

Theology as a Contribution to the Field of Social Sciences: Its Relationship with Education and Dialogue with Sociology*

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Introduction

The perspective of this article does not belong to the context of “apologetics” in favor of the science of Theology in relation to Sociology and the rest of the social sciences or the opposite. In the present era of the stilted impertinence and an aggressive post-modern revisionism, not only the sciences but also nature itself and the rules that govern it, seem to be attempted to be deconstructed and devalued in the context of a –rather dangerous– post-humanistic “cancel culture”.

The Fourth Biotechnological Revolution has already brought about important changes in societies and in social relations, putting forward the honest, creative, and productive dialogue mainly of the humanities and social sciences, in the perspective of developing a fruitful and constructive critique of any distortions as well as the dangers that seem to be spreading rapidly.

Religions, as organized systems of beliefs and acts of worship, seem to contribute to social integration and social cohesion. It is clear that the deconstructive spirit of the aggressive reflexivity of post-modernity

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perceives religions more as a “social construction” and less as a social necessity¹. However, it is also clear that God “did not die” and religions did not disappear². In the context of the sociological investigation of education, the importance of religious education and upbringing is highlighted, as a special socializing factor. Religious education and upbringing constitute a very sensitive and at the same time multidimensional issue, which certainly cannot be approached with superficiality or ideologically or politically committed aphorisms.

In addition, in the demanding modern context of interdisciplinarity, a fruitful, honest and creative dialogue between Sociology and Theology can be developed. Our era demands open horizons and consequently an open, broad democratic framework of dialogue, communication and respect, elements that advance the interdisciplinarity and strengthen the position of Sociology and Theology³. Theology, as a social science, can contribute decisively to the investigation and substantial understanding of social phenomena, social inter-reactions and interactions, with reference to religious communities.

On the Dialogue between Theology and Sociology

In the field of the Sociology of Religion, the position of religions in the perspective of socialization is clear, since: “the primary function of religion is to give meaning to human existence”, which is “necessary for

1. For the “social construction of Religion” see P. Karamouzis, *Η Κοινωνιολογία της Θρησκείας μεταξύ Εκπαίδευσης και Κοινωνίας*, Kallipos Publications, Athens 2015, p. 21 ff.

2. See indicatively W. Franke, “The Deaths of God in Hegel and Nietzsche and the Crisis of Values in Secular Modernity and Post-Secular Postmodernity”, *Religion and the Arts* 11, 2 (2007), pp. 214-241; Ol. Clément, *Η Θεολογία μετά τον «θάνατο του Θεού»*, Athena Publications, Athens 1973.

3. For the dialogue between Theology and Sociology, the complexity and the difficulties that have arisen since the beginning of the 20th century, see Niki Papageorgiou, «Η πρόσληψη της Κοινωνιολογίας από τη Θεολογία: θεσμικές και πρακτικές όψεις», *Σύνθεσις/Synthesis* 2 (2012), pp. 104-110.

socialization, the transition from the animal organism to the individual”⁴. Therefore, Religion is considered an autonomous phenomenon, an important factor “and not a product of secular reality and history”⁵. The important professor of Sociology of Religion P. Berger strongly criticizes the “theory of secularization”, considering it erroneous talking about the de-secularization of the world and of the public space⁶. For Berger, Religion and religious communities are able to protect people from situations of lawlessness, diffusion and promotion of an irrational –as it is manifested today– amorality, legitimizing social institutions, attributing ontological weight to them⁷.

Gr. Davie points out that “[...] sociology of religion aims to discover the models of social life that are associated with the various forms of religion and to interpret the resulting data”⁸. Therefore, since no religion manifests itself in a uniform way in the public-social space, it may eventually be useful to know the dogmatic truths of religions⁹, their historical course and perspective in order to explain their social dimensions more accurately and effectively¹⁰.

4. V. Yioultsis, *Κοινωνιολογία της Θρησκείας*, P. Pournaras Publications, Thessaloniki 1996, p. 60.

5. See Ap. Nikolaidis, *Κοινωνιολογία των αίρέσεων*, Grigoris Publications, Athens 2009, p. 23.

6. See P. Berger, “The Desecularization of the World. A Global Overview”, in: Michaela Pfadenhauer, *The New Sociology of Knowledge, The Life and Work of Peter L. Berger*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick & London 2013, pp. 61-76; V. Karpov, “Desecularization: A Conceptual Framework”, *Journal of Church and State* 52, 2 (2010), pp. 232-270; see also K. Kotsiopoulos, *Παγκοσμιοποίηση. Κατασκευή και Πραγματικότητα*, Kyriakidis Publications Thessaloniki 2020, p. 211.

7. P. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, Garden city, New York 1967, pp. 50, 100; see also K. Kotsiopoulos, *Ανάλεκτα Κοινωνιολογίας του Χριστιανισμού*, Kyriakidis Publications, Thessaloniki 2020, p. 274.

8. Grace Davie, *Κοινωνιολογία της Θρησκείας*, transl. (Greek) Evangelia Liliou, Kritiki Publications, Athens 2010, p. 26.

9. In relation to the social dynamics of dogmas Ap. Nikolaidis stresses that: “no dogma is an end in itself, but a means of intervention in secular reality. In religious terms, dogma is on the side of what is considered to be sacred, holy, distant uncommunicated terrible”, (Ap. Nikolaidis, *Δόγματα και Κοινωνία*, Grigoris Publications, Athens 2009, p. 37). See also L. Filippidis, *Η ιστορία των θρησκευμάτων καθ’ εαυτήν και ἐν τῇ Χριστιανικῇ Θεολογίᾳ*, Typois Pyrsou (= Pyrsos Print), Athens 1938, p. 70.

10. V. Yioultsis (*op.cit.*, p. 54) referring to Weber and Yinger, observes that: “Understanding

It seems that Sociology in general cannot by itself enter into issues that strictly concern religious dogmas¹¹. For this reason, in the demanding modern context of interdisciplinarity, a fruitful, honest, and creative dialogue between Sociology and Theology can –and perhaps is eventually imperative– to develop¹². In relation to the above, the interesting view has been formulated that: “The religion that the sociologists of religion talk about, is usually something different from the religion that the people experience in their daily lives”¹³. Ultimately, the Sociology of Religion seems to “cover only one aspect of approaching the religious phenomenon”¹⁴.

It is also characteristic the real inability of Sociology to formulate even a single definition of what religion is, due to the fragmentation of sociological thought, which may also reflect the fragmentation of the public-social space, with a deeper sociological investigation of religion proving rather impossible¹⁵. Perhaps the view of the late German sociologist U. Beck, that in the end the modern social sciences and humanities should rid of and free themselves from the absolutes of the “methodological nationalism”, in the perspective of establishing an epistemological cosmopolitanism is justified in a way¹⁶.

[the religious phenomenon] is a difficult approach, but it ensures the final result of the initial effort, which is better knowledge and the avoidance of errors due to prejudice or generalizations. Especially the religious phenomenon, requires special understanding from the researcher, in order to reveal to him the most important of its hidden and invisible secrets”.

11. K. Kotsiopoulos, *Ανάλεκτα Κοινωνιολογίας του Χριστιανισμού*, *op.cit.*, p. 251.

12. E. G. Talbott’s view is interesting, who points out that the relationship of each man with God-Father determines his relationship with his fellow man, his brother. Therefore, in this way Theology complements Sociology. See E. G. Talbott, “The Relation between Theology and Sociology”, *The Biblical World* 46, 3 (1915), p. 162; see also S. Mathews, “The social origin of Theology”, *The American Journal of Sociology* 18, 3 (1912), pp. 289-317.

13. G. Mantzaridis, *Κοινωνιολογία του Χριστιανισμού*, P. Pournaras Publications, Thessaloniki 2004, p. 14.

14. Ap. Nikolaidis, *Κοινωνιολογία της Θρησκείας*, Grigoris Publications, Athens 2007, p. 81.

15. G. Mantzaridis, *op.cit.*

16. See U. Beck, “Global Generations in World Risk Society”, *Revista CIDOB d’ Afers Internacionals* 82-83 (2008), pp. 203-216. It becomes clear that the “community of the faithful” is not necessarily in conflict with the “civil society” as is possible for Church and State to cooperate in a spirit of mutual respect and social responsibility; see K.

Religion is not something abstract or at least it does not manifest itself in an abstract way in the public-social space. It arises as an historically recorded social human need for reference, in the perspective of strengthening their identity as persons, groups and sub-groups¹⁷. It would be unfair for Sociology to abstain from this dialogue, due to existing anti-religious obsessive fortifications, and sometimes academic egoisms, as it is a young science, always in relation to that of Theology. Our time requires open horizons and consequently open, broad framework for dialogue, understanding and respect – elements that promote the interdisciplinarity and strengthen the position of Sociology as well as of Theology¹⁸. We cannot ignore the fact that “The academic theological research, not only applies the corresponding methods of the secular sciences, but has also historically contributed as Christian worldview to the systematic development and progress of the positive sciences”¹⁹.

Kotsiopoulos, «Θεσμός και χάρισμα ἐξ ἐπόψεως Κοινωνιολογίας τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ», *Θεολογία/Theologia* 88, 3 (2017), p. 120.

17. V. Yioultsis, referring to Durkheim, highlights the view of the great sociologist that: Religion is considered an expression of social solidarity”: V. Yioultsis, *Κοινωνιολογία τῆς Θρησκείας*, *op.cit.*, p. 142. Also, in relation to Durkheim, D. Tsaousis refers that “the great social institutions were born in religion [...] if religion gave birth to, everything that is essential to society, it is because the idea of society is the soul of religion”; D. Tsaousis, *Ἡ κοινωνία μας*, Gutenberg Publications, Athens 2005, pp. 217-218.

18. It is rather unfair, especially in the context of the development of the cognitive subject of the Sociology of Religion, that Sociology itself manifests and presents itself through phobic syndromes, in the perspective of its supposed protection from its downgrading, to a handmaiden of Theology or the development of a “theologizing sociology”, V. Filias expresses such concerns referring to the critic of M. Weber O. Spaun. See V. Filias, *Μὰξ Βέμπερ: Συστηματική Κοινωνιολογία καὶ Μεθοδολογία*, Nea Synora Publications, Athens 1976, p. 234. But this is not valid, as Weber himself clearly sought to ensure the free and unsupervised sociological research. Jaspers, delivering the funeral oration of Weber had stressed in his regard that: “the claim to separate evaluation from objective observation does not mean indifference to life” and as a result entrenchment behind ideologies and all kinds of “correctness” that are manifested in our modern public-social space indifference, eventually to the social truth itself. See Nikolitsa Georgopoulou, *Μελετήματα Ἠθικῆς*, Athens 1995, p. 173.

19. Sp. Tsitsigos, *Θρησκεία καὶ Ἐπιστήμη*, Tremendum Publications, Athens 2010, p. 431.

It is no coincidence that the Sociology of Religion “[...] is not concerned with the verification or denial of the religious practice and life [...]”²⁰, as it is interested –or should be interested– in social truth, the observation and analysis of it beyond and outside the narrow framework of any committed “correctness” or research expediency²¹. Any discussion to the contrary is judged to be unscientific and dangerous for Sociology itself, as there is the danger of returning it back 100 years, that is, a few years after the death of the great sociologist Max Weber. Sociology is, nevertheless, only one of the sciences that study human society²². Given that “[...] in the entire history there is not a single religion without a religious community [...]”²³, the role of Theology, as a social science, can contribute decisively to the investigation and essential understanding of social phenomena, social inter-reactions and interactions with reference to religious communities²⁴. In the context of the above reflection, the view is expressed that the Sociology of Religion becomes more effective by examining not only the general form or the general imprint of a religion but when it can be developed as the Sociology of a specific religion and religious confession²⁵.

20. Ap. Nikolaidis, *Κοινωνιολογία της Θρησκείας*, *op.cit.*, p. 81.

21. As early as the 1990s, the view has been formulated that it is possible that various funding –mainly those that do not come from official and recognized bodies and institutions– can alter the very scientific methodology of Sociology. Especially for a sensitive and particularly important issue, such as that of the impact and influence of Religion and religious cultures in a number of areas of human activity, unfortunately there are not few times when the above concern does not seem to move some of our-fortunately very few-modern sociologists. See about it Jennifer Platt, “Has funding made a difference to research methods?”, *Sociological Research Online* 1, 1 (1996), pp. 69-79.

22. See D. Tsaousis, *Η κοινωνία μας*, *op.cit.*, p. 11.

23. *Op.cit.*, p. 218.

24. V. Vioultsis observes about this that: “[...] the religious sphere is connected to the broad social system with multiform bonds, and despite its peculiarity as a sub-system it is not logical to be detached and studied outside its mutual influences and relationships with society as a whole”; V. Yioultsis, *Κοινωνιολογία της Θρησκείας*, *op.cit.*, p. 42. Interesting is also the view of Ap. Nikolaidis, who supports that: “Theology and Sociology, meet in human behavior, in phenomena, religious or social and in institutions [...] Theology contributes to the research activities of the Sociology of Religion with its social teaching [...]”. Ap. Nikolaidis, *op.cit.*, p. 75.

25. G. Mantzaridis, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

Moreover, the relationship between the science of Sociology and Christianity seems to be special. First of all, the science of Sociology bases its overall methodology on the observation and recording of the specific, that is, of society itself. In the same way, Christianity, has a dominant reference to the specific, who is the founder of the Church, Jesus Christ. There is also the view that “the religious environments of the Christian Churches, contributed to the emergence of the Sociology of Christianity”²⁶. The views that relate the special role in the genesis of General Sociology to the course of the spread of the Social Gospel in the United States are characteristic²⁷.

M. Weber, by highlighting protestant ethics in the dominant spirit of capitalism, is a point of reference for research issues that highlight Religion as a dogmatic truth that influences social relationships. It is worth noting that Weber is not ignorant and mainly not indifferent to the dogmatic and consequently social and cultural differences of Christianity. For this reason, avoiding generalizations and having full picture of the truths of each dogma, he managed, through the basic methodological tool of value neutrality to identify the qualitative differences between Western and Eastern-Orthodox Christianity²⁸. In particular, focusing on the religious communities of Russia, he observed the influences on social relationships of a religious communitarianism that seems to be inspired by the Christian Orthodox faith²⁹. The contribution of the student and friend of Weber E. Troeltsch, is considered noteworthy, who as a theologian and sociologist of Religion is “based par excellence on a Sociology of Christianity [...] has a comprehensive and complete knowledge of Theology as well as of Religious Science [...]”³⁰.

26. *Op.cit.*

27. See J.-P. Willaime, *Κοινωνιολογία τῶν Θρησκειῶν*, transl. (Greek) Anastasia Karastathi, Kardamitsa Publications, Athens 2004, p. 65; see also K. Kotsiopoulos, *op.cit.*, p. 245.

28. See Nataša Jovanović-Ajzenhamer, “Max Weber on Russia and Orthodoxy: an Analysis of the Collectivist Ethical Basis of Eastern Christianity”, in: M. Blagojević, Dr. Todorović (eds.), *Traditional and Non-traditional Religiosity. (A Thematic Collection of Papers of International Significance)*, Institute of Social Sciences, Yugoslav Association for the Scientific Study of Religion, Belgrade and Niš 2019, pp. 206-225.

29. *Op.cit.*

30. Ap. Nikolaidis, *Κοινωνιολογία τῶν αἱρέσεων*, *op.cit.*, 2009, p. 21; see also J. L. Adams, “Ernst Troeltsch as Analyst of Religion”, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*

Experientiality as a Social Element in Religious Education

In the context of the sociological investigation of education, the importance of religious education and upbringing as a significant socializing factor is highlighted. This reasoning is mainly based on the perception put forward by the Sociology of Religion, that religion gives meaning to human existence itself and is a necessary element for the “transition from the animal organism to the individual”³¹. Therefore, religious education and upbringing is a very sensitive and at the same time multidimensional issue, that cannot be approached superficially³².

It is lately noticed a tendency either to limit to the degree of abolition or to change in the context of an adjustment to “the requirements of the times” of the lesson of religious studies. This tendency and its dynamics have long opened a special dialogue between those who insist on “religious science” education and upbringing and those who argue-on the basis of the current Constitution- that the lesson of religious studies should essentially constitute a deciphering of the religious perceptions from the lives of the students that refer to the dominant religion of the country, that is the Christian Orthodox dogma³³. In any case, Religious Science today does

1, 1 (1961), 98-109.

31. V. Yioultsis, *Κοινωνιολογία της Θρησκείας*, *op.cit.*, p. 60.

32. See K. Delikonstantis, «Ἡ λειτουργικὴ ἀγωγή τῶν παιδιῶν διαμέσου τοῦ μαθήματος τῶν Θρησκευτικῶν», *Πρακτικά ΙΑ΄ Πανελληνίου Λειτουργικοῦ Συμποσίου Στελεχῶν Ἱερῶν Μητροπόλεων*, [Poimantiki Vivliothiki 24], Publications Department of the Communication and Cultural Foundation of the Church of Greece, Athens 2010, pp. 187-202, here p. 198.

33. There is the view that: “religious teaching in Greek education has as its starting point the constitutional imperative for the development of the religious consciousness of the students”; Her. Rerakis, *Διδακτικὲς προσεγγίσεις τοῦ μαθήματος τῶν Θρησκευτικῶν*, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Publications, Thessaloniki 2003, p. 3. See also article 16 § 2 of the Greek Constitution: “Education is a basic mission of the State and aims at the moral, spiritual, professional and physical education of Greeks, the development of the national and religious consciousness and their formation into free citizens”. See also article 3 of the Greek Constitution: “The religion of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ is the prevailing religion”. Interesting is also a relevant investigation of Pew Center, that was published in 2017, according to which those who declare themselves Orthodox Christians in Greece represent 90% of the population; see “Religious Belief

not serve its purposes through syncretism and pretentious indefiniteness but through the essential knowledge of the teaching of religious dogmas and traditions, in the perspective of consolidating an honest and essential dialogue between religions and religious cultures; a knowledge that the theological departments of the country and in particular the departments of Social Theology are able with scientific competence, validity and breadth to ensure.

The broader dialogue on the lesson of religious studies does not seem to be taking place in a climate of understanding and creative scientific dialogue. In other words, there is no lack of characterizations from both sides and the corresponding entrenchments behind collectivities, which now advance in an organized way the one or the other point view. But also, in the field of Church-State relations, or in other words of the official holy institutions with the State, seems to exist an intention or at least a propensity for unilateral actions, that provoke reactions and undermine, if not devalue the important issue of religious education and upbringing as a whole³⁴. In fact, it is a common observation that: “Today’s education promotes a kind of technocratic civilization that deadens man”³⁵. There are “tendencies to impose [...] the external world which is characterized by individualism and social Darwinism, technocratic specialization and materialistic or hedonistic overconsumption”³⁶.

In the research field as well as in the educational practice itself, especially with regard to the lesson of religious studies, influences and impacts from the above reality are found. The discussion on the contribution of the lesson of religious studies to multicultural education has already begun³⁷.

and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe”, *Pew Research Center Report*, pewresearch.org [20.7.2023].

34. Thus, the principle of the creative coexistence of God and of the World, of Church and Society, with tendencies towards autonomy of the latter, is refuted. The above magnitudes must “be in distinct unity and never at a distance or division”; K. Kotsiopoulos, *Κοινωνιολογία του Χριστιανισμού*, *op.cit.*, p. 661.

35. See Bisera Jevtic, R. Stosic, «Ἡ ἐπάνοδος τοῦ μαθήματος τῶν Θρησκευτικῶν στὴν σερβικὴ ἐκπαίδευση», *Θεολογία/Theologia* 85, 3 (2014), p. 226.

36. K. Kotsiopoulos, *Ἀνάλεκτα Κοινωνιολογίας τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ*, *op.cit.*, p. 217.

37. For intercultural education, see indicatively Evi Markou, «Σύντομος ὁδηγὸς διαπολιτισμικῆς ἐκπαίδευσης», *Πολύδρομο/Polydromo* 4 (2011), pp. 33-36; Mich. Damanakis, *Ἡ ἐκπαίδευση τῶν παλιννοστούντων καὶ ἀλλοδαπῶν μαθητῶν στὴν*

It would not be pointless to observe that the overall fragmentation that characterizes our time has certainly influenced issues such as that of religious education, a fact that makes it difficult to find sustainable, integrated and effective proposals and solutions. The idealization of the above dialogue, for the sake of dialogue alone, rather distances the educational and academic community itself from the students themselves and their needs.

In the context of a really useful for society, intercultural education, the lesson of religious studies as an important –in our opinion– element of such a wider program, may not need to serve narrowly one or the other methodological school, and even more ideological or political expedencies³⁸. The application of the positions of pretentious relativism, cultural hybridization and religious syncretism can only cause confusion and eventually indifference to the lesson of religious studies³⁹. Even more so, as intercultural education seems to “[...] aim at the education of “native” and “foreign” students, while its intentions concern the whole of society and not only in the school area”⁴⁰.

There is a view that experiential learning was used by Pedagogical science “to fill the gap that had been created in recent years in Education, with the pure and generalized and hegemonic use of rationalism and epistemology”⁴¹. This development seems to affect also the lesson of religious studies, given different assessments of the essence and practice of the so-called “experientiality”. Especially the element of experientiality in education as “experiential experience of educational goods”⁴² seems to be

Ελλάδα, Gutenberg Publications, Athens 2002.

38. For the dominant views on the modern lesson of religious studies in Greece, see *op.cit.*, p. 339 ff.

39. Of course, there is also the view that intercultural education is consolidated in the combination of interculturality, democracy, political and social identity, recognizing the fact that identities are not static. See C. A. Torres, “Democracy, Education and Multiculturalism: Dilemmas of Citizenship in a Global World”, *Comparative Education Review* 42, 4 (1998), p. 436.

40. Evi Markou, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

41. Her. Rerakis, «Θρησκευτικά χωρίς βιωματικότητα: το νέο ύπουλο εργαλείο της ούδετεροθρησκείας», *petheol.gr* [12.6.2023].

42. K. Kotsiopoulos, *Ανάλεκτα Κοινωνιολογίας του Χριστιανισμού*, *op.cit.*, p. 224.

the basis for the decompression of youthful impulses and exaggerations, while respecting the diversity on the part of the teacher of each trainee⁴³.

For example, there are fears that Christian students, in contrast to their classmates from other religions, seem to be increasingly pushed by the education system to distance themselves from their religious faith and the religious reference of their families⁴⁴. There is, that is, a one-sidedness in terms of respect for diversity, that seems to be consolidated only when it is related to people of other beliefs or religions. There is also a tendency to uncritically characterize as “proselytism” anything associated with the traditional teachings of religions⁴⁵. These considerations and views about the “religious neutral” state activate the above tendency.

Of course, that kind of breaks in the state and administration arise through a revolutionary situation, as History teaches us (France, former U.S.S.R.). Therefore, let us not forget that there was in Greece such a situation in 1821, with very clear references and invocation of the religious reference of the enslaved Greeks⁴⁶. Post modern deconstruction, through the promotion of the “cancel culture”, seems to be met with resistance, as even today, as it emerges from the qualitative analysis of the empirical data of social research, the Greeks in particular, to a large extent, still consider the Orthodox Christian faith as an important element of their national and cultural identity⁴⁷.

43. *Op.cit.* The view that “learning is transformed into a social institutional process that takes place within a formal social institution” is also considered important; see Christina Nova-Kaltsouni, *Κοινωνιολογία της Εκπαίδευσης*, Gutenberg Publications, Athens 2010, p. 172.

44. Her. Rerakis, *op.cit.*

45. See interesting views on the subject: “Proselytism and Religious Freedom in the 21st Century”, *Report of the Georgetown Symposium*, 3/3/2010, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University; D. W. Snook, M. J. Williams, J. Horgan, “Issues in the Sociology and Psychology of Religious Conversion”, *Pastoral Psychology* 68, 2 (2019), pp. 223-240. Also interesting is the view that places the term “proselytism” exclusively in the field of “new religious movements” and their tendency to extend their influence to societies and communities with a clear reference to traditional religious teachings; see D. Snow, R. Machalek, “The Sociology of Conversion”, *Annual Review of Sociology* 10 (1984), pp. 167-190.

46. See indicatively K. Cholevas, *Τò 1821 σήμερα. Τὰ μηνύματα τοῦ 1821 καὶ τὰ σύγχρονα ἔθνη καὶ θέματα*, Archontariki Publications, Athens 2020.

47. “Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe”, Pew Re-

Epilogue

As it has already been pointed out, religious education is a particularly important element of the general issue of education and the educational process. According to the Constitution⁴⁸, it is –or should be– essentially a deciphering of the religious experiential perceptions that the students have in their daily lives, outside the school and the educational system. The experiential element, that is, is at the center of religious education, as religion itself is an experience and a lived experience⁴⁹. There is also the view that the so-called “Communication and Information Technologies” are able to highlight the religious lesson and facilitate learning, contributing to a better and more efficient presentation of the material⁵⁰. Religious education can also profit and be enriched also methodologically through an honest and productive dialogue between social sciences and humanities, between Sociology and Theology etc.

The recent pandemic crisis imposed specific changes in social life (and educational process), which seem to present trends of normalization, due to their low cost. The attendance, for example, of online courses through a digital “bank” of audio-visual educational material, may eventually downgrade the important role of the educational process as well as the issue of education in general. It is correctly pointed out that: “The digitalization of our lives through the necessary situation of teleworking and distance learning creates a virtual world which in the long run works against the real world and realistic life”⁵¹.

Given that: “virtual culture seeks to establish, a spatial environment in which the difference between inter-personal and distance communication is eliminated”⁵², the development of a peculiar technocratic monophysitism

search Center Report, 10/5/2017, *pewresearch.org* [20.11.2023].

48. Article 16 §2 of the Greek Constitution.

49. See K. Kotsiopoulos, *Ανάλεκτα Κοινωνιολογίας του Χριστιανισμού*, *op.cit.*, p. 224.

50. See Vassiliki Mitropoulou, *Εκπαιδευτικές τεχνολογίες στο σύγχρονο σχολείο. Εφαρμογές στη Θερησκευτική Αγωγή*, Ostracon Publications, Thessaloniki 2014; Id., *Οι τεχνολογίες της πληροφορίας και των επικοινωνιών στην διδακτική του μαθήματος των Θερησκευτικών*, Ostracon Publications, Thessaloniki 2015.

51. K. Kotsiopoulos, «Κοινωνία της διακινδύνευσης και πανδημία», *romfea.gr* [2.8.2023].

52. V. Gaitanis, *Από την επικοινωνία στην κοινωνία*, Grigoris Publications, Athens 2008.

is observed, on the basis of which the “divine” is absolutely separated from the “human/scientific”, recycling the scholastic theory of the “double truth”⁵³.

p. 116.

53. Sp. Tsitsigos, *Θρησκεία και Επιστήμη*, *op.cit.*, p. 431.