

ȘTEFAN BRATOSIN

CHURCH IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE: PRODUCTION OF MEANING BETWEEN RATIONAL AND IRRATIONAL

Ștefan Bratosin

Paul Valéry University, CORHIS, ORC IARSIC, Montpellier, France.

Email: sbratosin.univ.montp3@gmail.com

Abstract: In the public sphere and especially in the media, the discourse on the Church and about the Church on faith and religion is often tainted by the confusion of meaning due, among other things, to the mutual borrowing less rigorous – epistemologically and methodologically – of the concepts which engage various disciplines (theology, sociology, anthropology, political science, information and communication science, and so on) who take possession of problematic centered on the relation between mankind and divinity. This article presents some basic benchmarks for analyzing and understanding the construction of meaning as well as the rationality or irrationality of these issues by convening the disciplinary distinction between the content of the concepts of organization and that of the institution.

Key Words: church, public sphere, media, faith, religion, production of meaning, symbolic forms

Introduction

In the academic discourse about the “church” there is a great sense of ambiguity due to the scholarly usage without rigorous distinction of the concepts of “religion”, “denomination”, “faith” or “belief”. Furthermore, even the use of these concepts per se is not without ambiguity. Thus it is used to say, for example, about the “Catholic religion” or “Orthodox religion” as if they were different religions while they are just different religious organizations within the same religion, the Christian religion¹. Scholars also speak about “denomination” – which has all the characteristics of a church from where originates, it accepts the right of other denominations to exist and the believers subscribe voluntarily – as being a “sect”². Regarding faith they speak about it as knowledge, faith as reason; the epistemology of faith, faith as belief, faith as trust, faith as doxastic venture, faith as sub-doxastic venture, faith as hope, faith as a virtue, faith beyond theism, etc. In such a context where a fertile polysemy constantly feeds the conceptual vagueness, speaking of the church in the public sphere requires some preliminary delimitation.

Church and Public Sphere: preliminary delimitation

I have to specify, so that for epistemological and methodological reasons, I will use here the concept of “church” only in the sense that it is indebted to the concepts of institution and organization concepts and that in the specific case of subordination of the organization of the institution. More precisely, I understand here by “church” an organization ontologically participating of an institution.

Indeed, “ecclesia” in its original meaning refers to an institution, i.e. a structure whose origin is due to stabilized and legitimized practices by traditions or laws, a structure based on a rationality founded on a legal framework oriented towards a clearly identified purpose, a structure whose reason of being is directly related to the functioning of the society and the state. This institution has appeared in the four or five century B.C., in the historical context of the emergence and development of Athenian democracy. “Ecclesia” is, in this sense, a framework that goes beyond the simple gathering of citizen representation. It is assembled “demos” that has the power to discuss everything, decide everything. In this perspective, the church – the “ecclesia” – in the Gospels in particular and in New Testament in general, it is in many ways an extension of the Athenian institution, but maintains the same functions.³ Therefore, regarding the issues raised by the organizations considered in the context of their practice of institutional ecclesial context, I consider the hypothesis that they do not have and/or should not have fundamentally a strong specificity in relation to issues developed around the organizations

generally considered in the researches on public sphere, but a natural, understandable and profitable predominant theological and disciplinary inclination.

The church in its fragmented sense means a religious organization, i.e. the result of a set of actions that define, organize, develop and articulate the religious being involved in Christianity or claiming itself from Christianity. This organizational fragmentation (Orthodox Church, Catholic Church, Reformed Church, Baptist Church etc.) covers by various appropriations, sometimes strained and to widely varying power levels, the same institutional scope – the “ecclesia”. The major consequence of the organizational dynamics that interests us is the erasure phenomenon in the church organization of the original democratic functioning of the “ecclesia” to the point that, for example, in the newspaper “La Croix” we have read recently: “The Church is not a democracy but a community led by Christ alone. It arises from a decision of God and not of mankind. (...) The Church does not have to comply with the rules of parliamentary democracy”⁴. The Orthodox Church is in the same perspective. According to the orthodox dogma “a layman has no right to question a priest and a priest has no right to challenge a bishop or sued (...) in the church ... democracy in the real sense of the term does not exist”⁵. For Protestant and neo-Protestant Churches things are a little different in the discourse, but in practice they join other churches. Hence my assumption that the issues raised by the institution – considered in its own practice specific of the context of ecclesial organization – have a high specificity in relation to the questions raised by organizations generally regarded in the functioning of the public sphere.

These boundaries are oriented towards the production of a rational sense not only in the interpretation of the discourse – academic or otherwise – on church, but more fundamentally to the production of a rational sense of the functioning itself of the church. However, these delimitations are not sufficient if they are not considered together in their interaction with the rational given sense – by the speaker or the actor – to the communicative sphere specific to each of its constituent universes, i.e. the universe of “ecclesia”, the universe of “agora” and the universe of the “oikos”. Thus, with reference to what the Greeks meant as “ecclesia”, Cornelius Castoriadis defines democracy as a regime where is established a real publicity of the public sphere as a “place where one deliberates and decides on common affairs” where political affaires are resolved with political means, and that in contrast to two other social spheres: the “oikos”, that is to say, the purely private sphere, that of the home where the problems are not political as well as their solutions, and the “agora” as an intermediate space, “political / non-political” sphere, “market-place of assembly, [...], an area in which individuals freely meet, discuss, contract, produce and purchase goods, and so on.”⁶ (Figure 1)

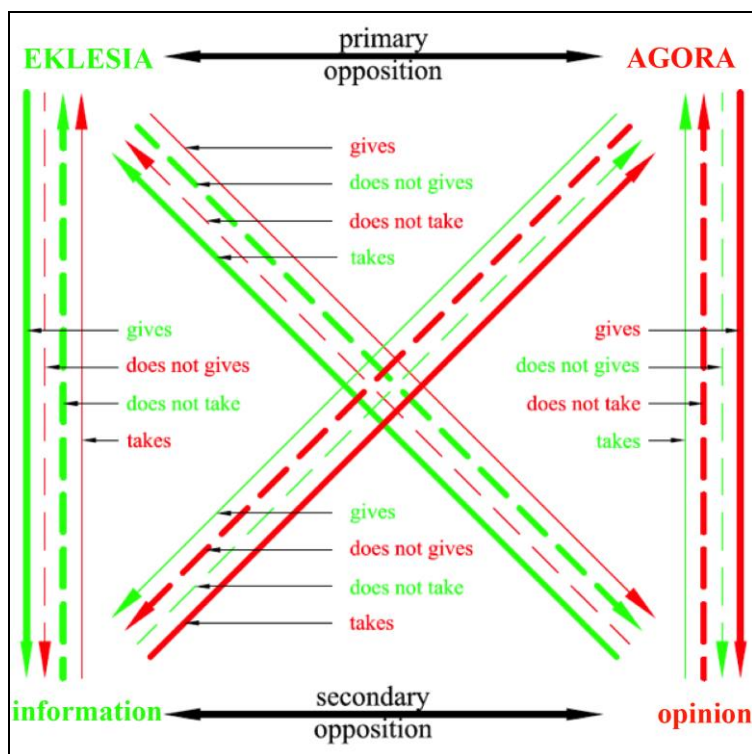


Figure 1. Ecclesia and agora

In this perspective, the rational sense of the church corresponds to public “public” universe. The ecclesia is the place where the power is organized, which are defined the rules of access to the power, where political competition is going, i.e. world of politics, the police, the career of honors (*cursus honorum*), forum for debate, discussion, rulemaking, which organizes the execution of laws. This is the universe where the communication is originally based on the information. But this meaning is rational insofar as the other two related universes are discursively practiced also in a rational manner. More exactly, “agora” (or “forum” in Latin) must absolutely refer to a private and public universe. This universe is important because this is what produces the union, what brings together. They are meeting places in the broad sense, where private individuals decide to meet (public side). There is always a public place where we meet each other in every type of society. Why are we meeting? Here is another level of distinction between societies. We meet to exchange point of view, to discuss⁷. In the public private universe, there may be ideological, philosophical, political exchanges. It is possible to negotiate in the merchant sense (forum = fair), it is possible to negotiate between private individuals. This contract does not happen in the private universe because a private contract in the private universe may be less efficient than if it is placed in a public place. We exchange goods and ideas.

In this universe we build major categories, the relationships between more specific spheres. For instance, the sphere of justice can intervene in this universe. Science is also intended to be public, as well as art, economics, and a lot of other spheres⁸. This universe is also the place of confrontation between different spheres. It is in this universe where the individuals, groups would occur, would report in accordance with the rules more or less commonly accepted. There are at least three types of rules, implicit, explicit and sometimes collectively agreed, negotiated and imposed by the authority: a) the nature of exchanges: what we are allowed to share? b) the nature of relationships, interactions: we can have something completely violent, confrontational (now dueling is unacceptable, but, on the contrary, cooperation may be present), c) the nature of commitments: what is the temporality of the past commitments? What about obligations? In this universe, power does not necessarily intend to intervene to define all these commitments. The intervention of the power must be legitimate and rightful. By what principle the state intervenes to resolve a purely private dispute? This is the universe where the communication is originally based on opinions. The rational sense of the church implies also the *sine qua non* discursive practice of rational meaning of “oikos”. The “oikos” is the domestic universe, the personal space but that is not uniquely individual. This is a universe of the household, of the clan, of the lineage, of the history of the ancestors that are a part of us. This space carries identity; it is the place to forge the strongest identities. It is a universe where the relationships between human beings, individuals occur, the universe where we learn the great relations between meaningful categories. We learn to differentiate between the sexes, the relationship between the living and the dead/ancestors, descendants. Also this is the space for learning cooperation and competition. It is in the private universe that the individual has a place; a relationship to the world is instituted. The place of the individual makes sense. In addition, the images have an essential place. For example, the Romans considered themselves as being the *manes* (ancestral spirits of the clan founders). A special altar is built with masks of ancestors. In absolute terms, the domestic universe is immune to interference of the power except for the core values collectively recognized. In the domestic space, the power has no right to intervene except in the name of these values. This is the universe where communication is based originally on emotions (Figure 2).

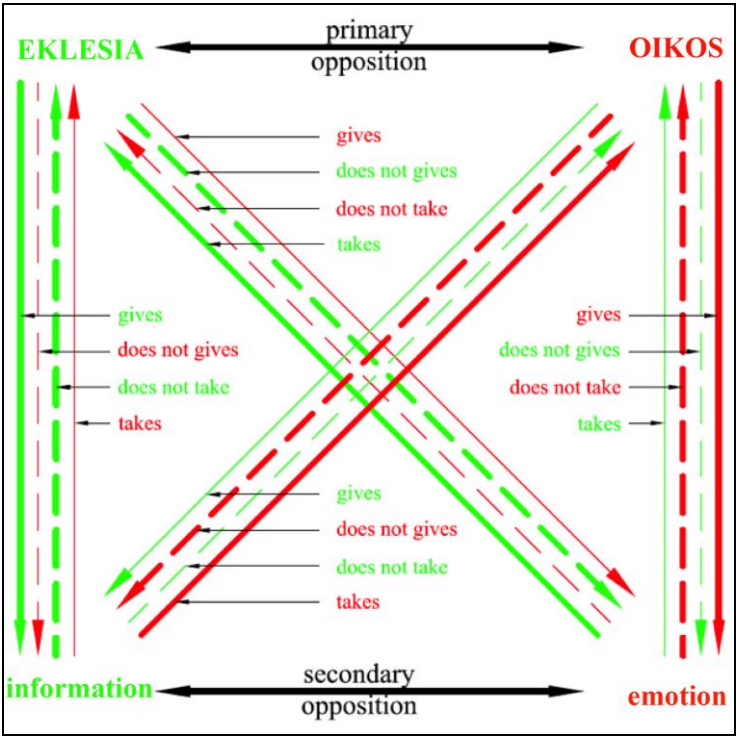


Figure 2. Ecclesia and oikos

It will be unrealistic to design a discursive reality built with these distinctions so clearly affirmed. The meaning of the church always appears – even in the same speech – in both the registries of the rational and irrational. To methodologically distinguish between rational and irrational use of the meaning of the church, I propose to use Aurel Ionica’ framework for analyzing the reasoning⁹ and by considering successively the rational and irrational meaning of the church in relation to the rational and irrational meaning of the “agora” universe and “oikos” universe. Schematically, the process is as shown in Figures 3 and 4.

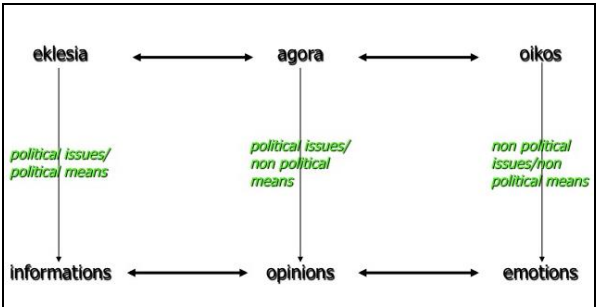


Figure 3. The communicative sphere of social space for public purposes

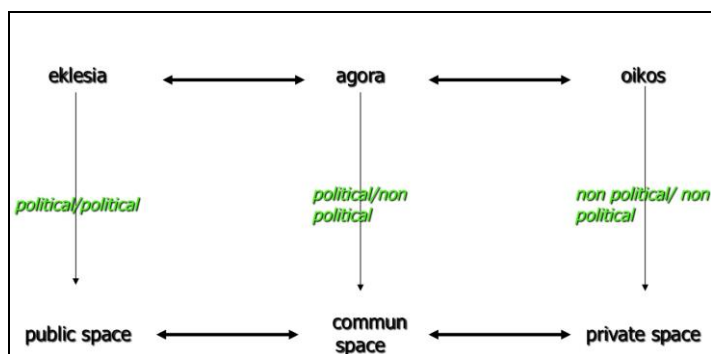


Figure 4. The operational symbolic forms of social space

In this analytical framework, called by Aurel Ionica *the rational square*¹⁰ each color represents one opponent and the actions that support the position of each opponent. Green will be used to represent what is rational for the opponent that the audience is expected to agree with and will be represented on the left side of the square, and red will be used for what is rational for the opponent that the audience is expected to reject and will be represented on the right side of the square. The thick continuous lines are the primary rational lines and they represent the actions which the opponents are expected to affirm and which establish the antagonism between them. Next are the thin interrupted lines which represent impossible relationships in the sense that they cannot be performed at the same time with the thick continuous lines because they are negations of the primary rational lines. They represent impossible relations because to say that “Ecclesia gives information” and “Ecclesia does not give information” at the same time is to place the subject in an impossible situation. These are the famous affirmative and negative indicative sentences that Aristotle and formal logic set aside as the only ones that can convey logical relations. Next there are the thick interrupted lines and they represent secondary rational relations. They indicate negations of actions that are the reverse of the primary rational actions. For instance, if “Ecclesia gives information” is the primary rational action which is expected from ecclesia, then “Ecclesia does not take information” would be the next rational action which is expected from ecclesia.

Finally, there are irrational relations. A rational line for one opponent becomes an irrational line when performed by the other opponent and vice versa. In other words, what is rational for one opponent is irrational for the other and vice versa. The primary irrational relations are represented by thin continuous lines and they represent the reverse of the action of the primary rational lines. They are irrational lines because an opponent is not expected to act according to these lines in the square and still remain an opponent. A primary irrational line for an

opponent represents a primary rational line for the other opponent. By affirming a primary irrational line, an opponent is in reality affirming a primary rational line of the opponent, and by doing that becomes one's own opponent. For instance, if "Ecclesia takes information," and "Agora/oikos takes opinion/emotion," then there is no opposition between the opponents any more. Similarly, another irrational relation would be for an opponent to affirm both oppositions at the same time. In other words, it would be irrational for ecclesia to give information—indicated by a thick green continuous line—and to give death as well—indicated by a thin red continuous line. This would be a secondary irrational relationship.

Irrational relations are not impossible relations, however. For instance, a subject can both push and pull a cart at the same time—e.g., push with one hand and pull with the other. It is possible for ecclesia to both give and take information—therefore to act according to primary irrational lines—or to give both life and death—and therefore act according to secondary irrational lines. To affirm primary irrational relations—that is, both the direct and the reverse action—does not involve an impossibility, but it does create a problem for a rational being who would try to carry out those actions. Similarly, to affirm secondary irrational relations—that is, to affirm both sides of the secondary opposition line—does not necessarily involve an impossibility, but it does create a problem for a rational being to carry out those actions.

Irrational relations are very important for rhetorical purposes. The primary rational lines establish the square and establish a rhetorical situation because it identifies the opponents and the issue which sets them against one another which is indicated on the secondary opposition line. As long as each opponent affirms only rational lines in the square, the antagonism between them remains and the rhetorical situation remains open or unresolved. When one of the opponents, however, affirms an irrational line in the square, that opponent ceases to be an opponent and in reality sides with the other opponent. When this happens the primary opposition line changes from an opposition " $\leftrightarrow$ " into equivalence " $=$ " and the rhetorical situation is closed or resolved. Once the opponent has sided with the persuader, the persuasion has reached its goal and the persuasive process stops.

This framework deconstructs the discursive feature in the communicational apparatus of a debate. Hence it is operational for the analysis of a scientific debate, for the analysis of a democratic debate and in particular for the public debate on the church organization.

The church organization in the public debate: a rationalized irrationality

Unable to be *democratic*, in the early 21st century, the church strives to be a *democrat*. To highlight the rationalized irrationality that currently corresponds to the concept of the church in public sphere, I'm citing here, as an example, the four major lessons of democracy given by the church in the world according to the observations of Jean-Yves Calvez and Henri Tincq: "The Church has become democratic (...) a fourfold way: by recognizing the democratic regime like the one that best enables compliance with various fundamental rights, by the developing these rights as the very purpose of the political society and by rejecting the totalitarianism and authoritarianism, by insisting on the participation to civic life and accepting openly the pluralism".¹¹

Without stressing the historic path of the thought that led the church to the recognition of democracy as the most respectful of fundamental human rights regime, I would like to remind that in this ideological and theological evolution the philosophy of Jacques Maritain has played a major role. In his book *Christianity and Democracy*¹², he proposes to the European Christianity in the context of the North American political thought that democracy is essentially a political incarnation of the fundamental principles of the Gospel. Reinforced by the Vatican II, this way of thinking will expand in the 20th century far beyond the boundaries of the Catholic Church, even in the Orthodox Church after the fall of the Iron Curtain in the late '80s. Moreover, Orthodox switch from a recognition of a regime to the recognition of a different regime is a natural specific mutation of the organizational pragmatism because "the Orthodox Church, while using the divine nature of all authority, affirms the necessary continuity, reproduction and perpetuation of state interests. In this logic, it is a servant church, without being interested about the sources, means and the ends of the power, intends to maintain this "symphony" between Church and State".¹³

But in this second decade of the 21st century the growing trend of this recognition by the church of democracy began to experience a number of reflexive postmodern objections, such as that of Danilo Castellano: "In the postmodern era, i.e. today, political concepts have given way to new exigencies from the individuals or organized groups as well as to irrational methods of political management. It is not an absolute novelty: in fact, it is the consequence of the doctrines from the past centuries, but especially at the end of the 19th century, which had theorized the politics as a conflict taking place either in outside the institutions – which, according to the constructivist doctrines was considered proper to the state of nature – but in their own midst. The

novelty lies in the fact that today this way of understanding democracy is the only model considered valid in the Western world, due in particular to the influence of North American political culture, descendant of Protestantism and the Enlightenment.”¹⁴

It should be noted that the facts of recognition by the church of the democracy as regime that allows the exercise of fundamental human rights are based on historical evidences. At the same time, it should also be noted that the recognition process is still not completed and its outcome, given the rapid and unexpected positions that are currently occurring in the world of socio-political and theological ideas, does not represent, in my opinion, the agenda of the church organization. Another form of rationalized irrationality of the church in the public sphere is its “commitment” in the defense of fundamental human rights. Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church is no longer the fortress that provides shelter and security against the assaults of the evil world, but the people of God that is part of the human race. The Church wants to be the leaven in the immense human paste. If the Church recognizes itself as an integral part of human society, it therefore becomes integral part of human rights. In addition, under the filial adoption of God offered to each person through baptism, the Church becomes the guarantee of fundamental human rights. Therefore, following the council and its redefinition of the role of the Church in the world, we have seen repeatedly the church organization in defense of human rights. In his letter to the President of the 28th General Assembly of the United Nations, Pope Paul VI said: “Precisely because the Church is especially attentive to the rights of God ... it can not ignore the rights of the man created in the image and likeness of God. The Church itself is injured when human rights – anywhere in the world – are violated.” “The Holy See, the Pope continues, is totally in solidarity with the human initiatives taken by the United Nations for the protection and defense of the freedom and dignity of every person.”¹⁵ Should be added to all this the almost immediate acceptance of the use of neologisms or new meanings in the discourse of the church which are rarely neutral, like, for example, “governance”, “civil society”, “participatory democracy” and so on. But “more time passes, more is revealed in broad daylight, even cynically, the profound truth of a *trompe l'oeil* system, intended to rest on people's participation in public affairs but in reality fundamentally oligarchic, running now in much greater opacity than in the past, (...) Faced with these mutations, the political approach which is developed from the conciliar core is now in flagrant gap with the reality. It ignores the structures of power, and considers only the intentions and thus reduces a political problem to a series of ideas and institutional abstract and in actual representations”¹⁶.

Finally, it should be noted that for the church the postmodernism does not bring secularization but *pluralism*, i.e. the peaceful coexistence of different religious groups in the same society¹⁷. The pluralism,

accelerated, developed, and intensified by globalization, has become a ubiquitous fact of social life and consciousness of individuals. At the church, the pluralism means that the established religions can no longer belong to a given population that is passively submitted to their authority. If the freedom of religion is guaranteed, religious institutions can no longer rely on the state to fill their pews. People should rather be persuaded to accept this authority, giving life to what is related to a religious market. Even if only one religious tradition still claims a majority of a population as its followers, people can always choose to withdraw from the institution that represents this tradition, as in predominantly Catholic countries in Europe.

All these lessons of democracy given by the church in the world, even if they are mixed, however, show that the irrational sense of “ecclesial” democracy is basically due to the willingness of religious organizations to have an active presence in the public sphere. However, an active presence in the public sphere today is inseparable from media activity. The presence of Christians media in the public sphere is not only the most relevant indicator of the degree of irrationality of the church in democratic regimes, but also the primary factor generating irrational meaning of religious organization in the public sphere.

But when the scholar in humanities and social sciences attempts a research in this direction, he is facing a major empirical problem: not only that Christians media experience autistic relations with the public sphere, but remaining faithful to its original purpose – the evangelization, the church assigns a task to the media in the public sphere that is in opposition to the philosophy and the functioning of mass media. This is a situation that is neither unknown nor ignored or concealed by the actors of Christian media. Instead, there is affirmed, embraced and cultivated. An eloquent illustration is the intervention of Charles Delhez under the “The Media Day” of the diocese of Tournai. Jesuit, chaplain of the University Faculties Notre- Dame de la Paix (Namur), where he teaches religious studies, sociologist, columnist for the newspaper “Sunday”, columnist for “Libre Belgique”, literary director of the publishing house “Fidelity”, preacher to the television masses Rtb and France2, Charles Delhez said: “We need our own media because the Church needs to communicate internally. More than a half-century, Pope Pius XII already called for a public opinion in the Church. And the role of these medias is to give meaning to our society, to look with the glasses of the Gospel, to be attentive to hope ... But the Church must also be present in the mainstream media to try to evangelize, considering itself as a guest and not entitled...”¹⁸. In other words, this autism of Christian media in the public sphere is not an unknown communicative pathology and not assumed by the religious organization. It is autism in the sense of a real church program. For example, “KTO TV was founded to give to the Church the means to convey the message of the Gospel by current media and

especially television and the Internet. The channel is complementary to the program “Lord's Day” on public television (a partnership was created in 2007 between CFRT and KTO). KTO is addressed not only to Catholics but to all *researchers of meaning*, believers or not¹⁹. The reason of being stressed by TrinitasTV is declined in the same register: “Through this cultural and religious channel, the Romanian Patriarchate informs the public about the events of the church, pastoral ministry and missionary, social, educational and cultural development of the Church through history, culture and heritage of faith and Romanian Christian spirituality in the European context”²⁰.

In his book *Christianity and the Mass Media in America. Toward a Democratic Accommodation*, Quentin J. Schultze analyzing the interactive relationship between large Christian denominations (Catholics, traditional Protestants and evangelicals) that he names “Christian tribes” and the mass media in the United States during the 20th century founds the results of his research on a condition that refers roughly to the same empirical conclusion, while trying to find an optimistic perspective within the limits of the American democracy: “Christian tribes cannot live with or without the secular media. A healthy tension between the media and Christianity is ultimately a good thing for democracy in America, as long as both sides are civil even when they disagree”²¹. But quickly, he will recognize the autism of the Christian media and their inability to play a role worthy to be considered as such in the public sphere by observing that: “With few exceptions—such as highly polarizing issues like gun control and abortion—exilic rhetoric is largely intratribal and therefore politically impotent in the broader public sphere. Evangelicals, in particular, may claim to be able to vote or act as a bloc in society, but the truth is that all of the different Christian tribes in America are relatively diverse and diffuse, held together more by the metanarrative of the faith than by every jot and tittle of theology, politics, and culture”²².

In the East, the situation is not fundamentally different. Even if the upheavals that followed the fall of the Iron Curtain may leave the impression that we assist at something different and the active presence of the Orthodox Church in the public sphere there is an evidence following the example of the unprecedented emergence of newspapers, radio, television channel, websites, and so on supported by the church, that “it is difficult to consider that the religious influences on politics: it is on a common Soviet legacy that religion and politics meet. The Church does not impose her matrix. In fact, it is rather the political matrix that is imposed on the religious”²³. This movement towards the symbolic domination of the politics over religion is, nevertheless, for the ecclesial organization a condition of access to the space with consequences not only harmful, but basically destroying. This is why the church, despite political circumstances, remains essentially still in a deep autism regarding the public sphere. Stewart M. Hoover suggests that in the

modern world religious “institutions are in the position of having to surrender control over their own symbols, in exchange for access to the public sphere and are unlikely to be entirely comfortable with this exchange”²⁴.

New information and communication technologies and new media provide no fundamental change to this situation especially when freedom of expression is an essential requirement of virtual public sphere, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, technology is seen as an insurmountable obstacle, as Caron notes: “the Internet, which is a kind of laboratory where all experiences are allowed, including the most dangerous, offers today unprecedented opportunities for less fortunate peripheral groups of all kinds, including those seeking to counter – so ridiculous perhaps – the influence of the Christian religion on the American society. Still, the Internet is a world apart, with its own future, functioning, terminology, its own typology, which only partially reflects the societies who use them”²⁵.

Conclusions

The institutional lack of means, including the media, allows “ecclesia” as an organization to provide and assume its conceptual and functional difference compared to another social space, “agora” which, rationalizing originally an irrational functioning introduced public sphere as 1) a place through which citizens have access to political information, information that they can discuss and from which they develop an opinion to choose the people who exercise the political power; as 2) a symbolic place that connects individuals belonging to various ethical or religious communities to form a common political community; as 3) a place where political actors put themselves in scene and the public problems become visible and tangible.

More precisely, Christian organizations are not the organizations that produce political opinion in the public sphere. These organizations, without turning back completely to the great debates of the society, show very little interest in political debates, which in absolute terms is deeply irrational, but in the reasoned reality of the practice of public sphere appears as rational practice. It is a rationality based on a reversal of attitude: instead of translating in organizational practice the neutrality of the public sphere in relation to church organizations, it is the neutrality of ecclesial organizations relative to the public debates – founders of public sphere – which is promoted and rewarded both inside and outside of these organizations. Basically, the citizen cannot rely on Christian organizations for having the information that will enable him or her to argue the choice when it comes to position himself or herself in terms of exercise of political power.

A second explanation of the irrational of Christian organizations in relation to public sphere is that indeed these organizations are not symbolic places that seek to walk together politically the citizens regardless of their religious and ethical beliefs.

A third major explanation of the irrational of the Christian organizations in relation to public sphere is possible if we observe that practically these organizations are not places where political actors put themselves in scene, and make politic the public problems.

Notes

¹ The following cited titles are the illustration: Jeffrey A. Burr, Patricia L. McCall, Eve Powell-Griner, "Catholic religion and suicide: The mediating effect of divorce", *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol 75(2), (Jun 1994): 300-318; Patricia Walls, "Religion, ethnicity and nation in the Census: some thoughts on the inclusion of Irish ethnicity and Catholic religion", (<http://www.radstats.org.uk/no078/walls.htm>); Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, "Encountering orthodox religion in psychotherapy", *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice*, Vol 12(4), (1975): 357-359; John A. F. Thomson, *Orthodox Religion and the Origins of Lollardy*, Volume 74, Issue 240, (January 1989): 39-55.

² The following cited titles are the illustration: A. M. Sorem, *Some Secular Implications of the Pentecostal Denomination* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1969); J. M. Stritecky, "Israel, America, and the ancestors: Narratives of spiritual warfare in a Pentecostal denomination in Solomon Islands", *Journal of Ritual Studies*, 15(2), (2001): 62-78; Tom Craig Darrand and Anson D. Shupe, *Metaphors of Social Control in a Pentecostal Sect*, (Mellen Press, 1983), http://opus.ipfw.edu/sociol_facpubs/54; H. K. Clow, *Ritual, Belief, and the Social Context: An Analysis of a Southern Pentecostal Sect*, (University Microfilms, 1976).

³ For instance, in the New Testament, as in the Athenian democracy, the ultimate economic forum for the resolution of social, political conflicts is always the ecclesia. In the Gospel according to Matthew 18: 17 we can read: "And if he will not listen to them, then tell the whole thing to the church, treat him as though he were a pagan or a tax collector".

⁴ See S. Gasser, "L'Église est-elle une démocratie?", *La Croix*, 09/03/ 2013.

⁵ See D. Coravu, *Despre noul Statut al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române* - interviu realizat de monahia Emilia Nistoroiu, published 12/07/2012, <http://www.crestinortodox.ro/interviuri/despre-noul-statut-bisericii-ortodoxe-romane-70546.html>, last visit 04/10/2013.

⁶ See Cornelius Castoriadis, *Les carrefours du labyrinthe, tome 4: La montée de l'insignifiance*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil (coll. Points-Essais), 2007), especially p. 277.

⁷ See Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991); Jurgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action Volume One: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, (Boston: Mass.: Beacon Press, 1984); Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (vol. 2), (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987).

⁸ See Ștefan Bratosin, *La concertation dans le paradigme du mythe*, (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2007).

⁹ See Aurel Ionica, *Reason, argumentation and persuasion*, (Doctoral thesis under the direction of Ștefan Bratosin, Université Toulouse le Mirail: Toulouse, 2011).

¹⁰ The name *rational square* is chosen to distinguish it from the *logical square* which uses the contradictory statements that Aristotle adopted for his syllogistic, and the *semiotic square* which is just a re-baptized version of the logical square.

¹¹ See J.-Y. Calvez, H. Tincq, *L'Eglise pour la démocratie*, (Centurion: Paris, 1992), 75.

¹² See Jacques Maritain, *Christianisme et démocratie* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2005).

¹³ See C. Gafiu, "L'éthique orthodoxe et l'échec de la démocratie", *Volumele Civitas99Alumni*, vol. IV, (september 2005): 2.

¹⁴ See D. Castellano, *La nouvelle démocratie "corporative"*, *Revue « Catholica »*, published at 28/06/2013 <http://www.catholica.presse.fr/2013/06/28/la-nouvelle-democratie-corporative/>, last visit 04/10/2013.

¹⁵ See *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 65, (1973): 674.

¹⁶ See D. Castellano, *La nouvelle démocratie «corporative»*.

¹⁷ See Sandu Frunză, "Minimal Ethics and the New Configuration of the Public Space", *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 11, issue 32 (Summer 2012): 3-17.

¹⁸ Voir C. Delhez, *L'Evangile au risque des médias*, (2013), <http://diocese-tournai.net/default.asp?X=AFF16E1CD1757A7A0D0401070E1377776D040402030F1E777862040A050E05127A746004040708050067>, last visit 06/10/2013.

¹⁹ See <http://www.ktotv.com/cms/presentation/>, last visit 06/10/2013.

²⁰ See TrinitasTv, <http://trinitastv.ro/despre-trinitas-tv>, last visit 06/10/2013.

²¹ Quentin J. Schultze, *Christianity and the Mass Media in America. Toward a Democratic Accomodation* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2003), 6.

²² Quentin J. Schultze, 33.

²³ See Kathy Rousselet, "Sécularisation et orthodoxie dans la Russie contemporaine: pour une hypothèse continuiste?", *Questions de Recherche / Research Question*, n°42, (mai 2013): 16, <http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceri/files/qdr42.pdf>, last visit 11 february 2014.

²⁴ See Stewart M. Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age (Media, Religion and Culture)*, (NY: Routledge, 2006), 93-94.

²⁵ See N. Caron, "Religion, société et politique aux Etats-Unis", *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, n° 75 (july-september 2004): 27.

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