, from religious totalitarianism. It appears that today there are two great challenges to the discourse of religious pluralism that has been nourished on American soils:

1) Christian evangelical fundamentalism
2) Neo-Salafi Islamic movement.

Especially the Muslim minorities in the West, because of their sociological context, are vulnerable to fanatic and neo-Salafi understanding, to a totalitarian religious approach. Therefore, to counter this development, a new philosophical and intellectual interpretation of Islam is urgently needed. Besides, many other programs, philosophical underpinnings of religious pluralism, must be strongly emphasized and constantly kept high on the agenda.

2. THE POSSIBILITY OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN TURKEY

Turkey has the experience of diverse cultures, religions and languages. Turkey is, by definition, a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country that bears

within it both the multicultural tolerance tradition of the Ottoman Empire and its *millet* arrangements. It straddles Europe and Asia and has a population of over 76 million, about three-quarters of them ethnic Turks. The next largest ethnic group are the Kurds, with smaller numbers of ethnic Arabs, Circassians, Armenians, Laz, Georgians, Greeks, Jews and others. An estimated 99 per cent of the population are of a Muslim background, mainly Sunnis, with 6 to 8 per cent of the population being Alevis, and very small numbers of Shias. The largest non-Muslim religious communities are the Christians, with the Armenian Apostolic being the largest church, followed by the Syrian Orthodox, the Greek Orthodox, Catholics of various rites and Protestants. Baha'is and Jehovah's Witnesses are present in smaller numbers.

Does Turkey still have the ability to maintain and flourish religious pluralism? After the foundation of the Republic, Turkey has gained the ability of producing more reliable knowledge about religion by turning *madrasas* (traditional institutions of religious education) into theology faculties. The main aim of these faculties is to find out the ways to establish a balance between science and religion. Therefore, away from dogmatic thinking, research and inquiry based studies are carried out in these faculties. Lying at the heart of the long-established tradition, the Turkish faculties of theology have taken it upon themselves to convey to the future generations this vast body of Islamic sciences that have remained intact to the present day, after a centuries-long developing phase. Moreover, the students studying Islamic theology in Turkey have the opportunity to study Islamic sciences, with all this richness, without plunging into the bigotry or fanaticism of promoting any of the particular schools of thought or jurisprudence to the exclusion of others. In addition, unlike other Islamic countries, the faculties of theology in Turkey teach Islamic sciences accompanied by philosophy, religious studies, Islamic art and literature, and, in this way, students are given the information they need to embrace the idea of cultural religious pluralism, namely to look at one's own religious beliefs and convictions from a distance and also to try to see our beliefs and convictions from the perspective of a person who does not share them with us.

These modern institutions, staying away from dogmatism, seek the balance between religion and science and conduct studies based on objective research and enquiry. With the studies and researches conducted in these faculties, many esoteric religious groups, which used to be considered as secret communities, have become civil societies conducting legal and philanthropic activities. Most of these religious groups are mystic Sufi organizations. Even some sectarian religious groups, such as Baktashi and Alawi, feel compelled to be public and to re-form their secret oral teachings. All of these developments indicate the possibility of an intra-Islamic pluralism in Turkey. As long as positive views are adopted, as long as objectivity, science and truth are valued, and as long as emotionally charged nostalgia-ridden

mythological desires are not promoted, there is a possibility for religious pluralism in Turkey.

As it stands, despite some isolated events, Turkey succeeds in managing religious diversity because the perception of Islam has developed in connection with a variety of current and historical events and variables. The perception that emerged in the course of the Turkish social, cultural and political history provides strong grounds for a peaceful co-existence within the shared social order. Turkey's achievement in establishing a political culture and a perception of Islam that facilitates religious pluralism can be attributed to numerous factors. These factors range from democracy and secularism to the perception of Islam and Turkey's efforts to join the European Union. However, it should be noted that, although we have achieved considerable success, we still need to make more improvements in these areas[10].

Secularism and the culture of democracy in Turkey likewise provide principles that are crucially important for the protection of pluralism and freedoms. By embracing democracy, the rule of law and secularism, Turkey has chosen a path that enables people of various backgrounds to live peacefully in the same social and political order, without abandoning their culture, religion or identity. Structural and legal provisions, as well as their social acceptance by the majority of Turkish citizens, have led to the establishment of individual freedom of religious belief and practice, as well as to the freedom of expression, as far as interpreting religion is concerned, i.e. what might be called intra-religious freedom or freedom within a religion. This is one of the peculiar characteristics of the modern Turkey of today.

Does Turkey want to continue with different religious groups or does it desire to transform the existing pluralistic religious landscape to a rather monolithic structure, comprising only one religion (namely, the Sunni-Salafi interpretation of Islam) which dominates the whole landscape? Even though the ruling Islamic elites of Turkey desire the last option and try to implement some sinister policies in that direction, I believe and hope the cultural and historical realities of Anatolian geography do not and will not allow such monolithic aspirations. Turkey needs to benefit from the culture of religious pluralism which has existed for a long time in this land. The European Union like projects that unite people which are different in terms of ethnicity, language and religion, have existed for a long time in this part of the world. Ignoring the existing differences in Turkey can be perceived as a kind of self-denial, an alienation from its authentic identity. Inter-religious or intra-religion differentiations are the result of globalization. Contemporary development in communication and transportation turned the whole

---

[10] Ali Bardakoğlu, "Culture of Co-existence in Islam: The Turkish Case," *Insight Turkey*, vol. 10, no. 3 (2008): 121.

world into a small village. Therefore, in such a global context, ignoring religious pluralism is as ridiculous as hiding one's head in the sand. Therefore, religious pluralism needs to be accepted as a reality and the traditional understanding of salvation, which requires loyalty to one religion, needs to be abandoned. Furthermore, individual forms of religiosity need to be promoted. Authoritarian monolithic political systems are outdated. Turkey, focusing on individuals and human rights, must value its pluralistic structure and must consider the differences - whether inter-religious or intra-Islamic - as a treasure[11].

After decades of official neglect and mistrust, Turkey has taken several steps to ensure the rights of the country's non-Muslim religious minorities and thus to guarantee that the rule of the law is applied equally for all Turkish citizens, regardless of religion, ethnicity and language. Besides political considerations and values, I think the social and religious history also entails Turkey keeping religious pluralism on the agenda. When we look at the history of Turkey, the relations of the Muslims with the non-Muslims have been dominantly a matter of Islamic jurisprudence. As Aslan argues, Muslims have not seen this as an issue of faith or theology. The absence of a theological consideration of the issue lies in the Muslim conviction that only God can know who has a genuine faith and therefore deserves salvation[12]. Although traditionally the content of this conviction was not extended to include non-Muslims, we may expand the circle of the saved ones in the light of the verse, "As for those who strive hard in Us, We will surely guide them to Our Paths."[13]

CONCLUSION

It seems to me that Turkey is experiencing the golden age of religious pluralism and as long as Turkey pursues its EU target, the quality of its democracy and freedoms will improve further and thus, by getting rid of its fears, a prosperous, developed and powerful Turkey will be characterized by a religious pluralism in an ideal sense.

Religious pluralism, in the sense of the unification of religions, cannot be advocated in terms of historical and current experiences. All movements which attempt to realize such an objective will eventually turn into a separate sectarian religious movement. In history, there are many examples of such religious

---

[11] Korkmaz, "Türkiye'de Kültürel Dini Çoğulculuk," 290.

[12] Adnan Aslan, *Religious Pluralism in Christian and Islamic Philosophy: The Thought of John Hick and Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 186; Mustafa Rüzgar, "Islam and Deep Religios Pluralism," in *Deep Religious Pluralism*, ed. David Ray Griffin (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 159-162.

[13] *Al-Ankabut*, 69.

formations. It is possible to develop religious pluralism based on tolerance and respect among the members of a religion. When we look at history, we can see that, when Muslims were in power, the members of other religions lived in peace and were able to transmit their beliefs to the next generation. However, when Islam lost its power, they faced great cruelty and oppression. Therefore, in Turkey, religious pluralism should be preserved and transferred to the future generations as cultural wealth. Especially, religious formations relative to the Sufi tradition could take a few steps forward, considering the structure of their cultural background. Formations within Islam have much to do in terms of developing religious pluralism. For instance, the heads of the cults and religious communions should receive an advanced religious education.

REFERENCES

Aslan, Adnan. *Religious Pluralism in Christian and Islamic Philosophy: The Thought of John Hick and Seyyed Hossein Nasr*. New York: Routledge, 1998.

Banchoff, Thomas. *Religious Pluralism, Globalization and World Politics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Bardakoğlu, Ali. "Culture of Co-existence in Islam: The Turkish Case." *Insight Turkey* Vol. 10, No. 3 (2008): 111-126.

Berger, Peter. "Religious Pluralism For a Pluralist Age." *Project Syndicate*, April 28, 2005. Accessed July 15, 2014. http://www.project-syndicate.org/comm entary/religious-pluralism-for-a-pluralist-age.

Hick, John. "Religious Pluralism." In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 12, edited by Mircea Eliade. New York: MacMillan Reference Books, 1986, 331-333.

Kersten, Carool. "Urbanization, Civil Society and Religious Pluralism in Indonesia and Turkey." In *Religious Pluralism, State and Society in Asia*, edited by Chiara Formichi. New York: Routledge, 2014.

Kılıç, Recep. "Dini Çoğulculuk Mu, Dinde Çoğulculuk Mu." *Dini Araştırmalar* Cilt 7/19 (2004): 13-17.

Korkmaz, Sıddık. "Türkiye'de Kültürel Dini Çoğulculuk Anlayışının İmkânı." *Uluslararası Bilim, Ahlak ve Sanat Bağlamında Çağdaş İslam Algıları Sempozyumu*, Samsun, Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi ve Canik Belediyesi, 26-28 Kasım 2010.

Legenhausen, Muhammad. "A Muslim's Non Reductive Religious Pluralism". In *Islam and Global Dialogue: Religious Pluralism and the Pursuit of Peace*, edited by Roger Boase. 51-77. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2010.

Reçber, Mehmet Sait. "Ibn Al Arabi, Hick and Religious Pluralism." *Asian and African Area Studies* No: 7-2 (2008): 145-157.

Rüzgar, Mustafa. "Islam and Deep Religious Pluralism." In *Deep Religious Pluralism*, edited by David Ray Griffin. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

Skudlarek, William. *The Attentive Voice: Reflection on the Meaning and Practice of Interreligious Dialogue*. New York: Lantern Books, 2012.

Thoha, Anis Malik. "Religious Plurality: Myth or Reality?" Discussion Paper, Unissula Institutional Repository, 2005. Accessed July 15, 2014. http://repository.unissula.ac.id/id/eprint/14.

*Zubair HUDAWI**

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE AS A CHALLENGE TO PLURALISTIC EXISTENCE. INDIA'S EXPERIENCE

Abstract: The socialist, secular and democratic republic of India takes pride in the motto of "Unity in diversity". The founders of the Indian Constitution have taken much effort to consider its religious, linguistic and ethnic diversity in order to make the concept of a federal or unified India a reality. Given its amazing diversities and contrasts, India offers the biggest example that can express the characteristics, challenges, threats and prospects of the pluralistic existence of any society. This paper looks into the challenges of communalism, which can be explained as the politicization of religious intolerance, to the religious pluralism in India. Though India's successful development, with its secular credentials and federal nature, has always faced continuous challenges and grave threats from the divisive forces of communalism, provincialism, and religious and linguistic extremism, this paper argues that India's pluralism has an inherent capacity to remain intact in the long run, and India cannot neglect its religious diversities forever.

Keywords: *Religious Pluralism, Islamic State, Secular State, Egyptian Revolution.*

<p align="center">***</p>

INTRODUCTION

In August-September 2013, the Muzaffar Nagar district of India's largest state, Uttar Pradesh (UP), witnessed a deadly Hindu-Muslim riot that resulted in the death of 62 (20 Hindus and 42 Muslims) and the displacement of over 50,000 people, mostly Muslims. The initial causes of the riot is alternatively said to be a bike accident and an incident of eve-teasing involving members from both communities. The tension was gravitated with the involvement of the community

* Department of Islamic and Contemporary Studies, Darul Huda Islamic University, Kerala, India (zubyjnu@gmail.com).

leaders and politicians who always look to secure their "vote-banks". Incitement to riots reportedly came from several parts, including an alleged inflammatory Facebook post by a Muslim leader, and an alleged uploading by a Hindu leader of a fake video showing a Hindu youth being brutally murdered by a Muslim mob. Sporadic simmering of communal tensions followed in different areas of the Western Uttar Pradesh in the following days, and a communal polarization was highly visible before the National Election. When the Hindutva party, Bharatiya Janata Party, won all the seats on offer in Uttar Pradesh, to grab the power at the Centre, in May 2014, analysts pointed out yet another example of communalizing the politics, or politicizing religious intolerance.

Religious pluralism and the coexistence of diverse belief systems in India face the biggest threat from this and several other concerted efforts by vested interests aiming at polarizing India's population by triggering religious tensions to reap political results. An analytical understanding of the dynamics of this increasing phenomenon, defined in India as communalism, would help make a futuristic perception on religious pluralism in India.

INDIA: UNITY IN DIVERSITY

India suits best for a thorough case study of pluralism due to its uncountable diversities in terms of religion, ethnicity, class, caste, culture, dress, food, music and art. A population of over 1.21 billion (the census from 2011) makes India the second most populous country in the world, inhabited by one sixth (17.5%) of the total world population. India is home to almost all religions in the world, and religious life, in all its forms, is highly visible in public life. According to 2001 census (2011 census analysis does not give religious data), Hindus make up 80.5% of the population followed by Muslims (13.4%), Christians (2.3%), Sikhs (1.9%), Buddhist (0.8%), Jains (0.4%) and others, consisting of Baha'is, Jews and Parsis (0.6%). Though India has a good number of atheists/Marxists or non-religious people, census data do not speak about them. The religious communities cannot be treated as monolithic for they represent a wide range of diversity in all variants termed above, and India's demography can be explained in terms of a highly hierarchical caste system and ethnicity. There are about 3,000 castes and over 25,000 sub-casts. The caste system divides the majority of the Hindu community into minority elites and majority backward communities or scheduled casts. Muslims and Christians are also not free from the caste hierarchy in many parts of the country. This complex mix of caste, ethnicity and religion reflects the pluralistic existence of Indian society.

The linguistic and cultural diversity adds to these factors in a big way. Out of 1635 recognized mother tongues in the country, there are 30 languages with over

a million speakers and 122 with over 10000 speakers. Hindi and English are the official and administrative languages, and there are 22 national languages. The borders of the states are drawn on socio-linguistic lines. In addition to this, Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian languages are part of the educational system considering their religious, historical or economic values. The efforts to make Hindi as a single national language in 1960s had resulted in deadly anti-Hindi riots in some regions. The call from the Hindu right wing party for making highly sanskritised Hindi as the sole national language[1] is always opposed by the secular community, terming it as part of the Hindutva agenda. Culturally, each region, religion, ethnicity and cast provide the ground for a host of food varieties, dressing habits, performances, rituals, arts and music. This create a cultural symbiosis, and helps people know each other in a better and cordial way. However, the same situation causes cultural tensions in many ways. The eating habits of one community may offend the beliefs of the other, the public display of one's cultural fest may be felt as a disturbance for the other, consequently leading to conflicts.

To acknowledge, manage and channelize these diversities for the integration and development of the country was the biggest task and challenge faced by the first leaders of the newly independent India. After much thoughts and debates, they drafted a Constitution that declared India as a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, and Democratic Republic. The constitutional concept of "Socialism" calls for equal status and opportunities for all, without any discrimination based on religion, race, color, caste, sex, or language, while "Secularism" calls for equal treatment, respect and freedom for all religions.

India has no state religion, but it gives the right to profess, practice and propagate any religion not only to individuals, but also to communities. It does not necessarily divorce religion from the state or separate religion and public life. Religious communities can establish their own religious, charitable and educational institutions, and they may avail financial assistance from the government. Government will administer, regulate and/or support religious institutions like historic/important places of worships, pilgrimage centers, Hajj Cell, Wakf (endowment) Boards, etc. The state has declared public holidays almost all major religious festivals. One of the major characteristics of Indian secularism is the acknowledgement, alongside the common and civil laws, of Hindu and Muslim Personal laws to govern issues related to marriage, divorce, inheritance, succession, adoption, maintenance, guardianship, custody of children, in addition to specific religious and cultural practices and control of religious institutions.

---

[1] In the end of May 2014, just at his coming to power, Prime Minister Narendra Modi instructed the bureaucracy to give prominence to Hindi on social media, government websites and government communications.

India stands firmly secular, while all of India's neighbors keep a religious identity. Pakistan and Bangladesh are Islamic states, whereas Nepal is a Hindu state and Sri Lanka officially focuses on Buddhism. There are many instances that reflect India's unity in diversity. Communities tend to respect each other in personal and public spheres, and co-operate with each other during festivals, rites of passages, disasters etc. In different localities, one can see places of worship belonging to different communities staying adjacent one to another, people from different religious background share jobs, political positions or work places, help each other in needs and even in constructing places of worship.

CHALLENGES TO RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

India's secular credentials and its potential for religious pluralism face serious challenges from the efforts to channelize religious intolerance for power and political gains. The religious mix of the country and the high level of the religious consciousness of the people is widely used to trigger religious tensions by vested interests. There have been tensions between Hindus and Sikhs, Hindus and Christians, and Christians and Muslims. However, the tensions between Hindus and Muslims are highly politicized. The majority communalism always tries to showcase Muslims or Hindus as invaders who dominated the majority and tried to destroy their belief and culture.

In India, the term "Communalism" is widely used to explain the attempts to politicize religious intolerance and to stimulate tensions and violence between diverse religious communities by misusing religious symbols, beliefs, rituals. There have been several studies regarding communalism in India, with a predominant view that considering community in terms of religion is the legacy of the colonial understanding of communities in India. According to Dick Kooiman, "Under colonialism, the religious definition of community has become so predominant that in common discourse communalism has become more or less synonymous with communalism of the religious variety"[2]. In a recent study, Surya Prakash Upadhyay and Rowena Robinson[3] said that "Communalism is commonly understood as conflicts over secular issues between religious communities, particularly between Hindus and Muslims. Though there were such struggles in the pre-colonial period, a full-blown communalism took place in the colonial period". They linked Communalism, under its political, economic and social aspects to the search for

---

[2] Dick Kooiman, *Communalism and Indian Princely States: Travancore, Baroda and Hyderabad in the 1930s* (New Delhi, Manohar, 2002), 249.
[3] Surya Prakash Upadhyay, Rowena Robinson, "Revisiting Communalism and Fundamentalism in India," *EPW Economic & Political Weekly* vol. XLVII, September 8 (2012).

community identity and to the tendencies of the communities to resist or seek domination.

GENEALOGY OF COMMUNALISM IN INDIA

History gives the pictures of several kings and rulers who utilized religions for their interests. However, such a tendency took a concrete shape during the period of the British rule, who effectively tried to escalate communities' competitive aspirations that derive out of threats, grievances, insecurities and distrust. The British colonizers are widely criticized for their "divide and rule" policy aiming at destroying the joint Hindu-Muslim efforts to fight for independence. Such efforts became more visible in all the policies adopted by the British following India's First War of Independence (Sipoy/Army rebellion) in 1857, in which both Hindus and Muslims participated. The British realized that "the existence side by side of the hostile creeds is one the strongest points in our political position in India"[4].

The 1857 incident was highly decisive of the fate of the Muslims in India. From the position of rulers of the region for several centuries, the Muslims were thrown deep into the crisis of existence and they had to face the challenges of a newly emerged socio-political scenario. The establishment of the traditionalist Deoband movement, that called for the revival of religious education, and the modernist Aligarh movement, which called for the acceptance of British Education, were part of the Muslim attempts to reclaim existence in the new environment. In the political front, the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 to coordinate and lead the movement for independence. However, many Muslim leaders, who were already having ill feelings towards the British policies, felt marginalization in the movement and formed All India Muslim League, in order to advocate for the rights of the Muslims. When the British introduced electoral democracy in India, Muslims demanded for separate electorates to select their own representatives, claiming that joint electorates will favor only the Hindu majority.

Simultaneously, a Hindu mobilization was on track by some leaders, who opposed the secular views propounded by the Indian National Congress. They were also annoyed by the Muslims' call for separate electorates, and by the conversions of Hindus to Christianity and Islam. They founded the All India Hindu Assembly (Hindu Mahasabha), calling for a Hindu political unity, the reconversion of the converted Hindus, and for the economic and educational development of the Hindus. In 1923, V.D. Savarkar published a pamphlet "Hindutva: Who is a

---

[4] Neil Stewart, "Divide and Rule: British Policy in Indian History," *Science and Society* vol. 15, no. I, Winter (1951): 49-57.

Hindu?", defining Hindu nationalism. In 1925, another Mahasabha leader, K.B. Hedgavar formed the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), an ultra-nationalist Hindu paramilitary organization, established in order to achieve the goals of Hindutva. It called for the primacy of Hindu culture, religion and heritage and termed India as a "Hindu Rashtra" (Hindu Nation). It advocated for cultural nationalism, called the Muslims and the Christians as foreigners, and formed a number of affiliated organizations (Sangh Parivar, RSS Famility) in order to achieve its goal of Hindu Rashtra. It mobilized people on Hindutva ideology, recruited activists and trained them as a strong cadre wing.

The two nations theory – a Hindu Majority in India and a Muslim Majority in Pakistan – was created and promoted through these two religious lines, tacitly supported and encouraged by the British. The demands for rights and privileges on religious lines, and the ensuing communalist discourses by vested interests, resulted in heightened religious intolerances and communal polarization among Hindus and Muslims. It led to the disastrous Partition of 1947, which saw widespread communal riots among Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, one million deaths and the migration of 1.4 million people.

While many Muslims from North India migrated to Pakistan, a large number of Muslims stayed back in India, and, despite being a minority (12-15%), form one of the largest Muslim populations in the world[5]. India's freedom leaders decided India to be secular nation, with no state religion. The Hindutva forces, widely accused of active participation in post-partition communal riots, were annoyed for not being able to create a Hindu Rashtra in a country having a Hindu majority. In 1948, a Hindutva activist assassinated Mahatma Gandhi, the father of India, accusing him of bias towards Muslims and Pakistan, during and after the Partition.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, which was banned following Gandhi's assassination, formed its political wing, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh or BJS, in 1951, succeeded by the Bharatiya Janata Party, in 1980. The Sangh Parivar, led by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, consistently tried to use the Hindutva ideology to gain political power and domination. Hindutva historians rewrote several histories creating the feeling of a "suppressed Hindu majority and dominating Muslim minority", of the humiliations and defeats of the Hindus by the Muslims. Several incidents involving Mughal Muslim rulers were depicted as anti-Hindu,

---

[5] With an estimate of 176 mln, Indian Muslims are the 3rd largest Muslim population, after that from Indonesia and Pakistan. They also represent 10% of the total Muslim population and the world's largest Muslim-minority population. Muslims are a majority in Lakshadweep and Jammu and Kashmir. Around 47% of all Muslims are concentrated in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar, while Assam, Kerala, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Karnataka have a good number of Muslim population.

and some stories of demolitions or lootings of Hindu temples by the Muslim armies to construct mosques were created. These stories were even taught through the textbooks, wherever Hindutva forces came to power. As Prakash and Rowena put it, using this constructed Hindutva feeling, Hindu communalism morphed into fundamentalism, with the Sangh parivar and its cultural politics of Hindutva playing the major roles.

The independent India witnessed a host of small and big communal riots and almost all government probe reports pointed fingers towards the active involvement of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh or its allies in planning, orchestrating, instigating and unleashing these riots targeting minorities. It always created a situation that any small conflict, criminal tendency or usual misconducts in the social interactions among communities could lead to big mob violence and communal riots. Issues may be as simple as explained above, but they will be used by the communalist elements to evoke tensions. In most of the cases, the lower middle class or poor people are used as the infantry in the riots.

Several public discourses also exacerbated the communal tensions. The Hindutva perception of "Mother India" (Bharat Mata) and the demands to see India as a Goddess to be worshiped is one of the examples. Heated debates over the Hindutva demand for a Uniform Civil Code, based on Indian culture and replacing all existing Personal Laws is another one. Issues concerning cow slaughter and vegetarianism are some other. (a) Muslims' opposition to the calls by the Hindutva forces to sing the song "Vande Matharam" in schools and at other official functions, on the ground that it is against their basic belief, (b) Muslims' strong reactions towards any attempts to repeal the Muslim Personal Law and the implementation of an Uniform Civil Code, (c) Muslims' feelings of belongingness to the heartlands of Islam and their solidarity with global Muslim issues, and (d) eating beef, especially cow meat, all these issues are exploited by the Hindutva forces to present the Muslims as alien.

However, India's political process and social structure gave little space for the communal forces to emerge until 1980s. The politics of patronage[6], exercised during the prolonged Congress rule, is said to have given an edge for the communal forces to grow faster. It paved the ways for the politics of "vote-bank" and "appeasement", issues which had their influence in keeping communal tensions alive.

In 1980s, India witnessed a deep rooted polarization on religious lines. Bharatiya Janata Party, the new political wing of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh,

---

[6] Politics of patronage are attempts by the political parties to create vote-banks on communal, cast-related or ethnic lines, promising protection and benefits in exchange for collective voting. The parties bargained with communities for vote showcasing state schemes and privileges.

took up the Hindutva claim[7] for Babri Masjid, a mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, constructed by the Mughal ruler Babar, in 1527, and started a movement to demolish the mosque and construct a Rama temple there. A big controversy concerning the applicability of the Muslim Personal Law, following a Supreme Court verdict in the Shabanoo Case, helped the Hindutva forces resound their voices well. The Ram Temple movement gave BJP a big political dividend, raising its seats in the Parliament from 2 in 1985 to 177 in 1991.

India's secularism and religious pluralism witnessed yet another disaster when Hindutva forces demolished Babri Masjid, in a daring act, in December 1992. Deadly communal riots across the country followed the demolition of the mosque. Feeling insecure, some Muslims resorted to extremist tendencies, and this paved the way for minority communalism. The Bharatiya Janata Party came to power in May 1996, but it could rule only for 15 days. They regained the rule in March 1998, in alliance with some communal and secular parties, and ruled till March 2004. Though Bharatiya Janata Party came to prominence with the help of its extremist communal agenda and reaping the results of religious intolerance, one can see that it came to power putting off its Hindutva agenda and creating a common, relatively pro-secular platform, alongside with other parties.

Since the ascension to power of the Bharatiya Janata Party, in the late 1990s, India witnessed some new forms of communal polarization. There occurred several explosions and terrorist attacks, especially the deadly Parliament attack in 2001, during the rule of the Bharatiya Janata Party, and the Mumbai terror attacks, in 2008. There also happened a number of communal riots and pogroms, including the mass massacres of the Muslims in Gujarat, in 2002, where the now Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, was the chief minister. India always accuses cross-border terrorism supported by Pakistan, in cooperation with India-born Muslim terrorist or separatist organizations, for almost all terror attacks inside the country, claiming that Pakistan wants to inflame the communal tensions in India. Thousands of Muslims were arrested under draconian laws like POTA and many kept in prison for years, without trial, in the aftermath of these terror attacks. The frequent terror attacks put Muslims in the pressure of proving their patriotism and secular image again and again. However, investigations to several terror attacks proved that elements or sleeper cells belonging to Hindutva forces planned and implemented many of them, in order to ignite communal tensions and garner the majority Hindu votes. It also came to the public view that the Hindutva forces in the Police planned

---

[7] Hidutva history claims that Babar demolished a temple in Ayodhya and constructed the mosque there. They claim that the mosque was built on the birth place of Lord Rama (Rama Janmabhumi). The Hindutva forces demanded the destruction of several mosques and monuments in India, constructed during the Mughal Period, saying that all were built after demolishing ancient temples.

fake encounters in which many Muslims were brutally killed in cold blood and were presented to the media as terrorists killed in encounters, while trying to wage terror attacks[8].

While Muslims agree with the presence of a minority of youth resorting to terror tactics and extremism reacting against the Hindutva communalist forces, there has been a general tendency from the Hindutva forces, supported by certain media and pro-Hindutva elements in the security forces, to present Muslims as terrorists and anti-Indian, and to implicate them in cases with severe anti-national charges. However, in many such cases, Muslim youths were set free, being proved innocent in the court, after 10 or 15 years. In May 2014, the day the new Bharatiya Janata Party government came to power, the Supreme Court, in a major trial, acquitted, after almost 13 years in jail, 6 Muslims who purposefully implicated in the Akshrdham Temple attack case, in 2002.

The attempts of the Hindu communalist forces to present the Muslims as a dangerous and anti-national "other", along with the limited extremist responses of the Muslims are creating big challenges to India's religious pluralism. Many places in India are communally tense and the emerging middle class is highly subscribing to this communal polarization. Minorities in India, especially Muslims, came to a big shock and utter disappointment when, in the 2014 May national election, the Bharatiya Janata Party came to power with an absolute majority and with Narendra Modi, who was the chief minister of Gujarat during the anti-Muslim riot of 2002, at the helm.

However, while analyzing the political trends and the grassroots level social undercurrents, one can argue that the victories of the communalist forces are only temporary. The Bharatiya Janata Party faced a crucial identity crisis back in 2004, when they lost the power after more than five years in rule. To the surprise of many, the Indian electorate rejected the Bharatiya Janata Party in 2004 and 2009, electing the Congress-led secular alliances. According to the analysts, the thumping victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party is largely because of the anti-incumbency waves and of the severe displeasure of the public in the economic and other policies of the Congress-led government that had ruled for 10 years. So, it is too early to state that Modi's victory is a proof for the Indian electorate's shift towards Hindutva and its cultural nationalism. In addition, in total, Bharatiya Janata Party has pocketed only less than 35% of the total votes polled.

---

[8] Amit Shah, the newly selected National President of the Bharatiya Janata Party, who is accused of being behind the communal tensions in Uttar Pradesh, that fetched big results for Bharatiya Janata Party in the national elections, is facing court proceedings for his involvement in several fake encounter cases as Home Minister.

CONCLUSION

In March 2014, two persons from Gujarat - Qutubuddin Ansari and Ashok Mochi – came together on a public program and shared flowers and pleasantries. When Ansari, whose photograph with folded hands begging for his life became an emblematic image of 2002 Gujarat violence victims, and Mochi, a strong Bajrang Dal (an extreme Hindutva outfit) activist whose image wielding an iron stick and roaring at Muslims in the backdrop of arson and violence represented the threatening face of Gujarat riot perpetrator, sat together opening their hearts and apologizing, it confirmed the claims of many social scientists and activists, that religious intolerance is being misused and exploited by vested interests to reap political gains. It also proved that a small elite group is exploiting the poverty and ignorance of poor backward people to employ them in communal tensions and riots. Mochi, a Dalit cobbler, regretting and repenting his involvement in the Gujarat riot, said he realized that he was being used by his masters and by the forces of hatred.

REFERENCES

Kooiman, Dick. *Communalism and Indian Princely States: Travancore, Baroda and Hyderabad in the 1930s*. New Delhi, Manohar, 2002.

Stewart, Neil. "Divide and Rule: British Policy in Indian History." *Science and Society* vol. 15, no. I, Winter (1951): 49-57.

Upadhyay, Surya Prakash, Rowena Robinson. "Revisiting Communalism and Fundamentalism in India." *EPW Economic & Political Weekly* vol. XLVII, September 8 (2012).

*Farrukhjon KAMOLOV**

TEACHING TOLERANCE IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM FOR ACHIEVING IMPROVED RELATIONSHIPS IN TAJIKISTAN

Abstract: The current paper discusses about the religious pluralism in Tajikistan and the problem of religious tolerance in society.

First, the author speaks about the religious pluralism historically, from the Somonids' period until Tajikistan's getting independence, and shows the religions which make modern religious pluralism in Tajikistan. Then, the author, discussing about the scientific works on religious tolerance, tries to show the ways of inculcating the teaching of tolerance in society.

Thus, the author draws the conclusion that tolerance can support the religious pluralism, understanding each other and living in peace within society.

Keywords: *tolerance, pluralism, understanding, society, peace, teaching.*

***

INTRODUCTION

Mankind passed through lots of historical periods and created or learned different ideologies. The different ideologies became the reason for appearing many cultures and for dividing humanity into faiths, religions and nations.

Sufism is one of the religious practices of Islam. It influenced the Persian and the Tajik literature, by inspiring poems, prose fictions and songs. The great Sufi poets and writers, such as Khoja Abdullah Ansary, Mirsayid Ali Hamadani, Abuhamid Al-Gazali, Hafiz Sherazi, Jaloliddin Rumi, Shams-i Tabriz, Sa'di Sherazi, Kamal Khujandi, Omar Khayyam, Nizami Ganjavi, Fariduddin Attar, Abdurrahmon Jami, Husain Waiz Kashifi, and others, gave the wisdom of Sufism to the world. One of Islamic scholar wrote about Rumi: "Rumi's work is so great

---
* Department of Foreign Languages, Institute of Economy and Trade of Tajik State University of Commerce (foteh122010@gmail.com).

that if one has read and understood it one has learnt every philosophy there is. His poems are sung in the sacred assemblies of the Sufis as part of their worship. The lives of the Sufis were marvelous in their piety, in their humanity"[1].

The great scholars wrote a lot of books about the stages of "Tariqat", love, attitude, behavior, religion, theology, etc. The scholars, besides religious themes, paid a lot of attention to educational, ethical and moral issues too. Some examples are books such as: "Kimiyo-e-Saodat", "Qobusnoma", "Wasiyatnoma", "Pandnoma", "Makhzan-ul-Asror", "Iskandarnoma", "Baqiya-e-naqiya", "Masnawi-e-Ma'nawi", "Futuwwatnaama", "Gulistan", "Bustan", "Bahoristan", "Khiradnoma-e-Iskandari", "Anwar-e-Suhaili", "Arba'in", "Akhloq-e-Muhsini", "Badoe'-al-Waqae'" etc.

Religious ideas were totally rejected in the Soviet period, when the atheistic ideology was supported for 70 years. Most of the books which were published in the Soviet period discussed atheistic values. During Stalin's personality cult, most of the Tajik religious personalities were killed. Keeping religious books at home was prohibited by the Soviet government and by the Communists. That's why, many people gave them away. Thus, the people were deprived from knowing their national culture and religion.

After the collapse of the Soviet government, on 9th of September, the Republic of Tajikistan became an independent country. The total area of Tajikistan is 142.6 km^2 and it borders China, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

There are many religions and faiths in Tajikistan. The Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan is the guarantor of their existence, as stated in the 26th article: "Every person has the right freely to determine their position toward religion, to profess any religion individually or together with others or not to profess any, and to take part in religious customs and ceremonies".

The majority of the population of Tajikistan is of Sunni Hanafi faith (data from April 2, 2009; the ratio is of 95%). There are 3000 mosques, of which 259 are conciliar. Officially registered *madrassahs* (Islamic religious educational institutions) are 19.

There is a Shia Ismaili religious minority in Badakhshan, which has its own history, starting with the X-XI centuries. In 2009, an Ismaili Centre was opened in the capital of the country. Ismaili people represent 4% of the population of Tajikistan.

There is also the "Naqshbandiya" Sufi order, which promotes peace and the ideas of humanism.

---

[1]Wahiduddin Khan, *History of Sufis*, accessed July 15, 2014, http://wahiduddin.net/mv2/VIIIa/VIIIa_1_1.htm.

There are 85 registered non-Muslim religious communities in Tajikistan. The most important are the Orthodox Christians, the Baptist communities (five), the Roman Catholic parish communities (two), the Seventh-day Adventists and the Lutherans. Two communities have derived from the South Korean church, Song Min. Other religious minorities are registered in the country, such as the Baha'i community, the Zoroastrian and the Jewish communities.

Most of the representatives of the non-Muslim faiths live in Dushanbe – the capital of Tajikistan.

All these religions, faiths and orders prove the free religious politics of the Republic of Tajikistan. Nevertheless, sometimes, we can notice that some people do not like this freedom.

When Tajikistan became independent, it gave people freedom in all spheres of thinking. Most people were not educated at all in respect of religion, so the problem of intolerance spread fast and this became the reason for the beginning of a civil war in society. Another problem was that the government was not politically stable and did not have enough power. Thus, a civil war began between the government and the opposition, headed by the "Islamic revival party". As a result of the civil war, lots of citizens were killed.

During the civil war, the majority organized a new parliament, a government, decided the national symbols and the national hymn. After that, they invited new people to the new institutions, in order to make new laws. The citizens of Tajikistan elected the new Constitution and President on 11/06/1994. The civil war continued till 1997.

ISLAM AND TOLERANCE IN TAJIKISTAN

Nowadays, when anyone discusses about Islam, we can see that most people think about Islam as terrorism, extremism and separatism. The reason is that people believe the media and they are not properly educated, from the Qur'an and the Hadith. There were terror actions in Khujand city and other places. Besides it, the security could stop terror actions and captured some terrorists several times.

When people hear about the wars from the Muslims world, about terror and extremism, they feel that this situation breaks the democratic values and pluralism, leading to conflicts.

Nevertheless, in 2009, the government of Tajikistan organized a celebration for honoring Imam A'zam, the founder and the leader of Hanafism. At that time, the whole country celebrated "The Year of Imam A'zam Abuhanifa Nu'maan Ibn Sobit". So, the citizens came to know about Imam Abuhanifa, the founder of the "Hanafi" faith, which is famous for its tolerance in the Islamic world.

But many people are not familiar with the tolerant ideas. For example, once it happened to me that a man came near to me and saw me reading a book in Arabic language; it was not a religious book. He said: "Do you know that the Qur'an teaches killing?" I answered that the Qur'an does not teach killing. Thus, the debate begun between us and finally I could prove that the Qur'an does not teach violence, but peace and tolerance. Then he said: "I do not know the Qur'anic ideas but the man who taught me is a teacher and he knows about it". He refused to pay any attention to my argument and, later on, he went to my brother and told him that I was a "fundamentalist" and a "fanatic".

Sometimes, religious people have a negative understanding about the secular people and, at the same time, the secular have a negative opinion about the religious people. There are some factors that account for this intolerance:

1. The low educational level.

2. There is high influence of the Communist ideas from the Soviet period.

3. Some people are not properly educated about Islam.

4. Some of the teachers of philosophy, literature, ideology and psychology who were influenced by the atheist ideology don't have a good impression about religion and religious pluralism. Instead, they stand on the atheist side.

5. The influence of the media makes people develop a negative impression about religion.

If we look at religions, they all have one goal – to determine man not to commit sin, to comply with God, to live in peace, freedom, in good economic conditions, to have a good behavior. When doing this, a person can go to paradise and can be judged by God as a good person.

When we pay attention to atheists and to secular people, we can notice that they also want to live in peace, in good economic conditions and to be free.

As we know, the majority of the population of Tajikistan is made of Muslims (99%). So, it is necessary to analyze the idea on tolerance and on religious pluralism, as taught in the Holy Qur'an and in the Prophet's *Hadiths*, in order to educate people about tolerance.

Many research works were done about the place of tolerance in the world. The researchers are divided into two groups. The first group are the scientists who look critically upon the level of tolerance in Islam and the second group are the Islamic scientists who are in confrontation with the former ones. The first group are mostly atheists people or members of other religions while in the second group there are mostly Islamic researchers.

Most of the atheist researchers or those from other religions tried to contradict the tolerant view of Islam and, instead of it, they notice its intolerance and coercion. The issue of Islamophobia is influential in case of some researchers.

On the contrary, the books and the papers of the Muslim researchers discuss and show the Islamic tolerance in the Qur'an, Hadith, great scholars' books and the way it was displayed in historical situations.

For example, one of the researchers, Atif Noor Khan, said: "Islam teaches tolerance on all levels, individual, groups and states. It should be a political and legal requirement. Tolerance is the mechanism that upholds human rights, pluralism (including cultural pluralism), and the rule of law. The Holy Qur'an says very clearly "To every People have We appointed rites and ceremonies which they must follow, let them not then dispute with you on the matter, but do invite (them) to your Lord for you are assuredly on the Right Way. If they do wrangle with you, say, 'God knows best what it is you are doing.' 'God will judge between you on the Day of Judgment concerning the matters in which you differ.'" (Qur'an, Al-Hajj, 76-69)".

The researchers or anyone who is interested in learning about tolerance in Islam can look to at least these 10 research works:

1. "Peace and Tolerance in Islam" by Muhammad Ahmad Qadri;[2]

2. "Religious Tolerance Revisited" by Rohail Khan;[3]

3. "Islam is the religion of peace" by Dr.Abdur-Rahman Abdul-Kareem Al-Sheha;[4]

4. "Generous Tolerance in Islam and its Effects on the Life of a Muslim" by Hamza Yusuf;[5]

5. "Islam and Peace" by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan;[6]

6. "Islam, Peace and Tolerance" by Zahid Aziz;[7]

7. "Religious Co-existence: Tolerance and Contestation amongst Hindu and Muslim Faith Groups of Indian Origin in South Africa" by Sultan Khan;[8]

---

[2] Muhammad Ahmad Qadri, "Peace and Tolerance in Islam," May 2004, California, USA, accessed July 15, 2014, www.iercrna.org.

[3] Rohail Khan, "Religious Tolerance Revisited," accessed July 15, 2014, www.newageislam.com.

[4] Abdurrahman Abdul-Kareem Al-Sheha, *Islam is the Religion of Peace*, translated and adapted into English with additions by Abu Salman Deya-ud-Deen Eberle, accessed July 15, 2014, www.islamland.org.

[5] Hamza Yusuf, "Generous Tolerance in Islam and its Effects on the Life of a Muslim," accessed July 15, 2015, www.newageislam.com.

[6] Wahiduddin Khan, "Islam and Peace," accessed July 15, 2014, www.wahiduddin.org.

[7] Zahid Aziz, *Islam, Peace and Tolerance*, Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore Publications, U.K., 2006, accessed July 15, 2014, www.aaiil.org.

[8] Sultan Khan, "Religious Co-existence: Tolerance and Contestation amongst Hindu and Muslim Faith Groups of Indian Origin in South Africa," *Journal of Sociology and Social Antropology* vol. 4, nr. 1-2 (January-April 2013): 149-57, accessed July 15, 2014, http://www.krepublishers.com/02-Journals/JSSA/JSSA-04-0-000-13-Web/JSSA-04-1-2-

8. "Tolerance in Islam" by Marmaduke Pikhtal;[9]

9. "Religious Tolerance in Islam" by Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi;[10]

10. "Tolerance-in-islam" by Atif Noor Khan;[11]

11. "Islam: a religion of tolerance or terrorism (an analytical and critical study)" by dr. Farooq Hassan.[12]

If we look at the Islamic doctrine and at the historical situations involving Islam, we can notice that Islam never agreed with terror, extremism and coercion.

The issue of tolerance is approached only accidentally in the Qur'an, but there are many *ayats* which teach tolerance, peace and understanding.

The Holy Qur'an teaches that, if peace is wanted in society, Muslims will have to live in peace with other religions or with the secular people. But, along history, it happened that the Muslims were driven out from their homes and people of other religions fought against them. So, they were forced to defend themselves, according to the Qur'an: "Perhaps Allah will make friendship between you and those whom you hold as enemies. And Allah has power (over all things), and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity" (Qur'an, Al-Mumtahina, 7-8).

Muslims have no right to attack non-Muslim people in a peaceful society; the Qur'an says: "If they incline towards peace, you also incline to it, and (put your) trust in Allah. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower" (Qur'an, Al-Anfal, 61).

The Qur'an teaches in another *ayat* that the Muslims have to live life consulting with the others: "And by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over (their faults), and ask (Allah's) Forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)" (Qur'an, Aal-e-Imran, 159).

000-13-Abst-PDF/JSSA-04-(1-2)-149-13-077-064-Khan-S/JSSA-04-(1-2)-149-13-064-Khan-S-Tt.pdf.

[9] Marmaduke Pikhtal, "Tolerance in Islam," U.K., Islamic Mission Dawah Centre, accessed July 16, 2015, www.newageislam.com.

[10] Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, "Tolerance in Islam," accessed July 16, 2015, www.al-islam.org.

[11] Atif Noor Khan, "Tolerance in Islam," accessed July 16, 2015, www.newageislam.com.

[12] Farooq Hassan, "Islam: a Religion of Tolerance or Terrorism (an analytical and critical study)," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, Department of Humanities, NED University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi, Pakistan vol. 3, no. 10 (February 2012).

Muslims believe that men are free and have the right to make their own choices, as the Qur'an says: "The Truth is from your Lord: let him who please believe and let him who disbelieve" (Qur'an, Al-Kahf, 29).

And, in another *ayat*, it is said: "To every People have We appointed rites and ceremonies which they must follow, let them not then dispute with you on the matter, but do invite (them) to your Lord for you are assuredly on the Right Way. If they do wrangle with you, say, 'God knows best what it is you are doing.', 'God will judge between you on the Day of Judgment concerning the matters in which you differ'" (Qur'an, Al-Hajj, 76-69).

According to the Qur'an, Islam is against aggression: "Help one another in works of righteousness and goodness, and help not one another in sin and aggression" (Qur'an, Al-Maeda, 2).

The Qur'an tries to repress anger and to pardon men: "Those who spend [in Allah's Cause – deeds of charity, alms, etc.] in prosperity and in adversity, who repress anger, and pardon men; verily, Allah loves Al-Muhsinun (the good-doers)" (Qur'an, Aal-e-Imran, 134).

Islam is a religion of justice. The Qur'an said: "Truly God commands you to give back trusts to those to whom they are due, and when you judge between people, to judge with justice…" (Qur'an, In-Nisa, 58).

All these examples show that humanism and tolerance are present in Islam.

Besides the Qur'an, there are hundreds of *hadiths* which teach tolerance and peace. For example, the Islamic researcher Rohail Khan, analyzing the issue historically, stated: "In this article, I propose to remind both Muslims and Christians about a promise that Prophet Muhammad made to the Christians. Recognition of this promise can have an enormous impact on Muslims' conduct towards Christians, in particular, and towards other non-Muslims, in general. In 628 AD, a delegation from St Catherine's Monastery came to Prophet Muhammad and requested his protection. He responded by granting them a Charter of Rights, which is reproduced below in its entirety. St. Catherine's Monastery is situated at the foot of Mt. Sinai and is the world's oldest monastery. It carries a huge collection of Christian manuscripts, second only to the Vatican, and is a world heritage site. It is a treasure house of Christian history that has remained safe for 1,400 years under Muslim protection. "The Promise to St. Catherine Treaty" is reproduced as follows: "This is a message from Muhammad Ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them. Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by Allah I hold out against anything that displeases them".[13]

---

[13]Rohail Khan, "Religious Tolerance Revisited," accessed July 16, 2015, www.newageislam.com.

Rohail Khan continued by giving another example: "On another occasion, Prophet Muhammad received a delegation of 60 Christians from the region of Najran, then a part of Yemen, at his mosque. When the time for their prayer came, they faced the direction of east and prayed. Prophet Muhammad ordered they be left in their state unharmed".[14]

The Prophet said in a *hadith*: "The strong man is not one who defeats people by physical force but one who is able to control himself in anger"[15].

The Prophet also taught about justice: "Listen, O people, if any one of you cruel towards a non-Muslim or does not give him his due rights or makes him do things beyond his powers, thereby causing him to suffer, or snatches anything from him against his wishes, then remember I will fight from his against you (the Muslim) on the day of Judgement".[16]

The Prophet said that every Muslim must show mercy: "Who does not show mercy, Allah will not show him mercy".[17]

The teachings of the Prophet require to the Muslims to be thankful to people: "Who did not thank to people, he did not thank to Allah"[18].

Besides, the great Islamic scholars, like Imam A'zam, Mavlana Jaloluddin Rumi, Omar Khayam wrote a lot about tolerance. In the history of Islam, we can find many situations of great tolerance. The history of the Somonid or of the Andalus periods are the best examples for tolerance and religious pluralism within the Islamic society.

One of the best examples of peace, mercy and tolerance is the "Hajj". David Clingingsmith, Asim Ijaz Khwaja and Michael Kremer, analyzing the "Hajj" process and its results, said that the "Hajj" spreads peace and tolerance to the whole world. In their work, *Estimating the Impact of the Hajj: Religion and Tolerance in Islam's Global Gathering*, it is stated: "The evidence suggests that the Hajj increases tolerance, which seems to apply not just within the Islamic world, but also beyond it. Hajjis return with a more positive views towards people from other countries. Hajjis are also more likely to state that various Pakistani ethnic and Muslim sectarian groups are equal, and that it is possible for such groups to live in harmony. These views of equality and harmony extend to non-Muslims as well".[19]

---

[14] Ibid.

[15] Muhammad ibn Abdullah Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*. Riyad: Dorussalam Kitab Al-Adab Bab no 72, Hadith no 6114 (1999), 1066.

[16] *Sunan-e-Abi Dawud Abu Dawid*, Bab no 33, Hadith no. 3052, 548.

[17]Abdurrahmon Jomi, *Arbaini Jomi*, with introduction to Kozim Mudirshonachi (Mashad: Oston Quds Razavi, 1363), 48.

[18] David Clingingsmith and Asim Ijaz Khwaja, "Estimating the Impact of the Hajj: Religion and Tolerance in Islam's Global Gathering," April 2008, accessed July 15, 2014, http://ssrn.com.

[19] Ibid.

THE METHODS OF INCULCATING THE TEACHINGS OF TOLERANCE WITHIN SOCIETY

The issue of tolerance is highly important for the establishment of religious pluralism since, before attempting to build a multicultural and multireligious society, first we have to learn to have a tolerant attitude towards any kind of "otherness".

Australia, taking into the consideration this issue, offered grants for teaching the practice of tolerance to the youth. Thus, Erebus International (Dr. Robert Carbines, Dr. Tim Wyatt and Ms. Leone Robb), with the assistance of Dr. Rapin Quinn and Dr. Declan O'Connell, made a project entitled "Encouraging Tolerance and Social Cohesion through School Education". It was submitted to the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training, and it aimed at teaching communities and schoolchildren about tolerance.

Practicing the teaching of religious tolerance to young people is clearly stated in the introduction to the project: "This project originates from the work being done to contribute to a National Action Plan to address the threats to Australia's social cohesion, harmony and security, being developed by the Council of the Australian Governments (COAG), following its special meeting held in September 2005. The development of the National Action Plan is guided by the Statement of Principles agreed at the Prime Minister's Summit with Muslim community leaders, in Canberra, on 23 August 2005. One of the agreed Principles states that: "the Australian Government will ensure that its programs and policies enhance mutual understanding between the Islamic community and the broader Australian community and promote the Australian values of harmony, justice and democracy."[20]

"The case studies [of the project] demonstrate good practices in three key areas:

a) Interschool cooperation aimed at reducing the potential isolation and alienation of Islamic youth;

b) Islamic schools assisting Muslim students and their parents to understand that Islamic culture can harmoniously co-exist with Australian civic values and cultures;

c) Schools that promote the understanding of Islam among Australian students and demonstrate how it can be compatible with other Australian values and cultures".[21]

---

[20]Robert Carbines, Tim Wyatt and Leone Robb, *Encouraging Tolerance and Social Cohesion through School Education, Report to the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training*, Erebus International, July 2006.
[21] Ibid.

Thus, we have to use the Australian model of teaching and spreading tolerance within society, a model which has given good results.

The values and the other issues related to tolerance are generally not shown in teaching books or in other educational aids.

CONCLUSION

Tajikistan is the home of many religions and faiths, such as Islamic Hanafism, Ismaili, the Sufi order Naqshbandiya, and of minor faiths such as Christianity, Zoroastrism, Baha'i; there are also the Russian Orthodox Church, the Lutheran Church, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, about 3000 Evangelicals, 300 Roman Catholics, five registered organizations of Baptists, one congregation of Korean Protestants and lots of secular people.

The experience of Australia, in the field of teaching youth how to be tolerant and to live in multicultural country can be a good example for our society, with some adjusting to our national values.

The following points are very helpful for teaching people about living in peace, spreading religious pluralism, understanding each other, all these aiming at maintaining the national unity:

1) creating teaching aids and writing books for educating young people about human values, such as tolerance, peace, harmony, based on the Qur'an, on the *Hadith* and on the books of great scholars, like Rudaki, Firdavsi, Khayam, Unsuralmaoli Kaykovus, Nosir Khusrav, Sa'di, Hofiz, Ganjavi, Rumi, Jomi, Koshifi, Donish, Aini, Tursunzoda, B. Gafurov, Loiq Sheraly, Farzona and others;

2) organizing educational courses and seminars on the same issues;

3) organizing educational courses at high and secondary schools, in the institutes and universities, for sustaining religious tolerance, humanism, peace and ethics, based on the Qur'an and the *Hadith*;

4) organizing a new project for inculcating the new subject "Tolerance and pluralism" in the educational system;

5) organizing holiday camps and tours with members of different religions and secular people, for sustaining tolerance and pluralism.

REFERENCES

Abu Dawud, *Sunan-e-Abi Dawud*.

Al-Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Abdullah. *Sahih Al-Bukhari*. Riyad: Dorussalam Kitab Al-Adab, 1999.

Al-Sheha, Abdurrahman Abdul-Kareem. "Islam is the Religion of Peace." Translated and adapted into English with additions by Abu Salman Deya-ud-Deen Eberle. Accessed July 16, 2014. www.islamland.org.

Aziz, Zahid. "Islam, Peace and Tolerance." Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore Publications, U.K. 2006. Accessed July 16, 2014. www.ahmadiyya.org.

Carbines, Robert, Tim Wyatt and Leone Robb, *Encouraging Tolerance and Social Cohesion through School Education. Report to the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training*, Erebus International, July 2006.

Clingingsmith, David and Asim Ijaz Khwaja. *Estimating the Impact of the Hajj: Religion and Tolerance in Islam's Global Gathering*, April 2008. Accessed July 16, 2014. http://ssrn.com.

Hassan, Farooq. "Islam: a Religion of Tolerance or Terrorism (an analytical and critical study)." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*. Department of Humanities, NED University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi, Pakistan vol. 3, no. 10 (February 2012).

Jomi, Abdurrahmon. *Arbaini Jomi*. With introduction to Kozim Mudirshonachi. Mashad: Oston Quds Razavi, 1363.

Khan, Rohail. "Religious Tolerance Revisited." Accessed July 15, 2014. www.newageislam.com.

Khan, Sultan. "Religious Co-existence: Tolerance and Contestation amongst Hindu and Muslim Faith Groups of Indian Origin in South Africa." *Journal of Sociology and Social Antropology* vol. 4, nr. 1-2 (January-April 2013): 149-57. Accessed July 15, 2014. http://www.krepublishers.com/02-Journals/JSSA/JSSA-04-0-000-13-Web/JSSA-04-1-2-000-13-Abst-PDF/JSSA-04-(1-2)-149-13-077-064-Khan-S/JSSA-04-(1-2)-149-13-064-Khan-S-Tt.pdf.

- Khan, Wahiduddin, "History of Sufis." Accessed July 15, 2014. www.wahiduddin.net/mv2/VIIIa/VIIIa_1_1.htm.

- Khan, Wahiduddin. "Islam and Peace." Accessed July 15, 2014. www.wahiduddin.org.

Noor Khan, Atif, "Tolerance in Islam." Accessed July 15, 2014. www.newageislam.com.

Pikhtal, Marmaduke, "Tolerance in Islam." U.K., Islamic Mission Dawah Centre. Accessed July 15, 2014. www.newageislam.com.

Qadri, Muhammad Ahmad, "Peace and Tolerance in Islam." May 2004. California, USA. Accessed July 15, 2014. www.iercrna.org.

Rizvi, Sayyid Muhammad, "Tolerance in Islam." Accessed July 15, 2014. www.al-islam.org.

Yusuf, Hamza, "Generous Tolerance in Islam and its Effects on the Life of a Muslim." Accessed July 15, 2014. www.newageislam.com.

*Ahmed KYEYUNE**

COMPARATIVE INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE
(UGANDA AND USA)

Abstract: This paper aims at conceiving an explanation of globalization and religious pluralism in Uganda. By this comparison, I want to emphasis that the forces of micro disintegration have manifested in religion, ethnicity, regionalism and all other kinds of pluralism. Although patterns of interaction between people of different faiths have not always been cooperative, violence in the name of God is very shocking.

Keywords: *Interaction, Pluralism, Islamic, development, Secular State, Uganda.*

***

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War, in 1990, brought hope that world peace is around the corner—even some scholars like Fukuyama concluded that it was the end of history. The development of technology and trade contributed to globalization far faster than anticipated. Communication and information technology in particular have changed so much in a short time, not only the quick flow of information but also what can be done with information. No area of the world has been left untouched by globalization, either as loser or beneficiary. With different factors contributing to the macro-integration, the process of globalization appears unstoppable. However, as the forces of the global macro-integration are pushing the world into a single entity, forces of micro-disintegration are pulling communities apart. Is globalization carrying its own anti-thesis? Forces of micro-disintegration have manifested in religion, ethnicity, regionalism and all other kinds of pluralism. In the process of micro-disintegration, countries like former Yugoslavia were reduced to pieces. Violence in Congo has left five million dead, Somalia fell in unending chaos etc. In the post-Cold War violence, Africa's Great Lakes region is having the biggest share of human loss**.** Peace remains elusive as new variables came up to remind both the international actors and academicians

that a lot needs to be done. Pluralism in all its kind has assumed a center stage in the post-cold war conflict. In the cob web of pluralism, religious pluralism has particularly become a major variable in the contemporary international conflict. What is more worrying is the rise of religious extremism even in the areas least expected. Earlier, the secular assumptions that religion will disappear with increasing science development have been proved wrong. Instead, religion has continued to play a big role in human relations. Although patterns of interaction between people of different faiths have not always been cooperative, violence in the name of God is very shocking.

This fear often turns to anger when we discover the other characteristic that frequently attend these acts of public violence: their justification by religion. Most people feel that religion should provide tranquility and peace, and not terror. Yet, in many of these cases, religion has supplied not only the ideology but also the motivation and the organizational structure for the perpetrators[1].

In the post-Cold War era, three major paradigms have come up: Huntington's clash of civilizations, Fukuyama's end of history and inter-religious dialogue. Each of these provides an answer but leaves many questions unanswered. Huntington's clash of civilization overstates the role of cultural pluralism in the post-Cold War conflict, Fukuyama was arrogant and inter-religious dialogue too optimistic. What is clear is that religious pluralism is a fact and will continue to grow in all our societies. Encouraging it should be the task and not halting it. How do we get the best out of religious pluralism?

Both Uganda and USA have long traditions of religious pluralism, though USA is more pluralistic. Migrations, missionary activity, attempts to fit to local conditions, attempts to internationalization, dissatisfaction with the status-quo and many other factors have all combined to create religious pluralism and to keep it moving. In the process of pluralizing, identities have been threatened, interests affected, power relations challenged, perceptions and misperceptions formed and changed and the patterns of interaction have ranged from confrontation to cooperation[2].

The 9/11 tragedy shook the world while, at the same time, proved the greatest test to American systems and values in recent times. How has the US fought terror amidst religious pluralism in her backyard? What are the institutions and values that have helped US to deal with its religious pluralism, especially in the post 9/11 period? How and when does inter-religions cooperation exist, especially in the post 9/11 era? What can Uganda learn from US experience?

---

[1] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God* (University of California Press, 2003), 5.
[2] For details on the definition of the relations, as used here, see Harold Saunders, "Two Challenges for the New Century: Transforming Relationships in Whole Bodies Politic," *Political Psychology* vol. 23, no. 1 (March 2002): 151-164.

In dealing with these questions, this paper looks at the following: the definition of religious pluralism, brief backgrounds of Uganda and USA, religious pluralism both in USA and Uganda, salient issues in inter-religious relations of the two countries, comparison of the efforts at inter-religious dialogue and, finally, it points out areas where Uganda and other countries can benefit from the US example. The paper is based on the assumption that religious pluralism is not bad as long as the right values and institutions are in place to ensure cooperation between the adherents of different faiths. Inter-religious dialogue, though optimistic, appears to be the only alternative in ensuring harmony in this pluralistic world.

1. WHAT IS RELIGIOUS PLURALISM?

The concept of religious pluralism is not new but, like many other concepts in social sciences, is contested across national, political and disciplinary contexts[3].

The commonly used meaning of the term is diversity or manyness, as stated by Albanese. She defines religious pluralism as manyness (the free existence of many faiths)[4].

In defining religious pluralism, Beckford shows that the term "religious diversity" is both complex and subtle, as there are different indicators used for political and scholarly purposes. Beckford questions the application of the terms "diversity" and "acceptability" in the definition of religious pluralism[5].

Dowd proposes three dimensions of religious diversity; a) qualitative and pertaining to the differences in creed, b) The second dimension is quantitative and concerns the number of distinctive religious groups, and c) the third dimension of religious diversity is proportionality[6].

However, there is a question on whether pluralism is only diversity or manyness. According to Moore K.[7], the understanding of pluralism goes beyond using the word pluralism as a mere descriptor of social conditions—the existence of people of diverse backgrounds, living in proximity to each other—to using it prescriptively, to promote a desired outcome[8].

---

[3] Thomas Banchoff, ed., *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.

[4] Catherine Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion* (Wadsworth: Cengage Learning, 2013), 11.

[5] James A. Beckford, *Social theory and religion* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 76.

[6] Robert Dowd, "Religious Diversity and Violent Conflict: Lessons from Nigeria," *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* vol.38, no.1 (Winter 2014): 153-68, accessed July 15, 2014, www.fletcherforum.org/.../38-1_D.

[7] Kathleen Moore, *The Unfamiliar Abode* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 30.

[8] Ibid.

Eck[9] draws a distinction between religious pluralism and diversity. According to Eck, all of America's diversity, old and new, does not add up to pluralism. "Pluralism" and "diversity" are sometimes used as if they were synonymous, but diversity - splendid, colorful and perhaps threatening - is not pluralism. Pluralism is the engagement that creates a common society from all that diversity. She gives four areas of definition; first, pluralism is not diversity alone, but *the energetic engagement with diversity*. Second, pluralism is not just tolerance, but *the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference*. Third, pluralism is not relativism, but *the encounter of commitments*. Fourth, pluralism is *based on dialogue*. The language of pluralism is that of dialogue and encounter, give and take, criticism and self-criticism[10].

According to T. Banchoff[11], in theology, the term often suggests harmony, convergence or compatibility across the religious traditions - in opposition to religious exclusivism, while in sociology, pluralism can refer to the diversity of different religious traditions within the same social or cultural space. Banchoff states that: "Religious pluralism refers to patterns of peaceful interaction among diverse religious actors—individuals and groups who identify with and act out of particular religious traditions. Religious pluralism, in this definition, does not posit different religions on diverse paths to the same truth, as it does in some theological contexts. And the term implies more than the social and religious diversity explored in much sociological analysis. Religious pluralism is the interaction of religious actors with one another and with the society and the state around concrete cultural, social, economic, and political agendas. It denotes a politics that joins diverse communities with overlapping but distinctive ethics and interests."[12]

From the above definitions, we can consider religious pluralism to include: diversity of religions and religious groups, public acceptance of this diversity and interaction between religious groups/individuals.

2. BRIEF BACKGROUND OF UGANDA AND USA

Uganda is a small country in East Africa, with a population of around 30 million people. Peopling of Uganda has happened through a series of migrations which continue up to today. There are over 62 tribes, with different but at times overlapping native religious practices. It should be noted that native religions did have a jealous god and there was a tendency to add on deities, instead of replacing.

---

[9] Diana Eck, *A New Religious America* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001).
[10] "The Pluralism Project," accessed July 15, 2014, www.pluralism.org.
[11] Banchoff, *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics*, 4.
[12] Ibid., 4-5.

In the end, the individual had several gods to attend to. The Baganda, for example, had more than 100 deities.

The contact with the world started in 1844, when an Arab trader, Ahmed bin Ibrahim, from the East African coast, reached Uganda. With him, he carried the Islam, which became the first foreign religion in Uganda, later to be followed by Christianity. With the construction of the Uganda railway in 1888, the British employed Indian labor. As a result, Indian religions also came to the country. The increasing migrations led either to new religions or increasing members of the existing faiths. Today, the number of religions in Uganda is difficult to ascertain as there are many sects which are not recorded. The table below gives a list of religions, according to the main report of 2002 population and housing census[13].

Religious Affiliation

Affiliation	2002 census
Christians	85.2%
Catholic	41.9%
Church of Uganda (Anglican)	35.9%
Pentecostal	4.6%
Seventh-day Adventist	1.5%
Orthodox Christian	0.1%
Other Christian	1.6%
Muslim	12.1%
Traditional	1.0%
Baha'i	0.1%
None	0.9%
Other non-Christian	0.7%

On the other hand, USA is a big country, at a different level of development and of socio-religious liberalism. Religious pluralism in USA is as old as the country itself. The different native tribes had their own beliefs, which were not totally lost with the coming of the Europeans.

Historians tell us that America has always been a land of many religions, and this is true. A vast, textured pluralism was already present in the life of the native peoples—even before the Europeans came to these shores. The wide diversity of native religious practices continues today, from the Piscataway of Maryland to the Blackfeet of Montana[14].

---

[13] "Uganda Bureau of Statistics," accessed July 15, 2014, www.ubos.org.
[14] Eck, *A new religious America*, 3.

European migrations were largely caused by the religious persecutions from Europe and by the search for economic opportunities. Although all could be categorized as Judeo-Christian, there are many sects that came and continued to come with each set of migrants.

The people who came across the Atlantic from Europe also had diverse religious traditions - Spanish and French Catholics, British Anglicans and Quakers, Sephardic Jews and Dutch Reform Christians …. this diversity broadened over the last three hundred years. The settlement of many Africans brought here by the slave trade meant the coming of the Muslims. The Chinese and Japanese who came to seek their fortune in the mines and fields of the west brought with them a mixture of Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian traditions. Eastern European Jews and Irish and Italian Catholics also arrived in force in the nineteenth century. Both Christian and Muslim immigrants came from the Middle East. Punjabis from northwest India came in the first decade of the twentieth century. Most of them were Sikh, who settled in the central and imperial valleys of California, built America's first *gurudwaras* and intermarried with Mexican women, creating a rich Sikh-Spanish subculture[15].

3.   RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN UGANDA AND USA

We have already seen that pluralism means not only diversity of faiths but also relations between them. This diversity and its content keep on changing as Eck points out: "Religion is never a finished product, packaged, delivered, and passed from generation to generation but dynamic, and ever changing."[16]

What Eck does not mention is that even the relations between these changing faiths change. As noted before, this changing nature of religions, at its turn, affects the identity, interests, power relations, perceptions and misperceptions and patterns of interaction, causing fear or hope among faithful. What are/have been the salient issues in these relations? Before looking at the salient issues, lets briefly consider the major perspectives on pluralism.

Diversity and pluralism generally are contested values. Proponents of religious diversity were /are optimistic that diversity leads to a wider choice and prevents the domination by one group. James Madison, one of Americas leading champions of religious freedom, supported this view, that religious diversity would guarantee religious freedom by itself: for where there is such a variety of sects, there cannot be a majority to oppress and persecute the rest[17]. Did Madison mean all religions? Did he have Islam, Hindu, and others on his mind? It seems Madison

---

[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid., 9.
[17] Noah Feldman, *Divided by God* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 19.

was only thinking in the terms of the Christian religions and did not predict what new migrations the future will bring.

The opponents of diversity supported the pessimistic view that diversity will lead to war and to the loss of both national and moral identity. Fears included domination by new groups, diluting American values and turning the Protestants into a minority[18]. This view was important in the enactment of the exclusive immigration laws of 1920, which limited the inflow of the non Anglo-Saxon.

However, in 1965, the new immigration laws negated the exclusivist restrictions stated in the 1920 law and new migrants started flowing in. As in the earlier migrations, new faiths came in, more adherents were added to the existing ones, new interpretations and sects emerged. Could all these blend or melt in the American way of life? The melting pot of culture meant that, once people of diverse cultural background reached America, their cultures and values inevitable gets blended in the American culture and the result will be an American type of culture. Whereas it was true of the earlier migrations, the improved communication technology and the easy migration keeps the new migrants in touch with their home culture and values. Eck was right to doubt the reality of the melting pot: "Our oneness will not mean the blending of religions into a religious melting pot, all speaking a king of religious Esperanto. Of course, there will be conversions, intermarriages—probably plenty of them—and forms of public and private syncretism, but there will never be widespread melting of religions or unanimity on matters of religious truth."[19]

Religious pluralism is seen from those three perspectives and, just like in case of its definition, there is a contest on what people expect from it, how they handle it and how it impacts on them. It is in this contested zone that the USA and Uganda find themselves.

4. SALIENT ISSUES. US/UGANDA RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Throughout the history of both USA and Uganda, religious relations have not always been rosy. In Uganda, wars have been fought and are being fought with religion as the excuse. The period between 1884 and 1900 was a period of religious wars between the followers of three main denomination, that is Muslims, Roman Catholics and Anglican Protestants which came to an end with the establishment of the colonial rule. The post-colonial period witnessed the massacres against the Muslims in 1979, the Kanungu inferno and an on-going war against the Allied Democratic Forces and Lord's Resistance Army. There is also a history of the Ugandan martyrs, in all the three main religions, something rare in Africa. In 2010,

---

[18] Eck, *A New Religious America*, 27.

Uganda was attacked by the al-Shabab terrorists from Somalia and more threats are still expected from the same group. USA has not had wars but hate attacks against religious minorities have been common before and after 9/11. Hate attacks and discrimination against Jews and Catholic were common in the US history. The al-Qaeda attacks against the US targets in different parts of the world (US included) and the 9/11 tragedy are some of the religious related conflicts that these countries have to deal with. The cause of this religious violent outburst cannot be fully comprehended.

Looking at the American society, the religious concerns have been over the national identity, moral identity/uniformity, security, state-church relations and increasingly over its foreign policy. It is against these that a comparison with Uganda will be made.

As already seen above, the religious identity of the US was of concern to the conservative members of the American society. Even though the first amendment aimed at the freedom of religions, non-protestant religions and Asian religions (new religious movements) were not in the mind of the framers. These new religious movements also carry with them new races, as opposed to the dominant white race. As Roof and Caron point out, the old image of the WASP - the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant - is gradually vanishing, which adds to the worries of many conservative evangelical and fundamentalist Protestants[20]. On the other hand, national identity, especially religious identity, has never been an issue in Uganda, except for the brief period of Amin's rule. Even with its Christian majority, Uganda is a member state of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The country does not have strict migration laws and even those already extant are not enforced due to corruption and weak law enforcement institutions. Uganda does not have a state religion, though the religion of the sovereign is considered the first among equals. As shown on the table above, Christians form the overwhelming majority but they are highly divided between Roman Catholics and Anglican Protestants to the extent that they always need a Muslim as the arbiter.

Increasing liberalism and secularism have made it hard to sustain moral uniformity. For example, reproduction and sexual liberalism, previously seen as deviant behaviors or values, are increasingly becoming common and acceptable to

---

[19] Ibid., 31.
[20] Wade Clark Roof & Nathalie Caron, "Shifting Boundaries: Religion in the United States," in ed. C.W.E. Bigsby, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Companion to Modern American Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 7.

the dismay of the conservatives[21]. Uganda also has its own conservatives, opposed to the above stated social changes and to many other aspects of the human rights, which are considered as immoral, especially sexual liberalism. This conservatism is based on both religion and traditional cultural values. Just recently, the president of Uganda signed a law criminalizing homosexuality and there was a talk about a law on decent dressing in public[22].

The state-church relations have been debatable since medieval Europe. Even though US constitutionally managed to separate the church from the state, it did not manage to divorce politics from religion. According to Feldman, "the deep divide in America life, then is not primarily over religious belief of affiliation - it is over the role that belief should play in the business of politics and government…the essential question of how religion and government should interact becomes most salient when we confront the controversial constitutional problems that arise under the heading of church and state."[23]

The rise of the evangelical Christians had been on for some time in the US even before Bush's presidency. This Christian lobby had even managed to secure the Religious Freedom Act, in late 1998, which empowered the American President to deal with countries that did not allow freedom of worship to Christians[24]. These developments worried the liberals who considered that the state was being hijacked by one religion. On the other side, as already mentioned, state-church relations have been an area of contest since the colonial rule. The colonial state itself was built on religious divisionism and, throughout the colonial period, politics of exclusion of certain groups and of dominance by the Anglicans, as the religion of the sovereign, was the rule. Different post-colonial governments have followed the same line. In a society where the state still plays a big role in people's lives, who controls the state matters a lot. It is for this reason that politics becomes the battle ground for religions, just as worship centers become the battle ground for politicians in Uganda.

The 9/11 tragedy also brought in the question of security. For many people, American or not, Islam and terrorism are not yet demarcated. The increasing number of Muslims represents an increasing risk of terror. Television images of relentless fights in the Muslim countries and the poor human rights record add to

---

[21] For a discussion on this see Roof&Caron, "Shifting Boundaries: Religion in the United States," 17-18; Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, 19-36, deals with the militant Christian groups and the violence they committed over the issue of morality.

[22] Uganda recently passed an anti-gay law but even before that homosexuality was illegal (though the law was not enforced).

[23] Feldman, *Divided by God*, 6.

[24] "Georgetown Journal of International Affairs," accessed July 13, 2014, http://journal.georgetown.edu/.

the fear. Poorly interpreted by Jihadists and poorly understood by many non-Muslims, Islam has been totally associated with violence. But not only Islam is seen as such, even those other religions from the Asian regions are added on this list, probably out of ignorance. The fears of Americans are vindicated by the religious violence and underdevelopment of the areas these religions come from[25]. Uganda has a similar problem, initially drawn from the excesses of Amin's regime, then by media and later on, by the terrorist attacks from ADF (Allied Democratic Forces) and al-Shabab terrorists. In both countries, Muslims have a lot to explain. Apart from Muslims, Uganda has had a problem with Christian insurgents/terrorists and cults[26]. The major group is the Holy Spirit Movement, started by Lakwena, but now under Joseph Kony (a former catechist), under a new name of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The group is now terrorizing many countries including South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic.

Foreign policy, though not currently a big issue, is likely to become important, as new religions gain ground. The US has been and is still a great supporter of Israel, in the Middle East conflict. According to Ali Mazrui, the American support to Israel includes: arming Israel with sophisticated weapons, economic aid and weakening of the anti-Israel Arab forces[27]. In the several wars fought, Israel has emerged victorious, while Arabs and their Muslim sympathizers/supporters have been humiliated. This American support is a result of the efforts of the Jewish lobby group[28]. Will the followers of other religions also ask for favorable policies too? Muslims in the USA, for example, are reportedly mobilizing to boycott the Ramadhan Iftar dinner at the White House because of the American support to Israel in the on-going war[29].

5.   WHAT IS INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE?

Despite the prevalence of hate violence and terror threats, it is amazing how Americans quickly overcome the difficult times. Comforting and supporting

---

[25] M.P. Daggett, in an article on the heathen invasion ("The Heathen Invasion," *Missionary Review* vol. XXXV: 538-540) wonders how a religion that has not developed the condition of women in its area of origin can develop the condition of American women.

[26] For more on the way the government treated the cults, see the 2012 Report on International Religious Freedom - Uganda.

[27] Arye Oden, *Islam & Politics in Kenya* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 130.

[28] "Georgetown Journal of International Affairs," accessed July 13, 2014, http://journal.georgetown.edu/.

[29] Julien Eilperin, "Arab American group urges boycott of White House Iftar dinner," accessed July 13, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-politics/wp/2014/07/14/arab-american-group-urges-boycott-of-white-house-iftar-dinner.

victims of hate crimes is done smoothly by all people, despite their religious diversity and opinion[30]. The American Muslims condemned the 9/11 attacks, Christians have come to the aid of the Muslims in cases of attacks and many others. The list of examples is endless. What drives the American spirit? What institutions are responsible for this spirit? This brings us to the interfaith dialogue in America.

Inter-religious dialogue has many definitions which cannot be exhausted in this essay, though we can look at some of them[31]. In its special report of 23 July 2004, United States Institute of Peace defined inter-religious dialogue as follows: "At its most basic level, interfaith dialogue involves people of different religious faiths coming together to have a conversation. "Conversation" in this sense has an expansive definition, and is not limited to verbal exchange alone…It is aimed at mutual understanding, not competing; at mutual problem solving, not proselytizing."[32]

Inter-religious dialogue has been defined by Merdjanova and Brodeur as "all forms of inter-religious dialogue activities that foster an ethos of tolerance, nonviolence, and trust"[33]. The two also consider Eck's definition as the most commonly used. According to Eck, inter-religious is defined as: "The first is parliamentary style dialogue. Secondly, there is institutional dialogue, such as the regular meetings between representatives of the Vatican and the International Jewish Committee for Inter-religious Consultation. Thirdly, there is theological dialogue, which takes seriously the questions and challenges posed by people of other faiths. Fourthly, dialogue in a community or the dialogue of life is the search for good relationships in ordinary life. Fifthly, spiritual dialogue is the attempt to learn from other traditions of prayers and meditation. Lastly, there is inner dialogue, which is 'that conversation that goes on within ourselves in any other form of dialogue."[34]

Eck's definition is comprehensive and gives us several means of dialogue, from institutional to individual levels. The inner dialogue is very important and we shall see later that meaningful dialogue is only possible when actors can realize in their hearts the importance of living in harmony with others. From above, we see that inter-religious dialogue includes many activities and, at different levels, the aim of understanding others faith and working together for peace. This calls for commitment, a lot of tolerance and sincerity.

---

[30] Eck, *A New Religious America*, 240-248.
[31] For a detailed discussion on the definitions, see Ina Merdjanova & Patrice Brodeur, *Interreligious Dialogue for Peacebuilding in Balkans: Religion as a Conversation Starter* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009), 10-39.
[32] "United States Institute of Peace," accessed July 13, 2014, www.usip.org.
[33] Merdjanova&Brodeur, *Interreligious Dialogue for Peacebuilding in Balkans*, 31.
[34] Ibid., 21.

6.   INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN THE US

Whichever way one may define inter-religious dialogue, it is a reality that it can no longer be ignored, if the society is to balance the fears and expectations arising out of pluralism. Inter-religious dialogue is the necessary outcome of pluralism. In this pluralistic world, we know that, within each religious community, there is a spectrum of opinions regarding "the other", ranging from hostility to tolerance and cooperation[35].

The visible inter-religious dialogue in the US can be traced back to the World's Parliament of Religions of 1893, held in Chicago. After that, there have been many conferences and efforts aiming at a dialogue, both local and international. Within the US, there are many organizations aiming at interfaith dialogue. For our discussion, we can mention that there are efforts at federal, state and community levels[36]. Activities include discussions, teaching others about one's faith, training in interfaith cooperation, worship centers, limiting hate sermons, assisting in building of worship centers and many others.

Dialogue cannot be done in vacuum, but in societies where there is appreciation of love, the love for humans simply because they are humans. Hearts full of hate cannot appreciate dialogue and can turn everything into a harming or killing tool. The American values of love, equality, freedom and liberty provide the basis of successful dialogue[37]. This is not to say that there is no violence in US or that there are no evil people, what I mean here is that it is easier to heal an injured soul full of love than to heal an injured soul full of hate. It is in such a situation that people can forgive, can be patient, can cooperate and can accept to be part of others who are not like them.

Closely related to the above, is the spirit of volunteerism in the US. Interfaith dialogue needs a lot of sacrifice and, in fact, many people engaged in dialogue activities. As Ellis S. and Campbell K. note: "In the United States, just about everyone, at one time or another, has been a volunteer. On any given day, millions of Americans give of their time and talents to benefit their communities through volunteer service. Volunteering is so pervasive in the United States that it can be observed daily in almost every aspect of life…..The roots of U.S.

---

[35] V. Havel, "Inter-Religious Dialogue in India. Special Reference to Hindu-Christian Dialogue in Indian Context, " accessed July 13, 2014,www.poust.cz/Data/files/ Interreligious%20dialog%20in%20India.pdf.

[36] For details on federal activities, see the "Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnership"(https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ofbnp), while for the state efforts, see "Inter-religious Studies. Dialogue in the United States," accessed July 13, 2014, irdialogue.org/resources/dialogue-in-us/.

[37] These values are embedded in the US constitution and they are taught in all US schools under the subject of civics.

volunteerism are far reaching and deep. Americans have been banding together to help one another since colonial times."[38]

Mass media has also been exploited. Most of our views about others are largely shaped not by facts but by the media, with all its strength and weaknesses. As noted in our introduction, improved communication technology has enabled a quick flow of information. American dialogue practitioners reach a high percentage of their population through television, internet and many other forms of modern communication. At the worship centers, there are fliers, brochures and other kind of tools used to convey information[39].

7.   LEARNING FROM THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

There is a problem in comparing these two countries, given their differences in almost all aspects. However, it is my belief that the lessons can be adjusted to the local conditions.

Religious cooperation is not new in Uganda and it can be traced back to the 1888 coup against Kabaka Mwanga, when the followers of all religions united against the king. There has been also an informal dialogue among Ugandans for a long time, because the social nature of the Ugandan societies. Clans and extended family settings make it difficult to have all relatives belonging to the same faith. Family and clan functions usually require organizers to know what is allowed and what is not allowed for the clan members who are of different faiths. This is more valid for the Muslims, whose religion is more restrictive. However, these are isolated incidences and do not greatly impact on interfaith relations. A wider dialogue needs more effort and knowledge. From the American experience, Uganda has to learn the following:

Uganda has to build a new culture of tolerance based on love, freedom, equality and liberty. The formation of these values should involve all people and should not be simply dictated from above. The role of these values cannot be underestimated. In a region where brutality reaches unimaginable levels, where reconciliation efforts are defied and where violent conflicts usually re-occur, new values appear to be part of the solution. These values need to be fit in our cultures and should extend beyond religious tolerance, to include all aspects of human life. This can be done by religious leaders, community leaders, political leaders, constitutional amendments, education curriculum and families. Religious leaders

---

[38] "Volunteering: An American Tradition," accessed July 12, 2014, http://iipdigital. usembassy.gov/st/english/publication/2011/11/20111114165203nasus0.1764032.html#axzz 3uE7qA89a.

are very important, because they meet their congregations at least once a week and they reach deep in the rural areas, where most civil organizations rarely go.

The state should also control the church. Lack of control in the name of the freedom of worship has allowed hate preachers to take the podium, many without any qualification other than the ability to speak in public. Preachers trained in foreign countries have also tended to carry the conflict from their places of training to the places of preaching (imported conflict). The state should guide the curriculum development in *madrasa*-s and other institutions of religious training, while those trained outside should pursue an orientation course.

The government should be committed itself to inter-religious dialogue through its own agencies, activities and funding. Leaving interfaith dialogue to external donors creates a lot of delays and diverts the objectives/methods of the agencies to those of the donors which, at times, may not be compatible with or a priority in the local situations. For example, at the moment, the biggest fund giver of the inter-religious councils has been the US, but it is threatening to withdraw the funding because of the new anti-homosexual law of Uganda.

As already noted, there is no state religion in Uganda but the religion of the sovereign usually has undue advantage over the others. This has been the major cause of the religious tensions and wars in Uganda. For example, when Muslims were massacred after the overthrow of Iddi Amin in 1979, no justice was ever been done and it is only recently (after 30 years) that the president promised to compensate victims. This kind of scenario has to be avoided and, instead, the state should show more transparency and equality for all.

Volunteerism is not new in Uganda but the years of wars, corruption and hate have created suspicion and zero-sum thinking. Since the 1966 crisis, political turmoil became a common aspect of Uganda, up to 1986. The turmoil had both ethnic and religious bearing and people lost their interest in the common good. From 1986, the political turmoil was replaced with a level of corruption unprecedented in Uganda's history. However, even in this situation, the spirit has to be built again, with the leaders from all levels and religious leaders in particular getting fully involved. Religious dialogue and cooperation cannot be totally dependent on funding, as people will doubt the intentions of the effort. Moreover the funding is scarce and unreliable.

In the above discussion, I have tried to show that pluralism cannot be halted, as exclusivists may wish, just as it is not a bed of roses. In any case, with increasing technology and migrations, pluralism is likely to grow. While there could be many fears about pluralism, sameness alone has never been a guarantor of

---

[39] The American Muslims, for example, reach out to media houses and film producers to give correct information that help to promote good relations.

peace. Finding proper values and institutions is the only way of ensuring harmonious co-existence in this constantly changing world. Inter-religious dialogue involves changing people's opinions and, as such, it takes a lot of time, efforts and faces a lot of challenges but the results are far better and long lasting than the use of violence. America provides a good example, not only to Uganda but also to other societies that have interest in peaceful co-existence.

REFERENCES

Albanese, Catherine. *America: Religions and Religion.* Cengage Learning: Wadsworth, 2013.

Banchoff, Thomas, ed., *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics.* Oxford University Press, 2008

Beckford, James A. *Social theory and religion.* Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Daggett, M.P., "The Heathen Invasion." *Missionary Review* vol. XXXV: 538-540.

Dowd, Robert, "Religious Diversity and Violent Conflict: Lessons from Nigeria." *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* vol.38, no.1 (Winter 2014): 153-68. Accessed July 15, 2014. www.fletcherforum.org/.../38-1_D.

Eck, Diana. *A new religious America.* HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 2001.

Eilperin, Julien, "Arab American group urges boycott of White House Iftar dinner." Accessed July 13, 2014. http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-politics/wp/2014/07/14/arab-american-group-urges-boycott-of-white-house-iftar-dinner.

Feldman, Noah. *Divided by God.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2005.

"Georgetown Journal of International Affairs." Accessed July 13, 2014. http://journal.georgetown.edu/.

Havel, V., "Inter-Religious Dialogue in India. Special Reference to Hindu-Christian Dialogue in Indian Context." Accessed July 13, 2014. www.poust.cz/Data/files/Interreligious%20dialog%20in%20India.pdf.

"Inter-religious Studies. Dialogue in the United States." Accessed July 13, 2014. irdialogue.org/resources/dialogue-in-us/.

Juergensmeyer, Mark. *Terror in the name of God.* University of California Press, 2003.

Merdjanova, Ina & Patrice Brodeur, *Interreligious Dialogue for Peacebuilding in Balkans: Religion as a Conversation Starter*, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009.

Moore, Katherine. *The Unfamiliar Abode.* Oxford University Press, 2010.

"Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnership." Accessed July 13, 2015. https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ofbnp.

Oden, Arye, *Islam & Politics in Kenya*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000.

Saunders, Harold. "Political Psychology." *International Society of Political Psychology*, vol. 23, issue 1 (March 2002): 151-164.

Roof, Wade Clark & Nathalie Caron. "Shifting Boundaries: Religion in the United States." In *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Companion to Modern American Culture*, edited by C.W.E. Bigsby, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

"Uganda Bureau of Statistics." Accessed July 15, 2014. www.ubos.org.

"United States Institute of Peace." Accessed July 13, 2014. www.usip.org.

"Volunteering: An American Tradition." Accessed July 12, 2014. http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/publication/2011/11/20111114165203nas us0.1764032.html#axzz3uE7qA89a.

Daniel JONES*, *Santiago CUNIAL***

PROTESTANT CHURCHES, THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS (1976-1983) AND THE SUPPORT FOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGE (2010) IN ARGENTINA[1]

Abstract: Religious actors regularly participate in political debates in Latin America. In Argentina, Historical Protestant Churches have been politically involved in several debates since the 1970s. This article compares two processes in which Historical Protestant Churches took part: the defense of Human Rights (1976-1983) and the support for Same-Sex Marriage (2010) in Argentina. It is based on a research about the relationships between evangelicals, politics and sexuality in Argentina, which focuses on diverse documentary sources (religious and secular press, churches' declarations) and interviews with key informants (especially, evangelical leaders). The article analyzes the performance of these churches because they took an alternative position to most religious actors in Argentina -including the Catholic Church and its hierarchy- and because they led the ecumenical and interreligious alliances that supported these causes.

The main hypothesis is that the performance of these churches in both contexts share significant characteristics that allow us to understand patterns of political participation of religious actors. First, they backed these causes through public statements and activities by their institutional bodies and leaders. Second, they built alliances with other religious and non-religious actors in order to defend the rights of groups that were politically persecuted or marginalized by the State. By doing so, they led the ecumenical and interreligious space that supported these causes.

The recognition of Protestant Churches by social movements and State agencies has increased the visibility of these religious actors in the public sphere and the legitimacy of its political interventions. Without overestimating the influence of the Historical Protestant Churches in

---

* CONICET, Argentina (danielprotestantes@gmail.com).
** CONICET, Argentina (cunialsantiago@gmail.com).

Argentina, we believe it is pertinent to point out their roles in the processes described, because in recent decades they have positioned themselves as authorized voices in the political spectrum in favor of the recognition of rights. This place must be considered when analyzing other discussions in Argentina, such as the legalization of abortion..

Keywords: Protestant churches, politics, Human Rights, Same-Sex Marriage, Argentina.

<p align="center">***</p>

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to describe patterns of non-partisan political participation of religious actors. This phenomenon has been scarcely analyzed by studies on religion and politics in Argentina. Most of them have focused on the Catholic Church: for example, some have examined the latter's role during the last military dictatorship in Argentina[2], while others have analyzed its participation in the democratic debate on Same-Sex Marriage (SSM)[3]. Studies on Protestants and Evangelicals[4] and politics in Argentina have focused on the establishment of a

---

[2]Rubén Dri, *Teología y Dominación* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 1987); Emilio Mignone, *Iglesia y Dictadura* (Buenos Aires: La Página,1999); Juan Esquivel, "Iglesia Católica, política y sociedad: un estudio de las relaciones entre la elite eclesiástica argentina, el Estado y la sociedad en perspectiva histórica," in *Informe final del concurso: Democracia, derechos sociales y equidad; y Estado, política y conflictos sociales* (Buenos Aires: Programa Regional de Becas CLACSO, 2000); Horacio Verbitsky, *Doble juego: la Argentina católica y militar* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2006); Luis Miguel Donatello, "Sobre algunos conceptos para comprender las relaciones entre religión y guerrilla en la Argentina de los '60 y '70," *Nuevo Mundo, Mundos Nuevos* July, 12 (2008), accessed June 22, 2014, http://nuevomundo.revues.org/38972

[3]Juan Vaggione, "Sexual rights and religion: same-sex marriage and lawmakers' catholic identity in Argentina," *University of Miami Law Review*, 65 (2011): 935-54; Karina Felitti, "Estrategias de comunicación del activismo católico conservador frente al aborto y el matrimonio igualitario en la Argentina," *Sociedad y Religión. Sociología, Antropología e Historia de la Religión en el Cono Sur* 21 (2011): 92-122.

[4]The terms "Evangelical" and "Protestant" (Pablo Andiñach, Daniel Bruno, *Iglesias Evangélicas y derechos humanos en la Argentina (1976-1998)* (Buenos Aires: La Aurora, 2001)) embrace churches inheritors of the Christian tradition established by the Protestant Reform of the Sixteenth Century and its subsequent revivals. In Argentina, the term "Historical Protestant Churches" refers to those churches which are ecumenical and connected to ethnic communities and to the entry of the missionaries to Argentina, in the nineteenth century (Pablo Deiros, *Historia del cristianismo en América Latina* (Texas: Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana,1982)). These churches have a more progressive

social movement in favor of a new law of cults[5]; the identification of Pentecostal communities with Peronism[6]; the political forms of Neo-Pentecostalism among middle classes[7]; and the participation of evangelicals in confessional and non-confessional political parties[8].

This article compares two processes in which Historical Protestant Churches took part: the defense of Human Rights (HR) against the violations perpetrated by the State during the military dictatorship between 1976 and 1983; and the support for the passing of the SSM act in 2010. It is based on a research about the relationships between evangelicals, politics and sexuality in Argentina, which focuses on diverse documentary sources (religious and secular press, declarations of the churches) and interviews with key informants (especially, evangelical leaders). We focus on the performance of the Historical Protestant Churches because they took an alternative position to most religious actors in Argentina, including the Catholic Church and its hierarchy, and because they led the ecumenical and interreligious alliances that supported these causes[9]. Historical Protestant Churches in Argentina are rarely studied and there are no articles that

---

and liberal character (José Míguez Bonino, *Rostros del protestantismo latinoamericano* (Buenos Aires: Nueva Creación,1995)) than Baptists, Free Brothers and Pentecostal churches, which tend to be more conservative in political and moral terms.

[5]Matthew Marostica, *Pentecostal and politics: the creation of the Evangelical Christian Movement in Argentina, 1983-1993* (University of California: Diss. Berkeley, 1997); Hilario Wynarczyk, *Ciudadanos de dos mundos. El Movimiento evangélico en la vida pública argentina 1980-2001* (San Martín: UNSAM EDITA, 2009).

[6]Pablo Semán, "El Pentecostalismo y la religiosidad de los sectores populares," in *Desde Abajo. La transformación de las identidades sociales*, ed. Maristella Svampa (Buenos Aires: Biblos-Universidad Nacional General Sarmiento, 2000).

[7]Joaquín Algranti, *Política y Religión en los márgenes. Nuevas formas de participación social de las mega-iglesias evangélicas en la* Argentina (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Ciccus, 2010).

[8]Hilario Wynarczyk, *Sal y luz a las naciones. Evangélicos y política en la Argentina (1980-2001)* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2010); Marcos Carbonelli, *Mediaciones con lo político. Análisis de la participación de actores evangélicos en partidos políticos en el AMBA* (Universidad Nacional de San Martín: Diss. Buenos Aires, 2011).

[9]Having indicated which was the criterion to investigate the Historical Protestant Churches in these processes, we need to point out that they are a small group within the evangelical field. According to a representative survey conducted all over Argentina in 2008, 9% of the population is evangelical, of which 88% comes from the Pentecostal tradition, while the remaining 12% is part of the Lutheran, Methodist or Baptist churches, among others (calculation by the authors based on Fortunato Mallimaci, Juan Esquivel, Mariela Irrazábal, *Primera encuesta nacional sobre Creencias y Actitudes religiosas. Informe de Investigación* (Buenos Aires: CEIL-PIETTE/CONICET, 2008).

link their participation in both processes, or that systematize their modes of political intervention[10].

The analysis of these phenomena helps us understand the diversity and complexity of the activities of religious actors in contemporary political processes in Argentina, since it leaves aside the most studied religious actor of the country - the Catholic Church - and the most visible and politically conservative evangelical actors. Our main hypothesis is that the performance of the Historical Protestant Churches in both contexts shares significant characteristics that allow us to recognize patterns of political participation of religious actors, particularly in the defense and/or promotion of the rights of the groups that were politically persecuted or marginalized by the State. These churches adopted a clear public position and built alliances with religious and non-religious actors, in which they played a leadership role.

We begin the article by describing the Historical Protestant Churches in Argentina and the political processes in which they were involved: the defense of human rights during the military dictatorship between 1976 and 1983 and the support for the passing of the Same Sex Marriage act in 2010. We then describe the relevant characteristics of the performances of these churches in both processes. We conclude the article by reflecting on the role of these religious actors in the debates about human and sexual rights.

THE EVANGELICAL FIELD IN ARGENTINA

The growth of the evangelical churches in the past 50 years has transformed the Latin American religious field. Although the predominance of the

---

[10]About the evangelical churches during the last military dictatorship, see: José Míguez Bonino, "Presencia y ausencia protestante en la Argentina del proceso militar 1976-1983," *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 83 (1985): 81-85; Walter Techera, *Entre la resistencia y la sumisión: el discurso de las iglesias protestantes frente a la realidad socio-política argentina (1955-1982)* (Diss. Buenos Aires: ISEDET, 1995); Alberto Roldán, "Comprensión de la realidad social en el discurso teológico de los hermanos libres en la Argentina (1882-1955)," *Cuadernos de Teología* 15 (1996): 23-53; Andiñach, Bruno, *Iglesias Evangélicas y derechos humanos en la Argentina (1976-1998)*; Mónica Di Risio, *"En el Cielo como en la Tierra" Las iglesias protestantes y la última dictadura militar argentina* (Diss. Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2011). About their performance in the debate on Same Sex Marriage, see: Daniel Jones, Marcos Carbonelli, "Evangélicos y derechos sexuales y reproductivos: actores y lógicas políticas en la Argentina contemporánea," *Ciências Sociais Unisinos* 48 (2012): 225-34; and Daniel Jones, Juan Vaggione, "Los vínculos entre religión y política a la luz del debate sobre matrimonio para parejas del mismo sexo en Argentina," *Civitas* 12 (2012): 522-37.

Catholic Church persists[11], evangelicals are the first religious minority in the region: 6.4% of the population in Paraguay, 9.6% in Ecuador, 10% in Colombia, 10.1% in Venezuela, 12.5% in Peru, 13.7% in Bolivia, 15.5% in Chile and 23% in Brazil[12].

In Argentina, this growth was resisted by the dictatorships of the 1960s and 1970s, when the Catholic hierarchy had a strong State support. Since the arrival of democracy in 1983, the evangelical movement demanded a new legal status[13] and its political mobilization established it as a collective subject with its own voice and influence in the public space[14].

The evangelical field in Argentina presents a broad ideological diversity. Wynarczyk[15] identifies two poles within the Evangelical field: one *historical liberationist* and one *biblical conservative*. The first one includes churches that belong to the so-called "historical Protestantism", established in Argentina between 1825 and 1850 to assist European immigrants in a spiritually way (Lutheran, Reformed, and Methodist churches, among others). They are associated with the Argentinian Federation of Evangelical Churches (FAIE, due to its initials in Spanish)[16], the Latin American Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. The biblical conservative pole includes a Pentecostal subsector that established the Pentecostal Evangelical Federation in 1977, and a subsector (mainly Free Brothers and Baptists) that congregated in the Christian Alliance of Evangelical Churches in Argentina, in 1982.

The liberationist pole has been ecumenical, close to the "social gospel" and gradually opened to the issues of sexuality, while the conservative pole has remained close to the United States' religious right[17], both in its anticommunism during the Cold War and on issues of sexual morality. These ideological trends have crystallized in the different positions of the institutions of the two poles as

---

[11]Fortunato Mallimaci, Verónica Giménez Béliveau, "Creencia e increencia en el Cono Sur de América. Entre la religiosidad difusa, la pluralización del campo religioso y las relaciones con lo público y lo politico," *Revista Argentina de Sociología* 9 (2007): 44-63.

[12]Elaboration by the authors based on Pew Research Centre, *The global religious landscape. A report on the size and distribution of the world's major religious groups as of 2010* (Washington: Pew Research Center´s Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2012).

[13]Wynarczyk, *Ciudadanos de dos mundos. El Movimiento evangélico en la vida pública argentina 1980-2001.*

[14]Carbonelli, *Mediaciones con lo político. Análisis de la participación de actores evangélicos en partidos políticos en el AMBA.*

[15]Wynarczyk, *Ciudadanos de dos mundos. El Movimiento evangélico en la vida pública argentina 1980-2001.*

[16]All the acronyms included respond to their initials in Spanish.

[17]Susana Bianchi, *Historia de las religiones en la Argentina: Las minorías religiosas* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2004), 244-45.

regards the defense of human rights in the last dictatorship and on topics such as sex education, abortion and SSM during the democratic period[18].

We focus our analysis on the Argentinian Methodist Evangelical Church[19] (IEMA), because of its leadership in the Protestantism in Argentina and of its chief role in the defense of Human Rights. In addition, we analyze the Evangelical Church of the River Plate (IERP) and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELU), which also participated in both processes.

THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

The March 24, 1976 coup led to a military dictatorship that promoted the National Security Doctrine to justify the State Terrorism[20]. Under the slogan of "the battle against subversion", the dictatorship brought together union leaders, politicians, business and religious sectors and legitimized itself[21]. Besides, the Catholic Church "became a significant player that legitimized the coup and the actions of the government"[22]. In consequence, the regime has been defined as civil, military and religious[23].

Despite this initial legitimacy of the dictatorship, different sectors of the civil society created several Human Rights associations: the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights (APDH), the Ecumenical Movement for Human Rights (MEDH), Grandmothers and Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, the Peace and Justice Service (SERPAJ) and the Center for Legal and Social Studies (CELS), among

---

[18]Daniel Jones, Ana Laura Azparren, Luciana Polischuk, "Evangélicos, sexualidad y política: las instituciones evangélicas en los debates públicos sobre Unión Civil y Educación Sexual en la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (2003-2004)," in *El activismo religioso conservador en Latinoamérica*, ed. Juan Vaggione (Ferreyra Editor, Córdoba, 2010); Daniel Jones, Ana Laura Azparren, Santiago Cunial, "Derechos reproductivos y actores religiosos: los evangélicos frente al debate sobre la despenalización del aborto en la Argentina contemporánea (1994-2011)," *Espacio Abierto. Cuaderno Venezolano de Sociología* 22 (2013): 110-33.
[19]For a description of the history and the origins of Methodism in Argentina, see Floreal Forni, Fortunato Mallimaci, Luis Cárdenas, *Guía de la diversidad religiosa de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2003).
[20]Marcos Novaro, Vicente Palermo, *La dictadura militar 1976-1983. Del golpe de estado a la restauración democrática* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2003).
[21]Horacio Quiroga, *El tiempo del "proceso". Conflictos y coincidencias entre civiles y militares 1976-1983* (Rosario: Homo Sapiens Ediciones – Editorial Fundación Ross, 2004).
[22]Di Risio,*"En el Cielo como en la Tierra" Las iglesias protestantes y la última dictadura militar argentina*, 28.

others. Historical Protestant Churches became relevant actors in the defense of Human Rights, as they reported disappearances and assisted the victims of the state terrorism.

In 1979, the dictatorship began to wear down, due to the failure of its economic policies and divisions of the military leadership[24]. This erosion manifested both in the progressive opening of the public spaces and in the claims of the civil society[25]. In 1979 the first general strike took place and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States visited the country. These events weakened the regime. The 1982 defeat in the Malvinas War against the UK brought down the dictatorship and began a democratic transition to the 1983 presidential elections, won by Raúl Alfonsín.

THE DEBATE AROUND THE SAME SEX MARRIAGE ACT

With the return of democracy, a process of legal discussion that expanded to family, reproductive and sexual rights began: from shared parental authority (1985) and divorce (1987), to sexual health and responsible procreation (2002), sexual education (2006) and gender identity (2012). One of the legislative projects that provoked major controversies was the Same Sex Marriage act, enacted on July 15, 2010.

Since 2007, sexual diversity organizations developed several strategies to place their demand on the institutional policy agenda and on the public arena: presentation of bills to the Parliament; *judicialization*[26] of the refusals to same-sex couples to be married because of its discriminatory character[27]; establishing the debate in the public agenda through the use of mass media and LGBT Pride

---

[23]Fortunato Mallimaci, "La dictadura argentina: terrorismo de estado e imaginario de la muerte," *La memoria de la dictadura. 'Nocturno de Chile', Roberto Bolaño. 'Interrupciones', Juan Gelman*, ed. Fernando Moreno (Paris: Ellipses Edition, 2006).

[24]Quiroga, *El tiempo del "proceso". Conflictos y coincidencias entre civiles y militares 1976-1983*.

[25]Diedo Benítez, César Mónaco, "La dictadura militar, 1976-1983," in *Problemas socioeconómicos contemporáneos*, ed. Gabriel Kessler, Mariana Luzzi, (Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional General Sarmiento, 2007), 17.

[26]The term *judicialization of politics* refers to the spread of the reliance on courts and judicial means for adressing core moral predicaments, public policy questions and political controversies (Ran Hirschl, "The Judicialization of Politics," in *Oxford Handbook of Law and Politics*, ed. Gregory Caldeira, Daniel Kelemen, Keith Whittington (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)).

[27]"Alex y José pusieron fecha", *Página 12*, November 16, 2009.

parades[28]; collaboration with State agencies; and the establishment of alliances with the legislators from different parties[29].

Between 2009 and 2010, the Chamber of Deputies Committees discussed a number of bills in order to include the marriage of the same-sex couples in the Civil Code[30] (Hiller). The main opponents of the law were the Catholic Church hierarchy and the conservative evangelical sectors. These actors promoted a referendum, demonstrations across the country and in front of the National Congress in Buenos Aires the day before the treatment of the Bill in the Senate. The last concentration was attended by 50,000 to 60,000 people[31].

Despite this mobilization against the project, the discussion on Same Sex Marriage in Argentina showed two new phenomena: first, conservative groups did not express the only religious position on the issue; second, the sexual diversity movement formed alliances with progressive religious actors to promote the bill.

PROTESTANT ACTIVISM AND LEADERSHIP AMONG POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS ALLIANCES. THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The actions of the Historical Protestant Churches in defense of Human Rights in Argentina fall within their increasing political participation since the 1960s. One of the most significant events in this process was the creation of the Christian Movement of Students, which was ideologically linked with various leftist movements and which became the cradle of several evangelical public figures (such as the theologian José Míguez Bonino and the academician Mauricio López[32])[33].

---

[28]"La Marcha del Orgullo Gay, una fiesta con fuerte reclamo", *Clarín*, August 11, 2009.

[29]Javier Corrales, Mario Pecheny, "Six Reasons Why Argentina Legalized Gay Marriage First," *Quarterly Americas* (2010).

[30]Renata Hiller, "Matrimonio igualitario y espacio público en Argentina," in *Matrimonio igualitario en la Argentina: perspectivas sociales, políticas y jurídicas*, Laura Clérico and Martín Aldao coord. (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 2010).

[31]"Fuerte rechazo frente al Congreso", *La Nación*, July 14, 2010.

[32]José Míguez Bonino (1924-2012) was a Methodist pastor, advocate for Human Rights and a liberationist theologian recognized all over the world. He contributed in the creation of the APDH. He was elected as a conventional to participate in the Constitutional reform of 1994, together with the Catholic Bishop Jaime De Nevares, as the two clerics present at the Convention ("El adiós al pastor Miguez Bonino," *Página 12*, July 02, 2012). Mauricio Lopez was a prestigious intellectual and professor of sociology and philosophy. He was a member of the Free Brothers Church. He was kidnapped and disappeared during the dictatorship, on January 1, 1977, while he was working with the Methodist Church in Mendoza.

Another precedent is the participation of the Historical Protestant Churches in ecumenical processes, expressed in different Human Rights associations across Latin America. In 1961 the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Peace was formed. In this organization participated the Uruguayan Pastor Earl Smith, the Methodist Bishop Carlos Gattinoni and the laical Catholic Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, both Argentinians. The Fellowship "was the basis for organizing appropriate responses a decade and a half later, when violence harassed the Argentinian society"[34].

In the 70s, the civil society structured the resistance to Latin American dictatorships violating the Human Rights through organizations composed by Protestant actors. In Argentina, the Argentinian Commission for Refugees (CAREF) was created in October 1973. It was initially formed by the churches Argentinian Methodist Evangelical Church, Evangelical Church of the River Plate and United Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Commission was a World Council of Churches' initiative, to assist the political refugees from the dictatorships in Chile and Uruguay:

"We began working with the Uruguayans. This is the way I entered. One day they phoned me and they told me: 'Look! The World Council of Churches sent us 15 thousand dollars. Only 15 thousand dollars! So we need someone here who can manage the money because it is for the refugees, the Uruguayan refugees'."[35]

"For us, the Methodist Church, the defense of human rights began when the Chilean refugees started to come to Argentina, running away from Chile. [...] This commitment began for us in 1973. And it was an ecumenical commitment, too. It was a commitment of the Argentinian churches which were part of the World Council of Churches."[36]

The activity carried out by the Argentinian Commission for Refugees was the fundamental background for the Historical Protestant Churches to redefine their

[33]Wynarczyk, *Ciudadanos de dos mundos. El Movimiento evangélico en la vida pública argentina 1980-2001*.

[34]Andiñach, Bruno, *Iglesias Evangélicas y derechos humanos en la Argentina (1976-1998)*, 31.

[35]Emilio Monti, Bishop of Argentinian Methodist Evangelical Church and President of FAIE (1996-2004), May 03, 2011.

[36]Aldo Etchegoyen, Pastor and emeritus Bishop of the Argentinian Methodist Evangelical Church (1989-2001), President of the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights, April 19, 2011.

identity in the battle for Human Rights:

> "For the first time in their history, these churches suffered threats and direct attacks due to their socio-political commitment. (…) It was not a conflict with the authorities as a part of the struggle to maintain their religious identity. (…) Since that moment, a change in the ecumenical identity of the Historical Protestant Churches can be noticed. They do not meet just around religious or dogmatic definitions, but rather from an active commitment with the victims of Human Rights violations."[37]

At the end of 1975, on the eve of the military coup in Argentina, Protestant, Jew and Catholic leaders formed, along with politicians, labor leaders and artists, the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights (APDH)[38]. The APDH and several Human Rights organizations used Methodist buildings as meeting points[39]. They did so because they were some of the few institutions that lent their buildings and because they were relatively safe spaces for the refugees and for the relatives of the disappeared persons, against the threat of State repression. For example, the Methodist Church lent a temple for the "National Meeting for Human Rights", organized by the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights in September, 1976[40]. It also offered its buildings to Mothers of Plaza de Mayo so that they could meet there and received them in their seventh General Assembly in 1981[41]. At the same time, the Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Episcopate refused to receive them[42]. The Methodist Church's institutional support was also crystallized in their official publications. For example, they reproduced an article written by the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights, which warned about the State repression and pointed out 1200 forced disappearances[43]. Hence, the Historical Protestant Churches operated as a *condition of possibility* for the emergence and consolidation of the

---

[37]Techera, *Entre la resistencia y la sumisión: el discurso de las iglesias protestantes frente a la realidad socio-política argentina (1955-1982)*, 241-42.

[38]Míguez Bonino, "Presencia y ausencia protestante en la Argentina," 83.

[39]Andiñach, Bruno, *Iglesias Evangélicas y derechos humanos en la Argentina (1976-1998)*, 33.

[40]El Estandarte Evangélico, 1976b: 4, quoted in Di Risio, *"En el Cielo como en la Tierra" Las iglesias protestantes y la última dictadura militar argentina*, 112.

[41]El Estandarte Evangélico, 1981d: 8, quoted in Di Risio, *"En el Cielo como en la Tierra" Las iglesias protestantes y la última dictadura militar argentina*, 129.

[42]Novaro, Palermo, *La dictadura militar 1976-1983. Del golpe de estado a la restauración democrática*, 315.

[43]El Estandarte Evangélico, 1978g: 11, quoted in Di Risio, *"En el Cielo como en la Tierra" Las iglesias protestantes y la última dictadura militar argentina*, 126-27.

Human Rights movement in Argentina, including non-religious organizations: "In the basement of another Methodist church, it was organized the movement which gave birth to both 'Mothers of Plaza de Mayo' and 'Relatives of the disappeared'."[44].

The Ecumenical Movement for Human Rights (MEDH) was founded in February 1976. Several protestant churches participated in its creation, such as the Argentinian Methodist Evangelical Church, Evangelical Church of the River Plate, United Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Church of the Disciples of Christ (IDC), the Waldensian Evangelical Church of the River Plate, the Reformed Churches from Argentina (IRA) and the Pentecostal Church of God. The Catholic Diocese of Quilmes, in Buenos Aires, and the ones from Viedma and Neuquén (in Patagonia) also participated in its creation[45].

Soon after the coup d'etat, these churches contacted the military authorities to express their concern about the violence and the clandestine detentions. A number of Historical Protestant Churches signed a letter and sent it to the president imposed by the dictatorship, Jorge Rafael Videla[46]. Then, in a meeting with many religious groups: "General Videla was informed of the concern about the high number of prisoners without a fair trial or accurate confirmation, (...) as well as about the lack of information provided to relatives of the detainees, who have no idea where they are"[47]. In this context, both the Synod of the Evangelical Church of the River Plate and the General Assembly of the Argentinian Methodist Evangelical Church, their main spheres of government, spoke "in favor of life". As Di Risio pointed out:

"In the statements of the Historical Protestant Churches, a specific way of linkage between the religious power and the political power, in relation to violations of human rights, will be defined. It will be an attempt to explain an objective situation (kidnappings and disappearances), and delegate the responsibility to the government, although in a non-confrontational style"[48].

---

[44]Andiñach, Bruno, *Iglesias Evangélicas y derechos humanos en la Argentina (1976-1998),* 35-36.
[45]*The web page of the Ecumenical Movement for Human Rights*, accessed on April 28, 2013, http://www.derechos.net/medh/.
[46]The Evangelical Church of the River Plate, the Evangelical Church of the Disciples of Christ, FAIE, the Reformed Churches from Argentina and the Argentinian Methodist Evangelical Church: 1976, quoted in Di Risio, *"En el Cielo como en la Tierra" Las iglesias protestantes y la última dictadura militar argentina,* 111.
[47]El Estandarte Evangélico, 1976c: 1, quoted in Di Risio, *"En el Cielo como en la Tierra" Las iglesias protestantes y la última dictadura militar argentina*, 114.
[48]Di Risio, *"En el Cielo como en la Tierra" Las iglesias protestantes y la última dictadura militar argentina,* 125.

Such a style was due to the fact that, in the first moment, the Historical Protestant Churches "did not have a position of full rejection to the military coup"[49]. However, they supported actions in favor of human rights. Through their congregations and the Argentinian Commission for Refugees, the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights and the Ecumenical Movement for Human Rights, they helped prisoners, refugees and their families in legal, material, psychological and pastoral ways. In contrast to what happened in Chile and Brazil - where the Catholic Church led the complaints to the dictatorships[50]-, in Argentina, the Historical Protestant Churches assumed the leadership of the ecumenical and interreligious space, since they were the only religious institutions that publicly positioned themselves in defense of Human Rights.

This highlights a fundamental difference with Catholicism[51], in which just some individual figures positioned themselves against the government[52]. But they did so in personal terms rather than as representatives of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, which supported the dictatorship[53]. The efforts of the Protestant leaders to coordinate actions with the Catholic hierarchy were fruitless: their Advisory Council of Churches met with the Argentinian Episcopal Conference on July 17, 1979, but they did not obtain their collaboration[54].

---

[49]Techera, *Entre la resistencia y la sumisión: el discurso de las iglesias protestantes frente a la realidad socio-política argentina (1955-1982)*, 261.

[50]Scott Mainwaring, *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986); Carla Peñaloza Palma, *Memorias de la vida y la muerte. De la represión a la justicia en Chile, 1973-2010* (Diss. Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 2011).

[51]Also in relation to the Argentinian Judaism. The Rabbi Daniel Goldman of the Bet-El community says that: "Except for exceptional cases such as [Rabbi Marshall] Meyer, [Rabbi Robert] Graetz and the formation by certain individuals of the Jewish Movement for Human Rights, the Jewish leadership was far from playing an active defense of its members who were persecuted by the dictatorship" ("La colectividad judía debate su rol en la última dictadura militar", *Clarín*, March 23, 2008).

[52]Such as the lays Pérez Esquivel and Mignone, and the Bishops Novak, Hesayne and Nevares.

[53]"It can not be said that some bishops, or, on some occasions, also the authorities of the Episcopate and the nuncio, have not made some complaints to the government […] But the impression is that it was not enough in proportion to the size and the inhuman characteristics of the military repression. Maybe a clear, strong and public complaint of the Catholic Church could have induced the government, whose legitimacy was derived in large parts from his claim of being the guard of a 'Catholic country', to respect human lives. However, that complaint has never been pronounced in such terms" (Roberto Di Stefano, Loris Zanatta, *Historia de la Iglesia Argentina. Desde la conquista hasta fines del siglo XX* (Buenos Aires: Mondadori, 2000): 546.

[54]Techera, *Entre la resistencia y la sumisión: el discurso de las iglesias protestantes frente a la realidad socio-política argentina (1955-1982)*, 326.

"The anti-military activism of some sectors of Protestantism had its price: disappeared people, deaths and exiled in a relatively high proportion"[55], considering the size of these churches. Repression was also directed to their buildings and the activities developed there: on September 6, 1975, a bomb exploded in the Methodist Church of Mendoza, headquarter of the Ecumenical Committee for Social Action. This institution used to work with the Chilean refugees, and it was the residence of Pastor Federico Pagura[56]. On October 4, 1976, the First Methodist Church of Rosario, headquarter of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, was raided[57]. On November 22, 1980, three bombs burned the library of the ISEDET, where Human Rights agencies were supposed to meet[58]. The fact that the repression fell not only upon the members of these churches, but also upon their buildings, illustrates the importance acquired by the Historical Protestant Churches in denouncing the military regime.

THE SUPPORT FOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

The alliance between the Historical Protestant Churches and religious and non-religious actors was repeated to support the Same-Sex Marriage in 2010. It was crystallized in institutional statements, interventions in the parliamentary discussions and public events.

With the antecedent that two Protestant churches had declared themselves in favor of the Civil Union Act for same-sex couples in the City of Buenos Aires[59], the Argentinian Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Trans (FALGBT)[60] approached some religious groups to achieve their support for the marriage draft. Already with half parliamentary sanction, on May 16, 2010, a letter from the Methodist Bishop was published. In this document, although the Bishop clarifies

---

[55]Míguez Bonino, "Presencia y ausencia protestante en la Argentina", 85.

[56]Di Risio, *"En el Cielo como en la Tierra" Las iglesias protestantes y la última dictadura militar argentina,* 103.

[57]Andiñach, Bruno, *Iglesias Evangélicas y derechos humanos en la Argentina (1976-1998)*, 36.

[58]Di Risio, *"En el Cielo como en la Tierra" Las iglesias protestantes y la última dictadura militar argentina*, 106.

[59]The United Evangelical Lutheran Church (July 24, 2003). Diálogo abierto: Ley nº 1004 de Unión Civil del Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Comunicado de Prensa de IELU, accessed on July 15, 2014, http://www.ielu.org/; the Evangelical Church of the River Plate (July 25, 2003). "Por un país donde 'quepan todos y todas'". A raíz de la promulgación de la Ley de Unión Civil (Ley nº 1004) por el Gobierno de la CABA, accessed on July 15, 2014, http://www.iglesiaevangelica.org/men_hemosdicho.htm#civil.

[60]The FALGBT was established in 2006 as a new national space of coordination between different groups of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans people. It led the demand for SSM in Argentina.

that "our church has not taken a position on the issue so far", he differs from most of the religious institutions that have declared their total opposition to Same Sex Marriage:

> "1. The Methodist Church has claimed that it is our duty to work to achieve a community where every human being has access to conditions that facilitate a truly human life. (…) 2. Therefore, our understanding of what affects human life will be marked by the respect and preservation of the dignity of all human beings. 3. We affirm that a democratic and pluralist state should be opened to hear the voices of everyone and make free decisions. (…) 6. The review of the Marriage Act challenges us as Christians to listen and understand before judging and condemning. Therefore we do not adhere, as a church, to any secular or religious campaign that reinforces discriminatory attitudes."[61].

On May 31, a statement in favor of the passing of the project was disclosed. The document was signed by the Presidents of two Protestant churches, the Evangelical Church of the River Plate and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church, and it stated that:

> "1. (…) Those who say that sexual orientation is a conditioning factor of the relationship between a person and God, for example by excluding homosexuals - for being such- from the love and grace of God, are committing a grave error. (…) 3. The marriage contract is an exclusively civil institution, which is attached to the changes and transformations of the historical and specific situation of the societies in which it was developed. (…) 4. We recognize to the State its legitimate power to legislate in order to ensure equal rights and responsibilities of all citizens. (...) In this sense we appreciate any initiative to repair situations of injustice and discrimination suffered by minorities in our society. (…) This is the case of the bill on the institution of marriage between persons of the same sex that is being debated in the Argentinian Parliament."[62].

---

[61]Argentinian Methodist Evangelical Church (May 16, 2010) Declaración sobre la Ley de Matrimonios. Carta del Obispo de la IEMA Frank De Nully Brown, accessed on July 15, 2014, http://www.iglesiametodista.org.ar/texto_completo.shtml?x=58126.
[62]The Evangelical Church of the River Plate and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (2010). Declaración de las Iglesias: Evangélica del Río de la Plata (IERP) y Evangélica

As it had happened during the dictatorship, Protestant churches were a basis for this social movement. During the discussion about the Same Sex Marriage, Methodist temples served as spaces for the coordination between the Protestants and the movement for sexual diversity. This means that a form of participation of these churches in both processes was to make their buildings available for meetings with social movements in defense of and/or for the expansion of rights. On May 29, 2010, there was a meeting between the leaders of the Argentinian Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Trans and several Protestant churches in the Methodist Church of Flores (Buenos Aires)[63]. On June 16, an interreligious public act was carried out in the same temple. In this event, the authorities of the Argentinian Methodist Evangelical Church, the Evangelical Church of the River Plate and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church, together with the referents of other Protestant churches and different religious cults, spoke in favor of the project[64]. Similarly, Protestant leaders participated in the TV spot "Faith says 'yes' to equality"[65] and the Argentinian Methodist Evangelical Church and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church representatives attempted to express their opinions at the Committee on General Legislation of the Senate, on June 28, but they were denied by its President, Senator Liliana Negre de Alonso (allied to the Opus Dei)[66]. Both the public event and the spot reflected the interreligious institutional cooperation intended to influence the public opinion and legislators in favor of this demand.

From Catholicism, the most important voices in favor of the project were two groups of priests, dissidents in relation to the institutional hierarchy[67], while

---

Luterana Unida (IELU), accessed on July 15, 2014, http://www.iglesiaevangelica.org/men_hemosdicho.html.

[63]Roberto González, Secretary of religious diversity of the Argentinian Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Trans, May 08, 2011.

[64]"La Fe a Favor del Matrimonio de Parejas del Mismo Sexo", *Prensa Ecuménica* June 21, 2010; "Apoyo de pastores, sacerdotes católicos y rabinos al matrimonio homosexual," *Pulso Cristiano* June 17, 2010.

[65]The TV spot is available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hK2ns7TmImc, accessed on July 15, 2014.

[66]"Acto de censura y discriminación", *Página 12*, July 01, 2010,.

[67]Two groups of priests declared themselves in favor of the project: one from the province of Córdoba and another that belongs to the Diocese of Quilmes in Buenos Aires (See Grupo Sacerdotal Enrique Angelelli de Córdoba (May 19, 2010). Aporte al debate sobre modificaciones a la ley de matrimonio civil, http://elcentroglttb.blogspot.com/2010/05/grupo-de-sacerdotes-enrique-angelelli.html, accessed on July 15, 2014; and Presbítero Ignacio Blanco, Marcelo Ciaramella, Eduardo De La Serna, Preguntas que nos surgen en la situación actual, *Pagina 12*, July 9, 2010, accessed on July 9, 2010, www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/sociedad/3-149180-2010-07-09.html.

only two rabbis from Judaism publically supported it[68]. In other words, in these religious traditions, there were no institutions (either diocese or community) that issued the approval of the Same Sex Marriage act, but only isolated groups or referents. In the evangelical world, on the other hand, there were a number of official institutional positions, both for and against the project. This was partly the consequence of the fact that, unlike Catholicism, "the tradition of dissent of the Puritan ethic always implied the existence of different views of the world, which are crystallized in the fragmentation of denominations"[69].

As in the defense of Human Rights during the dictatorship, we observe a Protestant leadership of the interreligious alliance in favor of this cause. On the one hand, as regards the religious actors, the only churches which declared themselves in favor of the Same Sex Marriage were the Historical Protestant ones (the Evangelical Church of the River Plate, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Argentinian Methodist Evangelical Church). On the other hand, the Protestant leadership of the progressive religious space was recognized by the movement of sexual diversity, which invited them to participate in a first meeting to seek their political support. This leadership was validated by these churches by lending their temples for public events and by sending representatives to the Committee on General Legislation, in order to accompany the project.

Once the Same Sex Marriage project passed, Protestant participation was recognized by the movement of sexual diversity and State agencies. On December 16, 2010, the Secretariat of Religious Diversity of the Argentinian Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Trans organized a gratitude ceremony for the authorities of the Historical Protestant Churches and requested their support for the Gender Identity bill[70]. On September 8, 2011, a celebration for the 175 years of Methodism in Argentina was organized by the Secretariat of Cults of the Nation,

---

[68]Two rabbis from the Bet El community, the Conservative movement of the Argentinian Judaism, declared themselves in favor of the project: Daniel Goldman did so at the Committee on General Legislation of the Senate (June 28, 2010) while Silvina Chemen expressed her support for the project during the interreligious act (June 16, 2010) and in the spot "Faith says 'yes' to equality". The legitimacy of their position was based on their intention "to reclaim a tradition of fighting for the rights of gays, framed in a broader struggle for human rights" (Damián Setton, Vanesa Lerner, "La problemática LGBT en el Movimiento Conservador Judío," in *VII Jornadas de Ciencias Sociales y Religión. Modernidad, secularización y religiones en Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 2012)), that was preceded by the actions of Rabbi Marshall Meyer during the military dictatorship.
[69]Angela Paiva, Católico, protestante, cidadão: una comparação entre Brasil e Estados Unidos (Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2003): 218.
[70]Centro Cristiano de la Comunidad GLTTB, Matrimonio Igualitario y apoyo religioso en Argentina, March 23, 2011, accessed on July 15, 2014, http://elcentroglttb.blogspot.mx /2011/03/matrimonio-igualitario-y-apoyo.html.

with national authorities, representatives of different cults[71] and representatives of the Human Rights movement. During the ceremony, the Methodist Church was recognized for its interventions in the country's public life, and a commemorative video highlighted its defense of Human Rights during the dictatorship and its support for the SSM act. On May, 2012, the state recognized this church by inviting its bishop, Frank De Nully Brown, to participate in a public policy project on religious diversity and beliefs[72].

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The aim of the article was to analytically reconstruct the positions and modalities of political participation of the religious actors, a phenomenon that has been slightly discussed in the literature on religion and politics in Argentina. In order to do so, we compared two processes in which the Historical Protestant Churches took part: the defense of Human Rights against the violations perpetrated by the state during the military dictatorship, between 1976 and 1983; and the support for the Same Sex Marriage act, in 2010. We focused on the performance of these churches, because they took an alternative position to most religious actors in Argentina - including the Catholic Church - and because they led the ecumenical and interreligious spaces that supported these causes.

The performances of the Historical Protestant Churches in both processes shared two main characteristics. First, there was an official ecclesiastical position to support these causes through public statements and activities of the government bodies of these churches and of their leaders. Second, these Protestant churches constructed alliances with other religious and non-religious actors, to defend and promote the rights of the persecuted or politically marginalized groups. In this context, we observe a Protestant leadership of the interreligious and ecumenical actions in favor of these demands.

Since the '70s, leaders and institutions related to the Historical Protestantism joined figures of other faiths and political and union leaders, forming a movement to denounce violations of Human Rights committed by the dictatorship. This involvement was recognized by the recently restored democracy in 1983: the President Raúl Alfonsín appointed the emeritus Methodist Bishop Carlos Gattinoni as a member of the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (CONADEP) (along with the Catholic Bishop Jaime Nevares and the Jewish Rabbi Marshall Meyer). The position taken by the leaders and the

---

[71]"Homenaje oficial por los 175 años metodistas en la Argentina", *Pulso Cristiano* September 15, 2011.

[72]INADI (May 16, 2012), Proyecto Diversidad Religiosa y Creencias, http://inadi.gob.ar/2012/05/diversidad-religiosa-y-creencias/, accessed on July 15, 2014.

institutions of the Historical Protestantism during the dictatorship and the transition to democracy (in Human Rights organizations) led them to be publicly considered as referents and/or potential allies in the struggle for the rights of persecuted or politically marginalized groups.

The political articulation of the Historical Protestant Churches with religious and non-religious actors was repeated in the discussion on Same Sex Marriage in 2010. The progressive image of these churches (due to their defense of Human Rights) made the movement of sexual diversity propose them an alliance (an unthinkable proposal for other religious institutions). At the same time, the public commitment of the Historical Protestant Churches with this law resulted in a closer relationship between their leaders and the civil society, since it broke down several prejudices about what can be expected of these churches in the debates on sexuality, family and rights[73]. As what happened with the defense of Human Rights, these Protestant churches led the religious mobilization in favor of Same Sex Marriage. They did so through institutional statements (unlike other credos, where only isolated figures or dissident groups declared themselves in favor of the law) and by providing spaces for public activities and/or policy coordination.

The recognition by the social movements and by the state agencies has increased the visibility of these religious actors in the public sphere and the legitimacy of its political interventions. Without overestimating the influence of the Historical Protestant Churches in Argentina, we believe it is pertinent to point out their roles in the processes described, because in recent decades they have positioned themselves as authorized voices in the political spectrum in favor of the recognition of Human Rights. This place must be considered when analyzing other discussions in Argentina, such as the legalization of abortion.

REFERENCES

Algranti, Joaquín. *Política y Religión en los márgenes. Nuevas formas de participación social de las mega-iglesias evangélicas en la Argentina.* Buenos Aires: Ediciones Ciccus, 2010.

Andiñach, Pablo and Daniel Bruno. *Iglesias Evangélicas y derechos humanos en la Argentina (1976-1998).* Buenos Aires: La Aurora, 2001.

Benítez, Diedo and César Mónaco. "La dictadura militar, 1976-1983". Comp. Gabriel Kessler and Mariana Luzzi. *Problemas socioeconómicos contemporáneos.* Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional General Sarmiento, 2007.

Bianchi, Susana. *Historia de las religiones en la Argentina: Las minorías religiosas.* Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2004.

---

[73]Alan Eldrid, Pastor and President of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (2004-2011), April 26, 2011.

Carbonelli, Marcos. *Mediaciones con lo político. Análisis de la participación de actores evangélicos en partidos políticos en el AMBA.* Diss. Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de San Martín, 2011.

Corrales, Javier and Mario Pecheny. "Six Reasons Why Argentina Legalized Gay Marriage First." *Quarterly Americas* (2010). Available at: http://americasquarterly.org/node/1753.

Deiros, Pablo. *Historia del cristianismo en América Latina.* Texas: Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana, 1982.

Di Risio, Mónica. *"En el Cielo como en la Tierra." Las iglesias protestantes y la última dictadura militar argentina.* Diss. Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2011.

Di Stefano, Roberto and Loris Zanatta. *Historia de la Iglesia Argentina. Desde la conquista hasta fines del siglo XX.* Buenos Aires: Mondadori, 2000.

Donatello, Luis. "Sobre algunos conceptos para comprender las relaciones entre religión y guerrilla en la Argentina de los '60 y '70." *Nuevo Mundo, Mundos Nuevos* (2008). Available at: http://nuevomundo.revues. org/index38972.html.

Dri, Rubén. *Teología y Dominación.* Buenos Aires: Biblos, 1987.

Esquivel, Juan. "Iglesia Católica, política y sociedad: un estudio de las relaciones entre la elite eclesiástica argentina, el Estado y la sociedad en perspectiva histórica." *Informe final del concurso: Democracia, derechos sociales y equidad; y Estado, política y conflictos sociales.* Buenos Aires: Programa Regional de Becas CLACSO Programa Regional de Becas CLACSO, 2000. Available at: http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/subida/uploads/FTP-test/clacso/becas /uploads/20110112035544/esquivel.pdf.

Felitti, Karina. "Estrategias de comunicación del activismo católico conservador frente al aborto y el matrimonio igualitario en la Argentina." *Sociedad y Religión. Sociología, Antropología e Historia de la Religión en el Cono Sur* 21 (2011): 92-122.

Forni, Floreal, Fortunato Mallimaci and Luis Cárdenas. *Guía de la diversidad religiosa de Buenos Aires.* Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2003.

Hiller, Renata. "Matrimonio igualitario y espacio público en Argentina." Coord. Laura Clérico and Martín Aldao. *Matrimonio igualitario en la Argentina: perspectivas sociales, políticas y jurídicas.* Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 2010.

Hirschl, Ran. "The Judicialization of Politics." Eds. Gregory Caldeira, Daniel Kelemen and Keith Whittington. *Oxford Handbook of Law and Politics.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Jones, Daniel, Ana Laura Azparren and Luciana Polischuk. "Evangélicos, sexualidad y política: las instituciones evangélicas en los debates públicos sobre Unión Civil y Educación Sexual en la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (2003-2004)." Comp. Juan Vaggione. *El activismo religioso conservador en Latinoamérica.* Córdoba: Ferreyra Editor, 2010.

Jones, Daniel and Marcos Carbonelli. "Evangélicos y derechos sexuales y

reproductivos: actores y lógicas políticas en la Argentina contemporánea." *Ciências Sociais Unisinos* 48 (2012): 225-34.

Jones, Daniel and Juan Vaggione. "Los vínculos entre religión y política a la luz del debate sobre matrimonio para parejas del mismo sexo en Argentina." *Civitas* 12 (2012): 522-37.

Jones, Daniel, Ana Laura Azparren and Santiago Cunial. "Derechos reproductivos y actores religiosos: los evangélicos frente al debate sobre la despenalización del aborto en la Argentina contemporánea (1994-2011)." *Espacio Abierto. Cuaderno Venezolano de Sociología* 22 (2013): 110-33.

Mainwaring, Scott. *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986.

Mallimaci, Fortunato. "La dictadura argentina: terrorismo de estado e imaginario de la muerte." Coord. Fernando Moreno. *La memoria de la dictadura. 'Nocturno de Chile', Roberto Bolaño. 'Interrupciones', Juan Gelman.* París: Ellipses Edition, 2006.

Mallimaci, Fortunato and Verónica Giménez Béliveau. "Creencia e increencia en el Cono Sur de América. Entre la religiosidad difusa, la pluralización del campo religioso y las relaciones con lo público y lo político." *Revista Argentina de Sociología* 9 (2007): 44-63.

Mallimaci, Fortunato, Juan Esquivel and Mariela Irrazábal. *Primera encuesta nacional sobre Creencias y Actitudes religiosas. Informe de Investigación.* Buenos Aires: CEIL-PIETTE/CONICET, 2008. Available at: www.ceil-piette.gob.ar/areasinv/religion/relproy/encuesta1.pdf.

Marostica, Matthew. *Pentecostal and politics: the creation of the Evangelical Christian Movement in Argentina, 1983-1993.* Diss. Berkeley: University of California, 1997.

Mignone, Emilio. *Iglesia y Dictadura.* Buenos Aires: La Página, 1999.

Míguez Bonino, José. "Presencia y ausencia protestante en la Argentina del proceso militar 1976-1983." *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 83 (1985): 81-85.

---. *Rostros del protestantismo latinoamericano.* Buenos Aires: Nueva Creación, 1995.

Novaro, Marcos and Vicente Palermo. *La dictadura militar 1976-1983. Del golpe de estado a la restauración democrática.* Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2003.

Paiva, Angela. *Católico, protestante, cidadão: uma comparação entre Brasil e Estados Unidos.* Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2003.

Peñaloza Palma, Carla. *Memorias de la vida y la muerte. De la represión a la justicia en Chile, 1973-2010.* Diss. Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 2011.

Pew Research Centre. *The global religious landscape. A report on the size and distribution of the world's major religious groups as of 2010.* Washington: Pew Research Center´s Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2012. Available at: http://www.pewforum.org/files/2014/01/global-religion-full.pdf.

Quiroga, Horacio. *El tiempo del "proceso". Conflictos y coincidencias entre civiles y militares 1976-1983.* Rosario: Homo Sapiens Ediciones – Editorial Fundación Ross, 2004.

Roldán, Alberto. "Comprensión de la realidad social en el discurso teológico de los hermanos libres en la Argentina (1882-1955)." *Cuadernos de Teología* 15 (1996): 23-53.

Semán, Pablo. "El Pentecostalismo y la religiosidad de los sectores populares." Comp. Maristella Svampa. Desde Abajo. La transformación de las identidades sociales. Buenos Aires: Biblos-Universidad Nacional General Sarmiento, 2000.

Setton, Damián and Vanesa Lerner. "La problemática LGBT en el Movimiento Conservador Judío." *VII Jornadas de Ciencias Sociales y Religión. Modernidad, secularización y religiones en Argentina.* Buenos Aires, 2012.

Techera, Walter. *Entre la resistencia y la sumisión: el discurso de las iglesias protestantes frente a la realidad socio-política argentina (1955-1982).* Diss. Buenos Aires: ISEDET, 1995.

Vaggione, Juan. "Sexual rights and religion: same-sex marriage and lawmakers' catholic identity in Argentina." *University of Miami Law Review* 65 (2011): 935-54.

Verbitsky, Horacio. *Doble juego: la Argentina católica y militar.* Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2006.

Wynarczyk, Hilario. *Ciudadanos de dos mundos. El Movimiento evangélico en la vida pública argentina 1980-2001.* San Martín: UNSAM EDITA, 2009.

---. *Sal y luz a las naciones. Evangélicos y política en la Argentina (1980-2001).* Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2010.

Documental sources

Centro Cristiano de la Comunidad GLTTB (March 23, 2011). Matrimonio Igualitario y apoyo religioso en Argentina. Available at: http://elcentroglttb.blogspot.mx/2011/03/matrimonio-igualitario-y-apoyo.html.

GRUPO SACERDOTAL ENRIQUE ANGELELLI de Córdoba (May 19, 2010). Aporte al debate sobre modificaciones a la ley de matrimonio civil. Available at: http://elcentroglttb.blogspot.com/2010/05/grupo-de-sacerdotes-enrique-angelelli.html.

IELU (July 24, 2003). Diálogo abierto: Ley nº 1004 de Unión Civil del Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Comunicado de Prensa de IELU. Available at: http://www.ielu.org/.

IEMA (May 16, 2010) Declaración sobre la Ley de Matrimonios. Carta del Obispo de la IEMA Frank De Nully Brown. Available at: http://www.iglesiametodista.org.ar/texto_completo.shtml?x=58126.

IERP (July 25, 2003). "Por un país donde 'quepan todos y todas'". A raíz de la promulgación de la Ley de Unión Civil (Ley nº 1004) por el Gobierno de la CABA. Available at: http://www.iglesiaevangelica.org/men_hemosdicho.htm #civil.

        IERP and IELU (2010). Declaración de las Iglesias: Evangélica del Río de la Plata (IERP) y Evangélica Luterana Unida (IELU).   Available at: http://www.iglesiaevangelica.org/men_hemosdicho.html.
        INADI (May 16, 2012). Proyecto Diversidad Religiosa y Creencias. Available at: http://inadi.gob.ar/2012/05/diversidad-religiosa-y-creencias/.
        Presbítero Ignacio Blanco, Marcelo Ciaramella, Eduardo De La Serna (July 9, 2010). Preguntas que nos surgen en la situación actual. Available at: www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/sociedad/3-149180-2010-07-09.html.

    Newspaper articles:

        Clarín. March 23, 2008. "La colectividad judía debate su rol en la última dictadura militar".
        Clarín. August 11, 2009. "La Marcha del Orgullo Gay, una fiesta con fuerte reclamo".
        La Nación. July 14, 2010. "Fuerte rechazo frente al Congreso".
        Página 12. November 16, 2009. "Alex y José pusieron fecha".
        Página 12. July 01, 2010. "Acto de censura y discriminación".
        Página 12. July 02, 2012. "El adiós al pastor Miguez Bonino".
        Prensa Ecuménica. June 21, 2010. "La Fe a Favor del Matrimonio de Parejas del Mismo Sexo".
        Pulso Cristiano. June 17, 2010. "Apoyo de pastores, sacerdotes católicos y rabinos al matrimonio homosexual".
        Pulso Cristiano. September 15, 2011. "Homenaje oficial por los 175 años metodistas en la Argentina".

Web pages:

        MEDH web page. April 28, 2013. http://www.derechos.net/medh/.

Interviews:

        Alan Eldrid. Pastor and President of IELU (2004-2011). April 26, 2011.
        Aldo Etchegoyen. Pastor and emeritus Bishop of IEMA (1989-2001); President of APDH. April 19, 2011.
        Emilio Monti. Bishop of IEMA and President of FAIE (1996-2004). May 03, 2011.
        Roberto González. Secretary of religious diversity of FALGBT. May 08, 2011.

*Judith Victoria MWANDUMBA**

CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN MALAWI.
THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AS AN AGENT OF POLITICAL
REFORM (FROM 1992 UNTIL PRESENT)

Abstract: History of the church in Malawi dates way back to the colonial times, when many missionaries arrived in the country with the aim of introducing Christianity. Since then, efforts have always been made by both the state and the church to build a good working relationship and to create an environment of peaceful co-existence. While this is the case, the relations have, in some cases, been sour. The church and state are often on a collision course following the former's use of the pulpit to intrude in politics. The church has been accused of meddling in politics instead of leading "the flock" and the state often has argued that such an interference has led to civil wars in other parts of the world, including in Africa itself. Nonetheless, the church has not been swayed in its role of "speaking for the voiceless" taking a swipe at the government on the need to embark on political as well as on social reforms. The church, as the paper shows, argues that it is within its rights to comment on national issues and that the state does not have a right to "dictate" what the church should and should not do.

The Catholic Church is used in this paper as an example of how a church's influence can lead to a political reform. In March 1992, the Catholic bishops released a pastoral letter which was an open criticism of the Banda regime. The letter changed forever Malawi's political landscape. While other factors might have contributed to the political reform in the country, this paper argues that without the Roman Catholic Church and the role it played, it is not certain whether such reforms would have happened at the time and in the manner they did. Hence, the Roman Catholic Church should be seen as an important agent in Malawi's political reform.

Keywords: *Roman Catholic, Church, state, political, relations.*

***

INTRODUCTION

Church state relations in Malawi date way back to the colonial days[1]. This period witnessed the arrival of different missionaries who established their mission stations in various parts of the country[2]. Notable ones included the Catholic and Protestant missionaries. The church has, overtime, evolved to become part and parcel of the national history, because it is almost impossible to write about the history of Malawi without making reference to the church. Relations between the church and the state have largely been cordial. This owes to the fact that the two institutions are in service of humanity and, as such, they need to promote peaceful co-existence and a spirit of tolerance; dialogue and cooperation have, for a long time, been seen as the main pillars guiding the relations between the two. However, we need not forget the crucial role religion plays in our everyday life; hence, on a number of occasions the church, as the discussion on the Roman Catholic will show, has intervened in the affairs of the state, especially where such intervention promotes good governance, equality and the rule of law[3].

This paper focuses on the church state relations in Malawi, from 1992 to present, and uses the Roman Catholic Church (herein after, RCC) as a case study. Three main arguments are stated in this paper.

Firstly, that the RCC, more than any other church in the country, was instrumental in bringing about the political reforms that took place from 1994. Secondly, that the RCC believes it is within its rights to intervene in the matters of the state for the greater good of humanity, and finally that the RCC will continue to be the "voice of the voiceless" for the foreseeable future in political and social matters, even in the face of the hostility from the state and its machinery. Thus, while the constitution of Malawi calls for the separation of church and state, the former is likely to behave to the contrary, should the need arise.

This paper is divided into four sections. The first one gives a brief overview of Malawi as a country. The second section is a brief history of the church and Christianity in Malawi, in general; thirdly the paper compares religious pluralism in Malawi, during the one party and multiparty eras; fourthly, the paper looks at the history of the RCC and its role in political and social reforms, from 1992 to present. The final section is the general conclusion.

---

[1] See J. Haynes, ed., *Religion, Globalization and Political Culture in the Third World* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1999).
[2] For an understanding of the missionary factor in Malawi, see, for instance, N.K. Mufuka, *Missions and Politics in Malawi* (Kingston, Ontario: The Limestone Press, 1977).
[3] Ibid.

1.   COUNTRY PROFILE

1.1.   Location

Formally known as Nyasaland, during the colonial era, Malawi (also nicknamed "The Warm Heart of Africa")[4] is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. It is bordered by Zambia to the northwest, Tanzania to the northeast and Mozambique to the east, south and west and covers an area of over 118,000 square kilometres (45,560 sq. mi.). The country has three main regions; namely: the North, the Central and the South. Lilongwe, the capital, is Malawi's largest city, seconded by Blantyre, then Mzuzu. In addition, Malawi has twenty-eight districts, which are spread across the three regions[5].

Map 1: Map of Malawi showing districts and borders. Source: *World Fact Book*.

1.2. Government and Politics

Malawi has a multiparty democratic government. The country gained its independence from Britain on 6 July 1964, under the leadership of Dr. Hastings

---

[4] The term "Warm heart of Africa" is usually used to portray the friendliness, the warmth and the welcoming nature of the people of Malawi.

[5] *The World Fact Book*, 2014, accessed July 15, 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/ publications/the-world-factbook/.

Kamuzu Banda, popularly referred to as the father and founder of Malawi nation[6]. Banda ruled Malawi as a one party state from 1964 to 1994. It was only in 1994 that Malawi became a democratic state. Other presidents that have ruled Malawi are: Bakili Muluzi, 1994-2004, Dr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, 2004-2012, Joyce Banda, 2012-2014[7] and Peter Mutharika, who is the current president of Malawi. The government consists of three branches: the executive, judiciary and legislature. The presidents are elected for two to five year terms.

Presidents of Malawi, Past and Present. Source: *The World Fact Book.*

Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda
(1964-1994)

Bakili Muluzi (1994-2004)

Dr. Bingu Wa Mutharika (2004-2012)

Joyce Banda (2012-2014)

---

[6] A. Gordon & D. Gordon, eds., *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, 4th ed. (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006).
[7] Joyce Banda took it over from Bingu Wa Mutharika, who died in office in April 2012. His term was to come to an end in May 2014. At the time of Bingu's death, Joyce Banda was Malawi's Vice President and, as per the requirements of the Malawi Constitution, she was sworn in as president to finish off her predecessor's term.

Peter Mutharika (since 31 May 2014)

1.3. Population, ethnic groups and languages

Malawi has a population of about 17 million people[8] and is the home to diverse ethnic groups such as Chewa, Lomwe, Yao, Ngoni, Tumbuka, Nyanja, Sena, Tonga and Ngonde[9]. The Chewa make up the largest ethnic group in Malawi. The country's official language is English and Chichewa (language of the Chewa) is widely and commonly spoken across the country[10].

1.4. Economy

Malawi is rated among the least developed but also heavily populated countries of the world[11]. Its economy is largely agriculture dependent and agriculture accounts for almost 90% of the country's exports[12]. Among some of its major export crops are tobacco (the country's major foreign exchange), tea, coffee, cotton groundnuts and sugarcane. For a long time, the country has relied on financial aid from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and individual countries that have bilateral ties with Malawi, such as Britain, Norway, United States of America (USA), Canada, just to mention a few. A number of political and social problems combined have slowed the rate of economic growth

---

[8] *The World Fact Book*, July 2014 estimates.

[9] B. Pachai, *Malawi: The history of the nation* (London: Longman, 1973).

[10] The various ethnic groups have their languages as well, but Chichewa is the dominant local language.

[11] See *The World Fact Book*, 2014.

of the country[13]; however, political leaders in recent years have reiterated the need to embark on policies that ensure economic growth and development[14].

2. RELIGION IN MALAWI

2.1 The spread of Islam and Christianity

History of religion and of the church in Malawi dates back to pre-colonial days; during this time, many people practiced traditional forms of religion[15]. However, the arrival of the missionaries from the mid-19th century led to the introduction of Christianity and Islam in the country[16]. Many of the coming missionaries viewed traditional religion as a form of pagan worship; hence they tried to convert as many people as possible to Christianity or Islam. Some of the first missions to arrive were the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland, the Universities Mission to Central Africa and the Dutch Reformed Church[17]. These were a combination of Presbyterians and Protestants. Catholic missionaries also opened up mission stations in the country. The first Catholic missionaries were the White Fathers and the Montfort missionaries[18].

Early missionaries mostly focused on the 3c's (Christianity, Commerce, Civilisation). The church and the state strived to established cordial relations; hence they promoted peaceful co-existence, and a spirit of tolerance[19]. However, this was later to change. With the passing of time, they also started criticizing the governments who were ill-treating their people. It should also be noted that during the colonial era, some churches run by black people became very critical of the oppressive governments. A notable case is John Chilembwe, a Malawian who headed the Providence Industrial Mission in Chiladzulu[20]. He led an uprising in

---

[12] Ibid.

[13] Politically bad economic policies implemented by leaders, mismanagement of donor funds, massive corruption in the government and public sectors and the HIV-AIDS pandemic have really slowed down any meaningful progress, economic growth and development.

[14] Among other things, leaders are committed to implement World Bank and IMF rules, which call for fiscal discipline.

[15] J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi, 1875-1940. The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province* (Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[16] B. Sundkler & C. Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge University Press 2000): 468.

[17] Ibid., 469.

[18] K.N. Mufuka, *Missions and Politics in Malawi* (Kingston, Ontario: The Limestone Press 1977).

[19] McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi, 1875-1940.*

[20] Chiladzulu is one of the districts in the Southern region of Malawi.

January 1915 (called the Chilembwe uprising) against the British government, in protest of their ill-treatment of black Nyasas[21]. Though not successful, the uprising remains an important case of a church speaking out against the state. To this day, the church and religion in general remain an important part of Malawi's history and politics and the country proudly calls itself a "God fearing Nation".

Today we have the following percentages[22]:

- Christians – over 70%
- Muslims – 20%
- Other – 5%
- None – 2%

So, Christianity is the major religion in Malawi and Catholics make up the largest Christian group, seconded by the Church of Central African Presbyterian (CCAP). CCAP is the biggest Protestant group. Other denominations in Malawi include Anglicans, Baptists, Evangelicals, Jews, Hindu, Baha'i and Rastafarians[23].

2.2 Religious Pluralism in Malawi

For us to better understand the religious pluralism in Malawi, it is important to consider both past and present political environments, as they have been very instrumental in shaping the dynamics of religious pluralism in the country. In doing this, we look at how the issue of religious pluralism was handled during the one party era and the multiparty democratic era.

2.1.1   Religious pluralism in Malawi during the one party era, 1964-1994

During this period there was a heavy interference of the state in religion and religious affairs, in general. The state had tight control over religion and churches and one can argue that religious freedom was almost missing[24]. Churches whose teachings ran contrary to government policies were persecuted and faced the wrath of the state. A good example in this point are the Jehovah's Witnesses who were banned from practicing their faith in Malawi because, among other things,

---

[21] The country was called Nyasaland during the colonial period and Nyasa was a term used to refer to a native. J. Lliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[22] These are the 2013 estimates (source: *The World Fact Book*).

[23] B.L. Gama, *The role of the Church in politics in Malawi* (South Africa: AcadSA Publishing, 2010).

[24] S. Gibbs and D. Ajulu, "The Role of the Church in Advocacy: Case Studies from Southern and Eastern Africa," 1999, INTRAC occasional paper, accessed on 09 July 2014, http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/55/OPS-31-The-Role-of-the-Church-in-Advocacy.pdf.

they refused to buy party membership cards[25]. The state embarked on a systematic campaign to rid Malawi of this religious group; they were imprisoned, their property confiscated, their houses and prayer halls burned and some were even killed with many more seeking refuge in neighboring Zambia and Mozambique[26]. Apart from Jehovah's witnesses, other churches that were critical to the government and its policies also suffered a similar fate. These developments instilled fear in the minds of various religious groups in Malawi, as they practiced their faiths in an environment characterized by intimidation and oppression. Another interesting thing to note is that, while other countries talked openly of atheism (in USA for example), it was a taboo to do this in Malawi, during this period. Malawi calls itself "a God fearing nation", hence atheism was never tolerated by the state.

2.1.2   Religious pluralism in Malawi during the Multiparty era 1994-present

Since 1994, the state has taken on a more pluralistic attitude towards religion. This has been made possible in part because of the new Constitution, which was adopted in 1994. The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi provides freedom of religion. Chapter IV, section 33 of the Constitution, regarding the freedom of conscience reads "every person has the right to conscience, religion, belief and to academic freedom"[27]. This implies that people in Malawi have the right to belong to any religious group, of their choice, and cannot be victimized or discriminated against on religious grounds[28]. This has led to the birth of several churches in recent years mostly Pentecostals. It was also at this point that the Jehovah's Witnesses, who had been banned by the Banda regime, started practicing their faith again[29]. As one writer puts it, "one of Bakili Muluzi's first acts as president (of democratic Malawi) was to allow back, to religious practice and freedom in Malawi, the Jehovah's Witnesses who had been banned by the preceding Malawi Congress Party Government"[30]. Generally speaking, there is a peaceful co-existence of the churches, though at times pockets of intolerance

---

[25] The Banda regime applied a number of policies e.g. buying party membership cards and attending party functions. The Jehovah's Witnesses refused to do any of this because of their faith. K. Ross, ed., *Political Theology of Power for the new Malawi*, Kachere Monograph, no. 3 (Blantyre: Claim, 1996).

[26] Ross, *Political Theology of Power for the new Malawi*, 113.

[27] Constitution of Malawi, 1994.

[28] T. Cullen, *Malawi: a Turning Point* (Edinburgh: Pentland Press, 1994).

[29] P. Gifford, ed., *The Christian Churches and the Democratization of Africa* (Leiden - New York Brill, 1995).

[30] T. Likambale, "Atupele Muluzi supports religious pluralism in Malawi," *Nyasa Times*, online publication, April 6, 2014, accessed July 15, 2014, http://www.nyasatimes.com/.

exist[31]. Relations between the church and state have been both good and sour. At times, the state has accused the church of meddling in politics instead of leading "the flock", while the church has argued that it is within its rights to comment on national issues – specifically those affecting the lives of ordinary Malawians and that the state does not have a right to "dictate" what the church should and should not do[32].

It can be concluded that the leaders that came after 1994 were determined to improve religious pluralism in the country. The following section examines the role of the Roman Catholic Church, as far as the political reform in Malawi is concerned.

3. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE POLITICAL REFORM IN MALAWI

Gifford argues that the Catholic bishops have been crucial in the political reforms, especially in many African countries. He mentions countries such as Benin, Gabon, Togo, Congo, Madagascar and Zambia, as some of the countries whose political history has been influenced and shaped by the RCC. In general he contends that churches play vital roles in education, health, development and politics. Specifically, he argues that "this has involved challenging political structures, urging reform, advocating political change and even presiding over the change itself"[33]. The story in Malawi is no different and, as the following sections will show, the RCC in Malawi has been and remains part and parcel of Malawi's political history. The first Catholic missionaries arrived in Malawi in 1889 (Episcopal Conference of Malawi). Reverend Dr. Methurin Guilleme was their first bishop and, by 1910, the RCC had established itself as the largest single church in the country[34]. During the early days, the RCC focused mainly on evangelism, on converting the local people to Christianity, but with the passing of time, the church started focusing on other social issues, for instance the provision of good education and health care. To this end, the RCC built and opened a number

---

[31] In very rare cases, minor tensions erupted. For instance, there was an incident that happened in Mangochi (one of the districts in the Southern region of Malawi). This region has a large group of Muslims. One day, a few Muslim men went into a market place and confiscated pork meat from some guys (not Muslim) who were selling it. In the days following this incident, they started talking of Mangochi being an "Islamic state" and of not allowing the sale of pork in the area. This act was heavily condemned by both Muslims and non-Muslims.

[32] For this kind of discussion, see, for instance, M. Schofeller, *In search for the truth: Confrontation between the Church and State in Malawi*, Kachere Book 8 (Blantyre: Claim, 2004).

[33] Gifford, *The Christian Churches and the Democratization of Africa*, 3.

[34] Mufuka, *Missions and Politics in Malawi*, 38.

of schools and hospitals. However, Gifford argues that it was not long before the church became the "voice of the voiceless", speaking on behalf of the people on the myriad of problems affecting them. The biggest impact of the church was in March 1992, when the Roman Catholic bishops released their first ever pastoral letter, in which they bluntly criticized the Banda regime and its policies. This letter became very instrumental in the political changes that took place in 1994. What led the Catholic bishops to defy the odds and write this letter, given the brutality of the Banda regime? To answer this question, we need to understand first and foremost the political situation in Malawi and the type of rule Banda had put in place, prior to 1992.

3.1 Roman Catholics under Dr. Banda Regime (1964-1994)

Malawi gained independence from Britain on 6 July 1964. With the passing of time, Dr. Banda introduced a one party system and declared all other opposition parties illegal. His one party rule was one of the most repressive and dictatorial in Africa[35]. Detention without trial, torture, assassination of the political opponents and suppression of the dissenting views were the major characteristics of Banda regime[36]. The rule of law did not apply in the country. In 1971, he declared himself president for life and soon it became clear that it would be very hard to remove him from power. People were denied of their basic freedoms, but due to the brutal nature of the regime, there was little people could do to oppose this. Economically, there was abject poverty and the gap between the rich and the poor was just too wide[37]. In addition, Banda formed two national youth organizations; the Malawi Young Pioneers (which was a paramilitary group) and the Youth League (a political wing of the sole governing party)[38]. These two bodies became instruments of control and coercion and were greatly feared[39]. There was a system of compulsory party membership so that every person was forced to buy party membership cards. The Youth League was used to "check the possession of party cards and the compulsory attendance at party meetings"[40]. The MYP and the Youth League could also be deployed as spies in public places, drinking places and even in churches or in any social gathering, with the intention of collecting any

---

[35] P.J. Schraeder, *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation*, Thomson, Wadworth, 1999.
[36] Haynes, *Religion, Globalization and Political Culture in the Third World.*
[37] Gibbs, Ajulu, "The Role of the Church in Advocacy: Case Studies from Southern and Eastern Africa."
[38] Haynes, *Religion, Globalization and Political Culture in the Third World*, 170.
[39] Ibid., 171.
[40] Ibid.

form of dissenting views regarding Banda, his party and his leadership. As Haynes rightly argues "the youth groups and their related secret bodies had become so effective that, by the end of the 1980s, Malawi had turned into one of the most supervised countries in Africa. State power was represented in almost every corner of society through an intricate network of informants, training camps, teachers, roadblocks and checkpoints"[41].

Therefore, we can understand the desperate situation Malawians found themselves in and, given these characteristics of the Banda regime, it was almost impossible to criticize him. Nevertheless, as the winds of political change started blowing across Africa, following the end of the Cold War, a number of authoritarian regimes began to crumble[42]. The question remains however, did they crumble by themselves? No. There were forces at work and, in many cases (including Malawi), the church emerged as the biggest force. This argument does not, in any way, overlook the crucial role other forces, like civil society organizations, played in bringing down Banda's regime. However, we need not forget that civil society organizations were tightly controlled and hence had little room to maneuver. The church, on the other hand, enjoyed some sort of legitimacy and therefore used this status to spread the message of reform to the people. Supporting the view that the church (RCC) was instrumental in Banda's downfall, Gibbs&Ajulu wrote "whilst the late 1980s and early 1990s saw the beginnings of dissent against his government's policies by various individuals and groups, it was the Malawian Catholic bishops' pastoral letter issued on 8th March 1992 which is widely thought to have signaled the beginning of the end for the regime"[43]. Thus, the role of the church, especially the RCC, in the political reforms cannot be overlooked. It can be argued therefore that "at the time of the end of the Cold War, Africa experienced the beginning of a second liberation, as the peoples of Africa tried to throw off the political systems that had increasingly oppressed and beggared them. The struggle was not the same everywhere, but one of its common features was the significant role played by the churches"[44]. Thus, the above mentioned characteristics of Banda regime are some of the factors that forced the Roman Catholic bishops to issue the pastoral letter[45].

---

[41] Ibid.

[42] During the Cold War (1945-1989), a number of authoritarian regimes in Africa still enjoyed the support of either the USA or USSR who were on a campaign to spread capitalism and communism respectively.

[43] Ajulu Gibbs, „The Role of the Church in Advocacy: Case Studies from Southern and Eastern Africa," 56.

[44] Gifford, *The Christian Churches and the Democratization of Africa*, 1.

[45] For a though discussion of these other factors see J. Newell, "A moment of truth? The Church and Political Change in Malawi, 1992," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 33, 2 (1995).

3.2 The 1992 Pastoral Letter

Released on 8th March 1992 and read in all Catholic churches, the pastoral letter marked the beginning of the open dissent against Banda's regime in Malawi. The RCC became the first institution to speak formally and "openly" against the ills of the one party regime. Titled "Living our Faith" the letter was the begging of a complete change for the future and destiny of the Malawians and their politics. The relations between the RCC and the Banda regime were severely strained. The Catholic Bishops (the architects of the letter) were imprisoned and faced death threats. The letter opened people's eyes and fostered in them the need to break free and reclaim their freedoms. What is more, "when the government started to react harshly and violently to the demands for democracy and to the writers and bearers of the Lenten Letter, it sparked off unprecedented demonstrations by secondary school and university students in Malawi's main cities, in defense of the newly won freedoms"[46]. There were protests everywhere, when, for the first time, Malawians realized that they could actually protest against the "mighty" Banda[47]. In response, the government engaged its machinery to intimidate people and to ban the pro-referendum protests but this did not help. International and local pressure forced president Banda to call for a referendum and, on 14 June 1993, the majority of the Malawians voted tremendously for a multiparty system of government.

At this point, it is important to mention that once the pastoral letter was released, other churches came out to support the RCC. A good example is the case of the Presbyterian churches, that joined the Catholic bishops in calling for political reform. However, there were also other churches who did the contrary. For instance, the Nkhoma synod[48], where Banda was a church elder, continued to support his regime[49]. Despite the intimidation by the state machinery, the churches in Malawi came together and formed an organization called the Public Affairs Committee which was an umbrella body for the churches and opposition groups that were slowly surfacing in the country. Further international and local pressure forced Banda to set up a Presidential Committee on Dialogue (PCD) and it is this committee that held talks with PAC until an understanding was reached, to hold a

---

[46] Ibid., 253.

[47] During demonstrations people were chanting, in Chichewa language, "zisinthe, zisinthe", meaning "we want change, we want change".

[48] Nkhoma synod is one of the three synods of the Presbyterian Church of Central African (CCAP); the other two are Blantyre synod, in the Southern region of Malawi, and Livingstonia synod, in the North.

[49] Haynes, *Religion, Globalization and Political Culture in the Third World*.

referendum, in 1993, and, eventually, multiparty general elections on 17th of May 1994[50].

Why is the Catholic Church singled out as being an agent of change in Malawi's political reform? As it has been discussed elsewhere in the paper, it was the first time that such open opposition was made against the Banda regime. This is not to say that people never resented Banda's rule; they did but they could not dare to voice out this resentment, given the brutality that characterized the one party state. The Catholic bishops knew that, by releasing that letter, they were putting their lives on the line, but they went ahead. In addition, once the letter was read, there was no turning back, it opened the doors even for those organizations and pressure groups that were still hiding in their cocoons to come out in the open. I argue here that the political reform in Malawi needed a stimulus and the RCC, with its pastoral letter, became that stimulus. Of course, others have argued that the political change would still have come to Malawi one way or the other[51]. This paper only argues that the RCC hastened the pace of this change and the manner in which it happened. There is no denying of the fact that the RCC led the way and others followed.

Today, the RCC continues to be the "voice of the voiceless" in political and social matters and criticizes government, where need be**.** Pastoral letters still remain the preferred method of not only criticizing government and holding it to account, but also of communicating to the people a number of issues affecting the country. In the run-up to the elections of May 2014, the RCC joined several other groups in educating people on the need to vote and the qualities to look for when choosing a leader. In addition, there are a number of organizations run by the RCC such as the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the Catholic Development Commission in Malawi (CADECOM), just to mention a few. CCJP is mostly involved in politically related issues while CADECOM takes on a more social approach, on issues related to development. Thus, it can be argued that, through these organizations, the RCC keeps track of the developments happening in Malawi, political as well as social, and gives its voice when the need to do so arises.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the paper argues that the church has been an important player in the political reform in Africa, as a whole, and in Malawi, in particular.

---

[50] Ibid.

[51] See, for instance, the arguments by B.L. Gama, "The relationship between Church and State: A Theologically based investigation into the social doctrine of the Church in Malawi," unpublished MA Thesis.

The RCC has been and remains an important part of Malawi's history. The 1992 pastoral letter opened the doors to active protests against the Banda regime, which eventually crumbled. While other organizations helped in bringing the Banda regime down, it was the RCC that took the crucial and most dangerous step – that of openly criticizing the president, a thing which had never happened in Malawi prior to 1992. After the pastoral letter, Malawians never looked back, until the Banda regime was removed. Today the RCC still continues its social roles, being a provision of good education as well as health care, and it also remains the "voice of the voiceless", as far as political reform is concerned.

REFERENCES

"Constitution of the Republic of Malawi." Accessed July 10, 2014. http://www.sdnp.org.mw/constituti/1994.

Cullen, Trevor. *Malawi: a Turning Point*. Edinburgh: Pentland Press, 1994.

"Episcopal Conference of Malawi." Accessed July 08, 2014. http://www.ecmmw.org/history_of_the_church.html.

Gama, Jimmy. *The role of the Church in politics in Malawi*. South Africa: AcadSA Publishing, 2010.

Gibbs, Sara, and Deborah Ajulu. "The Role of the Church in Advocacy: Case Studies from Southern and Eastern Africa" INTRAC Occasional papers accessed July 09, 2014. http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/55/OPS-31-The-Role-of-the-Church-in-Advocacy.pdf. 1999.

Gifford, Paul. (ed). *The Christian Churches and the Democratization of Africa*. Leiden, New York: Brill, 1995.

Gordon, April A. and Gordon, Donald L. (eds). *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, 4th ed. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007.

Haynes, Jeff. (ed). *Religion, Globalization and Political Culture in the Third World*. London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1999.

"Information on Malawi." Accessed July 08, 2014. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mi.html).

Likambale, Thom. "Atupele Muluzi supports religious pluralism in Malawi." Article on Nyasatimes. Accessed July0 8, 2014. http://www.nyasatimes.com/.

Lliffe, John. *Africans: The History of a Continent*. Cambridge: University Press, 1995.

McCracken, John. *Politics and Christianity in Malawi, 1875-1940. The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Mufuka, Nyamayaro K. *Missions and Politics in Malawi*. The Limestone Press, Kingston: Ontario, 1977.

Newell, Jonathan. "A moment of truth?" The Church and Political change in Malawi, 1992." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 33 :2 (1995): 243-62.

Pachai, Bridglal. *Malawi: The history of the nation*. London: Longman, 1973.

Ross, Kenneth. (ed) *Political Theology of Power for the new Malawi*. Kachere monograph No. 3. Blantyre: CLAIM, 1996.

Schraeder, Peter J. *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation*. Thomson: Wadworth, 2004.

Sundkler, Bengt. and Steed, Christopher. *A History of the Church in Africa,* Cambridge: University Press, 2000.

Yusuf KASUMBA＊

ATTEMPTS AT A REJUVENATION OF MUSLIM IDENTITY IN UGANDA. THE ERA OF AMIN (1971-1979)

Abstract: The paper is about the Muslim Community in Uganda, a presentation of the landscape we live in every day. More like an overview, this paper underlines the marginalization of Muslims in all the sectors of national life till the independence in 1962. Nevertheless, Amin's nine year rule changed the history of Islam in Uganda, for the better.

Keywords: *Religious Pluralism, Islamic State, Muslim, Abrahamic religion, influence.*

***

INTRODUCTION

The Muslim Community in Uganda has passed through episodes of tribulations, trials and triumph since the re-colonial days. Although Islam was the first Abrahamic religion to be introduced in Uganda, its adherents have never enjoyed a favorable status comparable to that enjoyed by the Christian sects which were introduced to Uganda thirty years after the coming of Islam here. Albeit numerous abortive attempts to capture state power and control state apparatus, Muslim influence and participation in the struggle for ownership of means of production as well as politics continued to wane during the era of British colonialism. Most importantly Muslim Identity suffered a heavy Blow under colonial rule, which marginalized and peripheries Muslims in all Sectors of National Life. The attainment of independence in 1962, did little to change the status of Muslims, who, as scholars such as Karugire[1] and Mamdani[2] have

---

[1] Samwiri Rubaraza Karugire, *A Political History of Uganda* (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980).
[2] Mahmood Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976).

correctly observed, remained behind in political participation, education and the distribution of the national product.

Therefore, there is a conventional belief that the coming of Amin on the political stage of Uganda, positively altered the status of Muslims, their identity, and the general level of Muslims' social, economic and political significance in the country. Contrary to what is generally believed, this paper seeks to assess the extent to which Amin's administration endeavored to redefine Muslim identity or uplift the status of Muslims in Uganda. This paper also seeks to clarify that Idi Amin, himself a Muslim, did not usurp power to salvage Muslims. Neither was he a champion of a Muslim cause. However circumstantial evidence available illustrates that the Muslim Community was one of the large beneficiaries of the bellicose regime. We highlight paradoxes that point to this benefit as having accrues from the political atmosphere of the time and the circumstances in which the military regime found itself entangled

Idi Amin took over power in the coup of 25th January, 1971. But this was not the genesis of his participation in politics in Uganda. The objectives of Amin, during his formative years of political participation (1966-72), his methods, character, attitude and behavior did least reflect a person ready to overhaul the status of his co-religionists in Uganda. But after 1972, Amin changed all the above elements to sway his efforts in favor of Muslims. Whether this was by design, unintentional, instinctual, or a result of tactical political calculation is what this paper seeks to analyze. It is however not contestable that Muslims are singled out as the group which reaped the major benefits from Amin's nine-year reign of political gambling.

An analysis of the relationship between of Amin and the Muslim community in Uganda yields a convincing conclusion that there was a massive attempt by the State to rejuvenate Muslim identity; an identity that had been denuded during the century of Anglican dominance in ownership of the means of production and state apparatus in Uganda.   Ironically, Amin's way of doing things reveals that the rudimentary approach he adopted to the Muslim question in Uganda, did not augur well for either what Muslim Community aspired for. At the time Idi Amin took over power, the Muslim Community yearned for a political, social and economic redeemer. In Amin, it seemed, the community had got one. The community had landed on a golden chance which had been elusive for almost a century. However, as it was soon to be evident, this golden opportunity was lost under the Amin's political modus operandi which smirked of inexperience and belligerence

Amin's interference in the affairs of Islam and his usage of the Islamic cloak to achieve his personal goals, almost undid whatever he had done for Muslims. By the end of his regime in 1979 for instance, all his vices were

accounted to Muslims. Those (Muslims) who had a stake in the bellicose regime, and those who never shared the slightest crumb of the cake, were generally regarded as having accomplices of the fallen dictatorship.

Idi Amin's policies towards the Muslim community affected Muslims, both internally and externally. Internally for instance, Amin coerced Muslims into getting united. Yet after achieving this, he egoistically prevailed upon them in the running of their affairs. The effect of this was that, only a year after his exit, the Muslim community fell asunder into the pre-1971 factional squabbles.

At the external front, the Amin-Islam relationship bred elements of Muslim phobia among non-Muslims. This explains why there was further balkanization of Muslims immediately after the fall of Amin. Idi Amin's adversaries inaccurately mistook him for a Jihadist whose legacy would prevail even after his exit. Therefore, to Amin's political foes, his co-religionists had to have a rough time lest they would pursue Amin's plans further.

Generally, this paper seeks to correct some of the notions harbored in this society about Amin and Islam. It is therefore envisaged that findings in this paper will clear the air about the extent to which Amin's political participation did facilitate or inhibit the development of Islam in Uganda.

1. THE MILITARY COUP OF 1971: MUSLIM PLOY OR CULMINATION OF A CLASH OF INTERESTS?

Research has proved that there was no connection between Islam, Muslims, and Amin in the latter's ascension to power. Personal interests and problems that Amin had by 1971 seemed to have overshadowed his political ambitions - if he had any - and the Islamic cause. Otunnu[3] clearly points out that a close look at the "events immediately preceding the coup demonstrate that Amin had personal reasons for attempting to takeover power" from the UPC Government. It is therefore relevant that we identify some of the factors which may have prompted Amin to take over power.

In the first place, there was, by 1970, a growing rift between Idi Amin and Milton Obote, the then president of Uganda. The two differed in matters of policy, approach and tact. By mid-1970, it had become apparent to Obote that Amin had to be eliminated if Obote was to continue having a grip on the Army. By 1969, there were signs of the dwindling of Obote's influence among the military. Obote certainly needed the army for purposes of perpetuating himself in power. This had, earlier than expected, been noticed by Amin, who grew psychologically impatient with Obote whom he had helped to crush his political opponents in 1966, by

---

[3] Amii Omara Otunnu, *Politics and the Military in Uganda* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 92.

commanding the troops which ousted the then President of Uganda, Sir Edward Muteesa.

Secondly, owing to Amin's behavioral record in the army, his personal security was at stake. Already, he had been implicated in the mysterious murder of Brigadier Okoya, yet laid the State had plans to arrest and try those who had allegedly been involved in the ploy. In fact, February 1971 had been earmarked for such arrests.

Thirdly, there were elements in the Army which threatened Amin's continued occupancy of the topmost post in the Army. In addition to this, Amin had been implicated to have misappropriated colossal sums of money meant for the army, which he could hardly account for. Perhaps if he had not fallen out with his former ally (Obote), he could have gone away with it. But owing to the rift that loomed between the old pals, Obote was looking for means of eliminating Amin. The issue of accountability thus offered to Obote potential grounds for axing Amin.

Already, before his departure for the Commonwealth conference in Singapore in 1971, Obote had asked for accountability from Amin[4]. The implications of Obote's insistence on accountability were obvious to both Obote and Amin.

There had also been divergent opinions between Obote and Amin in matters concerning foreign policy. The period between 1969 and 1971 was a period during which Arab-Israel rivalry had reached its peak. While on the one hand Obote was trying to construct his Anti-Zionist stance by supporting Egypt, Amin on the other hand was conniving with Israel in supporting the Anya Nya rebels against the Arabo-Muslim government in Sudan. In doing this, Amin was not only jeopardizing the Uganda-Arab relationship, but was also undoing Obote's policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of a neighboring state.

The imperialist connotation in the Amin coup cannot be overlooked either. Obote was increasingly falling out with Britain, a power that had colonized Uganda and that was not ready to see Kampala fall out of its orbit of neo-colonialism. Obote had already gone out of his way by blasting Britain over its policy on South Africa. With this attack on Britain, Obote's own words provided him with a political rope to hang himself. Imperialism sometimes relies on its colonial graduates to sustain itself in the periphery. Thus Britain studied the internal conflicts in Uganda and got the best out of it. She found ready material in Amin who was himself a British trained soldier.

Moreover, the British Premier's reaction to Obote's attempt to step on "Britain's toes", sent panic to the delegates attending the Singapore conference. And, it became doubtable to them whether Obote would not pay heavily for his

---

[4] Ibid.

loose tongue. The British Prime Minister, Edward Heath had remarked that "I wonder how many of you will be allowed to return to your countries after this conference". It is not surprising therefore that Britain was among the first countries to recognize Amin's Government.

The reaction of the White Hall and the British media also illustrate that perhaps Britain had a hand in the coup. For instance, out of mere imperialistic excitement, Amin was voted "man of the week" by *The financial Times*, in the week after the coup.[5] The editorial of the Daily Telegraph even coined that "One good reason that might be advanced for holding commonwealth conferences more often is that the number of undesirable rulers overthrown as a result of their temporary absence as has happened to Dr. Obote of Uganda, would thereby be increased".[6]

Three days later, the same paper noted that, with Obote gone, Britain would be at an advantage of pursuing "the course of her own strategic interests lightened on one Millstone".[7] Of all press statements however, it was *The Daily Telegraph* which gave the clearest impression of the British about Amin. In one of its issues, it was put thus:

Amin provides a welcome contrast to those African leaders... who bring African rule to discredit in their own countries... Dr. Obote, who violated Uganda's independence constitution, and was justifiably ousted by Gen. Amin was in that category.... Gen. Amin has been quick to express this in his country's policy.[8]

The takeover of power by Amin also featured prominently in leading headlines in other British papers such as The Guardian and The Times. The British Prime minister Edward Heath, who hosted Amin in July 1971 could not hide his sentiments when he coined what he termed as his "own ironic memories about the January coup, which came immediately after he had been sharply criticized by Obote"[9] in Singapore.

Nonetheless, before his departure to Singapore, Obote had instructed that Amin be arrested lest he would interfere with investigations on the murder of Brigadier Okoya, and other related investigations. Amin knew this himself[10] and acted swiftly to take over the government in order to avert the impending crisis that lay ahead of him. All the above observations, point to the fact that Amin acted for reasons other than furthering the Islamic cause in Uganda, although he had neither denounced his identity as a Muslim nor his sympathy for his co-religionists. If

---

[5] Ibid., 99.
[6] *The Daily Telegraph*, January 26, 1971.
[7] *The Daily Telegraph*, January 29, 1971.
[8] "Common Sense Uganda," *The Daily Telegraph*, July 12, 1971.
[9] *Uganda Argus*, July 14, 1971.
[10] Otunnu, *Politics and the Military in Uganda*, 98.

anything, Muslims had reiterated their support for him long before the coup. For instance, Muslims knew him as their "man" in the army, and at one gathering, Sheikh Kamulegeya, one of the leaders of the Muslim community, brought it to Amin's notice that "we support Obote because of you"[11].

2. THE AFTERMATH OF THE COUP: DID AMIN EXHIBIT PRO-ISLAMIC OBLIQUITY?

There are other factors which point to the fact that Amin did not have overwhelming Pro-Islamic inclination before the coup. In the first place, there is a contradiction which, those who hold views contrary this writer's, - on the above issue -will find difficult to reconcile. Amin himself a Muslim had embarked on a clandestine move to support Christian animist Anya-Nya rebels to oust the Muslim dominated regime in Sudan. We also notice that he found an ally in Israel, which is considered the greatest foe of Arabs and Muslims to further Zionist ventures against the Muslims in Sudan.

Secondly, after the coup, Amin's first official international visit was to Britain, but he made a stop-over in Tel Aviv show to the whole world his pro-Israel stance. It is imperceptible for a leader with a pro-Islamic agenda to conduct himself in a manner that would hurt his Muslim brethren from whom he would expect to enlist support for furthering his Islamic cause.

Thirdly, during the first year of his reign, Amin adopted an anti-Arab policy. On many occasions he vehemently denounced Arab racism as was practiced in Sudan, and attributed the 18th and 19th century's slave trade to this racial prejudice against Blacks. The situation in Sudan at the time was referred to by Amin as an atavistic carry-over of Arab racism. Although there is a difference between Islamism and Arabism, it is inconceivable that Amin could delineate between the two, owing to the "thin layer" that distinguishes the two cultures. Amin also openly accepted Israeli support during the first year of his reign. Israel supported him hoping that he would perpetually pursue his cosmetic anti-Arab policy[12].

Fourthly, the early days of Amin's era were also characterized by his attempt -whether consciously or otherwise - to adopt an ecumenical approach to

---

[11] A. Kiyimba, "The Muslim Community in Uganda through One Hundred and Forty Years: The Trials and Tribulations of a Muslim Minority," *Journal of African religion and philosophy* 2 (1990): 101.

[12] Omari Haruna Kokole, "*Black Africa and the nuclear factor, from the Arab-Israeli conflict to the struggles in southern Africa,*" microfilm, National Library of Canada, Ottawa, (1989):20.

political governance[13]. Amin attempted to make an appeasement policy towards the three major religions in Uganda; Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Islam. In doing this, he seemed to have made accurate political calculations that would contain pressures within a society characterized by religious pluralism. According to Amin, political stability in the country was partly determined by religious tranquility, coexistence and a climate free of religious bigotry.

In order to enlist support of religious leaders, Amin offered material and psychological encouragement to the leaders of the three Abrahamic religions. For instance he donated 100,000 shillings and a sleek Mercedes Benz to each of the trio; Archbishop E.K Nsubuga (Catholic), Bishop Eric Sabiiti (Anglican) and Sheikh A. Matovu (Muslim) as part of the appeasement package.

In order to pursue his ecumenical stance further, and to ensure stability in the said religious institutions, Amin christened himself a peace broker. He attempted to spearhead the solving of internal problems between and among various religious groups. He called inter-denominational dialogue in Kabale and later in Kampala[14]. He intervened prominently in the Muslim community affairs by inducing the then prevailing factions to repudiate their claims of legitimacy and unite under one umbrella body. The result was the formation of the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council [15]. Amin also encouraged discipline and unity in the divided Anglican community.

Although the Catholic Church seemed to be impermeable and with less internal conflicts, Amin appeased Catholics by releasing a leading Catholic Politician, Benedicto Kiwanuka from detention where he was languishing and named him Chief Justice. In 1972, he presented a check to the Catholic Arch-Bishop to facilitate the construction of the Martyrs' Monumental Shrine at Namugongo. He also promised Catholics that two of his sons were to be trained as priests[16]. Although this proved to be an empty promise, it gave Catholics some hope and renewed vigor in political participation in Uganda.

Amin played his cards well to prove that his was a non-denominational regime. In addition to all the above, in 1972, he included on his entourage to the OAU summit in Morocco, the Muslim Chief Kadhi, Catholic Arch-Bishop and the Protestant Arch-Bishop. However what we need to note here about Amin's ecumenism is that, although under this arrangement, Amin was not favoring Muslims, the arrangement did not suppress them either. It is also important to mention that Amin had realized the relevance of religious balance of power in

---

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 267.

[16] A.B.K. Kasozi, "The life of prince Badru Kakungulu Wasajja and his development of a forward looking Muslim community in Uganda, 1907-1991," unpublished paper.

managing a multi-religious society of the ilk of Uganda. This is a fact that both Amin's friends and enemies do acknowledge. It is however unfortunate that what seemed to be Amin's foresight in his early days later turned out to be political myopia, when he abandoned the scheme and inclined to Muslims at the expense of other religionists.

Another variable that helps to show that Amin had no pro-Muslim plans in the early days of his regime is to be found in the composition of his cabinet and administrative structure 1971-72. For instance out of a cabinet of 20 ministers, only two were Muslims (see Table 1 below). He also heavily relied on an advisory panel of non-Muslims such as Wannume Kibedi, Wadada Nabudere, Edward Rugumayo, and Bob Astles.[17]

Table 1: *Showing The Religious Distribution Of Amin's Cabinet 1971/72*

Ministry	Minister	Religious affiliation
President	Idi Amin Dada	Muslim
Internal Affairs	Obitre Gama	Christian
Defense	Oboth Ofumbi	,,
Foreign Affairs	Wannume Kibedi	,,
Finance	E.B. Wakhweya	,,
Planning & Econ. Devt	Arolo Kwonde	,,
Cabinet& Public Affairs	Ovonji	,,
Cooperatives And Marketing	F.L Okware	,,
Local/ Provincial Admin	V.A.Ovonji	,,
Agriculture	F.L.Okware	,,
Animal Resources	B.W. Banage	,,
Commerce	W. Lutara	,,
Industry(& Power)	W. Lutara	,,
Tourism	W. Lutara	,,
Information And Broadcasting	W, Naburi	,,
Works, Housing, Transport & Communication	J.M.N. Zikusooka	,,
Culture& Community Devt	Engur	,,
Health	J.H.Gesa	,,
Labour	J.M. Byagagaire	,,

---

[17] Mahmood Mamdami, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda* (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983).

Education	Abu Mayanja	Muslim
Justice & Attorney General	Nkambo Mugerwa	

Source: Jorgensen J.J., *Uganda, A modern History* (London: Croon Helm Ltd, 1981): 267

3. FROM ECUMENISM TO MANIACAL MUSLIM BIAS

Amin's ecumenical stance was short-lived. By the end of 1972 he had drastically changed his attitude towards a plan that he had initiated and showed his true political colors. It dawned on the Christian community that the 1971 coup had marked the decline of Protestant ascendancy and the rise of Muslim influence in Uganda. Amin, without regard to public opinion, embarked on an ambitious campaign to rejuvenate the identity of Muslims, which - though had started in the 1960s[18] - had been obscured throughout colonial rule.

Although from the evidence produced above, Amin had no Islamic ascendancy agenda in plotting the coup, as a Muslim he hastened to realize that the most reliable ally would be his co-religionists. It seems Amin had recognized an advantage in Muslim buoyancy; that is the universalistic nature of Islam. This would help create an ethnically mixed support since Islamic brotherhood cuts across ethnic identities. This strategy, according to Amin, would work better than an ethnic-oriented regime. A non-Muganda, as Amin was, could not rely on Buganda support, despite having appeased them by deposing their much hated enemy (Obote), and by returning the body of the beloved fallen king, Sir Edward Muteesa from London where he had died in 1969. If anything, as Kasozi[19] has rightly observed, it seems "the Baganda rejoiced to see Obote go although we are not sure whether they were happy to see Amin come." Amin knew that the shaky alliance that the fall of Obote and the return of the remains of Muteesa created between him and the Baganda would be short lived. To the Baganda, the memory of the destruction of their monarchy in 1966-67 - in which Amin played a profound role - was still fresh in their minds. Secondly, he could in no way promote an ethno-political strategy by relying on the dominance of his tribe the Kakwa. The Kakwa were insignificant in number, yet a northern corridor alliance with "tribes" such as the Acholi and Langi could not work out either. Most of the northern "tribes" were bed-fellows with the fallen regime of Obote and the UPC. Therefore Amin found in Islam a ready instrument to consolidate himself in power. Already

---

[18] Kokole, "*Black Africa and the nuclear factor, from the Arab-Israeli conflict to the struggles in southern Africa.*"

[19] Kasozi, "*The life of prince Badru Kakungulu Wasajja and his development of a forward looking Muslim community in Uganda, 1907-1991.*"

the Muslims had applauded his coming to power. Prince Badru Kakungulu, their respected leader, whom Amin had just released from jail, had in 1971 extended a congratulatory message to Amin saying, "We Muslims have added reasons to feel grateful for your Excellency, since under the previous regime our religion had been debased to a play thing and we had been denied the most elementary freedom of worship."[20]

Ironically, Amin was neither a staunch practicing Muslim, nor a Muslim fanatic. It appears therefore, that his tilt towards -Islamic promotion was a consequence of his entanglement in a quest for political, personal and economic survival. What marked the beginning of a 7-year Muslim dominated era was Amin's visit to Libya in 1972. The result of the visit was the signing of a communiqué of cooperation between the two countries.

The major implication of this deal was that Amin found himself in relationship with two arch rivals; Libya and Israel. Israel was shocked by this visit and it was apparent that the trust they had in Amin had waned. Amin's visit to Libya was not a function of abandoning his former political allies, Israel and Britain. But it was purely for reasons of his "personal, political and economic" survival[21], the Tripoli Communiqué changed Amin's philosophical bias towards Islam and the Arabs. To Qaddhafi, Amin's visit was construed as having given a chance to Libya, on behalf of the Arab world, to distract Amin from his pro-Israeli orientation, and to further extend Islamic influence in Uganda. Libya acted fast to reap the fruits of the communiqué. On 21st February, 1972, Qaddhafi sent a ten-man contingent to Uganda to discuss with their counterparts, matters pertaining to possible areas of cooperation. Among the vital areas of cooperation assented to by the two parties, the promotion of Islam through teaching, building of schools and mosques featured prominently. Other areas included trade, economic and technical assistance, air force and the Uganda army.[22]

Israel on the other hand, despite having been shocked by Amin's impending shift in policy, laid a desperate strategy lest their interests in Uganda and Africa as a whole, would be jeopardized by the turn of events. A trade mission was hurriedly sent to Uganda to discuss matters of "mutual economic interest with Kampala[23]. However, it was too late for the Israel. Amin's intellect had already been muzzled by Qaddhafi's ideological morphine. On 25 March 1972, Amin formally denounced what he called "Zionist imperialism"[24]. This followed his edict of 23 March, 1972 that all Israeli military personnel be evacuated within 72 hours.

---

[20] Ibid.
[21] Otunnu, *Politics and the Military in Uganda*, 114.
[22] *Uganda Argus*, February 28, 1972.
[23] Otunnu, *Politics and the Military in Uganda*, 114.
[24] Ibid.

He also ordered the reduction of diplomats at the Israeli Embassy to only four, disconnection of Israeli military wireless and the revocation of all orders and plans that were in the pipeline with the Israeli.[25] Subsequently, by the end of March 1972, Amin had officially terminated his relations with Israel.[26]

Amin is known for having possessed an overwhelming instinctual drive, which in most cases governed, directed and guided his behavioral actions and decisions. The same psychological phenomenon was exhibited in his dramatic shift in policy towards Israel. For instance, within a period of two months (February-March 1972) Amin had managed to put a seal on the termination of Uganda's relationship with Israel, a relationship that had taken the two countries a decade to build. On March 30 1972 he gave orders to all Israeli diplomats to leave Uganda within ten days. In doing all this Amin was almost oblivious that the "Zionists" had helped him to ascend to power only a year before.

Amin's expulsion of the Israelis and his denunciation of Zionism were a boost to the development of the Islamic influence and to the strengthening of his newly adopted pro-Arab attachments. His government started reaping immediate economic, financial and political benefits. The Arabs had to act instantly to ensure that they exert a tight grip on Amin's regime. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia visited Uganda later in 1972, the visit being his first ever to Africa. Faisal also granted 6.1 million Riyals and promised more in consideration of Amin's stance to fight Zionism and imperialism.[27] This increased morale in Amin and escalated his zeal for Islamic promotion. Qaddhafi's visit to Uganda in 1973 signaled confirmation of Amin's allegiance to the Arab world. With this visit, Amin totally abandoned his non-partisan religious spirit and bent towards the furtherance of Islam.

He embarked on an ambitious task of trying to Islamize Uganda. For instance, he expelled 58 white Christian missionaries in 1973 and initiated a program to reorganize religion in the army ostensibly to put the leadership of various religions in African's hands. There seemed to be no problem with Africanizing religious leadership. But the Programme directly affected non-Muslims and favored Muslims - since it was only the Christians who had foreign missionaries in the army. The above scenario provides that while Amin was trying to promote Islam, he was doing so at the expense of the other faiths[28].

Later, Amin's move to Islamize Uganda increased his bigotry towards non-Muslims. For instance, he banned all the minor Christian churches (sects) such as the Adventist Church, the Orthodox Church, "Mungu Mwema" (redeemed) Church and others, leaving only Islam, Anglicanism and Catholicism. He could have

---

[25] *Uganda Argus*, March 24, 1972.
[26] *Uganda Argus*, March 31, 1972.
[27] *Uganda Argus*, November 15-20, 1972.
[28] Uganda Govt., 1973, 53.

tolerated the two churches only because their adherents by far outnumbered Muslims and therefore had neither the courage nor the means to ban them. Amin's politicization of religion in a secular state was also exhibited in the membership of his cabinet. For example, while in 1971 his cabinet had only 2 Muslims, by 1975 it was dominated by Muslims where 70% of his ministers were Muslims[29].

The expulsion of the Asians in 1972 also intensified the influence of Muslims. This is because, most of the departed Asians' property was entrusted to Muslims, either directly or indirectly. In the army, religion inter alia became a criterion for recruitment and promotion. This saw an influx of Sudanic speaking Muslims into the army from southern Sudan. By the end of Amin's rule, most of the commanders and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) were Muslims, even though most of them lacked educational qualifications for the posts they held.

One of the indicators of the Islamisation process which Uganda went through during the period (1971-79) was the massive conversion of people to Islam. There were basically three factors to explain the reason behind this enormous conversion. First, as Islam had become a basis for redistribution of state resources, most people converted in order to have access to the then scarce resources. Secondly others converted in order to win favors, respect and for the purposes of security for the job-posts they held. An example here is that of Obura (later Kassim Obura) who the Commissioner of Police was until 1979. Thirdly other people converted out of fear of persecution. Such people saw in Islam a shelter to protect them from unprecedented repression, since most of the targets of Amin's tyrannical rule were non-Muslims. The rest converted either out of free will or after envying the status that Muslims held at the time. The Islamic propaganda spread during Maulid functions also attracted many people to Islam.

The role of the Maulid functions in the Islamisation process need not be underestimated. Many such functions were organized frequently throughout the country. The festivities that accompanied such functions definitely pulled non-Muslims nearer to Islam and consequently some had embraced Islam. Maulid once again became one of the platforms to spread government propaganda. Government officials and soldiers used to attend these functions in order to "sugar-coat" the regime's image. Maulid became political forum, where even some government plans were communicated. "Matali" (tambourine) groups took the place of political associations. Matali groups were merely entertainment clubs. But the competition amongst them and the alliances these groups sought with politicians, particularly those in army uniform, surpassed even that which existed between political

---

[29] Kokole, "*Black Africa and the nuclear factor, from the Arab-Israeli conflict to the struggles in southern Africa,*" 25.

associations. By 1979, the number of the "Matali" groups had risen to about 60. Table 2 below shows some of the most prominent matali groups in various districts.

Table 2 *Showing The Most Prominent Matali Groups In Various Districts*

NAME OF MATALI GROUP	HEADQUARTERS
Misbahu Dini	Naguru/Kampala
Misbahu Dini	Kawoko/Masaka
Nujum Matali Group	Kibuli/Kampala
Kamar Matali Group	Kibuye/Kampala
Kawempe Mbogo	Kawempe/Kampala
Nateete Matali Group	Mpigi
Nakawa Matali Group	Kampala
Shubban Matali Group	Kawempe
Nekoyedde Matali Group	Luwero
Kaberamaido Matali Group	Kaberamaido
Bunya Matali Group	Busoga
Sironko Matali Group	Mbale
Lubanda Matali Group	Masaka
Kabasanda Matali Group	Mpigi
Kyamuganga Matali Group	Masaka
Bisanje Matali Group	Masaka
Magamaga Matali Group	Busoga
Ndagwe Matali Group	Ndagwe Masaka

As the Matali groups gained prominence, many army officers-cum-politicians joined as members. One example will be useful to illustrate this. The Misbahu Diini matali group based in Naguru Kampala attracted membership of notables such as Capt. Noah Mohammed (Minister for Commerce), Capt. Yasin Sebbi (CO. Malire Para Troopers Regiment - Lubiri) Capt. Yusuf Amin Gogo, Brig. Moses Ali (Minister for Finance) and Brig. Taban (CO. Marines).

By 1978, Amin's Islamisation process had reached great levels. Even military operations were sometimes given an Islamic touch. For instance, in 1979, during the famous Mugulukusu Operation which marked Amin's short lived annexation of the Kagera Basin, it was reported that Uganda Armed Forces were using the slogan Allah Akbar (God is great) in their encounter. The number of pilgrims to Mecca increased manifold every year during Amin's regime, despite the economic hardships that the country faced during those years. Other Muslim festivities like Dua, Burda, Shukur were held more frequently than ever before. In

these festivities, particularly the Maulid, songs glorifying, praising and thanking Amin and the government in power, were   sang repeatedly. This was one of the ways through which the Muslims expressed their support for, and solidarity with, Amin. The song which featured prominently was composed in 1977, and first played at a Grand Maulid organized by the Kampala business community and held at the City Square. Some of its stanzas went as follows:

Leka twebaze Amin n'amagye ge   - Let's thank Amin and his army
Yakuza obusiramu mu Uganda   - he promoted Islam in Uganda
Leka twebaze omukulu   - lets thank his Excellency
Field Marshal   the Field Marshal
Yatugobera abayindi   - For expelling the Asians
mu Uganda   from Uganda
Chorus: Mulembe, mulembe gwa Daada mulembe Indeed Daada's (Amin's)rule is a great regime
Yatuddiza ebyenfuna etc.   -   He Africanized the economy.

However, what is important to mention here is that the more Amin promoted Islam, the more resentment he generated from among non- Muslims. Such resentment, for instance, was expressed in form of people going into exile. Secondly, the most crucial sector- education- which would have enhanced rapid uplifting of the status of Muslims was not given due attention. Apart from blessing the country with an Islamic university - which did not take off until 1988 - most Islamic and Muslim institutions were never overhauled. Very few Muslim founded schools were set up. Besides many Muslim parents never encouraged their children to invest in education. A good many of them dropped out of school and joined their parents in the booming trade; courtesy of the economic war. This was therefore another missed opportunity for Muslims. They would have used this chance to strive to catch up with their Christian counterparts in that sector.

The more Amin became entangled in the mesh of Pan-Arabism or Arab imperialism, the more efforts he put in to make Uganda appear more of an Islamic state than a secular one. Uganda's admission to the OIC as a full member state in 1974, marked the acme of the

Islamisation of Uganda happened at a conference, in Lahore, Pakistan. At the conference, Uganda was admitted to the OIC, as a member state. The implications of this admission were farther than mere membership. The OIC charter restricts membership to only Muslim states. The criterion for determining a Muslim state is that the country must have the majority of its population Muslim (about 70%). Therefore out of the 45 member states of the OIC, Uganda stands alone as the only country which lacks the said qualification.

The technical and legal implication of Uganda's admission to the OIC was that Uganda had legally become a Muslim state. At the conference in Lahore, it was resolved that two Islamic Universities be established in Africa to further spread the influence of Islam. Anglophone and Francophone Africa were to have a University each. Uganda was chosen as the site for the establishment of the University to cater for Anglophone African states, while Niger Republic was to house the Franco-Phone Islamic university. The Islamic university in Uganda, now based in Mbale, is a legacy of Amin's zealous campaign to Islamize Uganda, although the scheme did not take off until 1988, nine years after the fall of Amin.

Uganda's admission to the OIC opened more veins for the inflow of petrol dollars into Uganda from the Arab world. In addition to the military and technical assistance that was extended to Uganda from Libya, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries, Muslims benefited in the field of education. Many scholarships were awarded to Ugandan Muslim students to pursue education in the Arab world. Little effort was however made to develop the Islamic education sector locally.

Another indicator of the proliferation of the Muslim influence was the decreeing, in 1978, of Friday as a non-working day (public holiday) of the week[30]. In doing this Amin was trying to refurbish the status of Muslims and to observe recognition of their rights of worship which had been denied to them since the colonial times. Amin reasoned that many Muslims could not go for Juma prayers on Friday while it remained a working day. However, this was mere exaggeration of the Friday issue. Countries like Senegal, Nigeria and Mali which have large Muslim populations have not reached this extent either. Regional governments in Western Nigeria have adopted a motto of "worship and work" regarding the Juma prayers. In other words, they attempt to reconcile between their daily routine work and prayers without necessarily marking Friday as a non-working day. This is what Islam recommends. The Qur'anic injunction regarding Juma prayers is clear on this. It goes thus; "Oh ye who believe, when you are summoned for Juma prayers, hasten to the remembrance of Allah and cease your transactions. That would be best for you if you but knew it"[31]. However, there are countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Brunei, which observe Friday as a public Holiday. What we need to observe here, is that, Amin had in a way gone to excesses on this. The media (radio) was also given an Islamic touch. Bulletins in Arabic were introduced and Arabic literature increasingly flowed to Uganda. But this did not go far since many Muslims could neither write nor understand Arabic.

---

[30] Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda*, 56.
[31] *The Glorious Quran* "Surat Juma'", verse 9.

4. AMIN AND MUSLIM UNITY: THE CREATION OF THE
UGANDA MUSLIM SUPREME COUNCIL

The formation of the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC) was a brain-child of a combination of Amin's political tact and the political environment that prevailed in Uganda at the time. This researcher attributes four variables to explain the formation of the UMSC.

In the first place, the formation of the UMSC was a reflection of the attempt to implement the ecumenical stance of the formative political strategies of Amin's regime. We have already indicated the extent to which Amin had endeavored to adopt an ecumenical policy in Uganda politics. To this effect, a department of religious affairs in the President's Office was created in 1971 with Mr. Christopher Ntege as its Permanent Secretary. The subsequent conferences which were held in Kabale to alter the Schismatic structures of the Anglican and Islamic religions were a function of Amin's Endeavour to institute a non-denominationally skewed political system. The UMSC therefore found its birth from these ventures.

The second variable related to the creation of the UMSC, pertains to Amin's Phobic reactions to Buganda's insular 'nationalistic' sentiments which not only cut across religious boundaries, but also were seemingly impermeable. With the return of Muteesa's body for burial, Amin had hoped to get a constituency among the Baganda on a silver platter. In doing this, Amin had miscalculated the equation of Buganda politics. In as much as the Baganda rejoiced when Amin came - which is unlikely that they did so for a reason other than Obote's exit - the return of Muteesa's body had a bi-dimensional implication. In the first place it may have temporarily increased Amin's support in Buganda. On the other hand, however, it exhumed the then buried memories and sentiments of Buganda nationalism. With nostalgia, the Baganda attempted to resurrect their monarchical pride. However, owing to the fact that they had no king at that time, they displaced their honor of reverence - accorded to the king - to the noble royalists. Among the royalists of repute at that time was Prince Badru Kakungulu. Kasozi[32] observes that "Amin began to fear and to perceive Kakungulu as a focus of the rising and surging monarchism that desired to restore Kabakaship in Buganda."

Amin's fears were not unfounded. Already Kakungulu was being showered upon praises, and honors befitting a king[33]. Therefore, in order for Amin to consolidate his leadership, such elements had to be humbled. The connection between Amin, Kakungulu, the Baganda and the UMSC lies in the following

---

[32] Kasozi, "*The life of prince Badru Kakungulu Wasajja and his development of a forward looking Muslim community in Uganda, 1907-1991.*"
[33] *The People*, May 10, 1971, 8.

analysis. Badru Kakungulu had a large following of Baganda Muslims and non-Muslims. If he ever had political ambitions as Amin may have thought, it could be easy for him to win the support that Amin wanted from the Baganda at the time. Yet Kakungulu's faction the Uganda Muslim Community (UMC) was still very popular in Muslim politics. Therefore, in order to curb the threat of Baganda, Amin had to use all political tactics available to him. One such tactic was to neutralize the influence of the Baganda - who dominated the UMC - in Muslim politics. The success in doing this, lay not in allowing the perpetual existence of Muslim factions, but rather in uniting them under one organization. This would lower the "Gandanisation" of Muslim administration and leadership. If anything, Amin had been an ardent supporter of NAAM, a faction that sought to achieve that purpose. Amin joined the UMC, due to the political and personal differences he had had with Obote.

The third explanation relates to the nature of relationship that exists between religion and politics in Uganda's history. Owing to the fact that religion had greatly influenced Uganda politics, it was necessary for Amin to monitor the activities of religious leaders and institutions lest they could pose a political threat[34]. This explains why the department of religious affairs was set up. However, for monitoring purposes it is easy to deal with a single unit than with Schismatic fragments. Under the guise of helping religious organizations to solve their problems of internal cleavages, Amin prevailed upon Muslims and Protestants to move towards internal unity, which would in the real sense, enable him to meddle in the affairs of these religions with ease. The UMSC was therefore formed partly as a result of this effort.

In addition to the above, the creation of the Supreme Council may have stemmed from Amin's desire to use Islam as his political constituency together with the army. Muslims were the minority. But being his co-religionists, they would be a more reliable and easy to manipulate. But, in order to achieve this, there was a need to eliminate the schismatic elements within the Muslim community. A united Muslim front would be able to penetrate and attach to the State House, as was to be witnessed later after the formation of the council. Since members of a united Muslim community would repudiate their former allegiance to the pre-1971 factions and work under one administrative canopy, it was hoped that this would ease the government's task to influence the affairs of the Ummah and to gain their support.

Finally, the formation of the UMSC, was partly an attempt by Amin to rejuvenate Muslim identity, which the previous regimes had totally undermined.

---

[34] Kasozi, "*The life of prince Badru Kakungulu Wasajja and his development of a forward looking Muslim community in Uganda, 1907-1991.*"

However, what worked against the progress of Islam and the respectable identity of Muslims during the pre-1971 period was factionalism. Coupled with the unfortunate historical disadvantage under which Islam grew, letting factionalism to linger on would make the situation deplorable. The colonial regime had placed Muslims at the bottom of the social stratum in denominational distribution of importance. Therefore in order to reverse this, Amin saw the need of unity among Muslims which would be used as the first step towards elevation of Muslims' status. It was in this regard that scholars like Rowe (1991) and Bakaitwaho-Muhima (1981) view Amin as a jihadist with a "golden sword to Muslimise Uganda". Although Rowe's conclusion is sweeping, there is a ray of truth in it. The inaccurate part of it is that it labeled Amin as jihadist, in the superficial context to which the two sources named above understand the term. Rowe and Bakaitwaho-Muhima seem to understand jihad from a narrow perspective, that is, physical confrontation or war. But the meaning of jihad is more than that. Technically it refers to striving in the cause of Allah using a variety of lawful means. If Amin's jihadist element is judged using the latter meaning, then he was a jihadist, but if judged from the view point then the present writer differs from Rowe and his likes, the view of this writer is that he not, nor did he have the urge to become one. He simply utilized opportune circumstances to realize political objectives. If anything, the existence of the UMSC would enable him to use the body as a bait to canvass for foreign donations from the Arab world. It is now pertinent to discuss the process undertaken to create the UMSC.

The idea of forming the UMSC was conceived at the conferences held in Kabale and Kampala between 19 and 22 May and from 1st to 4th June 1971 respectively. The first reconciliatory meeting was chaired by Mr. P.J Nkambo Mugerwa, a non-Muslim who was considered to be a suitable choice in a situation where impartial steps were to be made[35]. Leaders of all factions and sects were invited to these conferences. At Kabale the UMC delegation was led by Sheikh Ali Kulumba, while Sheikh Abdu Kamulegeya led the NAAM delegation. The workshop recognized the following problems, inter alia, which required urgent redress:

(i)   There was a regional disequilibrium in the running of Muslim affairs, which tended to favor Buganda,

(ii)   There was an over accentuation of Buganda as a focus in resource allocation for the development of Islam, at the expense of the peripheral areas.

(iii)   An absence of an all embracing administrative institution to govern the affairs of Islam, hence the need to set up one,

---

[35] Ibid.

(iv)   Muslims were lagging behind particularly in the education sector; a factor that was considered to be a major source of their problems; and

(v)   A need for free and fair contestation for leadership and democratic election for the religious leaders.

After a thorough scrutiny of the above problems, the delegates made the following resolutions:

(1)   That an organization comprising of representatives from all districts be set up to unite Muslims, and be their mouthpiece.

(2)   That the organization to be formed shall be called the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC).

(3)   That all existing factions should relinquish their claims to Muslim leadership, reconcile and work for the common cause of Muslim unity and development.

In the aftermath of the Kabale and Kampala conferences, it became apparent that the, then, existing Muslim factions had been subdued in a "revolution from above". This marked the greatest government indulgence in Muslim affairs in Uganda. The formation of the UMSC reveals how government was resolved to determine the destiny of Muslims in Uganda.

Contrary to the impression created by Kaliisa (1994), the Muslim community was far from the idea of unity at that time the UMSC was formed. Kaliisa argues that in inspiring the formation of the UMSC, Amin "appealed to sentiments that were already latent in the Muslim community" toward unity. This conclusion is not only sweeping and misleading, but is also based on inaccurate premises. The three instances which Kaliisa mentions with pride as indicators of the latent sentiments are not sufficient to call for an inference like his. First, Kaliisa rightly notes that there were many Muslims (especially elites) who were calling for Muslim unity. But he overlooks the fact that it was the same elite group which formed the technical and parochial bases for Muslim factionalism in the 1960s, which had not changed by 1971.

Kaliisa also cites one of the aims of Uganda Muslim Students Association (UMSA) which stated: "to convince the elders to the necessity of unity"[36]. What Kaliisa ignores is that for a long time, the aims were not reflected in the conduct of the UMSA. The internal wrangles within the association, its unhealthy rivalry with the Young Men Muslim Association (YMMA) and the obliquity of its officials against NAAM, did not only perpetuate factionalism, but also created room for further internal strife in the Muslim community. Thirdly, Kaliisa bases his argument on the Balinda Abbas' "brain child" constitution of united Muslim community of Uganda (sic)*. But it is common knowledge to those who drafted the

---

[36] UMSA Report, 1963.

said constitution, that it was nothing but a ploy by the NAAM clique to legitimize NAAM, constitutionalize their objectives and sideline the UMC. Unity is not mentioned anywhere in this constitution except in the preamble, where Muslims were called upon to unite together under the Sheikh Mufti of Uganda, a post which was created by NAAM.

However, the fact is that the creation of the UMSC is a reflection of the "forced unity" which was engineered by the Lumpen militarist in the State House, to achieve material gains from the outside world, whose prospects lay partly in the existence of an organization, acting as a common voice for Islam in Uganda. There are a number of reasons to support the view that Muslim mechanical unity which was achieved through the formation of the UMSC was done under duress or undue influence from State House.

In the first place, the initiative of forming the UMSC did not emanate from the then warring factions but from the Government. Yet still the idea was not welcomed by the then existing Muslim organizations. Badru Kakungulu, the leader of UMC did not attend the Kabale and Kampala conferences[37]. Even many of the staunch leaders of NAAM such as Swaibu Semakula, Adoko Nekyon and Shaban Nkuutu, shunned the said conferences. Kakungulu himself in sheer frustration, instead retired as leader of the UMC. In a meeting with Amin, Kakungulu indicated that he had withdrawn from the formation of the UMSC, and that he would not seek office in the then impending elections of the UMSC[38]. Zaidi Mugenyiasooka; the AMC Bukoto-Nateete leader, did not support the idea of the UMSC, refused to recognize it, and in the words of Kiyimba[39] he only "bowed to its authority out of fear of the gun". His argument was that there was no need for annulling the existing sects and factions' sovereignty. The UMSC should instead have acted as an inter-factional body where factions, sects and organizations should converge to discuss matters of common interest.

The AMC continues to exist to date. The Asian Muslim groups also resented the allegiance to the UMSC. Kasozi[40] argues, as reason for their resentment, that they were not willing to surrender their property to an amorphous body of the ilk of the UMSC. Finally, it was apparent that the unity the UMSC sought to achieve would be a sham since many supporters of the existing factions still had "irrevocable" allegiance to their respective factions. For instance NAAM

---

[37] Kasozi, "*The life of prince Badru Kakungulu Wasajja and his development of a forward looking Muslim community in Uganda, 1907-1991.*"
[38] Ibid.
[39] Kiyimba, "The Muslim Community in Uganda through One Hundred and Forty Years: The Trials and Tribulations of a Muslim Minority," 101.
[40] A.B.K Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd, Kampala, 1987), 42.

diehards who had harassed UMC supporters or those who had crossed over from one faction to another construed the possibility of reconciliation as impracticable. When Shaban Nkuutu announced the dissolution of NAAM, many of its supporters expressed discontent with this decision. To many of such people, particularly the non-Baganda petty bourgeois, the dissolution of the NAAM was a recipe for the re-emergence of Buganda's ascendant position in Muslim administrative structural affairs. The conduct of the President also indicated that the UMSC was to be formed and maintained using legal, technical and rudimentary instruments of coercion. Although it had been resolved that the UMSC shall follow democratic and proper administrative procedures, the Religious Affairs Department worked far from this. In November 1971, the department announced the postponement of the UMSC elections sine die. This was followed by the naming of a committee comprising soldiers to appoint 11 representatives from each district. By. April 1972 the committee had accomplished its task and 229 members were duly announced as UMSC representatives. Thus, from the very onset the method of democratic contestation in which the UMSC elections were to be based was thwarted.

Table 3: *The factional distribution of the maiden UMSC representatives*

FORMER FACTION OR ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES
Uganda Muslim community	77
NAAM	59
AMC- Bukoto-Nateete	9
Muslim Asian organisations	11
Those with unidentifiable inclination	75
Total	229

Source: Kathleen Goodman Lockard. *Religion and political development in Uganda*, 1962-72. University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1974, p.159

After the appointment of the representatives, an impromptu assembly was convened to elect the office bearers for the new Uganda Muslim Supreme Council. What transpired in the hotly contested elections however, revealed that, although Muslim leaders had accepted to relinquish their factional claims to Muslim leadership, it had been done under undue influence. The old factional game was still in play. For instance, during the elections for the post of Chief Kadhi both NAAM and UMC fielded candidates in the names of Sheikhs Abdul Razak Matovu and Ali Kulumba respectively. In the 1972 elections it was obvious that old wounds

of inter-factional rivalry had been opened. After a lot of lobbying and counter-lobbying, the NAAM "candidate" Abdul Razak Matovu defeated Ali Kulumba by polling 160 votes against 60. The runner-up Ali Kulumba was named Deputy Chief Kadhi, under a directive from Amin, as a gesture of appeasing UMC and partly to avoid further polarization of the Council. The political tactics of NAAM however, prevailed over the UMC during those elections, since most of the members subsequently elected on the executive of the UMSC were formally supporters or sympathizers of NAAM.

Table 4: Showing the factional inclination of the maiden leadership of the UMSC

POST	OFFICIAL	FACTIONAL INCLINATION
Chairman	Ahmed Sulaiman	NAAM
Deputy Chairman	Ali Balunywa	NAAM
Chief Kadhi	Shk. A Matovu	NAAM
Deputy Chief Kadhi	Shk. Ali. Kulumba	UMC
Secretary General	A.Juma Birmahire	NAAM
Deputy Sec General	Sekulima	NAAM
Treasure	Abdul Khaliq Abdullah	NAAM

The UMSC was duly inaugurated on 1 June 1972, with a secretariat operating from parliamentary buildings. This sent signals to the non-Muslims about the politicization of the Muslim leadership as well as the Islamisation process that government had started undertaking.

Following the inauguration of the council, many individual and state donations were extended to the UMSC. Foreign countries like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, also extended financial assistance to the new body. The council was "economically revitalized" after the expulsion of the Asians in 1972. Many of the departed Asians properties were entrusted to UMSC. These fell under two categories. The first category included property especially houses, which were granted by the state out of its "loot" from the "economic war". The second category consisted of property which was voluntarily handed over to Muslims (through the UMSC) by Asians Muslims who were living Uganda. Such property included mosques and schools.

With such enormous donations and grants, the UMSC had by 1973 become the "richest land lord in the country"[41].

---

[41] Ibid.

The UMSC operated very successfully during its first year of operation, and it seemed apparent that for the first time in a period of 70 years the Muslim community was sighing with relief from the religious-political wrangles that had adversely affected it.

5. STATE PERMEATION OF THE UMSC

Although Amin continued throughout his rule to favor Muslims, the Muslim community started feeling the negative effect of Animism barely three years after the creation of the UMSC. This was particularly so when he continued to pinch his influence into the affairs of Muslims. By 1975, it had become apparent that the honey moon between the Muslims and Amin would bear negative consequences to Muslims. This was the time when the state exhibited beyond reasonable doubt, that it was resolved to make the UMSC a state organ. Amin prevailed upon the Muslim community by trying to make himself an expert and a consultant in Muslim affairs. Although he had started this earlier in 1971, when he took it upon himself to declare a self-chosen day for Idi el-fitir, and by forcing Muslims to 'unite', he exhibited his true colors after 1974. The UMSC was reduced to a mere implementation unit of the state policies towards Muslims.

From the very onset of its creation the UMSC never functioned independently. The democratic and transparent principles, upon which its operations were to be based, were thwarted right from its formative years. Instead it was the President's orders and guidelines which were to be followed. In 1975, the President, with no reasonable or rational explanation, sacked the Chief Kadhi Sheikh Abdul Razak Matovu and his entire executive. Although the dismissal of these officials followed a Col. Khamis Safi commission of inquiry report, it was a naked violation of the constitutional procedures of the UMSC. It also exhibited the extent to which government was determined to interfere in the affairs of Muslim leadership and administration. Kasozi considers this phenomenon to have been the greatest problem that faced the UMSC in its institutionalization.

The sacking of Sheikh Matovu's executive is considered to have been unbecoming on two accounts. In the first place, the head of the commission Col. Safi Khamis was not competent enough to head the commission. Although fairly learned in Islamic knowledge, he lacked the technical skills to handle matters of such sensitivity as were inherent within the UMSC. Secondly, the persons implicated by the commission for having stunted the proper running of the UMSC were not given chance to defend themselves regarding the findings of the commission. Lastly, the dismissal itself was procedurally wrong. This is because the General Assembly, that is to say, all representatives, were neither consulted nor allowed to act constitutionally to boot the executive. After the dismissal of Sheikh

—

Matovu's executive, a new Chief Kadhi, Sheikh Yusuf Sulaiman Matovu, was appointed to head the Muslim community. Sulaiman Matovu's appointment was unconstitutional. For, he was hand-picked by the President, and not by the proper appointing organs of the council. The current writer agrees with Kiyimba[42] that Amin was anxious that "the UMSC does not become a hostile body so he had to keep a keen eye on whoever went to its leadership". While I agree with the above contention, it must be made clear here that Amin's anxiety was purely political and not spiritual.

However, where Amin missed a point in the endeavor to tranquillize the leadership of the council, was in his failure to utilize shrewd political tactics as he had used in the suppression of factionalism in 1972. He instead used rudimentary martial tactics to achieve his ends. Whether or not Amin had good intentions to maintain sanity in the administration of Muslim affairs, he cannot be exonerated by history from the responsibility of reducing Islam to a State organ to serve his political interests. Indeed some of the problems encountered by the Muslim leadership today are a legacy of his interference[43].

Government interference in Muslim affairs did not end with the exit of Abdul Razak Matovu's executive. In 1977, the second Chief Kadhi, Yusuf Sulaiman Matovu was also dismissed, not by the council, but by the President of Uganda. The methods by which he came to office were the very methods that were used to axe him - "unconstitutional hire and fire". Sulaiman Matovu's "crime", unlike his predecessors was neither incompetence, mal-administration nor allegation of corruption. Instead there was no sound reason given by the Government for his exit. But the truth of the matter is that his dismissal followed his vehement insistence that the Government had not given satisfactory explanation regarding the mysterious death of Anglican Arch- Bishop Janan Luwum, Col. Erunayo Oryema, and Oboth Ofumbi[44], who allegedly died in a motor accident. It is said that Sulaiman Matovu put Amin to task to explain more, lest the public would construe their deaths as having been government-inspired. Amin could not stand such a challenge from his subordinate, whether be it a religious leader. Sulaiman Matovu was therefore axed. After his dismissal, Matovu sought asylum in Mombasa following his narrow escape in a motor accident which according to him had been engineered by Amin[45].

---

[42] Kiyimba, "The Muslim Community in Uganda through One Hundred and Forty Years: The Trials and Tribulations of a Muslim Minority,"101.

[43] Ibid., 110.

[44] Kasozi, "The life of prince Badru Kakungulu Wasajja and his development of a forward looking Muslim community in Uganda, 1907-1991."

[45] Ibid., 93-96.

The exit of Yusuf Sulaiman Matovu created a leadership vacuum in the UMSC which persisted until after the fall of Amin in 1979. The affairs of the council were administered by Haji Mufanjara who was appointed by Amin as acting secretary general. Thus the UMSC eventually became a department in the President's Office. All matters of crucial importance and major decisions that would have required either the executive or the general assembly, were referred to the President. Even district Kadhis were appointed or fired at will in the name of the President. This was unconstitutional.

Amin's regime had thus started devouring the biggest beneficiaries of the 1971 junta (Muslims). Earlier on, Amin had warned Muslims that if they failed to live up to his perceptual required standards, he would ask non-Muslims to administer Muslim affairs[46]. This threat became a reality in 1978, when he appointed a commission of inquiry headed by Col. Emirio Mondo, to probe into the affairs of the Muslims, especially Brigadier Moses Ali's performance as Chairman of the mosque building committee. In the light of the recommendations of the Mondo Report, Brig Moses Ali was relieved of his duties as Minister for Finance, head of Mosque building committee, dismissed from the army, and stripped of all military ranks and honors. Kasozi and Collin Legum[47] attribute Moses Ali's dismissal to Amin's fears of Ali's increasing popularity, among the military. However, the possibility of the existence of irregularities in the performance of the mosque building committee cannot be ruled out. After the entire mosque at Old Kampala was only completed long after Amin had left power.

Again, following the Mondo report, all checks of the UMSC had to be counter signed by an official from the Ministry of Finance. Thus even the financial management of the UMSC was engulfed by the state. Amin - through the paramilitary "State Research" intelligence operatives and military officials - continued running and monitoring the affairs of the UMSC until his down fall in 1979. This had a significant negative impact on the UMSC in particular and Muslims in general during the first year of the post-Amin period. It increased the correlation between Amin, Islam and Muslims. And to non-Muslims, the three became seemingly synonymous. Thus the atrocities committed by Amin were later to be blamed on the entire Muslim community after the fall of Amin. However what is significant to mention about Amin's interference in the Muslim affairs, is that it defeated the reasons for which the UMSC was created. Despite having been given vast privileges and enormous donations, UMSC did not manage to cater for the development of Islam in Uganda, at least to a creditable degree.

---

[46] Ibid., 43.

[47] Collin Legum, "*Africa in the 1980's*" (McGraw-Hill Companies, 1980), 424-5.

In circumstances where there was no security of tenure or job, transparency and efficiency among the Muslim leaders - both at the center and in the country side ¬became elusive. But state interference per se was not the only factor that affected the smooth running of the affairs of the Muslim community. There were also other problems inherent within the council itself that inhibited the development of Islam. The major problem stemmed from the manner in which the council was created. We have already noted how former members of the NAAM tactfully hijacked the first executive of the UMSC. This bred an unhealthy environment which was crystallized by residual factional considerations among the Muslim leadership. Although they had been subdued by the state into unity, the spirit of latent antagonism of the pre-1971 factional days, was exhibited in the post-factional era of Amin.

From the grass roots some partisan diehards refused to recognize leaders who formerly belonged to factions opposed to theirs.[48] This mostly affected the former NAAM supporters, who had been appointed as Imams or district Kadhis. Although they had the backing of the UMSC headquarters, the Muslim folk in the countryside adopted a silent policy of non-cooperation. Some extremist factions-cum-sects such as the Africa Muslim Community, refused to hand over their assets to the UMSC for supervision and control.

The administrative models that the UMSC constitution adopted also constituted a major problem to the leaders. The methods and procedures which were to be followed in the running of Muslim affairs were kind of strange to many sheikhs who took office. Major administrative conflicts arose among the executive members of the council particularly on the definition of roles. The cause of such conflicts was a function of the loopholes within the UMSC constitution which had many vague contradicting clauses. For instance, it remained allegorical to the Muslim leadership on whether it was the chairman of the UMSC or the Chief Kadhi who should exercise supreme powers.

However brawls were most significant in matter pertaining to financial and accounting systems, and responsibility. Kasozi sums the confusion in the following words: ... lack of rules of procedure within the organization itself often caused heated arguments. Conflicts arose mainly on financial matters and how the system of authority to withdraw funds would work. Mainly sheikhs objected to signing vouchers to strict accounting systems and to taking responsibility for money that was given them (sic) for official use. Each of the top officials wanted control of the housing department where annual rent was about two million shillings.

---

[48] Mugambe, Sengendo & Co., *Advocates Memorandum and Articles of Association of the UMSC*, 1972, 3-4.

In such circumstances accountability became very difficult to effect. Worse still, colossal sums of money were lost owing to this unscrupulous way of doing things. This was a big indicator of the failure of UMSC to achieve the purposes for which it was created. Perhaps this might have been the reason that prompted the state to interfere in order to have a stricter grip on such affairs.

CONCLUSION

Whether Amin had ideological or philosophical intention in trying to make Uganda a Muslim state is an issue that was probably known to himself. But the analysis based on his behavioral and practical aspects in Islamic matters reveals that Islam was used as a political propaganda bait to tap the Arab support and the benefits that accrued from thereon.

It is indeed doubtful whether Amin was that zealous in Islamic theory and practice. He was an open wine drinker, had married outside the provisions of the Sharia, and rarely practiced Islamic obligatory rituals such as prayers. Like Muteesa I Amin was caught up in a situation of Islam and superstition. The view held by many a scholar is that his intention to Islamize Uganda was not in good taste. However, the fact remains that, whatever his intention, Amin endeavored to rejuvenate Muslim identity by lifting the social, economic and political status of Muslims from the marshes where the colonial and neo-colonial political situations had dumped them.

What however marred the continuation of this course, in post Amin days is that, Amin had not used a logical approach to the question of revamping Muslim identity. He had endeavored to do it at the expense of the majority non-Muslim population, a factor that explains the trials and tribulations that Muslims were subjected to after the departure of Amin from Uganda's political scene. Muslims thus became an "orphaned" group (1979-80) and more vulnerable to forces against their progress and unity.

The irrational approach to the task of elevating the status of Muslims is also exhibited in the way Amin conducted his affairs towards them. Throughout his rule, he had identified himself as the god-father and protector of Islam, his rudimentary knowledge and unbecoming practice of Islam notwithstanding. He prevailed upon himself to drive the Muslim community into mechanical unity - by coercion and unfair persuasion. Even worse, by 1975 he had hijacked the powers to administer the Muslim affairs and had made the UMSC his personal organization. This alienated him from a good number of Muslims. For, he used to appoint and sack at will any Muslim leader who had conducted himself contrary to Amin's expectations.

The effects of forced unity of Muslims under Amin coupled with lack of serious, rational and persuasive endeavor to sustain that unity, made the situation more pregnant for the explosion and rebirth of Muslim factions should Amin go. Therefore Amin's endeavor were destroyed by his own conduct. After Amin's fall in 1979, the Muslim community sank deep in factional turmoil to which it is hitherto embroiled. However, whatever the mishaps, it is on historical record that Amin's nine year rule changed the history of Islam in Uganda, for the better.

REFERENCES

Books
Anas, Kaliisa. "The Leadership Crisis among Muslims of Uganda". M.A. Thesis, Makerere University,1994.

Collin, Legum. *Africa in the 1980's*. McGraw-Hill Companies, 1980.

Amii, Omara Otunnu. *Politics And The Military In Uganda*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987.

Dan, Mudoola. *Religion, ethnicity and politics in Uganda*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1993.

Jorgensen, Jan, Jelmet. *Uganda, A modern History.* London: Croon Helm Ltd, 1981.

Kakungulu, Badru and Kasozi A.B.K. *Abaasimba Obusiraamu Mu Uganda.* Kampala: Equator Books, 1977.

Karugire, S. R., *The roots of instability in Uganda*. Kampala: The New Vision Publishers, 1988.

Karugire, Samwiri Rubaraza. *A Political History of Uganda.* Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980.

Kasozi, A.B.K. *The Spread of Islam In Uganda*. Nairobi. Oxford University Press,1986.

Kasozi, A.B.K. *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda:1964-1985*. Toronto: McGill-Queens University Press, 1994.

Lockard, Kathleen Goodman. *Religion and political development in Uganda, 1962-72*. University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1974

Mamdami, Mahmood, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda*. Michigan: Africa World Press, 1984.

Mamdani, Mahmood, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda.* New York*: Monthly Review Press, 1976.

Rowe, John A. "*Islam Under Idi Amin: A Case of Déjà Vu*?" in Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael Twaddle (eds.).*Uganda Now: Between Decay and Development*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1988.

The Glorious Quran.

Articles in Journals

Kiyimba, Abasi. "The Muslim Community in Uganda through One Hundred and Forty Years: The Trials and Tribulations of a Muslim Minority." *Journal of African religion and philosophy* 2, 1990.

Kokole, Omari Haruna. "*Black Africa and the nuclear factor, from the Arab-Israeli conflict to the struggles in southern Africa,*" microfilm. National Library of Canada, Ottawa, 1989.

Un-published Manuscript

Kasozi, A.B.K, "The life of prince Badru Kakungulu Wasajja and his development of a forward looking Muslim community in Uganda, 1907-1991," Unpublished paper.

Official Documents

Mugambe, Sengendo & Co., *Advocates Memorandum And Articles Of Association Of The UMSC*, 1972

*Alaa HAMOUDA**

ISLAMIC STATE OR SECULAR STATE?
EGYPT AS A CASE STUDY

Abstract: The Christian Egypt (Copts) appreciated the Muslim conquest for stopping the persecution by the Christian Byzantine emperor. Gradually and optionally, many Egyptians converted to Islam in a period of six centuries (from 639 AD to the 12th century). Muslims and Christians lived as neighbours for centuries, with no conflict. To establish the contemporary state, there had been a great debate about making the Egyptian state Islamic or secular. This debate converted to a conflict between the religious, social and political forces in Egypt. This caused a lot of problems and resulted in the loss of the gains of 2011 Egyptian revolution. In this paper, I show the impact of the perspectives of both sides on the democracy in Egypt and on the Egyptian revolution path. Then, I propose a framework to resolve this conflict.

Keywords: *Religious Pluralism, Islamic State, Secular State, Egyptian Revolution.*

<center>***</center>

INTRODUCTION

By the mid-third century, a sizable number of Egyptians were persecuted by the Romans on account of having adopted the new Christian faith, beginning with the Edict of Decius. Christianity was tolerated in the Roman Empire until AD 284, when the Emperor Diocletian started persecuting and putting to death a great number of Christian Egyptians. This event became a watershed in the history of Egyptian Christianity, marking the beginning of a distinct Egyptian or Coptic Church. When Egyptians were persecuted by Diocletian, many retreated to the desert to seek relief[1]. The Muslim conquest of Egypt took place in AD 639. Despite the political upheaval, Egypt remained a mainly Christian land (although the influx of Arab immigrants and gradual conversions to Islam over the centuries changed

---

Egypt from a mainly Christian to a mainly Muslim country by the end of the 12th century). Today, Christians (Copts) are about 7% of the Egyptian population. In Egypt, Muslims and Christians live as neighbors. They share a common history and national identity. They also share the same ethnicity, race, culture, and language[2]. However, they have different points of view regarding the establishment of the contemporary state. Section two will present the relation between the Islamic state and secularism, from the point of view of the Islamic scholars and of the moderate movements. Then, the ideas provided by the reformists about democracy and pluralism are discussed in section three. The other point of view, of the Egyptian Christians and secular Muslims is presented in section four. In section five, I demonstrate how the different perspectives had a great negative impact on the Egyptian revolution. In section six, I provide a framework for a solution with some high level recommendations to solve the problems of different ideologies.

1.   ISLAMIC STATE AND SECULARISM

The conventional wisdom that assumed the centrality of secularism in a modern state and viewed religion as only a private affair has been challenged in much of the Muslim world. A hallmark of all Islamic movements and scholars has been the belief that Islamic principles and values govern all aspects of life and that Sharia acts as a framework for all human activity, whether in public or private realms. This belief counters the idea that the legislation of a modern state should not be dependent on any religious tradition. Muslims also consider that Sharia is able to change and adapt to contemporary concerns and conditions[3].

Many Muslims, in particular Islamists, cast secularism as a completely foreign doctrine imposed on the Islamic world by colonial powers. They hold up the traditional Islamic society, particularly that from the first centuries of Islam, as an ideal model reflecting religious principles guiding the community in all areas of life, including politics[4]. For example, the prominent judge and Arab historian Tariq al-Bishri, rejects the idea that modernization and secularization must be linked. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, famous and respectful Islamic scholar, believes that

---

Persecution_of_Copts.

[2] Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "Egypt, International Religious Freedom Report 2008," September 19, 2008, accessed July 12, 2014, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2008/108481.htm.

[3] John L. Esposito, "Rethinking Islam and Secularism," *Association of Religion Data Archives, ARDA Guiding Papers Series*, accessed July 12, 2014, http://www.thearda.com/rrh/papers/guidingpapers/esposito.pdf.

[4] Cf. Tariq al-Bishri, *Al-Hiwar al-islami al-'ilmani* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1996), 12.

Secularism and Islam are incompatible in a country in which the majority of the population is Muslim[5].

Qaradawi rejects the assertion that humans simply interpret the law according to changing circumstances, using over-arching principles such as charity and consultation. While he agrees that there is no "divine rule" in the sense that the ruler is a human being, he sees the rulings as divine because they are based on divine sources. Humans, he argues, have managed to form rulings, in spite of the law school differences, based on divine directives that are not as ambiguous as they may seem. For example, the Qur'anic obligation to cut off the hand of a thief has been specified and qualified by the Sunna of the Prophet, but the basic directive has remained the same and, therefore, is not subject to human interpretation. Qaradawi, like many Islamists and secularists, views Christianity and Islam as fundamentally different in the ability to accept the separation of religion from politics. He cites the popular argument based upon Jesus' command in the Gospels to give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's as proof that Christianity accepts the separation of life into two parts: a part for religion and one for the state. Islam, on the other hand, represents an inseparable unity in a life ruled by God alone, God who is Lord over both the heavens and the earth (xviii). Secularism, Qaradawi says, seeks to subordinate Islam and reduce its natural supremacy to one corner of life — an agenda that Islam must refuse[6]. Below are some examples given by them for Islamic principles and rules inspired by the Sharia in different aspects of life.

1.1 Economic system

Economy of poverty prevailed in Islam until the 13th and the 14th centuries. Under this system, God's guidance made sure the flow of money and goods was purified when being channeled from those who had much of it to those who had little by encouraging *zakat* (charity) and discouraging *riba* (usury/interest) on loans. The prophet also helped poor traders by allowing only tents, not permanent buildings in the market of Medina, and not charging fees and rents there[7]. No interest rate was allowed and investors were not permitted to escape the consequences of any failed venture—all financing was equity financing (partnership). In not letting borrowers bear all the risk/cost of a failure, an extreme disparity of outcomes between "partners" is thus avoided. Ultimately, this serves the purpose of social harmony. Muslims also could not and cannot (in Sharia)

---

[5] Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Al-Islam wa-al-almaniya wajhan li-wajh* (Cairo: Dar al-Sahwa al-Nashr, 1987, 126.
[6] Esposito, "Rethinking Islam and Secularism."

finance any dealings with forbidden goods or activities, such as wine, pork, gambling etc. Thus, ethical investing is the only acceptable investing, and moral purchasing is encouraged[8].

1.2 Social system

In the social system, there are a lot of Islamic teachings. Some few examples are presented below[9]:

Of major importance among these is the equality of mankind. Allah created a human couple to herald the beginning of the life of mankind on earth, and everybody living in the world today originates from this couple. So, Islam disapproves the prejudices which have arisen among mankind because of the differences in race, color, language and nationality.

1.3 Institution of the Family

According to Islam, the correct relationship between man and woman is marriage, a relationship in which social responsibilities are fully accepted and which results in the emergence of a family. Sexual permissiveness and other similar types of irresponsible behavior are not dismissed by Islam as mere innocent pastimes or ordinary transgressions. Rather, they are acts which strike to the very roots of society. Hence, Islam holds all extra-marital sex as sinful and forbidden *(haram)* and makes them a criminal offence. Severe punishments are prescribed to deter would-be offenders.

1.4 Relatives and Neighbors

After the limited circle of the family, the next social sphere is that of kinship and blood relationship. Islam wants all those who are related through common parents, common brothers and sisters or marriage to be affectionate, cooperative and helpful to each other. In many places in the Qur'an, good treatment of the near relatives (Dhawi-al-qurba) is enjoined. In the Hadith of the Prophet, the proper treatment of one's blood relatives was strongly emphasized and counted among the highest virtues. A person who cold-shoulders his relatives or treats them indifferently is looked on by Islam with great disfavor.

---

[7] Michael Bonner, "Poverty and Economics in the Qur'an", in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XXXV, no.3 (winter, 2005): 391–406.

[8] „Islamic economics in the world," accessed July 12, 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Islamic_economics_in_the_world#cite_note-Michael_Bonner_2005-3.

[9] Abul Ala Maududi, *"Social System of Islam, Jamaat-e-islami,"* interview given by the author on Radio Pakistan, Lahore, on 10th February, 1948.

1.5 Sports system

In general, Islam promotes good health and fitness and encourages both men and women to engage in physical activity to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The Islamic Sharia permits all things that are beneficial to the body and do not harm it and it forbids all things that may cause damage or harm to the body[10]. The Prophet said: "Your body has rights over you"[11]. For that, some sports like boxing, in which the player gains by harming the opponent and throws him to the ground, preferably with a "decisive blow", can be forbidden in Islam.

2. PLURALISM AND DEMOCRACY IN THE LITERATURE OF THE REFORMERS

The issue of Islam and secularism represents one of the most contested debates in contemporary scholarship and policy circles. An increasing number of Muslim scholars in the recent years have utilized rigorous historical and textual analysis to reexamine the role of Islam in the secular state and related issues like Islamic conceptions of democracy, pluralism and religious freedom. Although emphasizing the value/merit of classical Islam and its legacy, reformist scholars like Yusuf Qaradawi do not regard it as an absolute reference point or religious authority, but only as a tool for solving modern problems. While they acknowledge the authority of the classical tradition, they have methodologies to legitimate substantial reforms. Modern reformers more freely bypass the classical tradition and go back to the Qur'an as the primary basis for fresh understandings and interpretations[12].

The reformists desire a system of government in which religious principles and democratic values coexist. They do not view religious authority and political authority as mutually exclusive and find a role for religious principles in the formulation of state legislation. They advocate a secular democracy incorporating a strong policy of religious pluralism. They denounce those that oppose multicultural, multi-religious, and multinational life, noting that the Qur'an states many times: "If God wanted, he could create you to be one nation, but he wanted you to be different nations …."[13]. As well, they believe that democracy has

---

[10] Iman and Amal, "Muslim Women in Sport," *Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation and Sporting Equals*, Jan. 2010, accessed July 12, 2014, http://www.sportscoachuk.org/sites/default/files/Muslim%20women%20in%20sport%20%20WSFF%20&%20sporting%20equals.pdf.

[11] Mohamed al-Bukhaari*, Sahih al-Bukhari* (Kitaab al-Sawm, 1839), accessed July 13, 2014, http://sunnah.com/bukhari.

[12] Esposito, "Rethinking Islam and Secularism."

[13] The Noble Quran, verse 5:48.

Qur'anic precedents, implied in the Qur'anic and traditional Islamic notions of deliberation and consultation. However, they believed that no single model of government exists or is required; instead, different countries need to formulate models appropriate to their environment. They insisted that religious pluralism and tolerance were not simply a theological issue but a divine mandate, rooted in Qur'anic passages[14].

They take on some of the most controversial issues in contemporary Islamic thought: the legal rights of the non-Muslims in a mainly Muslim state, the rules regarding apostasy and retribution, and the practice of jihad and its relation to rebellion and martyrdom. Despite the fact that numerous examples of tolerance and legal flexibility exist in the Islamic community, nevertheless, some Muslim jurists formulated legal codes relating to the status of non-Muslims, that allow for discriminatory practices. These ideas are not in accordance with the modern conceptions of pluralism and inclusiveness and therefore must be rejected: "Most of the past juridical decisions treating non-Muslim minorities have become irrelevant in the context of contemporary religious pluralism, a cornerstone of inter-human relations". On the other hand, they do not believe that, in order to be truly just, the state must implement a full separation of religious and political authority. Nor do they accept the type of religious state proposed by the "fundamentalists", in which Islam has an exclusive claim over authority in the community. Rather, they argue that the Prophet laid the grounds for a "universal community" that was subsequently corrupted by the political imperative to subdue people of other faiths and by a reading of the traditional sources that lost sight of their original pluralistic intent. By reclaiming the belief that all human beings are "equals in creation", the Muslim community can serve as a model of a religious faith that also calls for justness in society through the creation of pluralistic, democratic institutions[15].

They believe that democracy is as much a requirement of Islamic teachings as prayer, *zakat*, abstinence from alcohol, usury, fornication, etc. The Qur'an includes a complete chapter with the name of consultation (Shura). By Shura, Islam encourages Muslims to decide their affairs in consultation with those who will be affected by that decision. This is actually some kind of democracy, as reformers explain. By these ideas, the reformist scholars provide their vision about the Islamic state that adopts democracy as the desire of the majority and at the same time, save the rights of minority as instructed by Islam.

---

[14] The Noble Quran, verses 2:62; 5:69.
[15] Esposito, "Rethinking Islam and Secularism."

3. COPTS AND OTHER MINORITIES

From the Coptic point of view, religious freedom in Egypt is hampered to varying degrees by discriminatory and restrictive government policies. Coptic Christians, being the largest religious minority in Egypt, are also negatively affected. Copts have faced increasing marginalization after the 1952 coup led by Gamal Abdel Nasser. Until recently, Christians were required to obtain presidential approval even for minor repairs in churches. Although the law was eased in 2005 by handing down the authority of approval to the governors, Copts continue to face many obstacles and restrictions in building new churches. These restrictions do not apply for building mosques[16].

While freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Egyptian constitution, according to Human Rights Watch, Egyptians are able to convert to Islam generally without difficulty, but Muslims who convert to Christianity face difficulties in getting new identity papers and some have been arrested for allegedly forging such documents. The Coptic community, however, takes pains to prevent conversions from Christianity to Islam due to the ease with which Christians can become Muslim. Public officials, being conservative themselves, intensify the complexity of the legal procedures required to recognize the religion change as required by law. Security agencies will sometimes claim that such conversions from Islam to Christianity (or occasionally vice versa) may stir social unrest, and thereby justify themselves in wrongfully detaining the subjects, insisting that they are simply taking steps to prevent social troubles from happening[17].

Although these issues occur in the secular regime of the military, Copts believe that these issues will be more significant under the Islamic regime. That is why they support a secular regime. However, there are also some Muslim secular elite groups who have often seen secularism as the best means to promote tolerance, pluralism and fairness in a society in which the government is not dominated by any religious ideology. They advocate a synthesis, an identity based on common values as the basis for citizenship. They think that the ethics of citizenship requires decisions to be made in the name of the shared principles such as the rule of law, equal citizenship irrespective of religion, universal suffrage, and the accountability of the leaders not solely based on religious identity.

---

[16] „Copts," accessed July 14, 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copts#cite_note-58.
[17] Ibid.

4. IMPACT OF THE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION

The regime of the former president Hosni Mubarak relied on dividing Egyptians. Authorities carefully presided over a volatile status-quo between Muslims and Copts, all the while pretending that religious strife didn't exist. Police officials often blamed the individual grudges or the foreign terrorists for most of the disputes. Mubarak skillfully manipulated the threat of the extremists from outside to convince the West, which for long criticized Egypt's human-rights record, that he was an ally in battling terrorism[18].

Nonetheless, the Copts felt secure under Mubarak, who tightened his grip over Islamists - the relatively moderate Muslim Brotherhood as well as the more extreme Salafis and jihadists. The Copts worried that the 18-day revolution that overthrew Mubarak in February would unbottle the ultraconservative Islamist voices and lead to greater problems[19]. So, the pope Shenouda III supported Mubarak's regime although a lot of Christian youth participated in the Egyptian revolution with an excellent spirit of unity in the 18 days at Tahrir square.

After the success of the Islamists in the elections, Islamic fundamentalism made serious inroads into the shaping and the rewriting of the new Egyptian constitution. This change was done under the pressure of the Salaf groups, despite the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic progressive parties were not welcoming that. As a result, the situation for the Copts in Egypt worsened, leaving them more vulnerable and more in danger than ever. For that, the Copts had a great role in the 30th June demonstration. Most Coptic Christians consider that anything is better than the Muslim Brotherhood. Thus, the support for the military coup / revolution, as some call, among the Copts was so clear and significant. The Pope of the Church was involved in the removal of the first elected Islamist president. The Pope of the Church alleged that the Islamic Sharia is backward, rigid and reactionary[20].

As the Church is finding out, the Copts, too, are not safe from the new government's oppressive measures. Fahim reported that a 23-year-old Coptic teacher was sentenced to prison for six months for insulting Islam. On June 23rd, a Christian convert reporter was sentenced to five years in prison for allegedly

---

[18] Amro Hassan, "Egypt: Religious conflict becomes the revolution's biggest enemy," May 9, 2011, accessed July 13, 2015, http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond /2011/05/egypt-sectarian-conflict-becomes-the-revolutions-biggest-enemy.html.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ashraf Ramelah, "The Egyptian Revolution and the Role of the Copts," *American Thinker* April 10 (2011), accessed July 12, 2014,http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/ 04/the_egyptian_revolution_and_th.html.

reporting false information about discrimination against the Copts. The following day, a 29-year-old Copt from Upper Egypt was given a five-year prison sentence for liking a Facebook page put up by a group of Christian converts. The Coptic push for a secular Egypt stemmed largely from the fear of Islamists. Mohammed Morsi's administration may have not taken direct action toward minority groups, but for many Copts their policies and statements suggested that it was only a matter of time before some wide-scale, concrete laws would be issued. From the point of view of the Copts, their marginalization from political life was expected to increase, sectarian clashes were already on the rise and hate speech grew rife at the time. Finally, a year after June 30th, Egypt faces a great challenge in the path of freedom and democracy. According to the Egyptian Center for Social and Economic Rights (ECSER), more than 40,000 arrests have been made since Morsi's overthrow, journalists have been prosecuted, artists have been censored, and opposition voices have been violently silenced. The country has descended into further chaos and fear has become the prevailing sentiment of the day[21].

5.   PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR A SOLUTION

We can shape the situation as below:
- Mubarak's regime managed some conflicts that were useful to the survival of his regime.
- Islamic extremists really exist, along with their ideas.
- Some Christian authors wrote that with the devastating curb of freedom of expression and the widespread crackdown on journalists and activists, the Coptic Orthodox Church's support for the government's post-June 30th Revolution policies needs to be reviewed.
- As the recent arrests and sentences of the Copts show, the Coptic Orthodox Church may realize that the civil liberties it chose to discard, the bloodshed it opted to ignore and the despotic establishment it continues to back will be the basis for the further suffering of its own people.

It is clear that there are differences in perspectives and position between the Islamists and their supporters on a side and the Copts and the secular people, on the other side. This challenges the intellectuals to find a solution. Certainly, the problem is too complex to find a simple solution. However, in the coming points, a framework for a solution is proposed, as a starting point. It includes:
- Democracy is the solution.
- Democracy does not imply Western secularism.

---

[21] Joseph Fahim, "Egypt's Copts, Egypt Pulse," accessed July 4, 2014, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/07/egypt-coptic-christians-sisi-secular-islamist.html.

- There is a great need for reformers to re-understand the teachings of Islam. Some efforts exist but a lot is still needed.
- There must be a constitutional democracy, that protects the rights of minority and their life style.
- The state should not enforce any religion.
- Along with the reforming ideas, there should be the application of the Islamic law (Sharia) in such a way that it would not conflict with the rights of the minorities.
- There must be a dialogue between the moderate Islamists and the moderate Christians, to find a framework for laws that apply Sharia but also save the Christian rights (e.g. applying the Islamic law on Muslims only in some cases, having the rights to get any governmental position, with no exception).
- All should know that: with democracy, there will be space for dialogue, studying, discussion. But, with the marginalization of Islamists or Christians, all will lose. Generally speaking, under the democracy umbrella, the extremists tend to be moderate.

CONCLUSION

Muslim reformers in the twenty-first century, whether secular or Islamic oriented, contend with two realities for reform:

(1) the broad Muslim public opinion that favors both greater democratization and Sharia as a source of law and

(2) the need to address the continued centrality and authority of the classical tradition of Islamic law.

Actually, it is not logical to ignore the desire of the majority for applying the Islamic Sharia. It is also illogical not to save the rights of the minority. It is the role of the reformers who admire and desire many of the principles and institutions associated with secular democracies to find a new version of democracy, that is not a Western secular or an Islamic theocratic state. The solution of the sectarian conflict in Egypt is a state that reflects the importance and force of the Islamic principles and values and, at the same time, saves the rights of the minorities. This can be done through democracy. With democracy, extremists tend to be moderate and the moderate movements can reach –through dialogue and discussion- a consent that satisfies the desires of both the majority and the minorities.

REFERENCES

***, *Islamic economics in the world*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic
_economics_in_the_world#cite_note-Michael_Bonner_2005-3.

***, "Persecution of Copts," accessed July 12, 2014,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Copts.

al-Bishri, Tariq. *Al-Hiwar al-islami al-'ilmani*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1996.

al-Bukhaari, Mohamed. *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Kitaab al-Sawm, 1839.
Accessed July 15, 2014. http://sunnah.com/bukhari.

al-Qaradawi, Yusuf. *Al-Islam wa-al-almaniya wajhan li-wajh*. Cairo: Dar
al-Sahwa lilNashr, 1987.

Bonner, Michael. "Poverty and Economics in the Qur'an." *Journal of
Interdisciplinary History* XXXV:3 (Winter, 2005): 391–406.

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. "Egypt, International
Religious Freedom Report 2008." September 19, 2008. Accessed July 12, 2014.
http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2008/108481.htm.

Esposito, John L. "Rethinking Islam and Secularism." *Association of
Religion Data Archives, ARDA Guiding Papers Series*. Accessed July 12, 2014.
http://www.thearda.com/rrh/papers/guidingpapers/esposito.pdf.

Fahim, Joseph. "Egypt's Copts." *Egypt Pulse*. Accessed July 4, 2014.
http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/07/egypt-coptic-christians-sisi-
secular-islamist.html.

Hassan, Amro. "Egypt: Religious conflict becomes the revolution's biggest
enemy." May 9, 2011. Accessed July 14, 2014. http://latimesblogs.latimes.com
/babylonbeyond/2011/05/egypt-sectarian-conflict-becomes-the revolutions-biggest-
enemy.html.

Iman and Amal. "Muslim Women in Sport." *Women's Sport and Fitness
Foundation and Sporting Equals*, Jan. 2010. Accessed July 12, 2014.
http://www.sportscoachuk.org/sites/default/files/Muslim%20women%20in%20sp
ort%20%20WSFF%20&%20sporting%20equals.pdf.

Maududi, Abul Ala. "*Social System of Islam.*" In "Jamaat-e-islami."
interview given by the author on Radio Pakistan, Lahore, on February, 10, 1948.
http://www.islam101.com/sociology/socialOrder.htm.

Ramelah, Ashraf. "The Egyptian Revolution and the Role of the Copts."
American Thinker April 10 (2011). Accessed July 12, 2014.
http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/04/the_egyptian_revolution_and_th.html.

*Ksenia KOLKUNOVA**

REINVENTING RELIGION IN RUSSIA

Abstract: The collapse of the Soviet Union opened path to post-Soviet countries for all sorts of religious organizations, missionaries, as well as for religious activities, that existed underground during Soviet period or emerged after 1991. That time, widely addressed as Religious Renaissance in Russia, added new trends to religious landscape of the country, already immensely diverse. People had to find their own religious views, for majority lost because of the state policy. In many cases it was the reinventing of religion.

Religious diversity of Russia is strongly connected to the ethnic adherence of the population. The common position is "Russian means Orthodox", "Tatar means Muslim", "Kalmyk means Buddhist" and so on. But the attendance of religious events is not that popular as labeling oneself as religious.

Most of religious practices this day can be studied with three major conceptual frameworks. One describe existing rituals and places of worship (bricolage), second tells us more about attitude to religious organizations (vicarious religion) and third places the question under study in the context of state policies (ties between church and state).

Can we say that in Russia there is pluralism? Solving problems with religious diversity and creating this pluralistic ideology is possible only by means of "melting" some differences for the same of civil society or the idea of citizenship. But it seems that Russia's chosen another way of solving the growing problems of diversity.

Keywords: *worship, pluralism, Orthodox, secular, ideology, Russian rituals.*

***

*Department of Religious Studies, St. Tikhon's Orthodox University, Moscow, Russia (ksenia.kolkunova@gmail.com).

1. RELIGIOUS RENAISSANCE IN RUSSIA

After 1991 Russian population faced relatively fresh and shocking news. For seventy years of Soviet history, religion and religious organizations were banned and regarded either as absent or irrelevant to the modern life; scholars argued that the religious worldview was naturally disappearing, or, in some cases, existed as an atavism, a form of narrow-mind, typical for no educated and rather "ancient" people.

The collapse of the Soviet Union opened the path to the post-Soviet countries for all sorts of religious organizations, missionaries, as well as for the religious activities that existed underground during the Soviet period or emerged after 1991. 1990s were a time when, on the national television, you could watch American televangelists in the morning, Sun Myung Moon's sermons in the daytime, and, in the evening, new members of the parliament discussing current issues with Aum Shinrikyo leaders. That time, widely addressed as the "Religious Renaissance" in Russia, added new trends to the religious landscape of the country, already immensely diverse.

The popularity of the religious TV programs, books and lectures showed a particular interest and lack of knowledge among the Russians, as they had very little or no experience of religion, because of their Marxist ideology, atheistic by its nature. Most of the religious traditions had to find their way back to Russia after 70 years of struggle with the state. Moreover, people had to find their own religious views, lost by the majority because of the state policy. In many cases, it was the reinventing of religion.

Religious diversity of Russia is strongly connected to the ethnic adherence of the population. Most groups in Russia maintain the traditional religion of their ancestors, intertwined with their culture, traditions, language etc.

During the latest census in Russia, held in 2010, people claimed to be of more than 160 ethnic groups. This question was optional and almost 4% did not declare any ethnic origin. 80.90% of the population claims to be Russians; there are 3.87% of Tatars; 4 peoples, Ukrainians, Bashkirs, Chuvashs and Chechens made more than 1% each, and other ethnic groups were even smaller. Tatars, Bashkirs and Chechens traditionally are Muslims, Ukrainians belong to several Orthodox churches, and Chuvashs are partly Russian Orthodox, but recently they tend to leave Christianity for Neopaganism, the traditional religion of their ancestors. The "Neopagan turn" is pretty close to the trend of "reinventing religion", with the number of Neopagans growing slowly but steadily. Despite this and other patterns of change, the common position is "Russian means Orthodox", "Tatar means Muslim", "Kalmyk means Buddhist" and so on. Such ties create space for "low-

commitment religious organization", to use Nancy Ammerman's phrase[1]. The attendance of religious ceremonies is not as popular as labeling oneself as religious. The number of people who go to churches/mosques/synagogues once a month or more often can vary from 3% to 8%[2] (data from 2012). One third of the population would visit places of worship occasionally, that is, on holidays or for a ritual – baptism or funeral. During the 1990s we saw a certain growth in church attendance, plus 3-4% from 1990 to 1998[3]. But, despite this low rate of attendance, these people still have the sense of belonging to the community.

2.   GAP IN TRADITION – NO ONE KNOWS WHAT RELIGION IS

Mostly we will address to the Orthodox, but the same is typical for Muslim and partly Buddhist communities. When it comes to religious minorities, their major goal is not to lose their identity and, in case of NRMs, either to keep stable good relations with the state or to prevent any contact with it. Usually, newly converted religious practitioners keep rather a high level of attendance and religious literacy, i.e. a pretty high level of commitment.

But, when it comes to "religious free riders", as someone put it, religious organizations and leaders have to cope with their attitude. Nevertheless, it puts a certain responsibility on the religious leaders and organizations: "The church is motivated to provide a subsidy in order to increase participation"[4], and this brings us to the tendencies that we will describe. They are very much about including people in religious life by all means and about leveling their commitment by building a new identity.

The situation that we called "reinventing religion" can be described in many terms, from "return to God" to "de-secularization"[5] However, I suppose that most of the religious practices of today can be studied with three major conceptual frameworks. One describes the existing rituals and places of worship, the second tells us more about the attitude towards religious organizations and the third places the question under study in the context of state policies.

---

[1] Nancy T. Ammerman, "Organized Religion in a Voluntaristic Society," *Sociology of Religion* 58 (1997): 206.
[2] "Посещение служб, соблюдение поста, ношение креста и молитва," accessed November 17, 2015, http://sreda.org/ru/opros/43-kto-iz-rossiyan-postitsya-nosit-krestik-molitsya.
[3] Detlef Pollack and Daniel V. Olson, *The role of religion in modern societies* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 67.
[4] Joseph P. Daniels and Marc von der Ruhr, "Subsidizing Religious Participation through Groups: A Model of the "Megachurch" Strategy for Growth," *Review of Religious Research* 53 (2012): 473.
[5] Detlef and Olson, *Role*,1.

3. BRICOLAGE

When one's goal is to invent something, or to reinvent it, the easiest, though not the very rational way, is to take all sorts of things rather hectically, hoping that this collection will work or at least will be useful. Such picking and choosing sometimes forms a religious worldview, and, among all the terms used to describe it, our choice is "bricolage", first used by Claude Levy-Strauss. There might be all sorts of definitions of the religious bricolage, such as the following: "This term has been used as a metaphor to designate the combining of a variety of religious practices and representations found in certain oral societies and, in a different form, in the most modern societies"[6]. Keeping in mind that, along with other terms we use, "bricolage" does not announce any specific ontological reality but is just a tool for describing it, a mere metaphor, lets pay attention to its creative nature – each person forms his or her version of views, tradition, rituals, based on his/her personal experience and background.

This trend is widespread and it can be compared with certain features of religious life all around the world, for example, with the growth of the Pentecostal churches in Latin America or the Evangelical megachurches in the US. These movements offer "something to everyone"[7], and, using the market metaphor, we can compare them to the shopping malls. Religion is much less regarded as an obligation, but becomes more of consumption[8].

The best illustration of this attitude can be discovered among the pilgrims to the sacred places or sanctities. As an example, The Cincture of the Theotokos, worshiped by all Eastern churches, was brought to Russia in 2011 from Mount Athos. The Cincture (pieces of it are kept in several churches in Russia, with two pieces in Moscow) was displayed in 14 cities and 1 monastery; it stayed in the country for 39 days. More than 3.1 millions of people reverenced it, with 1 million in Moscow, where the Cincture was on 19-28 November 2011. In the capital, several streets in the city center were closed for cars and pedestrians, subway passengers were unable to use several stations for exit, because the line lasting up to 8 km and consisting of 80 thousand people was freezing the public transportation, as well as creating traffic jams. This line was the center of media attention, as well as a product of media creation. Due to media coverage, the Cincture from Athos was regarded as much more interesting than the pieces of the same garment already kept in the Russian Orthodox churches. People came from

---

[6] Wade Clark Roof, *Contemporary American religion*, Vol.1 (New-York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2000), 81.

[7] C. K. Robertson, *Religion as entertainment* (New-York: P. Lang, 2002): 29.

[8] Grace Davie, "Thinking Sociologically About Religion: Implications for Faith Communities," *Review of Religious Research* 54 (2012): 287.

all regions to touch the sacred object, as it was claimed it could heal illnesses, especially women infertility.

The CEO of the Russian Railways (RZD), Vladimir Yakunin, head of Andrew the Apostle Foundation, an organizer of the event of bringing the sacred object to Russia, announced on a press-conference that the Cincture of the Theotokos would change the demographic situation in Russia and increase the birth rate (one of the priorities stated by President Putin)[9]. This shows a pretty magical or consumerist approach to the matter – trying to solve secular personal or social problems with the help of a Higher Being. But the people in the line, as many as the participants in other mass pilgrimages - to the Matrona of Moscow or to Seraphim Sarovsky in Diveevo, were not only Orthodox Christians. Among them, we could meet agnostics, spiritual but not religious, Christians of other denominations, even adherents of other traditions. No sociological survey on a big sample took place in the Cincture lines, but the existing data show that people standing there were willing to be more churched than they actually were and that only 8% visited church every week and on holidays[10]. But these people, with any views, were using the word "podvig" (endeavor) to describe their experience in the line. These 20-24 hours in the line meant the fulfillment of their religious aim, a shortcut to their wishes becoming true and them turning more Christian.

But, while being or trying to be Christian, the Russian population tends to be rather inclusive in respect of other worldviews, even if they are not really working well alongside Christianity. For example, 16% of people claiming to be Orthodox Christians, believe in and practice fortune telling and rely on different superstitions[11].

4. VICARIOUS RELIGION

Grace Davie writes that "vicarious religion" is religion "performed by an active minority but on behalf of a much larger number, who (implicitly at least) not

---

[9] "Ситуация с наплывом паломников к Поясу Богородицы в главный храм Москвы под контролем мэрии," accessed November 17, 2015, http://simvol-veri.ru/xp/situaciya-s-naplivom-palomnikov-k-poyasu-bogorodici-v-glavniie-xram-moskvi-pod-kontrolem-merii.html.

[10] "Очередь к Поясу. Подвиг?," accessed November 17, 2015, http://sreda.org/ru/2011/ochered-k-poyasu-podvig/1052.

[11] "Вера в астрологию, приметы и гадания," accessed November 17, 2015, http://sreda.org/ru/opros/42-veryat-li-rossiyane-v-astrologiyu-primetyi-i-gadaniya-portret-suevernyih-rossiyan.

only understand, but, quite clearly, approve of what the minority is doing"[12]. This means that we divide population in religious experts and religious consumers who are very different in their lifestyle and rarely meet. Their relations are restricted by several "rules":

   ✓ Churches and church leaders perform rituals on behalf of others;
   ✓ Church leaders and churchgoers believe on behalf of others;
   ✓ Church leaders and churchgoers embody moral codes on behalf of others;
   ✓ Churches can offer space for the vicarious debate of the unresolved issues in the modern societies;[13]

Finally, yet important, especially for the Russian case, "religious professionals, both local and national, are expected to uphold certain standards of behavior, not least, traditional representations of family life"[14].

Definitely, vicarious religion is very much based on the classic idea of Thomas Luckmann, who claimed that the privatization of religion gives birth to new forms of religiosity, usually called after English title of his book The invisible religion[15]. This invisible nature of the vicarious religion makes studying it really challenging; that is why Grace Davie suggests to pay attention to the periods of crisis, personal or social, to find traces of this phenomenon. Although originally this framework was created to describe different European contexts, certain features of vicarious religion could be found in the US as well[16].

This model works well especially (and maybe exclusively) with the cultures with dominating Christian churches[17], which makes vicarious religion a useful tool in studying the religious situation in contemporary Russia. The very idea of low-commitment religions, as the dominant form of affiliation in Russia, is particularly close to the notion of vicarious religion. Let me provide illustrations for the different elements of the cited definition.

Church leaders and church goers perform rituals and believe on behalf of the others; that gives them the responsibility as well as the privilege to be the representatives of the entire nation. Further, we will see how the Russian Orthodox Church became responsible for guarding the traditions in Russia as well as in the

---

[12] Grace Davie, "Vicarious Religion: A Methodological Challenge", in *Everyday religion: observing modern religious lives*, ed. Nancy Tatom Ammerman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 22.

[13] Davie, "Vicarious Religion," 23.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] Thomas Luckmann, *The invisible religion: the problem of religion in modern society*, (New-York: Macmillan, 1967).

[16] Davie, "Vicarious Religion," 32.

[17] Steve Bruce and Voas David, "Vicarious Religion: An Examination and Critique", *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 25 (2010): 257.

whole Russian-speaking part of the world. The inactive majority would take part only in case of personal need – like baptism or marriage, though the last one is not really popular, or in cases of major holidays – for Russian Orthodox Church, the Easter and the Christmas (of course, the same tendency can be seen in Europe[18]).

This majority doesn't pay a lot of attention to the church leaders but very painfully react on their supposed misrepresentation of the moral code. For example, one of the most heated discussion took place in 2012, when, via media, it was discovered that Patriarch Kirill had a very expensive watch and an apartment in one of the most expensive buildings in the center of Moscow. People blamed the Patriarch for not meeting the expectations people would have from a church leader – modesty, avoiding temptations etc.

The role of the vicarious religious leaders in the public debates, very important for a British context, is not so important in Russia. As long as the Russian Orthodox Church unites the majority of population, it regards other religious traditions either like "younger brothers", when it comes to the other religions of the peoples of Russia, or as dangerous strangers, when new religious movements, especially of foreign origin, start their mission in the country. So, when crucial questions require the attention of the religious leaders, in most cases, the only expert whose opinion is taken in consideration is the Orthodox Church.

5.   STATE CHURCH

Like many European countries, Russia has a long history of a state church. The Russian Orthodox Church played this role during the imperial period, and, after 1991, it has reached out to regain the power. Other religious organizations (except the Muslims) usually don't have the abilities to form strong mighty denominations and tend to be marginalized. As Grace Davie puts it, "The notion of "denominations and congregations" is characteristically American; it does not reflect the religious situation in Europe where the legacies of state churches and their successors still resonate, though more so in some places than others, and where there is significant representation of faiths other than Christian, not to mention more innovative forms of spirituality"[19].

When it comes to the question of law, Russia inherited the Soviet tradition of a very strict secularism – in the Russian Constitution (1993), Article 14 states the secular character and that no religion can become obligatory; religious organizations are separated from state and school and are all equal. On the federal level, all the issues concerning the religious groups are regulated by the law 125, "About the freedom of consciousness and religious communities". This law starts

---

[18] See Bruce and Voas, "Vicarious Religion," 251-52.

with a preamble that focuses on the special role of Orthodoxy in Russian history, spirituality and culture. In the previous version of this law, there was the idea of "traditional religions", i.e. Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Judaism, as the most important for the Russian history and culture and, despite the fact that the preamble doesn't really have any juridical power, this idea became very popular and widely used by prosecutors and judges. This is one of the reasons we cannot see Russia as a fully secular state: "In the Orthodox religious tradition, which is as a rule strongly connected to national identity, the question of the separation of church and state was not raised with such intensity"[20].

The case of other European countries may be a matter of disagreement among scholars[21], but in Russia religion is still an important part of building the national identity. The leaders of the state – President, Prime Minister, and Mayor of the capital – do not miss any important church service, support different church foundations etc. No religious service, but those of the Orthodox Church, are broadcasted live on the national TV. The idea of "russkiy mir" (Russian world), that has certain roots in the Russian history as a very conservative view of a people united by language and culture was brought back to life by Patriarch Kirill in 2009[22], and, in 2014, president Putin used this idea in his speech to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in connection with the request for the admission of Crimea in the Russian Federation. This mutual influence is an important feature of both church and state rhetoric in Russia today.

But the importance that the current government sees in Orthodoxy is rooted not only in the imperial period but also in the cultural role that the Russian Orthodox Church played during the period of perestroika. It is not uniquely a Russian experience: "In many parts of Europe, a tiny and undoubtedly infiltrated worshiping community had maintained a protected if somewhat marginalized public space (including physical space), which became available to the population as a whole at the moment of need, and in which protest could become explicit rather than implicit"[23]. So, the Russian church is regarded simultaneously as a keeper of the tradition and as a guard of the Russian culture and language, as well as a martyr of the Soviet atheistic society.

---

[19] Davie, "Thinking Sociologically," 273-274.
[20] Gert Pickel and Kornelia Sammet, *Transformations of religiosity religion and religiosity in Eastern Europe 1989-2010* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2012): 95.
[21] Bruce and Voas, "Vicarious Religion," 256-57.
[22] "Выступление Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла на торжественном открытии III Ассамблеи Русского мира," accessed November 17, 2015 http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/928446.html.
[23] Davie, "Vicarious Religion", 26.

Coming back to the question of the public debates and of the place of the religious leaders in them, I suppose that it is exactly this mutual reliance with the state that makes public debates impossible. If the state is somehow officially supporting the Orthodox dominance in Russian culture, we will have such stories as the widely discussed imprisonment of three members of an art project or of a punk protest band, "Pussy Riot", in 2012. In Russia, their performance on 21st of February 2012, in Moscow Cathedral of Christ the Savior, marked the crisis uniting the nation with shared feelings of shame and pity, as well as with disgust, and sometimes calling out for cruel punishment.

Finally, "Pussy Riot"'s performance "Holy Mary, drive Putin away", focusing exactly on the point of church-state mutual penetration, led to the passing of a new federal law protecting religious feelings (blasphemy became a crime). Now, this law is one more resource for suppressing the religious minorities and postulates the special role of the Russian Orthodox Church. Of course, the future of the atheists is rather gloomy as long as they don't have religious feelings to protect.

6. WHAT IS PLURALISM?

Nevertheless, this situation does not really mean serious conflicts; in most cases, the religion related conflicts are based not on the religious background, but on ethnic differences. Can we say that in Russia there is any kind of pluralism?

There are all sorts of definitions for religious pluralism. We can look at three of them representing different views on the subject.

The first, very wide and neutral, goes like this: "the free existence of many faiths"[24]. This definition stresses out freedom, that is, no external restrictions put on religions, but gives no clue about the relations between religions and also it gives no insight on how to distinguish diversity from pluralism.

The second is "Religious pluralism is a term for religious diversity that imputes positive meaning to religion and encourages appreciation of religion's many forms"[25]. Here, I would like to underline the idea of positive meaning and appreciation of religion in society.

Very close to the second is our third definition; pluralism is the "normative ideology of inclusion and tolerance"[26]. Only the third definition draws attention not

---

[24] Catherine L. Albanese, *America, Religions and Religion*, 5th. ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 2012), 11.

[25] Amanda Porterfield, "Religious Pluralism in Religious Studies", in *Gods in America: Religious Pluralism in the United States*, ed. Charles L. Cohen and Ronald L. Numbers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 21.

[26] Kathleen M. Moore, *The unfamiliar abode: Islamic law in the United States and Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 30.

to diversity as the main source of pluralism, but to the normative character of these phenomena, drawing a line between diversity as reality and pluralism as an ideology trying to regulate this reality.

The first definition seems too wide and inclusive. With this definition, we can say that Russia has all the reasons to be called a pluralistic society. The second definition works perfectly well for the Russian law. But pluralism, as the third definition puts it, doesn't really work well in societies with a state church. Solving the problems with religious diversity and creating this pluralistic ideology is possible only by means of "melting" some differences for the sake of the civil society or of the idea of citizenship. But it seems that Russia has chosen another way of solving the growing problems with diversity, by building a new form of state church, sometimes going pretty far from the historical Christianity.

REFERENCES

Albanese, Catherine L. *America, religions and religion*, 5th. ed. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 2012.

Ammerman, Nancy T. "Religion in a Voluntaristic Society." *Sociology of Religion* 58 (1997): 203-215.

Bruce, Steve, and David Voas. "Vicarious Religion: An Examination and Critique." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 25 (2010): 243-259.

Daniels, Joseph P., and Marc von der Ruhr. "Subsidizing Religious Participation through Groups: A Model of the "Megachurch" Strategy for Growth." *Review of Religious Research* 53 (2012): 471-491.

Davie, Grace. "Thinking Sociologically About Religion: Implications for Faith Communities." *Review of Religious Research* 54 (2012): 273-289.

Davie, Grace. "Vicarious Religion: A Methodological Challenge", in *Everyday religion: observing modern religious lives*, edited by Nancy Tatom Ammerman, 21-35. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Luckmann, Thomas. *The invisible religion: the problem of religion in modern society*. New-York: Macmillan, 1967.

Moore, Kathleen M. *The unfamiliar abode: Islamic law in the United States and Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Pickel, Gert, and Kornelia Sammet. *Transformations of religiosity religion and religiosity in Eastern Europe 1989-2010.* Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2012.

Pollack, Detlef, and Daniel V. Olson. *The role of religion in modern societies*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Porterfield, Amanda. "Religious Pluralism in Religious Studies." In *Gods in America: Religious Pluralism in the United States*, edited by Charles L. Cohen and Ronald L. Numbers, 21-25. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Robertson, C. K. *Religion as entertainment*. New-York: P. Lang, 2002.

Roof, Wade Clark. *Contemporary American religion*. Vol.1. New-York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2000.

Некоммерческая Исследовательская Служба "Среда". "Вера в астрологию, приметы и гадания." Accessed November 17, 2015. http://sreda.org/ru/opros/42-veryat-li-rossiyane-v-astrologiyu-primetyi-i-gadaniya-portret-suevernyih-rossiyan.

Патриархия.ru. "Выступление Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла на торжественном открытии III Ассамблеи Русского мира." Accessed November 17, 2015. http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/928446.html.

Некоммерческая Исследовательская Служба "Среда". "Очередь к Поясу. Подвиг?" Accessed November 17, 2015. http://sreda.org/ru/2011/ochered-k-poyasu-podvig/1052.

Некоммерческая Исследовательская Служба "Среда". "Посещение служб, соблюдение поста, ношение креста и молитва." Accessed November 17, 2015. http://sreda.org/ru/opros/43-kto-iz-rossiyan-postitsya-nosit-krestik-molitsya.

Символ Веры. "Ситуация с наплывом паломников к Поясу Богородицы в главный храм Москвы под контролем мэрии." Accessed November 17, 2015. http://simvol-veri.ru/xp/situaciya-s-naplivom-palomnikov-k-poyasu-bogorodici-v-glavniie-xram-moskvi-pod-kontrolem-merii.html.

*Cosmin Tudor CIOCAN**

A PSYCHO-SOCIOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF RELIGIOUS LIFE IN ROMANIA

Abstract: The thesis of this research project is that, despite the disappearance of the Communist and secular policy of implementing an atheistic worldview and life, neither the Communist regime, nor the post-socialist Romania have led to a low attendance of religion, as it supports the rational choice theory of religion (TARR), but to a new revival of it. This logic of revival manifests itself especially among younger generations who have been socialized in the new world-a-lifetime post-socialist and takes the form of different beliefs. But this is not so problematic in the last decade as it is the process of secularization that every religion and denomination has to confront. In the post-Communist era, the established church and all other denominations, despite the consolidated political power, did not gain control of the life of the young Romanian generation. In the context of the emergence of a new secular culture that structures the practices and the subjectivities of the younger generations, religious institutions articulate different strategies of counter-secularization and that makes the religious pluralistic dialogue in Romania special.

Keywords: *secularization, church, state, revival, denomination, atheism, religious identity, pluralism, interaction.*

***

INTRODUCTION

The paper will distinguish between the mere diversity of religious faiths and religious pluralism as a normative ideal but we'll see that this "normative ideal" is also brought from outside of Romania. It is not a concept that emerged from Romanian religious diversity, but still, at some point it was needed due to the situation that emerged in Romania after its boarders were open for everyone, after

December 1989. The idea of religious pluralism becomes a reality when adherents of different faith traditions are free to express their beliefs in ways that uphold the peace and well-being—the common good—of society. Some might say that pluralism is something that is achieved rather than simply given, others that achieving such pluralism entails participating in the very "idea of America" (the United States was founded on the constitutional ideals of religious freedom, liberty and justice for all). But we can all agree that what is best for America doesn't have to be good also for other countries, as they have completely and totally different traditions, concepts and attitudes.

There are louder and louder voices that speak about pluralism in Romania, but the meaning that this pluralism got in America or even in West Europe doesn't seem to fit into the Romanian mind and life perception. *For many Americans, however, religious pluralism is not a vision that brings us together but one that tears us apart*[1]. In Romania, the religious pluralism has to face a different, stronger believer and a patient people, for its population, Orthodox in majority, believes both in a real, redeemed and full of rewards after-life and also in a way to receive with indulgence the mistakes of others, helping them to overcome them, but guarding themselves not to be compromised in the process of helping them get over the mistakes they made.

Talking about the different understandings of religious pluralism, we can find nowadays opinions from a larger, broader view of it, e.g. Diana Eck stated in her book based on G. Clinton's words "Religious pluralism in our nation is bringing us together in new and powerful ways" that "our society becomes stronger as each group's religious freedom is exercised and as people like the Sikhs articulate principles like equality and freedom in their own voice and in their own key"[2]. How this "religious pluralistic movement" did work it out for Romanian and where was the point they have to meet it? It will be one of the sociological questions I will try to answer.

1. A STATE OF DENIAL

As many historians would like to speak about the birth of Romanian, Romanians came to life as a nation and as Christians at the same time. This was possible because the birth of the Romanians (sec. I-II), when the Roman army moved in and blended with the indigenous Dacians, was also the time when two of Jesus Christ's apostles, St. Paul and St. Andrew, came to the Dacian territories, in the South-east (Dobrogea), and Christianized this people. They stood on the Greek

---

[1] Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America. How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (San Francisco: Harper, 2001), 7.
[2] Ibid.

(Orthodox) side of Christianity after the Great Schism (1054). So, Romanians consider themselves as Christians and Orthodox since ever and, during the past two millennia, nothing changed. This is the reason that Romanians do not have a date for their baptism, as all other nations have (e.g. Russians, Hungarians, Bulgarians). This is not the place to bring into discussion the proofs for that, for we don't have even a case to contest the Orthodoxy of Romanians and this is not the main point of this paper.

For its position and Orthodox faith, Romanian people was always threatened to be wiped from this land that was "an island/enclave of Orthodoxy in an ocean of Catholicism"; "even in the nineteenth century, many wanted for Romanians to disappear. But Romanians refused to disappear", said the American historian Larry Watts[3].

Romanians, along with their national established Church (i.e. the Christian Orthodox Church), were not at all prepared to face this kind of "losing its flock, its believers" movement that started along with the December 1989 Revolution. Why is that? Well, although before 1989 Romania was under a socialist system, nevertheless the Orthodox Christian Church was – maybe not encouraged and many times we can say it was even persecuted for its priests were imprison for political reasons – but, at least, despite of the many persecutions against the Church, the faith was however tolerated by the Communist state. We will see in the next chapter why this happened. At that point, the faith of the people and of the Orthodox in particular became stronger.

After the Revolution from 1989 and along with the opening of the borders a state of denial was watering down the very meanings that till then make them stronger believers. So, what was happening with the Ceauşescu Communist regime before 1989 is now happening with the established religion in Romania. If at that time Ceauşescu was afraid to lose the population's favor and respect and tried, by all the means a dictator has, to reduce other's influences over population to silence, nowadays another regime took its place and make Romanians face the same problem.

1.1 Demography and sociology of Romanian Religion in the beginning of Romania as an independent State (1859)

On July 12, 1859, the political leader of the new Romania – at that time called "The United Principates of Romania" –, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, signed the Royal Ordinance no. 276 establishing the Central Statistical Office Administration, marking the creation of official statistics in Romania. This act was made after his

---

[3] Larry Watts, *Fereşte-mă, Doamne, de prieteni. Războiul clandestin al blocului sovietic cu România* (București: Ed. RAO, 2011).

success in uniting the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, on January 24-th, 1859. From that moment, Romania has had at Bucharest the Central Statistical Service led by Dionysius Pop Martian and, at Iaşi, the Department of Statistics of Moldova, led by Ion Ionescu from Brad. At that point, our first official census began, in 1859-1860, with an unprecedented data, that found out the religious reality of Romania at its beginning as a legal state. In spite of the precarious conditions of this first census (with an amount of only 500 enumerators), its work was successfully completed, the results being presented on 25-th of June 1860 for Wallachia, and in the Summer of 1861, for Moldova. They provided to the government of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza significant information regarding the population by sex, marital status, age and infirmity, by nationality and religious, social and media category, by professions and so on, in an arrangement by counties, districts and cities.

Since 1860 until now we had 11 other census that reported a very stable situation in the segment of Orthodox population in the country (**Figure 1**). In 1930, it seems that 31.1% of the population of Transylvania was Greek Catholic and 27.8% was Orthodox. In Crişana-Maramureş, 36.8% of the population was Orthodox and 25.2% Greek Catholic; in Banat, 56.1% were Orthodox and 3.6% Greek Catholic.

The province Dobrogea was not included to Romania until 1878, but its situation is very special in many aspects. That situation is due to the fact that, for Romanians, this region is the cradle of Christianity and Orthodoxy; here, in the year 400 about 14 episcopates were reported, and also from here some official

delegates attended the first four ecumenical councils (4-5th centuries). Even though here we will find the majority being Orthodox, we can also find the most diverse religious presence that came with a diverse ethnicity (see **Figure 2**).
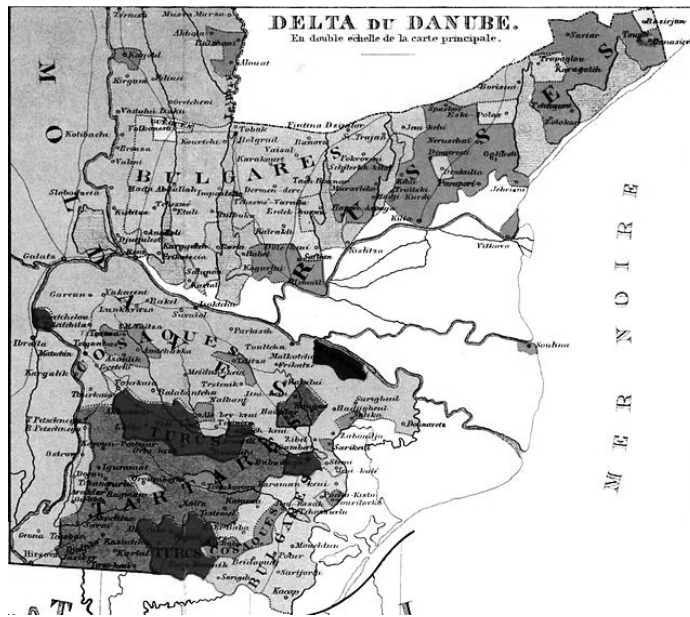
Any census of this area will have no relevance since any political regime that had it under its command (4th-7th century under Barbarians, from 602 under Byzantine Empire, in 681 it became a part of the First Bulgarian Empire; than the Mongol domination and, again, the Byzantine, Bulgarian Empire; between 1352 and 1359, under Tatars, Turks came in 1420 and so on)[4] removed by any means parts of its inhabitants.

1.2   Religion under the monarchy of Romania (1851 - 1947)

After the abdication of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, in February 1866, the politicians of the time decided to bring a foreign prince on the throne, within a royal house from West. This measure supposed to end the disputes on reign between the old aristocratic families, all related, and also to ensure external prestige for the Principality of Romania.

---

[4] See more about Dobrogea in: Valentin Ciorbea, edit, *Dobrogea 1878-2008. Orizonturi deschise de mandatul euronean* (Constanţa Ex Ponto, 2008). And also: C. Brătescu, I. Georgescu, coord., *Dobrogea (1878-1928): Cincizeci de ani de viaţă românească* (Constanţa Ex. Ponto, 2003).

Under the first King of Romania, Carol I, Prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, on his full name Karl Eitel Friedrich Ludwig von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen Zephyrinus (born April 20, 1839, Sigmaringen - died October 10, 1914, Sinaia), coronate on 10-th of May 1866 as Principe and on 10-th of May 1881 as King, when he also declared Romania a Kingdom, Romania received its first Constitution (29 June 1866) and had its religion mentioned only in passing. But article 82 of the Constitution put it in a way that everybody could understand that Orthodoxy was strongly encouraged; "His Majesty descendants will be raised in the Orthodox religion of the East"[5].

We may add here that this was undoubtedly the pledge I've been talking about especially since the wives of the Roman Catholic Romanian kings were Protestant queens and this certainly led to many discussions and conflicts in the royal house, but nevertheless they obeyed the religion of their new people. On top of all that, maybe you will see these conflicts within the royal house as a domestic disagreement that could be peacefully negotiated, but it was not only that. We have to know that, for a Catholic, in order to marry a Protestant, especially for a king, a blessing from the Pope was required and, in all cases, he gave that with an irrefutable condition: his children were to be baptized in the Catholic faith. The Pope had knowledge about the Romanian law, stood it and did nothing to agree with that. "Anxious, Prince Charles gave up waiting. With great difficulty they found a chaplain who agreed to officiate and Roman Catholic ceremony, in addition to the protest blessing. In order to satisfy the Romanians, even the day he returned to Bucharest, the couple made their first trip to the Metropolitan, to obtain the blessing of the head of the Orthodox Church in Romania too"[6]. For King Ferdinand, the situation was even worst, since he was excommunicated, in a particular understanding of it, called "The little excommunication" (meaning temporarily stopping a Catholic to receive the Holy Communion) that was not removed until his death. This kind of story happened for the next kings also.

We have to know that the Orthodoxy was not only a recognized religion for these foreign kings of Romania, but one that suited them and they became so passionate about this deep faith that, after they were banished from Romania with their families, they stood Orthodox; they even went to a monastery becoming known as "Princess and nun". Lady Ileana, Queen Maria's daughter became Mother Alexandra in a congregation of "the Protection of the Theotokos" Monastery in the village of Bussy-en-Othe, France and then moved to America and founded the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration in Ellwood City,

---

[5] See Cristina Diac, "Catholic kings, queens Protestant, Orthodox Children," 2008, accessed July 15, 2014, http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/general/articol/regi-catolici-regine-protestante-copii-ortodoc-i.

[6] Ibid.

Pennsylvania – bringing this faith there as a missionary nun. So, these additional explanations should give us an idea of what the recognized and constitutionally legalized Orthodox faith in Romania meant from the beginning. This was the first English language Orthodox monastery in North America.

1.3   Ceauşescu's Communist regime and religion (1948-1989)

The study of the relationship between Church and State in the postwar period and of the repression directed against the clergy is a difficult undertaking, given the many obstacles that a researcher must face in an attempt to reach the relevant documents. In general, ecclesiastical archives remain inaccessible to all historians and the archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations only recently opened for a significant number of researchers. Even so we don't know for sure if the data are accurate because the Communist regime was always making all up.

The situation of the religious life of Romanian people changed after 1945, when the Prime Minister of the first Communist Party and head of the State, Petru Groza (1884 - 1958), intervened in the religious life of Romania as a deputy in the Synod and in the Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Church (from 1911), a position which would later make him invaluable to a Romanian Communist Party (PCR) that was campaigning to attract the support of the Eastern Orthodox Christians who constituted the most numerous religious group of the nation[7]. On February 10, 1947, Romania signed the Treaty of Peace with the Allied and the Associated Powers. From that moment, Romania fell under the power and the influence of the Soviet Union. Starting with 1945, almost 19 denominations lost their proprieties and many even the worship churches; since that time, the Romanian Communist Party began a campaign of secularization, trying to turn the country into an atheist state.

The practices of the Romanian Communist regime originated in the Leninist-Stalinist model of social engineering[8]. The Communist dogma claimed to be infallible: people could possibly be wrong, but the Party was omniscient. Supremacy ideology was the key to understanding the system. The first generation of Communists in power in Romania fervently embraced the Bolshevik myths: the myth of the revolution, the party of the working class, the classless society. To achieve these goals presumed to be noble, Romanian Communists considered that it was allowed to use the most abject means.

---

[7] ***, "Petru Groza of Romania Dies; Chief of State of Red Regime," *The New York Times* January 8, 1958, ProQuest Historical Newspapers - *The New York Times* (1851-2002), 47.
[8] Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy. A History of Socialism in Russia* (New-York: Free Press, 1994), 136-137.

First of all, shortly after 1945, religious education came under the control of the Communist authorities. A Department of Religious Cults, a government body dealing with religious matters, pre-existing the Communists, continued to exist, but it was transformed into a government agency dealing with the tight control over the religious affairs in the country. The National Security had included a special department for the supervision of religious life, trying to control all the religious activities within Romania.

Religious denominations were persecuted without mercy. Many of them were seen as obscure, harmful and dangerous for the country, so they were to be removed from the social stage of Romanian life. For example, the Greek Catholic Church was suppressed in 1948[9], and the Roman Catholic Church was pushed to the edge of legality because the State declaimed the Pact with Vatican (signed in 1927) that established the terms for the Roman Catholic Church was of expressing itself in public. After this declaim only the Romanian State was entitle to change its statute; till then the Pope was the one who could create / dissolve / modify the dioceses and the one to appoint the bishops. The Orthodox Church, devoid of moral and material support from outside, could easily be brought under the control of the totalitarian power. Many priests were arrested, convicted, imprisoned and even killed. The regime also led a systematic and intense battle against the Protestant churches and the Evangelical congregations. The battle was to control the soul and mind of the people. Religion, as Marx called it – " the opium for the people" – had to be discredited and abolished. In the prospect of building a Communist society, religion had to disappear, like a blasphemous "private property" of capitalism. This came with the Marxist view about freedom of opinion. For the Communist regime, it was almost the same if you have one or other religious belief; all looked the same and there was a kind of threatening for the position of the government (dictator) to put somebody – even God – above him who consider himself to be the „beloved of them all", „the hero among heroes" and so on[10].

Regarding the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church, with a majority in Transylvania, where it was born, its breaking was just another goal of the Communist regime. Eliminating and destroying the opposition and the democratic institutions[11] were the perfect tools for the Communists to eliminate voices that

---

[9] Ioan-Marius Bucur, *Din istoria Bisericii Greco-Catolice Române (1918-1953)* (Cluj-Napoca: Ed. Accent, 2003).

[10]   Appellations   extracted   from   a   poem   to   the   dictator: http://www.ceausescu.org/ceausescu_media/pcr.html (accessed July 15, 2014).

[11] See also: Cristina Păiuşan, Radu Ciuceanu (editors), *Biserica Ortodoxă Română sub regimul comunist 1945-1958 [Romanian Orthodox Church under the Communist Regime 1945-1958],* vol. 1, INST (Bucureşti, 2001); Olivier Gillet, *Religie şi naţionalism.*

could discredit or diminish the credibility and popularity among the people. For such reasons, they committed crimes like restriction of religious liberty, infiltration into the clergy of the political police, persecution of the Greek Catholic Church, the arrest and imprisonment of the recalcitrant priests, secularization campaigns, restricting the influence of the Church and even the destruction of the places of worship[12]. Another interesting act against religious freedom took place in 1948. It is known that, at the order of Moscow, the Communist regime forcibly integrated the Greek Catholic Church within the Orthodox Church. So, from these political acts, we cannot speak about State-Church separation before December 1989, as we cannot speak after it also.

But this "pact with the devil" – the way population perceived the relation between the Communist regime and the Orthodox Church – is justified today by some as the only way to save what was to be rescued; indeed, the churches were filled with believers during those 45 years of Communism and that was only because in reality the Orthodoxy did not give up on people at all, even if it had to display something else.

Despite of all that, there were certain movements against the atheistic regime. Movements like the Romanian Christian Committee for the Defense of Religious Liberty and Conscience (ALRC) led to the popular rebellion in December 1989, asking for their rights to religious free expression.

2. THE NEW PLURALISTIC ERA IN THE ROMANIAN RELIGIOUS LIFE

Because of the attitude of the Communist regime towards religion and the Orthodox Church, the faith was to be down-watering, the religious sentiment had to be completely vanished and churches were to be irremediably discredited by being transformed into obedient tools of the state. Instead, it was otherwise; there was faith and a strong belief in God. Some of the first acts of political attitude after December 1989 headed towards giving up the religious monopole that the Christian Orthodox Church had at that time. In April 1990, a new decree-law was

---

Ideologia Bisericii Ortodoxe Române sub regimul comunist [Religion and nationalism. The ideology of the Romanian Orthodox Church under Communism], (București: Ed. Compania, 2001); Cristian Vasile, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română în primul deceniu comunist [Romanian Orthodox Church in the First Decade of Communism]*, (București: Curtea Veche, 2005).

[12] See Ştefan Iloaie, Paul Caravia, Virgil Constantinescu, *Mărturisitori de după gratii. Slujitori ai Bisericii în temniţele comuniste [Confessors of Jail. Ministers of the Church in Communist Prisons]*, (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Renaşterea, 1995); Paul Caravia, Virgiliu Constantinescu, Flori Stănescu, *Biserica întemniţată. România, 1944-1989 [The Imprisoned Church. Romania, 1944-1989]*, INST (București, 1998).

issued by the head of the state, Iliescu Ion at that time, through which the Romanian Church United with Rome (the Greek-Catholic Church) was officially recognized; until than it did not have this public state.

Another political act in favoring the religious life in Romania was the reorganization of religious education. The first step was the introduction of religious education in public schools for all pre-university levels. Religion was an optional discipline, to be attended by teenagers belonging to the Church or by those who wished. Those who are atheists or do not want to study religion, can skip this matter. In 1995, a new article (9) was added in order to have religious education obligatory in public schools, optional being only choosing the denomination.

2.1 Demography and sociology

Before talking about the psychological aspects of pluralism, first let's take a look on the movement towards religious pluralism in Romania. Besides the Orthodox Church, the most persecuted religion – not only in Romania, but in the whole world – was Judaism. The Jewish communities on what would later become Romanian territory were attested as early as the 2nd century AD, at a time when the Roman Empire had established its rule over Dacia. A decree of the Roman emperor (397) granted protection to the Dacian Jews and their synagogues ("Cod. Theod. de Jud." xvi. 8)[13]. Due to their commercial abilities, they were positioned along the Black Sea shore, mostly in Dobrogea. Even if they were poor in number, they were always present in the history of Romania. Minimal until the 18th century, the size of the Jewish population increased after around 1850, and more especially after the establishment of Greater Romania, in the aftermath of World War I. A diverse community, albeit an overwhelmingly urban one, Jews were the target of religious persecution and racism in Romanian society – from the late-19th century debate over the "Jewish Question" and over the Jewish residents' right to citizenship, to the genocide carried out in the lands of Romania as part of the Holocaust[14], but these were rather issues of nationality, acts of war and, in particular, acts of personal vendetta by John C. Brătianu, nominally Liberal, the first anti-Semite of the modern type in Romania. He was called to the premiership in 1866, after the abdication of Al. I. Cuza, and granted the Romanian citizenship exclusively to Christians. Jews were expelled from the country. A number of such Jews, who failed to prove their Romanian birth, were forced to cross the Danube, and when Turkey refused to receive them, they were thrown into the river and drowned. Almost every country in Europe was shocked at these barbarities.

---

[13] Gotthard Deutsch, D.M. Hermalin and Joseph Jacobs, "Jews in Rumania", 1905, accessed July 15, 2014, http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12939-rumania.
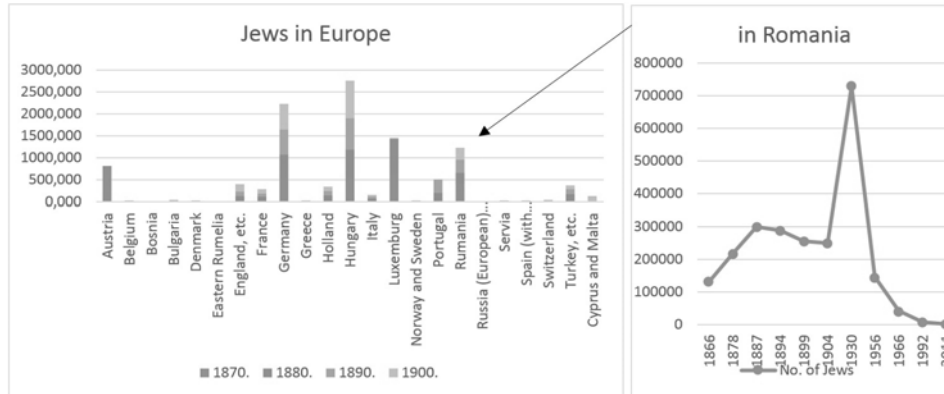[14] Ibid.

Figure 3: *The situation of Jews in Europe and Romania along history*

During the Russo-Turkish War (1769-74), the Jews of Romania had to endure great hardships. They were massacred and robbed in almost every town and village in the country. When peace was at last restored both princes, Alexander Mavrocordatos of Moldavia and Nicholas Mavrogheni of Wallachia, pledged their special protection to the Jews, whose condition remained favorable until 1787, when the Janizaries, on one side, and the Russians, on the other, invaded Romania and proceeded to butchering the Jews. But the biggest action against the Jews in Romania was done during John Antonescu's government, when the *Legion of the Archangel Michael*, called *the Legionary Movement* – founded in the interwar Romania, on 24-th of June 1927, by Corneliu Codreanu, on the model of Nazi SA and SS organizations, with a mystical-religious character, violently anti-Communist, anti-Semitic and anti-Masonic – accomplished the order of "cleansing of the land", by the extermination of the Jews in Bessarabia and Bukovina and the deportation of the rest, again not by a national disapproval of Jews, but for their own pleasure.

Statistically, according to the official statistics of 1878, there were 218,304 Jews in Romania. The excess of births over deaths from 1878 to 1894 being 70,408, the number of Jews at the end of 1894 ought to have been 288,712. But the census of December, same year, showed only 243,225, with 45,487 less than the number expected. In 1904 it was estimated that the number of Jews who were living in Romania did not exceed 250,000. Now, there are 3,519 Jews, living in good understanding with the Romanians and all the other religions of Romania.

Another indigenous faith is Islam. Muslims kept on coming and moving here for almost five centuries (approx. 1418-1878), especially in Dobrogea county,

where it was established an Ottoman administration, considering the potential of Dobrogea for new Muslim colonization. Because of that, in Dobrogea, there is a big religious and ethnic diversity: Muslims and Christians, indigenous and settlers. The last Ottomans established groups including deported people (*sürgün*) and some who voluntarily settled here, attracted by the opportunities of trade: Italian, Raguza (with communities in Silistra, Varna, Babadag) and Jews. So, Muslims and Jews came together to this region, in the 15th century. Most part of the Muslims, above 85 %, had lived in Dobrogea along with the indigenous population for almost 700 years, in good understanding and mutual help, their interests being represented according to the Law of Religions by the *Muftiyat* of the Muslim Cult of Romania. They are represented in the Parliament by *the Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tartars in Romania*. Nowadays, there are approx. 80 mosques in Romania.

The true challenge of religious pluralism occurred after the 16th century, when the Reformation took place in Europe and Romania was also a place for this kind of refugees. The Greek-Catholic (United with Rome) Church was born in the eighteenth century and contributed to the Romanian people's becoming a modern nation.

The "Romanian Evangelical Awakening" began at the end of the nineteenth century, through the Baptist movement, and it developed in the first half of the twentieth century[15]. The first Protestant denomination that came to Romania was the Reformation. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Protestants in Transylvania frequently tried to convert Romanians to Protestantism. The conversion was not without success, given the existence, mentioned in the documents, of many Protestant pastors, led by two Romanian bishops, Paul Tordas followed by his son, Michael. During the Reformation, in the 16-th century, there were three churches, three Protestant denominations. These are: the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Reformed Church and the Anabaptist Church.

The Reformed Church spread in Europe during the life of Martin Luther and so it arrived to Transylvania in 1519. The Diet (Parliament) of Hungary banned in 1526 the promotion of the ideas of the Protestants and took drastic measures against protesters, but the military defeat by the Turks, at Mohacs, and the Hungarian king's death on the battlefield made these measures ineffective. Saxon Protestantism spreads rapidly, and, in 1533, Johannes Honnterus, a rich and cultured citizen of Braşov, organizes the Evangelical Lutheran church in Transylvania. This was relatively easy to spread because they were using the methods that the Orthodox Church already had – developing schools within churches, printing books, making out of Brasov a leading cultural center. Their target was simple people, oppressed peasants, the minority of Transylvanian

---

[15] Mihail Sevastos (1892 –1967). In *Adevărul*, 21 November 1931.

Saxons. Unlike the Transylvanian Saxons who were followers of the ideas of Luther, the great majority of Hungarians became followers of John Calvin. In time, tensions emerged between the branches of the Lutheran and the Calvinist Protestant Church in Transylvania. In 1564, that led to their separation, during the Synod of Aiud. Thus appeared the Reformed Diocese of Transylvania, which included members of the Hungarian followers of John Calvin's theology. A small part of the Hungarian Lutherans decided to remain as such.

Soon, these denominations started proselytizing among Romanians. In order to have their attention, the Lutherans and the Reformed translated books and catechisms into Romanian, consecrated priests and bishops. Many Romanians used these catechisms not for ministry, but for education and, with their use, they also received the Protestant teachings. Romanian Reformed churches continued to exist for some time in Transylvania but eventually disappeared, due to the fact that their members were assimilated into the Hungarian communities. Today, there are no more Romanians in Transylvania as members of the Reformed Church.

Along with the Lutherans and the Reformed, the Anabaptist Church also came. This is a radical branch of Reformation, which, in addition to the principles introduced by Luther and Calvin, reintroduced the adult baptism also, abolished the baptism of the infants, promoted nonviolence and religious freedom. The early Anabaptists appeared in Transylvania, during the time of Principe Gabor Bethlen, who colonized, in 1622, the Lower Vinţu[16], now called Alba County. Anabaptists remained in Transylvania until the 18th century, when they were subjected to persecution by the Habsburg authorities and the Catholic Jesuit monks and were forced to immigrate to Russia, in 1782; Alexa Popovici added that they did not have as enemies only the Catholic Church but even by the "compatriots" of the Reform, the Lutherans and the Reformed[17].

The importance of the Anabaptist movement, as a subject of research, results from the fact that they influenced the history of Christianity in our country, where Anabaptists tend to Unitarianism is even clearer by the fact that the promoter of Unitarianism in Transylvania, Francis David, was also the promoter of the Anabaptists. It is interesting to know that he followed an interesting route: he was,

---

[16] Paul Chiş, "Bisericile Protestante în spaţiul românesc. Scurt istoric," *Clujul Evanghelic*, June 19, 2009. Accessed July 15, 2014, http://clujulevanghelic.ro/2009/06/19/bisericile-protestante-in-spatiul-romanesc-scurt-istoric-paul-chis. Instead of this, Alexa Popovici, in *Istoria Anabaptiştilor din România 1527-1768* (Chicago: Editura Bisericii Baptiste Române, 1976), shows that the Anabaptists came to Romania in 1527.

[17] Lăpugean Emanuel-Zaharia, "Review of Alexa Popovici*, 1976. Istoria Anabaptiştilor din România 1527-1768*, 1976," 2012, accessed July 15, 2014, http://istorieevanghelica.ro/2012/05/04/lapugean-emanuel-recenzie-alexa-popovici-istoria-anabaptistilor-din-romania/.

in order, Catholic, Lutheran and then Calvinist, before getting to these other two. What helped Unitarianism – and all other Protestant denominations – spread into the Principality of Transylvania was the *Protocol from Turda* (1568), that gave freedom of expression to every religion within. All 18 religious confessions were given official recognition. Since 1700, the Unitarian Church has had 125 parishes and in 1948 the Uniate Church was compelled to merge with the Orthodox Church; the Uniate clergy who refused to comply faced arrest. Since 2006, there have been only 110 Unitarian priests and 141 places of worship in Romania[18].

Roman Catholicism in Romania. The oldest traces of Roman Catholic activities on present-day Romanian territory were recorded also in Transylvania, in connection to the extension of the Magyar rule and the region's integration into the Kingdom of Hungary, in the 16th century. Throughout the history, there were many attempts to impose this faith to the Romanian population, but it succeeded only briefly and in very few localities. Some of the oldest attempts were when Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241) established the Diocese Milcovia. A Dominican monk, Theodoric, was appointed as its first bishop but it lasted only for 14 years, because of the Tartar invasion.

The Greek Catholic Church was born in Transylvania, in the late 17th century, through the union with the Roman Catholic Church of a part of the Romanian Orthodox Church, when the Emperor Leopold I of the Habsburg Empire recognize the rights of the four imported religions (Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist and Unitarian) and promised lands and other goods to the Orthodox priests from Transylvania that would convert to Catholicism.

Johan Gerhard Onken (1800-1884), who founded in 1834 the first Baptist church in Germany, started this new faith also in Romania in 1856-1862.

The Pentecostal faith was adopted by a Baptist couple, Gheorghe and Persida Bradin, in the village Păuliş, in Transylvania, in September 1922. Though it was banned in Transylvania in 1924, the Pentecostal faith moved to Bukovina in 1926; it had a large number of start-ups and it became the largest group of Evangelicals from Romania.

The Romanian Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is Romania's seventh-largest religious group. It originated in the 19th century and is divided into six local conferences, standing for and named after some of the country's main historical regions. In 1868-69, Michał Belina-Czechowski, a former Roman Catholic priest who had embraced Adventism in the United States, arrived at Piteşti and introduced Seventh-day Adventist doctrines into Romania.

---

[18] Marius Vasileanu, "Cultele din România: Biserica Unitariană," *Adevărul*, May 25, 2006, accessed July 15, 2014, http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-arhiva-1177299-cultele-din-romania-biserica-unitariana.htm.

Jehovah's Witnesses began to operate in Romania in 1911, but the first coordination office was opened in Cluj in 1920, when a member offered his house as house of prayer.

An interesting aspect of the new Protestant movement in Romania was the Christian Evangelic Church that, unlike all other denominations, started within the Orthodox Church, when two former Orthodox theologians, Teodor Popescu (priest in Bucharest) and Dumitru Cornilescu switched to Evangelism, in 1920-1924. At the request of the authorities to be distinguished from the fellow Christians, in 1927, the new Christian movement was called "Christians by Scripture" and were officially organized as an association. Prohibited during the war, along with the "Evangelical", they were allowed, in 1946, to resume work, and, after December 1989, the "General Conference of the representatives of the churches", held in Bucharest (27 January 1990), decided the separation of the "Christian Worship Gospel" and its functioning as an independent cult, under the name "Romanian Evangelical Church"[19].

Scientology is one of the most controversial religious movements of our days. Since 1954, when the first church of Scientology was founded by Ron Hubbard in Los Angeles, California, this new theosophical-therapeutic vision also arrived in Romania, but it has very few members.
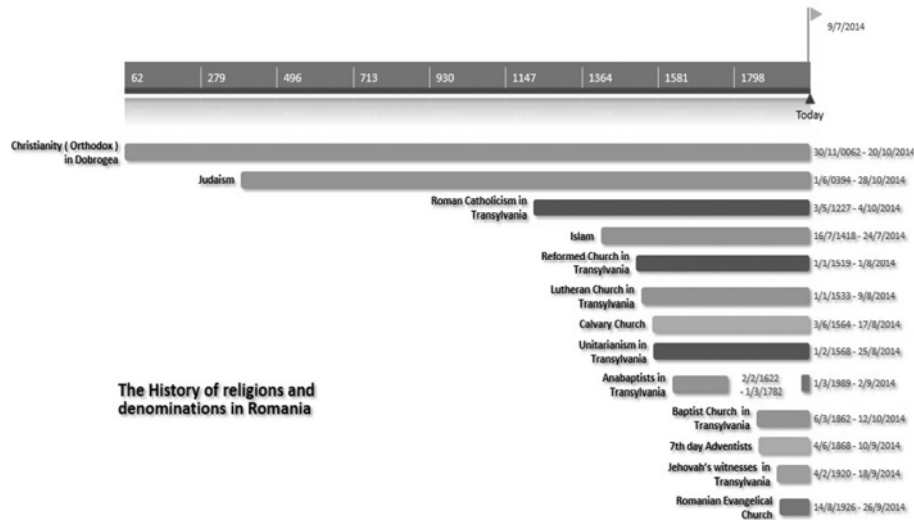

Figure 4. *The immigration of the new religions and denominations, in history*

---

[19] "Evangelical Church in Romania," accessed July 15, 2014, http://istorieevanghelica.ro/2009/07/04/biserica-evanghelica-romana/.

2.2   Pluralism, freedom of meeting the "otherness"

When you are seeing yourself as an open-minded people, who can embrace everybody in this world with their traditions and religions, then we'll end up opening the Pandora's box with every consequence that follows. And this is what happens; following the New World's liberal and democratic path, Romania opens its windows to every influence that came, not being aware of the mistakes that this world has already done. Along with opening the borders, Romanian had also to open its mind.

Accepting someone else's opinion and belief and respecting it as a valid one, with the same right to be expressed as yours, was the new, attractive way of capitalistic progress.

What are the bad elements that came out from Pandora's box after December 1989? Wave after wave of so-called liberation movements of the locked minds; first, it was the secular post-modern movement. Then, other movements followed, like Zeitgeist Movement Romania or Mission Astral Romania. And a more recent one, the Secular-Humanist Association in Romania (ASUR) is trying now (2014) not only to remove religious education from public schools, but also to put it under civil, non-religious intervention and control. They claim that in this way we cannot fall victims of any religious extremism, misbelief and discrimination of any kind. This is the new movement against religion in general that sets upon the public and civil belief that we have to protect ourselves by law from any mistakes that we might have done; there has to be religious education without any religion! Hence, we are back to Marx and Nietzsche's conception about religion, that religion is bad for the people because it infects us with its distorted views about this world as God's creation, that has to be purified from sin. But this concept of salvation of the world brought us to wars, to destruction, to massive killing and to slavery. We have to get released from religion, so we have to speak only about a morality without including any religious concept. And this will be the end of religion, starting from pluralism! Therefore, Romania had to figure it out a way to make it work: keeping both its beliefs and traditions along with pluralism, but to accept this agreement with a minimum damage of the faith.

Despite to all that, the last census conducted in 2011 on a population of 20.121.641 persons, the majority of people expressed their religious affiliation like that:

Figure 5. *Religions percentage in Romania*

Religion	1866	1930	1992	2002	2011
Percentage	%				
Orthodoxy	42,33	72,59	86,81	86,79	86,45
Orthodoxy (old rite)	?	0,32	0,12	0,18	0,17
Roman Catholicism	1,0	6,83	5,09	4,73	4,62
Reformed		3,94	3,52	3,23	3,19
Baptism	0,7		0,48	0,58	0,60
Pentecostal			0,97	1,50	1,92
7th Day Adventists	-	0,09	0,34	0,43	0,43
Jehovah`s witness	-	-	-	-	0,26
Greek Catholic	18,86	7,9	0,98	0,88	0,80
Unitarianism	?	0,38	0,34	0,31	0,31
Judaism	?(134,168 persons)	4,19	0,04	0,03	0,02
Muslims	0,03	1,03	0,25	0,31	0,34
NONEs and Atheists	?	0,04	0,11	0,06	0,10
Mans			49,2	48,7	48,65
Women			50,8	51,3	51,4
Under 25 years			42,2	33,2	27,9
Between 25 - 40			19,8	22,1	21,8
Above 40			40	44,7	50,3

3. GOD'S ACTIVE ROLE IN ROMANIA

3.1 Reasons why the majority of Romanians are still religious

First of all, we strongly, deeply believe in God, compared with other regions and countries in Europe. As the Eurobarometer 2005 poll shows in **Figure 6,** more than 75% of those asked by the Eurobarometer 2010 poll expressed a positive "belief in God" in Malta, Turkey, Cyprus, Romania, Greece, and Poland. The 2010 Eurobarometer Poll asked whether the person believed "there is a God", believed "there is some sort of spirit of life force", or "didn't believe there is any sort of spirit, God or life force". For these questions, Romanian had a huge different answer: more than 90% acknowledged God as a Person, and only 7% pointed a Supreme Being, a force or a pantheistic view. That shows that Orthodoxy had a real, vivid effect in the education of the people.

Figure 6. *Europe belief in God*
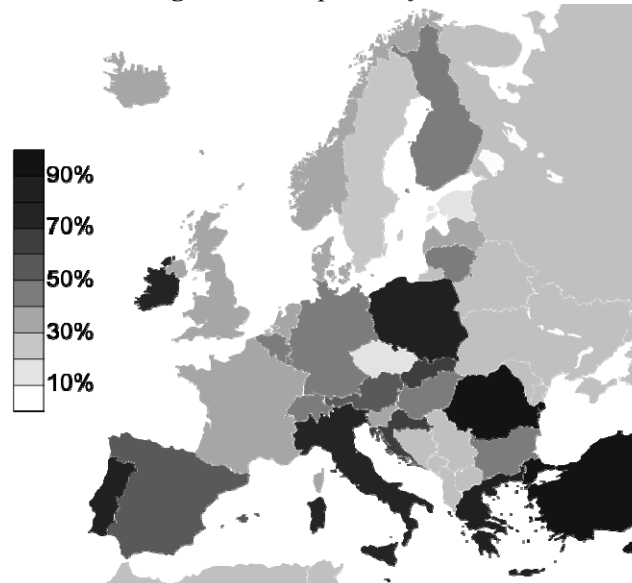
3.2 The coexistence of the Church and the state

Why should there be any religion at all in the state or in the civil society? In Romania, there are substantial differences between the denominations, in respect of the advantage that they could get or pretend from the political class. The Orthodox Church, who has now above 86% of the Romanian population as declared members, prove to be the most powerful and influential political actor and, therefore, an indispensable ally for every candidate and political party who sought help and support of any electoral segment. This is not new for Romania or for the world in general, for many states or empires had their political leaders supported by the religious authority. For that reason, the Protestant churches and the new religious denominations which appeared in the 16-th, 19-th and 20-th centuries did not have enough followers to be attractive to politicians and parties and, therefore, rarely played a role in the elections[20]. But, even if some might maliciously claim that the Orthodox Church did that only for itself, in order to be protected from other denominations[21], the truth is that the Orthodox church never used its power to overcome other denominations but to empower those who

---

[20] Lavinia Stan, Lucian Turcescu, "Religie, partide si alegeri in Romania postcomunista," *Sfera Politicii* XIV (123-124) (2006): 28.
[21] As some authors intentionally put it. See, for example, Anca Gorgan, who, by the way, does not reveal her religious identity – "Relaţia Stat-Biserică în România Postcomunistă," *Revista Română de Sociologie* XXIII/1–2 (2012): 142, accessed July 15, 2014, http://www.revistadesociologie.ro/pdf-uri/nr.1-2-2012/08-AncaG.pdf.

claimed that would fight for religiousness of the Romanians and for their prosperity as a Christian people, in general (e.g. religious education in public school, access to media for proselytizing, religious holidays etc.). So, it is nothing to be feared about its strong implication in politics.

When the new form of Constitution was shaped in 2013, the representatives of the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate asked for a reference, in the 1st article, to the role of the Orthodox Church "in building and modernizing the Romanian state". That is not in any way discriminative against the other religions in Romania, but this "Article proposed for the Constitution, on the role of the Orthodox Church and other denominations in building and modernizing the Romanian state, respects both the historical truth of the major cult and the principle of equality of recognized denominations in Romania"[22]. That was until now only a tacit contempt of the entire Romanian people, but since a variety of Christian denomination came to this country after 1989 and now they claim not only the liberty of cult expression in the public life, but also that they had an important role in the life of the Romanians, the established church considered that it is time to record its role in a state document. It was not an act of discrimination, as the Seventh-day Adventist Church claimed: "an unnecessary addition, discriminatory and offensive to the other 17 religions and denominations" recognized in Romania. That was a declaration coming from a denomination that had no history within Romania till 1868, as we have seen in chapter 2.

However, the reality of the state-church coexistence has nothing to do with Orthodoxy only, for it acts in the benefit of the Romanian people, in general, and not only for the Orthodox. As an example, one of the latest achievements of the civil religion for the people was that, in the last 5 years, some of the Orthodox holidays – i.e. first and second day of Pentecost, Assumption of the Virgin (2008) and St. Andrew, protector of Romania (2012), along with other days already declared holidays were admitted as state holidays in the Labor Code – rising the free days to 12 – free for all Romanians, with the specification that *persons with other religion than Christianity can take those days off on their own holidays*; so, that is also a display of religious pluralism or mutual understanding that the Orthodox Church shows.

In other public issues that could affect the Romanian people, its traditions and strong beliefs (e.g. homosexuality, same-sex marriage, euthanasia, prostitution, drugs, weapons etc.), even if the Orthodox Church does no longer have ecclesiastical direct involvement in the Parliament, still it uses its public influence

---

[22] Mihaela Stoica, in *Gândul* (02.07.2013), accessed July 15, 2014, http://www.gandul.info/stiri/bor-biserica-ortodoxa-romana-s-a-nascut-odata-cu-formarea-poporului-roman-adventistii-au-aparut-abia-la-inceputul-secolului-al-xx-lea-11067773.

and political means to stop any voice or attitude that struggles to alter the traditional mindset of the Romanian people. For that, the Orthodox Church gets support from almost all other denominations and stand together against other *temptations* that support a "*liberal way*" of public life. When the voice of the Church is weak, the mentality of our nation speaks. These voices of the common people, usually spontaneously grouped into street demonstrations, have some influence over the political class due to the democratic elections.

For example, we have an association that stands for gays, lesbians and transsexuals' rights in Romania (ACCEPT) and they are quite vocal in the last few years, trying to present to the public their liberal views. After three years of public confrontations in the streets of Bucharest, they have now a peaceful Gay Parade. The first one was a real disaster that ended with many casualties and injured; in the years to come, till now, the same response of the population came into the streets along with Gay Fest, but protests were without major incidents. Along with these internal associations the gay community receives help and political support from outside (i.e. the embassies of Great Britain and Netherlands) in a civil struggle to influence a traditional Orthodox people to leave aside its beliefs and embrace the novelty. Gay rights and same-sex marriage issues are tacitly accepted, unlike other Orthodox countries, like Moldavia or Russia. Russia, in the State Court of Moscow municipal government, declared such acts illegal for the next 100 years (from March 2012 until May 2112), with penalties for any kind of display or propaganda.

4   THE ROMANIAN CIVIL RELIGION: DOES IT EXIST OR NOT?

4.1 Rituals and tradition

Why do Romanians attend the established church after December 1989, as they did before? Psychologically speaking we will find three reasons for that behavior.

First of all, it is the human nature that always wants what is forbidden. Under the Communist regime, many people became even stronger believers trying to get back what the regime attempted to take from them: the liberty – of opinion, of choosing, of living one way or another. In other words, they perceived the Orthodoxy as a way to escape the fear, to escape from this never-ending bad story that was in their lives. So, in order to receive peace of mind and also to feel the way that a free person feels, they found in our Orthodox rituals and tradition a way out, an escaping door. That was possible thanks to the spiritual position of both our Orthodox Holy Fathers' teachings, as well as of the high spiritual engagement that was among many priests at that time. It is a kind of hard to perceive that from the angle of an objective opinion; you will have a picture looking like that: on the one

hand, it was the Communist regime who continually engaged in fighting with people and, on the other, the Orthodoxy was conveying to people its teachings about forgiveness (love your enemy and turn the other cheek to your opponent, according to Matthew 5:39, Luke 6:29 and so on). Their need for internal peace and for an equilibrium in mind and soul was greater than fear.

Christianity was called "a religion for the slaves" and this was applied again to the Romanian people in the Communist era. Christianity was a religion that suffered along with people, cared about their concerns and took into its hands the burden that people had to suffer and, in return, gave them peace, an open path for a better life, without fear, despair and deprivation. That was the salvation, the promise for the enslaved Romanian people: a Savior will eventually come and look upon their sufferings and heal all their wounds. For them, Orthodoxy with its peaceful path was the support they could hang on in need, the very reason that helped them get easily over the daily burdens.

Secondly, knowing that the Communist regime was increasingly struggling to get the church and the faith out of the mind of the people in order to get all their attention and faithfulness, the people, on the other hand, led this battle into their own garden, so to speak. Because of the partnership between people and the Orthodox Church, Romanians always took as a personal affront any initiative against their church; everything against the church was done against the people.

Actually, that was the main reason that started the popular revolution in 1989. All started on December 15, as the population of Timişoara stood in solidarity with the Hungarian Reformed pastor László Tőkés, subjected to persecutions, for reasons where the religious motivations could not be distinguished from the ethnical ones. After everything fell into its place, the new democratic government had to take into consideration this act and the very reasons that led into the battle all the people from all over the country.

After December 1989, religious pluralism started as the natural recognition of the religion of the ethnical groups. As waves of different religions and Christian denominations came to Romania, each ethnic group brought its own mix of ordinary and extraordinary religion, combining local customs with general Orthodox teaching. There were no problems with the ethnics and denominations that were already present in the country when the revolution occurred, but there were problems with the alien denominations and religions that were trying to cut a "piece of the new market".

And the last, but not least reason, is that nobody can remove religion from humanity! But everyone is entitle to have his own believes! The possibility for everyone to have whatever religion and belief they want and to express them accordingly was not so new, for Romanians had some variety in religion even before. The "problem" appeared when this variety was about Christianity, because

in the past Muslims, Jews and Greek-Catholics lived like brothers in the same house, working together for the same benefits.

4.2 Perceptions of religious pluralism

How did Romania receive the religious pluralism after the Revolution, as a pluralism within Christianity? In the beginning clumsily – like any beginning – with emotions, with opposition, with confrontations. But, in time, Romanians realized and accepted that everyone is entitled to be in this world as they are, even if these people seem to be different in some ways.

I said there were three reasons that the Romanian people did not give up on their beliefs or, to put it properly, on their religious disposition; though, I think there are also several other reasons for receiving and trusting what is called a more "visible" religious way, the pluralism. The main reason could be a mixture between the corruption of human mind and its continuous need for what is new, what is different from the old. The corruption of the mind of the Romanians is the first thing that has to be explained here. It was a trend in the '90s for persons less close to their churches (beliefs) and willing to have a convenient trade, to give up the baptism that was never activated in order to receive instead a financial help. Without taking any look at the sine qua non condition impound by this wasteful contract – 10% for life – they went to different denominations. This process languished after the year 2000, when Romanians started to travel to experience more and to know the socio-economic and political realities of the countries from where these denominations were sent to Romania.

The continuous need for what is new in the spiritual world is a kind of habit in human history; everything interests us, but nothing can satisfy this need. All new Christian denominations claimed that this Christian nation needed a revival because it was led by a corrupt church.

There is also a third, more important reason for receiving pluralism in Romania after 1989: that an outer influence occurs only when somebody is less convinced of his own values and then he perceives the other to be more powerful, persuasive and with a more vivid effect. I will support this idea with an example that came from the Muslim world and tradition. The feminist movement could promote itself because there will always be physical attraction and need experienced by men towards women, so, when the woman declines her presence in bed, then men will be more willing to negotiate their rights in the relation between them; in that case "the sexual inequality, based on the belief in women's biological inferiority"[23] will be overcome by "the male-female dynamics" based by

---

[23] Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil. Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011), http://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2010/

"relationship stability and sexual satisfaction"[24]. What was the female discrimination about till the late 19th century? They knew that "All sexual institutions (polygamy, repudiation, sexual segregation, etc.) can be perceived as a strategy for containing their power"[25] and that is the reason that even the most radical and stubborn discriminative view in history could be overcome. This is the assimilation explanation, from the sociological point of view, of the influence of pluralism upon the population[26].

So, regarding our overview of the religious pluralism that flooded and influenced Romania after 1989, the third reason can be putted this way: it's all about who's more willing to give up his understandings, tradition, beliefs and who is more persuasive to convince and influence the other's mind and life.

CONCLUSION

Why remove religion from the civil or state society?

It was Voltaire who said, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him".

If religion is a projection of what is the worst in mankind (carnal, vanities, envy, selfish desires), than religion must be put away. But religion may also be a projection of what is for the better and the very best for mankind – love, peaceful thoughts, wish of serenity, mutual help, looking for other's need and so on – and, in this case, could we speak any longer of the disposal of this projection?

Could we ask any longer to remove this aspect from our mind and life? At this point, it doesn't matter anymore if this side of ours is a wonderful work of God in our life or if it is a mere projection of what is the best in us, because the result will be the same. If the effect is good and enough powerful to change man's heart (his thinking / feeling / wish) and save him from everything that is wrong, replacing every time a wrong thing with a good one, is there anyone who would wish to remove this doing – God's or man's?!

Why a country with an established church (religion) has such a pluralism problem?

First of all, there are many voices that are strongly trying not to recognize that this movement is growing among the Romanian people in the last decade with

---

SAN215/um/Mernissi_-_Beyond_the_Veil.txt.

[24] Laurie A. Rudman, Julie E. Phelan, "The Interpersonal Power of Feminism: Is Feminism Good for Romantic Relationships?," *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, Volume 57, Issue 11-12 (2007): 787-799, accessed July 15, 2014, http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007 %2Fs11199-007-9319-9/fulltext.html.

[25] Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil. Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*.

a visibility that cannot be denied. They say that it is only a conspiracy led by other religious leaders from abroad – especially from America – that have to go proselytizing into the "new" old world – post-revolutionary Europe – in order to survive. They are perceived as "the enemies of our nation". We have to face them as a nation, as strong Orthodox believers.

But somehow this project didn't work out for we are now in the watering down process of our faith, as it can be seen in the report of last three censuses – nobody won, neither the Orthodox defensive nor the Protestant offensive. They tried first to mock on our religious beliefs saying that even if we have been an Orthodox country for two millennium, we still have to be Christianized again, and this time not by the priests, but by the Evangelical denominations. This time the words coming from that side were against the priests of the Orthodox Church, claiming that they are only wolves in sheep skins. Even if you know Jesus, you have actually never met Him because your priests do not allow you to; they stay behind that wall and everything they want is to squeeze all your money, your energy and eventually to let you without redemption – as Jesus once said "You hypocrites! You snakes and children of snakes! You lock the door to the Kingdom of heaven in people's faces, and you yourselves don't go in, nor do you allow in those who are trying to enter..." (Matthew 13: 13-35). With this kind of speeches, every part of the barricade was throwing out rocks to the other one, without thinking that the people were stuck in the middle, and the effect of this fight was not the one that any of the parties expected. The new generations in this country do not follow either their parents' Orthodox beliefs, nor the new evangelical ones. We rather see the beginning of a spiritual, theosophical movement in Romania; from that moment, another movement started to grow, a movement of dialogue between the denominations that stand for a belief in God, as they do within each religions. It was happening after October 2007, when the Muslim community from abroad started a movement of dialogue with Christianity. Over 138 Muslim leaders signed a letter known as "A Common Word Between Us and You". The reactions to that were very diverse. First, the Evangelical Christian University „Yale Divinity School" published a response of denial in „The New York Times". But soon after, the letter was also signed by 500 Christian leaders and scholars from 37 countries, among which one was from Romania. Why is this dialogue happening and even growing? Because every church and religion fears another common enemy of faith, and this is secularism. That's why, in Romanian society, we have now a well-known, mediated, non-contradictory and intensive dialogue between the 22

---

[26] According to Ed. Elliott Robert Barkan, *Immigrants in American History: Arrival, Adaptation, and Integration*, vol.1 (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2013), 207-208.

denominations. Once again, what makes us different unites us and makes us stronger together!

The conclusion is that we cannot speak of a religious pluralism in the way of a forced tolerance or a fake agreement, but as a interreligious dialogue. The failure of the State to suppress competing faiths, which was clear to everyone many times in the history of the Romanian people, was often due to the engagement of Orthodoxy, that showed respect for those who believe in God, even if they don't share the same faith with the Orthodox majority.

A conception of human perfection involving both formal and substantial elements will not free us from understanding humanity in a more liberal, free way, but it will leave man facing an even worse enemy. That is because "the God of religion" has died in many parts of Europe and not only. However, Nietzsche believed that the idea of God still lingered in a sublimated form, such as in ideals of progress or of the national state. These are themselves ultimately doomed however, leaving us with the problem of 'nihilism' – a world in which we can no longer properly inquire into the meaning of our world[27]. But a world without God, without His affection and understanding as Creator and Providence, will remain forever meaningless, hopeless and into despair, for man will always need an example of goodness and love, different from himself.

I am aware that this approach of mine does not solve at all the problems of religious pluralism, instead it shows a worse enemy that every religion has to face. Pluralism is justified by the reality of the multiplicity of beliefs and religions. Therefore, we cannot protect our people or children by prohibiting them from meeting diversity, but only with a good example and better explanation of our faith and beliefs. That's why "the market of pluralism does not lead to the end of religious confessions, because religions become stronger and competitive, especially if they give a convincing answer to individual expectations." (Roberto Cipriani).

REFERENCES

***, "Petru Groza of Rumania Dies; Chief of State of Red Regime, 72." *The New York Times* January 8, 1958. ProQuest Historical Newspapers - The New York Times (1851-2002), 47.

Albanese, Catherine L. *America. Religions & Religion.* Fifth edition. Canada: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2013.

---

[27] Adrian Samuel, "Nietzsche and God (Part I)," *Richmond Journal of Philosophy* 14 (Spring 2007), note 9, accessed July 15, 2014, http://www.richmond-philosophy.net/rjp/back_issues/rjp14_samuel.pdf.

Barkan, Elliott Robert. *Immigrants in American History: Arrival, Adaptation, and Integration* Vol. 1. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO. 2013

Bratescu, C., I. Georgescu (coord.). *Dobrogea (1878-1928): Cincizeci de ani de viaţă românească*, Constanta: Ex ponto, 2003.

Bucur, Ioan-Marius. *Din istoria Bisericii Greco-Catolice Române (1918-1953).* Cluj-Napoca: Editura Accent, 2003.

Caravia, Paul, Virgiliu Constantinescu, Flori Stănescu. *Biserica întemniţată. România, 1944-1989*, INST. Bucureşti, 1998.

"Census reports about religions in Romania." Accessed July 15, 2014. http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/publicatii/pliante%20statistice/08-Recensamintele %20despre%20religie_n.pdf.

"Censuses between years 1859-1990 in Romania." Accessed July 15, 2014. http://www.recensamantromania.ro/istoric/recensaminte-1859-1990/.

Chiş, Paul. "Bisericile Protestante în spaţiul românesc. Scurt istoric." *Clujul Evanghelic.* June 19, 2009. Accessed July 15, 2014. http://clujulevanghelic.ro/2009/06/19/bisericile-protestante-in-spatiul-romanesc-scurt-istoric-paul-chis/;

Ciorbea, Valentin, ed. *Dobrogea 1878-2008. Orizonturi deschise de mandatul euronean.* Constanta: Ex Ponto, 2008.

Deutsch, Gotthard, D.M. Hermalin, and Joseph Jacobs. Jews in Rumania. 1905. Accessed July 15, 2014. http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12939 -rumania.

Diac, Cristina. "Catholic kings, queens Protestant, Orthodox Children." Accessed July 15, 2014. http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/general/articol/regi-catolici-regine-protestante-copii-ortodoc-i.

Eck, L. Diana. *A New Religious America; How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. San Francisco: Harper, 2001.

"Eurobarometer Poll 2005." Accessed July 15, 2014. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_225_report_en.pdf.

"Evangelical Church in Romania." Accessed July 15, 2014. http://istorieevanghelica.ro/2009/07/04/biserica-evanghelica-romana/.

Gillet, Olivier. *Religie şi naţionalism. Ideologia Bisericii Ortodoxe Române sub regimul comunist*. Bucureşti: Editura Compania, 2001.

Gorgan, Anca. "Relaţia Stat-Biserică în România Postcomunistă." *Revista Română de Sociologie.* XXIII (1–2) (2012): 141–146. Accessed July 15, 2014. http://www.revistadesociologie.ro/pdf-uri/nr.1-2-2012/08-AncaG.pdf.

Hancock-Ştefan, George. *Impactul Reformei asupra românilor între 1517-1645*. Oradea: Cartea Creştină, 2003.

Iloaie, Ştefan, Paul Caravia, Virgil Constantinescu. *Mărturisitori de după gratii. Slujitori ai Bisericii în temniţele comuniste.* Cluj-Napoca: Editura Renaşterea, 1995.

"Jewish Encyclopedia." Accessed July 15, 2014. http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/5909-europe.

Lăpugean, Emanuel-Zaharia. "Review to Alexa Popovici. 1976. Istoria Anabaptiștilor din România 1527-1768." Accessed July 15, 2014. http://istorieevanghelica.ro/2012/05/04/lapugean-emanuel-recenzie-alexa-popovici-istoria-anabaptistilor-din-romania/.

Malia, Martin. *The Soviet Tragedy. A History of Socialism in Russia.* New York: Free Press, 1994.

Mernissi, Fatima. "Beyond the Veil. Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society." Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011. Accessed July 15, 2014. http://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2010/SAN215/um/Mernissi_-_Beyond_the_Veil.txt.

Păiuşan, Cristina; Radu Ciuceanu. *Biserica Ortodoxă Română sub regimul comunist 1945-1958* vol. 1, INST, Bucureşti, 1997.

Popovici, Alexa. *Istoria Anabaptiştilor din România 1527-1768.* Chicago: Editura Bisericii Baptiste Române, 1976.

"Religious Pluralism in the United States." The Boisi Center Papers on Religion in The United States, 2011. Accessed July 15, 2014. https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/boisi/pdf/bc_papers/BCPPluralism.pdf.

Rudman, Laurie A., Julie E. Phelan. "The Interpersonal Power of Feminism: Is Feminism Good for Romantic Relationships?." *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research.* Volume 57, Issue 11-12(2007): 787-799. Accessed July 14, 2014. http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11199-007-9319-9/fulltext.html.

Samuel, Adrian. "Nietzsche and God (Part I)." *Richmond Journal of Philosophy* 14 (Spring 2007). Accessed July 15, 2014. http://www.richmond-philosophy.net/rjp/back_issues/rjp14_samuel.pdf.

"Secretariatul de Stat pentru Culte." Accessed July 15, 2014. http://www.culte.gov.ro/.

Stan, Lavinia, Lucian Turcescu. "Religie, partide si alegeri în România postcomunistă." *Sfera Politicii* XIV (123, 124): 28-33.

Stoica, Mihaela. "Biserica Ortodoxă Română s-a născut odată cu formarea poporului roman, adventiştii au apărut abia la începutul secolului al XX-lea." *Gândul.info* (02.07.2013). Accessed July 15, 2014. http://www.gandul.info/stiri/bor-biserica-ortodoxa-romana-s-a-nascut-odata-cu-formarea-poporului-roman-adventistii-au-aparut-abia-la-inceputul-secolului-al-xx-lea-11067773.

Tismăneanu, Vladimir. *The Final Report of the Presidential Committee for the analysis of the Communist dictatorship in Romania*. București, 2006.

Vasile, Cristian. *Între Vatican şi Kremlin. Biserica Greco-Catolică în timpul regimului comunist*. Bucureşti: Curtea Veche, 2003.

Vasile, Cristian. *Biserica Ortodoxă Română în primul deceniu comunist*. Bucureşti: Curtea Veche, 2005.

Vasileanu, Marius. "Cultele din România: Biserica Unitariană." *Adevărul.* May 25, 2006. Accessed July 15, 2014. http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-arhiva-1177299-cultele-din-romania-biserica-unitariana.htm.

Watts, Larry. *Fereşte-mă, Doamne, de prieteni. Războiul clandestin al blocului sovietic cu România*. Bucureşti: RAO, 2011.

DANUBIUS
SUPLIMENT

RELIGION AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Issue editors:
Ovidiu NEDU, Cosmin CIOCAN, George ENACHE

CONTRIBUTORS:

Osman MURAT DENIZ

Zubair HUDAWI

Farrukhjon KAMOLOV

Ahmed KYEYUNE

Daniel JONES

Santiago CUNIAL

Judith Victoria MWANDUMBA

Yusuf KASUMBA

Alaa HAMOUDA

Ksenia KOLKUNOVA

Cosmin Tudor CIOCAN