COMMON FOUNDATION AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INTER-ETHNIC AND INTER-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS

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Abstract: Both the ethnic and the religious conflicts are rooted in the profoundness of the cultural values system. The ethnic conflict is the result of engaging identity ideologies so as to legitimate an ethnic group, since nation-state and ethnicity are two concepts neither similar nor congruent. Moreover, a pertinent limiting, performed by theorists/specialists, is contradicted by the normative definition of terms, through the agency of laws, rules, and norms. The religious conflict is the result of the religious disputes. Differently from the previous concept, the terminological limiting in the field of religious conflict is theoretically and normatively stable. In spite of the fact that both types of conflicts can manifest together, the religious conflicts are shaped in a more acute form of confrontation, because their bases are related to an irrational reference.

Keywords: ethnic conflict, nationality, homeland security, religious conflict, identity, 'unitas multiplex'.

In the context of the great political, social, symbolic, economic, and technologic mutations of the last decades of the past century, the contemporary society has not experienced a more secure environment; on the contrary, it is still confronted with ethnical and religious conflicts. The sources of these conflicts may be at the surface level (relating to values of civilization) or at deeper levels (profound sources, based on the differentiation in the ethnic, religious, cultural or ideological identity, according to Romania's project of National Security Strategy) [1].

Being a mark of identity, the ethnicity is regarded, through the ethnic conflicts, as the natural and legitimate unity of the nation-state. This fact leads to the appearance and the reconfiguration of new states in relation to the ethnical groups. The ethnic conflicts represent the confrontation among ethnical groups, as a result of the ethnic nationalism. These groups are constituted for the purpose of legitimating a certain ethnicity or some large social entities that possess the same biological features and claim a territorial area of provenance. The territorial area is not necessarily the territory where the ethnic group is located, but a claimed territory, at a specific time taken as a reference point in the group's history. From this perspective, three major manifestations are visible in a state's intentions of manifesting its legitimacy: a tendency for secession, a tendency of taking control over the state where the pressure ethnic group is constituted, or a tendency for immigrating to other territories.

The real ethnical conflict appears only when the group's ideologies concerning its identity are engaged politically and/or militarily. The conflict may appear as a military confrontation among the groups of political pressure, thus affecting the entire reference area of the claimed territory geopolitically. To be more accurate, the causes of ethnic conflicts outbreaks or of the acceleration of latent conflicts have economic roots (at the ideological level - the perception of economic exploitation by another group), political roots (the perception of political de-legitimating) or may be perceived as coercive (the perception of the imminence of repression or of some forced assimilation) [2]. From this standpoint, a relationship with "the matrix of powers", as formulated by the English sociologist Michael Mann, may be established.

It is necessary to take into account the fact that both ethnic and religious conflicts imply deep symbolic reasons in comparison with surface reasons of economic, politic and coercive causes. "*Michael Mann distinguishes four types of power: economic, politic, coercive, and symbolic. By the established relation of power and pregnant tendencies, 'Mann's matrix', completed by the Bourdieu's 'social field theory', makes the base for the temporal position of each individual, for the dynamic balance in which exists in every moment in the society*" [3].

Therefore, we may position the ethnical and religious conflicts on the profound layer of the symbolic structure, but, at the same time, at the surface, we may constitute other different causes from the area of economic, politic and coercive power. In this respect, some contemporary theorists charge the ethnic conflicts with economic, institutional or political claims, only for distract them from the profound ethnical motivation. Individually, these interpretations might be true, but concerning the group, as well the over-individual entity, where the ideological impulse of modifying a territorial area is formed, the arguments of economic or political frustrations are insufficient.

By accepting the idea that the nation-state and the ethnical group are not always similar, we must emphasize upon the definitions of these categories, in order to interpret them within the pertinence of the inter-ethnic conflicts experience. The English theorist Anthony D. Smith [4] considers that a nation-state represents "*a state claiming to be a nation*", while a nation is "*a named population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for its members*". The ethnicity is shaped within other limits of *genus* and *differentia* in comparison with the nation, which represents "*a named population sharing a collective proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more differencing elements of common culture, an association with a specific 'homeland' and a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population*". Considering this terminology

difference between nation and ethnicity, it is obvious that what refers to the national systems of values does not necessarily characterize the ethnic group systems of values. The ethnicity corresponds to a cultural matrix, whereas the nation-state relies upon a high-leveled diplomatic agreement, as a result of a legitimate or illegitimate action of the conflict between civilization and cultures. In this manner, the inter-ethnical conflicts could be interpreted from a marginal perspective, by exposing them to such interpretations able to confer legitimacy and pertinence only to the national dimension. Thus, the concept of 'homeland', and especially the concept of 'homeland security', which refers to ethnicity and, more precisely, to membership, are brought in the conceptual area of the term 'national' for strengthening legitimacy through pertinence. In a similar manner, since pairs of terms such as *langue-parole, culture-civilization, post-modernity postmodernism* are often confusable, there is no wonder that a sensible difference between nationality and ethnicity is not marked in the American thinking. For example, 'homeland security' is defined as a common (concerted) national effort of "*preventing terrorist attacks within the United States; reducing America's vulnerability to terrorism; and minimizing the damage and facilitating the recovery from attacks that do occur.*", as The National Security Strategy of the United States of America asserts [5]. Consequently, as long as the maximal borders of terminological limitations concerning the national doctrines and strategies cannot be established, and so long as, intending to take over models from the American area, there appear discordances between the pertinent terminological limits (of theorists' studies) and the legitimate terminological limits (of norms, rules, laws), the inter/ethnic conflict could not be rigorously tackled with. And, considering the lack of a rigorous terminological limitation, it is impossible, too, to tackle with a proper action plan or to apply a coherent strategy coming from the daily reality. Surely, the ethnicity means "*one of the forces that moderately contributes to build the communities, but excessively leads to destruction of them*" [6].

The religious conflict appears around the major disputes between communities, disputes that cover religious and political-religious aspects. Actually, these conflicts are also based on the cultural matrix and are built by the transfer of ideas from the beliefs' layer to the convictions' layer, where the ideas become ideologies and punitive tools against people who do not tolerate the respective religion or sect, or against people who are different or think differently. The cultural foundation is the common element of the manner in which the inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts are generated and manifested. It implies mythologies (common myths), rituals and the ethos, which characterize the religious, linguistic and racial communities.

Differently from the inter-ethnical conflicts, the inter-confessional conflicts have certain stability in the field of terminological limiting in theoretical and normative aspects. Thus, based on the article 1A of the Convention (1951) or on the Protocol (1967), regarding the Statute of refugees, there are taken into account, almost exhaustively, the coordinates of religious acceptance as belief (implying a set of beliefs in divinity and life after death, with aspects that concern the destiny of mankind), as identity (referring to community-homeland that shares beliefs, rituals, ethnicity, nationality, or common origins) and as a *modus vivendi* (referring to relationships with the rest of the world) [7]. From this normative perspective over the acceptance of the religious phenomena we can conclude that, similarly with the various causes of the inter-ethnic conflicts, we can take into account everything that refers to religion as an identity mark.

Similar to the inter-ethnic confrontations, the religious conflicts may manifest in various ways regarding the contact within the power fields, presented before. Thus, we can talk about political-symbolic confrontations, sometimes with coercive (military) features, in spite of the fact that religious beliefs of certain communities could be political by excellence, supporting the ethnicity and associating themselves with transcendental values. This is the most common form of religious conflict, when the transcendental values create the climate of cohesion and stability necessary for intermediating an action way ('in the name of something" spiritually). Using these values with the purpose of promoting coercively its personal religious convictions and beliefs, the group/community turns towards religious fundamentalism. In this case, the apparently defensive acts, characterizing the defense of personal values (inclusively the religious values) could be shaped in offensive acts, in attacks for preventing and/or hinder from the possible oppressive acts of possible attackers.

To point a difference, the inter-religious conflict escalation could cause violence more effectively than an inter-ethnic conflict. If in the case of inter-ethnic conflicts the reason of the action could be described in qualitative and quantitative terms and could be interpreted, quantified, and blocked up by concrete actions, in the case of the inter-religious conflicts their progress may not be observed rationally, but emotionally. An inter-religious conflict escalation implies adopting a set of radical rules based on the sacred texts or interpretations of them. Involving the political or economical nuance of inter-confessional conflicts is just an intermediate stage in the complete evolution, in the lifecycle of the conflict that is about to break out. Differently, the inter-ethnic conflict has a similar nuance in its final stage, when hiding itself behind ethnic claims.

Another significant difference between ethnic and religious conflicts concerns the relationship with the society as a whole. The ethnic conflicts are based on a reproach of the (self-) legitimate ethnicity toward the process of modernist colonialism (a process of conquest) or of postmodernist (a process of seduction), which causes the appearance of the nation/state. Despite this reproach, the ethnicities cannot attack the modern or postmodern society because, except for the way of attack by offering the possibility of self-allegation. In fact, *unitas multiplex (We live with the illusion that the identity is always a unitas multiplex. We are all individuals with multi-identity, a fact meaning that we bring together a familial identity, a local identity, a national identity, an over-national identity (Slavish, German, Latin), and, eventually, a*

confessional or doctrinal identity, notes Edgar Morin in Gândind Europa) [8], one of the principles that govern our contemporary world, is the principle of the local globalism or glocalism. The religious communities live in opposition to civilization and contemporary values. They are strictly related to the past and to traditions, and motivate their conflictive acts by marginalizing the religion in the modern and/or postmodern social field.

Finally, another essential difference between the conflict within the ethnic and the religious communities is the tendency of diminishing the number of ethnic groups' special characteristics, while in the confessional field the differences are intact or increase. The religious groups deepen the cleavage between them and the others, but the ethnic groups erase the differences. Somebody can be the beneficiary of a dual ethnical inheritance, but he can be the beneficiary of a singular religious inheritance. Eventually, we can reach the conclusion that in the dynamics of the contemporary society the principal confrontation takes place where the law of the included third cannot rule. By the religious dogma, one must choose one of the antinomian values. By ethnical ideology, one may convert himself to common values.

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