RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND SOCIAL ACTION IN THE PUBLIC SPACE

Ioan HOSU, Sandu FRUNZĂ

Religious Affiliation and Social Action in the Public Space

Ioan HOSU[1], Sandu FRUNZĂ[2]

Abstract

The relationship between religion and the public space has turned into a high interest topic under the pressure of two phenomena: on the one hand, secularization is part of everyday life, as an inherent value of modern life and of the processes of political and social democratization; on the other hand, the strong reaction of fundamentalist movements to secularization phenomena – and particularly to the globalization of Western values – leaves us with no other choice than to reevaluate how religion can adjust its position in the public space in a nonviolent manner. On these grounds, the expression of religious organizations in the public space becomes a very interesting phenomenon, especially if we consider social actions, the expertise on vulnerable populations, and the professional labeling. Special attention will be paid to the ambiguous relationship between state and religious organizations in general, and faith-based organizations in particular, which lead to special interactions between the religious affiliation and the individual institutional participation in the public space.

Keywords: religious affiliation, cult; faith-based organizations; state and religion; vulnerable populations; religious freedom; secularization; ethical expertise.

Religion – from Conflict to Dialogue

Twenty years ago, Samuel P. Huntington, in his article on the clash of civilizations published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993, stirred up a strong controversy between social and political science theorists, and religious theorists, by advancing his

---

[1] Babeș-Bolyai University, Department of Communication, PR, and Advertising, Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Cluj, ROMANIA. E-mail: hosu@fspac.ro

[2] Babeș-Bolyai University, Department of Communication, PR, and Advertising, Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Cluj, ROMANIA. E-mail: frunza@fspac.ro

explanations regarding a new global crisis that would have repercussions on the American social crisis. His work also generated concerns among some of the educated population because of his description of how the increased role of religious fundamentalist organizations in a modern society can lead to a state of crisis and conflict, as a result of the democratic relationship between society and religion.

The issue of how religious community members, generally speaking, fit in different cultural spaces was considered crucial. Huntington's explanations, in 1993, started off with the premise that "the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future. The conflict between civilizations will be the latest phase in the evolution of conflict in the modern world" (Huntington, 1993: 22). As we may easily notice, today's global society still proves to be one of crisis and conflict. The depth and length of the economic crisis have given way, once again, to claims that the Western crisis has economic roots, and that any ideological, cultural, or religious aspects come in second. More and more credit has recently been given to the idea that the life of the Western man is largely affected by local issues triggered, this time, by the global economic crisis, and much less by global affiliations, loyalties, religious disputes, or any type of cultural expressions. Hence, once again, economic factors gain a central role in any possible crisis and conflict theory that aims to clarify the state of crisis of the Western man (James, 2004: 53).

After a seemingly endless debate, even Huntington himself got to a point where he became less certain of his accounts, and in some way gave them up altogether (Huntington, 2004). We will not insist on this debate; suffice it to say that his theory stirred up public opinion in Romania as well, especially when Huntington's book was out in 1996, mainly because of the maps that set the borders of the conflict – these maps divided Romania in a Western part and a part outside the Western world, based on the religious affiliations of members of Romanian cultural space (Huntington, 1996). Once Romania joined the European Union, there were less fears of this theory becoming reality. In fact, Huntington's reflections on the clash of civilizations stimulated not the theory of conflict, but the theory on the need for dialogue. The need for dialogue started taking up an important place on the international agenda. It involved, among others, debates on: 1) the role of religion in the discussion on security and insecurity as topics of dialogue between the East and the West, thought of as separate civilizations (Kayaoglu, 2012; Bilgin, 2012); 2) the meaning of surpassing the dispute between theology and philosophy, between secular ethics and religious morals in the local/

vs. global debate, and between specific cultural traditions and universal culture (Soleau, 2012; Boboc, 2010); 3) the role of religion and ideology in the interaction between 'dialogue among civilizations' and 'civilizational discourse', between post-secular policies and philosophical presuppositions of intercultural dialogue and multiculturalism (Kapustin, 2009; Bosetti, 2011; Frunză, 2011; Frasin, 2012), and others. Scientific analyses of the religious phenomenon have failed as yet to establish a connection between the propensity towards conflict and the public actions of people who are affiliated to religious cults or organizations in general. However, Huntington's theories remain important from the perspective of both the discussion on the relationship between state and religious organizations, and of the role that religious organizations (meaning various religions and confessions) may play in the Western public space.

The debate on the significance of religious factors in the global context gave birth to a debate regarding the rebirth of individual interest in religion, the return of religion to the public space, and the increasing influence of religion on decisions made in some political spheres. They act not as substitutes of laic principles that ensure the strong dynamics of Western society, but as elements of overcoming secular rationalism and the theological meaning of the secular – elements that are part of the contemporary discourse. In this context, several issues are still up for debate, such as the state/religion relationship; the role of religion in solving the everyday problems of the contemporary man; the influence of religion over the decision making process, especially when it comes to administrative, legal, and political decisions; the involvement of religious organizations in the resolution of social problems that remain unsolved even after state intervention; and so on.

The Approach of the State regarding Religious Organizations

The experience of the ex-communist countries is quite complex, as each of them evolved differently. What can be considered a common trait, underlined by Juraj Majo, is the fact that we have all been going through a dual process that implies, on the one hand, the revival of traditions, the creation of new religious communities, the increased importance of religious affiliations for individuals, the repositioning of religious organizations within the public space; while on the other hand, we are witnessing a recreation of the meaning of rational approaches, a more laic institutional development, a growth in visibility of the differences between private and public actions of religious organizations (Majo, 2011: 40).

One of the main principles of postmodern society is that state laicization is a value introduced by modern thinking; that it implies nurturing other principles related to the separation of state institutions from church institutions, to the autonomy of the church in relation to the state, to the various roles that religion plays in the public and the private space, to the laicization of the legal system and

of legal decisions, and to the secularization of public policies. Regarded as an integrating organization that acts in a global context, the state, as a sum of institutions, has had a number of approaches to religion and religious organizations. We will name two: the neutrality of the state regarding religion and religious organizations, and the active intervention in regulating the activities of religious organizations. The two types of approach largely influence the behavior of individuals who choose to get involved in any religious organization.

Therefore, one of the models that describe the relationship between state and religion is that of state neutrality when it comes to religion. Leni Franken, and Patrick Loobuyck analyze two perspectives of this neutrality: 1) neutrality understood as lack of intervention of the state in issues pertaining to religious organizations; 2) neutrality understood as insurance of religious freedom, of equal opportunities for all members of the society, regardless of the religious organizations to which they belong or of their personal beliefs. In both cases, the state will abstain from any sort of intervention, be it financial, or related to the way religious organizations choose to be structured or to perform their activities; every such organization has the right to express itself within a democratic society, according to its own practices and the spiritual needs of the individuals who belong to it (Franken, Loobuyck, 2011: 3-20). Such neutrality implies that by ensuring equal opportunities and stimulating the expression of religious freedom not only is there an improvement in the religious options of individuals, but also a harmonious development of individuals and a greater degree of their participation to the dynamics of society.

A second model worth discussing is the possibility of intervention once the state is outside the "neutrality zone". It intervenes in the life of religious organizations, by financing them, by subjecting them to a hierarchical system and to a process of evaluation that can result in their acknowledgement or lack thereof as official, law abiding cults. As the term "cult" is used with multiple meanings, it must be mentioned that, in our view, the term has a positive meaning, both when it describes an organization that stands out as a minority of a religious group, as well as when it depicts devotion to a certain religious entity. We will not employ this word in any negative way, as sometimes is the case in different religious subcultures (Cleaver, 2012).

The interventionist model is the kind of model present in Romania despite the fact that the Romanian cultural environment has promoted discussions regarding both the division between state and church, and of church autonomy in relation to the state. It is difficult to claim that an interventionist approach is compatible with the principles of separation and autonomy. However, we accept that this intervention is not meant to restrict the expression of religious freedom, given that it does not aim for any elements of religious doctrine, but rather for elements of a financial, administrative, social, and political nature. Moreover, we can state that "the principle of acknowledgement" does not imply acknowledging the existence

of religious organizations, but recognizing them as beneficiaries of state-granted privileges – such as financing the salaries of clerics and allowing them to teach religion in public schools. Public servants must be careful to perform such interventions within the limits of the rule of law, and with special concern for professional ethics (Frunză, 2012). The fact that the state supports the principle of acknowledgement seems to be an overall positive aspect for religious organizations. Nevertheless, sometimes the principle of acknowledgement may lead to conflict or may create discriminatory situations, such as the case with the relationship between the Jehovah's Witnesses religious minority and the Romanian state. It is known that even though this minority met the required conditions for being included on the list of acknowledged cults, and even though there were several legal decisions favorable to its acknowledgement, state authorities refused to grant the organization the status of official cult for a long time; only after a few international organisms that Romania belonged to applied pressure on Romanian institutions was there an official acknowledgement of the said cult (Pintilescu, Fătu-Tutoveanu, 2011). Moreover, state intervention may also have negative effects on certain religious minorities, if they consider themselves vulnerable and wronged by the majority. Such is the case of the Greek-Catholic Church, which has been in a long conflict with the Orthodox Church (and implicitly, with the Romanian state) because it was unable, after 1989, to regain the territories that the communist regime confiscated starting with 1948 and that have been listed since then among the proprieties of the Orthodox Church (Andreescu, 2012). Even if in this case the conflict is not about spiritual problems, and even if religious and doctrine issues are not primary in this situation, the effects of economic, legal, and social measures may significantly affect the religious activity and mission of an organization and even people's decision to be affiliated to such an organization.

Affiliation to faith-based organizations and engagement in the public sector

Huntington's theory of conflict as a theory on inter-religious conflict has generated the fear that a significant type of presence of religious organizations in the public sector could lead to an exaggeration of religiousness in society and consequently could fuel conflicts. Such a view could be fostered by perceived religious violence – promoted by fundamentalist movements as a global phenomenon – or by extremist attitudes of certain individuals, affiliated to religious organizations that use symbolic violence or even terrorist attacks in the name of religion. Beyond such a pessimistic approach, it is plainly obvious that religion can be a part of the public sector, as an expression of individual or collective manifestation, without necessarily leading to social tension. The same way, we

can see the positive impact of faith-based organizations in the field of social work. Getting involved in such organizations ultimately leads to the growth of the civic spirit, to the increased awareness of belonging to a certain community, to the postmodern man's rediscovery of his own relational nature manifested in his relationship with those in need of care and assistance.

One positive outcome following the involvement of religious organizations in community life is detailed by Daniela Cojocaru, Stefan Cojocaru, and Antonio Sandu in their analyses on the involvement of faith-based organizations in actions connected to children's social services, especially children with special needs and children who are institutionalized. In a post-1989 Romania, when these types of organizations started to get involved, their mission was to act in an area where although the government was active through institutionalized services, social work was way behind, especially due to the lack of funding and to children's substandard living conditions. All of these shortcomings were considered the results of post 1989 communist heritage. These religious organizations were largely of different denominations compared to the vastly Orthodox majority, which leads to a double amount of pressure: 1) the pressure exerted by the Orthodox Church as an institution, which at that time did not get involved in social activities and had a very restricted doctrinarian system, which did not foster collaboration with other denominations; 2) the pressure exerted by the secular system of the state and by the general mentality of a community fresh out of atheist communism. This happened despite the fact that a rapid and mass reorientation towards religion occurred after the 1989 Revolution. Under this double amount of pressure, the message of these organizations was "mainly humanitarian and charitable (food aid, medicine, clothing and equipment), and gradually became increasingly professional and implicitly secular" (Cojocaru, Cojocaru, Sandu, 2011: 66). Under the pressure of international organizations and because of creation, in the Romanian education system, of Theology Faculties with various majors, including social services, some organizations were finally developed within Romanian Churches, especially the Orthodox and Catholic ones. Traditional religious organizations which belong to the Orthodox Church leve-raged the development of social awareness of Orthodox communities (Cace, Cace, Nicolăescu, 2011: 37) and managed to come forward with activities conducted in local communities, at the same time benefiting from advertising through TV campaigns made by the national broadcasting network and the development of their own broadcasting network (Surugiu, 2012). By borrowing certain models from the Western Catholic experience (Maina, 2011, Maina, 2012, Szaniszlo, 2011), charitable organizations belonging to the Catholic and Greek-Catholic Churches managed to develop social activities and even become professionals in this field (Cojocaru, Cojocaru, Sandu, 2011: 70).

One important aspect, which was highlighted following these analyses, is that due to the specificity of the activities performed by religious organizations, they

eventually gained a secular form due to which their content "is established in agreement with the priorities of secular donors and according to the nationwide quality standards, as required by Romanian legislation". The consequence of this process is that it "will force faith-permeated or faith-centered organizations to become religiously-affiliated organizations or organizations that have their origin in a religious doctrine, in which the religious factor is less clearly present" (Cojocaru, Cojocaru, Sandu, 2011: 72). In the field of children's social services, this effect can be connected to what Daniela Cojocaru and Stefan Cojocaru call "the deprivatization of family", which entails that the family image as well as types of behavior we associate with it do not depend on the traditional, religious way of conceiving them, "but instead become the object of increasingly specialized institutional attention and prescriptions" (Cojocaru, Cojocaru, 2011: 213). At the same time, we witness the redefining of the relationship between parents, family, and educators, a re-launch of the relationship between socialization and learning, and a re-consideration of what can be deemed as authentic – educationally speaking (Cojocaru, Cojocaru, 2011: 61; Cojocaru, 2011: 140-154).

The fact that religious organizations depend to a large extent on state funding or funds obtained through European programs is a cause of the phenomenon identified by Daniela Cojocaru, Ștefan Cojocaru and Antonio Sandu as a process in which "the establishment of faith-based organizations affiliated with parishes and providing specialized services does not represent ... a means of increasing or influencing the degree of religiousness in the community, but quite the opposite, a fragmentation of the Church's influence and a secularization of its perception by the members of the community" (Cojocaru, Cojocaru, Sandu, 2011: 79). We actually find a positive effect, that of triggering a standardization and specialization process which implies a phenomenon of secularization of messages, in accordance with the values of the social state.

Even if the affiliation to a certain religious organization seems secondary in defining the behavior of vulnerable populations, an interesting aspect is the economic behavior pattern identified in their analysis by Ștefan Cojocaru, Daniela Cojocaru, Constantin Brăgaru, and Raluca Purcaru. Some aspects are derived from the feeling of belonging to a minority. Thus, starting from the fact that "every religion comes with a set of religious needs that determine the management of economy and that influence the economic needs of the members of that religion", they ascertain that "the fact that the Protestants are a religious minority in Romania makes the individuals more likely to be influenced by their religion and makes them more likely to be sensitive to the group members' needs and act more socially responsible to each other's needs" (Cojocaru, Cojocaru, Brăgaru, Purcaru, 2011: 96). These attitudes are caused not only by the status of belonging to a minority. The religious affiliation to a certain confession is by itself a factor that shapes mentality and behavior. Thus, researchers have emphasized the fact that whilst the members of Protestant communities tend to use the aids received both

for daily living and for saving in order to improve their living standards, the members of the Orthodox community use their income and benefits only for meeting their daily consumption needs, which also leads to their increased dependency for financial support. Thus, we may notice that there are important differences between the members of the religious majority and minority communities, caused precisely by their religious affiliation, differences that can also be found in the form of social responsibility which implies "economic, ethic and social values and sensitivity towards the community" (Cojocaru, Cojocaru, Brăgaru, Purcaru, 2011: 97).

In such a context, we will witness two situations. On the one hand, we see, in this case as well, that the financial support given on the basis of social policies (due to the dominant mentality among the poor members of the Christian Orthodox community), eventually leads to supporting the state of poverty rather than solving issues and stimulating a way to get out of the crisis, even though we have growing social programs (Cace, Arpinte, Cace, Cojocaru, 2012). On the other hand, the opportunity of searching and finding solutions to integrate the social services into a complex of activities is created. This would imply the capitalizing on both the religious dimension and the specific elements brought by the society of abundance (Cace, Cace, Nicolăescu, 2011: 43).

There is a general European trend of government supported faith-based organizations. They perform their activities in the social area. In some European states, a set of coherent public policies that establish financing methods of such organizations and types of activities in which they can be involved is already in place (Bielefeld, Cleveland, 2013; Gocmen, 2013). In the European context, although the organizations act in a similar way, it is difficult to present a unique model regarding the competencies of religious organizations and the specific role that they play in relation to the social service endeavors undertaken by secular organizations, as well as in what concerns the regulations imposed by each state. However, it is always acknowledged the possibility that these organizations could have a significant role in fighting poverty or social exclusion, in developing programs relating to community cohesion, in cultivating diversity, in eliminating segregation or in fostering social and cultural dialogues (Fridolfsson, Elander, 2012; Nayak, 2012), as is the involvement in care given to populations with different special needs, including activities of palliative care of counseling for terminal phase patients and in the case of certain radical decisions related to their own existence (Login, 2012; Dirks, Curseu, Schalk, 2011).

These organizations grow in parallel to the non-governmental organizations sector which participates in social programs on a secular basis. The partnership between NGOs and local decision structures proves to be a more and more important and sustainable resource of community action. The degree of involvement in solving issues proves to be higher, and financing from local entities is more consistent as well, especially when it comes to implementing certain measures

decided by the local community (Balogh, 2012). Being a member of such an organization is not incompatible with the adherence to organizations that operate in similar areas and define themselves as faith-based organizations.

Despite the fact that researchers emphasize a certain degree of secularization, as an implicit process of specializing religious organizations, the majority of such organizations do not abandon the religious mission in favor of social ideologies, especially since they do not see any gap between religious motivated action and social charity, between social justice and the practice of faith. Moreover, religious organizations keep elements of visual identity, the symbols that define them as religious organizations, without resorting, through this, to actions of proselytism or actions that might imply any form of violation of the freedom of conscience of the people that the programs are targeting. Even if social action is seen as part of the religious mission that they carry out, the elements that we perceive as springing separately from religious and ideological motivations appear in the view of these organizations as a common body of motivations for charitable social action (Kettell, 2012; Lambie-Mumford, Jarvis, 2012; Hong, 2012). Even more so, motivations of a religious type belonging to a religious organization are resources for action in aid programs and programs for resolving social issues.

Faith-based Organizations between the Institutional Context and the Context of Cultivating Personal Values

Religious beliefs and devout communities all over the world have influenced, in a considerable manner, the way in which the social, cultural, and economic footprint of the world was structured in different historical periods.

The sociological, philosophical and economic debates in post-communist Romania, and in ex-communist countries, in general, focus on the role of social capital, and on the participation and involvement in social actions which would lead to social, economic or human development. Within the compass of these efforts, two notions are frequently called upon in order to understand the mechanisms which facilitate or maintain human development, key concepts for understanding the social relations in the post-communist world we live in. The concepts and phrases frequently invoked in these debates refer often to values and institutions. The two concepts seem to explain both the positive and negative expressions and realities which take place in the Romanian society. The research approaches which cover these conceptual areas aim at providing added understanding of the ways in which the Romanian society functions in post-totalitarian times. This is an initiative that is necessary, but that is very hard to carry out successfully. The difficulty is given by the fact that the post-communist Romanian society is extremely vulnerable and currently in a full crisis of values and models at an individual and institutional level. Numerous studies, either older or more recent,

indicate that the corruption issue (Expert Forum, 2013), the low institutional performance, the lack of trust in Romanian institutions, the deterioration of values at an individual level (the loss of dignity, self-respect or respect for others, etc.) are major issues that the Romanian society is faced with (IRES, 2013). In this context, a lot of the debates related to social capital, socio-economic development, and human development gain major importance for the optimal configuration of the state (IRES, 2013), for community and individual action, for focusing resources on people that need them most. Religious institutions have been, and data shows that they still are, important actors in the way in which citizens' attitudes towards individual or community values are set, or the way in which public policies, aimed at providing welfare, are applied.

Religious tradition, the religious communities, or religious institutions have provided collective action models for a long time; they have set the norms, and action and human cohabitation values and have secured frameworks for the cultural, social and economic development of entire generations. Religious institutions have been, at certain moments, models of economic organization of social life, have inspired or set the values of new economic organization models (see the perspective of the German sociologist Max Weber with regard to the relationship between Protestant values and the Capitalist spirit). The emergence of modern states and the Enlightenment era drove major changes in the relationship between state and Church – we refer here again to Max Weber, who proposed an equalization of the civilizing progress (rationality and secularization) with what he called the disenchantment of the world. The dispute on the relationship between state and religious organizations is important from the perspective of modernizing the individuals' attitudes towards harmonious, sustainable development and has as its core internal resorts (values, commitment, responsibility, dignity, etc.). The role of religious cults and faith-based-NGOs remains significant in the organization of the way in which the resources are reallocated towards categories which are exposed to social risks.

Trust in the Church and the importance that the Church has in the individual's life has been repeatedly affirmed in the last two decades. Moreover, this powerful preference for religious institutions and values is also accompanied by the numerous commitments assumed by individuals or communities. Sociological studies (FDSC, 2010) indicate the fact that the direction and strong responsibility for these values is also expressed in the financial support that religious institutions benefitted from in 2010. At that moment, religious institutions and faith-based NGOs were on top of the Romanian people's preferences for redirecting the tax of 2% out of their income. Data from 2008, 2009, 2010 but also subsequent years show that church institutions and religious associations and foundations have received considerable support both from citizens (financial contributions, volunteering) (GfK Romania) and the state, as well as from people who redirected the share of 2% of the tax owed to the state.

The trust-based relationships and the increased tendency of believing in NGOs in general, in the segment of religious organizations in particular, confirms the social capital theory, which supports the idea that a responsible citizen is one of the key actors in maintaining and developing democracy, the element that makes the public policies or strategies (social, cultural or economic) viable (Bădescu, 2001). The consequence of the institutional development of social, educational, medical components, and of social and economic elements is also reflected by the exponential increase in the number of religious associations and foundations, caterers of social services. For the faith-based NGOs segment, while in the year 2000 there were 174 such entities registered, ten years later, in 2009, their number grew to 480 entities. The data supplied by the National Institute of Statistics shows that the number of religious organizations has considerably increased in the period immediately following the fall of the communist regime, the stabilization of this rise being recorded starting with the year 2006. The spectacular leap in the number of religious organizations is illustrative: the Statistical Yearbook of Romania recorded a number of 6,591 religious organizations in 1996, while in 2006 the number of such organizations increased to 18,377 (the organizations that we are referring to are others than cult type ones). One explanation for the social success of religious institutions in the post-communist era, in both areas with Orthodox and Catholic majorities, is as follows: "Not even the God found in post-communism has a claim on acknowledging His transcendental existence. He seems to be satisfied with being recognized in His social function, as provider of relief. In other words, man today is a believer not because God exists, but because believing in Him is socially useful. Religion is identified through its value of social usefulness" (Buden, 2012: 112-113). The return to God and of God from the communist exile is a phenomenon of great amplitude, the empirical data placing Romania again on top levels from a European point of view (European Commission, 2008).

The considerable targeting of funds, both private and public, towards religious institutions shows that we cannot ignore the socio-economic significance of religious institutions: "a church or a monastery can be regarded as a place of industry, but also as a place of immaterial work, i.e. affective work, which would rather be suitable to a world in which economic life is more and more based on the post-Ford production forms" (Buden, 2012: 153). The services supplied by associations and foundations of a religious nature are placed at the proximity of post-Ford economic views (professional education and counseling, social economics, socio-medical services, cultural activities etc.). Religious organizations become, through the services they provide, a part of the set of industries with high potential for development, referring here to the cognitive-cultural industries: cultural industries, information and communication, entertainment.

Thus, we are witnessing increasingly high levels of public engagement of individuals in matters which until recently belonged exclusively to the private

sector (affirming values inspired by religious beliefs and traditions); on the other hand, religious institutions are expressing themselves as important players in the public environment (media, politics, social politics etc.) and tend to be active in social, cultural and sometimes even socio-economic production areas.

Conclusions

The global context is represented by the re-birth of the interest in religion, especially under the pressure of what Eliade called, in a different context, the spiritual colonization of the Western world by cultures outside the Western world. Only in extreme cases is it expressed in forms of conflict, the visible effect being rather one of a revival of religion and an exaltation of cooperation between the institutions of Western states and different religious organizations. A special place is held by the activities performed by faith-based organizations, which reveal that people's denomination proves to be an important motivational factor in participating in social programs. There is a general tendency in Europe for valuing the beneficial effects of this affiliation and the motivation of volunteers for putting themselves at the service of their community. In this sense, a continuous effort is needed not only from the organizations but also from the central state institutions and especially from local authorities.

Research shows that the objective of religious organizations is not performing disguised actions of religious propaganda, but rather the specialization of the organizations based on the specific field in which they act. While organizations are concerned with holding on to their identity, there is a simultaneous development of the civic spirit, a professional and generally human morality oriented towards those with special needs, those in vulnerable positions, towards those who need temporary support to get out of the crisis they find themselves in.

References

Andreescu, G. (2012). The Romanian Church United With Rome (Greek-Catholic) Under Pressure: The ROC's Bad Behavior as Good Politics. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 11(32), 227-255.

Bădescu, G. (2001). *Participare politică și capital social în România.* Cluj-Napoca: Accent Publishing House.

Balogh, M. (2012). Non-Governmental Organizations - Factors for Local Development. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences,* Special Issue, 19-31.

Bielefeld, W., & Cleveland, W. S. (2013). Defining Faith-Based Organizations and Understanding Them Through Research. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 42(3), 442-467.

Bilgin, P. (2012). Civilisation, dialogue, security: the challenge of post-secularism and the limits of civilisational dialogue. *Review of International Studies*, 38(5), 1099-1115.

Boboc, A. (2010). Church and Culture in Today's World. *Revue Roumaine de Philosophie*, 54(1), 93-99.

Bosetti, G. (2011). Introduction: Addressing the politics of fear. The challenge posed by pluralism to Europe. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*. 37(4), 371-382.

Buden, B. (2012). *Zonă de trecere: despre sfârșitul postcomunismului,* trad. Maria-Magdalena Anghelescu. Cluj-Napoca: Editura TACT.

Cace, C., Cace, S., & Nicolăescu, V. (2011). The Social Programs run by the Romanian Orthodox Church During the Period of the Economic Crisis. *Revista de Cercetare si Interventie Sociala*, 35, 28-45.

Cace, S., Arpinte, D., Cace, C., & Cojocaru, D. (2012). Financial Resources Management – Factor of Sustainable Development of the NGOs Implementing Social Economy Activities. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, 35 E, 48-61.

Cleaver, K. (2012). The Practical and Ethical Considerations in Labeling a Religious Group as a 'Cult'. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 11(33), 164-181.

Cojocaru, D. (2011). Attending parenting education programmes in Romania. The case of the Holt Romania Iasi programme. *Revista de Cercetare si Interventie Sociala*, 32, 140-154.

Cojocaru, D., & Cojocaru, S. (2011). The deprivatization of family and its effects on parenting in Romania. *Revista de Cercetare si Interventie Sociala*, 33, 209-222.

Cojocaru, D., Cojocaru, S., & Sandu, A. (2011). The role of religion in the system of social and medical services in post-communism Romania. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 10(28), 65-83.

Cojocaru, S., & Cojocaru, D. (2011). Naturalistic evaluation of programs. Parents' voice in parent education programs. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, 34 E, 49-62.

Cojocaru, S., Cojocaru, D., Brăgaru, C., & Purcaru, R. (2011). The Influence of Religious Affiliation of Vulnerable Families on Their Investments and Consumption Secondary Analysis of a Program Evaluation. *Revista de Cercetare si Interventie Sociala*, 35, 93-107.

Conovici, I. (coord.) (2013). *Organizații cu profil religios angajate în economia socială în România 2012,* Available at: http://www.ies.org.ro/library/files/raport_organizatiile_cu_profil_religios_angajate_in_economia_sociala_in_romania.pdf

Dirks, C., Curseu, P. L., & Schalk, R. (2011). End-Of-Life Decisions: An Exploration and Extension of the Shared Decision Making Model. *Revista Romana de Bioetica*, 9(4), 65-73.

European Commission. (2008). *Standard Eurobarometer 69/ Spring2008 – TNS Opinion &Social*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

Expert Forum. (2013). *Clientelismul politic – raport anual special*. București, Available at: http://expertforum.ro/extra/harta-bugetelor/EFOR-rap-anual-2013.pdf.

FDSC. (2010). *România2010. Sectorul non-guvernamental – profil, tendințe, provocări.* București, 2011, Available at: http://www.fdsc.ro/library/conferinta%20vio%207%20oct/Romania%202010_Sectorul%20neguvernamental1.pdf

Franken, L., & Loobuyck, P. (2011). Barry and Kukathas as Inspiring Sources for a Fair Church-State System in Belgium. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 10(28), 3-20.

Frasin, I. (2012). Identity and Cultural Diversity Challenges Arising from Globalization. *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 8(3), 37-45.

Fridolfsson, C., & Elander, I. (2012). Faith-based Organizations and Welfare State Retrenchment in Sweden: Substitute or Complement?, *Politics and Religion*, 5(3), 634-654.

Frunză, S. (2011). The relational individual in a communication built society. Towards a new philosophy of communication. *Transylvanian Review*, vol. XX, No. 3, 140-152.

Frunză, S. (2012). Increasing competence - an ethical duty of civil servants. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences,* Special Issue, 32-41.

GfK Românïa. A research report available at http://www.gfk-ro.com/public_relations/press/multiple_pg/005844/index.ro.html

Gocmen, I. (2013). The Role of Faith-Based Organizations in Social Welfare Systems: A comparison of France, Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 42(3), 495-516.

Hong, Y. J. (2012). Best Practices in Managing Faith-Based Organizations Through Charitable Choice and Faith-Based Initiatives. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 38(2), 130-143.

Huntington, S. P. (1993). The Clash of Civilizations? The Next Pattern of Conflict. *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3), 22-50.

Huntington, S. P. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Huntington, S. P. (2004). *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

IRES. (2013). *România și statul socia – analiză*. Available at: http://www.ires.com.ro/articol/232/romania-si-statul-social

IRES. (2013a). *Percepții privind religia și morala – raport de cercetare*. Available at: http://www.ires.com.ro/uploads/articole/ires_perceptii-privind-religia-si-morala_august-2013.pdf

James, C. A. (2004). Huntington or Halliburton? The Real Clash of Civilizations in American Life. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 3(8), 43-54.

Kapustin, B. (2009). Some Political Meanings of 'Civilization'. *Diogenes*, 56(2-3), 151-169

Kayaoglu, T. (2012). Constructing the dialogue of civilizations in world politics: a case of global Islamic activism. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 23(2), 129-147.

Kettell, S. (2012). Thematic Review Religion and the Big Society: a match made in heaven. *Policy and Politics*, 40(2), 281-296.

Lambie-Mumford, H., & Jarvis, D. (2012). The role of faith-based organisations in the Big Society: opportunities and challenges. *Policy Studies*, 33(3), 249-262.

Login, C. C. (2012). Palliative Care A Multidisciplinary Approach. *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 8, Supplement 2, 61-69.

Maina, W. M. (2011). The Common Good and/or the Human Rights: Analysis of Some Papal Social Encyclicals and their Contemporary Relevance. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 10(29), 3-25.

Maina, W. M. (2012). Public Ethical Discourses and the Diversity of Cultures, Religions and Subjectivity in History: Can We Agree on Anything?. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 11(32), 18-36.

Majo, J. (2011). Shrinking Minority? Slovak Lutherans Fighting with Secularism, *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 10(30), 39-55.

Nayak, A. (2012). Race, religion and British multiculturalism: The political responses of Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary organisations to multicultural cohesion. *Political Geography*, 31(7), 454-463.

Pintilescu, C., & Fătu-Tutoveanu, A. (2011). Jehova's Witnesses in Post-Communist Romania: The Relationship Between the Religious Minority and the State (1989-2010). *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 10(30), 102-126.

Soleau, J.K. (2012). Recovering Common Ground: Philosophical Resources for the Third Millennium. *Revue Roumaine de Philosophie*, 56(1), 161-173.

Surugiu, R. (2012). Media and Religion in Romania Three Contexts and a Discussion. *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 8(4), 205-213.

Szaniszlo, I.M.V. (2011). The Process of Democratization and Political Communication in the Roman Catholic Church. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 10(29), 26-42.