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THE ASSESSMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THROUGH THE TOLEDO GUIDE IN ROMANIA

Case
Study

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Abstract

The main actors on the global scene, the State, the Church and society, together with their values, their identity, their faith, and democracy, are involved in a new dilemma of the individual's relationship to community, with crucial impacts on the position of universality and transcendence in society. The acute crisis in the recent history triggered a new step in the religious, intercultural or confessional education, which must generate an articulated answer in a field cleared of secularism. This is the key for the interpretation of the new State-cults partnerships in education. Thus the interest manifested by students in the non-confessional public schools reveal the need to present in a balanced way the intercultural and interreligious elements, supported in the OSCE vision by the Toledo Guide. The assessment of the religious education class from an intercultural perspective showed that the Orthodox format is quite close to the recommended principles and intercultural values. Nevertheless, in spite of the lack of intercultural education in the structure of these classes the students have a certain level of knowledge from other sources also deserving investigation.

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY, ELEMENT OF THE INTERCULTURAL MANAGEMENT

When we weight the merits of an educational policy or program, a key element that requires consideration is the fact that the merits can be supported on two types of arguments: the policy's capacity to produce the needed effects (reaching the expected goals, fulfilment of efficiency and efficacy criteria, the sustainable potential of the interventions' results, etc.) and the policy's capacity (after implementation, or even during its project stage), to coagulate an acceptable client satisfaction level. This aspect refers to the degree of acceptance, support and appreciation of an intervention by the beneficiaries as well as of other stakeholders' categories.

In the specific case of the educational system, the impact is assessed on more than one level. At system's level, the assessment regards the system's general quality, the quality of one of its levels or components (curriculum, assessment, management, etc.), the diversity and quality of offers, of services, the diversity and quality of suppliers, the participation and involvement of the direct or indirect beneficiaries. The impact assessment at the suppliers level concerns the quantity and quality of one supplier's offers, the visibility and opportunity of the offers, the clients' number and satisfaction while at the level of professional practices it regards the quality of the involved personnel's service (teachers, managers), their professional and managing capacity. At the level of students and other direct or indirect beneficiaries, the impact is much or difficult to assess, since it targets long-term effects and it usually has in view an assembly of policies/programs. The impact assessment levels in education are important for the design of the process and for the assessment instruments. The largest incidence of these levels can be noticed concerning the assessment indicators that can be formulated at system level (institutional and functional framework), at suppliers level (their services and beneficiaries), at the level of professional practices (the quality of service, of interactions and of educational processes) or at the level of the students' performance (Government's General Secretariat, 2009).

The school, as public institution, is an agent of the State, thus its manner of reporting to the religious education is decisively marked by the relationship between the State and the Church. Although the classical version of education is the one of virtuous citizens producer, citizens capable of participating to a rational political process, considering politics and education to be equally important and susceptible of sub summing one another, presently, the education is thought more and more

often as included in the politics in such way as to become a mere instrument of political forces. If education still leads to politics, politics doesn't follow anymore the educational equivalent, the later becoming better an instrument of subordination to the political, the main objective of the educational policy becomes the persuasion of the - apparently free but in fact subject to cohesion - individual - that its own interest coincides with the State's (Milbank, 2014). On the other hand, citizens consider that the State should answer to them and fulfil their every desire. Nowadays, the State is not asked for the image of the general interest but the reflection in its mirror (by the game of representation) of each particularity. The State does not have a unifying and cohesion dimension (making it rival of the Church), thus leaving an individualised civil society, a composite bunch of minorities, incapable of surmounting its pluralism. There isn't any more a global acceptance of religion nor tensions with the State but only a posture of demand, wanting to choose, wanting to recognise what is proposed to him. This individualism is not a militant one, but an implicit (pre-established) one, that does not find nor wishes for a veritable general interest. The return to the religion, as answer to numerous contemporary global crisis is merely „an adaptation of faith to the modern conditions of social and cultural life leading us to the religious structure of the human being” (Gauchet, 2006). Thus, the school itself, aiming for integration and universality, is confronted to this crucial question: should it make an effort to adapt to particularities, to identities, or should it try to standardise, to level and even to transcend. Presently, the State must represent the differences of identity. They need the State to assert their particularities in shares of public space. To represent no longer means to unify, to overcome the differences, but only to expose, to show or to present (Gauchet, 2006).

Due to globalisation, the secularisation consequences are present in Romania as well, especially in the individual-State relationship. The mirror State model (mainly reflexive) of an atomised composite, with a reduced power of coagulation, ready to return only a sum of individual reflexions, is also valid in our case. So is the identity crisis that proposes that each should lock inside their own culture in order not to be bored within the educational process, or in the other extreme, eager to accept new moral rules, not validated by the Church, only because they have a source of democratic welfare. In this context, the interaction between the religious education and the intercultural values promotion becomes a necessity, the creation of a bond between the spiritual and the civic dimension of young people being one of the present day objectives of the European religious education.

APPROACHES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

The secular approach of religious education belongs most of the times to the case where the State is neutral towards religious confessions. From this position, the State is the one to have control as well as responsibility of the religious education in public schools, the result being a wider and wider opening towards secularisation, in the conditions of insuring a very high level of securing human rights and liberties. United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark and Sweden are few of such examples. The confessional approach offers the role of leader in organising and controlling religious communities or churches, the case being. State's involvement resumes to a few elements adjacent to the educational process such as financial support of teachers wages and provision of space required for the process implementation. Countries with majority religion (usually Catholic or Orthodox) implemented this model of religious education, among them being: Austria, Belgium, Finland, Russian Federation, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, and Hungary. Of course, these two models are not completely separated, only dominant in one case or another. Thus, the school programs of confessional character comprehend also non-confessional elements: religious history and traditions, religious art belonging to other religions, the vice versa being possible, namely accentuating a certain religion, the one practiced the majority of that country's population, in the non-confessional education (Horga, 2007).

The practical models of the present Europe are very diverse. Analysing the states with different models of religious cults relationships one may find, for instance, that Belgium includes the study of religion in the common package during the entire pre-university cycle, with the possibility to choose one's confession. Teachers are civil servants with mandatory university degrees (Torfs, 2008). Denmark, an example of the former State Church, makes religion a mandatory discipline for all educational levels, enabling parents and students over 15 years old to ask for exemptions (Dübeck, 2008). France, a model of complete separation, understands by the study of religions only the preservation of a cultural heritage, including this information in the curricula of some secular courses: history, art, literature (Basdevant-Gaudemet, 2008). On the other pole of strong EU Member States, Germany considers mandatory the study of religion, the process being patronised by the State in cooperation with the various cults. The number of the hours of study in the public schools is relatively large, two hours per week, the religion

being even an optional subject for the graduation exams (Robbers, 2008). In the issue of the religious education the Orthodox Church of Greece, an Orthodox state by excellence, is consulted only from a dogmatic point of view, all the other attributions, of administrative or organisational nature, belonging to the State (Papastathis, 2010). Poland, in spite of being a country with a strong Catholic image and of having a strong church, respected by the population, institutionally opted for choice between religion and ethics to be made by parents or students in the beginning of the school year. Nevertheless, teacher's nomination, schoolbooks conception and the analytical curriculum are of cult's competence, the State covering the financing (Rynkowski, 2008). The English model is characterised by non-confessional education, the Inter-religious Committees being the ones structuring the analytical curricula. The content is consequently dominated by intercultural values, the students studying the history, the doctrine and the practices of the representative cults of the United Kingdom. In England, both non-confessional education and confessional training of clergy are State financed (McClean, 2008).

The average ratio of religious education at European level is 4.1% (values between 0% and 11.2%) from the education plans (The Institute of Educational Sciences, 2008). In the case of optional religious education, students of 14/16/18 years old (age varying from one country to another) or parents in some cases, may choose or not to frequent the religious education classes as well as the type of training. A special case is France, defined as secular by Constitution, where there is no religious education in the public school (except for the regions of Alsace and Lorraine, which were not part of France at the time of the adoption of the law separating completely the State and the Church in 1905). Certain study subjects, such as History, Philosophy, or Art and Literature, have school programs containing religious education elements. Only private confessional schools exist and they pertain to religious communities. Regarding the content of religious education, the literature describes the three models existing in the European schools today. *Learning religion* refers to the case where the curriculum envelope comprises a single religion/confession that is studied from the inside (confessional study). The teachers are believers of that religion/confession themselves, their mission being that of making the students embrace that belief or of strengthening their already made choice. Usually a specific religious community controls the curriculum and the teaching methods as well as the teachers training. One version of this method is "to learn through faith", case where various religions are presented separately in the teaching process but from the point of view of the chosen religion/confession. *Learning about*

religion, supposes an external approach, of descriptive and historical nature, the fundamental books such as the Bible or the Quran being studied outside their sacred value, looked upon as literary works and analysed from a non-religious perspective. One thus learns about religious beliefs, values, and practices with the purpose of understanding in which way these faiths influence behaviour or generate communities. The method is also known as „*comparative study of religions*” or „*religious studies*”, and it may include religions’ history, phenomenology, or ethnography (Schreiner, 2002). The disadvantage of the method is "the fact that it tends to focus on the content of religions and, subsequently, the students are seldom motivated to study it" (Hull, 2001, p.4). Teaching facts proves to be insufficient (Schreiner, 2002). *Learning from religion* – offers the possibility to children and young students to provide their own answers to major problems of religious or moral order, which translates into placing the learner in the centre of the teaching process. The problem is „at what extent benefits will be drawn from the study of religion, the main objective being the contribution to students’ moral and spiritual development” (Schreiner, 2002). Schreiner (2002) considers that elements from all categories may be included in the teaching act but the approach *learning about religion* is preferable, especially when the students’ knowledge is scarce.

EUROPEAN PRINCIPLES ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The counter-arguments regarding the two basic models for the religious education class content (confessional study, and religious studies respectively) refer to the need for mutual, inter-religious understanding, differentiation between school education and the believers community education, an education open to all young people, in the first case, and respectively, the need to overcome a non-pedagogical objectivism, the demand to include the "authentic representatives" of faiths and the pedagogical argument of relationships within a religious community, in the second case. Schreiner argues that Europe requires that religious education that would protect against religions’ negative consequences (religious intolerance), based on the human rights. From the point of view of the primary European law, one must mention that the Lisbon Treaty (2007), modifying the Treaty for the functioning of the European Union (TFUE), provisions only a support policy for education, without mentioning exclusive or shared competences of the States and Union (Şelaru, 2011). The prevention of religious intolerance was also the reason for which the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human

Rights (ODIHR) of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), of which Romania is a Member State, drafted in 2007, with the help of its *Advisory Council of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief*, the guide called „*Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools*”. The guide’s idea started from the eclectic style of the church of San Roman of Toledo, which combines architectural traits of all historical ages it crossed so far: Roman Catholic church, Islamic mosque, Arian Vizigothic church. The authors call it „a confluence of civilisations” and consider that, in absence of confrontation, the model is ideal for an eclectic edifice to be developed within the classes teaching religions or other beliefs. The main objective is to reach a higher level of understanding in a world with growing religious diversity and increased presence of the religious element in the public life. The rationale is based on two core principles: it is a positive value in education that of emphasising the respect of everyone’s right to freedom of religion and of belief, and that *learning about religions and beliefs* may reduce misunderstandings and stereotypes (Toledo, 2012, p. 11).

The Guide’s recommendations (Toledo, 2007, p.77) propose to the OSCE States the dissemination of Toledo guiding principles among teachers, school administrative personnel, students’ associations, parents’ organisations, education decision factors and all parties possibly interested in the *teaching about religions and beliefs*, when such teaching is developed or implemented. Also, it recommends to the States to apply in the implementation or development of such programs the relevant standards of other international organisations, such as: recommendations of the Parliament Assembly of the European Council no.1202 of 1993, (on religious tolerance in a democratic society), no. 1369 of 1999 (On religion and democracy) and no.1720 of 2005 (On education and religion). The recommendations also include the evaluation of the existing curriculum for public schools including *teaching about religions and beliefs*, in order to determine if they promote the respect of the human rights and the freedom of religious belief, if they are impartial, balanced, adequate for the age of the student, equidistant and if they fulfil the professional standards. States are recommended to assess the process leading to the curriculum development for *teaching about religions and beliefs*, in order to be sure that the process remains sensitive to the needs of various religious and faith communities, and that all interested stakeholders have the opportunity to be heard and to examine in extent to which teachers training institutions are capable of providing the necessary professional training in order to *teach about religions and beliefs* in such way as to

promote the respect of human rights and especially the freedom of religion and of beliefs. Other recommendations propose to the participants to determine the extent to which the teachers training institutions offer sufficient knowledge on the issues related to human rights, an understanding of the diversity of religious and non-religious opinions in the society, a firm understanding of various teaching methodologies (with a special care for those founded on an inter-cultural approach), and a significant perspective on the ways one can teach about religions and beliefs in a respectful, impartial and professional way. The states are advised to facilitate the set up for meetings with authors and editors publishing *manuals on teaching about religions and beliefs*, in order for them to observe the Guiding principles of Toledo and take advantage on the expertise of the Advisory Council of ODIHR - OSCE on freedom of religion and belief, when they develop or implement a curriculum for *teaching about religions and beliefs*, or when they establish or assess institutions and teachers training programs.

Out of the core principles promoted in the Guide (Toledo, 2007, p.16), is worth emphasising the one showing that the process of *teaching about religions and beliefs* must not undermine or ignore *the role of the families and of the religious organisations or faith communities* in the transmission of values to the future generations. Also, efforts should be made to establish *consultation organisms* at various levels, with an inclusive approach that would involve various stakeholders in the preparation and the implementation of the curriculum and in teachers' training. The drafting of programs, handbooks and support materials for *teaching about religions and beliefs* must take into consideration the religious and non-religious points of view in a comprehensive, correct and respectful manner. Incorrect or prejudicial materials must be avoided, especially when it strengthens the negative stereotypes. The curriculum development and implementation should include also open and fair procedures that would offer to all interested parties adequate opportunities to provide comments and advice. The study programs focused on *teaching about religions and beliefs* should provide special attention to the key historical and contemporary evolutions regarding religion and faith, and to reflect to the global and local issues. They should be sensible to various local manifestations of religious and secular plurality existing in the schools and in the communities they serve.

EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF CONFESSIONAL RELIGION CLASS AT THE LEVEL OF THE DIRECT BENEFICIARIES METHODOLOGY

Given the above presented context, we have performed a first assessment of the religious education in the non-confessional public schools of Romania, performed during the confessional religious education classes, from the perspective of intercultural and inter-religious elements recommended by the Toledo vision. The main question is at what extent the values promoted by the Toledo Guide may be transmitted and acquired through the classes of Christian Orthodox confessional religious education. Thus the evaluation refers to the impact achieved at the level of beneficiaries, in this case high school students. The specific objectives targeted, besides determining the portrait of the young high school student beneficiary of the religious education, the determination of an aggregated index for the assessment of the inter-culturalism degree of the high school student and of the religious education class in public schools and the assessment of the convergence between the confessional religious education in Romania and the recommendations of the Toledo Guide. In order to perform this research we used the survey as research method and applied it to a group of 137 high school students. This criterion was determined by the higher degree of abstract thinking characterising young people over 14 years old and having completed the secondary cycle of the religious education. The research targeting the approach of the Christian Orthodox confessional teaching from the non-confessional public schools, only students belonging to this cult have been surveyed. The number of respondents resulted from the convenience criterion due to the data collection resources available. The information collection was performed up to the moment where a significant number of cases belonging to the targeted population was reached in order for the statistical analysis to be eloquent. The structure of the type of origin locality of the students is 82% from the urban environment, 18% rural, the ratio of multi-ethnic families being of 6%. The profile of the students' orientation is 56% scientific, 32% humanistic and 12% vocational. Thus were investigated the vision, the preoccupations, and the proneness of the students as direct beneficiaries of the religious education classes as well as persons on which the relationship between the State and the cults produces its effects through the governance of the educational system. The mathematical and statistical instrument of the research targeted the strength of the association between two variables expressed by Pearson's correlation coefficient ($r = \frac{\sum (x-X)(y-Y)}{\sqrt{\sum (x-X)^2 \sum (y-Y)^2}}$)

$X)^2 \sum (y-Y)^2$, where x and y are the two variables, and X and Y , the average value of the two variables) (Voineagu et al., 2004), as well as by the determination coefficient, meaning the coefficient showing the effect of the variation of the dependent variable compared to the variation of the independent variable (Popa, 2008, p.153): $R = r^2$. Regression is the coefficient that can involve a cause-effect relationship, the most usual one being the linear regression, expressed as: $y = a \cdot x + b$; $f(x) = y$; $f : R \rightarrow R$, where: „ a ” – regression coefficient (the line’s slope) and „ b ” – the interception coefficient.

THE PORTRAIT OF THE DIRECT BENEFICIARY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Although research returned results for all mentioned objectives, next we will particularly emphasise the interaction between religious education and promotion of inter-cultural values in public schools in Romania. We will mention though a few aspects of the assessment that proved interesting from the point of view of the main purpose of the religious education class, the confessional education, in order to sketch the degree of satisfaction of partner’s, in occurrence the Orthodox Church’s, strategies and educational policies. Regarding *the religious education beneficiary’s portrait*, the answers regarding the confession of the respondent draw an average portrait of the student of religious education from the public schools, quite remote of what the Orthodox Church, the main confession in Romania, formulates in the scope and specific objectives of its own strategy. The portrait taught by the Church is, of course, that of the saint, spiritual and moral height to which all humans are called to, men and women that by their own free will are summoned to follow the absolute row-model, Jesus Christ. In exchange, the will to acquire intercultural and inter-religious knowledge is very big, corresponding to the Toledo vision of the religious education. The Church faces a non-ecclesiastic young Christian, belonging to a „*reality untainted with sacra*”, that can justify the Sunday Mass absences with his/her presence in the „*counter-cathedral*” (stadiums, concerts, parks, malls), the later „*overwhelming by sheer size and making you feel humble in front of the inaccessibility of the marketed goods*” (Raiu, p.76). This „*believing without belonging*” (Davie, 1990) is characterised by a weak connection to the spiritual life of the Church, with a weekly participation to its rituals of 21%, cult practicing in private life of 36% and an observance of the fasting periods recommended by the Church of 26%. The portrait is completed by a demand of opening to negotiation and of update of

the Church taught morality with the evolution of society, only 35% of the respondents observing the moral precepts considered divine commandments by the clergy. „All religions know the true God but from different perspectives” is the intercultural and interreligious conception overwhelmingly embraced, making the religious education to be considered as not necessarily confessional. There is a clear preference for choice, spiritual market-like. This comes as perfectly harmonised with the Toledo recommendation that grants confessional freedom to the person teaching on religions and beliefs for as long as the professionalism criterion is fulfilled. In this situation, the Church is in a delicate and hard to manage spot. It considers this extreme opposite to atheism as very dangerous, atheism being considered gone with the communist age. The entire universe is God, everyone knows God, danger lies in hiding God in the multitude of religions and beliefs.

THE METHOD OF APPROACH IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The model of the young Christian receiver of religious education records a „return to religion” but in a manner rather exterior to the Church, he or she has a natural penchant to the content of the „learning about religion”-type study. Regarding the confessional education, as highlighted in Figure 1, its importance is considered as high and very high by 48% of respondents, in spite of them ignoring the recommendations made by the Church regarding the religious practice in all its aspects. Only 17% of the students consider that this type of education is little or very little important. This contradiction between the desire for knowledge and the refuse to observe the teaches shows the high level of confusion of the young people in a society with a very large number of offers generally unfiltered by the educational system. The wish for intercultural and interreligious knowledge is very large and corresponds to the Toledo vision on religious education, almost 50% of the interviewed persons sharing these values. Those who are not interested in this dimension of the common, including religious knowledge, is small: 22% of them consider important to study the big religions’ teachings simultaneous and at a medium extent, while 16% are not interested in the history of religions. The large percentage of those who value this type of education shows the opening of the young generation to the globalised world and confirms the correctness of the OSCE policy regarding the content of the religious education, from the point of view of the religious education consumer’s choice. Students are convinced (in a significant 75% ratio) of the importance of studying the impact of religions on the ethical and

moral behaviour, meaning that they expect the promotion of a modern type of moral and ethics. The present curriculum of the Orthodox religious education discipline includes the study of other religions as provisioned by the Toledo guide, but their presentation varies according to the teacher (Figure 2), the most frequently, in 35% of cases, being presented by comparison to their own religion.

THE INTER-CULTURALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS

The answers referring to the inter-culturality of the religious education class showed the extent to which the confessional dimension of the religious education is according or against the Toledo Guide. Although the Romanian Orthodox Church grants in official statements an increased importance to the confessional aspects of the religious education (BOR, 2015), in practice only a third of students received consistently answers to their transcendental expectations and to their spiritual aspirations. The values supported by the OSCE Guide are much easier to receive by the students than those of strictly confessional nature. The training of discernment between right and wrong, together with the empathy for those who suffer are areas of intersection between two systems of values. Only 13% of the students did not identified during the religious education classes ethical and moral benchmarks, even though these are not always overlapping for the two actors, the Church and the political world. Empathy is a clear common value hence the answers were as expected, 59% of the students considered that the provided solutions are concrete in a large or very large extent and only 15%, considered them to be concrete at a little or very little extent, the respect and tolerance, as supreme value of the Toledo Guide, are offered as solutions also by the present format of the religious education class, in the vision of 49% of the respondents. The opposite answers are accumulating only 18%, suggesting that the Guide's objectives may be fulfilled without the major organisational changes it proposes.

Other principles of the Toledo Guide are answered by the present format of the religious education class. Thus, the freedom of religion and of belief is treated at a large and very large extent in the opinion of 41% of the students while 26% consider that the religious education class is deficient from this point of view. Tolerance and respect towards people of other religion is well and very well presented by the religious education teachers in the opinion of 48% of respondents, while only 17% are having the opposite opinion. Another set of answers targeted the dimension of reducing the misunderstandings and avoiding conflicts, 44% of

respondents considering that the present format of the religious education class brilliantly faces the challenge, while 34%, considers that the teachers' presentation of the topic is insufficient. Religion based labelling and stereotypes are properly addressed by the teachers during the religious education class in the opinion of 40% of the students, 30 % disagreeing with this statement, but only 18% consider that nothing is done in these area. In order to be able to characterise concretely the students accumulation regarding the adoption and respect of inter-cultural values acquired during religious education classes, we built a globalisation index, *Students Inter-culturality Index*, based on specific indicators: usefulness of the religious education class from the perspective of the general knowledge development, usefulness of the religious education class from the perspective of the moral and ethical education, the attention granted to simultaneous study of the teaching formulated by the main religions of the world, the importance attributed to the study of the history of religions and their social and cultural impact and the importance attributed to the religions impact in ethical and moral behaviour. For index's normalisation purposes the interval 0-100 was selected, values being calculated as sums of partial indicators reported to the maximum possible cumulated value and expressed as percentages.

The similar designed *Religious Education Class Inter-culturality Index* analysed the offer of concrete solutions to problems, the empathy for people in distress, training of the spirit of respect and tolerance towards any person as well as the degree of presentation and debate during the religious education classes of issues regarding: the right to freedom of religion and belief, tolerance and mutual respect towards persons of different religion/confession, avoiding religion-based labelling and stereotypes of other people. This index was normalised in the same way as the previous. A first conclusion determined that the level of students' inter-cultural education is related to the level of inter-culturality of the religious education class, but not in a determinant way. The degree of association of the two variables, the *Students Inter-culturality Index* and the *Religious Education Class Inter-culturality Index* respectively, is moderated, the correlation coefficient r being 0.43, while r^2 is 0.18, which means that the religious education provided in school determines the students inter-cultural education only by 18%. The regression curve is described by the equation $Y = 35.98 + 0.455 * x$, with $Y: [0,100] \rightarrow [0,100]$. Figure 3 demonstrates that the dependent variable *Students Inter-culturality Index* is 35, even when the value of the independent variable, the *Religious Education Class Inter-culturality Index*, is 0. This means that even when the intercultural education misses from the

religious education class the students have intercultural knowledge accumulated from other sources that are not comprised in the scope of the present paper.

CONCLUSIONS

The ethic and the morality re theoretically highly appreciated by most students, 55% of the respondents considering the ethical and moral component of the religious education class as important or very important, but the content of these terms is very different in the two analysed reference systems. If the secular values are perceived more clearly and norms' flagrant violation is condemned, the case being of corruption or lie in public media, the moral requirements of the Church, seen as divine commandments, the source of which are the Holy Scriptures, are considered out fashioned, anachronic. Thus, 48% of the questioned students consider of little importance, very little importance, or no importance at all the observance of moral Orthodox precepts, 16% of them being moderately preoccupied by the topic, fact that indicates the large-scale violation of these precepts without raising conscience issues to most of the students. The values supported by OSCE in the Toledo Guide are more easily received by the students than those of strictly confessional nature. The training of discernment between right and wrong (having substantially different definitions), together with the empathy for those who suffer are areas of intersection between two systems of values. Empathy is a clear common value so the answers followed, 59% of students considering the offered solutions as very practical and highly practical, only 15% considering the solutions as unlikely or unpractical. Respect and tolerance as supreme value of the Toledo Guide are offered as solutions by the present format of the religious education class as well, in the opinion of 49% of the respondents. For these reasons, one can conclude that the objectives of the Guide are fulfilled, without the major organisational changes proposed by the Guide.

Same observation applies to the respect and tolerance towards people of other religion or confession or free thinkers, the love for humankind as instrument of verification of the love for God being a first line objective of the Christian pedagogy. Thus, the freedom of religion and belief is treated at a high or very high degree in the opinion of 41% of the students and the tolerance and respect towards people of other religion is well and very well emphasised by the religious education teachers in the opinion of 48% of the respondents. Synthesising the answers to all questions related to the principles of the Toledo

guide and considering also the respondents in the average area, one can consider that **the present format of the religious education class from the Christian Orthodox perspective is close enough to the principles of the Guide, favourability being comprised between 70% and 83%**. To the same conclusion converges also the *Religious Education Class Inter-culturality Index*, with an average score of 62.02/100, the feedback of the students offered through the *Students Inter-culturality Index*, having an average score of 64.20/100. The higher students' score is explained by the existence of complementary training and information sources that are not comprised in the scope of the present paper. On the other hand, the dependent variable *Students Inter-culturality Index* is 35, even when the value of the independent value *Religious Education Class Inter-culturality Index*, reaches zero. This means that even when the intercultural education misses from the religious education class the students have intercultural knowledge accumulated from other sources that are not comprised in the scope of the present paper. It would be interesting to follow the identification of the other sources of the inter-cultural education, proven by the answers of the students as being outside the religious education class, especially from the perspective of the essence of the ethics and morality coming from the other potential secular reference systems.

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FIGURES

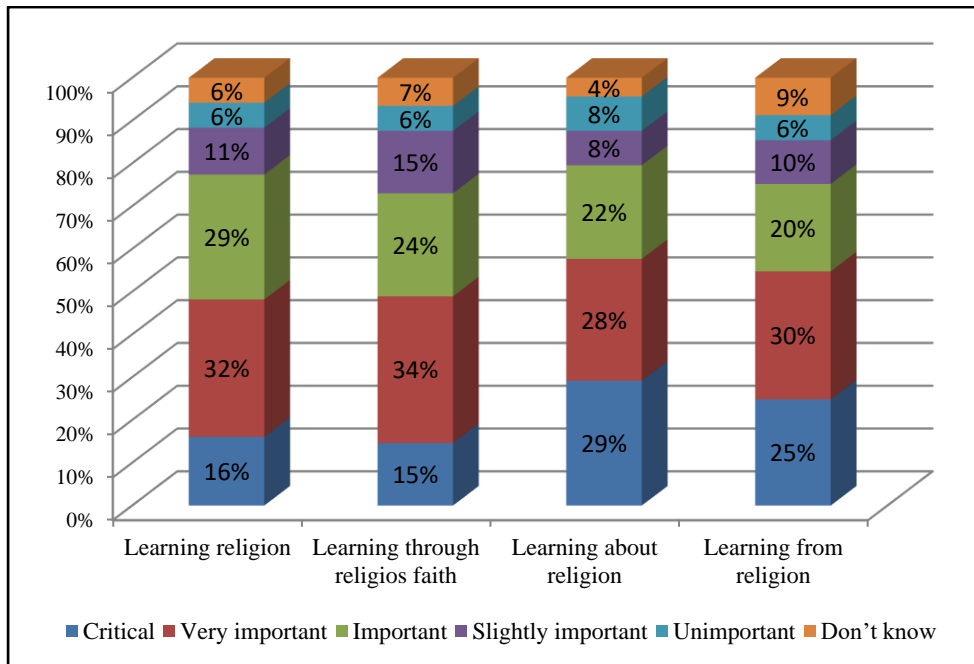


Figure No. 1 Approach of the religious education

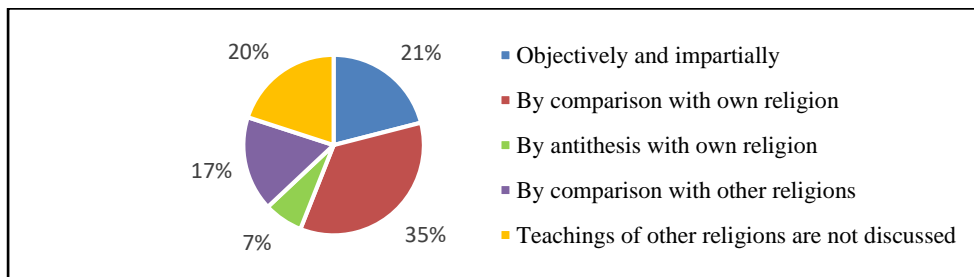


Figure No.2 Approach of other religions

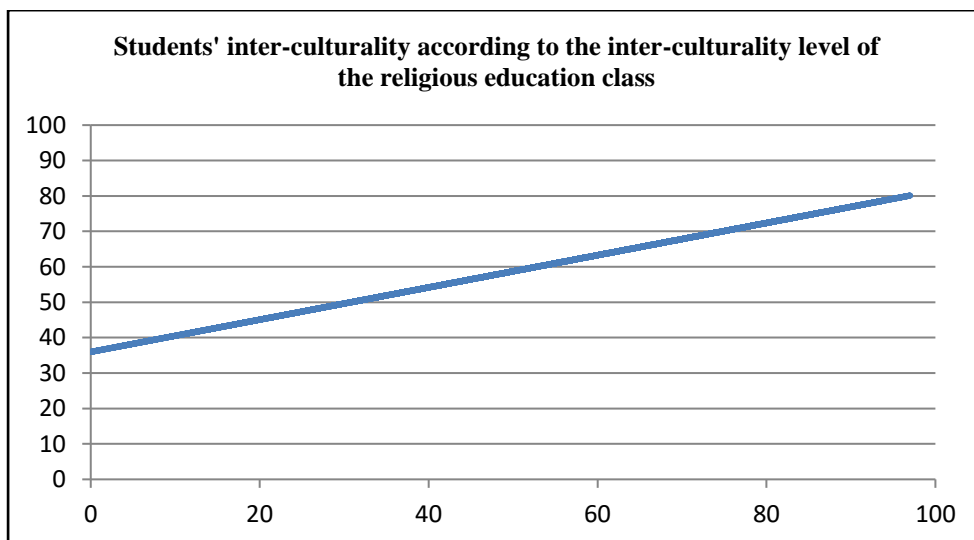


Figure No. 3 Students' inter-culturality level compared to the inter-culturality level of their religious education class