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Sociology of religions and challenges of globalization

Theologians warn us that even the first pages of the Bible point at globalisation. There, Adam/Adem was named as "The Father of all peoples". Jesus gives a global task to the Apostles: „Go and make all peoples my scholars!" (Mt 28,19). Some religions say about creation of "the God's kingdom on Earth". Kuschel[2] writes on "Before there is 'a people', there is one mankind in the Jewish Bible and Koran".

Nevertheless, perhaps sociologists should point at the difference between globalisation that was commenced by universal religions and contemporary globalised processes?[3] While the ultimate objective of contemporary globalisation is "the economic unity", the world's economic market, the objective of the religious globalisation has been and still is the spiritual ruling over the world.

Is one, global religion, an unification at the spiritual level, possible today? That is the same as if we would ask whether could be possible to have all people in the world wearing the same clothes?

Could it be said, from the sociological point of view that confessions grounded on Christianity and Islam i.e. originated from universal (global) religions, are not ready to give answers to challenges of contemporary globalisation? Could it be said that only some protestant communities, above all those of the Evangelistic orientation, have responded to that challenge? In regard to that, i refer to the datum that a percentage of Protestants within the world's population has been increased for 1000 % in the last fifty years. In addition, "traditional confessions" of the Balkans, have turned more to the marriage with national states and national parties, than to the challenges of contemporary globalisation. That was reflected in religious fundamentalism that is getting stronger, as fear of globali-

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[2] Karl-Josef Kuschel, *Židovi-Kršćani-Muslimani*, Sarajevo: „Svjetlo riječi", 2011, page 355.
[3] Georgije Mandzaridis thinks: „Though seem mutually similar, contemporary globalisation and Christian universality actually differ radically in essence" (Georgije Mandzaridis, *Globalizacija i univerzalnost – san ili java*, Beograd: „Službeni glasnik", 2011, pp. 9).

sation and a response to it (including deep social crises, fear of secularisation, fight for preserving an identity).

Is it that the globalisation gives a fatal counterattack to the nationalism or makes the ethnic and religious nationalism stronger in the function of the identity's protection? One would say: the globalisation ruins the model of "the state's church" and the model of "national" religions. In that sense, the following question can be asked: does the globalisation lead to taking off the throne of "national" religions or is something like that illusive to expect?

If the globalisation leads to creation of one world's cultural model, then what religions that were the key factor of establishing cultural identities (Hinduism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam etc.) in many cases before, would say to that. That can only be assumed from recent debates o an alleged death of multi-culturing, on which dr. Mile Lasić wrote a paper ("Death of multi-culturing or overcoming the misery of divided societies). Buddhism, by its spreading, then Christianity and Islam, have become a kind of global religions. Those religions have often been "interlaced" with local religious traditions in a way that differ in some aspects from the religion itself in some other countries in which that religion is more known (like Buddhism in America than the one in Japan, Cambodia, China; Christianity in Africa, than the one in Europe; Islam in Indonesia and Africa than the one in Saudi Arabia etc.). How those religions will react to an attempt of creating a new world's cultural model? Already today we can notice a fear of religious elites that the globalisation will bring to mixing of religions, their equalising, even to a religious syncretism.

Processes of contemporary migrations have influence on a sort of "globalisation" of religions. By series of circumstances and conveniences, one chooses easily to change their place of living and work: goes from Africa and Asia to Europe, USA etc. and brings with him/herself their own religious culture. They are followed by their religious institutions (Churches, denominations etc.). Missionaries, as being called like that by traditional sociology of religions, have a special role in that kind of "globalisation" of religions. Those are the ones that have been travelling and still are, through various parts of the world, spreading and/or preserving religious culture and tradition they belong to.

Can religions, in the time of globalisation, offer a kind of common system of values to the world, like the Declaration of the world's ethics (Chicago, 1993), or attitudes on ecological problems (1986.) etc.? „What is the place of religions in upcoming global society? Actual crisis of globalisation – even a doubt that the globalisation is the crisis itself – really makes that question more prompt to respond to than even before. We have to find ways to tackle spiritual and ethical heritage of the others, without assuming that the other is inferior and at the same time, thinking that the other is a threat to our own integrity and unique-

ness. We have to learn understanding the universality as inter-dependence, so that the universalism to which we strive, will be dialogical and inter-subjective; pluralism for which we long, has to be interactive, not static; we have to accept that the consensus on which we work, will be multidimensional and trans-cultural." [4]

Contemporary sociology should try to find an answer to the question: which are the consequences of the globalisation for relations amongst religions and religious communities? To search for the answer would probably lead us to some of the following stand views:

1. Globalisation leads religious communication and their followers into necessary dialogue with other religious communities and their followers.
2. As a result of the awareness of necessity of dialogue, it has been commenced with creating global organisations that contribute to the above, like the World's Conference of Religions for Peace, European Council of Religious leaders (established in 2002, as a part of the World's Conference of Religions for Peace).
3. Globalisation will contribute to greater respect of freedoms of the Other. Isn't it that the "shirt" of ecumenism (as a movement of getting the Christian churches closer to one another) in the era of globalisation has become too "tight"? Moreover, as the globalisation forces in a way, all religious communities (not only those Christian ones) to approaching one another (not in a sense of any doctrine-based approaching).
4. When in situations of close connection of religious and national identities, Globalisation creates preconditions for religious communities to appear in the role of protection of the national identity (which, as obvious, leads to the rise of religious nationalism worldwide). Religions which embraced nationalism will go into „conflict" with global processes – all, under the slogan of protecting the identity.
5. On the other hand, global processes will lead to strengthening tolerance, reinforcing religious freedoms, and thus will destroy their limitation.
6. Globalisation imposes the following question to religious communities: how to present to others, especially from the aspect of modern communication techniques? Expansion of communication will lead to higher information dissemination on other religions. Each of religions will be able to present itself to the world, by using modern communication techniques. That would reduce a possibility of extreme part of the religious leadership to create prejudice on a religion and religious culture of the Other amongst believers.

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[4] Hogan, L.-M, J., *Viđenje ekumenizma kao međukulturalne, međureligijske i javne teologije*, U: „Concilium", Rijeka-Sarajevo, No. 1/2011, p. 97.

7. Globalisation destroys the monopoly of one religion and leads to creating a "market" of religions and to religious pluralism. It produces religious heterogeneity.

8. If national borders loose of their significance in the era of globalisation, can it be also said for religious/confessional ones? Would the issue of borders become insignificant in the 21st century, or perhaps, very much important? For the sociology of religions is important to monitor the processes which take place at the borderline of religions, especially in times of conflicts, when both religions and religious symbols are called for help. Also, to monitor what kind of religious awareness (tolerant, exclusive, inclusive, radical, fundamentalist-like etc.) shapes at the border of religious etc.

The above are only a few of issues and questions that remain before the Sociology of religion, when it comes to contemporary global processes.

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