Abstract
It is difficult do not accept the idea that values are the roots of human and religious rights. However neither values as ideals nor values as practice are mutually identifiable. At present, people say that "nowadays there are no values anymore". But the variety of human values is very wide. A recurrent distinction concerns the difference between applied values and final values, therefore between values concerning individual practices and values which represent real goals to achieve. Another distinction quite widespread is between universal values and particular values. The discussion tends to slip onto a juxtaposition of universal values and universal rights, which is to say between human values and human rights.
The issue of universal values is not secondary in juridical perspective. As human beings are variable, values as well have a variable dynamics. Social values seem to be required by unavoidable authorities that force individuals to respect them within rules of law. Sometimes global values and local values can be in conflict, especially when the same individual has to play a number of different rules. The idea of value totally vanishing is not convincing, however.
It is not always easy to discern secular values from religious values. Vice versa, there are some typically secular values which are accepted by people inspired by religious principles. The main issue regards those who hold religious and secular values. If religious values are presumably conserved by churches, denominations, confessional organizations, for secular values the state is usually considered to be the main holder, through the established rights and duties. The existing relation between secular and religious values therefore is not a surprise. The different religions and Churches operating in Europe manifest a variety of behaviours towards religious pluralism and agreements between state and religious organizations.

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VALUES AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY
Introduction
It is difficult do not accept the idea that values are the roots of human and religious rights. Actually, according to *Encyclopedia of Public International Law*, published in 1995, "human rights are those liberties, immunities, and benefits which, by accepted contemporary *values* [emphasis by R. C.], all human beings should be able to claim 'as of right' of the society in which they live"[1].

If taken as such, values may also become normative rules, some sort of validation criteria. They guide individual choices; therefore they interact with interests and pre-existent habits (in fact, values are not immune from those interests and habits that are capable of consolidating them, instead of choosing among a wide variety of options or of interests and habits). However, it is important to maintain a distinction between values as ideals (orienting individual life) and values as real practices (aiming at a certain goal), at least for descriptive reasons. As a matter of fact, both meanings are present in empirical situations, where it is usually impossible to establish which is *prius* and which is *post.* Neither values as ideals nor values as practice are mutually identifiable. To be more precise, we cannot analyse the situation only from a behaviouristic point of view. We will have to go further and consider a wider variety of knowledge, made up by a network of interactions between individuals and society, subjectivity and social structure, attitudes and behaviours.

At present, people say that "nowadays there are no values anymore". This means that standard behaviour is different from what it used to be. In fact, as the conventional wisdom maintain, in old times any action was moved by "good" values.

In the first place the reliability of such a statement needs to be verified. History is a document written by countless slaughters, repugnant tortures, wild hatred, and catastrophic wars. This is not obviously an optimistic picture of "good old times". Therefore we are forced to believe that also in the past social and religious issues difficulties were not always resolved in harmony and peace.

The question about the real nature of contemporary social dynamics is still open. In other words we are not quite aware whether these lead to conflicts or to peaceful and harmonious solutions. Even when conflict is believed exerting a stronger influence than consensus, we still have to verify whether contemporary tendency to conflict, hatred, revenge and competition without limits is to a larger extent comparable to past centuries and decades.

How to find indicators of differences and their level, that is to say their percentage in relation to the number of inhabitants of a territory, of its economic resources, without neglecting to monitor the existence of rights and duties, norms and laws, police, structures of detention, repressive measures? But there are indicators also of educational actions and plans for mutual respect and for an equal consideration of other people's abilities and requirements, within a context open to solidarity, while enhancing a correct exchange and interpersonal interaction in a non purely utilitarian approach. A long time has elapsed since social and anthropological research first showed the existence of societies, communities and groups bent either to a consensual or to a conflict kind of behaviour. We have to admit, however, that even in a conflict situation it is

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[1] *Encyclopedia of Public International Law*, vol. 2 (Human Rights), Elsevier, Amsterdam, 1995, p. 886.

undeniable that there are forms of collaboration, just as competition is not completely absent in normal peaceful conditions.

Therefore, individuals and groups shift continuously on the wave of the general culture they belong to and they decide what to do each time in a different way, according to inherited values but also according to the convenience of the moment or in view of an immediate or future gain.

However, there is an unquestionable datum: every social actor is moved by values and guiding-principles that are at the very source of any kind of common law or written law, and they are continuously in conflict with emotions, affection, parental and friendship habits, sudden change of temper, conditions of temporary (or long-lasting) stress or pressure. If everyday news items, broadcast by media, present a long list of embezzlement, frauds, cheats, physical and psychological violence, scandals and other kind of shameful events, this cannot be taken to mean an unusual or unpredictable lack of values. It will be enough to go through old newspapers to find out similar or even more serious events.

It is not so easy to measure the illness of societies, in order to decide whether contemporary societies might be called more or less ill than old societies. The same can be said when trying to compare two or more contemporary societies, whether or not belonging to Western culture.

As a matter of fact, each society has its own fundamental values, with behavioural rules, traditions and praxis, but within the law also. We often tend to judge other individuals and other societies according to our own ideas, on the basis of our *Weltanschauung* and according to our concept of reality, through the lens of our values or principles of preference. But those are not, and cannot be universal values. Some characteristics are peculiar to a given cultural and religious frame, with a certain concept of acting, and emerging from a complex and articulated kind of knowledge that not always is correctly interpreted and understood. It is irrefutable that some values are relative to certain places, or to some "ethnic group", or even to a certain religion, or belong to a linguistic group and to a commonly shared living.

A different approach is the ideological and/or confessional one. Such approach is usually expressed with considerations (usually most negative) towards facts and actions "other", different.

There are some values considered remarkable in a wide social and territorial extension. For example, democracy is recognized and taken for granted in those states in which citizens are free of express their preferences as regards institutional and political choices of the government.

This fact does not mean that democracy is experienced everywhere and always as a value, within that same social frame. A *façade* democracy may hide an authoritarian bureaucracy, or a strong policy-system, or even a restricted oligarchic power elite. Such elite tends to keep the same people in power even when formal conditions might change.

It is therefore important to raise the value of civic awareness, especially as far as the citizen's participation is concerned. This is not a spontaneous product, naturally blossoming, without a careful cultivation.

Values as "participating citizenship" and democracy are the outcome of a long, continuous, attentive and careful process of education in order to "prepare" young people. It is also meant to keep on as a permanent learning process in order to consolidate, to give comfort and support.

Such action of recognition, legitimation (and continuous re-legitimation) and motivation (even flexible, according to actual situations) is very fragile, it risks failure, because of the pressure of negative issues, such as individualistic choices, family and corporative interests, or utilitarian reasons.

At last, it is clear enough that the history of values is characterized by conflicts between ethics and individual ambitions. When these ambitions prevail, we may have admission and resignation to defeat, hence withdrawals and flight from public service.

The contrast between values (more or less collective) and anarchy of single will is a well-known refrain within human history. Adam and Eve, as well as Cain and Abel, or even Romulus and Remus and so forth are all symbolic examples of how society works. An excessive desire for conservation, which can turn out into a will of domination and abuse, marks clearly the different and complex way of life, in the past as well as at present and probably in the future also.

From such historical-sociological considerations an interpretation emerges that is necessarily in conflict and contrast with human behaviours. Even when an education to values has been enacted in a particularly effective and scientific way, one can always expect some kind of deviant behaviour and harmful acting in terms of accepted values. Moreover, if reference to values is particularly lacking in some environments, it is more likely that the system will force all subjects to accept such situation, also as a "defensive" response towards a coercive decision not shared but hard to oppose.

Only a strong, solid and convinced person, who is rooted in good values, can resist a surrounding environment made up by complete lack of ethics, and of respect towards other people. It is clear enough, how crucial, strategic and decisive can be a value-oriented kind of education, such as the Weberian ethics of responsibility or the Habermasian idea of replacing any kind of exploitation with communication. Therefore, before speaking of the "end" or "crisis of values" it is necessary to think of the importance of an educational process as well as of a serious commitment to values.

Values and rights

Values can be independent variables, those at the origin of interests, habits, identity processes and social solidarity, but they can also be dependent variables, those deriving from other social factors. In both cases values have a central position. On a general consideration we might call them human values because they are linked with human subjects and their fundamental tendencies, and with their fundamental beliefs and evaluations, oriented to assume decisions, and to establish rights and duties.

The variety of human values is very wide. It is almost all-pervading. It embraces many fields: from knowledge to communication, from law to ethic and moral, from policy to economics, from daily life to general living.

A recurrent distinction concerns the difference between applied values and final values[2], therefore between values concerning individual practices and values which represent real goals to achieve.

Another distinction quite widespread is between universal values and particular values. But the discussion is still open on which are the universal values. In particular the discussion tends to slip onto a juxtaposition of universal values and universal rights, which is to say between human values and human rights.

During the last century the development of human rights has kept pace with the "scientification" process. Especially by the end of World War II, authority and influence of scientific research have been taken more into consideration[3].

However, democratization dynamics, although growing, has not reached the level of human rights at the top of the scale. They passed from an interest with a few nations and organizations at the beginning of the 20th century, to a number of more than three hundred organizations and nations directly involved by the end of the same century. In this regard, the role of the so called high education has been decisive[4]. Human rights widespread have become a world event. Therefore, it represents a significant modality in the more recent globalization processes.

Problems of equality and exclusion, for instance, are a constant issue at the present time. They are a must in the international socio-political agenda. By now, the lack of participation of some groups – especially minorities, rural and of a low social-economical *status* – to higher education levels represents a strong call for attention and sensitivity for governments and international organizations.

Due to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* approved by the United Nations, a strong interest for equality among individuals and for democratic participation values has been increasing for years. We shall now ask: "Are there other universal human rights?" At most the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* can represent a valid reference, even if it has not been signed and fostered by all nations worldwide.

Sociological research can only give empirical data about the presence of average widespread values in each culture or socio-geographical and political context. A worldwide survey, using an appropriate and significant methodology, based on a comparative interpretation could provide a general information about the existence of meta-values, that is to say, values empirically found in various society that, when compared on a larger scale, may be indicated as universal.

Values such as freedom, democracy, respect for individuals, "sacredness" of life, equality among individuals and others are not necessarily to be considered universal, just because they are prevailing in a certain part of the world. There are situations and conditions which do not recognize such values, thus clearly showing that only a part of the world sustains and claims them as universal.

Universal and local values

The issue of universal values is not secondary. The necessity of spreading abroad the values of some organizations and nations depends directly on this issue. An example can be made for freedom or democracy: we shall ask ourselves if it is ethically desirable to export such values through the means of war which is already an implicit denial of freedom and democracy itself.

However, if in a particular context other values are considered as fundamental (or simply more important) than human life, in this case it is impossible to think about "sacredness" of life as a universal value.

As we can see, determining which universal values are is not easy. Everything we say may be contradicted by empirical results. Individuals and community structures decide if a value is "good" and worth following it in their daily action or in the long run.

Universal values, spread worldwide and commonly shared by all cultures, can only be seen as hypothetical views. The hypothesis can be destined to a failure as soon as an empirical survey shows an opposite thesis.

In order to provoke (but also to produce a scientific knowledge applied to dynamics of values), we might start pretending that suppression of human life is a value in order to verify if such a position is commonly shared by all social realities existing in the world. We might find that the sacrifice of one's life is particularly

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[2] Rokeac, M., *Understanding Human Values: Individual and Societal*, Free Press, New York, 1979.

[3] Drori G., Meyer J. W., Ramirez F. O., Schofer E., *Science in the Modern World Polity: Institutionalization and Globalization,* Stanford University Press, Stanford (Ca.), 2003.

[4] Schofer E., Meyer J.W., "The Worldwide Expansion of Higher Education in the Twentieth Century", *American Sociological Review*, 6, 70, 2005, 898-920.

appreciated in certain areas, within a certain cultural, ideological and religious faith, thus granting privileges to a goal different from that envisaging a totally negative opinion on taking a man's life either voluntarily or coerced.

Moreover, in the same social reality we might envisage a clear opposition between values of the majority and those of a minority group. It is the typical case of the deviant or marginal religious groups, which follow logics of values that are different from that of the majority.

A possible solution might be found by speaking about quasi-universal values. This means that the suggested classification cannot pretend to be exhaustive and to be susceptible of generalization. It would be better to avoid radical and self-referring positions. Values do not depend only on the capacity of a dominant group to impose them to other individual and social groups.

Respect or no respect for values is linked with many not easily foreseeable variables. Especially in the field of values many predictions are bound to failure. The amount of variables involved in the dominance of values is quite varied. In some situations values are commonly shared; in others they are not; in some situations they are in evident opposition; in others they are not squarely opposed to "counter values". As human beings are variable, values as well have a variable dynamics. This latter depends on the degree of importance that each value has for a single individual and for the group. It is not by chance that the most difficult decisions to take are those concerning a discussion on more than one value, equally present in the cultural and personal background, according to a classification which is more or less aware, but which becomes evident when there is a decision to take.

However, even if a certain value has an influence stronger than the others have, it cannot be taken for granted that in the future, on a similar occasion, the same value will prevail again. Situations, actual conditions and other factors, the affective ones also, can have a decisive influence, in such a way as to be often independent from the scale of values of a single social actor.

Today a better mobility of people throughout the world is visibly increasing the occasions of sharing values as well as occasions of clashes[5] between different cultures and religions. That is why there is a sort of competition of political and governmental structures for defining constitutions, laws and rules in order to protect basic local principles from other cultural values imported from people expected to arrive. In the meantime, better solutions for facing the clash of values are under consideration.

The United States at first tried the strategy of the *melting pot,* which consists of mixing all cultural peculiarities and hopefully delete the differences, and after they tried the strategy of the *salad bowl,* willing to respect the different values without changing them, but none of these attempts had positive results. Now they are promoting a patchwork approach.

Europe is trying, and not only Europe, to enforce laws on the basis of local particular values of the belonging countries. However, every single country has the right to adjust such values according to its necessities even if it cannot refuse European shared values.

Among the major values are: gender equality, freedom of speech, freedom of education, the refusal of war as a solution for conflicts, peaceful living together of people with different cultural origins, abolition of the death penalty, non racial discrimination, school integration, ideological and religious pluralism and last, but not least, freedom of consciousness.

Regarding this, there are already a number of official declarations and signed documents[6]. The definition of the parts also shows a clear will to declare to be faithful and practicing of religion, as well as being part of a nation. In Italy, for instance, both Islamic and Hebrew communities are particularly willing to specify their national as well as religious belonging.

This is also the outcome of a long history that has given maximum power to God at first (sovereigns as well were assigned by divinity) and only in a second phase has offered to its democratically chosen representatives the possibility to elect rulers in order to prepare laws for the whole community.

In the past not respecting the rules was a sin against God, nowadays it is called crime and is committed against individuals and societies. A change of mentality in the Catholic Church, which is a main part of universal religions, has renewed its vocabulary by defining crimes major social sins such as fiscal frauds, negligence at work, drug selling, gambling, mystification of public truth by modifying communication contents, and other "anti-social" behaviours.

However, these preached values are not really accepted because do not damage to the community is hardly considered a strictly fundamental value for individuals. There are just a few shared referring values for recurrent convictions concerning homicide, stealing, sexual harassment and a few other crimes.

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[5] Huntington, S., *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996.

[6] Blau, J., Moncada, A., *Human Rights. Beyond the Liberal Vision*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham-Boulder-New York-Toronto-Oxford, 2005, 44-49.

Notwithstanding this, society preserves a sacred, superior and almost metaphysical character. Social values seem to be required by unavoidable authorities that force individuals to respect them. And this happens when values have been interiorized and deeply accepted by individuals.

Global values and local values can be in conflict, especially when the same individual has to play a number of different rules. In this case interests and habits are struggling, therefore there is a conflict of value oriented choices against goal oriented choices, as well as interests of the community against personal and/or family needs. Other factors may play a role, such as interpersonal relations, class relations (which is not an easy dimension to wipe out, well beyond Marxist theories), awareness of one's role within society.

It is clear enough that some "universal" values (nowadays called global values) are actually representative of one social class only, which is the bourgeoisie. In other words the French revolutionary triad of values of freedom, brotherhood and equality is now going through a wide and rigorous revision.

At the end, the social actor also decides to accept certain values instead of others according to a rational calculus of personal convenience, in other words he can operate a "rational choice" (as one of the most quoted contemporary sociological theories).

We cannot ignore the individual choice in favour of personal preferences. The social actor in fact may choose some values also because they mean something to him, or because they are attractive and convincing even though they do not represent a rationally useful choice.

One last individual interpretation of values cannot be forgotten. Values may reduce to something without significance, thus becoming open to any kind of further interpretation and implementation.

The scenery emerging from the background reveals a shared tendency, with individuals oriented towards self realization and autonomy, which are post-materialistic values according to Ronald Inglehart's definition[7].

The idea of value totally vanishing is not convincing, however. We are well aware of the role that values still play within the contemporary world.

Not even Weberian world disenchantment has fostered an ultimate turn, and with his idea of awareness for polytheism of values he seems to have created more difficulties. He did not at all solve the problem of an ethic issue for society, because having various principles is equal to having none.

Weberian *Wertfreiheit* provokes a number of critical opinions as well. This approach insists on the distinction between facts and values, therefore social scientists are asked to keep at a definite distance from their own values, thus totally renouncing to any sort of evaluation judgement towards a scientific "object". The outcome is that the analysis of social scientists is limited to data gathering and interpreting.

A major criticism to this approach is the non-neutrality of a scientific method and the presumed neutrality of all kinds of theories of knowledge. Apparently, some sort of influent value references or ethical and ideological fundaments are acting behind every presumed neutral research, even if scientists might not be consciously aware of it.

At the very beginning of any research experience declaring its neutrality there would be a great number of values. Just because these values are different and polymorphic, they are the evidence of value pluralism at the source, *in nuce,* even before the research has started.

The Kantian idea of a universal ethic, from which common values for harmony in the world and among men derive, has lost many fans and is no longer in fashion. Contemporary sociologists cannot ignore that there is something more (or less, according to different points of view) than "a starry sky above us" and more than the "moral conscience which is inside us".

Calling for rationality adds more complexity. What rationality should we use? The lay rationality generated by the French Enlightenment? European history (and not only European) has shown limits, idiosyncrasies and eventually tragic consequences of that approach. More particularly, history lets us see that thought, even of a small elite and very attentive, is not effective and protective of everybody's rights. Shall we give up research, which is likely to give useless results, in order to look for shared ethical references? Or can we decide in favour of comparing various ethical systems of inquiry, in order to define the more acceptable and recurrent tendencies?

Habermas suggested an ethic of discourse: a double-way of open communication to be acted among pairs, with people having trust in each other and who are open to critical remarks, who do not hold the absolute truth, who are receptive of other people's opinions, oriented to continuous research of common good and in the interest of the community.

Values and ideologies

Ideologies deny any solution with an ethic of discourse. Such a critical note concerns both religious and lay perspectives, because both of them are glued to their deep convictions. A double fundamentalism, religious

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[7] Inglehart, R., *Modernization and Post-modernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1997 [This represents a follow up of a previous research (1977)].

and lay, is not suitable for communicative acting, which is in search of an adequate solution for a number of social subjects. A quick solution is not desirable from this perspective, because it has to be reached with an explicit consensus of the majority. Actually, a widely useful solution might also come from the point of view of a minority. The most important thing is that it is not coercively imposed, without any legal, military, and affective blackmail. A rapidly and easily reached goal is with no promise for the future. Only a consolidated praxis, which has become tradition and habit, even though respectful of the interests of the social actors, can succeed in becoming a wide consensus reference.

However, a delicate issue is the influence of individual interests. When they have become steady habits and traditions, they are hardly put aside. Regulation of subjective requests seems to be necessary, in order not to harm collective expectations.

Nowadays, there is an evident increasing respect for individual rights, which are separate to a certain extent from the social context and do not easily combine with the issue of solidarity. The idea of a social actor is therefore an attempt to place the individual within a relational network, thus underlining his/her human characteristics of socialization, sharing, dialogue, confrontation, values, from neither a non utilitarian nor functional point of view.

Migration dynamics, which have a multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-linguistic shape, emphasize the urgency of common values and adequate ethical principles which are able to solve conflicts, misunderstandings and struggles. The hypothesis of universal values widely accepted by different ethnic groups seems to be far too utopian. The idea that social subjects who belong to different religious faiths have visions of life squarely divided into good and evil with no possibility of dialogue, mediation, or discussion to find shared positions without conflict cannot even be thought of. Sometimes there are rules, adequate behaviours and coherent attitudes, usually widely accepted, which not even through the transcendental dimension of a religion really become accepted. That is why, speaking of ethic values, it is worthwhile reading Weber once again. But, this time, accepting Weber's suggestion in terms of an ethic of responsibility, thus taking into account the immediate situation, the urgency of problem solving without harming anybody, if not to a minimum extent and for the good of the community. One might take into consideration evaluating the consequences of a certain action, or seeing the effects of some kind of acting. Therefore, the complexity of making a choice is always in between community maximum gain on the one hand, and what can possibly be realized, on the other hand.

Religious values

All the so called universal religions contain values that present a certain vision of the world, a certain meaning of life and a specific idea of human destiny, from those referring to books (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) to Oriental ones (Taoism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto).

A concise value centred attempt of syncretism may allow a slight convergence of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, despite many past and present historical events show some difficulties of these religions to reach shared solutions. However, official and organized attempts have been made.

Oriental and Chinese religions have the remarkable experience of Ju-Fu-Tao that melts together Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in one religion. Ju-Fu-Tao is widely practised especially by Chinese people.

Somewhere else, in Japan, social actors go further, not only having their cults and values that belong to other Asiatic religions (especially Shinto and Buddhism): they also include some elements of Christianity, thus determining a mixture of values and practices which are often alternated, according to the personal living of subjects, their families and communities. It is not by chance that in the first decade of the past century there was an attempt of melting Shinto, Buddhism and Christianity.

Among the more widespread values in the East, veneration of past generations has to be remembered. Actually, it is a real cult of the ancestors. Part of it is also the highest value given to piety for sons, which extend to a respect owed to any other human beings. In some cases attention to people precedes the devotion for divinity, so that important personalities, called masters, become more important than divinities.

In respect to the ethical and social character of Confucianism, Buddhism develops more the value of spirituality. We also have to say that after the declaration of the Republic of China, at the beginning of the past century, the system proposed by Sun Yat-Sen became widespread. This system is based on three new values: nationalism, democracy and socialism. Socialism assumes a less idealistic and more military character with the advent of Maoism.

Hinduism and Buddhism, on the other hand, continue to appear more sensitive to eschatological issues, in particular to the destiny of human beings at the end of their *parcours de vie.* In fact, central values of Hindus and Buddhists are connected to the dynamics of the transmigration of souls, which is why spiritual aspects are emphasized. However, within Hinduism, the division in castes produces specific consequences. Attempts of refusals, for instance, gave way to the birth of new religions, such as Sikhism, which was funded by Nanak five centuries ago. Kabir's attempt of bypassing ritualism and idolatry is almost contemporary, enhancing a melting of Hinduism and Islam. Such an idea was proposed again, but from a political point of view, by

Muslim Indian emperor Akbar. Islam succeeded at the end, owing to military reasons as well imposed by the Mogul sovereign Shah Jahan.

Hinduism comes into fashion after a more spiritual turn (deriving from Brahmanism), which introduces the predication of values such as goodness, sustained by Devendranath Tagore, father of the famous poet, who was himself a fundamental reference for Hindu culture.

A further push towards uniting different religions appears from time to time: at first with Ram Mohan Roy, who was in favour of a so called Unitarian Hinduism and enhancing British reformism in India. And after with Keshab, who tried to annex Christianity within Unitarian Hinduism. Later on, Ramakrishna fostered a total syncretism of all religions.

The vitality of Hinduism's internal dynamics is confirmed by the exalted value for vegetarian life, preached by Dayananda Sgravati, active in Europe and in the United States too. Finally there is Mahatma Gandhi who prays for values such as non-violence, passive resistance, purity and truth. Later on there is religious tolerance as a further value. But tolerance can mean do not accept at all.

On the other hand, Buddhism has insisted on absence of desire as a value, connected with body control and the principle of self-help.

The birth of a theosophical society, based on Buddhism and Hinduism, is related to old trends of Oriental religions.

In the meantime, the history of mankind is full of philosophical and religious inputs, from Arabian Averroës to Hebrew Maimonides and Christian Thomas Aquinas. In Literature, Chaucer exalts community and social brotherhood values in his *Canterbury Tales*. Erasmus and Thomas More speak about the value of a simple life. Rousseau insists on free thinking. The philosophers Lessing and Herder envisage the possibility of human development in all religions. Wordsworth notices the spiritual side of community life. The New York Ethic Society is founded by Felix Adler while Stanton Colt creates the English Ethic Society. Horace Bridges has to do with the Ethic Society of Chicago. Tolstoy and Kropotkin write down the values of social justice and human brotherhood. Rauschenbush should be remembered for his "social gospel", while John Dewey and John Middleton Murry should be remembered respectively the former for *A common Faith* and the latter for his "religious socialism". Albert Einstein should also be mentioned for the respect of human life and ethic values. Martin Buber as well gives great importance to the individual dimension. With such premises, the idea of realizing the first international congress on humanism and ethic culture comes as a natural consequence by the second half of the last century.

Hans Küng, who has completed the publication of his trilogy[8] on the three "book" religions, besides having underlined the numerous common elements among them, he also confirms that "there are common bases: do not kill, do not torture, do not violate; do not steal, do not corrupt, do not betray; do not lie, do not give false testimony; do not commit abuse. These principles belong to all religions. Usually, Catholics totally agree. In some cases the problem arises, when respect for life is identified with the condemnation of contraceptives, when there is a consideration of abortion which is too rigid, if there is a discriminatory attitude towards homosexuality or if the problems linked to euthanasia are not understood". He concludes: "we need moral fundamentals. But these cannot be laicism, neither can they be clericalism, or restoration of Christian Europe as Pope Wojtyla desired. There cannot be a restoration of an atheist State as it happened after the French Revolution. We need a common ethic ground, which means to accept basis ethical norms sustained by all important religion and by philosophical traditions, which can also be accepted by non believers".

Religious values, because they are contained within an ideological system, have a number of fundamental ideas, which often mean condemnations, precepts and prohibitions. Such a characteristic does not prevent them from being quite widely accepted. It can happen that for the sake of a confessed and practised religion, one tries to propose ones own values, asking for a legal recognition in the constitution, within actual norms and in the regulation of cults, with extensions that can comprehend aspects which are far from those peculiar to a religious faith.

Especially when a crisis of values occurs, recurring to religious values seems to be a successful and unavoidable remedy. However, sociological research results clearly suggest that no value, either religious or secular, can totally satisfy all needs of social life. The same can be said for every group of values that belong to a specific religious faith. Law, public organization and public procedures cannot solve their complexity just within one frame of reference. At first we have to consider that all situations evolve, appearing in unpredictable ways and often presenting complications. The possibility of conforming a jurisdiction to a specific group of religious values in order to "educate" social actions, does not seem to be an adequate solution to face the diversities inside societies, and religions, and to solve the problem at its very origin, even less can it help predicting the development of democratic dynamics or anticipating any sort of political choice.

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[8] Küng, H., *Christianity: Essence, History, and Future*, Continuum, New York, 1995; *Judaism: Between Yesterday and Tomorrow*, Continuum, New York, 1995; *Islam: Past, Present & Future*, Oneworld, Oxford, 2007.

Moreover, whether religious or not, values do not complete their influence and function in a particular law order. They are more than that. That is why they have a much wider reference, a more solid foundation given by the same social actors, and beyond any futile simplification they exert a strong critical influence on choices to be made.

Values do not seem to be an "all occasion recipe". An attentive analysis of social reality is usually required to put values into practice. Even more so, values are a general tendency and they are not capable of depriving the individual of his freedom taking the place of the individual's reflexive action. More than some sort of defence, values are like an encouragement for acting in the world with great attention but fearless. Actually, values seem to have something in common with scientific theories: both are able to guide without forcing the individual, they both give autonomy to a certain extent, they use "transcendence" not in a mere religious sense but as a way to overcome exclusive, unchanging and unfailing principles.

It is not a sort of diffused relativism to be used at all costs, it is rather an attentive and educated approach, which comprehends pluralism but at the same time shows an awareness of relativity of the existing and possibly feasible different positions.

The social actor can therefore assume a sort of starting weakness of values, more than flexibility, because they are bound to come up against social reality data and face their own evolution.

It is not by chance that a fundamental state law, which is the constitution, even if considered "sacred", needs to be up-dated and to be revised, also for the search for "almost" universal values. Such "almost" universal values mean that they are mostly retained consensual towards what cannot be ignored at a *certain moment of time* and *within a certain society*.

That is why every attempt of state religion, as a pact between religion and state, does not last long. Individuals are willing to personally elaborate what is codified. That means that they are keen to give their own interpretation and, even more, they tend to apply it with measure, criticism, focusing on the situations. Pacts between churches and public administrations, even if, on the one hand, they lead to good results, offering advantages and facilitating religious organizations, they also represent an obstacle for an unconditioned acceptance by citizens. Thus, taking back their individual rights, citizens exert their own rights bypassing the agreement between high religious and political officials. Religion loses its character of value-bearer for all and is perceived as mere ideology and power, therefore it becomes similar to other forcing structures.

Therefore, if religions are longing for values towards human rights and civil respect, freedom and battle against any sort of slavery and against any totalitarian government, they are judged less reliable.

Secular values

It is not so easy to discern secular values from religious values. Some religious values are widely accepted also by those who declare to be lay. Vice versa, there are some typically secular values which are accepted by people inspired by religious principles.

The main issue regards those who hold religious and secular values. If religious values are presumably conserved by churches, denominations, confessional organizations, for secular values the state is usually considered to be the main holder. However, in this case it is better to use another definition: in fact they are "secularist" or "laicism oriented" values, more then secular or lay values, which usually have their moral basis in personal consciousness, in the free and autonomous possibility of choice of the individual.

At this point there is a similar individual attitude and behaviour towards religion and politics, as well as towards church and state. Finally, absolute values are not sociologically dominant because values and ethical aims are various and differently shaped, therefore they are not related to the same one religious and/or political system.

We also have to consider that a supposed unity of religious values is not necessarily related only to one form of political organization, as well. Vice versa, a shared political situation does not mean that there is only one platform of values. In other words, Weberian polytheism of values is true both for the religious as well as the public sphere.

Every institution is founded on some shared values, therefore it is never neutral and without prejudice. A lay point of view also has its own burden of values. A state that assumes to be ethical, for example, becomes the main source of values for its citizens, who usually turn their autonomous capacity of taking decisions, using their own personal conscience and taking advantage of their freedom of acting.

However, if the state is founded on ethical principles and aims at protecting them within its citizens, it becomes a further guarantee for freedom of thought and action. Especially if the value of freedom is highly considered, in relation to the individual rights on one's body ("this body is mine and I can do what I want with it") as well as on property rights on non material goods ("this is my mind and I can use it as I like").

Also a "cybernetic" idea of social reality, such as Luhmann's neo-functionalism[9], might be identified as based on the lay-secular values of good functioning, order, social balance and of a systematic regulation. Historical

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[9] Luhmann, N., *The Differentiation of Society*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1982.

and social experience has already verified that this approach is not self-sufficient and has to face individual autonomy and its own free choices. When there is no reciprocity between state values and the citizens tendencies a crisis of society occurs, thus causing conflicts of values and an increasing number of anomic behaviours.

A good functioning of social structure is assured by widespread values, and it can only occur when the structure, its basic values and all its subdivisions are in harmony with the orienting tendencies of social actors. On the background of these secular and lay pictures is the value of freedom of consciousness, a basic character that no state can substitute. That is why any state, whether lay (otherwise "laicism oriented") or secular (otherwise "secularist"), cannot leave out from consideration either ethical autonomy of religions or ethical autonomy of social actors. However, even if it does not imply that politics depends on religion, they both have to recall the value of reasoning, whose characteristic is to be a lay-secular value originated by French Enlightenment but which is well known by universal and non universal religious traditions.

A number of philosophers have actually fostered the consolidation of some values by giving them a sacred "aura", which is already a metaphysical definition. The existing relation between secular and religious values therefore is not a surprise. In order to understand change of values, it is necessary to know the origins of such values as well. Therefore, traditions and old paths have to be explored again, in order to have a clear vision of the present situation. Along this research, it is easy to realize that a wide part of contemporary values has ancient origins belonging to religious inspiration.

From the point of view of sociology of knowledge we can say that a longer lasting of religious institutions and their intellectual elites has influenced social dynamics more than the ephemeral tenure of political and state structures.

In the meantime, if religions lose strength and the ability of orienting themselves, their typical values show the effects: they become weak on a large scale, as well as value principles of political parties, or union trusts, or any other kind of group which starts to lose popularity in public opinion. One of the first indicators of this kind of weakness is the advent of new value pluralisms, with alternative values, and an increasing instability of previous values, defended by more militant groups, which are therefore keener on fundamentalisms.

Religious diversity in Europe
The scenario of European societies is rapidly changing, particularly in the field of religion and Churches. New streams of believers and religious organizations are reaching different places in Europe, sometimes very far from their countries of historical origin. The phenomenon of religious acculturation is a kind of challenge between religious movements and local people and culture. Nowadays, the relation between different peoples and religions is becoming more and more frequent and more long lasting than in the past, when the few occasions for a direct contact (vis-à-vis) were only due to conflicts and territorial invasions, therefore there wasn't any mediation.

There aren't major hindrances in crossing European continent. This is why migrations, invasions, incursions, and expansions have easily occurred as well as cultural exchanges of various origins, on a linguistic and political level, as well as economic and legal, ethic and religious. In ancient times polytheistic religions were prevailing in European territories, followed by monotheistic religions of "salvation" such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The presence of Jewish people in Central and Oriental Europe became important. In fact Judaism developed its own particular culture and its diffusion at first in closed Oriental territories (and after in Europe) also caused deep differences. After 1492 a decisive change in the presence of Jewish people in Europe was registered: in The Netherlands, in Poland, in Lithuania and other East European countries an increase in Jewish population was registered, as well as in Italy and everywhere else in the Turkish Empire.

In Europe nowadays, the Catholic Church is the main religious influence in the Central and Southern area; Protestantism is the main religious influence in the centre and Northern area; Greek and Russian Orthodox is the main religious influence in the South-Western area; Muslim is the main religious influence in Oriental areas of Europe.

Other religions and other Churches have crossed Europe also exerting a certain political power, thus influencing economy and linked aspects.

Religions have significant presence almost everywhere but mostly in the great urban centres, where non-Christian worship places have dimensions, capacity and visibility which cannot be ignored. Changes are also evident in religions of non European origins but present in almost all of Europe. Linguistic barriers persist, as well as political and national barriers, also the diversity of race and religion keep at a mutual distance. If on the one hand, some improvements have occurred, on the other hand reciprocal mistrust is not diminishing and seems to be rising because of the difficulty in verifying on the reliability.

The mixture of religions, Churches and temples, but also of new religious movements[10] is a clear indicator of pluralism that registers through the *European Values Study* of 1999-2000 specific convergences/divergences that also create a common shared plateau of values[11] among areas usually homogeneous. In the predominantly Catholic countries as well as in the Anglican Great Britain and in Orthodox Greece there is a favourable tendency towards both propitious to secular and rational values and values of auto-expression.

The relation between state and religion is not the same everywhere throughout Europe: in some countries there is a clear separation even regulated by the law (as happened in France from 1905), in other countries there is a more or less conservatory legal regime (Spain, Italy and Portugal), and there are also countries with state Churches (Scandinavian countries and Great Britain). As a matter of fact, there are in Europe some secular states that offer many privileges to religious communities. Another possibility is that state and religion do not have a shared identity but do not take complete opposite positions, sometimes they negotiate case by case, as it happens to majority Churches in a country or towards other minor Churches, movements and religious groups.

Europe has a generally strong presence of Christians (more than 550,000,000), with its different kinds of Catholicism, and Protestantism. Since centuries, there are other confessions, but recently new migratory flows have stressed the presence of Islam and some Oriental religions.

Culture plays an important role for the presence of religion and Churches in single nations. In other words as religion is a fundamental part of each culture, the consequence is that traditions, habits, customs and institutions are influenced at different levels and for many generations, so that at a distance of years and centuries their historical and sociological outcome can be seen.

This division of religions by their belonging cultures seems to be quite founded because "belonging to a culture is the basic factor for self-accomplishment. In a time of quick changes people automatically look back to the past, because they fear of being separated from their roots. Immigrants, for example, feeling the majority typical values as a menace, they try to maintain social, cultural and religious traditions of their group through many generations, and defending themselves as subcultures especially in the 'melting pot' of the modern megalopolis"[12]. On the other hand Hélène Carrère d'Encausse[13] was right some years ago when in her book *L'empire éclaté* had foreseen that the Soviet Union would no longer be dominated by the European part, but by Asiatic populations that had a strong political, cultural and religious structure.

Moreover, the so-called thawing out of post-iron curtain would originate a growing demand from the populations of the East to the West.

According to Giuseppe D'Amato[14] "the enlargement of the European Union to the East represents the starting point for a not yet definite process that the fifteen old UE members probably did not expect to trigger off. If the Chancellor Helmut Kohl had to organize German reunification in a few weeks, Brussels will now have to clearly and quickly define, in order not to be anticipated by the events, a common systematic foreign policy to be good neighbours and establish if the Union will be in the future a political entity or simply an economical area and a democratic free place". However, concludes D'Amato[15], "in the new Europe of 25, 27 or 30 countries, the direction will be decided by the variable majorities, even if now they are more or less stable and will have the ability of compromising". Errors and wounds of the past are not easy to overcome.

One example, for all, is the case of the Baltic area. In Latvia a real independence from Russia arrived only in 1990: as well as Estonia and Lithuania, Latvia was crushed by Nazism and Stalinism in the meantime. Ukraine and Poland have similar problems.

The Baltic territory is characterized by two peculiar presences, that of the Lutherans in Latvia and Estonia (where the influence of Lutheran Germany and Finland is evident) and that of the minority of *Old Believers* in Lithuania and Latvia (respectively in Vilnius and Riga). The *Old Believers* are actually present in Belarus and in Moscow where they are supposed to have a little less than one million of adepts. *Old Believers* are dissidents of the Orthodox Church for liturgical reasons from the second half of the seventeenth century; they are divided in various groups (with or without priests), and they passed through many events and persecutions.

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[10] Barker, E., *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction*, Her Britannic Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1989.

[11] Inglehart, R. (ed.), *Human Values and Social Change: Findings from the Values Surveys*, Brill, Leiden, 2003.

[12] Kerkhofs, J., "Il significato degli studi sui valori per il futuro dell'Europa", in G. Capraro (ed.), *I valori degli europei e degli italiani negli anni novanta*, Servizio Studi della Regione Autonoma Trentino-Alto Adige, Trento, 1995, 23-38.

[13] Carrère d'Encausse, H., *L'empire éclaté*, Flammarion, Paris, 1978.

[14] D'Amato, G., "L'Europa centro-orientale e il nodo della storia", *Storia Politica Società*, V, 7, 66-70, 2005, p. 68.

[15] *Ibíd*, p. 69.

Politics and religion

Many particular situations throughout former Yugoslavian territories show that national-oriented culture and religious politicization processes were widely popular in the country. In fact Catholicism in Herzegovina was a "religion in a border region", but it has become a "border religion"[16]. Tomka's contribution too is remarkable and faces diverse issues of East and Western Europe with a comparative approach. He begins with three remarks: religious influence is declining in Western Europe; while Western young people seem to be increasingly less religious, the Eastern and Central situation seems to register an inverted tendency; in ex-Communist countries the role of Churches is increasingly popular. Some Central European countries play a different role and are more modernized and represent a solid reference for East countries, which are quite marginal in comparison with Western countries. There are two main guiding factors at the origins of Western Christian Churches: Church as an institution and individual autonomy. However, when we want to distinguish what is peculiar of Oriental Churches respect to Western Churches we come to six differences, according to Tomka[17]: a reduced control of the Church and dominance of local factors; the tendency to homologate forms with contents, beliefs with symbols, liturgy with art; a more collective than individual approach to religious belonging and a dominant position of the clergy within an ecclesiastic role hierarchy; religion and culture are mainly considered as one; a formally bombastic liturgy that does not allow adjustments, changes nor a direct participation of laymen; a basic unity between politics and religion, as well as state and Church, just like a "symphony".

Apparently opportunistic strategies were developed by the Orthodox Church in order to survive bad situations. This was also possible because national Orthodox Churches (in Greece as in Georgia, in Russia as in Serbia) lacked close relations; therefore there was no need for a similar behaviour. It is part of a generic and all-embracing spirituality that leads to an identification between religion, culture and state: "being Orthodox and Bulgarian, for instance, is almost the same, but withdrawing from religion as moral teachings or as based in religious practice is rather rare"[18]. This happens in contexts where Orthodox religion prevails.

"With the collapse of Communism, the countries of Eastern and Central Europe joined the world of growing differentiation and globalization"[19]. The operation was easier in Central European countries, especially Poland, in the Baltic area, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia. Finally, the difference between religions of Western and Eastern Europe is given by the presence of a problem of national identity connected to religious belonging.

In Croatia as well as in Poland, for instance, the Catholic Church has fostered the birth of a modern nation-state[20]. Ethnical and religious conflicts occurred between Serbian Orthodox against Bosnian Muslims and against Serbian Catholics with Croatian habits. It is important to remember that in 1967 an autocephalous Macedonian Orthodox Church was auto-proclaimed in Macedonia, independent from the Serbian Church.

Also Serbian nationalism contributed to a religious rebirth. Moreover interethnic disputes had a religious connotation: Catholics, Orthodox and Muslims were fighting one against the other.

Religious pluralism

Greek and Irish constitutions refer to religion, the German one permits *Invocatio Dei,* the European one does not give any reference at all.

This diversity, one could surmise, may also create consequences in the religious-ethical field and within the Churches in particular[21].

Speaking of pluralism and respect of religion, Europe develops a number of different issues[22]. Independently of the type of preponderant religion, problems of freedom of expression and religion practices rise from minority confessions. The different religions and Churches operating in Europe manifest a variety of behaviours towards religious pluralism. This is the result of a wide inquiry called RAMP (Religious And Moral

[16] Vrcan, S., "A Preliminary Challenge: Borders or Frontiers?", *Social Compass*, 53 (2), 2006, 215-226, p. 222.

[17] Tomka, M., "Is Conventional Sociology of Religion Able to Deal with Differences between Eastern and Western European Developments?", *Social Compass*, 53 (2), 2006, 251-265, pp. 259-262.

[18] Borowik, I., "Orthodoxy Confronting the Collapse of Communism in Post-Soviet Countries"*, Social Compass*, 53 (2), 2006, 267-278, p. 270.

[19] *Ibíd.*, p. 272.

[20] Martin, D., *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2005, p. 81.

[21] Cipriani, R., "Traditions and Transitions: Reflections on the Problems and Prospects for Religions in Eastern and Central Europe", in W. H. Swatos, Jr. (ed.), *Politics and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe. Traditions and Transitions*, Praeger, Westport (Ct)-London, 1994, 1-16, p. 2.

[22] Davie, G., *Religion in Modern Europe*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2000; *Europe: The Exceptional Case*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 2002; Davie, G., Hervieu-Léger, D. (eds.), *Identités religieuses en Europe*, La Découverte, Paris, 1996; Bolgiani, F., Margiotta Broglio, F., Mazzola, R. (eds.), *Chiese cristiane, pluralismo religioso e democrazia liberale in Europa*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2006.

Pluralism) carried out in many European countries: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Sweden[23]. The conclusions of this research are not univocal: "in the model explaining pluralism as a cultural enrichment … the effect of Church commitment is positive, meaning that people with a high degree of commitment to their Church also tend to appreciate the cultural enrichment of religious pluralism". Actually "the Churches are challenged to change their positions. Formerly, the Churches as authoritative institutions could proclaim a truth that was taken for granted by Church members. Religious identity must then try to take into account the existence of other religious identities, aspects which modify its structure of belief. Young people are the first ones to experience the dynamics of secularization, thus reducing rates of religious belonging feelings, of ritual practices and spiritual dependence. This impetus originates from below: with the diffusion of new religious identities, groups and organisations ranging from Buddhists, to the new Churches of Protestant matrix and the different Islamic communities. There are also pressures that come from above, from the effects of European integration that require a re-negotiation of long-standing Church-state relations"[24].

Religious differences in Europe do not start in the twentieth century but their roots date further back.

There are traditional countries like Ireland and Portugal but in the predominantly Catholic countries of Czech Republic, Slovenia, France, Belgium, Austria, Italy and Spain as well as in the Anglican Great Britain and in Orthodox Greece there is a favourable tendency towards both propitious to secular and rational values and values of auto-expression. These last values are less evident especially in Poland, where there is a certain traditionalism as well as survival values; the same can be said for Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Romania; for other countries such as Slovenia, Bosnia, Lithuania, Estonia, Belarus, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Hungary, Latvia, Albania, Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine and Moldavia secular-rational and *survival values* are combined; at the end Protestant Europe is strongly signed by secular-rational and *self expression* values.

The Catholic Church

Catholic Church has a capillary presence of religious structures and organisations, numerous religious and lay educational institutions, which operate all over Europe where, thanks to this extensive network, it includes about two hundred thousand priests, with different rites (Roman Latin, and Ambrosian, but also several Eastern rites: Alexandrian, Antiochian, Armenian, Chaldean and Constantinopolitan or Byzantine).

From the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council on, the Catholic Church has shown a willingness to interrelate with the denominations, both Christian and non Christian, attempting forms of dialogue especially with the Churches of the East. Important steps have been taken and declarations of reciprocal goodwill made, but not always in terms of total openness.

For many centuries the history of the Catholic Church was one with the history of Europe itself. It was only in the sixteenth century that it began to spread to other continents, especially to the Americas. Meanwhile in Europe it suffered several splits, especially within the Eastern Church. Furthermore, it witnessed internal diversifications of ritual and local reference sites homologous to those of the non-Catholic Eastern Churches. Thus the following Eastern-Rite Catholic Churches emerged: the Byzantine-rite of the Ukrainians; the Byzantine-rite of Hungary; the Byzantine-rite of the Greek Catholic Church; the Byzantine-rite of Croatia; the Byzantine-rite of Bulgarian Catholic Church; the Church of the Rumanian Catholics; the Byzantine-rite of Moscow; the Byzantine-Rite of Belarus Catholic Community; the Byzantine and Latin-rite of Albania; the Byzantine-rite of Italian-Albanian dioceses (in Calabria and Sicily).

New attitudes compared to those of the past towards other Christian and non-Christians religions have appeared. It suffices to recall the *Ostpolitik* fostered by John XXIII and Paul VI. However relations with the Russian Orthodox Church have remained problematic.

Among European Catholics the Pentecostalism movement has become particularly significant and, like Protestant Pentecostalism, it too exalts charismatic phenomena, the role of the Holy Spirit, oral expression, prayer, prophecy, recovery, and spontaneous manifestation. The development of this phenomenon is so powerful and differentiated that it is difficult to provide a precise outline, because it would have to be adapted to each of the numerous rather independent groups it embraces.

There are also other forms of Catholic worship, like that of the so-called old-Catholic Churches which refer to the Union of Utrecht, of Jansenist and anti-papal origin: these are in communion with the Anglican Church.

Anglicanism unites the characteristics of Lutheranism, Calvinism and Catholicism and that helps to explain the fact that it contains three principal branches: the Low Church close to the Protestant position, the High Church which appears well disposed towards Catholicism and the Broad Church which is more liberal and

[23] Dobbelaere, K., Riis, O., "Religious and Moral Pluralism: Theories, Research Questions, and Design", in R. L. Piedmont, D. O. Moberg (eds.), *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 13, Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2002, 159-171.

[24] Bontempi, M., "Religious Pluralism and the Public Sphere", in G. Bettin Lattes, E. Recchi (eds.), *Comparing European Societies*, Monduzzi, Bologna, 2005, 155-186, p. 166.

critical.

The Eastern Catholic (or Uniate) Churches are an important presence in Europe because they have around 9 million members, an Oriental rite parallel to the Latin, a local liturgical language, and a communion with the Catholic Church. In particular, groups of Eastern-Rite (Uniate) or Greek Catholics live in Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and The Ukraine, or in other parts of Eastern Europe, and number about 4 million. They played an underground key role during communist times. The small group of Armenian Uniate Church must also be mentioned.

The Orthodox Churches

According to Lane[25] "the Orthodox Church has its support overwhelmingly in rural areas. It is not by chance that Bulgaria has it own National Orthodox Church with six million believers, twelve dioceses and thousands of priests. In comparison with Russia, Greece and Serbia, Bulgaria has a secondary role within Orthodoxy. In other areas there is a closer relation between the state and Church, as if it was to create a worship of state and its rulers. In this way it is the population itself that supports religion through culture. Apparently, traces of paganism are also present, forms of religion far off from high, intellectual and selected European culture. Also, in recent times, and referring to the wide area of Orthodox culture the limits of "canonical territories" have been revenged in order to stress supremacy rights, especially by the Russian Orthodox Church over the Catholic Church. No religion can be established as a state or compulsory religion". Moreover the document *Basis of the Social Conception of Russian Orthodox Church* says that (III, 3): "the Church cannot take advantage of the points of view of the state". The relation with modernity really makes the difference between Orthodoxy and Western religions[26]. Leaving aside the significant theological and cultural differences between Western and Oriental Christianity, modernity did not represent an autonomous cultural development of Orthodox countries. Moreover, "from the '800 the Church and the Orthodox culture entered a form of social development which is radically new and with no precedents. It also meant a new form of relationship between the Church and the State as well as new tensions and new alliances between religion and politics because, at least in Greece, but also in the rest of the Balkans, the institution of the Orthodox Church became a servant of the State and assumed a nationalist way of thinking. The Orthodox Church has also played, as for the migrations of the twentieth century, a decisive cultural role for the Orthodox Diaspora at a World level"[27].

The Serbian Orthodox Church dramatically lived through the end of Yugoslavia, with the rising ethnic conflicts in 1991 and the confrontation between Catholics and Muslims. Political, ethnic and religious reasons were bound together giving as outcome an explosive mixture with tragic consequences.

Ethnocentrism and Church dependence on the State are probably the most important issues of the Orthodox Church today"[28]. Even if an Orthodox *Commonwealth* will not be realized, nonetheless with the entering of Bulgaria and Romania by 2007 the presence of Orthodox people has increased in Europe. Many of them are already operating in Sweden, France, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Germany, Finland, Croatia and Austria.

The Abkhazians deserve a specific quotation (almost one hundred thousand people), residing in the Northern Caucasus (within Orthodox Georgia, but belonging to an autonomous republic) and believed to be partly Christians and partly Muslims: they actually belong to an ancient pre-Christian monotheist religion with a God surrounded by a sort of angels (called *apaimbari)*. Their religion is quite particular and not easily assimilable to others, apart from some apparent convergences.

Protestantism

"Religious Europe is not only a map of territories characterized by this or that religious culture, Religious Europe has also and moreover the presence of a wide number of minorities: Orthodox or Protestants in Catholic countries, Catholic and Orthodox in Protestant countries, Jews and Muslims in the majority of European countries"[29]. Resistances against Europe are also present in Protestantism, according to Dreyfus[30] who underlines that the Protestant states of Western Europe are highly doubtful over the construction of

[25] Lane, C., *Christian Religion in the Soviet Union. A Sociological Study*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1978, p. 227.

[26] Kaufmann, F.-X., "Religion and Modernization in Europe", *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics*, 153 (1), 1997, 80-99.

[27] Kokosalakis, N., "Aspetti culturali del Cristianesimo orientale ortodosso", *Religioni e Società*, XI, 25, 1996, 5-27, pp. 19-20.

[28] Makrides, V. N., "Ortodossia e nazionalismo nella Grecia moderna: aspetti di una correlazione", *Religioni e Società*, XI, 25, 1996, 43-70, pp. 69-70.

[29] Vincent, G., Willaime, J.-P. (eds.), *Religions et Transformations de l'Europe*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1993, p. 91.

[30] Dreyfus, F.-G., "Le protestantisme contre l'Europe", in G. Vincent and J.-P. Willaime (eds.) *Religions et Transformations de l'Europe*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1993, 127-141, p. 128.

Europe.

The most relevant datum in the present situation is certainly the high flow of migration streams, in the greater part from Islamic countries of Turkish workers heading for Germany, Egyptian immigrants in Greece, Tunisians and Algerians in France and Italy, Moroccans in Spain, France and Italy, and people from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh migrating to the United Kingdom.

Jews people have also reached many European countries right from medieval times - nowadays being still present - and had to pass through persecutions and destructions, up to the *Shoah* during World War II. Hebrew Ashkenazi communities of Yiddish language have been in activity for a long time mostly in the Central and Oriental countries of Europe.

De facto situation is officially highlighted by the Catholic Church itself for example, by Pope John Paul II during his post-synod apostolic exhortation on June 28th 2003 with the title *Ecclesia in Europe,* where we can read at point 20: "Particular Churches in Europe are not simple entities or private organizations. Actually, they operate in a specific institutional dimension which deserves to be legally brought out, in the complete respect of the civil right institution". Besides, at point 55 it is said that "it is necessary to build up a deep and smart *inter-religious dialogue* in particular with Judaism and Islam". All this is focused on an evident European perspective because, according to what quoted on point 109 of the same exhortation, "in the actual transformation process, *first of all, Europe is asked to find its own true identity.* In fact, even if Europe is made up of quite a diversified reality, a new model of unity inside diversity has to be found, in order to become a community of reconciled nations that is open to other Continents and directly involved in the present process of globalization".

Islam

It is not by chance that sociological bibliography on Islam in Europe has rapidly increased[31] and that now some sociologists of religion, who were once mainly experienced in the dominant religion of their home country, have become Islam experts, studying the relationship between the state and Islamic religion, the integration of Muslims in Europe and the role of Islam inside European society. France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Spain and Switzerland are among the countries that care more about new themes of Islamic content, in relation to areas such as immigration, citizenship, political representatives, community organization, means of mass communication, identity processes, the perception of European Union, the identification with Europe, Islamization of Europe, Islamic associations in European territory, social and religious Islamic networks, youth education, inter-ethnic conflicts, the use of free time, criminality, entrepreneurship, work, polygamy, minority conditions, linguistic barriers, law statute, places of worship, woman's role, religious practice and conversions.

The question is no more about Islam and Western countries: Islam is inside Western countries. Islam is therefore part of and integrated in Europe, especially as far as the second generations are concerned, who are completely socialized within European territories, speaking one or more European languages, and who are Euro-Islamic generations[32]. Europe becomes a decisive ground for "Muslim Geopolitics" as well. In the future there is, however, a "plural" Europe[33].

Islam itself is "one and multiple", as Pace affirms[34], passing through the different solutions experienced in Europe for public acknowledgement and state regulation of Islam and Muslim identity. In Scandinavian countries *jus loci* is applied, as well as in France, thus facilitating the citizen's access, but also helping immigrants of European origins limiting access. About the Islam question in Europe[35] a comparative analysis concerning Buddhists and Muslims from European citizens' perception can be interesting. According to some studies carried out in France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Italy, Denmark, United Kingdom, Scotland, Austria, Germany and other places in Europe, appreciation for Buddhism has increased, while appreciation for Muslims has reduced. Furthermore, Buddhism apparently represents the future of Europe, except for conceiving Islam a sort of new Buddhism, based on some peculiar religious values.

Hinduism deserves to be mentioned. In Europe this religion is a minor but growing presence in all countries where it was pre-existent, such as: Germany, Norway, Russia, The Netherlands and especially England. However, nowadays, migratory flows from India are increasing also towards other European countries, Italy for instance. Sikhs are also migrating from India to Europe[36] and they combine elements of Hinduism and

[31] Dassetto, F., Conrad, Y. (eds.), *Muslims in Western Europe. An Annotated Bibliography*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1996.

[32] Allievi, S., Nielsen, J. (eds.), *Muslim Networks and Transnational Communities in and across Europe*, Brill, Leiden, 2003; Maréchal, B. et al. (eds.), *Muslims in the Enlarged Europe*, Brill, Leiden, 2003.

[33] Allievi, S., *Musulmani d'Occidente. Tendenze dell'islam europeo*, Carocci, Roma, 2002, p. 179.

[34] Pace, E., *Islam in Europa. Modelli di integrazione*, Carocci, Roma, 2004, p. 12.

[35] Bistolfi, R., Zabbal, F., *Islams d'Europe. Intégration ou insertion communautaire?*, Éditions de l'Aube, La Tour d'Aigues, 1995.

[36] Denti, D., Ferrari, M., Perocco, F. (eds.), *I Sikh. Storia e immigrazione*, FrancoAngeli, Milano, 2005.

Islam.

Notwithstanding the attempt of including in the European Constitution a reference to Christian roots this did not succeed and in the constitution a number of forms and contents that refer directly to the life of European citizens still remain, therefore to their own culture and their religious expressions. Actually, "the elaboration of a European right to religion cannot result from any combination of national rights on the issue because the differences between the states are too great. Nonetheless, it is possible to pick out a common *fundamentum* in the principles of secularity of modern constitutionalism that guarantee the protection of the right to religious freedom"[37].

Besides any form of competition, all Churches together wrote down the *Charta Oecumenica Europea* on the 22nd April 2001. "In EU law, religious freedom is explicitly sustained because it is a freedom relating to the individual"[38]. Churches practically contribute to civil life, therefore they play an important role in the construction of European identity. In the meantime, "the local character of orthodoxy is deeply bound to national realities and, in some cases, to state institutions themselves"[39]. After all, intercultural and inter-religious tendencies of many European countries foster the development of joint-ventures, co-operations and agreements thus promoting integration processes.

On the other hand, some European nations are changing their actual legislations in order to be more up-to-date with the emerging European contingencies: that is what happened in Portugal, says Helena Vilaça[40]: "changes of the political system such as the end of dictatorship in Iberian countries, the high number of Islamic people immigrating towards Central Europe or the recent integration of Eastern countries in the European Union, are factors which imply sooner or later a revision of the religious constitution or a rethinking of worship legislation. In Portugal, for instance, political changes gave way to the new Law of Religious Freedom".

Conclusion

It can be useful to verify the rate of pluralism by observing the presence of religious teaching in European public school. The picture is once again complex and articulated:

Country	Religious teaching
Austria	Catholic or Islamic or Other
Belgium	Catholic or Hebrew or Islamic or Areligious-Ethical
Bulgaria	Orthodox or Islamic
Croatia	Catholic
Czech Republic	Catholic (to be arranged)
Denmark	Lutheran Protestant; Religious History in secondary schools
Finland	Lutheran Protestant or Ethical
France	A free day in primary school to attend religious education in a chosen Church; Catholic in Alsace and Moselle
Germany	Catholic or Protestant or Islamic or Other
Greece	Orthodox
Italy	Catholic or Hebrew or Other
Poland	Catholic or Other
Portugal	Catholic or Other

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[37] Bontempi, M., *op. cit.*, p. 168.

[38] *Ibíd.*, p. 171.

[39] *Ibíd.*, p. 173.

[40] Vilaça, H., *Da Torre de Babel às Terras Prometidas. Pluralismo Religioso em Portugal*, Edições Afrontamento, Porto, 2006, p. 57.

Romania	Orthodox or Other
Russia	Cultural Orthodox or Other
Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo	Orthodox or Other
Slovakia	Catholic
Spain	Catholic or Other or Religious History; or Islamic out of school timetable
Sweden	No confessional teaching
The Netherlands	Protestant or Catholic or Other or Liberal
United Kingdom	Interconfessional (Multifaith Religion)

Bulgaria had an opportune action in this regard: already by the academic year 1997-1998 the optional teaching of religion, both Christian and Islamic, was introduced in schools. However, relations between Christians and Muslims do not foster conflict situations, as a matter of fact fundamentalism does not seem to be so remarkable, young people are open to new cultures and religions different from their own. Some prejudices, however, are still present as far as Gypsies are concerned[41]. They usually decide to follow the dominant religion of the hosting country: that is why there are so many Orthodox, Muslims, Catholics and Jews as well as Protestants among them.

In The Netherlands, at first, the migration flux was accepted, afterwards the system of acceptance underwent a crisis because many immigrants established themselves in the country with their families (and with their religion, either Islamic or other). Within a decade the Muslim population in the Netherlands doubled and in the meanwhile the Dutch society had to face economic recessions. Especially second generation Muslims were damaged because they experienced a reduction of rights. In Belgium there is a representative organism of Muslims that keeps in touch with the Belgian government but also respects the law.

In Scandinavian countries *jus loci* is applied, as well as in France, thus facilitating the citizen's access, but also helping immigrants of European origins limiting access. However, here a fiscal crisis was registered as well which has complicated the management of immigrant fluxes. Moreover, many refugees have been accepted for humanitarian reasons, but they are submitted to strict controls. Nonetheless Islamic schools and mosques were opened. However, between Scandinavian countries there are some differences, as for automatic registration of newborns to national Churches, in particular to the Swedish Church, which has such privilege since 1990. In Sweden there have been some conflicts with Muslims: that is why there are some difficulties in the "passage from the assimilation policy to that of respectful integration of socio-religious differences in Islam"[42]. The difficulty also arises from considering Islam as one, as if it were a single "congregation".

The perspectives for a European future[43] cannot leave out of consideration the responsibility for this kind of religious problems.

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[41] Bogomilova, N., Religion, *Law and Politics in the Balkans in the End of the 20th and the Beginning of the 21st Century*, Iztok-Zapad, Sophia, 2005, p. 236.

[42] Pace, E., *op. cit.*, p. 88.

[43] Greeley, A., *A Sociological Profile. Religion in Europe at the End of the Second Millennium*, Transaction, New Brunswick-London, 2003; Knippenberg, H. (ed.), *The Changing Religious Landscape of Europe*, Het Spinhuis, Amsterdam, 2005.

LECTURE
Roberto Cipriani (University Roma Tre)
VALUES AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY
Introduction
It is difficult do not accept the idea that values are the roots of human and religious rights. Actually, according to *Encyclopedia of Public International Law*, published in 1995, "human rights are those liberties, immunities, and benefits which, by accepted contemporary *values* [emphasis by R. C.], all human beings should be able to claim 'as of right' of the society in which they live"[44].

At present, people say that "nowadays there are no values anymore". This means that standard behaviour is different from what it used to be. In fact, as the conventional wisdom maintain, in old times any action was moved by "good" values.

How to find indicators of differences and their level, that is to say their percentage in relation to the number of inhabitants of a territory, of its economic resources, without neglecting to monitor the existence of rights and duties, norms and laws, police, structures of detention, repressive measures? But there are indicators also of educational actions and plans for mutual respect and for an equal consideration of other people's abilities and requirements, within a context open to solidarity, while enhancing a correct exchange and interpersonal interaction in a non purely utilitarian approach.

Individuals and groups shift continuously on the wave of the general culture they belong to and they decide what to do each time in a different way, according to inherited values but also according to the convenience of the moment or in view of an immediate or future gain.

However, there is an unquestionable datum: every social actor is moved by values and guiding-principles that are at the very source of any kind of common law or written law, and they are continuously in conflict with emotions, affection, parental and friendship habits, sudden change of temper, conditions of temporary (or long-lasting) stress or pressure. If everyday news items, broadcast by media, present a long list of embezzlement, frauds, cheats, physical and psychological violence, scandals and other kind of shameful events, this cannot be taken to mean an unusual or unpredictable lack of values. It will be enough to go through old newspapers to find out similar or even more serious events.

As a matter of fact, each society has its own fundamental values, with behavioural rules, traditions and praxis, but within the law also. We often tend to judge other individuals and other societies on the basis of our *Weltanschauung* and according to our concept of reality, through the lens of our values or principles of preference.

There are some values considered remarkable in a wide social and territorial extension. For example, democracy is recognized and taken for granted in those states in which citizens are free of express their preferences as regards institutional and political choices of the government.

This fact does not mean that democracy is experienced everywhere and always as a value. A *façade* democracy may hide an authoritarian bureaucracy, or a strong policy-system, or even a restricted oligarchic power elite. Such elite tends to keep the same people in power even when formal conditions might change.

Values as "participating citizenship" and democracy are the outcome of a long, continuous, attentive and careful process of education in order to "prepare" young people. It is also meant to keep on as a permanent learning process in order to consolidate, to give comfort, and support.

Values and rights
Values can be independent variables, those at the origin of interests, habits, identity processes and social solidarity, but they can also be dependent variables, those deriving from other social factors. In both cases values have a central position. On a general consideration we might call them human values because they are linked with human subjects and their fundamental tendencies, and with their beliefs and evaluations, oriented to assume decisions, and to establish rights and duties.

A recurrent distinction concerns the difference between applied values and final values[45], therefore between values concerning individual practices and values which represent real goals to achieve.

Another distinction quite widespread is between universal values and particular values. But the discussion is still open on which are the universal values. In particular the discussion tends to slip onto a juxtaposition of universal values and universal rights, which is to say between human values and human rights.

During the last century the development of human rights has kept pace with the "scientification" process. Especially by the end of World War II, authority and influence of scientific research have been taken more into consideration[46].

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[44] *Encyclopedia of Public International Law*, vol. 2 (Human Rights), Elsevier, Amsterdam, 1995, p. 886.

[45] Rokeac, M., *Understanding Human Values: Individual and Societal*, Free Press, New York, 1979.

[46] Drori G., Meyer J. W., Ramirez F. O., Schofer E., *Science in the Modern World Polity: Institutionalization and Globalization,* Stanford University Press, Stanford (Ca.), 2003.

However, democratization dynamics, although growing, has not reached the level of human rights at the top of the scale. They passed from an interest with a few nations and organizations at the beginning of the 20th century, to a number of more than three hundred organizations and nations directly involved by the end of the same century. In this regard, the role of the so called high education has been decisive[47].

Problems of equality and exclusion, for instance, are a constant issue at the present time. They are a must in the international socio-political agenda. By now, the lack of participation of some groups – especially minorities, rural and of a low social-economical *status* – to higher education levels represents a strong call for attention and sensitivity for governments and international organizations.

Values such as freedom, democracy, respect for individuals, "sacredness" of life, equality among individuals and others are not necessarily to be considered universal, just because they are prevailing in a certain part of the world. There are situations and conditions which do not recognize such values, thus clearly showing that only a part of the world sustains and claims them as universal.

Universal and local values

In the same social reality we might envisage a clear opposition between values of the majority and those of a minority group. It is the typical case of the deviant or marginal religious groups, which follow logics of values that are different from that of the majority.

Today a better mobility of people throughout the world is visibly increasing the occasions of sharing values as well as occasions of clashes[48] between different cultures and religions. That is why there is a sort of competition of political and governmental structures for defining constitutions, laws and rules in order to protect basic local principles from other cultural values imported from people expected to arrive.

The United States at first tried the strategy of the *melting pot,* which consists of mixing all cultural peculiarities and hopefully delete the differences, and after they tried the strategy of the *salad bowl,* willing to respect the different values without changing them, but none of these attempts had positive results. Now they are promoting a patchwork approach.

It is clear enough that some "universal" values (nowadays called global values) are actually representative of one social class only, which is the bourgeoisie. In other words the French revolutionary triad of values of freedom, brotherhood and equality is now going through a wide and rigorous revision.

The idea of value totally vanishing is not convincing, however. We are well aware of the role that values still play within the contemporary world.

Not even Weberian world disenchantment has fostered an ultimate turn, and with his idea of awareness for polytheism of values he seems to have created more difficulties. He did not at all solve the problem of an ethic issue for society, because having various principles is equal to having none.

Weberian *Wertfreiheit* provokes a number of critical opinions as well. This approach insists on the distinction between facts and values, therefore social scientists are asked to keep at a definite distance from their own values, thus totally renouncing to any sort of evaluation judgement towards a scientific "object". The outcome is that the analysis of social scientists is limited to data gathering and interpreting.

The Kantian idea of a universal ethic, from which common values for harmony in the world and among men derive, has lost many fans and is no longer in fashion. Contemporary sociologists cannot ignore that there is something more (or less, according to different points of view) than "a starry sky above us" and more than the "moral conscience which is inside us".

Values and ideologies

Ideologies deny any solution with an ethic of discourse. A double fundamentalism, religious and lay, is not suitable for communicative acting, which is in search of an adequate solution for a number of social subjects. A quick solution is not desirable from this perspective, because it has to be reached with an explicit consensus of the majority. Actually, a widely useful solution might also come from the point of view of a minority. The most important thing is that it is not coercively imposed, without any legal, military, and affective blackmail. A rapidly and easily reached goal is with no promise for the future. Only a consolidated praxis, which has become tradition and habit, even though respectful of the interests of the social actors, can succeed in becoming a wide consensus reference.

However, a delicate issue is the influence of individual interests. When they have become steady habits and traditions, they are hardly put aside. Regulation of subjective requests seems to be necessary, in order not to harm collective expectations.

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[47] Schofer E., Meyer J.W., "The Worldwide Expansion of Higher Education in the Twentieth Century", *American Sociological Review*, 6, 70, 2005, 898-920.

[48] Huntington, S., *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996.

Migration dynamics, which have a multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-linguistic shape, emphasize the urgency of common values and adequate ethical principles which are able to solve conflicts, misunderstandings, and struggles.

Religious values
All the so called universal religions contain values that present a certain vision of the world, a certain meaning of life, and a specific idea of human destiny, from those referring to books (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) to Oriental ones (Taoism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto).
A concise value centred attempt of syncretism may allow a slight convergence of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, despite many past and present historical events show some difficulties of these religions to reach shared solutions. However, official and organized attempts have been made.
Oriental and Chinese religions have the remarkable experience of Ju-Fu-Tao that melts together Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in one religion. Ju-Fu-Tao is widely practised especially by Chinese people.
Somewhere else, in Japan, social actors go further, not only having their cults and values that belong to other Asiatic religions (especially Shinto and Buddhism): they also include some elements of Christianity.
In respect to the ethical and social character of Confucianism, Buddhism develops more the value of spirituality.
A further push towards uniting different religions appears from time to time: at first with Ram Mohan Roy, who was in favour of a so called Unitarian Hinduism and enhancing British reformism in India. And after with Keshab, who tried to annex Christianity within Unitarian Hinduism. Later on, Ramakrishna fostered a total syncretism of all religions.
Hans Küng, who has completed the publication of his trilogy[49] on the three "book" religions, besides having underlined the numerous common elements among them, he also confirms that "there are common bases: do not kill, do not torture, do not violate; do not steal, do not corrupt, do not betray; do not lie, do not give false testimony; do not commit abuse. These principles belong to all religions. Usually, Catholics totally agree. In some cases the problem arises, when respect for life is identified with the condemnation of contraceptives, when there is a consideration of abortion which is too rigid, if there is a discriminatory attitude towards homosexuality or if the problems linked to euthanasia are not understood". He concludes: "we need moral fundamentals. But these cannot be laicism, neither can they be clericalism, or restoration of Christian Europe as Pope Wojtyla desired. There cannot be a restoration of an atheist State as it happened after the French Revolution. We need a common ethic ground, which means to accept basis ethical norms sustained by all important religion and by philosophical traditions, which can also be accepted by non believers".
Values do not seem to be an "all occasion recipe". An attentive analysis of social reality is usually required to put values into practice. Even more so, values are a general tendency and they are not capable of depriving the individual of his freedom taking the place of the individual's reflexive action. Values seem to have something in common with scientific theories: both are able to guide without forcing the individual, they both give autonomy to a certain extent, they use "transcendence" not in a mere religious sense but as a way to overcome exclusive, unchanging and unfailing principles.
It is not by chance that a fundamental state law, which is the constitution, even if considered "sacred", needs to be up-dated and to be revised, also for the search for "almost" universal values. Such "almost" universal values mean that they are mostly retained consensual towards what cannot be ignored at a *certain moment of time* and *within a certain society*.
Pacts between churches and public administrations, even if, on the one hand, they lead to good results, offering advantages and facilitating religious organizations, they also represent an obstacle for an unconditioned acceptance by citizens.

Secular values
It is not so easy to discern secular values from religious values. Some religious values are widely accepted also by those who declare to be lay. Vice versa, there are some typically secular values which are accepted by people inspired by religious principles.
The main issue regards those who hold religious and secular values. If religious values are presumably conserved by churches, denominations, confessional organizations, for secular values the state is usually considered to be the main holder. However, in this case it is better to use another definition: in fact they are "secularist" or "laicism oriented" values, more then secular or lay values, which usually have their moral basis in personal consciousness, in the free and autonomous possibility of choice of the individual.

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[49] Küng, H., *Christianity: Essence, History, and Future*, Continuum, New York, 1995; *Judaism: Between Yesterday and Tomorrow*, Continuum, New York, 1995; *Islam: Past, Present & Future*, Oneworld, Oxford, 2007.

However, if the state is founded on ethical principles and aims at protecting them within its citizens, it becomes a further guarantee for freedom of thought and action. Especially if the value of freedom is highly considered, in relation to the individual rights on one's body ("this body is mine and I can do what I want with it") as well as on property rights on non material goods ("this is my mind and I can use it as I like").

On the background of these secular and lay pictures is the value of freedom of consciousness, a basic character that no state can substitute. That is why any state, whether lay (otherwise "laicism oriented") or secular (otherwise "secularist"), cannot leave out from consideration either ethical autonomy of religions or ethical autonomy of social actors.

Religious diversity in Europe

The scenario of European societies is rapidly changing, particularly in the field of religion and Churches. New streams of believers and religious organizations are reaching different places in Europe, sometimes very far from their countries of historical origin. The phenomenon of religious acculturation is a kind of challenge between religious movements and local people and culture.

In Europe nowadays, the Catholic Church is the main religious influence in the Central and Southern area, Protestantism in the centre and Northern area, Greek and Russian Orthodox in the South-Western area, Muslim in Oriental areas.

Other religions and other Churches have crossed Europe also exerting a certain political power, thus influencing economy and linked aspects.

Religions have significant presence almost everywhere but mostly in the great urban centres, where non-Christian worship places have dimensions, capacity, and visibility which cannot be ignored. Changes are also evident in religions of non European origins but present in almost all of Europe.

The relation between state and religion is not the same everywhere throughout Europe: in some countries there is a clear separation even regulated by the law (as happened in France from 1905), in other countries there is a more or less conservatory legal regime (Spain, Italy and Portugal), and there are also countries with state Churches (Scandinavian countries and Great Britain). As a matter of fact, there are in Europe some secular states that offer many privileges to religious communities. Another possibility is that state and religion do not have a shared identity but do not take complete opposite positions, sometimes they negotiate case by case, as it happens to majority Churches in a country or towards other minor Churches, movements and religious groups.

Politics and religion

Many particular situations throughout former Yugoslavian territories show that national-oriented culture and religious politicization processes were widely popular in the country. In fact Catholicism in Herzegovina was a "religion in a border region", but it has become a "border religion"[50]. Tomka's contribution too is remarkable and faces diverse issues of East and Western Europe with a comparative approach. He begins with three remarks: religious influence is declining in Western Europe; while Western young people seem to be increasingly less religious, the Eastern and Central situation seems to register an inverted tendency; in ex-Communist countries the role of Churches is increasingly popular. Some Central European countries play a different role and are more modernized and represent a solid reference for East countries, which are quite marginal in comparison with Western countries. There are two main guiding factors at the origins of Western Christian Churches: Church as an institution and individual autonomy. However, when we want to distinguish what is peculiar of Oriental Churches respect to Western Churches we come to six differences, according to Tomka[51]: a reduced control of the Church and dominance of local factors; the tendency to homologate forms with contents, beliefs with symbols, liturgy with art; a more collective than individual approach to religious belonging and a dominant position of the clergy within an ecclesiastic role hierarchy; religion and culture are mainly considered as one; a formally bombastic liturgy that does not allow adjustments, changes nor a direct participation of laymen; a basic unity between politics and religion, as well as state and Church, just like a "symphony".

Finally, the difference between religions of Western and Eastern Europe is given by the presence of a problem of national identity connected to religious belonging.

Religious pluralism

Greek and Irish constitutions refer to religion, the German one permits *Invocatio Dei,* the European one does not give any reference at all.

This diversity, one could surmise, may also create consequences in the religious-ethical field and within the

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[50] Vrcan, S., "A Preliminary Challenge: Borders or Frontiers?", *Social Compass*, 53 (2), 2006, 215-226, p. 222.

[51] Tomka, M., "Is Conventional Sociology of Religion Able to Deal with Differences between Eastern and Western European Developments?", *Social Compass*, 53 (2), 2006, 251-265, pp. 259-262.

Churches in particular[52].

Speaking of pluralism and respect of religion, Europe develops a number of different issues[53]. Independently of the type of preponderant religion, problems of freedom of expression and religion practices rise from minority confessions. The different religions and Churches operating in Europe manifest a variety of behaviours towards religious pluralism.

The Catholic Church

Catholic Church has a capillary presence of religious structures and organisations, numerous religious and lay educational institutions, which operate all over Europe where, thanks to this extensive network, it includes about two hundred thousand priests, with different rites.

New attitudes compared to those of the past towards other Christian and non-Christians religions have appeared. It suffices to recall the *Ostpolitik* fostered by John XXIII and Paul VI. However relations with the Russian Orthodox Church have remained problematic.

Among European Catholics the Pentecostalism movement has become particularly significant and, like Protestant Pentecostalism, it too exalts charismatic phenomena, the role of the Holy Spirit, oral expression, prayer, prophecy, recovery, and spontaneous manifestation.

Anglicanism unites the characteristics of Lutheranism, Calvinism and Catholicism and that helps to explain the fact that it contains three principal branches: the Low Church close to the Protestant position, the High Church which appears well disposed towards Catholicism and the Broad Church which is more liberal and critical.

The Eastern Catholic (or Uniate) Churches are an important presence in Europe because they have around 9 million members, an Oriental rite parallel to the Latin, a local liturgical language, and a communion with the Catholic Church.

The Orthodox Churches

The document *Basis of the Social Conception of Russian Orthodox Church* says that (III, 3): "the Church cannot take advantage of the points of view of the state". The relation with modernity really makes the difference between Orthodoxy and Western religions[54]. Leaving aside the significant theological and cultural differences between Western and Oriental Christianity, modernity did not represent an autonomous cultural development of Orthodox countries.

The Serbian Orthodox Church dramatically lived through the end of Yugoslavia, with the rising ethnic conflicts in 1991 and the confrontation between Catholics and Muslims. Political, ethnic and religious reasons were bound together giving as outcome an explosive mixture with tragic consequences.

Ethnocentrism and Church dependence on the State are probably the most important issues of the Orthodox Church today"[55]. Even if an Orthodox *Commonwealth* will not be realized, nonetheless with the entering of Bulgaria and Romania by 2007 the presence of Orthodox people has increased in Europe.

The Abkhazians deserve a specific quotation (almost one hundred thousand people), residing in the Northern Caucasus (within Orthodox Georgia, but belonging to an autonomous republic) and believed to be partly Christians and partly Muslims: they actually belong to an ancient pre-Christian monotheist religion.

Protestantism

"Religious Europe is not only a map of territories characterized by this or that religious culture, Religious Europe has also and moreover the presence of a wide number of minorities: Orthodox or Protestants in Catholic countries, Catholic and Orthodox in Protestant countries, Jews and Muslims in the majority of European countries"[56]. Resistances against Europe are also present in Protestantism, according to Dreyfus[57]

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[52] Cipriani, R., "Traditions and Transitions: Reflections on the Problems and Prospects for Religions in Eastern and Central Europe", in W. H. Swatos, Jr. (ed.), *Politics and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe. Traditions and Transitions*, Praeger, Westport (Ct)-London, 1994, 1-16, p. 2.

[53] Davie, G., *Religion in Modern Europe*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2000; *Europe: The Exceptional Case*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 2002; Davie, G., Hervieu-Léger, D. (eds.), *Identités religieuses en Europe*, La Découverte, Paris, 1996; Bolgiani, F., Margiotta Broglio, F., Mazzola, R. (eds.), *Chiese cristiane, pluralismo religioso e democrazia liberale in Europa*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2006.

[54] Kaufmann, F.-X., "Religion and Modernization in Europe", *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics*, 153 (1), 1997, 80-99.

[55] Makrides, V. N., "Ortodossia e nazionalismo nella Grecia moderna: aspetti di una correlazione", *Religioni e Società*, XI, 25, 1996, 43-70, pp. 69-70.

[56] Vincent, G., Willaime, J.-P. (eds.), *Religions et Transformations de l'Europe*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1993, p. 91.

[57] Dreyfus, F.-G., "Le protestantisme contre l'Europe", in G. Vincent and J.-P. Willaime (eds.) *Religions et Transformations de l'Europe*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1993, 127-141, p. 128.

who underlines that the Protestant states of Western Europe are highly doubtful over the construction of Europe.

Jews people have also reached many European countries right from medieval times - nowadays being still present - and had to pass through persecutions and destructions, up to the *Shoah* during World War II. Hebrew Ashkenazi communities of Yiddish language have been in activity for a long time mostly in the Central and Oriental countries of Europe.

Islam

It is not by chance that sociological bibliography on Islam in Europe has rapidly increased[58] and that now some sociologists of religion, who were once mainly experienced in the dominant religion of their home country, have become Islam experts, studying the relationship between the state and Islamic religion, the integration of Muslims in Europe and the role of Islam inside European society.

The question is no more about Islam and Western countries: Islam is inside Western countries. Islam is therefore part of and integrated in Europe, especially as far as the second generations are concerned, who are completely socialized within European territories, speaking one or more European languages, and who are Euro-Islamic generations[59].

Islam itself is "one and multiple", as Pace affirms[60], passing through the different solutions experienced in Europe for public acknowledgement and state regulation of Islam and Muslim identity. In Scandinavian countries *jus loci* is applied, as well as in France, thus facilitating the citizen's access, but also helping immigrants of European origins limiting access.

Furthermore, Buddhism apparently represents the future of Europe, except for conceiving Islam a sort of new Buddhism, based on some peculiar religious values.

Hinduism deserves to be mentioned. In Europe this religion is a minor but growing presence in all countries where it was pre-existent, such as Germany, Norway, Russia, The Netherlands and especially England. Sikhs are also migrating from India to Europe[61] and they combine elements of Hinduism and Islam.

Actually, "the elaboration of a European right to religion cannot result from any combination of national rights on the issue because the differences between the states are too great. Nonetheless, it is possible to pick out a common *fundamentum* in the principles of secularity of modern constitutionalism that guarantee the protection of the right to religious freedom"[62].

Besides any form of competition, all Churches together wrote down the *Charta Oecumenica Europea* on the 22nd April 2001. "In EU law, religious freedom is explicitly sustained because it is a freedom relating to the individual"[63]. Churches practically contribute to civil life, therefore they play an important role in the construction of European identity.

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[58] Dassetto, F., Conrad, Y. (eds.), *Muslims in Western Europe. An Annotated Bibliography*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1996.

[59] Allievi, S., Nielsen, J. (eds.), *Muslim Networks and Transnational Communities in and across Europe*, Brill, Leiden, 2003; Maréchal, B. et al. (eds.), *Muslims in the Enlarged Europe*, Brill, Leiden, 2003.

[60] Pace, E., *Islam in Europa. Modelli di integrazione*, Carocci, Roma, 2004, p. 12.

[61] Denti, D., Ferrari, M., Perocco, F. (eds.), *I Sikh. Storia e immigrazione*, FrancoAngeli, Milano, 2005.

[62] Bontempi, M., *op. cit.*, p. 168.

[63] *Ibíd.*, p. 171.