PHD THESIS
SUMMARY

Scientific Coordinator,

Rev. Prof. Univ. Dr. NICOLAE BRÎNZEA

Phd student

Fr. Croitoru Mihai Marian

CONSTANTA

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"OVIDIUS" UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANȚA

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INTERRELIGIOUSNESS AND MULTICULTURALISM IN THE RELIGIONS OF THE BOOK, IN TODAY'S SOCIETY

SUMMARY

Scientific Coordinator,

Rev. Prof. Univ. Dr. NICOLAE BRÎNZEA

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CONTENT

Religion under globalization will seem most evident in its plurality of forms, here institutional and non-institutional forms. We should think of the hypothesis that religion will not gravitate, or at least less and less revolves in the way it is structured towards a dominant institutional form or predominantly towards deinstitutionalization. And both forms could be diverse.

Dialogue with religions is here a solution to the problem that the post-secular idea identifies and delineates. The transition from secularization to pluralization is understood as an inherent challenge and requires a response. Another somewhat related example could be the movements we are witnessing in many countries that believe that religious diversity is potentially positive, but in reality a problem. The solutions that are used are ideas such as the need for *common values* and the *integration* of religious differences. [1] Here the dialogue would be a descriptor for *coming together*, similar to the problem of cohesion proposed in some cases with the thesis of secularization, which is necessary in light of the supposed inherent problem of differences.

In order to understand the religious reality of today, it is necessary to get out, at least on a theoretical level, from the limits of theology to adapt concepts that have proven to be useful in explaining the complexities of societies with an increasing diversity of culture and religious identities.

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[1] P. Beyer & M.E. Larivière, "Globalizations of a common discourse: The United Kingdom and Quebec compared in the context of four national commissions on diversity", in S. Lefebvre & P. Brodeur (Eds.), *Public Commissions on cultural and religious diversity: Analysis, reception and challenges,* London: Routledge, 2017, pp. 182–202.

From the analysis of religious theorists and sociologists there has been a tendency to elaborate three separate aspects of religion in public life under the general rubric of pluralism. First, societies differ in the extent of their religious diversity. Second, the degree to which different religious groups enjoy acceptance or recognition in the public sphere varies from country to country. Third, support for the moral or political value of broadening public acceptance of religions is also variable. This third sense of the term is an ideological or normative commitment[2] .

Homogenization in this understanding is itself multidimensional, and this multidimensionality allows and even encourages what might label heterogeneous ways of being homogeneous. Roland Robertson said it succinctly in his formulation of globalization as the simultaneity of the universalization of the particular and the particularization of the universal.[3] He and other theorists of globalization have subsumed this idea under that other less popular neologism of glocalization: the global is at the same time local, just as the local is global[4]. From this perspective, rationalization is modernization, just as glocalisation is globalisation.

Glocalization is a conceptual mixture of *globalization* and *localization* - it is the simultaneous emergence of trends of both universalization and customization in contemporary social, political and economic systems. The notion of glocalization "poses a challenge to simplistic conceptions of the processes of globalization as linear. Glocalisation indicates that the increasing importance of continental and global levels is taking place with the increasing record of local and regional levels[5].

Peter Beyer went further in his analysis and introduced a new interpretation of religious fact in contemporary global society: *pluralization[6]*, which can also be expressed as *diversity[7]*. Like *rationalization*, *pluralization* tells us little, without further specification, and the sufficiency or deficiency of the approach will only be revealed in such additional specifications. Consequently, *pluralization* in this theoretical attempt speaks of the three dimensions of *form*, *power* and *locality*.

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[2] See James A. Beckford, *Social Theory and Religion*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, 73.
[3] R. Robertson, *Globalization: Social theory and global culture*. London: Sage, p. 72.
[4] *Ditto*, Gl*ocalization: Time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. Global modernities*, London: Sage, 1995, pp. 22-44.
[5] See Roland Robertson, "Europeanization as Glocalization", in Roland Robertson, *European Glocalization in Global Context* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 6-34.
[6] P. Beyer, "Globalization and glocalization", in J. A. Beckford & N. J. Demerath (Eds.), *The sage handbook of the sociology of religion*, London: Sage, 2007, pp. 98-99.
[7] G. Giordan & E. Pace (Eds.), *Religious pluralism: Framing religious diversity in the contemporary world*, Cham: Springer, 2014, p. 17.

The multidimensional understanding of globalization includes the understanding centered on the economy, but it sees capitalism as one aspect, of course critical and powerful, of the process[8]. For this conception, the most fundamental feature of globalization is a simultaneity of uniformization or homogenization and diversification or "heterogenization".

Religion within the framework of globalization should also be expected to become increasingly plural or diverse, in terms of its presence or power in society. It will be resurgent in some contexts and circumstances, and declining or even evanescent, privatized or marginal in others. And finally, both dimensions of *diversity* will be expressed globally: diversity will vary depending on how religion is customized in different *locations*, including translocal social networks and virtual *localities*.

Moreover, *pluralisation* means that, therefore, there will no longer be an exception - for example, American, European, African or East Asian - because world society is not the diffusion or globalization of a local model, whether it is American, Western, but rather merely the glocalization of a global observational abstraction. Having said that, however, the *thesis of pluralisation* - like the thesis of secularisation - must argue that these conclusions apply to religion; they may or may not apply to other areas (e.g. economics, science). Pluralization is a complexification of secularization, not just a negation; like globalization, pluralization can be seen as a complexification of modernization and not as a negation.[9]

While such an elaboration of the idea of pluralization or diversification of religion is a necessary step in the realization of P. Beyer's thesis, from the perspective of theory is not enough. We must be able to discern the historical transformation that led to such a reconceptualization of religion so that it is capable of operationalization for empirical testing. In this regard, we believe that it is useful to translate *the thesis of pluralization*, in which the relationship and distinction of secularization and pluralization translates into a historical analysis of the creation of Vestphalianism and then the transition from this arrangement to a post-Western circumstance for religion, characterized by a different type of pluralization of religion compared to the Vestphalian circumstance[10].

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[8] J. A. Scholte, *Globalization: A critical introduction,* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 118.
[9] Peter Beyer, "Global Migration, Religious Diversity and Dialogue: Toward a Post-Westphalian Circumstance", p. 52.
[10] *Ibid.*

In the given circumstances, dialogue is used to address how the categories according to which religion has become characterized by pluralization relate to each other in the social process. A question can be asked this way: what challenges does *pluralization* typically present, challenges arising from the pluralization of religion itself? And how can we expect such challenges to be addressed? It's another way of asking about *the inherent contradictions* of pluralization. Dialogue in this context is the name of a response to a perceived contradiction or challenge accompanied by religious pluralization.

The view of dialogue in this way obviously implies that some kind of response could not be answered at all, if the challenge is not perceived or is considered to be *undisputed*. One such development is the intensification of theories that try to understand the problem and provide a solution. An example could be Jürgen Habermas' post-secular thesis that religion must have a place in the public arena and in public discourse to prevent it from becoming a problem by itself[11].

Diversity is such a common term in everyday language, as well as in the social sciences, with a wide range of meanings. But religious diversity can take many forms, and the dominant ideas about religious pluralism reflect only some of them. In the interest of conceptual hygiene, then it is important to make an analytical distinction between the following five forms of diversity in religion.

It may seem that the most direct indicator of religious diversity in any country is the number of separate religious organizations or traditions of faith that are represented in that space. Indeed, R. Stark and R. Finke consider this to be the only meaning of pluralism: "*To the extent that a religious economy is unregulated, it will tend to be very pluralistic ... Pluralism refers to the number of firms active in the economy; the more firms with significant market shares, the greater the degree of pluralism*"[12].

This is indeed a plausible idea, but it fails to take into account the possibility that some or many religious collectivities are so small that they are insignificant for practical purposes. Another complication occurs when some religious communities are limited to a single geographical location and are unknown in other places. In this situation it is not clear whether the whole country can usefully be described as *religiously diverse* if its religious market consists of only one or two

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[11] See J. Habermas, *An awareness of what is missing: Faith and reason in a post-secular age*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010, p. 88.
[12] Stark, R. and Finke, R. 2000, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, p. 98.

major communities of faith and any number of small *competitors*, some of which are not easily accessible to the majority of the population. From the point of view of the *individual consumer*, the choice can be extremely limited.[13]

An alternative approach is to focus not on communities, but on the people who associate with them. If a variety of religious communities can attract a significant number of people, then this is a better basis on which to talk about religious diversity. But one difficulty lies in knowing what matters as a significant number. For example, members of the Greek Orthodox Church in Turkey who now number only a few thousand still insist, for political reasons, that their country has an honorable tradition of religious diversity. Another more practical difficulty lies in knowing the number of individuals who identify only with religious communities, those who are officially their members or those who participate from time to time in their religious and social activities. The point at hand here is that individual and collective perceptions of diversity can be as important as numerical evidence[14].

A completely different indicator of religious diversity is the number of distinct traditions of faith or major (world) religions represented in a particular country. For some purposes, this is a more useful indicator than the number of separate communities or individual members. It is useful because it can indicate significant differences in ideology and culture. Thus, any country where two or more traditions of faith have large communities could be described as *religiously diverse*. In that sense, the internal differences within each major tradition do not necessarily indicate diversity[15].

Another possibility, especially in countries where support for major religious organizations is relatively weak, is to assess the number of people who combine different religious perspectives in their own identity. This measure of diversity is difficult to calculate, but it can shed useful light on the extent to which individuals embrace religious ideas and practices that come from different sources. Finer distinctions could be made between those people who mix with a variety of religious resources (DIY), those who combine these resources in a new syncretic position, and those who retain the distinctiveness of the original revelation in hybrid forms that

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[13] James A. Beckford, *Social Theory and Religion*, 74.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Robert McKim, "Introduction", in *Religious Perspectives on Religious Diversity*, Brill, 2017, p. 3.

only coexist with each other. [16] The most interesting feature of this type of internal diversity is that it can be compatible with the formal or official dominance of a single tradition of faith. Many Filipinos and Italians, for example, manage without difficulty to reconcile their personal interest in the various religious and spiritual interests with the idea that their countries remain overwhelmingly Catholic[17].

Finally, it is possible to conceive of religious diversity as a process by which a previously unitary religious tradition undergoes a process of *internal differentiation* in separate sects or denominations. The divisions between the major currents of Islam in a country like Turkey illustrate this point. There is clearly diversity, competition and occasional conflicts between different expressions of Islam, as well as in Christianity, but the range of different positions is relatively limited. For some purposes, then it would be misleading to ignore the inner, factional diversity of faith traditions approaching monopolies, especially if the intensity or extent of such diversity has increased[18]. Consequently, if secularization was the fate of religion under the assumptions of modernization because religion was understood to be in a contradictory relationship with what was understood as rationalization, then the fate of religion under this understanding of globalization can be expected to evolve from the way religion is understood with reference to glocalization. Experience informs us that often our true differences lie somewhere else than we thought before the dialogue. A community goal in seeking to learn the common points and differences that two religions hold is to make the connection between dislikes and misunderstandings - to get closer in thought, feeling and action based on the communities that are shared. This goal, however, can only be achieved if another principle is also respected: *interreligious dialogue must be a dialogue on two sides - along and within the common division.*

We must be in regular dialogue with our religious partners, sharing with them the results of our interreligious dialogue, so that they, too, can improve their understanding of what is in common and where the differences really are, because only in this way do communities grow in knowledge and inner and outer transformation and, therefore, overcome dislikes by getting closer to each other. Moreover, if this two-sided dialogue is not maintained, the individual dialogue

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[16] Harold A. Netland, *Christianity and Religious Diversity: Clarifying Christian Commitments in a Globalizing Age*, Academic Baker, 2015, p. 21.

[17] Enzo Pace, "Increasing Religious Diversity in a Society Monopolized by Catholicism", *in Religious Pluralism: Framing Religious Diversity in the Contemporary World*, Giuseppe Giordan, Enzo Pace (Eds.), Springer, 2014, pp. 93-115.

[18] James A. Beckford, *Social Theory and Religion*, 75.

partners will grow in knowledge and experience the resulting transformation, thus slowly moving away from their unchanging community, thus becoming a third reality with the integrative purpose of interreligious dialogue.[19]

It is clear that it is important to learn as fully as possible the things that we share in common with our dialogue partners, which will often be much broader than we could have anticipated beforehand. We will thus be drawn together in greater harmony. Likewise, it is important to learn more comprehensively what our differences are.

From an inter-Christian perspective, *mission* and *dialogue* are complementary activities that are in considerable tension between them. The first reason for this tension is direct. The missionary who considers himself simply sharing experience with religious equals who follow other paths is part of an ancient missionary movement that seeks to convert *non-Christians* into Christians[20]. He may not have a proselytizing spirit in his personality, but he is part of an enterprise with a history from which he cannot escape. Second, the real motivation of most people who fund Christian missionary activities is to bring in converts.

The West has had a long history of using Islam as *another imagined*. The rhetoric that launched the crusades had little to do with the reality of Islam or the mandate of what became called the Holy Land. The cult of the hero of the crusader knights, as opposed to the demonization of Muslims, has created images of the otherness that still shapes the relations between Muslims and Christians[21]. Of course, this process of creating otherness happened on both sides. From a young age we are educated in a sense of imagining each other. The current use of the demonized, impure West by ISIS (Islamic State) and other radicalist groups in Islam provides further examples of the rhetorical construction of others who are imagined to define boundaries.

Examples of anti-Muslim rhetoric among Christians provide interesting case studies about this phenomenon. Since the mid-90s a whole theology has emerged that differentiates the Christian God from the Muslim "Allah". [22] This process accelerated after the regrettable event of 11 September 2001. Although it would seem that the main function of this theology is to clarify

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[19] *Ibid.*

[20] See: Rev. Prof. Aurel Pavel, *Critical Reflections on Christian Mission*, vol. II., Ed. Andreiana, Sibiu, 2016, pp. 40-48.

[21] See: ***The anonymous chronicle of the First Crusade: the deeds of the Franks and of the other Jerusalemite pilgrims*, Doxologia Publishing House, Iasi, 2020, tad. and study Fr. Dr. Mircea Cristian Pricop, 293 p.

[22] See Richard Cimino, "No God in Common:" American evangelical discourse on Islam after 9/11", in *Review of Religious Research* 47 (2005), pp. 162–174.

the boundary between Christians and Muslims, this is unlikely to be the case, since those most active in promoting these views are not in actual daily contact with Muslims.

If not the main purpose, at least the secondary function of this theological imagination is to differentiate radical Christians from more liberal Christians, most of them do not share this view.

Since many Christians have little to no contact with current Muslims, the role of imagination and rhetoric remains substantial. References to current conflicts involve others at a distance — Christians and Muslims elsewhere, in places where rhetoric is not necessary to clash, and where leaders are often much more subtle and nuanced in their groups.

Rhetoric is one thing, but serious problems arise when imagination produces reality. Negative rhetoric about racial and ethnic groups, gender groups and sexuality is, or is increasingly, prohibited by equal opportunities and other legislation or social policies designed to promote equity and equality.

In pre-1648 European societies - when the Peace Treaty of Westphalia was signed - and in many other societies with strong religious monopolies, the boundaries between what was acceptable and what was not acceptable were drawn by religious communities. Before the reformation, the Catholic Church defined the acceptable range of religious diversity and used state powers to sanction deviants. The horrors of European religious wars clearly showed that religion could destroy the social cohesion of a nation and the continent. This period of time also saw the emergence of more powerful states.

The peace of Westphalia in 1648 changed the place of responsibility for defining the acceptable range of religious diversity from a religious monopoly to the state - in this case mentioned in the principle *of cuius regio, eius religio* giving each prince the right and responsibility to determine the religion of his realm. It was assumed that only one religion would be chosen, indeed a single form of Christianity - Catholic, Calvinist or Lutheran. Religious identity and religious relationship, not practice and faith, became a part of a citizen's duties. Later, the Netherlands was the first European country to offer religious freedom to its citizens. In this context, Britain did not extend the full rights of citizenship - including admission to universities, public service and the higher ranks of the army - to those who were not members of the Church of England until the 1830s.[23]

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[23] George M. Thomas, "The Cultural and Religious Character of World Society", in *Religion, Globalization and Culture*, Edited by Peter Beyer and Lori Beaman, Brill, Lieden and Boston, 2007, pp. 35-57.

With the advent of various forms of *religious freedom*, the state retained its role in defining the acceptable range of religious diversity. Religious groups were expected to manage their own internal diversity, but without the power of the state. The residual use of state power can be seen in the vestigeal remains of the Anglican Church in the former British colonies, where there are appeals to the courts to resolve internal differences at the very end of the twentieth century. These appeals are based on legislation that has incorporated the local forms of the Anglican Church. Contemporary examples of the state that defines the boundaries of acceptable religious diversity include the rejection of new religious movements in some European states, their acceptance and definition as a religion by state authorities.

In these examples one can observe the transition from the role of religious organization in post-Western Christianity in the definition of limbs.

Membership of the church was a part of citizenship. The state church recognized the person through the ecclesial rite of baptism, regulated family relations through ecclesial marriage. Citizenship and Christianity were intertwined. The rise of religious freedom first had to do with expanding the range of religious organizations allowed or necessary to manage the definition of citizenship. However, the state determined which religious groups were allowed to exist and practice a specific cult.

Many European countries still actively certify which groups they can operate. The United States operates a freer religious economy as long as the groups support the state. If governments do not manage the range of acceptable diversity, active religious groups are left in the organizational structures established to train and certify and monitor diversity. The question of who decides and how to decide what is acceptable has become a problem in contemporary times as new forms of religious diversity reveal the Christian assumptions of many western secular laws and policies in this area[24]. Muslim societies face the same problem of defining and maintaining borders.

The social significance of religious labels and boundaries can change in response to events and political changes. Recent societal developments motivated by political, military, social, medical events have caused growing concern about the ability of European countries to absorb migrants from the Middle East, even Asia. Following the events of September 11, 2001, the attacks in Bali, Madrid, London, concern shifted from ethnic definitions of borders to religious ones, with

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[24] Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing Without Belonging*, Blackwell, 1994, p. 82.

concern focused on the ability to absorb Muslims. The terrorist attacks had the effect of transforming attention from racial and ethnic differences to religious differences[25].

In the West, the socio-cultural context of postmodernity differs from that of modernity in ways that affect the recognition, assessment and definition of difference at the border, including religious difference, the organization of religious difference, on the one hand, and attempts to overcome religious difference through the ecumenical movement, which had *organic* unity as one of its goals, on the other. Christian and Jewish diversity has been increasingly respected in denominational organizations. Among Protestants, theological and liturgical innovation was often attended in the formation of a new denomination. Waves of migrants from the similar theological framework often found it more comfortable to establish a new denomination — the Reformed Church of America, the Christian Reformed Church, the Protestant Reformed Church, and the Orthodox Protestant Reformed Church provide an example of this phenomenon within Dutch Calvinism.

The modernity of Western societies of the twentieth century also witnessed the establishment of national and global coordinating councils, such as *the National Council of Churches*, *the World Council of Churches*, etc. Each of these was assailed by the need to define the boundaries of belonging by the fact that some groups refused to participate in these forums.

Late modernity was characterized by clear boundaries of authority within religious communities, clerical domination of agenda and policies, clearly defined boundaries between groups, and organizational forms that were reflected in local, state and national government; hardworking and political organisations that often have interconnected leadership. In this network closely related to organizational networks, innovation and religious diversity could be controlled - where possible, channeled back into the life of the organization and where they were not relegated to a separate group, itself soon subject to control of the larger network. Only the complete withdrawal from society allowed for uncontrolled innovation, but the desire to apply the faith and

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[25] Brian R. Farmer, *Understanding Radical Islam. Medieval Ideology in the Twenty-First Century*, Peter Lang, New York, Washington, Bern, Berlin, Brussels, Vienna, Oxford, 2008, pp. 2-6; Ditto, *Radical Islam in the West. Ideology and Challenge*, McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, Jefferson, 2010, pp. 7-19; Shamit Saggar, *Pariah Politics. Understanding Western Radical Islamism and What Should be Done*, Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 14-16; Martin Kramer, "Coming to Terms: Fundamentalists or Islamists?", in *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. X, No. 2, 2003, pp. 133-141.

influence of the larger society brought the most into interactions that required compromise and effective participation.[26]

Postmodern secular societies are characterized by hyper-differentiation. Secularization does not mean that there is no religion, but that religion and spirituality have moved outside the control of religious organizations and societies. Hyper-differentiation results in the internal fragmentation of once seemingly homolitic denominations present in late modernity. Once hierarchically organized religious groups become free communities of congregations, they themselves are often divided into small groups. This internal differentiation diminishes the ability of religious leaders to shape and direct their followers, vote on any issue, or significantly shape social policy.

Religious organizations are less able to articulate with local, state and national levels of government. Religion and spirituality are not only less under the control of religious organizations, but religious organizations are less under the control of the state. The assumption so widespread in the mid-twentieth century that secularism would eliminate religion[27] led political decision-makers to ignore religion and not maintain effective communication with religious communities and organizations.

In postmodernity, religious boundaries are less legal, less organizational, and much more fluid and volatile. Moreover, the increase in religious diversity to include significant communities of religions other than Christianity means that familiar forms and rhetoric about religious difference do not apply because they are constructed differently in different groups. While the West was accustomed to the formal hierarchical organization of christian religious life, in most societies Muslims are not organized like them. All this makes religious boundaries harder to spot and more difficult to demarcate or trace. However, the intensification of terrorist acts - some of which are linked to religion - has increased concern and brought more attention to religious boundaries both within and between groups. As a result, there is more anxiety towards the *other* and more conflicts.

Globalization - the global movement of people, ideas and capital - has not only brought about a dramatic increase in the religious diversity of many local communities, but has also allowed the rapid spread of ideas, images and narratives that are instantly communicated to

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[26] J. Milton Yinger, *Religion in the Struggle for Power*, Duke University Press, 1947, p. 82.

[27] Scott Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations*, p. 18.

communities that associate themselves with both victims and authors of global events that undermine local senses of security. The regular reports broadcast on television and on the Internet about the atrocities committed by individuals and groups associated with each of the world's religions serve to maintain the continuous moral panic about terror, its prevention and the search for security. When meetings between religious communities go wrong and become violent, global communication networks ensure that stories are heard around the world. It is unfortunate that the narratives of religiously diverse communities living together in harmony and productivity do not have an equally rapid and extensive popularization and visibility.

Contrary to the theses promoted in the 60s-70s on the basis of the theory of secularization, according to which religion will completely disappear from the public space, religion is present and even in undeniable forms of presence. Scientific developments have not invalidated the legitimacy of the faith, whether we are talking about Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, etc.

The new communication techniques, that is, *the online*, but also the *offline* space confirm this. In the shows, religious issues are debated, the film productions address religious themes, the services at the Christian churches are attended by people, in a larger or smaller number, in the religious festivities as well, and the pilgrimages are no exception. Also, a good segment of philanthropic activity is supported by religious organizations.

The term *local culture* is commonly used to characterize the experience of everyday life in the specific, identifiable place[28]. It reflects people's feelings of adequacy, comfort and fairness - attributes that define personal preferences and changing tastes. Given the strength of local cultures, it is difficult to argue that there is a global culture[29].

What has led and continues to lead to the dilution of identity and a lack of awareness of belonging to Christian values is secularization, the desacralization of life[30]. This new reality, supported by moral relativism, which proliferates in a consumer society, and guided by the landmarks of the fulminant development of technology, in which the existential fact of "being" is hijacked by the manic contest of "to have", has allowed a lack of horizon to be outlined in relation to other religious identities, and we are referring here to Islam. Judaism, Hinduism. However, one

[28] Natalia Vlas, *Globalization and Religion at the Beginning of the XXI Century*, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, p. 44.
[29] James L. Watson, "Cultural globalization," in *the Encyclopedia Brita*, Nov. 4, 2020, https://www.britannica.com/science/cultural-globalization (accessed: January 12, 2023).
[30] Joseph Ratzinger and Damaskinos, Metropolitan of Switzerland, *The Christian Heritage of Europe*, edited by Viorica E. Ungureanu, Trinitas Publishing House, Iaşi, 2002.

fact is obvious: no matter how traditional a religion may have lived in its historically consecrated space, it fits to a certain extent on the social pattern where it is imported; for example, the presence of Indians in England made Hinduism to be lived here on a much more liberal note or, in other words, we are talking about a "Westernized Hinduism" Lacking the authentic framework of references from India, here we can mention the temples and all the elements that combine the experience of Hinduism in the maximity of its valences, the Hindu believers, being in a new social framework, they are trying to adapt their religiosity to this new social structure, a European society that has other values and social vectors and which is strongly marked by secularisation, by religious indifference[31].

In a comparative logic, the world today differs in substantial aspects from the world of yesterday, and the world of tomorrow will differ, in many respects, from the world of today. Technical progress imposed new vectors on the rhythm of life in all its dimensions: social, religious, economic, cultural, which led to an elasticization and broadening of horizons in which the world became the "common" space of all.

The territorial boundaries that delineated nations, the cultural boundaries that delimited civilizations, the religious boundaries that delineated identities and custom configurations of the relationship with the Divinity / Ultimate Reality, are today surpassed by what is called *globalization.*

Religion must make its own contribution to the promotion of human values. We are bound to each other by our very humanity, by our very existence. Only sin and vice, these diseases of the soul, limit the development of human relationships, affecting the life of each person, in part, and of the community in general.

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[31]Klaus Klostermaier, "The Future of Hindu-Christian Dialogue", in *Hindu-Christian Dialogue. Perspectives and Encounters*, Harold Coward (Ed.), Motilal Banarsidass, 1993, pp. 262–275.

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