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POLITICS, RELIGION AND HUMAN RIGHTS. ASSUMPTIONS ON THE COSMOPOLITAN DEMOCRACY

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Abstract: *This article analyzes notions as the old New World Order and the new Global Democracy. It assumes that the separation between religion and politics, between Church and State, is a necessity in order to achieve a real democracy of a world focused on peace and respect for human rights. The debates about the secularity, the world democracy and human rights must continue. The structure for the Cosmopolitan Democracy is offered by the secularity of this new millennium, where the discussions can be held on an equal status, without appeal to any authority, neither divine nor political.*

Keywords: *cosmopolitan democracy, religion, politics, human rights, political communication.*

1. Introduction

After the world survived the 2000 year and did not come to an end, neither physical nor informational (as in computers, not in intelligence), the beginning of the third millennium started optimistically. But an extraordinary and abominable event changed the face of the world: the attack on September 11, 2001, and what come next, especially the brand new war named the War on Terrorism. Nevertheless, some authors alleged that America did not really change after September 11; only continued its hegemony established since the XIX century (Kagan, 2003: 85).

This article concentrates on one central for this century concept: human rights. It will also focus on relation between politics and religion; it assumes that the separation between religion and politics is a necessity in order to achieve a real democracy in a future world. As Deneulin and Rakodi (2011) demonstrated, "in the social and political context, consideration of the subject of religion can no longer be avoided".

Politicians may have reasons to keep people in ignorance, no matter how wrong it is, and that is for an easier manipulation. But these days less and less people are so ignorant or can be easily fooled; so there are

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needs for smoother solutions: political communication is one.

The trust of the public in diverse political institutions and political parties is on a very low level in many countries. In his studies Ivor Gaber (2009: 84) shows not only that the trust in politicians decreases, but most important, the trust "in the political system as a whole, wanes". The more politicians talk, the less they say. Political communication has reached nowadays - suffocated with tens of exclusive news and political commentary televisions, newspapers on paper or online, news alerts, and so forth - a huge saturation. This saturation doubled by the poor quality of the information and accompanied by a permanent campaign in which politicians are, as Sidney Blumenthal said (in Gaber, 2009: 87), determine many people "to switch off", not only metaphorically but in greater number literally (Gaber, 2009: 85).

Political communication looks more and more like a marketing strategy or in other terms, like "public relation truth" - which means disinformation. "It spreads information that spins reality, which causes confusion, obfuscation, and misunderstanding rather than clarification and enlightenment" (Martinson, 2009: 75). Probably television still has one of the most important roles in making the public "politically lazy", as the viewers passively watch debates without engaging in them (Denton Jr., 2000: 100) or even questioning them; but political consultants are "spin experts" and their role is to subvert relevant information, which conduct to a public political apathy (Martinson, 2009: 76).

The influence of political communication and the ability to spin reality can be seen in the extreme situation offered by war, when the leaders must persuade the public that war is reasonable, and indeed there is a need for it. Since the beginning of this new millennium some political rulers succeeded well. In times of war, manipulation is a necessity not only for the disinformation of the enemy, but also to increase the self-confidence of soldiers and the morale of the population; as well for a favorable *public opinion* in the world (Kunczik, 2003: 125).

When the heads of one side convinced their population that they have a mission from God and they are on the Good side and the enemies on the Evil one, the war is justified and can be started. The Crusades are the best examples for this idea, and the genocides and atrocities they conducted to in the name of God or Christianity in the Medieval Age are well known.

In the twentieth century, after the World War II, Europe evolved into a culture of peace. In contrast, America continued a force tactic and adopted a war strategy (Kagan, 2003: 22). The American political justification for starting wars resides, on short terms, following the arguments of Bellah or Richardson, in an inevitable sacralization of the US nation, and also in "relating God's sovereignty to American politics" (Cristi, 2001: 213); to act in the name of God seems for the USA a good reason for any action.

2. Politics, Religion and the Cosmopolitan Democracy

Since the falling of the Berlin Wall, Western values, e.g. human rights, are almost universally recognized, yet there are more than ever violations of these rights (Douzinas, 2006: 355). Furthermore, the third millennium unfortunately opens with those reprobate attacks on civilians, the attacks on World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Consequently, a new war begins, an indefinite war, without a limit in time, against an unidentified or faceless enemy, a so named War against Terrorism. Because terrorism is evil, the soldiers who fight it, by contrast, represent

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the good. Human rights become the center around which political decisions are taken and new wars are started. Human rights are the "fate of postmodernity", and "the moral way of conducting politics" ((Douzinas, 2006: 362), and concomitant with the concept of humanity become "the new sacred order in a disenchanted world" (Douzinas, 2006: 371).

For a society it can appear just or correct to impose to others by force that society's values in which it believes, only because people trust them and it is sure they are good and right. Maybe it may look just, but is it moral? Religion is still used by the system to control masses. Religion forestalled by political power sustained blind obedience to authority, virtually annihilating the individual. There are some people who take advantage of the soil fertilized by religious myths for thousands of years. But it is even worse that today there are some high-ranking groups who took the old scheme and use other myths to control the masses.

America is still the greatest political and military power. China is coming intensely from behind, and not just economically. In a public barometer published in a study, on the subject of good influence China has a higher score (58.4%) then US (53.3%), and US has a higher one (22.7%) then China (16.5%) regarding bad influence (Carlson and Nelson, 2008: 310).

The New World Order idea starts from USA, its first principal activist being Woodrow Wilson (Roshwald, 2005: 82). Wilson justifications for the Americans to enter the World War I were to make the world safer and more democratic (Ambrosius, 2007: 689). America is conducted "by the hands of God" and should "show the way" (Ambrosius, 2007: 708). The critics of Bishirjian's political opinion (in Roshwald, 2005: 85) can also be read as the critics of Wilson's proposal, in accordance with the mission of America is "to revolutionize world politics, destroy the order of balance of power among nations, and replace it to a New World Order". In Bishirjian's terms, and this is a preconception, the new order should not try to find universal peace, because that is not possible. But it should. Wilson himself uses concepts like peace, freedom and democracy as central terms regarding the League of Nations and the World Order; his discourse is not only messianic, and a clever twisting of reality, but regrettably it is also characterized by racism: for example, he thought that only White people were ready for democracy (Ambrosius, 2007: 693).

In the American leaders own terms, Wilson and his followers, such as George W. Bush (Ambrosius, 2006: 509-543), the New World Order wants to bring peace. More recently the war against Iraq, for example, was called "Operation Iraqi Freedom"; now it is named "Operation New Dawn". But how can a war be seen as similar to peace, this is a completely different thing. It is not a logical error; it is a political communication strategy and it has results. An informative study (Lagos, 2005: 251-257) shows the impact of education level on opinions about world powers: better educated people consider Europe promotes democracy and defends peace better than United States.

As authors like Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane (2006: 26) said in their study regarding "anti-Americanism", one should make the distinction between opinion and bias. They classified and analyzed anti-Americanism into four major types: liberal, social, sovereign-nationalist, and radical. The third one is related with the themes of this article; it focuses on political power and determines that State sovereignty becomes a "shield against unwanted intrusions from America" (Katzenstein and Keohane, 2006: 31). Nationalism is now a reaction to that kind

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of McWorld globalization (Barber, 1996); simply, the nations want to keep their sovereignty when it is endangered. The anti-Americanism can be seen as an anti-New World Order, too. The main responsibility for identification of Americanism with New World Order comes from the American leaders themselves, who used the concept and overweighed it with significations of all kind (Selvidge 2008: 61-78), including the religious one, which is the fight of good against evil, in order to justify their war.

In addition, there is another study (Carlson and Nelson, 2008: 320) which reveals that "the political significance of anti-Americanism in Asia is overstated". In top three, along with Japan and China, USA is considered to have a positive influence.

New World Order is still a concept. Being so, it has power only when it is applied in real life, in society. The significance of the concept is what US political leaders communicate (Hamid and Brooke, 2010: 50), with all negative connotation that occur; its main sense being the control of countries and people, mainly through war either military or economically, another name should be used and others principles must be applied instead of the new world order, like cosmopolitan or global democracy (Frankenberg, 2008: 289). A democracy concentrated on the protection of human, social and economic rights (Goodhart, 2008), showing that already in its intention and further in its action this order is not malicious but noble. As could be seen from the amount of criticism of the first "new world order" concept, some of the politicians and the military forces made it evil. This one has no interest in human life and must vanish. The other one, cosmopolitan democracy, is significant and must be first analyzed, conceptualized and then applied for the sake of humanity.

There are many defenders of cosmopolitan governance as world democracy; but as Tiffany Limsico (2009: 521) study argues cosmopolitan governance is still "a process far from ending". As a matter of fact, it is only beginning. If this good new order will be accomplished, and if this will happen anyway, then it should be done right; after all, there is only one Earth, and only one species of humans. In fact, it is only a matter of perspective: if instead of the love for a country, people will use the love for the world, there will be no hatred based on nationalism. A still perfectible model for the global democracy and its governance could be the European Union, where countries freely adhere and in which Parliament people from each country elect representatives. Of course, European Union is far for being a perfect system, it can be improve if people will get more involved, the system will be perfectly transparent, and politicians will be responsible for their decisions. But as Robert Kagan (2002: 3) argues, there is a significant difference between the politics of the European Union and that of the United States of America: while the first is seeking transnational negotiation and cooperation, prosperity and peace, the second focuses on exercising power, military might, and unreliable international laws and rules. As Hamid and Brooke (2010: 48) show, after September 11 American "democracy promotion was little more than a rhetorical device".

Unfortunately, the other big influence in the world, China follows the US model, not the European Union one. China tends to have the greatest power in East Asia; it believes power, including the military one, follows the rule: the more the better (Kagan, 2007: 24). The two countries are so belligerent from some different reasons: while the U.S. is a still young and immature country with imperial hegemonic

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dreams, China wants to regain the power it had in the past; there is also at least one similar reason: the misbelief "that status and honour, and not just wealth and security", are more important (Kagan, 2007: 24).

Also very important when it is comes to cosmopolitan democracy the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) should be respected. For example, article 25, in paragraph 1 presents a universal right that is a challenging issue in many countries: the right for a decent life (Art. 25.1: Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control). The problems of poverty and starvation, and all those causes, because thousands of children and also many adults are dying every day, should be urgently solved by the global governance. Even if "justice has no requirement that every person in the world should have an equal share of goods" (Limsico, 2009: 522), starvation is not only an issue of justice [justice is genuinely urgent "because terrorism and war are increasingly dangerous" (Audi, 2009: 366)], but also a moral one.

Regarding human rights, Hoover and De Heredia (2010) agree that morality and politics are inseparable. Human rights are a sensible issue and it should continue to be carefully analyzed, in order not to misapply it or to assume it verbally by political or activist forces which in reality will contradict and deny the rights themselves, even if it is about other people's rights.

Another essential human right, which interest this article specifically, is the freedom of religion. The entitlement to have or not a religion (Art. 18: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance), the freedom of religion is a basic right and it should remain on the foundation of the new world democracy. But there is another foundation principle that any democratic system should be aware of, and the cosmopolitan democracy must be established on it: the necessity of a true and complete separation of religion from politics (e.g., the separation between Church and State). This is imperative for achieving world peace (Audi, 2009: 376).

The French Revolution and its *Déclaration d'Indépendance* tried to separate Church and State. The same did the Constitution of the United States. The first did it with struggles and troubles. Latter succeed without casualties, almost naturally, the secularism being necessary to democracy. In Europe the Catholic Church did not want to lose the power and tried to keep its principal and fundamental position, condemned the new laic epoch and still proclaimed the confessional state. This happened until 1885, when "IMMORTALE DEI. Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the Christian Constitution of States" (1885, www.vatican.va), made a decisive change.

Societies had and still have two kinds of fundamental discourse, two structures on which they are formed: one religious and one political. Between those two there was a dialectical correlation and also there is a complex relationship, a struggle for power, a sensible condition that determines in reality, in humanity's everyday life, and in history, several systems and societies in which people have lived and continue to cohabit.

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In Romania for example the Patriarch Daniel (www.basilica.ro, 2009) states that the leaders of all three biggest monotheist religions (Judaism, Islam, and Christianity) have the "duty to guide nations" ("datoria să călăuzim popoarele", in Romanian in original). What this "guidance" involves it is not enlightened, but one can see here an old hypothesis that people still need to be led. Those who are in need, in a real democracy, included in a global one, have the right to be guided. And the "duty" of clerics must not be seen as an obligation for all people, because those who do not want have the right to not be guided at all.

As a survey shows (Rogobete, 2006: 36-38), in Romania 97 per cent of the population declared itself as religious; 88 per cent of these belong to the Orthodox Church. Also, 86 per cent have trust in the Church, more than anything else. Situated on such a leading position, forgetting this is supposed to be spiritual, the Romanian Orthodox Church have also a "strong political voice" and manifests its influence in many political decisions (Herbert and Fras, 2009: 92). The 489/2006 Law regarding Religious Freedom is in the spirit of the European legislation and recognizes everybody's right to choose any religion wants. The Romanian Orthodox Church made a progress: it renounced to the status of "national church" but there is a long way until it will accept the need of a truly separation from the State.

On the other side of Europe, Benedict XVI in his Encyclical CARITAS IN VERITATE (www.vatican.va, 2009), after some compassionate consideration about poverty and charity, makes new links to the political zone. The Supreme Pontiff expresses his official point of view about a different world order, about the reform of the United Nations and the need to create a truly and universally recognized "world political authority" which must seek to "establish the common good". Also, this authority must have "the effective power to ensure security for all".

The Encyclical provoked many pros and cons; some said it has a profound Christian humanism, others that it opens a totalitarian gate, especially with what the expression "the effective power" assumes. Probably both views are imperfect, and one should be situated on an objective side, in balanced position, on the thin line of separation between religion and politics.

Religion representatives as well as politicians should comprehend that the separation between Church and State is essential for democracy and human rights, including for religious freedom itself; it is not the intention of this article to deny the important role that religion has in society, spiritual and moral as well. If Mircea Eliade is right with his main idea: the Sacred is an element in the structure of conscience, not a phase in its history (see David, 2010: 111), then the religion will be important in the future as it was in the past.

3. Conclusions

The opinion, which can stand also as a conclusion for this article and a working premise for future ones, is that this world new democracy should not be made above the people, but for humanity and its rights; "human rights can serve the goal of inclusion and make our human politics more democratic" (Hoover and De Heredia, 2010: 26). There are intense debates about the secularity, the world democracy and human rights (Goodhart, 2008); therefore, the scientific community needs to continue these debates. Positive changes have more often occurred as a result of people's involvement, intellectuals, artists, scientists and so on, than simply as a consequence of political decisions alone. In the dawn of the cosmopolitan democracy there is yet more than always a need for an authentic dialogue; honest, respectful and open-minded.

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The structure is offered by the quite fragile secularity of this new millennium, where the discussions can be held on an equal status, without appeal to any authority, neither divine nor political, for the reason that no one actually holds the absolute truth and because all people are equal, with equal human rights and responsibilities. Maybe a conciliated status between the contemporary harsh political world and some ideas such as the futuristic Venus Project (2011) is possible: a cosmopolitan democracy based on resources and technology, and not on greed and fights for power, if it is desired sincerely the good of the unique nation which is formed of all human beings; if it seeks beyond selfish interests and inflated passions what it *resembles* not what it divides the humanity.

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