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CHURCH AND STATE IN POST-COMMUNIST ROMANIA: PRIORITIES ON THE RESEARCH AGENDA

This paper looks at the state of research on church-state relations in post-communist Romania in order to provide an outline of the most important questions which need to be addressed in the coming years. The article consists of two parts. First, a survey of academic studies published over the past two decades on the relationship between the country's churches and state after 1990. Secondly, a breakdown of pressing church-state issues today, accompanied by short discussions of existing studies and suggestions as to what future research should probe into.

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Key Words:

religion, post-communist
politics, church-state
relations, Orthodox Church,
religious freedom,
separationism, state funding
of religion, religious
education, religiosity

Introduction

The literature on religion and politics in post-revolutionary Romania is, unsurprisingly given the sheer breadth of the subject, very rich – but only in quantitative terms. The churches in general, and academic theologians in particular, have generated a considerable amount of it, mostly in church-edited or -affiliated journals. The academic environment has also been particularly productive, as groups of scholars interested in religion have organized over the past decade numerous conferences and have published the papers delivered there in collective volumes. Some activist organizations in the field of human rights have monitored the state of religious freedom and issued periodic reports summarizing the findings.¹ Civil society has flared several times in connection with matters of religion and politics – the criminalization of homosexuality, the challenges of religious education, the building of the “National” Orthodox Cathedral, the contents of religious education textbooks –, and one result was short-lived flourishings of magazine and newspaper articles on these thorny questions. Meanwhile, academic contributions to international journals or internationally-visible Romanian journals in the social sciences have been rather infrequent² and, in the case of homespun periodicals, often of average quality. Book-length studies on religion and politics in today's Romania are few in number, although some related subjects, such as the churches under communism, have been well represented.³

This variety of works on religion and politics obviously gives voice to a diversity of perspectives and approaches. Since our aim here is to offer suggestions for future research, both empirical and normative, in the field of political science and associated disciplines (Section 3), the survey in Section 2 and the proposals that follow it are limited to writings which may be subsumed to the paradigms or methods of the social sciences. We have not considered, for the purposes of this paper, the views of theologians or philosophers of religion or of religious pluralism, for example, except to the extent to which they are directly relevant to our limited goals. Conversely, some reports by civic groups were taken into consideration essentially for the empirical results they delivered. The need to distinguish between ways of approaching matters of church and state is, in fact, an underlying premise of this article.

An overview of research on church-and-state in post-communist Romania

As suggested in the introductory paragraphs above, in this field of study, and especially with respect to domestic publications, quantity has triumphed over quality and the debate has been limited in both range and depth. Especially after 2000, there have been numerous academic- and civil-society-spawned conferences on the intersection of religion and a whole range of pressing political issues, from European integration and church-and-state to the eternally delayed law on denominations, and from the role of religion in a globalized world to the connections between Orthodox and national identity. Participants in such events typically included a wide range of scholars and activists, from academic theologians to clergy, political scientists, philosophers of religion, sociologists, politicians, and defenders of Western-style religious freedom. A substantial number of volumes promising studies on the issues announced in their titles were published. On reading them, the impression is that too often the numerous contributors were talking past each other. It was only rarely that the debates centered on one or a few clearly defined common issues and then deployed scientific expertise to probe them in depth. Most often, these conferences seem to have been treated as venues in which the association of participants would pursue their individual, chiefly academic interests at the expense of a genuine conversation on the subjects which provided the pretext.

As a result, although a lot has been published in Romania in the recent years on the interplay of religion and politics, relatively little counts as a substantial contribution. The most dependable source on such subjects have been a few academically-inclined activists as well as scholars affiliated with Western universities and research centers, some of them of Romanian background (e.g., Lavinia Stan, Lucian Turcescu, Lucian Leuștean). However, and unfortunately, the latter's analyses played a

comparatively limited part in the debates on the home front. Furthermore, their works and those of their Western colleagues who have written on Romania were colored by the specific interests and biases – we intend the latter term neutrally – of the Western community of social scientists studying the scientifically promising testing-grounds of the post-communist world.⁴

Specifically, analyses of church-state relations in Romania dating from the first decade of the post-revolution era originated primarily in an attempt on the part of political scientists to understand the setbacks and stumbling blocks of post-communist democratization – the “morning after” syndrome, as Ivan Varga aptly called it in a 1994 study on Central European churches and politics.⁵ The relationship between religious groups and post-communist political authorities was explored mainly in the context of its impact upon the transition process, in particular in conjunction to such phenomena as the revival of nationalism, the legitimization strategies of the new political elites, the weakness of civil society, and resistance to liberal conceptions of human rights.

This focus reflected the broader concerns of the international community, which confronted soon after the fall of communism the dangers to social peace and regional stability posed by inter-ethnic hatred and authoritarian reflexes. Religious freedom was, by comparison, a secondary concern for both a large part of the international community and for many political analysts writing on this country in the nineties. Admittedly, it is difficult to distinguish, analytically and practically, between the broader process of post-communist democratization and the comparatively more limited issue of religious freedom. The latter is very much a chapter of the former, to the extent to which human rights, religious freedom prominently among them, are part and parcel of the respective process. Furthermore, religious freedom is in practice often linked to such questions, which remain central to democratization in Eastern Europe, as the resurgence of nationalism and anti-Semitism, or ethnicity-based social tensions. However, as we shall argue additionally below, the paramount concern for democratization in formerly communist lands oriented church-state research on Romania in such a way that particular themes (religion and nationalism, religion and civil society, the churches and the making of public policy in areas such as sexual and reproductive freedom) were emphasized at the relative expense of others (viz., freedom to exercise one’s religion).

A further disclaimer: this is not to say that the question of religious freedom was ignored. Religious minorities, experts and activists (often coming from North America), and a few religious freedom organizations worked tirelessly to monitor religious affairs and raise awareness.⁶ Moreover, as the argument in the previous paragraph intimates, most academic works cited in this paper touch at some point, directly or indirectly, on matters of religious freedom. Nonetheless, a review of

political science literature on our topic suggests that throughout the previous decade religious freedom was most frequently discussed in the wider contexts of transition politics and general human rights. In this respect, scholarship followed policy: while international actors were, during the nineties, very responsive to inter-ethnic strife, which they monitored closely and to which they reacted promptly, violence motivated chiefly by religion was, for example, comparatively overlooked.

As a result, the topic of church-and-state in post-1989 Romania was explored, until the turn of millennium, mainly in the context of religion's "ancillary" role in political legitimation⁷ or that of policies violating sexual freedoms, thus upsetting the fragile new democratic order and diminishing the country's prospects of NATO and EU integration. Analyses typically insisted on the ties of the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) to the "language and symbols of nationalism"⁸ – even the Church's unofficial position on abortion and contraception was deciphered as being premised in part on "ethno-national considerations"⁹ –, as well as on the informal alliances between nationalist political groups and leaders of the majority denomination. The connection between the Orthodox Church and inter-ethnic tensions, with its ramifications in the communist and pre-communist past, was probably the subject examined most frequently and carefully. Other prevalent topics included the participation of Orthodox clergy in elections on the ruling party's electoral lists; the Synod's vacillations on the political involvement of the clergy; the democratic opposition's recourse to religion in order to deal a blow to the self-declared "freethinker" Ion Iliescu; the ROC's disputes with the Greek-rite Catholics over formerly Uniate assets confiscated by the communists; and the churches' stance on the criminalization of homosexual relations.

The alliance between church and state was thus a relevant issue for scholarship primarily because it helped explain transition politics. On the one hand, ruling politicians with a tainted past but also a democratic opposition looking for vulnerabilities in its adversaries sought to enlist the *culte* to further their electoral prospects. On the other, a majority church which is considered by analysts apprehensive about modernization and a free religious market welcomed political advances as long as they enabled it to secure a public voice and conserve or enhance inherited privileges. In this alliance, nationalism, the ideological scourge of the Balkans, served as a common currency and provided political scientists with a useful umbrella concept summarizing the failures of democratization. The link between church-state entanglement and religious freedom was, in the Romanian case at least, comparatively underemphasized in the nineties. Even in Sabrina Ramet's comprehensive 1998 study *Nihil Obstat*, a book ostensibly written to show that "throughout what used to be called the Soviet-East European Region, literally *nothing stands in the way* of new religious movements, groups, and associations",¹⁰ the underlying issue remains the

contorted transition to the democratic order rather than religious freedom specifically.

One consequence was that particular aspects of church-state relations that were less immediately relevant – though by no means irrelevant – to the study of nationalism, ethnicity, or multiculturalism, remained under-explored despite their central importance to freedom of religion and conscience. A topic noticed by some studies is the expanding web of financial relations between Romania's majority church and central and local authorities, enabling the former to enlarge its social base¹¹ in spite of what appeared to be, in the immediately post-revolutionary months, a general disaffection with a Church branded as "collaborationist". But the most telling – because most dramatic – example is that of religious education. After an initial struggle against confessional religion classes in public schools was lost in the mid-nineties by a small section of Western-oriented civil society, no study of consequence on the implications of this policy surfaced for around a decade. Although in Romania religious education was offered in state schools as early as 1990, became established a few years later, and proved problematic enough to spark a heated argument among a Romanian intelligentsia usually friendly to the Orthodox Church, it was accorded little serious attention by analysts until well into the new millennium.¹² Yet religious education as organized almost a decade and a half ago poses, according to some voices in Romanian civil society (including the authors of the present article), a serious threat to freedom of religion and conscience. Empirical and normative studies on its implications for these freedoms, obviously of paramount necessity, are only now beginning to emerge.¹³

There is a major exception to the observations above. One religious freedom issue commanded a lot of attention in the 1990s and enjoyed some coverage in the literature on religion and politics in Romania. Starting from the early 1990s, the question of the coming law on the status of religious groups proved a constant concern of the international community, partly in response to the apprehensions expressed by non-traditional *culte* and religious minorities. The situation mirrored that in other Eastern European lands with an Orthodox majority which had to replace their communist-era laws – and did so, for better or for worse, after delays and tense negotiations among the denominations. In the case of Romania, the anxiety among religious and non-religious actors lasted longest because the law came last, in December 2006. The 17-year span between the fall of communism and the passing of this anticipated act was rife with inter-denominational arguments and recriminations, international pleading and arm-twisting, and unexpected turns of events.¹⁴ This anxiety was reflected in the academic literature on religion and politics in Romania.¹⁵ Nevertheless, by comparison with the outpour of analyses of the 1997 Russian law, for example, the output on its Romanian

counterpart, before and after it was passed, has been limited in both international and domestic literature.

The interest in the relationship between religion, on the one hand, and nationalism and illiberalism, on the other, has persisted to this day. Sabrina Ramet's recent synthesis of East European Orthodoxy, in which she discusses the ROC alongside three sister churches, listed as its main concerns the Orthodox Church's "deeply ingrained homophobia, its inward-looking sacralization of the nation, its hostility towards liberalism and cosmopolitanism, and its consequent hostility towards both ecumenism and European unity."¹⁶ Ramet also deals with Orthodox-organized violence against minority faiths, but chiefly as an extension of Orthodoxy's broader suspicion of ecumenism, rather than – as somebody focusing on religious freedom would most likely do – as a facet of the majority churches' efforts to stem religious competition, whether by law, by forging alliances with central and local authorities, or by intimidation. Since nationalism, ethnicity, and minorities remain academically engaging and profitable subjects of research, it is unlikely that they will lose their hold on the study of religion and politics in Romania. However, we feel that over the coming years freedom of religion and conscience "for their own sake", so to speak, is an open field for the academic researchers.

In part, this is because of the radical improvement in the country's democratic prospects. The nationalist hysteria of the nineties has slowly but surely faded. While the development of Romanian-Hungarian inter-ethnic relations was touted as an international model, *Vatra Românească* and the Party for the National Unity of Romanians (PUNR), commonly included in the ultra-nationalist camp, were experiencing internal crises and disintegrating. Vadim Tudor's surprising electoral achievement in 2000 represented, as subsequent events demonstrated, not a peak of nationalist sentiment but the swan song of ultra-nationalism. Soon after, Romania became a full member of NATO and of the European Union. The former neo-communist camp in Romanian politics re-invented itself, as did the anti-communist side – to such a degree that the straightforward political labels of the nineties no longer apply.

Consequently, the intersection of religion and politics in the specific context of state-sponsored ethno-nationalism and government-stoked ethnic conflict is no longer as scientifically interesting as it used to be. While in the nineties the political project of the Romanian state was under the pressure of ethnic nationalism, after 2000 this pressure has been coming, in our view, mainly in the form of Orthodox nationalism. The position of the Romanian Orthodox Church enables it today to forge new relations with public authorities and state-run institutions, to control the public agenda and define public values. It is significant, for instance, that over the past years, in practice as well as by law,¹⁷ the denominations have been replacing civic organizations as social partners of the state. On questions such as abortion, euthanasia, or stem cell research, the voice of

the churches has started to dominate the public debate at the expense of expert opinion and professional ethics. Or, to supply another example, the question of the ROC's collaboration with the communist Securitate has been partially wrested from the public domain and turned into an internal affair of the Church. In light of the new context, in which Orthodoxy gains precedence over ethno-nationalism as a threat to liberal democracy, we need a shift of focus and a new impetus in church-and-state research.

Below, we attempt to provide a list of subjects that have not been, in our opinion, sufficiently addressed by social scientists. Our analysis of research priorities concerning religion and politics is guided by our particular belief that today, after two decades of transition, freedom of religion and conscience and societal power structures remain, for academic research, the main outstanding issues of church-state relations.

An agenda for church-and-state research

By circumstance, the Romanian Orthodox Church is the most important agent of Romanian religious life. It is also the most active religious actor in the public sphere and stands closest to the state, with which it has formed over time a strong alliance. There are a number of factors which explain this privileged status: its being nominally the confession of a majority of this country's people; a sense of representativeness grounded in history and the historical imaginary; a set of doctrines (autocephaly, symphonia etc.) which has developed through the eons and may be construed in ways that justify an ever closer identification with the secular establishment. Finally, regardless of where we stand on the question of the ROC's repression under *versus* collaboration with the communist rulers, it remains incontrovertible that, as Tom Gallagher noted, the "Orthodox Church was the only major national institution whose inner life [was] not destroyed by the party in order to conform fully with communist norms."¹⁸

As a result, as soon as the fleeting post-revolutionary hangover caused by the Church's passivity in communist times passed, the ROC was left competing on an almost equal footing with the state in terms of the latter's real-world authority. "With the sole exception of the three counties inhabited by a Hungarian majority," one analyst observed, "the ROC is present institutionally in all Romanian communes and cities, while in many remote or small villages it is the only active institution in the community – religiously, socio-culturally, and even politically. Which is to say that, if we leave aside law enforcement and local administration, the ROC is demographically and administratively far ahead of any other institution of the state or civil society."¹⁹ It is a position which the Orthodox Church has been striving to maintain and improve since the early 1990s.

This explains why any analysis of church-state relations in Romania is largely one about the Orthodox Church and the state. This is not to say that other churches, even though frequently at odds with the majority denomination, are not sometimes eager to indulge in questionable practices or to sponsor problematic ideas or initiatives. Minority religious groups have capitalized on the political and social influence of the ROC to promote their own agendas even when they were directly or indirectly detrimental to freedom of conscience or religion. Some denominations, such as the admittedly beleaguered Greek-rite Catholic Church (GCC), have often affirmed their support for the state's direct financing of *culte*, even though the ROC, an arch-nemesis of sorts, reaps most of this policy's benefits. Greek Catholic priest and senator Ioan Moisin requested in 1998 that philosophy and biology curricula in public schools be revised to comply with religious education (his dream came true in 2007).²⁰ When asked in 1995 by the Constitutional Court to offer their views on the Criminal Code's ban on homosexuality, the Orthodox, Greek Catholic and Old Calendar churches and representatives of the Jewish, Muslim, Adventist, and Pentecostal communities "without exception condemned homosexuality and upheld the ban."²¹

This list could go on with examples involving sexual education classes taught in public schools, the content of religious education textbooks used by some minority *culte*, and other matters. Very significantly, the issues discussed here in relation to the Orthodox Church deserve to be examined in the context of the Hungarian minority in Romania and its churches. Just as the Romanian Orthodox Church has an important impact on Romanian political life, the Hungarian churches have considerable political influence within the Hungarian community, the most evident example being the career of bishop Tókécs László.

The above notwithstanding, the part played by minority religious groups supporting policies detrimental to freedom of religion or conscience remains secondary to the paramount role of the Romanian Orthodox Church. It is the latter which acted as a prime mover in most of the cases cited above, as it alone had the necessary political clout. Conversely, on almost every issue in which the ROC and another minority denomination were at odds, the former either prevailed or scored a draw – even in such cases as the restitution of the GCC's communist-confiscated assets. For these reasons, the list of church-state concerns presented below will inherently focus on the majority Church.

Captive audiences

One subject which has recently come to the foreground of the church-state debate and whose importance cannot be overstated is that of denominations' activities involving "captive audiences" – hospitalized individuals, members of the military and army draftees, detainees, and public school students. For instance, it has been argued that Law 195 of 6

November 2000 on the establishment and operation of the army chaplaincy is discriminatory and bestows on the Orthodox clergy unacceptable competences in the field of raising the armed forces' civic and patriotic spirit.²² However, so far there is no empirical research on the nature and extent of the work of army chaplains.

Detainees are the subject of a 1997 Protocol (updating a similar document from 1993) on religious assistance within the Romanian penitentiary system concluded between the ROC Patriarchate and the Ministry of Justice. Inmates' exercise of their right to enjoy religious assistance was shown to be potentially hampered by the provisions of this understanding, which gives the ROC the freedom to engage in proselytization activities incompatible with detainees' captive condition.²³ Ministry of Justice regulations on religious assistance in detention centers dating from February 2006 formally ensure religious freedom and pluralism, but no empirical studies of the situation either before or after 2006 exist.

The question of religious education in public schools has been, however, the subject of several investigations in recent years. While normative analyses predominate, some data offering a quantitative image of the issue have been collected.²⁴ Studies covered the question of religious ceremonies organized periodically in state schools, the contents of religion textbooks,²⁵ the inspectorates' responses to complaints concerning religious education, and cases in which students were forced to attend religion classes.

Surveying this research, it is apparent that further studies are needed and that public debates, even though heated and protracted, have not been terribly informative. Consider the question of religious displays in public schools: as yet, there has been no adequate study of their compatibility with the relevant jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights. Does or does not the current organization of religious education in Romania turn confessional subjects into quasi-mandatory classes, thus rendering them incompatible with freedom of religion and conscience as protected by the ECHR? Is or isn't the Romanian state in breach of the Convention on the Rights of the Child? The answers to these questions may have far-reaching implications, but they have not been pursued systematically.

This being said, empirical studies remain the most severely lacking type of research. Wide-ranging polls are needed to establish the frequency of particular practices and phenomena where captive audiences are involved. So far, all we have are either anecdotes and case studies or, in the field of education, pilot surveys. One cannot answer even with approximation whether, for example, the alarmingly low percentage of public school students who believe in the theory of evolution is mainly a result of years of confessional religious education, or of the home environment, or of something else. We remain almost completely in the

dark with respect to the religious environment in which children are raised in the countryside. Although minority faiths have made numerous complaints about religious discrimination in education, there is still no reliable academic study of the topic. Last but not least, there is no analysis of the relation between the religious beliefs with which students come in contact and their micro- or macrosocial behavior.

Relationships with state institutions

Following 1990, the old rapport of subordination-cohabitation between the churches and the communist state has diversified. The churches have secured a degree of autonomy, defined their interests, enhanced and broadened their resources, and made numerous contacts. All religious actors have developed, and a few have attained considerable growth. Part of this expansion was made possible by capitalizing on existing relationships with the state, whether formal or informal. These connections become visible especially in the context of transfers of resources from the latter to the churches, but also when government and church cooperate to place religious symbols in public spaces, provide religious assistance in state-run institutions, or assume responsibilities concerning religious education.

All of these are specific issues of church-state relations and deserve to be treated separately. However, distinctive questions arise in connection with institutions which seem to have a special interest in and particular affinities with the majority church. Perhaps the most obvious case is the bond between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Army. Several volumes promote, often in militant terms, the “historical connection” between the two organizations.²⁶ Starting with 2000, this connection has been formalized and codified through the institution of the army chaplaincy, which, as noted, may raise constitutional concerns.²⁷ Besides the normative matters, other developments have still not become a subject of study despite their noteworthiness. One involves the hiring of former army apparatchiks as chaplains. How was this achieved? Were there any formal or informal agreements between the two institutions in this respect? What roles do these individuals play in the Army-Church connection?

Other empirical issues are the construction of Orthodox places of worship inside military compounds, or forms of assistance by the army for the church (e.g., military helicopters were used on several occasions to assist the ROC with its endeavors). How frequent and extensive is such assistance, and to what extent is it legal? Finally, what is the relation – if any – between the elective affinities of the two institutions and the population’s high level of trust in the army and the church, respectively?

Another apparently special bond ties the majority church to central or local executive agencies – even apart from their electoral intersection. How significant and how open are the channels of communication? It is

striking that ROC-government meetings are customarily held not at the headquarters of the latter, but at those of the Church. This suggests a relationship of authority which is certainly symbolic, but may also have a practical dimension. It is worth recalling here that during the 1999 mineriad the “peace” between the miners bent on toppling the regime and the government was brokered by the Orthodox Church. Also, at least on occasion, the prime minister and the Patriarch use the military mail service to write to each other.²⁸ How do the high-ranking dignitaries and the hierarchs view this relationship? How symmetrical is it, in view of the fact that hierarchs have been systematically involved in state ceremonies? Are specific procedures followed, or are the relations part of an informal administrative culture? There are numerous anecdotes in the field, but no systematic investigation.

Finally, one should look not only at cases of church-state collusion, but also at instances of church-state collision. In 2007, for instance, the Romanian Orthodox Church started a campaign against the National Council for the Study of Securitate Archives (CNSAS). The contents of the files of ROC hierarchs were declassified and the Council had to respond to the several requests, some dating from as early as 2000, to make public the nature of the collaboration of Church leaders with the communist agencies of repression.²⁹ After the first assessments were made, several important high-ranking clerics were confirmed as “collaborators of the Securitate as political police” (archbishops Andreicuț, Pimen, and others). The ROC responded by denying the right of state agencies to pass any judgment on the collaboration of its members and, invoking the autonomy of denominations, established its own “truth commission”. How far-reaching were the Orthodox Church’s pressures on political leaders to keep the lid shut on Church collaboration? Were subsequent decisions, which went as far as the disestablishment of the CNSAS after an incoherent ruling of the Constitutional Court,³⁰ determined among others by a pro-Orthodox lobby to keep hidden the revelations in the files? What the archives may disclose about the collaboration between the churches and the communist regime is a research subject that is only now beginning to take off.³¹ Its significance cannot be underestimated.

Confessionalization

As noted, the ROC’s cooperation with a variety of state actors – army, clinics, schools, penitentiaries – poses a set of distinct religious freedom problems because of the nature of these exposed, fragile communities. Furthermore, the denominations’ newly acquired status as preferred partners of the government (see below in this section) suggests that in the future the churches may gain a stronger voice in the formulation and implementation of policy. It is therefore fit to ask: are we dealing with a larger process of confessionalization – by which we mean the development

of a structural linkage of church and state such that the religious worldview becomes a criterion in the making of public policies?³²

Some developments might point in this direction. In the field of education, for instance: not only did catechizing religious education curricula fail to adapt to the broad goals of public schooling, but the curricula of other disciplines (biology and philosophy) were amended to diminish possible conflicts with the religious worldview. Despite the public outcry caused by the belated discovery of such curricular amendments, nobody knows how the changes were brought about or why. Were there any formal requests by the denominations? Was there any concealed pressure from the *culte*? More generally speaking, how are such faith-based policy decisions reached, how do the actors involved interact, and what are their channels of communication?

A related topic on which little research has been done so far is that of theological higher education. This field may have been redesigned after 1990, when theological institutes were integrated into state universities, with the goal of confessionalization in mind. Until the introduction of the so-called “Bologna system”, Romanian universities offered such uncommon specializations as “Theology and foreign languages”, “Theology and philosophy”, “Theology and communication”, “Theology and history”, “Theology and geography”, and so on.³³ Theological schools in public universities still offer specializations which double “secular” ones (e.g., social assistance). Some authors who cannot be dismissed for being unsympathetic to religion regarded this as “a hidden way to erect a confessional university within the public higher education system...”³⁴ An equally legitimate question is whether this is a hidden way to confessionalize the public education system as a whole. Are theologians trained to become teachers of foreign languages, geography, humanities, or social sciences in Romania’s public schools? What are the implications of the increasing output of theology graduates? More generally, what is the relationship between theological education and primary and secondary education and, taking the long term view, the making of faith-based policy?

Last but not least, under the 2006 law on religious freedom and denominations the *culte* enjoy, by default, the *de jure* status of “public utility associations”. Conversely, a new law amending Government Ordinance 26 of 2000 on associations and foundations has made this desirable status even more difficult to reach or maintain by secular NGOs.³⁵ The numerous protocols concluded between the ROC and the Romanian government involving the Church in a series of partnerships (on religious assistance in state-run institutions, public and parochial religious education, “health and spiritual assistance”, religious broadcasting etc.) are by now familiar. The question arises: to what extent have faith-based organizations started to replace NGOs as preferred partners of the state? What are the future implications for public policy?

The Church's wealth

Government funding for the recognized religious groups constitutes a central component of the Romanian state's religious policy. Public money flows to the *culte* – except for a few Protestant groups refusing it – through numerous channels. Some types of allocations are transparent: disbursements for clergy salaries, for impoverished parishes, for religious education and theological higher education, for church construction, upkeep and renovation. Other types involve taxes forgone by the state, the *culte*'s monopoly on the manufacturing and sale of “cult goods” and, under the law on religious freedom, the exemption “from the dues normally owed to [Intellectual Property] authorities” for the “use of musical works in the activity of recognized denominations”.

The above constitutes only the relatively visible part of state provisions. Over the past years, there have been hundreds of allocations from the Government Reserve Fund (used for emergency or *ad hoc* expenditures), as well as occasional funding from state institutions (e.g., the National Bank), state-owned companies (for example, pre-OMV Petrom), the army etc. Add the sums given to individual parishes by local authorities, either as direct subsidies or in other ways (building materials); the public land leased, usually for 99 years, either for free or for symbolic amounts; or other public property granted at no charge, from the use of which parishes derive financial benefits (e.g., public graveyards, forests).³⁶ This list is, in all likelihood, incomplete. It would be useful to comprehensively chart the public sources from which the churches receive money, as well as the amounts received over the past two decades.

Government funding for the denominations remains debatable under a system in which the state allocates the money from the public budget based on an abstract formula, instead of serving as a vehicle through which religious taxpayers donate willingly (as in the case of Germany). The system favors the majority denomination, stifles religious competition, reinforces existing monopolies, and encourages alliances – both transitory, around election time, and lasting – between politicians and church leaders. In the Romanian case, government financial assistance is premised on the apparently widely shared belief that some traditional churches would fail to survive or dwindle impermissibly without sponsorships. No research proves this – or otherwise. What would be the implications of shifting to a different system of financing for the denominations? Would the denominations get less or more money if they relied on taxes collected by the state and paid by adherents who give knowingly?

Finally, how rich are the churches actually? The number of Orthodox places of worship has expanded greatly over the past years, and grand cathedral projects have been undertaken in the capital and major cities, suggesting an organization that thrives financially. Churches own stock, exploit resources ranging from agricultural plots to forests to hotels, and operate private businesses. Anecdote – especially as reported in the

mainstream press – has it that many parishes condition religious rituals on the payment of a fee which is infrequently reported to fiscal authorities. Protestant religious groups are said to receive considerable amounts from sister churches in the West. Such disparate details are known, but no general picture of the churches' wealth is available. Attempts to offer a glimpse, such as a 2003 investigation by the financial publication *Capital* or a more recent one by the *Business Standard*, are in fact guesstimates based on undependable extrapolation.³⁷ If the funding policy of the Romanian state is to be even partly justified, one has to know whether the public money is needed to stave off unacceptable decline or merely to make some denominations richer and stronger with taxpayer money.

The Orthodox Church and Romania's international relations

The cooperation between the communist state and the churches was systematic and, as documented by a number of historical works,³⁸ served to promote the former's interests. This relationship suddenly increased in complexity after the toppling of the totalitarian regime, as the churches gained the ability to further their own pursuits. In this respect, as in others, the Orthodox Church has been the most energetic religious actor on the scene. The nature of its previous relations explains the connections with the state after 1990. One example: in 1995, Patriarch Teoctist made a tour of Yugoslavia and used the opportunity to visit Pale, the Bosnian Serbs' capital. This was an overt sign of opposition to the West's policies in the region.³⁹ To what extent was the Patriarch's friendliness to the Serbian state correlated with the involvement of the Romanian secret services in the breaches of the Western embargo against Yugoslavia?⁴⁰

Another subject mired in obscurity concerns the connection between the ROC and the Bucharest authorities in the context of the country's relationships with the Republic of Moldova and, respectively, the Russian Federation. The Metropolitanate of Basarabia, tied to the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate, was established in 2003 after a decision by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. The Court had sanctioned in 2002 the Moldovan state's refusal to recognize the Metropolitanate. The issue has been dealt with from a militant and legal perspective,⁴¹ but never from a political science or international relations paradigm. Tensions between the authorities in Romania and the Republic of Moldova mounted again in early 2008, when three Romanian bishoprics, including the Dubasari Diocese with authority over the Trans-Dniester, were reactivated. The Russian Orthodox Church, as expected, called this development a brutal infringement of the Russian canonic space.

Clearly the most important issue in the post-socialist period has been the tensions between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the ample political effort of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The ROC was itself home to conflicting opinions, for and against integration. Some important hierarchs and active Orthodox organizations promoted a

strongly anti-European message.⁴² Eventually, the Church was mobilized to defend the country's interests and affixed its signature on the May 2000 Denominations' Statement in Support of European Integration. Since the pro-European stance was unanimously shared by the other *culte*, research has focused on the Orthodox Church.⁴³

However, the ROC's place in Romanian international relations *after* NATO and EU accession has been much less documented and even less understood. The Romanian state was involved directly, financially and otherwise, in establishing Orthodox churches and branches abroad (a Brussels office, among others). The political mobilization of Romanians outside the country's borders, especially after their number reached several million, intersects with the attempt to turn Orthodox churches into centers of community life. How present are these churches and what is their role in the lives of Romanian communities in Italy, Spain, Germany or the United States? What is the extent of the cooperation between Romania's diplomatic offices, political parties, intelligence services, and the clergy working abroad?

The relationships between the ROC and the government are influenced by the bond between the former and other Orthodox Churches in the region. "Orthodox unity" instills patterns of behavior which are sometimes hostile to liberal democracy. The recent protests against biometric chips initiated by conservative members of the Church closely mirror, down to the use of the "666" symbology, the campaign of the Greek Orthodox Church against the ratification by Greece of the Schengen Convention.⁴⁴ One should inquire into the effects of the regional Orthodox alliance on the international relations of the Romanian state. Moreover, how does this process interact with the worldwide integration of religious groups in politics?

Religiosity, trust, growth, and other statistics

The Romanian Orthodox Church's claim of precedence on the Romanian religious market is underpinned by several statistical claims. They have been constantly cited by religious leaders to justify a series of practices (state disbursements, the "national church" status) and to lure politicians into electoral alliances. One statistics comes from the national census, in which almost 87 percent of Romanians declared themselves Romanian Orthodox; another from studies such as a 2003 Gallup poll or the Eurobarometer, according to which trust in the Church is very high (over 80 percent), as well as the highest among major institutions.⁴⁵

These statistics have been accepted rather uncritically. They were also uncritically acknowledged as a basis for religious policy. They are most likely deceptive. Despite the numerous criticisms leveled against them,⁴⁶ they remain superficially convincing because we lack in-depth studies on how representative Romanians hold the churches to be on a number of issues on which the latter are outspoken. The little we know suggests a

different picture. The aforementioned Gallup poll and the World Values Survey (WVS), for example, tell us that only 45 percent of the respondents stated they go to church at least once a month. Other researchers quote a figure of one third of the adult population.⁴⁷ Only around 50 percent of the Gallup respondents believe in such central Christian tenets as life after death and hell. Cross-national studies of religiousness⁴⁸ indicate that, while Romanians report the highest percentage of church membership (at 96 percent) out of a group of 26 European countries, church attendance per year (with a mean of 14) is lower – and in some cases significantly lower – than in 8 lands, of which two used to belong to the Eastern bloc.⁴⁹

Studies also suggest that many Romanians do not trust the churches on a variety of policy questions. According to the Gallup and the WVS, almost four Romanians in five agree with the statement that “Priests should not influence the way people vote”, and about just as many with the statement “Religious leaders should not influence government”. Around two thirds believe that “Priests should not run in elections”. In another study, when asked who should teach children how to be good parents (as well as spouses, friends, citizens, and neighbors, respectively), only between one and three percent of the respondents selected the church.⁵⁰

The comments above suggest that while some statistics on religious life in Romania are available, they are of the very general variety and ultimately uninformative as to specifics. What are Romanians’ expectations from the churches? Besides the answers to questions such as those posed by the WVS, not much is known.⁵¹ Do Romanians follow the churches on sexual education, abortion, euthanasia, stem cell research, contraception, or biometric passports? Does the level of trust square with the practice (for example, the large number of abortions performed in this country)?

Furthermore, even the existing data refers to the population as a whole and is not disaggregated according to denomination (and only rarely according to country region). It would be enlightening to obtain figures for the ROC specifically, especially since supply-side theories of religion suggest that religious participation is correlated negatively with religious market share (at least for church members).⁵² What are the levels of religious participation inside the Romanian Orthodox Church? What is the relation between religious belief inside the church and quasi-religious beliefs outside of it?

Finally, one other question concerns rates of growth and abandon inside the ROC. According to some studies, 4 percent of Romanians agree that they now belong to a church but had not in the past, while only 0.5 percent say they gave up belonging altogether.⁵³ It is relatively easy to assess the dynamics of minority churches which maintain statistics and publish periodic yearbooks.⁵⁴ But the Orthodox Church does not publish such figures. What percentage of Romanians who were unreligious or belonged to a different church in the past have entered the fold of the ROC? How many have abandoned it and what do they believe today?

Conclusion

We have advanced in this paper a set of research questions that would hopefully reveal more about the condition of church-state relations in today's Romania. An immediately obvious conclusion is that, after a lot has been written and debated on the topic, what church-and-state research currently lacks most is extensive empirical studies, including detailed polls and surveys. Given this deficit in academic research, and the lack of interest of theology scholars in quantitative and qualitative inquiries, the field investigations of some civic organizations remain, for better and for worse, a significant though limited source of knowledge on the matter. Without empirical data, even the most reliable synthetic efforts available, such as Stan and Turcescu's recent *Religion and Politics in Post-Communist Romania*, can only go so far.

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Notes

¹ For instance, the human rights NGO Asociația pentru Apărarea Drepturilor Omului în România (APADOR-CH) or organizations affiliated to religious minorities (in particular, the Greek-rite Catholic Church, Adventist Church, and the Jehovah's Witnesses).

² Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu have published regularly on the topic for more than a decade. On the other hand, academic articles on religion and politics by authors reporting a Romanian institutional affiliation have been relatively scarce. This is also a reflection of the dearth of such publications in the social sciences more generally. Among political scientists writing in Romania, a noteworthy

contributor has been Daniel Barbu. See, e.g., “De la jurisdicția ecleziastică la comunitatea politică. O speță din 1391,” *Analele Universității din București. Științe Politice* 1 (1999); “Etica ortodoxă și ‘spiritul’ românesc”, in *Despre firea românilor*, ed. Daniel Barbu (București: Nemira, 2000), as well as his *Bizanț contra Bizanț* (București: Nemira, 2001).

³ See Cristian Vasile's *Biserica Ortodoxă Română în primul deceniu comunist: 1945-1959* (București: Curtea Veche, 2005); *Între Vatican și Kremlin: Biserica Greco-Catolică în timpul regimului comunist* (București: Curtea Veche, 2004); *Istoria Bisericii Greco-Catolice sub regimul comunist, 1945-1989* (Iași: Polirom, 2003). These works were recently complemented by a series of historical articles authored by Lucian Leuștean, the basis for his forthcoming *Orthodoxy and the Cold War*. Church-affiliated historians have also published books on the churches in communist times, and several works of oral history are available. Other volumes of interest: Paul Caravia, Virgil Constantinescu and Flori Stănescu, *Biserica în temniță: România, 1944-1989* (București: INST, 1998); Ovidiu Bozgan, *România versus Vatican: Persecuția Bisericii Catolice din România comunistă în lumina documentelor diplomatice franceze* (București: Sylvi, 2000); Olivier Gillet, *Religie și naționalism: Ideologia Bisericii Ortodoxe Române sub regimul comunist* (București: Compania, 2001); Ioan Bunaciu, *Bisericele creștine baptiste din România între anii 1944-1990* (București: EUB, 2002); George Enache, *Ortodoxie și putere politică în România contemporană* (București: Nemira, 2005); William Totok, *Episcopul, Hitler și Securitatea* (Iași: Polirom, 2008); also, the collection of articles in *Studia Politica* 7, no. 3 (2007), and the chapter on religion under communism in the so-called “Tismăneanu Report”.

⁴ See Radu Carp's comments and Lucian Turcescu's response in *Idei în Dialog* 4 (April 2008).

⁵ Ivan Varga, “Churches, Politics, and Society in Postcommunist East Central Europe,” in *Politics and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe: Traditions and Transitions*, ed. W.H. Swatos, 102 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1994).

⁶ Naturally, such concerns also generated academic literature on religious freedom specifically, though Romania was not very well represented. See, for instance, Peter Danchin and Elizabeth Cole, eds., *Protecting the Human Rights of Religious Minorities in Eastern Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). (Contrary to what the title may suggest, of the 18 articles in the volume only half deal specifically with former communist states, and Romania is not included except in a brief subsection.) The Keston Institute's *Religion, State, and Society* has been publishing numerous articles, including periodic overviews by the editors, on religious freedom in ex-communist Europe. In this journal's collection Romania was, however, under-represented. More recently, Cole Durham and Silvio Ferrari have edited two volumes on religion and the state, and laws on religion, respectively, in *Central and Eastern Europe: Law and Religion in Post-communist Europe* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003); and *Laws on Religion and the State in Post-communist Europe* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004). Romania is covered in both volumes, and one article focuses on religious freedom specifically (Romanița Iordache, “Church and State in Romania,” in *Law and Religion in Post-communist Europe*). A series of important academic papers on religion in Romania by Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu, mostly published around and after 2000, devoted some space to religious freedom issues, as reflected in their 2007 book which expands on these articles, *Religion and Politics in Post-communist Romania* (Oxford: OUP, 2007).

⁷ Sabrina Ramet, *Whose Democracy? Nationalism, Religion, and the Doctrine of Collective Rights in Post-1989 Eastern Europe* (Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), 27.

⁸ Tom Gallagher, *Democrație și naționalism în România: 1989-1998* (București: ALL, 1998); see also Gallagher's *Theft of a Nation: Romania Since Communism* (London: Hurst, 2005), 1. Other titles on religion and nationalism and/or ethnicity in Romania: Gillet, *Religie și naționalism*; Sabrina Ramet, *Nihil Obstat: Religion, Politics, and Social Change in East-Central Europe and Russia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), ch. 7; Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, "The Ruler and the Patriarch: The Romanian Eastern Orthodox Church in Transition," *East European Constitutional Review* 7, no. 2 (1998); Constantin Iordachi, "Politics and Inter-Confessional Strife in post-1989 Romania," *Balkanologie* 3, no. 1 (1999); William Oldson, "Alibi for Prejudice: Eastern Orthodoxy, the Holocaust, and Romanian Nationalism," *East European Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (2002); Gabriel Andreescu, *Right-wing Extremism in Romania* (Cluj: CRDE, 2003), ch. 5; Silviu Rogobete, "Morality and Tradition in Postcommunist Orthodox Lands," *Religion, State & Society* 32, no. 4 (2004); Lucian Leuștean, "Ethno-Symbolic Nationalism, Orthodoxy and the Installation of Communism in Romania," *Nationalities Papers* 33, no. 4 (2005); Gavril Flora, Georgina Szilagyi and Victor Roudometof, "Religion and National Identity in Post-Communist Romania," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 7, no. 1 (2005); Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu, "Politics, National Symbols and the Romanian Orthodox Cathedral," *Europe-Asia Studies* 58, no. 7 (2006); Valentin Săndulescu, "Sacralised Politics in Action: the February 1937 Burial of the Romanian Legionary Leaders Ion Moța and Vasile Marin," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8, no. 2 (2007); Stan & Turcescu, *Religion and Politics in Post-communist Romania*. There are, then, the many academic conferences on religion and national identity. One recent example: the workshop on "Identity and Religion in Romania" in the "Foundations of Romanian Identity" symposium organized in November 2008 by the Babeș-Bolyai University.

⁹ Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu, "The Romanian Orthodox Church and Post-Communist Democratization," *Europe-Asia Studies* 52, no. 8 (2000): 1481.

¹⁰ Ramet, *Nihil Obstat*, 3.

¹¹ Liviu Andreescu, "The Construction of Orthodox Churches in Post-Communist Romania," *Europe-Asia Studies* 59, no. 3 (2007).

¹² Emil Moise, "Relația Stat-Biserică în privința educației religioase în școlile publice din România," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 7 (2004); Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu, "Religious Education in Romania," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 38, no. 3 (2005). See also Part 3 of Sandu Frunză, ed., *Pași spre integrare: religie și drepturile omului în România* (Cluj: Limes, 2004).

¹³ The first report was elaborated and published in 2006 by Solidaritatea pentru Libertatea de Conștiință ("Cercetare asupra educației religioase în unitățile școlare din România," *Noua Revistă de Drepturile Omului* 3, no. 2 (2007)). The research was expanded considerably by the Liga Pro Europa: see Smaranda Enache, ed., *Educația religioasă în școlile publice* (Târgu-Mureș: Pro Europa, 2007), the first extensive study of the topic. The volume generated an ample public debate which focused overwhelmingly on the contents of religious education textbooks.

¹⁴ Liviu Andreescu, "Romania's New Law on Religious Freedom and Religious Denominations," *Religion, State & Society* 36, no. 2 (2008).

¹⁵ See, for instance, Gabriel Andreescu, "Pentru o lege a libertății de conștiință și religioase (I)," *Revista Română de Drepturile Omului* 16 (1999), and "Pentru o lege a libertății de conștiință și religioase (II)," *Revista Română de Drepturile Omului* 17

(1999). Also, the collection of papers on “Church and State” in *Caietele Institutului de Studii Liberale* 1-2 (2001); Ioan-Vasile Leb and Radu Preda, eds., *Culte și statul în România* (Cluj: Renașterea, 2003); Silviu Rogobete, “The Unfinished Odyssey of a New Law for the General Regime of Religion in a South East European Country,” in *Legal Position of Churches and Religious Communities in South Eastern Europe*, ed. Silvo Devetak (Ljubljana: ISCOMET, 2004); Adrian Lemeni, Florin Frunză and Viorel Dima, eds., *Libertatea religioasă în context românesc și european* (București: Ed. Bizantină, 2005).

¹⁶ Sabrina Ramet, “The Way We Were – And Should Be Again? European Orthodox Churches and the Idyllic Past,” in *Religion in an Expanding Europe*, ed. T. Byrnes and P. Katzenstein, 150 (Cambridge: CUP, 2006).

¹⁷ Andreescu, “Romania’s New Law,” 150.

¹⁸ Gallagher, *Theft of a Nation*, 65. As Gallagher further observes, at his death in 1977 “Patriarch Justinian left 10,000 parishes adequately staffed and two or three applicants for each place at the seminaries.”

¹⁹ Alexandru Tudor, “Suveranitatea națională și Biserica Ortodoxă Română din perspectiva integrării europene,” in *Suveranitate națională și integrare europeană*, ed. A. Niculescu, 196 (Iași: Polirom, 2002).

²⁰ *Evenimentul zilei*, “Senatorul PNȚCD Ioan Moisin cere ca Biserica să cenzureze manualele școlare,” March 18, 1998.

²¹ Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu, “Religion, Politics and Sexuality in Romania,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 57, no. 2 (2005): 293.

²² Gabriel Andreescu, “Evoluția culturii drepturilor omului versus evoluția culturii de securitate,” *Revista Română de Drepturile Omului* 28 (2004).

²³ Andreescu, “Evoluția culturii drepturilor omului”.

²⁴ Moise, “Relația Stat-Biserică”; Stan & Turcescu, “Religious Education in Romania”; Enache, ed., *Educația religioasă în școlile publice*.

²⁵ Gabriel Andreescu, “Manualele: discriminare ori îndoctrinare?” *Noua Revistă de Drepturile Omului* 3, no. 4 (2007).

²⁶ Introduced as “the heroic, profound, unceasing and useful work that the Army and the Church have placed at the foundation of our common Home, now called Romania.” Comandor Ilie Manole, ed., *Armata și Biserica* (București: Colecția Revista de Istorie Militară, 1996), 6.

²⁷ Ministry of National Defense Order no. 3 of August 4, 1996 requested that army chaplains carry out “pastoral activities” (illegal) rather than offer “religious assistance” (legitimate). Gabriel Andreescu, “Ocuparea spațiului secular: Libertatea de conștiință versus limitele ‘libertății de religie instituționale,’” *Revista Română de Drepturile Omului* 29 (2004).

²⁸ Ion Zubașcu, “Năstase corespundează cu patriarhul Teoctist prin poșta militară,” *România liberă*, November 26, 2005.

²⁹ Gabriel Andreescu, “Legea 187/1999 și primul an de activitate a Consiliului Național pentru Studiarea Arhivelor Securității,” *Revista Română de Drepturile Omului* 20 (2001).

³⁰ Corneliu-Liviu Popescu, “Uzurparea de putere comisă de Curtea Constituțională în cazul cenzurii dispozițiilor legale privind deconspirarea poliției politice comuniste,” *Noua Revistă de Drepturile Omului* 4, no. 1 (2008).

³¹ New articles have been published in *Caietele CNSAS*, a journal launched in 2008.

³² “Confessionalization” is also the term used by historians to designate the process of “over-arching political, social, and cultural change” through which, in

the aftermath of the Reformation, the various confessions consolidated into coherent ecclesiastical systems, enabling in the process states and societies to integrate more tightly. See Jörg Deventer, "'Confessionalisation' – A Useful Theoretical Concept for the Study of Religion, Politics, and Society in Early Modern East-Central Europe?" *European Review of History* 11, no. 3 (2004): 407.

³³ Due to constraints imposed by the new three-year BA cycle, these specializations were eventually abandoned, though some theology faculties still offer a hybrid degree after four years, including an additional "foreign languages module".

³⁴ Aurel Codoban, in Frunză, ed., *Pași spre integrare*, 170.

³⁵ On February 26, 2008, the Parliament passed a bill amending Government Ordinance 26/2000 on associations and foundations. Many prominent NGOs regarded the bill as instituting additional barriers before civil society groups seeking recognition as "public utility associations".

³⁶ For a more detailed though still general view, see Andreescu, "The Construction of Orthodox Churches".

³⁷ R. Amariei, "Averea bisericii, o taină bine păzită," *Capital*, May 8, 2003; Claudiu Herțeliu, "O încercare de estimare a domeniului 'Religie' din economia națională," *Sfera politică* 113 (2004). Most recently, the *Business Standard* has estimated that the ROC is worth 3 billion Euro (see the several pieces in the August 20, 2007 issue). This seems to be the most comprehensive investigation so far.

³⁸ Henry Bogdan, *L'Histoire des pays de l'Est: Des origines à nos jours* (Paris: Hachette, 1990); Gillet, *Religie și naționalism*; and others.

³⁹ Gabriel Andreescu, "Relații internaționale și ortodoxie în Estul și Sud-Estul Europei," *Studii Internaționale* 4 (1998).

⁴⁰ Revelations in this last respect were made after the change of regime in 1996.

⁴¹ Iulian Chifu, *Basarabia sub ocupație sovietică* (București: Politeia SNSPA, 2004).

⁴² Perhaps most importantly, Archbishop Bartolomeu Anania (Lucian Dobrater, "În viziunea IPS Bartolomeu Anania, Europa ne propune să acceptăm homosexualitate, electronică, droguri, avorturi, inginerie genetică," *Evenimentul zilei*, April 16, 1998); and the Association of Christian Orthodox Students in Romania (ASCOR) (see ASCOR's open letter to the President of Romania, *România liberă*, April 2, 1997).

⁴³ Tudor, "Suveranitatea națională și Biserica Ortodoxă"; and Gabriel Andreescu, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română ca actor al integrării europene," available at <http://www.contrulconstiintacritica.ro> (a much shorter version was published in *Harta actorilor și problemelor aderării la Uniunea Europeană* (București: Fundația pentru o Societate Deschisă, 2004)).

⁴⁴ Gabriel Andreescu, "Miza internă și internațională a campaniei împotriva noilor pașapoarte," *Timpul* (February 2009).

⁴⁵ Institutul pentru Politici Publice, *Intoleranță, discriminare și autoritarism în opinia publică* (București: IPP, 2003).

⁴⁶ To show what is wrong with the census one may quote a Russian poll in which 82 percent of respondents declared themselves Orthodox, as did 50 percent of the self-identified non-believers, and 42 percent of the atheists. (James Warhola, "Religiosity, Politics, and the Formation of Civil Society in Multinational Russia," in *Burden or Blessing? Russian Orthodoxy and the Construction of Civil Society and Democracy*, ed. Christopher Marsh, 92 (Brookline: Institute of Culture, Religion, and World Affairs, 2004).) Tradition, Ortho-nationalism, and baptism at birth are some of the explanations for this apparently puzzling result. In the case of the Romanian census, causes for the overwhelming Orthodox majority also include faulty census

forms which invite Orthodox self-categorization (as well as self-identification as religious) and, as far as anecdotes can tell, poorly trained interviewers.

As for the trust scores, subsequent polls have borne out the notion that a very large majority of the population trusts the church (*Evenimentul*, “Românul din sondaje: credincios, nemulțumit și pesedist,” April 30, 2004). Other studies indicated much lower figures: 44 percent for the army and 36.4 for the church, according to a 2002 research by the Taylor Nelson Sofres Center for Opinion and Market Research (*Evenimentul*, “Parlamentul, lider în topul neîncrederii,” May 28, 2002). See also Iordache, “Church and State in Romania,” 242.

There are numerous issues with the polls, such as the question about trust involving two groups of institutions, those seen as responsible for the country’s economic debacle (the parliament, the government, the unions) and those perceived as disconnected from the economy (the church, the army, the EU) – and, indeed, from daily life: only 44 percent in the Gallup poll claimed the church can answer people’s social needs. Furthermore, Gallup’s “church” is hardly an organization at all, and rather an abstract, ethereal entity.

⁴⁷ Diana Barca and Florian Bichir, “Evlavia de fațadă,” *Evenimentul zilei*, April 25, 2004.

⁴⁸ Detlef Pollack, “Religiousness Inside and Outside the Church in Selected Post-communist Countries of Central and Eastern Europe,” *Social Compass* 50, no. 3 (2003).

⁴⁹ An ample research on the religious attitudes of students is now underway, under the coordination of Professor Daniel Barbu (the International Colloquium “Identitate românească în contextul identității europene”, Cluj, November, 21-23, 2008).

⁵⁰ Mihaela Miroiu et al., *Gen, interese politice și inserție europeană*, a project funded by CNCIS under code no. CNCIS 964.

⁵¹ For a theoretical discussion with reference to Romania specifically, see Sorin Gog, “The Construction of the Religious Space in Post-socialist Romania,” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 15 (2006).

⁵² Paul Perl and Daniel Olson, “Religious Market Share and Intensity of Church Involvement in Five Denominations,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 39, no. 1 (2000).

⁵³ Pollack, “Religiousness Inside and Outside the Church,” Table 2. This is itself an intriguing result, because a growth by only 4 percent after decades of communism is not, at first sight at least, very significant.

⁵⁴ The Seventh Day Adventist Church in Romania, for example, had 809 churches in 1990 and 1087 by 2007. Growth has been very slow since around 1996-97. For a complete set of figures, including membership, see http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldID=U10088, accessed on 23 December 2008.