

PONTIFÍCIA UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA DE MINAS GERAIS

Department of International Relations

*Stricto Sensu* Graduate Program of International Relations

Luiz Felipe Dias Pereira

**ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION:  
Church-state relations and permanent liminality in Greece and Romania**

**Advisor:** Prof. Dr. Leonardo César Souza Ramos

Belo Horizonte

2024

Luiz Felipe Dias Pereira

**ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION:  
Church-state relations and permanent liminality in Greece and Romania**

PhD thesis presented to the Stricto Sensu Graduate Program of International Relations of the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in International Relations.

**Advisor:** Prof. Dr. Leonardo César Souza Ramos

Belo Horizonte

2024

## FICHA CATALOGRÁFICA

Elaborada pela Biblioteca da Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais

P436o      Pereira, Luiz Felipe Dias  
Orthodox christianity in the context of european integration: Church-State relations and permanent liminality in Greece and Romania / Luiz Felipe Dias Pereira. Belo Horizonte, 2024.  
180 f. : il.

Orientador: Leonardo César Souza Ramos  
Tese (Doutorado) - Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais.  
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Relações Internacionais

1. União Européia. 2. Religiões - Relações. 3. Secularismo. 4. Igrejas ortodoxas - Grécia. 5. Igrejas ortodoxas - Romênia. 6. Igreja e Estado. 7. Direitos humanos. 8. Relações internacionais. I. Ramos, Leonardo César Souza. II. Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais. Programa de Pós-Graduação em Relações Internacionais. III. Título.

SIB PUC MINAS

CDU: 327

Luiz Felipe Dias Pereira

**ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION:  
Church-state relations and permanent liminality in Greece and Romania**

Tese apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação  
Stricto Sensu em Relações Internacionais da  
Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais,  
como requisito parcial para obtenção do título de  
Doutor em Relações Internacionais.

Área de Concentração: Política Internacional:  
Instituições, Conflitos e Desigualdades.

---

Prof. Dr. Leonardo César Souza Ramos - PUC Minas (Orientador)

---

Prof<sup>ª</sup>. Dra. Daniela Vieira Secches - PUC Minas (Banca examinadora)

---

Prof. Dr. Rodrigo Corrêa Teixeira - PUC Minas (Banca examinadora)

---

Prof<sup>ª</sup>. Dra. Ana Paula Balthazar Tostes – UERJ (Banca examinadora)

---

Prof. Dr. Fábio Rodrigo Ferreira Nobre - UEPB (Banca examinadora)

---

Prof<sup>ª</sup>. Dra. Letícia Carvalho de Souza Andrade – PUC Minas (Banca examinadora - Suplente)

Belo Horizonte, 19 de abril de 2024.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my advisor, Professor Leonardo César Souza Ramos, for guiding me through both my Doctoral and Master's studies. As both mentor and partner, your invaluable guidance has been pivotal on my academic journey over these six years. Thank you so much.

I am profoundly grateful to my beloved Nicolle, who has been the cornerstone of my resilience, providing unwavering emotional support and boundless love throughout these years. Without you, I would not have come this far. I love you with all my heart.

I am also thankful to my dear, long-time friend, Julia “Julha” Theodoro, for her insightful contributions to the discourse analysis presented in Chapter 4. Thank you for your consistent support whenever I sought assistance.

My warmest thanks to Amelia, Dora, and Krista, my dear Greek friends, for being a wellspring of joy and motivation that has positively influenced both my personal and academic journeys. Σας ευχαριστώ άπειρα για όλα.

A sincere thank you to Professor Gabriel Leanca for his exceptional guidance and support throughout the course “The Politics Of Peace And The Ottoman Empire In The Modern World”, which he lectured at PUC Minas.

I would like to thank Professor Daniela Vieira Secches for her comments on Chapter 1. Her valuable feedback has significantly enhanced the quality of my analytical framework.

I wish to extend my gratitude to Professor Rodrigo Corrêa Teixeira for his insightful suggestions that significantly enhanced the quality of Chapter 2.

I am thankful to my friend Luísa Hostalácio for her significant contributions to both creating and refining the visualisation of Figure 16, as well as for her thoughtful review of my text.

I also want to thank my friend Ana Eliziário for her kind support in reading and reviewing Chapter 4.

Finally, I would like to express my everlasting gratitude to the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) for providing the financial support that made this project possible.

This study was financed in part by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Brasil (CAPES) - Finance Code 001.

“I love the church: its labara,  
its silver vessels, its candleholders,  
the lights, the ikons, the pulpit.  
Whenever I go there, into a church of the Greeks,  
with its aroma of incense,  
its liturgical chanting and harmony,  
the majestic presence of the priests,  
dazzling in their ornate vestments,  
the solemn rhythm of their gestures—  
my thoughts turn to the great glories of our race,  
to the splendor of our Byzantine heritage.”  
(Cavafy, 1992, p.44)

## ABSTRACT

This thesis aimed to analyse the Church-state relations in Greece and Romania, and the challenges that these countries have been facing with issues involving human rights violations and Western secularism in the context of European integration. The main argument proposed was that the previously mentioned problems derive from their national identities, which have a Byzantine cultural and religious heritage that persists to the present day. This Byzantine legacy was fundamental to the formation not only of Greek and Romanian national identities, but also to their respective ideals regarding their models of Church-State relations, which, in turn, differ considerably from the Western European tradition concerning the borders between the political and religious spheres. Due to these social and ideological divergences, this thesis started from an allegory that considers European integration as a rite of passage, and Greece and Romania as liminal states, that is, political entities whose identity is ambiguous, imprecise and inexact, and which lie on a spectrum that does not allow for binary classifications such as "secular" and "non-secular". In this sense, European integration is treated as an incomplete rite of passage, meaning that the problems arising from Church-State relations in both countries contribute to the perpetuation of this liminal condition. Through an investigation based mainly on Hansen's (2006) discourse analysis, the author concluded that the Orthodox discourse on European integration constructs an Orthodox identity that is not classified exactly as the "Self" and nor as the "Other", varying on a spectrum between "European" and "non-European".

**Keywords:** International Relations. Religion. European Union. Orthodox Christianity. Liminality.



## RESUMO

Essa tese teve como objetivo analisar a relação Igreja-Estado na Grécia e na Romênia, e os problemas que esses países vêm enfrentando com questões envolvendo violação de direitos humanos e com o secularismo no contexto da integração europeia. O principal argumento proposto foi de que os problemas previamente mencionados derivam de suas identidades nacionais que possuem uma herança cultural e religiosa bizantina que perdura até os dias atuais. Esse legado bizantino foi fundamental para a formação não apenas das identidades nacionais grega e romena, mas também para os seus respectivos ideais no que se refere aos seus modelos de relação Igreja-Estado, que, por sua vez, diferem consideravelmente da tradição Ocidental no que diz respeito à relação à delimitação das fronteiras entre as esferas política e religiosa. Devido a essas divergências sociais e ideológicas, essa tese partiu de uma alegoria que considera a integração europeia como um rito de passagem e Grécia e Romênia como Estados liminares, isto é, entidades políticas cuja identidade é ambígua, imprecisa e inexata, e que se encontram em um espectro que não permite classificações binárias tais como "secular" e "não-secular". Nesse sentido, a integração europeia é tratada como um rito de passagem incompleto, fazendo com que os problemas advindos das relações Igreja-Estado em ambos os países contribuam para que os mesmos perpetuem essa condição liminar. Por meio de uma investigação baseada principalmente na análise de discurso de Hansen (2006), o autor concluiu que o discurso Ortodoxo sobre a integração europeia constrói uma identidade Ortodoxa que não se classifica exatamente como o "Self" e nem como o "Other, variando em um espectro entre o "Europeu" e o "não-Europeu".

**Palavras-chave:** Relações Internacionais. Religião. União Europeia. Cristianismo Ortodoxo. Liminalidade.

## LIST OF FIGURES

|                                                                                         |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Figure 1 - Different dimensions of liminality.....                                      | 60  |
| Figure 2 - Adaptation of Thomassen's model on types of liminal experiences.....         | 63  |
| Figure 3 - The East-West division of the Roman Empire in roughly 120 A.D.....           | 71  |
| Figure 4 - European Union enlargement, 1952-2013.....                                   | 72  |
| Figure 5 - Physical map of “the lands between” according to Alan Palmer.....            | 75  |
| Figure 7 - Spheres of influence according to the “Percentages Agreement” .....          | 80  |
| Figure 8 - The Soviet bloc.....                                                         | 82  |
| Figure 9 - Southeastern Europe According to the Treaty of Berlin (1878).....            | 84  |
| Figure 10 - The political division between Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches | 91  |
| Figure 11 - Nineteenth-Century Southeastern Europe.....                                 | 96  |
| Figure 12 - The Ottoman Empire, 1815.....                                               | 97  |
| Figure 13 - The expansion of Greece, 1821-1919.....                                     | 100 |
| Figure 14 - Moldavia and Wallachia.....                                                 | 114 |
| Figure 15 - The expansion of Romania 1861-1920.....                                     | 117 |
| Figure 16 - Different identities found in the analysed speeches.....                    | 139 |
| Figure 17 - The linking and differentiation of “Orthodoxy” and “Europe” .....           | 140 |
| Figure 18 - Categories associated to each type of identity.....                         | 141 |
| Figure 19 - Intersection between discourses regarding European integration.....         | 148 |

## LIST OF TABLES

|                                                                                                   |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table 1 - Methodology.....                                                                        | 27  |
| Table 2 - Analysed texts.....                                                                     | 29  |
| Table 3 - Official documents concerning the EU accession processes of the Greece and Romania..... | 33  |
| Table 4 - Content analysis.....                                                                   | 34  |
| Table 5 - Europeanization as proposed by Büttner; Eig Müller and Worschech (2022).....            | 46  |
| Table 6 - Rituals of separation, liminality and reaggregation according to Garwood (2011)...      | 59  |
| Table 7. Model of types of liminality as suggested by Thomassen (2009).....                       | 61  |
| Table 8 - Characteristics of liminal states.....                                                  | 64  |
| Table 9 - The religious landscape of contemporary Greece.....                                     | 101 |
| Table 10 - The religious landscape of contemporary Romania.....                                   | 127 |

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

|      |                                |
|------|--------------------------------|
| CoG  | Church of Greece               |
| ECHR | European Court of Human Rights |
| EU   | European Union                 |
| IR   | International Relations        |
| ROC  | Romanian Orthodox Church       |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                                                                   |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>                                                                                       | <b>16</b>  |
| <b>2. CHAPTER 1 – SECULARISM, STATE IDENTITIES AND LIMINALITY.....</b>                                            | <b>37</b>  |
| 2.1 National and state identities: a constructivist perspective.....                                              | 37         |
| 2.2. The state as person in IR theory.....                                                                        | 41         |
| 2.3 European integration and “Europeanization” .....                                                              | 43         |
| 2.4 Secularism, secularisation and desecularization.....                                                          | 48         |
| 2.5 Critical constructivism.....                                                                                  | 51         |
| 2.6 Rites of passage.....                                                                                         | 56         |
| 2.6.1 <i>Liminality, Communitas and Anti-Structure</i> .....                                                      | 57         |
| 2.7 Final remarks.....                                                                                            | 65         |
| <b>3. CHAPTER 2 – BETWIXT AND BETWEEN: CENTRAL AND (SOUTH)EASTERN<br/>EUROPE AS LIMINAL SPACES.....</b>           | <b>68</b>  |
| 3.1. Where is the East of Europe? A brief overview of Europe's mesoregions.....                                   | 69         |
| 3.2 Western Europe.....                                                                                           | 70         |
| 3.3 Central Europe.....                                                                                           | 73         |
| 3.4 Eastern Europe.....                                                                                           | 78         |
| 3.5 Southeastern Europe.....                                                                                      | 83         |
| 3.6 Final remarks.....                                                                                            | 85         |
| <b>4. CHAPTER 3 – RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES AND NATION-BUILDING IN<br/>NINETEENTH CENTURY SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE.....</b> | <b>89</b>  |
| 4.1 Church-State relations and nation-building in Southeastern Europe.....                                        | 89         |
| 4.2 Symphonia in the Byzantine Empire.....                                                                        | 93         |
| 4.3 Religion and nationalism in nineteenth-century Southeastern Europe.....                                       | 95         |
| 4.4 Church-State relations in Modern Greece.....                                                                  | 99         |
| 4.5. Church-State relations in Romania.....                                                                       | 113        |
| 4.6 Final remarks.....                                                                                            | 128        |
| <b>5. CHAPTER 4 – CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND<br/>LIMINALITY IN ORTHODOX DISCOURSES.....</b>         | <b>130</b> |
| 5.1 Official documents – EU integration: what was demanded?.....                                                  | 131        |
| 5.2 Discourse analysis – Orthodox constructions of the EU.....                                                    | 136        |
| 5.3 Orthodoxy and (or in) the EU?.....                                                                            | 142        |
| 5.4 Orthodoxy on the threshold of the EU.....                                                                     | 152        |
| 5.5 Final remarks.....                                                                                            | 161        |
| <b>6 CONCLUSION.....</b>                                                                                          | <b>164</b> |

**REFERENCES.....168**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

My intention in this doctoral thesis is to conduct a post-secular analysis of Orthodox Christianity and its relationship with nationalism and secularism in the context of European integration, by analysing Greece and Romania as case studies. Religion and nationalism are intertwined in these societies, which now seek to adapt themselves to Western European standards of modernity and secularism. However, this adaptation has social and political implications for Greece and Romania. Social phenomena such as the Orthodox Anti-Westernism – a rejection of Western values and institutions – can be noticed as an outcome of this process (Makrides, 2009). My intention is to provide a contribution towards filling gaps in studies on religion in the field of International Relations (IR) in three main aspects.

First, it is possible to argue that there are, in the field of International Relations, gaps regarding theoretical studies that seek to incorporate religion into existing theories of International Relations or new theoretical frameworks (Chadha, 2022). Chadha (2022, p.3) proposes three contributions that can collaborate for the development of theoretical studies of IR involving religion, namely: i) studies incorporating Religion in traditional IR theory, ii) Religious IR theories/approaches and frameworks of analysis, and iii) finding secular in the post-secularizing IR. Aligned with these objectives, the present thesis endeavours to provide a theoretical contribution to the field of IR by integrating the concepts of the secular, secularism, secularisation and desecularization into a critical constructivist approach.

Approaching the topic of religion in the field of IR, in this research, I intended to provide three main theoretical contributions, which have the potential to be valuable for future studies involving religion in IR studies. These are: 1) Pointing out the possibility of a (critical) analysis of religion in IR as a way of contesting understandings of the global; 2) Suggesting the applicability of a critical constructivist analysis of the role of religion as a constitutive element of national identities and 3) Demonstrating the various possibilities regarding the boundaries between the secular and the religious in non-Western contexts and/or different from the model predominant Westphalian in the West.

Foremost, it is pertinent to provide a brief contextualization of the current state-of-the-art pertaining religion in the field of IR. Early studies concerning religion in the field of IR were based on the secularisation theory, which predicted that elements of modernity could lead to an eventual demise of religion worldwide. Consequently, a lack of

certainty as to how religion would respond to the challenges of modernity led to the rise of secularism, that is, an ideology whose premise is that religion should be separated from public life (Fox, 2015).

According to secularisation theory, modernity has a secularising effect on societies, diminishing the influence of religion in people's lives (Berger, 1999). However, although modernity has favoured secularising effects in many societies, this thesis has been shown to be inconsistent with empirical evidence in some respects. While a decline in the influence of religious institutions can be observed in different societies, in the context of modern secularism some religious communities resorted to strategies of rejection and adaptation (Berger, 1999). A rejection of modernity could be achieved by the establishment of religious subcultures and an attempt of keeping modernity's influence away from a given society, or through an obligatory "counter-modern" revolution, a strategy that would require a homogenisation of society in this enterprise (Berger, 1999).

Yet, this adaptation can also be considered as a gap in secularisation theory, since, according to its argument, one could expect that the survival of religious communities would depend on their own capacity of adapting themselves to the requirements imposed by this secular social reality. Nevertheless, this did not occur: not only religious communities have survived, but many of them did not respond to the demands of the secular world as it was expected. Instead of a secularisation of religion, reactionary beliefs and practices have thrived in modern secular societies. With exceptions such as Western-Europe, the rise of various religious resurgences has put the idea of an increasingly secularised world to the test (Berger, 1999).

The idea of IR as being fundamentally secular has its roots on the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), which established several norms that would become central to modern international relations, such as the modern (sovereign) state as the main actor in the international system, the separation between Church and state, and the idea of a secular state that has a limited influence on domestic religious matters and should not intervene in other states' religious affairs (Haynes, 2021). This secular and state-centric Western tradition was also reflected in IR mainstream theories, which were built on Enlightenment ideals of rationality in opposition to the irrational/religious. As a result, this Western modern heritage has contributed to a general overlook of the relevance of religion in IR studies, since, for a long time, the discipline did not consider other expressions of modernity and secularity in non-Western contexts (Huang, 2022).



The Iranian Revolution of 1979 may be considered as a "key catalyst" (Haynes, 2021, p.1) with regard to the emergence of religion as a relevant topic in IR mainstream studies; "radical political Islam" became an important aspect of international relations insofar as it seemed to be related to Iran's relationship with the Muslim world and the West (Haynes, 2021). As pointed out by Haynes (2021, p.3), the interaction between international relations and religion may involve topics such as "international security, international conflict, international cooperation, foreign policy, secularisation, democratisation, the transnational spread of ideas and the nature of the international community".

In the field of IR, secularism can also be understood as "political authority": in the West, it is "the dominant language of religion and politics" (Hurd, 2004, p.236). Secularism is considered by many secularists as a universal model at both domestic and international levels. Moreover, it is seen as being superior to non-secular alternatives in normative terms (Hurd, 2004). Starting from the assumption of a secular paradigm in the field, there were different responses from scholars regarding this return of religion, and how to restore the study of religion in IR: some advocated the incorporation of religious actors, institutions and traditions in studies of IR, while others advocated the inclusion of religious leaders and communities in conflict resolution processes (Hurd, 2012).

Furthermore, there was also the opinion that religion could explain variables such as longevity and the frequency of religious conflicts. These restorative approaches to the role of religion in IR studies treated religion as something that could be operationalized, that is, problems involving religion could be resolved as fundamentalist actors were identified and reformed, and religious moderates were understood and empowered. This "drive to 'operationalize' religion" (Hurd, 2015, p.3) – which involves notions such as "religious freedom" and "interfaith toleration" – became institutionalized after 9/11 (Hurd, 2015).

Moreover, when it comes to this "operationalization" of religion in the international system, it should also be mentioned that the United States, alongside with allies such as Canada and the United Kingdom, have perpetuated a discourse that characterises the notions that "the flourishing of free and tolerant religion, increased dialogue between faith communities, and the legalization of minority rights are required to emancipate societies from intercommunal strife, economic deprivation, and gender and other forms of discrimination" (Hurd, 2015, p.3). According to Hurd (2012), there is a relationship between knowledge and power with relation to this operationalizing approach to religion. She argues that:

The move to restore religion has laid the groundwork for a striking array of legal and administrative initiatives to intervene in religious affairs around the world. It creates the conditions of possibility for international interventions to secure religious freedom, create religiously tolerant subjects, and instruct governments on how to cultivate and oversee religiously diverse societies. These programmes are becoming institutionalised as natural attributes of international public life in the twenty-first century. They are becoming regular features on the global landscape. The attempt to restore religion to international public life and the forms of knowledge that underwrite it are creating new religious and political realities. They designate acceptable spaces for religion and acceptable forms of religion that are regulated legally and politically, domestically, and transnationally” (Hurd, 2012, p.946).

In this sense, Hurd (2012) contends that such efforts to restore religion to IR actually “authorise particular forms of political and religious authority (Hurd, 2012, p.946); at the international level, religious affairs are “overseen, administered, and transformed through various formations of secular power” (Hurd, 2012, p.960). Therefore, it is possible to observe the use of secular power by states and transnational authorities in the international system (Hurd, 2012).

The term “post-secular” – made popular by Habermas (2008) - refers to a change of consciousness in previously secular societies. According to the author, the transition to a post-secular society marked by religious conflicts at global level may affect a society insofar as they can be interpreted as a sign of a religious resurgence. This change of consciousness in secular societies is also influenced by religious revival movements at the domestic level, since this phenomenon may shape public opinion regarding religion and secularism (Habermas, 2008).

In IR studies, post-secularism has emerged as a paradigm change that proposes a shift in understanding the different expressions concerning the relationship between the secular and the religious. By going beyond the simple inclusion of religion in international politics in Western terms, a post-secular analysis would suggest an understanding of the role of religion in the transformation of the international system that surpasses the capacity of the Western state to meet specific (religious and socio-political) demands. The question, therefore, is whether the secular should be an indispensable and non-negotiable standard for interactions and demands in the context of international politics (Mavelli; Petito, 2014).

Post-secularism is relevant for studies into both domestic and international politics of the European Union (EU) since the religious aspect of the European integration project seems to intersect with social issues such as immigration, debt and the idea of a common European identity: questions that are primordial for the EU's understanding of the meaning of Europe. Terrorism, the use of the veil and the display of religious symbols are a few examples of

current subjects that point out the importance of rethinking secularism in the context of European integration (Thomas; O'Mahony, 2014).

The EU is moving eastwards and, since the end of the Cold War, it has been increasingly marked by diversity: not only has the idea of Islam as being a part of Europe emerged, but the European project now includes former communist states and societies in which Eastern Christianity is deeply rooted. Besides increasing the number of Orthodox Christians into the EU, the incorporation of countries such as Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania also brought different perspectives for the institution about its Christian identity (Thomas; O'Mahony, 2014).

Historical events should be contemplated when analysing the role of the Eastern Churches on the EU's identity. First, it is necessary to remember that Eastern Christianity has passed through different dynamics. As pointed out by Thomas and O'Mahony (2014), some historical events should be taken into account when analysing the relations between Europe and Eastern Christianity: "(i) the Byzantine theocratic legacy, (ii) the Ottoman legacy, (iii) the legacy of communism, and (iv) democratization" (Thomas; O'Mahony, 2014, p.120). Notwithstanding, European Orthodox Christians' engagements with Islam have been significantly different from Western European Christians. Islam has been "the Other" to Western Christians (Thomas; O'Mahony, 2014, p.121), but the relations between Orthodox Europe and Islam have been marked by interactions and cohabitation with Muslims (Thomas; O'Mahony, 2014).

Thus, understanding the current perception of politics in Orthodox Christian societies – both domestic and foreign – requires an investigation that includes elements and concepts derived from their cultural and religious heritage. Unlike Western Europe, which was the scene of specific phenomena such as the Protestant Reformation and secularisation, Orthodox-majority countries have kept their own ideals when it comes to the relationship between state and Church (Makrides, 2017).

One example of Orthodox Christian singularity is the political theological concept of *symphonia* – a byzantine heritage. This ideal – whose origins lie in the relations between the Church and the Byzantine Emperor – assigns duties and responsibilities to both the state and Church. The state should guarantee the material well-being of society – such as protection against external threats – while the Church should be responsible for the spiritual well-being or salvation of the population (Twiss; Simion; Petersen, 2015). Thus, Eastern Orthodox Christianity has distinct approaches when it comes to the boundaries of religion and politics.

There is a difference not only regarding the perception of the idea of secularism between Western and Orthodox Christians, but it is worth mentioning that the Orthodox perspective of what is Europe also differs from the Western European one. Historical events such as the Great Schism of 1054 and the sacking of Constantinople by Western Crusaders had an impact on the Orthodox perception of the West as a threat. This should be considered when analysing the political positioning of many Orthodox Churches such as the tendency to protect the nation against external threats (Olteanu; De Nève, 2014).

In the EU, some Orthodox Churches have been involved with issues regarding intolerance towards other religions and pluralism. These Churches tend to perceive themselves as protectors of the nation, therefore, religious pluralism is seen as an external threat, a phenomenon confirmed by the hostile behaviour of these institutions towards other religious denominations, even reaching the escalation of violence. Furthermore, in Orthodox-majority countries, there is a trend towards higher indicators of violation of article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and religion. (Olteanu; De Nève, 2014).

In general, Orthodox Christian Churches' behaviours tend to be conservative and intolerant to both other religions and sexual minorities (Ramet, 2019). Ramet (2019) observes three patterns of behaviour in the Orthodox Churches of Southeast Europe that consist of forms of resistance to the influence of Western liberal values: nationalism, conservatism and intolerance. However, concerning the interaction of Orthodox Churches with European institutions, Leustean (2018) argues that "the political mobilization of Orthodox representations in Brussels acquires a geopolitical and civilizational dimension that places the Eastern Orthodox world as a competitor of the secular West " (Leustean, 2018, p.146).

In addition to the arguments presented, some statistical data can illustrate this context about the relationship between national identity and religion in Orthodox-majority countries. Data provided by the Pew Research Center (2017a) indicate that, in Orthodox-majority countries, a considerable part of the population says that "homosexuality should not be accepted in society". One of the most expressive cases is that of Armenia, where homosexuality is rejected by 98% of the population, and this rejection is also strong in Georgia (93%) and Moldova (93%) (Pew Research Center, 2017a, p.52).

The case studies analysed in this thesis are not an exception to this phenomenon. Although it has been long aligned with the West (it joined NATO in 1952 and the European Union in 1981), Greece is closer to Eastern European countries than to Western nations when it comes to public attitudes on religion, nationalism, abortion and same-sex marriage (Pew

Research Center, 2018). According to another research published by the Pew Research Center (2017b), Greece can be seen as a particular case amongst Central and Eastern European countries:

Most of the countries surveyed were once ruled by communist regimes, either aligned or not aligned with Moscow. But Greece remained outside the Iron Curtain and became allied with Western Europe after World War II. In this respect, Greece offers a useful point of comparison with other Orthodox-majority countries in the region. It is both of the West and of the East. For example, Greeks report relatively low levels of religious practice, while expressing strong feelings of cultural superiority and national pride – similar to respondents in other Orthodox-majority countries surveyed. But Greeks also differ: For instance, they are more supportive of democracy and less socially conservative than neighbors in majority-Orthodox countries (Pew Research Center, 2017b, p.17).

Thus, Greece can be perceived as both Western and Eastern simultaneously. In 2024, after a 176-76 vote in parliament, it has become the first Orthodox-majority country to legalise same-sex marriage. Moreover, same-sex couples will also be allowed to adopt children. The bill was criticised by the Orthodox Church; Archbishop Ieronymos stated that the measure would “corrupt the homeland's social cohesion” (Gregory, 2024, n.p.). It is also worth mentioning that Greece is the first Southeastern European country to legalise same-sex marriage (Gregory, 2024).

Romania, although a member state of the European Union, also offers some interesting insights about several social trends. Differently from most Western Europeans, 46% of Romanians seem to agree with their government promoting religious beliefs (Pew Research Center, 2018). Moreover, 68% of Romanians agreed when asked if there is a conflict between their country’s traditional values and those of the West (Pew Research Center, 2017). It is also worth mentioning that homosexuality is considerably rejected in Romania: 85% of Romanians agreed with the statement that “homosexuality should not be accepted by society” (Pew Research Center, 2017, p.106).

My intention in this work was to analyse these two cases, considering them as interesting examples of the studied phenomenon. Therefore, the suggested analysis is not a comparison in the strictest methodological sense, but rather the analysis of two case studies. The choice of cases is justified by the fact that they are contexts that present similarities and differences. For instance, Greece has been a member of the EU for a longer period than Romania. On the other hand, Romania has undergone different political experiences, such as the communist period. Thus, both cases may offer us insights regarding liminality in the context of European integration.

I argue that the aforementioned social issues respecting religion and identity of Orthodox-majority countries in the EU – specifically Greece and Romania – derive from their liminal position concerning Church-state relations. Both Greek and Romanian societies have their own understanding of what is the “secular”, how should be the boundaries between religion and (secular) politics, and their Church-state relations are linked to their national identities. These identities assume an ambiguous character compared to other European states in which the relationship between politics and religion follow the Western (“Westphalian”) model.

Nevertheless, I intend to analyse the liminal situations of Greece and Romania by considering liminality as an ambiguous transitional state. Therefore, for analytical purposes I shall consider European integration as a **rite of passage** in the terms proposed by anthropologists Arnold Van Gennep (1960) and Victor Turner (2008), a concept that will be introduced in Chapter 1.

Thus, this thesis also sought to provide a contribution to IR studies by exploring different applications of the concept of liminality to international relations. In the field of IR, this concept has already been addressed by several authors. For instance, Rumelili (2012) applied the concept of liminality to the Turkish case, analysing its liminal position in relation to Western institutions, such as the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and how this liminality plays a role in perpetuating conflict with other countries, such as Greece. The author states that liminal entities are viewed as a threat due to their ambiguous nature, that is, since both “Self” and “Other” coexist, this allows the identity boundaries of a given community to be subverted (Rumelili, 2012).

Mälksoo (2012) affirms that liminality may be applied in several subareas in the field of IR, from analyses involving security and sovereignty, to studies on the constitution of political identities. Considering the adaptation of this concept to IR studies, the author affirms that:

To accept liminality as a fundamental feature of political subjectivity in International Relations constitutes a radical move away from an urge for concrete classifications which seek to control the subject by the very 'attack' of naming it in a particular way. All classifications, including the distinction between the inside and outside of the sovereign state, nurture the hope of successful management of a situation, as if the inability to classify would signify an open recognition of humans' fundamental helplessness in the face of the world (Mälksoo, 2012, p.485).

In this sense, liminality contributes to a reimagination of the ways of thinking of international politics, since “it calls for the acceptance of disorder” (Malksoo, 2012, p.485). Based on Victor Turner’s works on liminal entities, Rumelili (2012) proposes extending liminality to the study of international politics. Among the multiple possibilities in relation to the application of this concept to IR studies, she mentions the opportunity to analyse how liminal spaces are produced through discourse in the context of international politics. Nevertheless, it can also be useful in studies involving civilizational issues, such as the dichotomy respecting the definitions of the West and the “non-West” (in the cases of countries such as Russia and Turkey, which may be located in an “in-betweenness” in this matter.

Furthermore, as mentioned by Rumelili (2012), the idea of liminality in IR studies as a theoretical tool may contribute to new insights insofar as they address identity categories such as the distinction between the self and the other, the Western and the non-Western, and also their role in the constitution of state identities. Concerning the possibilities about the manifestations of liminality in contemporary IR, the author argues that:

In contemporary IR, liminal positions arise mainly through two processes. First, universalistic identity discourses while constructing temporal social categories of 'have's and 'have not's - that is, modern/unmodern, developed/undeveloped at the same time position most of their significant others in a liminal state of becoming, that is, modernising and developing. Thus, universalistic identity discourses produce a distinction not between a Self and an Other, but a Self its liminals (Rumelili, 2012, p.502).

The construction of liminal categories and discourses in the international context will also be applied to the cases of Greece and Romania. However, differently from Malksoo’s (2012) and Rumelili’s (2012) approaches to liminality in IR, here, this concept will be explored in a wider sense, being not restricted to the liminal stage/position of a state, but including the complexity of all the stages of a rite of passage in the terms of Van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1969). The argument of European integration as a rite of passage will be developed throughout this thesis.

According to Turner (2008), a liminal entity does not possess a fixed social status in a given structure and cannot be precisely defined. Consequently, Greece and Romania are in a liminal position within the EU, since they cannot be classified as being neither secular, nor “non-secular”. By taking into account the theoretical debates concerning religion and international politics, liminal entities and rites of passage, and Church-state relations in non-Western secular contexts, this work suggests an original contribution to IR studies insofar

as it proposes an analysis of a complex, multifaceted research object through a dialogue between different categories and theoretical approaches.

In this research, I sought to establish a dialogue between themes that are not necessarily found in "mainstream" IR studies, in order to approach them in an interdisciplinary way, thus pointing out the multiple ways in which these intersections can be observed. Finally, the contributions of the thesis, as well as the research project were planned considering the lines of research of the *strictu sensu* graduate program of the Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais.

The scope of the work is aligned with the line of research it proposes, addressing issues related to inequalities in the international system. The analytical framework proposed in this thesis can be adapted to other research that aims to address topics and research objects that may be considered marginal in IR studies. In addition to the state of the art related to the debate on religion and IR, this research can also serve as inspiration for new analyses involving rites of passage and liminality in the international system. In this sense, the contribution of this research is not restricted only to the study of the Orthodox Christian case, but can also be applied to other cases, in different political, economic and social contexts. Critical constructivism is also a useful approach in understanding diversity as it relates to the study of the "international", as it allows us to analyse diverse political identities, social claims and social imaginaries in multiple non-Western contexts.

This research offers an insightful contribution to the Postgraduate Program in International Relations at the Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais by proposing an original analytical perspective on an object already studied in the field of International Relations, and contributes particularly to the line of research "Development and International Inequalities" by proposing an interdisciplinary theoretical dialogue that can be used as an analytical model to analyse socio-political contexts that are not limited to the mainstream of IR studies, and can be adapted to Global South and non-Western contexts in a broader sense .

Thus, the starting point of this thesis is the following question: What are the implications of the liminal conditions of Greece and Romania for their state identities and its consequences for their respective EU memberships?

This research was not guided by a hypothesis in a rational-explicative sense. Considering the interpretive character of its theoretical framework, I suggested the following declarative sentence: *the aforementioned social issues regarding religion and identity of Orthodox-majority countries in the EU – specifically Greece and Romania – derive from their liminal position concerning Church-state relations. Both Greek and Romanian societies have*



*their understanding of what is "secular", how should be the boundaries between religion and (secular) politics, and their respective Church-state relations are related to these states' national and state identities. These identities assume an ambiguous character in the social structure of the European Union when compared to other European states in which the relationship between politics and religion follows the Western ("Westphalian") model. Thus, religion, Church-State relations and the Orthodox identities of Greece and Romania place both countries into a state of permanent liminality in the EU.*

The preceding sentence seeks to understand a specific social phenomenon. Likewise, the methodology of this research has an interpretative character, with a focus on subjective elements present in international politics. For this reason, two methods provide the basis for the methodology of this thesis: discourse analysis as suggested by Hansen (2006) and content analysis adapted from Pashakhanlou (2017).

Finally, I will provide an overview of the methodology employed in this thesis, encompassing a breakdown of each method applied, alongside a detailed account of the steps taken throughout the research process.

## **(b) Discourse analysis**

There are theoretical similarities between Turner's (2008) approach to liminality and post-structural theoretical approaches in the field of International Relations (IR). One of the main similarities is the idea that identities are not fixed in the relations between the Self and the Other, but rather are constructed and constituted through discourses and power relations. In this sense, the liminal state between two established social structures can be seen as a space of contestation – or even subversion – where the norms and values of both structures are subject to negotiation and renegotiation. Similarly, in post-structuralist theory, identity is seen as a product of discursive practices that are constantly contested and reconfigured.

Hansen (2006) argues that representations of these relations may be found in different types of documents. The author suggests four intertextual models of discourse analysis applied to foreign policy. In this research, this framework was adapted by mixing some elements of Models 1, 2 and 3B as suggested by Hansen (2006). This is due to the relevance of the analytical focus and the object of analysis proposed by both models. Official documents, such as national constitutions and governmental reports are relevant for the

analysis of Church-state relations. However, political texts, speeches and even opinions from specific agents are also relevant for understanding different perceptions of the secular. Thus, the adaptation of Hansen's framework is described in Table 1.

**Table 1 - Methodology**

| <b>Intertextual research model</b> |                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ANALYTICAL FOCUS</b>            | Orthodox political discourses                                                            |
| <b>OBJECT OF ANALYSIS</b>          | Speeches, statements, opinion, debates, newspapers, websites, articles                   |
| <b>GOAL OF ANALYSIS</b>            | The response of Orthodox discourses to Western discourses regarding European integration |

**Source:** Elaborated by the author based on Hansen (2006)

Regarding the analysed documents, specially those concerning European integration, document analysis was conducted instead of discourse analysis. The justification for this choice is related to my intention with the analysis presented in Chapter 4. The main goal of the suggested document analysis was to identify the demands made by the EU regarding the adoption of human rights policies by the candidate states. In analytical terms, I sought to make a parallel with the rites of passage according to Van Gennep (1960) and Turner (2008), thus alluding to the impositions made on liminal individuals. Therefore, just as individuals must meet the demands and conditions imposed upon them, candidate states had to agree to the conditions established by the EU.

Thus, I chose document analysis rather than discourse analysis, since it would avoid ambiguities and multiple interpretations regarding the aforementioned conditions, thus pointing out exactly how these impositions appear in the text. Therefore, the first part of Chapter 4 represents the structural impositions of the EU on candidate states, while in the second part of the chapter, speeches by members of the hierarchy of national churches were analysed. Based on Hansen's (2009) discourse analysis models, I analysed the selected speeches aiming at identifying discursive representations of the Orthodox perception of

European integration. For this reason, I define the analysis of these speeches as discursive analysis, differently from the document analysis presented in the first part of Chapter 4.

Discursive constructions of liminality were found in speeches made by relevant members of the hierarchy of the Churches, and texts published by the Churches or related religious institutions. Archbishop Christodoulos, Metropolitan Bartolomeu Anania, Patriarch Daniel Ciobotea of Romania, the The Committee of the Representatives of the Orthodox Churches to the European Union, the Permanent Office Of The Romanian Orthodox Church To The European Institutions and the Church of Greece (Representation Office in Brussels). It should be mentioned that during discourse analysis, I did not look for the presence of the term "liminal" in the analysed documents; instead, I aimed at finding representations of the liminal conditions of Greece and Romanian according to the discursive context, guided by my adaptation of some attributes of liminal entities – in Turner's terms (2008) – to modern states (see Table 8).

It is also necessary to mention the criterion used to define the selection of the analysed texts. Firstly, I sought speeches from members of national Churches who spoke more assertively on the topic of European integration. For this reason, the speeches of Archbishop Christodoulos and Metropolitan Anania were selected, since both individuals engaged in this debate<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, I aimed to demonstrate through the analysis how discourse on European integration had some variations over the years. Thus, I selected texts from different historical (political) contexts of Greece and Romania. Based on this idea, I selected more recent speeches, such as those of Patriarch Daniel, and those made by the Church of Greece (Representation Office in Brussels) (Αλέξανδρου Κατσιάρα), the Permanent Office Of The Romanian Orthodox Church and The Committee of Representatives of the Orthodox Churches to the European Union.

Therefore, I sought documents that could allow for a discursive analysis taking into account distinct historical moments and possible variations (and similarities) of the Orthodox perspective on European integration, considering the perspectives of different members of the national Churches, as well as the aforementioned institutions. Certainly, such an analysis has limitations: the analysed speeches do not represent religion as a whole, nor do they reflect the stance of the Orthodox Churches of Greece and Romania. However, the purpose of the proposed discourse analysis was to demonstrate how the discourse of integration was received

---

<sup>1</sup> Christodoulos' and Anania's engagements with the debate regarding European integration will be mentioned throughout this thesis. For instance, they are mentioned by Günel; Balci (2019) and Stan; Turcescu (2000; 2007).

by the national Churches from a historical perspective, associating the Orthodox perspective on European integration with the “rites of passage” analogy.

Table 2 presents the speeches analysed in Chapter 4, organised by title, author and source:

**Table 2 - Analysed texts**

| <b>Title</b>                                                                                      | <b>Speaker</b>                                   | <b>Source</b>                                        | <b>Link</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| "The Word and Role of Orthodoxy in the European Union" (1999a)                                    | Archbishop Christodoulos                         | Ecclesia.gr                                          | <a href="https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&amp;id=485&amp;what_main=3&amp;what_sub=12&amp;lang=en&amp;archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches">https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&amp;id=485&amp;what_main=3&amp;what_sub=12&amp;lang=en&amp;archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches</a>                                                                                                             |
| "The Society of People in the Time of Post-Neoterism, of Holisticity and of Globalizaton" (1999b) | Archbishop Christodoulos                         | Ecclesia.gr                                          | <a href="https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&amp;id=486&amp;what_main=3&amp;what_sub=12&amp;lang=en&amp;archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches">https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&amp;id=486&amp;what_main=3&amp;what_sub=12&amp;lang=en&amp;archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches</a>                                                                                                             |
| “Futurum” (2003a)                                                                                 | Archbishop Christodoulos                         | Ecclesia.gr                                          | <a href="https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&amp;id=494&amp;what_main=3&amp;what_sub=12&amp;lang=en&amp;archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches">https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&amp;id=494&amp;what_main=3&amp;what_sub=12&amp;lang=en&amp;archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches</a>                                                                                                             |
| “Europa Nostra” (2003b)                                                                           | Archbishop Christodoulos                         | Ecclesia.gr                                          | <a href="https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&amp;id=493&amp;what_main=3&amp;what_sub=12&amp;lang=en&amp;archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches">https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&amp;id=493&amp;what_main=3&amp;what_sub=12&amp;lang=en&amp;archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches</a>                                                                                                             |
| “Welcome address to the President of the European Parliament, Josep Borrell” (2006)               | Archbishop Christodoulos                         | Ecclesia.gr                                          | <a href="https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&amp;id=554&amp;what_main=3&amp;what_sub=12&amp;lang=en&amp;archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches">https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&amp;id=554&amp;what_main=3&amp;what_sub=12&amp;lang=en&amp;archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches</a>                                                                                                             |
| “Ορθοδοξία στην Ευρώπη (και όχι Ορθοδοξία και Ευρώπη)” (2023)                                     | Repr. Office Internet Team (Αλέξανδρου Κατσιάρα) | Church of Greece (Representation Office in Brussels) | <a href="https://www.churchofgreece.eu/%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%B8%CE%BF%CE%B4%CE%BF%CE%BE%CE%AF%CE%B1-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%81%CF%8E%CF%80%CE%B7-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CF%8C%CF%87%CE%B9-%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%B8%CE%BF%CE%B4%CE%BF%CE%BE/">https://www.churchofgreece.eu/%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%B8%CE%BF%CE%B4%CE%BF%CE%BE%CE%AF%CE%B1-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%81%CF%8E%CF%80%CE%B7-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CF%8C%CF%87%CE%B9-%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%B8%CE%BF%CE%B4%CE%BF%CE%BE/</a> |
| “Ce ne oferă                                                                                      | Bartolomeu                                       | Porunca                                              | <a href="https://www.agaton.ro/reviste/Pi%2">https://www.agaton.ro/reviste/Pi%2</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

|                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                         |                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Europa?"<br>(Unknown)                                                                                                                  | Anania                                                                                                  | Iubirii 2/2006<br>(magazine)                                                       | 02006%20-%202.pdf                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| "Despre Europa"<br>(Unknown)                                                                                                           | Bartolomeu<br>Anania                                                                                    | Rotonda<br>Valaha, Anul<br>VI, Nr. 2,<br>2021                                      | <a href="https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Florentin-Smarandache/publication/352544390_Rotonda_Valaha_Anul_VI_Nr_2_2021/links/60ce12c292851ca3acb2c752/Rotonda-Valaha-Anul-VI-Nr-2-2021.pdf">https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Florentin-Smarandache/publication/352544390_Rotonda_Valaha_Anul_VI_Nr_2_2021/links/60ce12c292851ca3acb2c752/Rotonda-Valaha-Anul-VI-Nr-2-2021.pdf</a>                                     |
| "Religious<br>Education is a<br>must in European<br>Schools"<br>(2023)                                                                 | Permanent Office<br>Of The Romanian<br>Orthodox Church<br>To The European<br>Institutions               | Romorth.eu                                                                         | <a href="https://www.romorth.eu/single-post/religious-education-is-a-must-in-european-schools">https://www.romorth.eu/single-post/religious-education-is-a-must-in-european-schools</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| "The Orthodox<br>Church and the<br>New Europe:<br>Ecumenical<br>Experience and<br>Perspectives"<br>(2008)                              | Daniel Ciobotea                                                                                         | Truth and<br>Morality: The<br>Role of Truth<br>in Public Life<br>(Google<br>Books) | <a href="https://www.google.com.br/books/edition/Paths_to_the_Divine/LhyndUnWYVMC?hl=pt-BR&amp;gbpv=1&amp;dq=Truth+and+Morality+the+role+of+truth+Daniel+Ciobotea+google+book&amp;pg=PP5&amp;printsec=frontcover">https://www.google.com.br/books/edition/Paths_to_the_Divine/LhyndUnWYVMC?hl=pt-BR&amp;gbpv=1&amp;dq=Truth+and+Morality+the+role+of+truth+Daniel+Ciobotea+google+book&amp;pg=PP5&amp;printsec=frontcover</a> |
| "Importance of<br>Church-State<br>cooperation in the<br>European<br>context"<br>(2019)                                                 | Daniel Ciobotea                                                                                         | Basilica.ro                                                                        | <a href="https://basilica.ro/en/importance-of-church-state-cooperation-in-the-european-context/">https://basilica.ro/en/importance-of-church-state-cooperation-in-the-european-context/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| "Statement of<br>CROCEU on the<br>occasion of the<br>70th Anniversary<br>of the Universal<br>Declaration of<br>Human Rights"<br>(2018) | The Committee of<br>Representatives<br>of the Orthodox<br>Churches to the<br>European Union<br>(CROCEU) | Orthodox<br>Times                                                                  | <a href="https://orthodoxtimes.com/statement-of-croceu-on-the-occasion-of-the-70th-anniversary-of-the-universal-declaration-of-human-rights/">https://orthodoxtimes.com/statement-of-croceu-on-the-occasion-of-the-70th-anniversary-of-the-universal-declaration-of-human-rights/</a>                                                                                                                                         |
| "Patriarch Daniel:<br>Religious<br>dimension of<br>cultural dialogue<br>"crucial" to<br>Europe"                                        | Daniel Ciobotea                                                                                         | Embassy Of<br>Romania<br>In The Czech<br>Republic                                  | <a href="http://praga.mae.ro/en/romania-news/501">http://praga.mae.ro/en/romania-news/501</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

Source: Elaborated by the author

## (b) Content analysis

In addition to the aforementioned methods, some quantitative and qualitative material was incorporated into the analysis, such as surveys on religious and ethnic compositions, as

well as data from questionnaires on public opinion. For this reason, content analysis was chosen as a complementary method. Content analysis is a method used to analyse the content of “all forms of oral and visual communication such as articles, websites, diaries, speeches, letters, interviews, images, videos and beyond” (Pashakhanlou, 2017, p.3). Proposing a “fully integrated content analysis,” Pashakhanlou (2017, p.3) points out three of the methods’ main features:

Three main factors make content analysis a distinct method of communication. First, content analysis is predominantly descriptive. It is primarily concerned with what is said rather than how or why it is said. In other words, content analysis mainly focuses on ‘what’ questions, even if it can address ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions as well. Second, content analysis systematically reduces the communication. This is accomplished by restricting the investigation to the theme(s), concept(s), or word(s) of interest with the aim of condensing the communication to more relevant and manageable pieces of data that can be explored more thoroughly. Third, content analysis settles for one interpretation when several are possible (Pashakhanlou, 2017, p.3).

Although fully integrated content analysis as suggested by Pashakhanlou (2017) has the goal of exploring all the aspects of the method, in this thesis its focus will be on its qualitative aspect, since it offers the potential to unveil latent meanings and contributes to the analysis by incorporating and interpretation contextual elements. Differently from quantitative oriented research, where meaning is manifested, qualitative content analysis seeks to uncover latent meaning. The goal is to make inferences based on the interpretation of contexts, therefore the analyst should also consider the need for background information (Pashakhanlou, 2017).

Following the full integrated content analysis model proposed by Pashakhanlou (2017), when analysing the documents referring to the entry of Greece and Romania into the EU, we must, first, consider what will be evaluated in the analysed texts. This method was applied mainly to official documents concerning the accession of both countries to the EU and other textual contents that, although relevant to the analysis, was not included in the discourse analysis, whether for reasons of scope, format or size: for instance, short texts found on websites, mentions to the European Charter of Human Rights, texts from processes/cases regarding Greece and the European Court of Human Rights.

Considering the scope of this research, I looked for keywords (such as “human rights”, “values” and “religion”) when reading and analysing the documents, since this procedure, in addition to saving time and resources, can contribute to delimiting the analysis, aiming for a greater focus on relevant topics. Thus, considering that the documents analysed are extensive

in terms of pages and scope, I sought to focus on terms referring to common values and issues relating to human rights present in the documents. Considering the reasons mentioned above, I included content analysis as a complementary method. However, content analysis was adapted from Pashakhanlou (2017) and was not focused on codifications; instead, I aimed at exploring mentions of human rights and European values in the analysed documents.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, given the scope of this thesis, for analytical purposes the concept of liminality will hereby be linked to the process of European integration. However, it is not related to a specific formal stage of EU accession; instead, it refers to a state of transition – in Turner’s (2008) terms – in which any precise categorization in a given structure becomes impossible due to the ambiguous character of the liminal entity. Since liminality is a state within the context of a rite of passage, the accession process must be analysed through hermeneutics.

The application of the rite of passage analogy engendered methodological consequences for the procedures of inquiry and data gathering (these observations are also mentioned in the Conclusion section). To analyse the first stage, it was crucial to conduct a content analysis of treaties regarding the candidacy status of Greece and Romania. To retrieve these documents, the EUR-Lex website<sup>2</sup> constituted the main database. Its archives contain digital versions of official documents, such as the Official Journal of the European Communities and the Official Journal of the European Union.

The main criterion used in the selection of documents was their content, therefore, I focused on information regarding the role and the importance of human rights to the accession processes of candidate countries. Although the treaties address the conditions of different layers of European integration, the sections analysed refer to the ideas of belonging, common values, and the protection of human rights in Greece and Romania. Therefore, the analysed official documents were: “Commission opinion of 23 May 1979 on the application for accession to the European Communities by the Hellenic Republic” (1979), “Accession of the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union – Treaty of Accession, Protocol and its Annexes” (2005), “Treaty on European Union (Consolidated version 2016)” (2016a) and “Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2016)” (2016b).

In my analysis, I sought to highlight the interrelation among the Treaty of the European Union, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, aiming to demonstrate how they complement each other by

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html>

establishing human rights as a relevant condition for European integration. Table 3 presents the sections analysed in the official accession treaties of both countries.

**Table 3 - Official documents concerning the EU accession processes of the Greece and Romania**

| Document                                                                                                                  | Source  | Link                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| “Commission opinion of 23 May 1979 on the application for accession to the European Communities by the Hellenic Republic” | Eur-lex | <a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/collecti on/eu-law/treaties/treaties-access ion.html#new-2-13">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/collecti on/eu-law/treaties/treaties-access ion.html#new-2-13</a> |
| “Accession of the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union – Treaty of Accession, Protocol and its Annexes” | Eur-lex | <a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/collecti on/eu-law/treaties/treaties-access ion.html#new-2-13">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/collecti on/eu-law/treaties/treaties-access ion.html#new-2-13</a> |
| “Treaty on European Union (Consolidated version 2016)”                                                                    | Eur-lex | <a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-co ntent/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELE X:12016M/TXT">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-co ntent/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELE X:12016M/TXT</a>                           |
| “Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2016)”                                                              | Eur-lex | <a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-co ntent/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELE X:12016P/TXT">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-co ntent/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELE X:12016P/TXT</a>                           |

Source: Elaborated by the author

Surveys published by the Pew Research Center were also included into the analysis. The institution conducts research on public opinion and other topics related to the social sciences (Pew Research Center, n.d.) which defines itself as “a non-partisan fact tank that informs the public about issues, attitudes and trends that shape the world” (Pew Research Center, n.d.). The Pew Research Center has a specific forum for the theme of religion, which covers several regions and continents, including research on the influence of religion and its relationship with national identity in Orthodox-majority countries.

In this sense, content analysis will be a complementary method used in the execution of the work, and will be applied through the collection of texts, such as documents available on the Internet and interviews and reports conducted by researchers and journalists. Table 4 summarises the main sources concerning the materials selected for content analysis throughout the research process.



**Table 4 - Content analysis**

|                         |                                                                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of material</b> | Qualitative data (Official documents of the European Union).           |
| <b>Analytical goal</b>  | Finding mentions to the role of human rights in the accession process. |
| <b>Main sources</b>     | Eur-lex.                                                               |

**Source:** Elaborated by the author.

These were the methodological steps that guided the present thesis. Each method was elected in accordance with the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 1. The application of these methods throughout the research process will be discussed in the Conclusion, along with the gaps and limitations concerning the presented methodology.

Thus, this thesis was structured in four chapters, divided in three parts. **Chapter 1** introduces the theoretical foundation for this research, introducing the fundamental concepts for the proposed analysis. In this section, the main goal was to establish a dialogue between different theoretical approaches, in order to construct a cohesive analytical framework. This was possible through a literature review of state identities in IR studies, the process of Europeanization in the EU, the categories of the secular, secularisation and secularism, Muppidi's (2004) critical constructivism and the definition of liminality in the context of rites of passage, as suggested by Arnold Van Gennep (1960) and Victor Turner (2008). Chapter 1 comprises Part 1.

**Chapter 2** was dedicated to the contextualization of historical discourses referring to some mesoregions of Europe, namely: Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Central Europe and Southeast Europe. The debate regarding the discursive construction of these regions and terms such as "West" and "East" is essential to understand how Greece and Romania, as well as countries with an Orthodox majority in general, find themselves on the religious margins of the EU. This chapter presents an analysis that includes material and social elements (e.g. discourses and territories, respectively) that played an important role in the identity formation in those respective regions. Furthermore, these definitions are also central to understanding the concept of "liminality", and to the historical contextualization introduced in the following

chapter. In methodological terms, Chapter 2 is fundamental for understanding not only the historical events presented in Chapter 3, but also the discourse analysis presented in Chapter 4, since the discourses make mention of geographical categories (“Western/West”, “Balkanic”, and others) religious/national identities and how these elements are related in Orthodox discourse.

**Chapter 3** provides the necessary historical context for a better understanding of Orthodox political discourses. It does not follow a specific historical period; instead, it presents different historical processes and sociopolitical contexts that greatly influenced the consolidation of Church-state relations in Greece and Romania and, consequently, their respective liminal conditions in the structure of the EU. Therefore, the chapter starts with a brief introduction of Orthodox Christianity and its origins, besides presenting a broader perspective on Church-state relations in Orthodox-majority societies, specifically in Southeastern Europe, in a wider sense before delving into the specific cases of Greece and Romania, including historical events related to the processes of nation-building and state-building, until their respective integration into the EU.

**Chapter 4** is centred on content and discourse analysis, and it is focused on the identification and interpretation of social identities, social claims and social imaginaries, Church-state relations and liminality, and how these concepts are manifested through discourse. Since my analysis of Europeanization was based on the definition formulated by Büttner, Eig Müller and Worschech (2022), the first part of Chapter 4 was structured based on a perspective that transcends strictly "top-down" approaches that only considers the role of supranational institutions in domestic changes of member-states. For this reason, the first section offers a "top-down" perspective of Europeanization in which I analyse official documents regarding the accession processes of Greece and Romania into the EU, to understand the demands and conditions established by the latter to the former. Posteriorly, discourse analysis is presented in the second part of the chapter, providing a "bottom-up" approach to Europeanization, that is, a comprehensive analysis of how the integration process is perceived and characterised in Orthodox discourses. The final part of the chapter consists of a general analysis of the cases and documents examined, approaching the evidences of the liminal conditions of Greece and Romania in the EU, based on everything that has been exposed throughout the study.

Finally, the last part of this thesis comprises **Conclusion** and final remarks. In this section, results are discussed, along with some gaps of this research and suggestions for further studies.



## **2. CHAPTER 1 – SECULARISM, STATE IDENTITIES AND LIMINALITY**

In this chapter, I shall introduce an analytical framework composed of concepts that are primordial for the fulfilment of the objectives mentioned in the introduction. As previously mentioned, the purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate how the relationship between religion and politics may be considered an expression of a liminal state in the international system. Thus, the proposed argument was built based on three main concepts: the secular (including secularism and secularisation), state identity and liminality.

I argue that in both Greek and Romanian cases, their own understanding of the idea of “secular” and their respective Church-state relations are related to these states' national or state identities (in the context of the European Union). These identities assume an ambiguous character in relation to other European states in which the relationship between politics and religion follow the Western model. Consequently, Greece and Romania are located in a liminal space within the EU, since they cannot be classified as being neither secular, nor “non-secular”.

However, the concept of liminality that shall be explored, in an anthropological sense, refers to one of the stages of a rite of passage, in the terms of Van Gennep (1960) and Turner (2008). Therefore, if Greece and Romania are in a liminal position in the EU when it comes to Church-state relations, then one could argue that the European integration, in a wider sense, may be seen as the background of a rite of passage where religion is one of the transitional elements in an agent's identity, interests and expected roles. For this reason, a section was dedicated exclusively to the idea of rites of passage and how this concept may be imported into the field of IR.

Thus, the chapter was structured as follows: first, a brief state-of-the-art concerning the topic of secularism will be presented. Next, critical constructivism, in the terms of Himadeep Muppidi (2004) shall be incorporated into the theoretical framework, allowing a better understanding of how one could analyse a state's identities and interests. Posteriorly, liminality and the other stages of rites of passages will be investigated. Finally, the last section presents the selected methods and other methodological remarks.

### **2.1 National and state identities: a constructivist perspective**

To understand the concept of state identity, it is primordial to define several concepts that are fundamental for the comprehension of social identities in the context of international

relations. A nation is a self-conscious community that may be composed of one or more ethnicities. The latter can be defined as a group of people who share a language and a common identity – especially in pre-national contexts – the former may claim a political identity, autonomy and a territory. A nation-state is the product of the identification of a state with a specific nation – although, in many cases, it also includes peoples from other nationalities. In a nation-state, there is a shared sense of belonging amongst its citizens and a notion that sovereignty is inherent to a specific people. Nationalism may be defined in both practical and theoretical perspectives. As a theory, it asserts the right of a nation to a nation-state, a claim that derives from the nineteenth century. In practical terms, it affirms the belief that a nation's tradition should be defended (Hastings, 1997).

All these concepts may relate to both state and religion in terms of identity. On the relationship between ethnicity, nation, nation-states and religion, Hastings (1997) argues that:

Religion is an integral element of many cultures, most ethnicities and some states. The Bible provided, for the Christian world at least, the original model of the nation. Without it and its Christian interpretation and implementation, it is arguable that nations and nationalism, as we know them, could never have existed. Moreover, religion has produced the dominant character of some state-shaped nations and of some nationalisms. Biblical Christianity both undergirds the cultural and political world out of which the phenomena of nationhood and nationalism as a whole developed and in a number of important cases provided a crucial ingredient for the particular history of both nations and nationalisms (Hastings, 1997, p.4).

Given the aforementioned argument, religion may be one of the elements that provide the foundations of state identities. Amongst the other factors that may have influence over the construction of state identities are the use of vernacular literature, or, in the case of the process of state formation, the struggle for survival against existential threats (Hastings, 1997).

The topic of state identities has been subject of discussion in IR studies, especially – although not exclusively – amongst constructivist authors<sup>3</sup>, and it is related to the process of socialisation of the state and the internalisation of international norms. Identities are socially constructed through the interactions between states, playing a significant role in shaping states' interests (Wendt, 1999). However, neither identities nor interests are fixed and immutable; they are subject to change through interstate interaction. In this sense, the incorporation of state identity as in IR studies may provide the analyst with a better understanding of changes in states' behaviours at international level, since they are related to changes in their respective interests and identities (Wendt, 1999; Rae, 2003).

---

<sup>3</sup> On this subject, see, for instance, KATZENSTEIN, 1996; WENDT, 1999; LAPID; KRATOCHWIL 1996.

Thus, from a constructivist perspective, identities at both domestic and international levels matter when it comes to analysing states' actions. The relationship between states' identities and interests was explored by Alexander Wendt (1999) in "Social Theory of International Politics". According to the author, an actor's identity may be understood as a subjective element that provides an agent with behavioural motivations and whose roots lie in their self-understanding. Therefore, while identity refers to an agent's understanding of who he/she is, interests consist of what agents wish and pursue (Wendt, 1999).

Interests may be objective or subjective (e.g., bureaucratic rites and beliefs, respectively) and they guide agents towards their objectives and according to their identities and preferences. Furthermore, Wendt (1999) suggests four types of state identities: personal, type, role and the collective identities. The type identity is responsible for building the interests of the state, both domestically and systemically, since it is a product of social interaction between states (Wendt, 1994). It is a social category used to define individuals who share common characteristics, whether they are related to appearance, values, opinions or behavioural traits (Wendt, 1999).

Based on the assumption that the role of these rules is to transform individual characteristics into social types (Wendt, 1999), it is possible to assert that the Others are also part of the process of constitution of these identities (Wendt, 1999). In contrast to individual identity, a state may have multiple social identities that vary with the context in which it is embedded, considering the distinct roles that a state can assume at a domestic and systemic level (Wendt, 1994).

Role identities are meanings attributed by the actors to themselves when they are seen from the perspective of Others. In this sense, the role identity will depend on the culture of the state and, consequently, on the "Other" (Wendt, 1999). Therefore, this type of identity is not based on the basic characteristics or intrinsic to the state since it can only exist in interaction with other states. This way, interactions between states can cause changes in their role identities and consequently in their interests (Wendt, 1994).

Collective identity consists of identification from the relationship between the Self and the Other (Wendt, 1999). However, while role identity is part of the same process aimed at distinguishing roles between the Self and the Other, collective identity seeks to merge these two properties into a single identity (Wendt, 1999). When mentioning the idea of a conflict of identities, the author proposes two hypotheses: the first asserts that the conflict will reflect the hierarchy in which these identities lie in relation to the commitment of the latter in relation to

the Self, while the other defines that the hierarchy will follow the order in which the types of identities were presented previously (Wendt, 1994).

However, as outlined by Rae (2003), a gap in Wendt's approach to the relationship between agency and structure is the fact that the author does not refer to how identities are constructed, relying mainly on the systemic level, neglecting the processes of identity construction at domestic level and failing to explain how states and their identities are formed. Drawing on Wendt's social and corporate aspects of states' identities, Rae (2003) argues that the states system has been partially constituted through processes of pathological homogenisation, that is, the establishment of a membership based on the distinction between insiders and outsiders. Thus, culture and identity play a vital role in processes of state-building and, consequently, in the formation of state identities and interests (Rae, 2003).

In the process of homogenisation of peoples, religion can be a criterion for inclusion/exclusion. In the context of modernity, several states used religious elements to construct state identities. For instance, in the XIX century, the Ottoman Empire was marked by multiculturalism, with many minority communities being organised based on religious identities. However, the empire's transition into the Turkish modern state had implications – such as the Armenian genocide – for religious minorities, since religious identities were transformed into a criterion of belonging in the context of a national state (Rae, 2003).

Rae (2003) mentions the Macedonian case as an example of this phenomenon. After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Macedonian citizenship was based on ethnic terms, despite being composed of different ethnic groups, such as Albanians, Turks, Romanies and Vlachs. Nevertheless, religion was also part of the identity of the Macedonian state. Despite recognizing the freedom of religion, the Macedonian Orthodox Church was the only religious designation named on the constitution (Rae, 2003). Based on these cases, it is possible to infer that religion often played a relevant role not only in the construction of national identities, but also in processes of states-building and the formation of state identities.

However, it should be highlighted that, when it comes to the socio-political structure of the modern state, national and state identities are not necessarily equivalent categories. According to Bloom (1990):

National Identity describes that condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols - have internalised the symbols of the nation - so that they may act as one psychological group when there is a threat to, or the possibility of enhancement of, these symbols of national identity (BLOOM, 1990, p.52)

While processes such as the attempts to create a homogeneous identity were conducted with the aim of attributing the state's identity to a specific national community, it is necessary to bear in mind that the identity of a state is composed of several cultural aspects. As one of the elements that comprise state identities, national identity may also influence foreign policy, since policymakers can justify certain policies by recurring to categories of “self” and “others” (Berenskoetter, 2017). Applying this premise to this thesis, I argue that Greece and Romania may have multiple identities and interests that may change according to the social contexts and interaction with other states. Some examples include categories such as “Orthodox”, “European”, “South/South-eastern European”, and “post-communist”.

I suggest that in countries where there is a dominant religion and/or favoured by the state, and in which it has been present in the processes of nation building and state building, religion, nation and identity must be considered relevant elements for foreign policy analyses and interstate relations. For this reason, the following sections will address the national and state identities, and how these elements may be related to the personification of the modern state.

## **2.2. The state as person in IR theory**

Although theorization on the psychology of states is still underdeveloped in the field of IR, psychological approaches to the study of international politics have already been explored, especially in analysis concerning foreign policy and international security (Naude, 2021). For instance, Hall (2011) and Saurette (2006) approached the role of emotions on states' actions - (addressing anger and humiliation, respectively), while Löwenheim and Heimann (2008) analyse the probability of a state seeking revenge based on “emotional” criteria.

Claiming that “states are people too”, Wendt (2004) suggested the idea that a personalization of the state, as a metaphor or analogy, can be useful in the study of international politics. A person could be described based on a rationalist perspective, including properties such as a persistent identity, beliefs concerning their own environment, desires (motivations) and the ability of making choices based on rationality (Wendt, 2004).

These properties also imply intentionality, which is a requirement for personhood, considering that the rationalist model assumes that human beings are intentional. Being an intentional actor, being an organism and having consciousness are Wendt's (2004) criteria to define psychological personhood. Thus, a person might be characterised according to three



features: (1) Their ability to make decisions intentionally; (2) The state as a (living) organism; and (3) the state as possessing a collective conscience in a subjective sense (Wendt, 2004).

Adapting this premise to the modern state may be useful for a better understanding of its motivations, realisations and normative behaviours in the context of rites of passage. Two of Wendt's properties fit within the scope of this thesis: intentionality and collective consciousness. Through intentional actions the state assumes social roles and identities and agrees with a rite's structural conditions and norms. By claiming that the state's actions are intentional I do not mean that they should be restricted to a rationalist perspective. Instead, it may be translated to this context as a state's compliance during the stages of a rite regarding its rules.

I also argue that a state's shared subjective conscience could be related to its identities (a concept that shall be further explored in this chapter). It concerns symbolic elements such as a collective memory in a historical sense, shared values, symbols, language and norms. However, it does not imply a strict cultural homogenization of the state. This collective conscience refers to the cultural foundation that guides a state's actions; a sense of belonging that has an impact on its decision-making processes at both domestic and international levels. In this sense, this collective conscience could be viewed as being part of a state's identity and, at the same time, a property related to the allegory of the state as a person in international politics.

In the context of regional integration, the personification of the state becomes more evident insofar as states agree with political and cultural transformations. For instance, regional integration processes could be interpreted as rites of passage. A state can commit to agreeing to formal conditionalities during negotiations concerning regional integration processes. In such cases, states adopt policies that may affect its domestic affairs in bureaucratic/pragmatic and cultural/subjective aspects.

Notwithstanding, certain points concerning the limitations of this allegory should be addressed. Although it is possible to draw parallels between personification at both individual and statal/international levels, there are some ontological features that may have an influence on these actors' behaviours. For instance, while individuals are guided by common sense when it comes to daily activities, the state is more oriented towards formal policies based on rational choices considering its bureaucratic constitution. One could also argue about the differences regarding sovereignty. At the domestic level, authorities have a different significance when compared to the international context, since individuals do not have social or political legitimacy in the same sense as a state's sovereignty.

However, considering the purpose of this thesis, these limitations do not directly compromise the personalization of the state, as the main argument consists of a state's transformation through its relationships with other states and/or non-state actors at international level. Based on this premise, I argue that the state, through interaction and socialisation vis-à-vis other states, can find itself in liminal positions in international systems/societies.

The allegory of the state as a liminal entity is possible since the liminal attributes to be applied to states in this thesis are not compromised by the aforementioned limitations. The allegory of “the state as person” will be adapted here in the following terms: first, the state can be interpreted as a person considering its capacity to act intentionally and to be historically and culturally conscious. Furthermore, the process of regional integration (in this case, the integration into the European Union, from candidate application to full membership) can be seen as a rite of passage insofar as it includes socialisation and cultural transformation of a state. Thus, assuming European integration as a rite of passage, the topic of Europeanization will be introduced in the next section.

### **2.3 European integration and “Europeanization”**

In the last decades, there has been extensive discussion about the reforms and adaptations required for EU membership, and how this process – also known as Europeanisation – leads to changes in a state's domestic institutions (Exadaktylos; Radaelli, 2009). While European integration and Europeanisation may be seen as two different phenomena for analytical purposes, both are related and seem to have become dependent over time. For that reason, in this section I will approach these concepts, focusing on the effects of European integration on states' domestic structures and the implications of Europeanisation for their state identities.

In the former European communities – the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community and Euratom – the only criterion mentioned for the candidacy of new members was geographic, that is, to be a European state. However, since the introduction of the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, any country willing to join the EU must commit to respect values such as democracy, human rights and rule of law (Janse, 2018).

Accession to the EU is composed of six stages: Formal membership application; Candidate status; Pre-accession; Negotiations; Ratification and Integration (Labastie; Wright,

2022). First, the state must submit the formal application to the European Council. After this submission, the Permanent Representatives to the EU decide whether to forward this application to the European Commission or not. In order to move forward with the application, the European Commission must approve it and recommend it. Posteriorly, if the European Council accepts the application, the country officially obtains the candidate status (Labastie; Wright, 2022).

However, before the start of the negotiations, the EU and the state establish a partnership known as the “Pre-accession strategy”, which assists the latter in the process of adaptation, including political, economic and administrative reforms, although the political criterion is the only one necessary to start the negotiations. These reforms are in accord with the “Copenhagen criteria” (Labastie; Wright, 2022). These criteria - established at the European Council in Copenhagen (in 1993) – consist of:

Political criteria: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; economic criteria: a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces; administrative and institutional capacity to effectively implement the EU *acquis* (body of common rights) and ability to take on the obligations of EU membership (European Council, n.d.)

The accession negotiations are carried out by the European Commission and it includes the negotiation of many chapters of the EU legislation. In the following stage, ratification, both the European Parliament and the European Council must approve the Treaty of Accession, which must also be signed by the candidate state and every single member state of the EU. Finally, in the integration stage the candidate becomes an acceding country, but it is only officially recognized as a member of the EU in the date stipulated in the treaty (Labastie; Wright, 2022).

While European integration refers to the construction of supranational institutions and the power dynamics in the context of the EU, Europeanization, on the other hand, is the process related to the domestic institutional changes and the embedding of norms and policies in EU member states. It was believed that, in the European context, the likelihood of institutional changes at the domestic level would be proportional to the level of integration of a state to the European Union and, hence, Europeanization may influence a state’s strategies in the pursuit of national interests (Ladrech, 2014).

Moreover, the theoretical debate regarding state identities is also located within the studies concerning Europeanization, especially when it comes to the adoption of rules and the

construction of identities and interests in the EU. In this discussion, the idea of a collective identity amongst EU member states is relevant for a better understanding of the process of Europeanisation and its implications towards many national and state identities (Risse, 2004).

Regarding the impact of Europeanization on the collective identities, Risse et al. (1999) argue that the idea of a common European identity promoted by the political discourse of individuals is more likely to be legitimated and influential insofar as this discourse generates a consensus concerning political order at the domestic level. In this sense, the author argues that the degree to which the idea of a common European identity is adopted by a given society varies according to the internal context of the states, allowing different interpretations regarding both the idea of "European" and "Others" (i.e., non-Europeans) according to each context. An identity crisis could occur when the amount of information that contradicts the identity construction becomes unbearable, and that this process depends on the capacity of reconstruction and change of collective identities by individuals, groups and organisations (Risse et al. 1999).

Although political scientists have for many years interpreted this concept as the effects of EU policies on member states at the domestic level, the idea of Europeanization as a "bidirectional dynamic between the national and supranational level" (Worschech, 2018, p.58) became increasingly popular. In this sense, Europeanization is understood not as a strictly vertical process, but as a process through which changes occur at both "top-down" and "bottom-up" perspectives (Worschech, 2018). Considering these different approaches, Worschech (2018) defines Europeanization as:

A multidirectional, non-teleological process of social, political, economic and cultural transformations in and among European societies, based on but not determined by historical trajectories in Europe. This process is 'European' in the sense that it occurs in a particular context of institutionalized transnationalism that is inherent but not restricted to the institutional order. The EU's institutional order provides a unique setting that both enables and constrains these transformations and processes within institutionalized transnationalism in a way that balances heterogeneity and commitment of those involved (Worschech, 2018, p.59).

Thus, Europeanization may be interpreted as a complex multi-layered transnational process. The sociology of Europeanization, as proposed by Büttner, Eig Müller and Worschech (2021) provides a more recent perspective on this topic, with an analytical focus on three elements: institution, interactions and interpretations. It considers not only the bureaucratic aspects of Europeanization, but also multiple micro dynamics, patterns, interpretations, transformations and interactions at different levels of analysis. According to the authors:

In contrast to political, juridical and economic approaches the Sociology of Europeanization focuses less on specific aspects and outcomes of European integration and on the numerous facets and implications of EU politics, but on the broader sociological and societal implications of the project of European integration. This essentially implies considering and exploring the construction, dissemination, and institutionalization of both formal and informal norms, institutions, and lifestyles at different levels of society (Büttner; Eig Müller; Worschech, 2022, p.76).

Thus, Europeanization can be analysed as mechanisms of social change that may be observed at transnational, national and sub-national levels. Based on this approach, one could argue that domestic elements are crucial when it comes to analysing political and social changes within the EU. By recognizing that normative changes are not restricted to a top-down approach, the definition proposed by Büttner, Eig Müller and Worschech (2021) takes into consideration the possible implications of different perspectives on Church-states relations amongst EU member states to the European integration as a political project. Table 5 shows this framework's main categories of analysis.

**Table 5 - Europeanization as proposed by Büttner; Eig Müller and Worschech (2022)**

|                       | <b>Comparative Perspective</b>                                                                  | <b>Transnational Perspective</b>                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Institutions</b>   | Institutional settings in selected regions or countries often affected by the European level    | Transnational institutions and governance; new structures or institutional settings                                                     |
| <b>Interactions</b>   | Networks, action patterns and social organization with reference to Europe                      | Emergence of new social configurations, networks, patterns; transformation of (national) societies and social patterns                  |
| <b>Interpretation</b> | Habitus, identities, interpretations, and frames on European issues from a domestic perspective | Transnational habitus, identities, interpretations, and frames as new social dynamics across borders linked with Europe/Europeanization |

**Source:** Büttner; Eig Müller; Worschech (2022, p.45-46).

In this sense, I argue that this definition of Europeanization relates to the argument by Thomas and O'Mahony (2014) concerning the European political imagination and the accession of Orthodox-majority countries into the EU. I propose that Church-state relations may fall under the "interpretation" category for two reasons: first, because it may have a constitutive character, acting as the cornerstone for an agent's interpretations and worldviews. Moreover, this framework allows for a constitutive analysis of domestic elements, such as social identities and agents' habits, perceptions and interpretations of transnational phenomena related to Europeanization; therefore, the process of construction of collective identities should not be restricted to a top-down approach to Europeanization.

The presence of religion in the European integration project is also worth mentioning. In *God and the EU*, Chaplin and Wilton (2015) explore the relevance of Christianity to the formation of the EU. For instance, Wilton (2015) mentions the Christian faith of the founders of the EU:

Along with that of De Gasperi, Monnet, and Adenauer, Schuman's Christian faith was the inspiration for a life dedicated to the rebuilding of Europe. Schuman and his peers worked with a profound sense that it was their vocation to restore and re-unite Europe to peace and prosperity. Before attending the Paris conference of 1951 they retreated for meditation and prayer at a Benedictine monastery on the Rhine. As Christian Democrats they shared a common foundation that would underpin the nascent European Community. Although Schuman's initial focus was on coal and steel his underlying concern was to embed democracy in Europe as a bulwark against war and as the authentic expression of Christian political economy (Wilton, 2015, n.p.).

Therefore, Christian faith was an inspiration for the founders of the EU about the idea of rebuilding Europe (Wilton, 2015). The influence of Christianity in the EU has also been pointed out by Thomas (2005), who argues that "The idea of European integration was a practice of the political imagination, but it can be argued that it was much more than this. It was also an act of the theopolitical imagination of Christian Democracy" (Thomas, 2005, p.167). Furthermore, as pointed out by Nelsen and Guth (2015), religion, particularly Christianity, has played a significant role in the European integration project. The authors posit that after World War 2, there was an endeavour initiated by Catholic statesmen who sought to unite the diverse European peoples. The idea of a regional integration was perceived by some as not only a means to restore economic prosperity to the continent but also as an opportunity to establish a "New Europe" grounded in Christian values (Nelsen; Guth, 2015).

The notion of establishing a supranational political entity in Europe was enshrined in the founding treaties of the European Economic Community (EEC). Since then, the goal of European integration has been to unify the various European nations under a federal political framework (Shore, 2000). Moreover, according to Shore (2000), the ability to shape European identity hinges on the capacity to develop norms that can be assimilated by individuals, such as "European citizenship," "European common values," and "European culture." The construction of this identity necessitates the establishment of "Europeans" as a category of subjectivity, which involves transforming the identities and consciousness of the relevant actors (Shore, 2000). Given the scope of this thesis, it is imperative to examine the interplay between Europeanization, religion, and identities. To this end, the next section will introduce

the theoretical debate regarding the ideas of secular and secularism, as well as the processes of secularisation and desecularization.

## **2.4 Secularism, secularisation and desecularization**

According to Max Weber (2001), Western modernity would be marked by processes of rationalisation and bureaucratization. Societies would witness a “disenchantment” of the world, a decrease in religious beliefs and superstitions in people’s lives as a consequence of the advent of modern rational thought. In this sense, a modern society would also be “secular”, since political and religious authorities would belong to different social spheres.

However, it is primordial to understand the definition of secular and the context in which this category emerged. The secular, as a modern epistemic category, refers to a reality external to the religious. Secularities may be experienced and institutionalised in different ways according to specific social contexts. On the other hand, it should be noted that the “secular” has its roots in Western Christendom, and it does not have an exact equivalent in other religions, as in the case of Orthodox Christianity (Casanova, 2011).

In the context of modernity, the secular can be conceived as an epistemic category that refers to a reality external to that which is understood as religious (Casanova, 2011). Casanova (2011, p.54) posits the existence of various secularities that can be “codified, institutionalised, and experienced in different modern contexts, alongside transformations in modern ‘religiosities’ and ‘spiritualities’”). Thus, the secular, as an epistemic category, can manifest in diverse ways in distinct social contexts. This relativization of the term is applied to case studies, mainly to underpin arguments concerning differing notions and perceptions of the secular across various social contexts.

According to Casanova (2011), there are three meanings or manifestations of the secular in non-Western societies:

That of mere secularity, that is, the phenomenological experience of living in a secular world and in a secular age, where being religious may be a normal viable option; (b) that of self-sufficient and exclusive secularity, that is, the phenomenological experience of living without religion as a normal, quasi-natural, taken-forgranted condition; and (c) that of secularist secularity, that is, the phenomenological experience not only of being passively free but also actually of having been liberated from “religion” as a condition for human autonomy and human flourishing (CASANOVA, 2011, p.60).

Therefore, in non-Western contexts, the secular may be related to the ways in which modernity took place in these societies. For this reason, relativizing the idea of secular is

relevant when analysing social contexts outside of the West. As a social phenomenon, secularisation may refer to three distinct processes. According to Casanova (2007), these processes are:

1) Secularization as the decline of religious beliefs and practices in modern societies, often postulated as a universal, human, developmental process; 2) Secularization as privatization of religion, often understood both as a general modern historical trend and as a normative condition, indeed as a precondition for modern liberal democratic politics; 3) Secularization as the differentiation of the secular spheres (state, economy, science), usually understood as “emancipation” from religious institutions and norms (Casanova, 2007, p.7).

In this sense, secularisation establishes the institutional differentiation between the religious and the secular. This process took place specifically in the context of modern Western Europe and, for this reason, the idea of secularisation would be posteriorly associated with the European experience, that is, European secularisation would become a standard in debates concerning the differentiation between these two social spheres (Casanova, 2007).

Nevertheless, since secularisation is closely related to modernity, it was believed that it would be an irreversible process, and the world would naturally become less religious (Casanova, 2011). However, since in this thesis secularisation will be analysed in social/religious contexts outside of the Western Christendom, it is essential to consider the ways in which the idea of the secular was received and interpreted in Orthodox-majority countries. In this endeavour, critical constructivism can be useful, as it provides an analytical framework that may provide the theoretical foundations for a better understanding of these processes.

Peter Berger (1967) once suggested that religion would gradually lose its influence in modern societies. This assumption was based on the “secularisation theory”, whose basic premise is that the world was becoming less religious. This phenomenon could have many reasons, but it was ultimately related to the idea that modernity necessarily leads to secularisation, which can be understood as “the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols” (Berger, 1967, p.125).

However, Berger himself would later recognize that the secularisation thesis is actually mistaken. This topic was approached in his book “The Desecularization of the World”, where Berger affirms that “The world today, with some exceptions to which I will come presently, is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever” (Berger, 1999, p.2). Thus, in the author’s perspective, the world is not secularised as predicted by the



secularisation thesis. Religious institutions have not simply managed to survive the context of modernity; actually, they flourished, without having to adapt themselves to a secular reality.

The idea of desecularization was also explored by Karpov and Svensson (2020), who proposed a theoretical framework aimed at understanding a supposed return of religion into public life. As an analytical concept, it can be understood as “a process of counter-secularizing social change, through which religion reasserts its social influence in response to previous and/or concurrent processes of secularization” (Karpov; Svensson, 2020, p.21). The authors suggest desecularization as a complex phenomenon that may be composed of all or at least some of the following processes:

- (a) a rapprochement between formerly secularized institutions and religious norms;
- (b) a resurgence of religious beliefs and practices;
- (c) a return of religion to the public sphere (“de-privatization”);
- (d) a revival of religious content in a variety of culture’s sub-systems (arts, philosophy, literature, and others) and in a decline of the standing of science relative to a resurgent role of religion in world-construction and world maintenance (but not necessarily a decline of science in absolute terms);
- (e) religion-related changes in society’s substratum (e.g., religiously inspired demographic changes, redefinition of territories and populations along religious lines, [re]building of faith-related material structures, growing shares of religion-related goods in the economy, and so on) (Karpov; Svensson, 2020, p.22).

Thus, desecularization is not necessarily fully integrated, and the combination of the processes mentioned above should be identified according to each social context. It may also be promoted from above or from below. In the first case, it is promoted by secular or religious elites through institutions, whereas the second refers to mass movements of religious character. A desecularizing regime may emerge if counter-secularizing manages to achieve a considerable level of influence in a given society. It refers to a normative mode of political and ideological character that may lead to the expansion and legitimization of desecularization in society. In this sense, desecularization may be considered as a project that may subvert secularity, causing social changes (Karpov; Svensson, 2020).

At international or transnational levels, desecularization may be analysed as a globalised phenomenon that is not restricted to national boundaries. On this perspective, the authors point out that:

Just as the ideologies and practices of Western secularisms acquired global influence, counter-secular ideas and movements are globalized and cut across old civilizational and national boundaries, fusing the local and the global into phenomena previously unheard of. Religions of social solidarity and mobilization and those of personal self-actualization and authenticity, which Charles Taylor’s account allocates to different stages of the advent of a secular age, coexist and often clash in many places around the globe. These facts have huge implications for the

way we understand toleration's relation to secularization and desecularization (Karpov; Svensson, 2020, p.22-23).

Based on the authors' argument, I contend that a critical constructivist approach to international politics may be useful in analyses concerning desecularization in different social contexts. For this reason, the next section will be dedicated to Muppidi's (2004) critical constructivism, given that this approach may provide the analyst with several conceptual frameworks that may dialogue with Karpov and Svensson's (2020) definition of desecularization, such as the processes of articulation and interpellation.

## **2.5 Critical constructivism**

Muppidi (2004) proposes an analysis of the production of the global that considers multiple meanings and the possibility of thinking the global through different social realities. In an attempt of understanding globality in a world marked by a great diversity of political communities, the author considers two processes through which it would be possible to imagine the global in the international system: the first consists of a shared understanding of the ontology of the "global" from different imaginations, while the second concerns a manifestation of this understanding of the global in alternative (local) realities or imaginations. This includes processes of articulation and interpellation of meanings (Muppidi, 2004).

Henceforth, this essay endeavours to provide a comprehensive analysis of the diverse interpretations of the interplay between politics and religion in non-Western settings. This study proposes an examination of secularism in the global order as a concept that reinforces the perpetuation of power dynamics among nation-states, while also leading to the marginalisation of actors in the international system (Kayaoglu, 2010).

The Westphalian state model implicitly establishes secularism, along with democratic and liberal principles, as a fundamental criterion for the recognition and inclusion of new members in various diplomatic and cooperative forums (Kayaoglu, 2010). Therefore, it is imperative to shed light on the experiences that shape the interactions between politics and religion in non-Western contexts concerning secularism. These experiences can be viewed as mechanisms of resistance to a global or hegemonic order, providing insights into social assertions in the international system.

Critical constructivism, grounded in the idea that reality is socially constructed, prioritises the examination of the relationships between agents and the construction of social

identities and power dynamics in this process. Following this approach, social identities and an agent's interests are negotiated through intersubjective interactions. Consequently, agents develop their own understandings of how politics and religion should relate to each other in their respective societies, adapting this principle to their social realities and challenging the Western notion of an ideal secular/secularism (Muppidi, 2004).

The process of social interaction facilitates the constitution of social claims, which encompass demands, interests, and self-understandings of agents. As posited by Muppidi (2004), social claims can be defined as “individual demands, obligations, and self-understandings, social claims furnish analysts with a way to conceptualize an agent’s actions as they relate to the actions of other units” (Muppidi, 2004, p.22). The concept of social claims suggests that agents articulate their interests in response to social demands, as well as their own self-understanding, which is always in relation to another person (Muppidi, 2004).

Thus, it is assumed that an agent's actions require some form of social interaction, and social statements are relational in nature, acquiring meaning only in the context of these interactions. This concept serves as a useful tool for analysts to gain insight into an agent's interests, which are established through relational processes and derive meaning only through interactions with other agents (Muppidi, 2004).

Since identities and interests are constructed through social interaction, the institutionalisation of the global at local level is marked by what Muppidi (2004, p.20) defines as a “negotiation of difference”: this process involves not only interests and identities, but also imaginations. This premise is also related to the concept of social imaginaries, which can be understood as a representation of a specific social reality, including a “distinctive fields of meanings and social power” (Muppidi, 2004, p.25). According to the author, social imaginaries may operate in two ways:

Operating as a field of meanings, the social imaginary provides an organized set of interpretations—or social claims—for making sense of a complex world. Operating as a field of social power, the social imaginary works to produce specific relations of power through the production of distinctive social identities. My analytical separation notwithstanding, both operations are moments of the same process (Muppidi, 2004, p.25).

Social imaginaries are intertwined with the construction of social identities, as it can be interpreted as a particular representation of social reality, shaped by social practices and identities. Within this context, the discursive boundaries of the social imaginary “are reached when particular representations of the world seem meaningless and specific practices appear

strange or irrational within the reality produced by the imaginary”, as suggested by Muppidi (2004, p.26).

Moreover, it is worth noting that the social imaginary provides agents with a framework of meanings that shapes their understanding of the world. Social claims are a subset of this category, and the institutionalisation of these sets of meanings can influence the production or transformation of social identities (Muppidi, 2004).

Through the process of articulation, different elements of meaning that, at first glance, may not have a direct relationship with each other are connected, making this connection meaningful within a specific social imaginary. Therefore, the association between different meanings that may exist within a given social imaginary may not necessarily exist in the same relation within another social imaginary. Muppidi (2004) defines articulation as:

“[...] political mechanisms produced within a social imaginary. Their production and reproduction involve political struggles over which combinations of social meanings are legitimate and which are illegitimate. Such political struggles involve critical constructivism implicit and explicit claims and contestations over social identities involving, among other things, existing imaginings of personal and community identities” (Muppidi, 2004, p.26-27).

The articulation between these elements within a social imaginary is crucial for the analyst to detect social affirmations and their legitimacy. However, the articulation of meanings in a given social imaginary is not necessarily received without any sort of contestation. For this reason, Muppidi (2004) states that the analyst should not consider the articulation as something presupposed, since its mere existence in a social imaginary does not imply an unconditional or uncontested reception of these meanings by the agents. In this sense, it is worth mentioning that a given meaning established through articulation can also be received by agents in a problematic manner (Muppidi, 2004).

The process of reception of meanings by social actors is called interpellation. This concept allows the analyst to understand the different ways through which social actors respond to the establishment of meanings and to different social claims. The concept is also useful for a better understanding of the persuasive power of social statements on agents. For instance, analysing whether and how actors identify with these statements can provide insights into the dynamics of power within a given social context. In Muppidi's (2004) words, the process of interpellation:

[...] refers to the ways in which actors respond to being socially claimed in specific ways. For the analyst, interpellation is a useful window into the question of how persuasive some social claims are to social actors. Do they resonate to these articulations? Do they recognize themselves in them? Does it help them make sense

of complex and uncertain social realities? If an articulatory claim is met by an interpellatory response, then articulations and interpellations mutually confirm each other. In doing this, they set up “reciprocating circles of meanings and social powers” that generate specific social identities with distinctive social powers, interests, and practices (Muppidi, 2004, p.27).

When the processes of articulation and interpellation complement each other, they create what Muppidi (2004, p.27) refers to as "reciprocal circles of meanings and social powers that generate specific social identities with practices, interests, and different social powers." In this way, the social imaginary and its symbols play a crucial role in the construction of social identities, as they allow for the creation and maintenance of shared meanings and values that shape social relations and power dynamics. Through these reciprocal circles, individuals and groups are capable to negotiate and contest their social positions and interests, contributing to the ongoing construction and transformation of the social reality.

Considering the aforementioned concepts, it is necessary to briefly argue about the ways in which the definitions of secular, secularism and secularisation relate to the concepts of affirmations and social imaginaries, and how these categories may be imported to a critical constructivist analysis. Based on the constructivist premises provided by Muppidi (2004), one could argue that the idea of secularism and secularisation is not universal and must be understood in the context of each society and its social imaginaries. The way in which these concepts are defined and understood is influenced by the historical and cultural context in which they are inserted, as well as the articulation and interpellation of different social statements and affirmations. In this sense, the concept of secularism, as a separation between politics and religion, may not be applicable or relevant in societies where religion plays a more prominent role in politics and public life.

In this sense, it is important to consider Hurd's (2012) argument about secularism as a political authority in the field of IR. As previously mentioned, the separation of politics and religion is often seen as a dominant discourse or an indispensable condition for politics at domestic and international levels. Secularism is often considered the ideal model when it comes to the relationship between religion and politics (Hurd, 2012). However, an analysis of the Orthodox perception of Church-State relations through the critical constructivism of Muppidi (2004) provides us with insights that allow us to observe alternative models to Western secularism that are found on the margins of the international system.

Furthermore, the idea of secularisation as a linear process of the decline of religion in society may not be accurate in societies where religion remains a central aspect of identity and

social practices. Therefore, the analysis of the concepts of secularism and secularisation must consider the specific social imaginaries of each society, their articulations, interpellations, and the reciprocal circles of meanings and social powers that generate specific social identities, practices, interests, and different social powers.

According to Casanova (2007), European social scientists perceived secularisation as a product of European modernity that can be universally applied, regardless of historical or social context. This paper suggests that the concept of social imaginaries could be useful in comprehensive and constitutive analyses. For instance, it could aid researchers in understanding varying perceptions of European secularisation in non-Western societies. Muppidi (2004) suggests that as one approaches the discursive boundary between social imaginaries, practices and understandings may be seen as irrational. In theoretical terms, the attempt to create a theory that explains the process of secularisation highlights the limitation of the classical theory of secularisation, which is only applicable to the European context and may not be explanatory for other societies.

Analysing the articulations and interpellations concept of secularisation, it becomes possible to observe that the relationship between politics and religion varies greatly in each social imaginary (Muppidi, 2004). The Western understanding of secularisation is often associated with elements such as modernization, modernity, and democracy. However, in non-Western societies, the European model of secularism is perceived differently. Through critical constructivism, the study of secularisation and secularism processes allows for an analysis of how social meanings are articulated in different social imaginaries and how social claims are carried out by individuals who are influenced by their perception of the world in which they live.

Adapting the premises of critical constructivism to the scope of this thesis, I argue that this theory may contribute to the study of religion in the field of IR if we consider that religion works as a coherent social imaginary, and the possibility of both articulation and interpellation multiple notions and perceptions regarding the meaning of “secular” in the international system. If there are many ways to imagine and to understand globality, as well as local contestations of these ideals, then one could also argue that there are multiple contestations over the secular in the context of international politics.

Building on the earlier discussed concepts of social imaginaries, secularism, and secularisation, this proposal puts forward the idea of considering religion as a cohesive social imaginary. In line with Muppidi's (2004) approach, religion is understood as a complex system of beliefs, practices, and symbols that shape individuals' behaviour at domestic and

international levels. It influences perceptions of the world, including global politics, and plays a critical role in shaping individual and collective identities and social affirmations.

While the idea of religion as a worldview and identity marker is not new to the field of IR, this proposal aims to highlight the significance of examining the processes of articulation and interpellation of dialectical perceptions about the religious/secular dichotomy. By considering the dialectical interactions between religion and secularism, this approach can provide a more nuanced understanding of how religion shapes individual and collective identities and how it influences international relations.

Prasad (2014) attributes the marginalisation of religion in the field of IR to the secular roots of (Western) IR, a product of European modernity. Although I agree with this argument, I contend that it is also possible to observe marginal articulations, interpellations and contestations over the “ideal” model of relationship between politics and religion in international politics, such as in the cases of Orthodox-majority countries. The Orthodox social imaginary articulates specific meanings regarding the notion of “secularism”. Moreover, the secular is negotiated through the affirmation of social claims and is also related to the construction of identities.

## **2.6 Rites of passage**

The concept of liminality is not something new in the field of IR. Some authors have written about states in an “in between” situation in the context of international relations. However, I argue that an in-depth application of this concept to modern states requires recognizing its potentials, as well as its limitations.

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate to what extent states can undergo rites of passage. I suggest that approaching the state as a person may provide better insights not only regarding an entity’s liminal attributes, but also how one could draw a parallel between these two types of agents concerning their respective capacities of agency. In order to use such allegory, first, I shall explore the concept of rites of passage, approaching the liminal stage of a rite, as well as the characteristics of liminal entities and individuals. Then, Wendt’s (1999) argument concerning the personification of the state in IR studies will be presented. Finally, I will point out some points of divergence and convergence between these concepts, demonstrating how – and which – liminal attributes may be applied to modern states.

### 2.6.1 *Liminality, Communitas and Anti-Structure*

The concept of rites of passage, as coined by Arnold Van Gennep (1960) in his work “Les Rites de Passage”, can be described as rituals that mark a change in an individual’s status within a given social structure, that is, a celebration of a transition from a person’s social status to another. Van Gennep (1960) observed that these rites followed recurrent patterns and could be classified in three types according to their respective orders and contents: rites of separation, transition and incorporation (which can also be considered as preliminary, liminal and postliminal, respectively). Although rites of passage tend to follow this pattern, it is important to note that, in some cases, one of these types of rites may differ in importance, without being equally elaborated (Van Gennep, 1960).

During the initial segregation in the context of a rite of passage, the individual is withdrawn from society and detached from the attributes related to its status in that social structure, leading to a departure from their previous state. Turner (2008) employs the term “state” – in contrast to the concept of “transition” – while referring to a cultural condition, meaning “any kind of stable or recurring condition, culturally recognized” (Turner, 2008, p.116).

During the liminal phase, the individual no longer has many of his previous social attributes, as well as he does not have attributes of his future state. His social features are ambiguous. Regarding such characteristics of liminal people, Turner (2008) points out that:

The attributes of liminality or of liminal *personae* (“threshold people”) are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon (Turner, 2008, p.95).

The transition of a status from another may also be related to a spatial or geographic movement. This movement from one place could include the crossing of thresholds or national frontiers – with different areas corresponding to the subject’s preliminal and postliminal statuses. In a symbolic sense, it could refer to what Turner (1982, p.58) as a “permanent change of residence or geographical sphere of action”. In modern societies, the geographical aspect of this transition can be represented by the relationship between social



status and physical space: for instance, a promotion in an individual's professional status may result in her or his movement for another place (Turner, 1982).

It should be mentioned that liminal entities generally present some common features. Turner (2008) points that they may be portrayed as being without possessions to show that they also do not have social status. A passive behaviour is assumed, and obedience to authorities and the acceptance of arbitrary punishment are also taken on. I argue that these characteristics are relevant for the study of liminal states in the field of IR. This concept will be returned throughout this chapter.

In the last phase, reincorporation, the subject is added back to society, and the passage is complete. Now, the individual has new obligations and expectations in relation to the other members of that structure, maintaining stability regarding their own social position and their adequacy to the norms of that society. After this reaggregation, the person finally has a specific place or category in that social structure, which allows him/her to occupy social positions (Turner, 2008).

Furthermore, during the liminal period, it is possible to identify what Turner (2008) defines as two models of social interrelatedness, who are at the same time juxtaposed and alternant. One of them is a social structure marked by diversification and political and economic hierarchy, in which individuals are separated by different positions. The other is an under structured society, a community of individuals who are under the authority of the elders and in which there is little differentiation regarding their social positions, which he identifies as "communitas" (Turner, 2008).

Communitas refers to the social bonds and interactions between individuals during the transitional state of a rite of passage. In this state, hierarchies are suspended. This allows individuals to develop a sense of solidarity and to share a common identity during a specific rite of passage (Turner, 2008). This concept is also related to Turner's (1982) definition of anti-structure. In the author's words:

I meant by it not a structural reversal, a mirror-imaging of "profane" workaday socioeconomic structure, or a fantasy-rejection of structural "necessities," but the liberation of human capacities of cognition, affect, volition, creativity, etc., from the normative constraints incumbent upon occupying a sequence of social statuses, enacting a multiplicity of social roles, and being acutely conscious of membership in some corporate group such as a family, lineage, clan, tribe, or nation, or of affiliation with some pervasive social category such as a class, caste, sex- or age-division (Turner, 1982, p.75).

Thus, the concept does not imply a simple reversion of the social structure; instead, it suggests a release from normative constraints. In the context of a rite of passage, anti-structure is a temporary state in which there is a suspension of the social structure, resulting in an individual's liberation from current roles and social statuses. Rites or festivals can be viewed as an expression of liminality. For instance, DaMatta (2000) identified elements of liminality in Brazilian carnival: during the festival, a space is created where individuals are liberated from social hierarchies, they may find themselves free from collective restraints and, instead, enjoy individuality. After this period, the linear time and the social hierarchy are reasserted (Garwood, 2011).

For this research, I will adapt some of Garwood's (2011) considerations regarding rites of separation, liminality and aggregation. Table 6 shows Garwood's (2011) notes on these three types of rites:

**Table 6 - Rituals of separation, liminality and reaggregation according to Garwood (2011)**

| <b>Rites of separation</b>                                                                                                  | <b>Rites of liminality</b>                                                                                                       | <b>Rites of reaggregation</b>                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Departure and disengagement from the social world: expressions of breach, separation, journey and transition/transformation | Engagement with the transcendental: experience/expressions of otherness, sublimity, order (cosmos), exaltation                   | Return to and re-engagement with the social world: expressions of return journey, sociality, vitality, fertility, profanity |
| Sacralization of social action: increasing formality, solemnity, deference, passivity and submission to sacred authority    | Communication/revelation of sacra, esoteric knowledge, cosmology, and prominent display of symbols of condensation (Turner 1967) | Domination/conquest of the social by the sacred (expressions of transcendence and 'rebounding violence'; Bloch 1992)        |
| Transition from linear time to cyclical time/atemporality                                                                   | Timelessness, 'deep time' or cyclicity emphasized                                                                                | Transition to and reassertion of linear time                                                                                |
| Suspension of social hierarchy ('structure'; Turner 1969)                                                                   | Communitas; egalitarian principles ('anti-structure'; Turner 1969)                                                               | Reassertion of social hierarchy ('structure'; Turner 1969)                                                                  |
| Abandonment/symbolic negation of former social persona/state of being of the initiate                                       | Transformation and sacralization of identity/personhood (initiates)                                                              | Celebration and reification of the social persona/state of being attained by the initiated                                  |

Source: Garwood (2011, p.262)

Considering the structural nature of these processes, I propose an adaptation of this framework to the case studies. For analytical purposes, this analogy may be useful in the research process insofar as it points out processes and transformations that may be expected during the rites of separation, liminality and reaggregation in a given structure.

As pointed out by Thomassen (2009), Turner's studies on liminality transcend specific ethnographic contexts. Turner was interested in understanding how individuals react to liminal phenomena, and his observations were not restricted to non-modern societies. Figure 1 shows three dimensions that should be considered when analysing liminality.

**Figure 1 - Different dimensions of liminality**

## Different dimensions of liminality

| Experiences of liminality according to different types of subject                             | The temporal dimension of liminality                                                                           | The spatial dimension of liminality                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) Single individuals<br>2) Social groups<br>3) Whole societies, populations or civilizations | 1) Moments (sudden events)<br>2) Periods (Weeks, months, years)<br>3) Epochs (decades, generations, centuries) | 1) Specific places, thresholds<br>2) Areas or zones (e.g. borders between nations)<br>3) Countries, regions or continents |

Source: Adapted from Thomassen (2009, p.16)

I argue that these dimensions could prove valuable when analysing the cases of Greece and Romania. The incorporation of these three dimensions may provide the analyst with a broader perspective on the transitional state of liminal entities, allowing an interpretive analysis that considers both domestic and international levels. When analysing the modern state in a liminal position, it is primordial to consider different types of subjects, since the latter wield a considerable influence over the former's behaviour and the construction of national and state identities.

Moreover, the temporal dimension matters, considering the emergence of a different timeline during the liminal period. The spatial dimension is fundamental for the present analysis insofar as it points to the importance of geographic positions in the rite of transition. In the case of the modern state, this can be reflected in issues involving borders, territory and sovereignty. Furthermore, Thomassen (2009) argues that the aforementioned categories can relate in various ways for analytical purposes. Table 7 shows Thomassen's (2009) approach to liminality according to different types of subjects. The author proposes a model based on the types of subjects and the temporal dimension of liminality.

**Table 7. Model of types of liminality as suggested by Thomassen (2009)**

| <b>Subject Time</b>                  | <b>Individual</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Group</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Society</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Moment</b>                        | Sudden event affecting one's life (death, divorce, illness or individualized ritual passage (baptism, ritual passage to womanhood, as fx. among Ndembu).                                                                              | Ritual passage to manhood (almost always in cohorts); graduation ceremonies, etc.                                                                                                                                                                 | A whole society facing a sudden event (sudden invasion, natural disaster, a plague where social distinctions and normal hierarchy disappear.<br><br>Carnivals.<br><br>Revolutions.                  |
| <b>Period</b>                        | Critical life-stages<br>Puberty or teenage                                                                                                                                                                                            | Ritual passage to manhood, which may extend into weeks or months in some societies; Group travels.                                                                                                                                                | Wars.<br>Revolutionary periods.                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Epoch (or life-span duration)</b> | Individuals standing "outside society", by choice or designated.<br>Monkhood.<br>In some tribal societies, individuals remain "dangerous" because of a failed ritual passage.<br><br>Twins are permanently liminal in some societies. | Religious<br>Fraternities, Ethnic minorities, Social minorities, Transgender, Immigrant groups betwixt and between old and new culture.<br><br>Groups that live at the edge of "normal structures", often perceived as both dangerous and "holy". | Prolonged wars, enduring political instability, prolonged intellectual confusion;<br><br>Incorporation and reproduction of liminality into "structures"<br><br>Modernity as "permanent liminality"? |

**Source:** Thomassen (2009, p.17).

Thomassen (2009) also made some relevant remarks on this model. Firstly, it is important to consider the fact that liminal experiences may be intentionally produced through rituals, but it can also be a product of unexpected events. In this sense, individuals may seek liminal positions consciously or unconsciously; some individuals or groups may choose to be in liminal positions, while others have no choice but to accept liminality (Thomassen, 2009).

Moreover, by introducing “scale” as a variable related to the dimensions of subject, space and time, Thomassen (2009) recognizes the possibility of different degrees of liminality, that is, the intensiveness of the liminal experience. On these variations, the author suggests that:

Liminal experiences can (and most often do) take place within a society where much of what goes on stays “normal”. Sometimes, however, liminal experiences become intensified as the personal, group, and societal levels converge in liminality, over extended periods of time, and even within several spatial “coordinates”. In other words, most experiences of liminality are circumscribed by some kind of frame, whereas others are closer to “pure liminality”, where both spatial and temporal coordinates are in play. One can or should not put this into any mathematical model, but it does seem meaningful to suggest that there are degrees of liminality, and that the degree depends on the extent to which the liminal experience can be weighed against persisting structures (Thomassen, 2009, p.17-18).

Thus, this model may be useful in analyses concerning the observation of liminal experiences at different social dimensions. Furthermore, different social levels should be considered when analysing liminal experiences, considering that the latter may not be extended to the whole society, or at least not to the same degree. Applying these premises to the present thesis, I argue that the liminal positions of Greece and Romania may be analysed through these lenses by recognizing the existence of many liminal experiences in these societies.

Therefore, based on the theoretical remarks mentioned above, I propose an analysis of possible liminal experiences of Greece and Romania in the context of European integration (see Figure 2). By adapting Thomassen’s model, I suggest that these experiences in both countries are multi-layered, since Greece and Romania may find themselves in liminal positions in various aspects within the EU, such as religious, political and geographical and geopolitical. The following table was adapted from Thomassen’s premises, suggesting several possibilities regarding liminal experiences in modern states, especially in the context of European integration and considering the scope of this thesis.

**Figure 2 - Adaptation of Thomassen's model on types of liminal experiences**

| <b>Time</b>                          | <b>Subject</b> | <b>Modern State</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Moment</b>                        |                | Ritual passage to EU membership;<br><br>Change of national borders and thresholds;<br><br>Normative transformations;                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Period</b>                        |                | Ritual passage to EU membership, which may extend into years or decades in some countries                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Epoch (or life-span duration)</b> |                | Violation of human rights due to religious practices;<br><br>Incorporation of international norms on the protection of human rights, leading to a liminal position with regard to secularism;<br><br>Western secularism as "permanent liminality"? |

Source: Adapted from Thomassen (2009, p.17)

Regarding the application of the concept of liminality to modern states, Table 8 shows the characteristics of liminal people that may be adapted to states, considering all the observations made in the previous sections. I suggest that the liminal characteristics as mentioned by Turner (2008) could be adapted to a state's foreign policy. This "liminal foreign policy" consists of a situational category: when passing through a rite of passage, a state could assume a liminal behaviour that would also be reflected in its foreign policy.

For instance, in the context of the European Union, liminal states would agree with all the conditionalities imposed by the institution to acquire full membership. Here, characteristics such as humility, passivity, absence of social status and/or kinship within that community, could be translated as a state's decision of promoting domestic reforms, sharing

its sovereignty in some aspects and adapting its behaviour according to the imposed rules and norms (whether formal or not).

**Table 8 - Characteristics of liminal states**

| <b>Liminal characteristics (individuals)</b>                                                      | <b>Liminality (applied to modern states)</b>                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Humility                                                                                          | Compliance with external conditions.                                                                 |
| Passivity                                                                                         | Accepts impositions from other states in order to be accepted into an institution, group or society. |
| Lack of possessions                                                                               | Must agree with formal/bureaucratic/economical changes.                                              |
| Absence of social status                                                                          | Is not yet considered as an equal (does not have full membership).                                   |
| Cannot be classified into that structure and do not have a specific category within their society | Does not share all the same common norms, beliefs and values as the other members.                   |
| Necessarily ambiguous, “neither here, nor there”                                                  | Is unpredictable, therefore cannot be entirely trusted.                                              |

**Source:** Elaborated by the author based on Turner (2008).

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that, as argued by Rumelili (2012), liminal actors may deal with their liminal conditions in different ways. Some responses by liminal actors

may include challenging existing categories, while others may engage with practices that actually reinforce existing categories. For instance, Turkey has used its liminal position as an asset, articulating its identity as both Western and Middle-Eastern, sometimes presenting itself as being at the same time the self and the Other. However, at the same time, its liminal condition may have some implications towards its foreign policy: Turkey may behave in opposition to some Western expectations (e.g UN sanctions to Iran), but, at the same time, it may act according to Western international norms and, in this sense, it could not be considered as “anti-Western” (Rumelili, 2012).

Furthermore, Greece and Romania adapted themselves to the criteria established by the EU, but their political and religious imaginations and their very idea of Europe may differ from those shared by Western European countries. Thus, in many aspects their religious identities are related to liminality and, for this reason, the socio-political dynamics derived from their respective Church-state relations may be considered as an expression or manifestation of their liminal positions within the EU.

## **2.7 Final remarks**

In this chapter, I sought to demonstrate the theoretical foundations that support my claim that accession to the EU may be analysed as a rite of passage. To accomplish this objective, first it was necessary to present the discussion regarding state identities from a constructivist approach. Approaching the socialisation of the modern state in the international system through distinct types of state identities as suggested by Wendt (2004) allows the analyst to observe states' behaviours at international level. This is important for an interpretive perspective on the construction of collective identities in the EU, the behavioural expectations through common values and the relevance of norms and ideas in international politics. In this sense, Greece and Romania may be perceived differently according to the context of their respective interactions with other states. Furthermore, their respective behaviours and interests may change according to each situation. Both states have corporate, role, type and collective identities and, therefore, categories such as “EU member state” and Southeastern European are not mutually exclusive and may coexist.

The construction of national identities at domestic level is also of utmost importance when analysing state identities in international relations. As pointed out by Rae (2003), the homogenisation of peoples may be achieved through different elements related to criteria of belonging in national states, with religion being one of them. Considering the scope of the



present thesis, a state's social landscape in terms of nationality and religion matter, since in both Greece and Romania, Orthodoxy is the religious denomination followed by most of their respective populations and is closely linked to their national identities.

Considering that a state may have one or many identities allows the analyst to argue about the possibility of a personification of the state in international relations. Through the utilisation of this analogy researchers can identify personal attributes in modern states in order to understand their actions and behaviours. If a state has a collective consciousness and can act intentionally, as suggested by Wendt (2004), then one could argue that it can also undergo collective experiences as a persona. Moreover, this personification of the state also implies that it can display personal attributes, such as motivations, desires, consciousness and emotions (Hall, 2011; Saurette, 2006; Wendt, 2004).

The premises mentioned above served as the foundation for the argument that I have posited (despite its limitations and caveats): in a similar manner to (individual) persons, states may also undergo rites of passage. This metaphor may prove to be useful as an analytical tool since it allows the analyst to draw inferences on states' behaviours during a rite of passage at international level. Thus, similarly to individuals, a state may display liminal characteristics while interacting with other states, such as humility and passivity, and *communitas* and anti-structure may be observed in the international system. Such liminal experiences may occur in either formal or informal situations, as in bureaucratic processes or treaties (e.g. accession to the EU) or subjective experiences (e.g. construction of national or collective identities).

The comprehension of the process of Europeanization is crucial to understand normative and institutional changes within the EU. The definition of Europeanization in the terms of Büttner; Eigmüller and Worschech (2022) allows an analysis that transcends the top-down perspective on European integration, providing an approach that includes the role of institutions, interactions and interpretations, that is, elements such as identities and *habitus* matter in analyses that regard social dynamics in the EU. Furthermore, this approach may relate to Muppidi's (2004) critical constructivism. To understand the dynamics of Europeanization with focus on Church-state relations and the construction of national identities, it is primordial to consider the agents' social claims and to observe the articulations and interpellations at both domestic and transnational levels.

By conceptualising a state's accession to the EU as a rite of passage that requires mandatory domestic changes, it is possible to infer that this period of adaptation may be perceived as a transitory state in which the state may have liminal experiences. Liminality

may be experienced by different types of subjects: individuals, groups and societies. It also has different dimensions, such as temporal and spatial (Thomassen, 2009). Since this process of adaptation may occur in the context of an anti-structure that is characterized by timelessness, as posited by Garwood (2011), I argue that the liminal position or status of a state in the EU varies in time and space.

The aforementioned approaches make up the analytical framework of the present research, and these concepts will be resumed throughout this thesis. The next chapter is dedicated to a historical background of the case studies and the investigation of social mechanisms and parallel dynamics in Greece and Romania.

### **3. CHAPTER 2 – BETWIXT AND BETWEEN: CENTRAL AND (SOUTH)EASTERN EUROPE AS LIMINAL SPACES**

As elucidated in the previous chapter, the concept of liminality can be applied to a myriad of contexts, in different social spheres. In this sense, these countries can be classified as liminal entities from different perspectives. However, given the complex nature of this concept, it is imperative to establish a clear delineation of several fundamental concepts that will be expounded upon in the course of this research. Hence, it is possible to pose the following question: What political, social, geographic and religious characteristics allow us to classify Southeastern Europe as a liminal region?

Once again, I resume my argument that a state can be defined as liminal based on more than one attribute. Examples of this would be identity attributes such as national identity, religious identity, land, location and territory, amongst others. Based on this assumption, in this chapter I intend to address these themes, to demonstrate how they relate to the concept of liminality. Based on this assumption, I intend to address these themes to demonstrate how they relate to the concept of liminality. In this chapter, we will see that one of the signs of the liminal conditions of Greece and Romania comes from the fact that throughout their respective histories, these countries have been characterised as being parts of different mesoregions – or even different civilizations.

Therefore, I will also attempt to answer the following questions: is Greece a Western nation or does Orthodoxy constitute a civilization in its own right? Is Romania a Balkan country in geographical and political terms? To which mesoregion of Europe do these countries belong, and how does this reflect on European integration?

As we shall see, categories such as "East", "West", "North", "South" and "Southeast" are not neutral; on the contrary, they have connotations – often negative – and civilizational assumptions that can have serious implications for state identities. We shall explore some controversies behind these definitions.

An important note regarding the structure and importance of this chapter: one could argue that these concepts could have simply been covered briefly in an appendix that contained precise definitions of each of these terms. However, I contend that understanding these issues is extremely important for the object analysed and, for this reason, this topic deserves its own chapter. Furthermore, my intention in this chapter is not to propose a strictly contextual and merely descriptive text; My goal is to analyse the influence of different discourses related to the categorizations of certain mesoregions that are related to the

construction of identities of states, peoples and nations. In this sense, all these processes are in some way related to the different perceptions and classifications of Greece and Romania throughout history, as well as the formations of their national and state identities. At the end of the chapter, some reflections will be proposed about the relationship between state identities and liminality.

### **3.1. Where is the East of Europe? A brief overview of Europe's mesoregions**

The religious aspect constitutes one of several elements and characteristics that constitute the liminal character of the liminal identities of Greece and Romania. In this sense, one should consider an historical perspective on how Eastern Europe<sup>4</sup> was mapped based on a Western European perspective. Thus, political, economic, geographical and religious elements, myths and stereotypes, have contributed to a specific perception of Central and Eastern Europe – or, in some cases, the “non-Western” regions of Europe – as being exotic in the eyes of Western European societies (Wolff, 1994).

However, before delving deeper into this literature, it is crucial to define some fundamental concepts for a better comprehension of this topic. In order to approach the political differences between East and West in the European continent, first and foremost, some questions should be raised: in geopolitical terms, what are the definitions of Central and Eastern Europe? Which countries belong to these regions and what are the common characteristics shared between them? Where do Greece and Romania fit into this axis?

To answer these questions, first it is primordial to understand the geopolitical definitions of the main mesoregions of Europe. The European continent is often divided into six main spatial units: Western Europe, Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Northern Europe, Southern Europe and Southeastern Europe (Iordachi, 2012).<sup>5</sup> This division suggests a homogeneity that exists in each of these regions; however, a thorough analysis will certainly reveal the heterogeneous character of each of these spatial units. Regarding the definition of historical regions, Iordachi (2012) states that:

Contrary to naive expectations, historical regions are not characterized solely by their geographical location (east, west, north, south, central, etc.) or their shared history and common linguistic or cultural features, but mostly in view of geopolitical visions prevalent at a given historical time. Concepts of historical regions thus

---

<sup>4</sup> The Schengen Convention establishes the free movement of people within the European Union, without the need for passports (Molokotos-Liederman, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Here the terms Southeast Europe and Southeastern Europe will be used interchangeably.

appear as building blocks of mental maps, the latter being understood as normative cartographic systems built according to established geopolitical conventions. Mental maps result in historically bounded yet enduring symbolic geographies, which can be defined as political-cultural lenses through which people perceive and organize historical spaces, assigning various meanings to geographical boundaries. These cartographic systems are both descriptive and normative, since they 'map' and thus organize a territory, assigning names and labels to geographic spaces; at the same time, these labels also encapsulate ideological visions of inter-regional economic and political hierarchies, their explicit or implicit teleological and hegemonic connotations shaping those territories' public perception (Iordachi, 2012, p.42).

In this chapter I will analyse these definitions based on the concept of "historical regions" proposed by Iordachi (2012). This implies recognizing that the division of these regional denominations is not limited to their respective geographic locations. Instead, historical regions are marked by political connotations, and their division should not be considered as being neutral and devoid of political or ideological meanings.

### 3.2 Western Europe

Although the definition of **Western Europe** has changed over time, this concept has become almost inseparable from the very idea of "the West". However, these meanings varied according to different political traditions, agendas and historical contexts. In an attempt to provide a general definition to this concept, Philippe Nemo (2005) suggested a morphogenesis of the West based on five historical episodes:

(1) the Greek invention of the City, liberty under the rule of law, science, and education; (2) the Roman invention of law, private property, the individual, and humanism; (3) the ethical and eschatological revolution of the Bible: justice transcended by charity, linear time pulsated by eschatology, the emergence of History; (4) the Papal Revolution of the Middle Ages (the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries), responsible for cloaking human reason in the figures of Greek science and Roman law, thus inscribing biblical ethics and eschatology in history and, in so doing, achieving the first real synthesis of Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem; (5) the great revolutions, fostering liberal democracy, which took place in Holland, England, the United States, of America, and France and then spread their principles, in one form or another, to all Western European countries. Since pluralism outperforms both the natural and artificial orders in the three domains of science, politics, and economics, the West gradually achieved unrivalled development and engendered modernity (Nemo, 2005, p.3-4).

Each of these episodes would be part of a cultural evolution, representing a historical continuity of Western civilization. In short, the West could be associated to historical facts and phenomena such as the processes of urbanisation and a supposed scientific revolution of the Greek city-states, the Roman law, the cultural heritage of Christianity and its legacies – such as the notion of linear time and eschatology – and the birth of liberal democracy and

modernity. According to his definition, the West is not specific nation or people, but rather a culture composed of different political communities (Nemo, 2005). Nevertheless, as argued by Berger (2017), this conceptualisation of “the West” hides many contestations, since such definitions were built on XXI century’s literature based on Western values.

When it comes to the division of Europe into an East-West axis, two other facts should also be mentioned. First, it is relevant to consider the impact of the political division of the Roman Empire into its Western and Eastern parts on the consolidation of an East-West dichotomy. The notion of “West” would eventually be employed by the Frankish kings not only as a reference for their self-description but also as an argument to legitimise their rule over the Western Roman Empire (Berger, 2017). The emerging difference between “Franks” and “Romans” – as well as the Latin-Greek – would eventually result in an oppositional identification between the Western and the Eastern parts of the Roman Empire (Demacopoulos; Papanikolaou, 2013). Figure 3 shows the Western and Eastern parts of the Roman Empire:

**Figure 3 - The East-West division of the Roman Empire in roughly 120 A.D**



Source: Utah State University (2019)

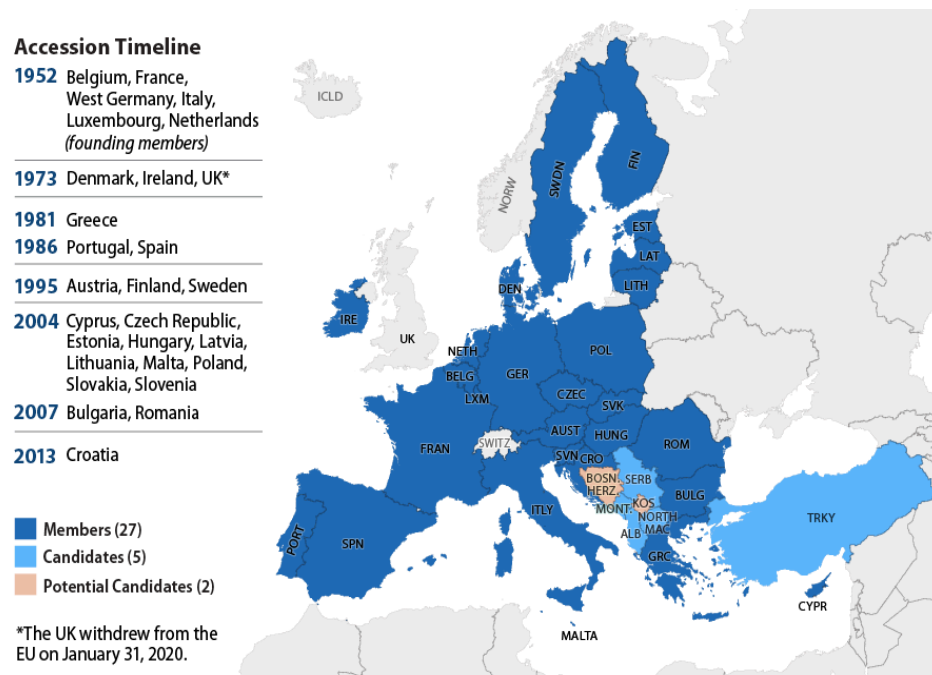
Before the Cold War, the terms “West” or “Western Europe” were rarely used amongst Western European nations as a form of self-description, since there was little need for the

construction of a single Western European identity (Berger, 2017). However, conceptualisations of Europe would appear in the XX century with the rise of the European Union and, during the Cold War, “Western Europe as core of the European Union was an integral part of that West” (Berger, 2017, p.23). Nevertheless, uncertainties about the definition of “the West” would return after the end of the Cold War. Berger argues that:

[...] The eastward expansion of the European Union extended the West eastwards—much of Central and East Central Europe was now reconceptualized as West—with the post-Soviet space (except for the Baltic states and Ukraine) remaining as the only true East. The enlarged European Union began transgressing divisions between east and west as well as north and south under the conceptual hegemony of the West (Berger, 2017, p.25).

Berger (2017, p.25) argues that the eastward expansion of the EU “began transgressing divisions between East and West as well as north and south under the conceptual hegemony of the West”, also pointing out clear tensions in a “westernizing European project” (Berger, 2017, p.25) associated with the struggles of the EU in the construction of a common framework that would be able to unite all these nations (Berger, 2017). Figure 4 shows the enlargement of the EU, from 1952 to 2013:

**Figure 4 - European Union enlargement, 1952-2013**



Source: EveryCRSReport.com (2015)

According to the EuroVoc, the “EU's multilingual and multidisciplinary thesaurus” (EUR-Lex, n.d.), Western Europe comprises: France, Channel Islands, Germany, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Andorra, Monaco, Netherlands, Isle of Man, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Austria and Belgium (EUR-Lex, n.d.). However, when dealing with such definitions, it is important to always consider the context in which the concept is situated, bearing in mind that both the notions of "West" and "Western Europe" are neither static nor incontestable, having undergone continual reformation throughout history.

### 3.3 Central Europe

The concept of **Central Europe** has been extensively debated in the field of social sciences; however, there has been no consensus or definitive answer regarding an exact definition of the term. The opinions of some scholars converge regarding the complexity of this concept; the idea that the meaning of Central Europe transcends the geographical aspect and also includes historical and political meanings (Šabič; Drulák, 2012). Central Europe can be regarded as an example of “a geopolitical construction of concepts of historical regions” (Iordachi, 2012, p.44).

Few historical regions are as contested and complex in character as Central Europe is. Although Central Europe is to be found, naturally, at the centre of the continent, in delineating its geographical borders one can draw two different concentric circles, thus coming up with two geographical visions of Central Europe: a narrow one, encompassing Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, and Slovenia; or a wider circle, including also Western Ukraine, Western Belarus, and Transylvania, as well as Northern Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein. Geopolitically, in the medieval period the centre of the continent was dominated by three states: the Kingdom of Hungary, the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. After the dissolution of these states, in the early modern and modern periods, the centre of the continent became a disputed borderland, a battlefield among three multinational empires: the Habsburg, the Ottoman, and the Tsarist. Central Europe's tumultuous history explains the contested geopolitical status of the region: as the Davies' map evidences, all the major dividing fault lines in Europe cross Central Europe at some points, creating variegated subregional combinations (Iordachi, 2012, p.44).

The idea of Central Europe was developed later than the concepts of both Western and Eastern Europe. Consequently, the concept became somewhat dependent on these two categories, since, in geopolitical terms, Central Europe came to be regarded as a zone that separated the Western and Eastern regions of Europe (Iordachi, 2012). Referring to that region, Katzenstein (1997) mentions four countries: Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. However, the definition of Central Europe is not simple. According to the author:



Acknowledging that central Europe exists, there is no agreement about where it starts precisely, and where it ends. Is its center in Berlin, Prague, Vienna or further east? Are the Baltic states part of central Europe? What about Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Romania, and Bulgaria? There are no precise or uncontested answers to these questions. But this much is certain: while the coordinates of world politics are shifting away from Europe, central Europe remains politically important because it evokes powerful memories of some of the major disasters of the twentieth century: fascism, two world wars, and the holocaust. Furthermore, central Europe was the staging area of the Cold War and the most likely flashpoint where that war might have turned hot (Katzenstein, 1997, p.4).

Thus, there is no definitive answer as to which countries constitute that region. For instance, during the Cold War, the notion of Central Europe was redefined. Switzerland and Austria, democratic and capitalist countries began to be considered as being part of that region (Katzenstein, 1997). Alan Palmer (1970) also proposed a concept to refer to nations situated at the heart of the European continent. In his book *“The Lands Between: A History of East-Central Europe since the Congress of Vienna”*, the author employed the term “the lands between” to denote the countries of “East-Central Europe”. This region consists of “the Vistulan basin, the Danubian basin and the Balkan ranges” (Palmer, 1970, p.1), and includes Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia (Palmer, 1970). Figure 5 illustrates Palmer's (1970) definition of “the lands between”:

**Figure 5 - Physical map of “the lands between” according to Alan Palmer**



Source: Palmer (1970, p.3)

Iordachi (2012) suggests that the delineation of its borders allows for the creation of two different concentric circles, which, in turn, can generate two geographical visions of the region: “a narrow one, encompassing Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, and Slovenia; or a wider circle, including also Western Ukraine, Western Belarus, and Transylvania, as well as Northern Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein” (Iordachi, 2012, p.44).

The first definition of Central Europe dates back to the Habsburg political vision of the region, a “Habsburg Central Europe” (Iordachi, 2012, p.45). The idea is associated to a supposed mission of the House of Austria which was supposed to act as a bastion of Catholicism and European values in the centre of the continent, protecting them from external threats such as Russian absolutism and the French Revolution. After the decline of Habsburg rule in the region, and the eventual rise of a unified Germany as the dominant power in the region, there was the emergence of a new hegemonic concept of Central Europe: The Germanic idea of “*Mitteleuropa*” (Iordachi, 2012).

*Mitteleuropa* was “one of the key terms in German political geography” from the beginning of the nineteenth century (Loughlin, 1994, p.165). The concept had political character and was used to refer to the idea of a Central Europe united by a supposed German heritage. Although many different maps of *Mitteleuropa* were produced between 1870 and 1945, most of them shared the idea of a German domination of Europe. The term was revised during the 1980s due to its political significance, although German historians and politicians continued to use it (Loughlin, 1994).

This idea was initially proposed by the economist Friedrich List in 1908 and was later elaborated by the nationalist Friedrich Naumann. List had suggested protectionist economic integration in the region, while Naumann had plans for German hegemony in *Mitteleuropa* (Iordachi, 2012). Naumann (1915, p.101, my translation)<sup>6</sup> argued that “Central Europe will be essentially German” and, therefore, the German language should be the language of mediation between neighbouring languages, so as to provide the harmony necessary for the survival of a large state that could survive despite being oppressed by multiple sides (Naumann, 1915). Figure 6 illustrates the territory corresponding to "Central Europe" in 1945:

**Figure 6 - Europe in 1945**



Source: Kirschbaum (2007, p.xxi)

<sup>6</sup> Mitteleuropa wird im Kern deutsch sein

After the First World War, Germany was no longer considered part of Central Europe, and the region began to be organised based on a French project to transform the region into a *cordon sanitaire* that should, at the same time, contain German and Bolshevik expansions. The German hegemonic project was resumed during the Second World War, but was abandoned after Germany's defeat in the War, resulting in a decrease in the use of the term in diplomatic contexts. After the incorporation of the region's nations into the Soviet Union, the idea of Central Europe temporarily ceased to exist in geopolitical terms, as the region became part of a broader Eastern Europe, being integrated into the Soviet economic and political systems. (Iordachi, 2012).

After the Cold War, Central European states such as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic oriented themselves towards the West, strengthening ties with Germany and also with NATO and the EU. This rapprochement with the latter was marked by the abandonment of a communist state system and the adoption of the European government model as a new standard (Katzenstein, 1997). On the other hand, although the idea of a supposed “return to Europe” was present in debates concerning the integration of Central European countries into the EU, discussions about the integration process were accompanied by scepticism from some parties. Among the arguments against the integration process in some countries, there was a preference for a national development project based on specific cultural elements and national identities (Neumayer, 2007).

Bearing this in mind, I propose a reflection on the position and positioning of these countries. Taking into account the idiosyncratic characteristics of the region, not only in geographical terms but also in political, normative, and ideological terms, one could ask: where does Central Europe belong politically? Milan Kundera (2023) proposed a short but insightful answer to this question: “By virtue of its political system, Central Europe is the East; by virtue of its cultural history, it is the West” (Kundera, 2023, p.85).

EuroVoc does not provide a precise definition of Central European countries. Instead, it groups central and eastern European countries, defining them as part of the same region: **Central and Eastern Europe**. According to the dictionary, these countries are: Albania, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Moldova, Slovakia, Czechia, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Ukraine, and Serbia and Montenegro (EUR-Lex, n.d.). Considering the contextual character of this term, Rupnik's aphorism is an indicator of the complexity of this concept: “Tell me where Central Europe is, and I can tell you who you are” (Rupnik *apud* Johnson 1996, p.6).

### 3.4 Eastern Europe

The distinction between Western Europe and **Eastern Europe** predates the division imposed by the “iron curtain” during the Cold War. In fact, this separation dates back to the Enlightenment. In the XVIII century, a new notion of civilization arose in Western Europe. Intellectuals of that period proposed a division of Europe based on a West-East axis, instead of the predominant North-South division (Wolff, 1994).

However, despite initially being a spatial division, it eventually acquired additional connotations. This geographical division became associated with the Western notion of progress, as Eastern Europe came to be perceived as economically and socially inferior compared to Western Europe. This perception also contributed to a contrast between the Western and Eastern regions of Europe in multiple spheres. Thus, Eastern Europe was seen as a type of “other” to Western Europe, characterised by superstition, irrationality, and being primitive and backward in institutional and cultural terms (Todorova, 2009).

Schenk (2017, p.189) argues that “Contrary to most other concepts of European mesoregions, “Eastern Europe” has always been almost exclusively a term denoting an “other” and “foreign” geographical, political, and cultural space”. For instance, until the nineteenth century, Russia was defined as a Northern European (and not Eastern European) country in German, French and British textbooks of physical and political geography.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Russia migrated to the “East” in the mental maps of Europe. This change occurred at the same time as the new division between West and East was consolidated, which, in turn, coincided with the religious division on the map of Europe, between Western and Eastern Christianity (Schenk, 2017). Schenk (2017) points out that:

The imagined legacy of the schism of 1054 has been stressed again and again in the discourse on Eastern Europe since the nineteenth century, most prominently in Russian religious philosophy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, in Western debates on the traditions of Europe’s bipartite division during the Cold War, and most recently in Samuel Huntington’s theory of the “clash of civilizations” (Huntington *apud* Schenk, 2017, p.190).

The origin of term Eastern Europe (*östlicher Teil Europas*) dates to the beginning of the eighteenth century, appearing for the first time in geographical literature. It was used by Philip Johan von Strahlenberg in 1730, but the term (*vostochnaia Evropa*) was also found in Russian sources dating back to the 1750s (Miller *apud* Schenk, 2017, p.190). The new political order established after the Congress of Vienna also had in impact on the mental

division of the European map. Scholars such as Conrad Malte-Brun, Adriano Balbi and others provided significant contributions to the regional subdivisions of Europe. Malte-Brun suggested a division of the European continent into five mesoregions: in this division, Eastern Europe was subdivided into boreal and central parts – comprising European Russia, Poland, Republic of Cracow – and the astral part, including Greece, the Ionian Islands and the European part of the Ottoman Empire (Malte-Brun *apud* Schenk, 2017, p.190).

In the period following the First World War, the emergence of new independent states on the European map made the question of where Eastern Europe was an object of academic debate. For example, historian Oskar Halecki argued that the region should not be considered as a uniform territory, but as a mesoregion, arguing that although geographically the territory beyond the German eastern border could be termed Eastern Europe in strictly geographical terms, in terms of cultural belonging, a considerable part of that region had historically belonged to Western civilization (Halecki *apud* Schenk, 2017, p.195-196).

Furthermore, Halecki also argued that Eastern Europe was divided into two parts, with the justification that the spatial union between the Kingdom of Kiev and Poland had ended with the rise of Moscow from the 12th century onwards and the conquest of Russian territory by Tatar troops in the 13th century. In this sense, the author sought to distinguish the histories of Tsarist Russia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on Western maps and, later, he would also suggest that Russia should not even be considered as part of "European History" (Halecki *apud* Schenk, 2017, p.196) (Schenk, 2017).

It is also interesting to mention Czech historian Jaroslav Bidlo's perspective on this topic. The author considered Eastern Europe as a civilizational space. According to Bidlo, it was possible to think of the European continent as being divided according to Western and Byzantine-Slavic cultures, given that both had followed distinct historical trajectories, thus developing considerable cultural differences. In this sense, the differences between these two distinct civilizations dated back to the founding of Constantinople and the division between Western and Eastern Christianity (Bidlo *apud* Schenk, 2017 p.196-197).

The geopolitical context of the Cold War also contributed significantly to the redrawing of European borders, as well as the boundaries on European mental maps and the very idea of Eastern Europe. A new territorial delimitation was established based on zones of influence; Churchill's famous speech about the division of Europe through an Iron Curtain helped to construct the idea of a continent divided between a democratic West and a Soviet East:

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow. Athens alone-Greece with its immortal glories-is free to decide its future at an election under British, American and French observation. The Russian-dominated Polish Government has been encouraged to make enormous and wrongful inroads upon Germany, and mass expulsions of millions of Germans on a scale grievous and undreamed-of are now taking place. The Communist parties, which were very small in all these Eastern States of Europe, have been raised to pre-eminence and power far beyond their numbers and are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control. Police governments are prevailing in nearly every case, and so far, except in Czechoslovakia, there is no true democracy (Churchill, 1946, n.p.).<sup>7</sup>

In a secret agreement known as the “Percentages Agreement”, Churchill and Stalin decided to establish the percentage of influence that Britain and Russia would have over Romania, Greece, Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Bulgaria. Figure 7 shows the division established by the agreement:

**Figure 7 - Spheres of influence according to the “Percentages Agreement”**

|                                    |  |        |
|------------------------------------|--|--------|
| <b>Romania</b>                     |  |        |
| Russia                             |  | 90%    |
| The others                         |  | 10%    |
| <b>Greece</b>                      |  |        |
| Great Britain (in accord with USA) |  | 90%    |
| Russia                             |  | 10%    |
| Yugoslavia                         |  | 50-50% |
| Hungary                            |  | 50-50% |
| <b>Bulgaria</b>                    |  |        |
| Russia                             |  | 75%    |
| The others                         |  | 25%    |

**Source:** Carlton (2000, p.116)

A fact of particular relevance for this research is Churchill’s emphasis on the significance of Greece in that partition. He contended that retaining the nation within British sphere of influence would be crucial for British interests in that region (Mazower, 1993).

<sup>7</sup> Available at: <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1946-1963-elder-statesman/the-sinews-of-peace/>

Furthermore, Greece seemed to be the only civilization worth fighting for in the Balkans. Consequently, Greece would follow a distinct historical trajectory compared to other nations from that region; Greece began to be constructed in the Western European imagination as a democratic country (Todorova, 2009).

Although within the Soviet Union – and the Soviet bloc, in general – the term "Eastern Europe" was rarely used in the sense of establishing a common identity, in the West, this term began to be used interchangeably with terms such as “Soviet/Communist Bloc,” “countries of the Warsaw Pact Treaty” and “Eastern Bloc, (Schenk, 2017, p.199). Regarding this new configuration, Kundera comments that:

'Geographic Europe (extending from the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains) was always divided into two halves that evolved separately: one tied to ancient Rome and the Catholic Church, the other anchored in Byzantium and the Orthodox Church. After 1945, the border between the two Europes shifted several hundred kilometres to the west, and several nations that had always considered themselves Westerns woke up to discover that they were now in the East (Kundera, 2023, p.2-3).

From 1945 onwards, the idea that the countries of the Soviet bloc shared a common centuries-old history became popular, despite the fact that there was no consensus regarding the definition of Eastern Europe. This political and ideological division of the European continent between Western and Eastern Europe would be challenged by Central-European intellectuals during the 1980s (Schenk, 2017). Analysing the different historical contexts relating to the concept of Eastern Europe, Schenk's (2017) makes an interesting observation: “Eastern Europe” is generally mentally located eastwards of one's own position (Schenk, 2017). Figure 8 shows the definition of “Communist-dominated Eastern Europe”, according to Alan Palmer (1970):



Figure 8 - The Soviet bloc



Source: Palmer (1970, p.202)

From 1945 onwards, the idea that the countries of the Soviet bloc shared a common centuries-old history became popular, even though there was no consensus regarding the definition of Eastern Europe. This political and ideological division of the European continent between Western and Eastern Europe would be challenged by Central-European intellectuals during the 1980s (Schenk, 2017).

Finally, another significant change in the mental maps of Europe occurred after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991: the integration of Central European countries into the European Union and NATO caused them to move away from the political configuration of Eastern Europe, thus contributing to a political reconfiguration of mental maps in Western Europe (Schenk, 2017).

### 3.5 Southeastern Europe

Throughout history, different terms have been employed to denote the southeastern part of the European continent. The ancient Greeks and Romans referred to the Balkan Mountains as “Aemus” and “Haemus”, respectively (Todorova, 2009). Until the 1870s, the designations “*La Turquie d’Europe*”, “Turkey-in-Europe” and “European Turkey” stood as the prevailing nomenclature for that region. Those terms were used by Western Europeans and the Ottomans, and included the Romanian Principalities, despite their different administrative status within the Ottoman Empire; However, in some Greek texts, the term “Graicia” was also employed to designate that region, being used interchangeably with “Turkey-in-Europe” (Mishkova, 2018).

Until the Congress of Berlin, some of the most used designations were derivative from the Ottoman dominion in the region (e.g. European Turkey, European Levant, Oriental Peninsula, and others), while others were based in ethnic criteria (“Greek Peninsula”, “Slavo-Greek peninsula”). The Ottomans called the region “Rum-eli” (“the land of the Romans/Greeks”), “Imperial Rumelia” and Ottoman Europe (Todorova, 2009). By the end of the nineteenth century, Ottoman authors started to apply the word “Balkan” to designate the Balkan peninsula (Mishkova, 2018). This term underwent politicisation, which probably occurred due to the emergence of independent states in European lands that had once been Ottoman territory, thus resulting in the replacement of “Turkey-in-Europe” by the term “Balkans” (Mishkova, 2018). Figure 9 shows the territory of Southeastern Europe in 1878:

Figure 9 - Southeastern Europe According to the Treaty of Berlin (1878)



Source: Freeman (2020, p.49)

The German geographer August Zeune coined the term “Balkan peninsula” in his work “Goea” (1808), as a replacement for “Turkey in Europe”. Zeune chose the name “Balkan” based on the erroneous belief that the Balkan Mountains were the northern frontier of the peninsula. In an attempt to correct Zeune’s mistake, the geographer Theobald Fischer later suggested renaming the region to *Südosteuropa* (Todorova, 2009).

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the term Balkans had acquired a political connotation, and from 1918 the term “Balkan peninsula” fell into disuse, particularly in German-language literature. Authors such as Otto Maull and Mathias Bernath advocated the use of a more neutral term: *Südosteuropa* (Southeastern Europe). The idea of replacing the term Balkans with Southeast Europe was also present in the United States in the interwar period; the Bulgarian author Theodore Geshkof and an American colleague used the two terms as synonyms, however, demonstrating a disapproval of the term Balkans and the idea of “balkanization” (Todorova, 2009).

The terms “Balkans” and “Southeastern Europe” sometimes are used interchangeably, even though a conceptual distinction between these two terms could be made.<sup>8</sup> According to Todorova (2009):

The one differential interpretation of Southeastern Europe and the Balkans belongs to the German language literature and has to do with differences in the criteria for definition, but even there it is neither pervasive nor unanimous. The broadest interpretation of Southeastern Europe, put forward by Karl Kaser, professes to be based chiefly on a geographical approach, delineating its borders with the Carpathian Mountains in the north, the Black Sea in the east, the Aegean Sea in the south, and the Ionian and Adriatic Seas to the west. It thus encompasses Slovakia (but not the Czech lands, even before the separation of Czechoslovakia), Hungary, Romania, the former Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and European Turkey. In this interpretation, Southeastern Europe can be approached as a comprehensive entity, of which the Balkans are only a subregion. Defining Southeastern Europe as a unity, an object of world history “in the field of tension between Rome and Byzantium, the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, and between the hegemonic claims of the modern great powers in the East and in the West,” Bernath included Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and European Turkey. Most often, definitions of Southeastern Europe concern the treatment of Hungary. As a rule, Hungary is included in German surveys of Southeastern Europe but is omitted from the Balkans. Sometimes, although not too often and with qualifications, it is considered also as part of the Balkans. This is mostly the case when the two notions, Southeastern Europe and Balkans, are treated as synonyms. However rarely, this has been done often enough to produce strong reactions from the Hungarians who “resent being called Balkanites.” In certain cases Romania, too, has been excluded from treatments of the Balkans proper, and has been covered by the broader notion of Southeastern Europe. (Todorova, 2009, p.29).

Thus, as previously mentioned, there are many controversies regarding the multiple definitions and contradictions behind the terms “Balkans” and “Southeastern Europe”. Todorova (2009) mentions that William Miller (1898) used the terms Balkans and Southeastern Europe as synonyms – and even called the Balkan Peninsula as “Near East” – defined the region as being a land made up of contradictions: a place where “the Bulgarian and the Greek, the Albanian and the Serb, the Osmanli, the Spanish Jew and the Romanian, live side by side” (Miller *apud* Todorova, 2009, p.17).

### 3.6 Final remarks

This chapter aimed at two main objectives: 1) to provide an overview of the definitions of West/Western Europe, East/Eastern Europe, Central Europe and East Central Europe (or lands in between), and Southeastern Europe/Balkans; and 2) to conduct a historical analysis in order to find elements that point to the liminal condition of Southeastern

---

<sup>8</sup> For instance, see Mishkova (2018; 2022).

Europe/the Balkans. To accomplish these objectives, I aimed at pointing out the origins and controversies of each of these definitions. Although no definitive answer has been provided, this analysis can help us understand the complexity of mental maps of Europe. Considering that European mesoregions are built and rebuilt at different historical moments, it is essential that they are analysed according to the context in which they are inserted. Therefore, it is important to highlight that the meanings of categories such as East and West often go beyond the mere geographical aspect. In European mental maps, these definitions were loaded with meanings, assumptions and civilizational stereotypes.

“Where is the East on the map of Europe?” one may ask. Just as Eastern Europe generally lies “eastwards” of one’s own position (Schenk, 2017), a possible answer to this question could be “anywhere beyond one’s Eastern border”; hence the difficulty in working with terms such as East, West, Centre and Southeast in European social imaginaries and mental maps. Since these terms are impermanent and relational, one could assume that states can move between these categories. This confusion generated by the lack of precision in these terms may result in states assuming ambiguous positions within a given social structure.

This reflection brings us back to the question raised at the beginning of this chapter: what criteria and/or evidence allow us to define Southeastern Europe/the Balkans as a liminal region? I argue that this difficulty in establishing which States belong to Southeast Europe is a sign of a liminality condition of the States located in that region. Considering the Balkan’s ambiguous condition, Todorova (2009) defines these lands as a liminal region:

This in-betweenness of the Balkans, their transitional character, could have made them simply an incomplete other; instead they are constructed not as other but as incomplete self. Enlarging and refining on Arnold van Gennep’s groundbreaking concept of liminality, a number of scholars have introduced a distinction between liminality, marginality, and the lowermost. While liminality presupposes significant changes in the dominant self-image, marginality defines qualities “on the same plane as the dominant ego-image.” Finally, the lowermost suggests “the shadow, the structurally despised alter-ego.”<sup>58</sup> The reasons that the Balkans can be treated as an illustration of the lowermost case, as an incomplete self, are two: religion and race (Todorova, 2009, p. 18).

In agreement with Todorova's (2009) analysis, I argue that this region is, in fact, a liminal space, and that this liminal character played a vital role in the formation of religious identities of different nations, as well as in the consolidation of Church-State relations in the region. Greece and Romania are examples of this phenomenon. Greece was categorised as being part of the West based on political criteria. However, based on cultural and geographic attributes, the country is much closer to other Balkan countries. Regarding this, Attila Ágh

comments that Greece is an exception in the Balkans, since it was “attached to the West militarily and politically in the early post-war period, but having been part of Balkan developments as far as long-term historical tendencies are concerned” (Ágh, 1998, p.5).

Romania has also been categorised in different ways throughout its history. Occasionally, the country has been treated differently from other Balkan countries, being classified as part of Southeastern Europe. On several occasions, Romania made an effort to get closer culturally to the West and distance itself from its Balkan neighbours, highlighting Latinism as a civilizational landmark. Under Ceaușescu, the theme of the unique character of Romanian identity reached its culmination, which can be seen as an escape from the ambiguous state in which the country found itself, between East and West. However, in the post-communist context, there are signs of a wavering identity that places the country between Central Europe and the Balkan region and, “more generally between West and East, a country embodying the ‘transition between Occidental and the great Asian Orient,’ ‘some kind of no-man’s land, not European at all, but not Asian at all.’” (Todorova, 2009, p.49).

George Hoffman argued that Romania, as well as Greece, were not exactly part of the Balkans, but that they should enter into discussions regarding that region (Hoffman *apud* Todorova, 2009, p.30). Fritz Viljavec argued that the Balkans had a political unity that was the inheritance of Byzantine and Ottoman cultures, however, he also contended that Greece and Romania should have a separate treatment from this unity, considering that they had developed “a distinct cultural physiognomy” (Viljavec *apud* Todorova, 2009, p.31). On the other hand, Tomáš Masaryk pointed out that Romania was not considered to be part of the Balkans until the first Balkan War; moreover, it “seldomly included Greece, and even Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Dalmatia were often excluded. After the second Balkan war, however, the notion Balkan included the whole peninsula with Romania and Greece” (Todorova *apud* Masaryk, 2009, p.31).

In this chapter, we have seen that, although definitions such as "East", "West", "Center", "Southeast" in the European geopolitical context may seem simple at first glance, these ideas are the product of historical trajectories influenced by political and ideological decisions in different historical moments. A similar effort was made by Hansen (2006) in her book "Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War", where she shows different discursive constructions about "Balkan" identities. In a similar – although not identical – way, I tried to show how discourses concerning the aforementioned regions changed over time, and how categories such as geography, religion and nationalism are related in the formation of Orthodox identities. This topic will be resumed in Chapter 4,

where we will see, through discourse analysis, how these elements are articulated in the Orthodox social imaginary.

Now that we are more acquainted with the complexity of the discourses regarding Southeastern Europe, and how Greece and Romania were socially and culturally inserted in that region, we can proceed to Chapter 3, where we will analyse some historical moments that can be considered as relevant mechanisms for understanding the current liminal status of these states in the EU.



#### 4. CHAPTER 3 – RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES AND NATION-BUILDING IN NINETEENTH CENTURY SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

The cultural legacy left by the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires for the different peoples of Southeastern Europe is indispensable for any analysis regarding the relationship between politics and religion in these nations in contemporary times. As we saw in the previous chapter, Southeast Europe was a region marked by the presence of multiple national and ethnic identities throughout history. Furthermore, inventions by foreign powers also contributed to the cultural formation of the region, whose liminal character has already been discussed in the last sections. For this reason, the first part of this chapter is dedicated to understanding the Byzantine and Ottoman heritage of Southeast Europe in general.

We shall see the influence of the Byzantine concept of *symphonia* for the Greek and Romanian nations, the Ottoman system of *millets* that organised subjugated peoples using religion as a criterion, as well as events such as the Greek War of Independence and the independence process of the Danube Principalities (which would later give rise to the Romanian state). In the second part of the chapter, we will see the historical trajectories of Greece and Romania with regard to the consolidation of their respective models of Church-State relations in Greece and Romania in contemporary times.

##### 4.1 Church-State relations and nation-building in Southeastern Europe

“It would be better to see the turban of  
the Turks reigning in the center of the City than the Latin miter” (Notaras *apud* Magoulas,  
1975, p.210)<sup>9</sup>.

The fragmentation of Christendom is a process that may be divided into three stages, in different historical contexts. The first stage, which took place around the fifth and sixth centuries, refers to the separation of the eastern Churches, namely the Churches of Syria, Armenia, Egypt, India and Ethiopia, and also the Nestorian Church of Persia. This rupture with Western Christian consciousness led to the consolidation of Orthodox Churches mainly in nations located further East of the Christian world, where Greek was *lingua franca*. Later on, the schism of 1054 established the division between the Orthodox Church of the East,

---

<sup>9</sup> Quote attributed to Grand Duke Loukas Notaras (Magoulas, 1975, p.309).



located in the Byzantine Empire, and the Roman Catholic Church. The last stage would be the division between Rome and Reformers (Ware, 2015).

The term “Orthodox Church” had different meanings. In the Byzantine tradition, it was used to address those churches who were in communion with each other and were faithful to the seven ecumenical councils (McGuckin, 2010). The seven councils were: the First and the Second Councils of Nicaea, the first, the second and the third Councils of Constantinople, the Council of Ephesus and the Council of Chalcedon. During the Middle Ages the term “Orthodox” came to have a different meaning, as a form of identification in contrast with Roman Catholicism (Meyendorff, 1981).

Until the present day, Orthodox Christianity is predominant in Eastern Europe and in the East of the Mediterranean. Differently from Roman Catholicism, there is no leader in Orthodoxy whose authority is equivalent to that of the Pope. Instead, the Orthodox world is composed of distinct autonomous churches. The hierarchy of the Orthodox Church is composed of bishops, who preside over a city, the archbishops, who have more authority than assistant bishops. The heads of specific historical cities hold the title of Patriarch, in reference to the biblical patriarchs (Mathewes-Green, 2015). Nevertheless, although the Ecumenical Patriarch enjoys an honourable position in the Orthodox world, he has no formal authority to interfere in the domestic affairs of other Churches (Ware, 2015). Figure 10 shows the geographical division of Christianity after the Great Schism:

**Figure 10 - The political division between Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches**



Source: The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica (n.d.)

Culture has been a crucial element in the history of Christianity. These ecclesiastical divisions also contributed to the formation of a link between religion and culture, especially regarding the Latin, Greek and Semitic influences. Each one of these cultures had a greater influence on some of the Christian traditions. However, Orthodoxy would later expand and include new peoples, such as the Russians, Serbians and Bulgarians (Ware, 2015).

The Churches are united by shared beliefs and sacraments, but, at the same time, they are independent, with many of them being autocephalous, that is, they are autonomous and self-governing. This system of independent Churches contributed for them to become capable of adapting to the local socio-cultural conditions in which they found themselves, leading to the founding of many Local Churches. In some Orthodox countries, the close link between Church and State collaborated for the creation of national Churches (Ware, 2015).

The arrival of nationalism in (Orthodox) Eastern Europe had implications for Orthodox nations. Phyletism – the idea that every nation should have its own Church – was spread throughout many peoples, causing Orthodox Churches to adopt nationalism. This religious nationalism promoted by national Churches had both political and ecclesiastical motivations: Some churches would argue that performing liturgical rituals in local languages could strengthen the faithful's bonds to both Church and State (Kalkandjieva, 2011). Eastern

Orthodoxy has undergone forms of “glocalization” - that is, an interaction between Christian universalism and local cultural traits – highlighting four main ones: “vernacularization, indigenization, nationalization and transnationalization” (Roudometof, 2014, p.229), and each of these processes concerns the aforementioned interaction between religion and ethnicity, nation, migration, amongst others (Roudometof, 2014).

Vernacularization is the process of merging the universal character of religion with vernacular languages. Indigenization, in turn, is characterised by the incorporation of religious rites and hierarchies to the particularities of a given ethnic group (Roudometof, 2014).

The process of nationalisation occurs when religious universalism mixes with the nation (Roudometof, 2014). Regarding this process, it can be said that its main difference in relation to previous forms is that the nation serves as a foundation for the claims of legitimacy by religious institutions” (Roudometof, 2014, p.229). Through the process of nationalisation, religion provides the basis for the formation of the nation, creating a close relationship between religious affiliation and national identity (Brubaker *apud* Roudometof, 2014, p. 229). It is important to note that there is the possibility that an individual may be affiliated with a national Church even if he does not consider himself religious (in terms of following rites, participating in ceremonies and attending the church itself) (Roudometof, 2014).

Finally, transnationalization, on the other hand, refers to the creation of the category of “transnational” citizens (Roudometof, 2014, p.230) in the context of the nationalisation of citizens, that is, these are groups of individuals who are residing in a given state, but who are seen as external to the local nation (Roudometof, 2014). Although not restricted to Eastern Orthodoxy, these processes played a role in the constitution of religious identities in Orthodox nations of Southeastern Europe. Furthermore, these processes are fundamental to understanding the relationship between the local and the universal, that is, glocalization in the Orthodox context. For example, Latin and Greek as vernacular languages were fundamental to the vernacularization process, which contributed to the formation of the identities of the "Latin West" and the "Greek East". The indigenization process marked Orthodoxy in that it allowed "the absorption of the faith into local ethnic identities" (Roudometof, 2014, p.1026) and, in this sense, contributed to the construction of a cohesive identity among certain peoples. As we will see in the next sections, the process of nationalization that Orthodoxy went through, and which began in Southeastern Europe in the 19th century, is of great relevance for understanding the formation of Orthodox identities in countries such as Greece and Romania. Finally, transnationalization can also be expressed through the Orthodox

diaspora and the religious ties of Orthodox Christian migrants who identify with their national churches.

## 4.2 Symphonia in the Byzantine Empire

In the Byzantine Empire, the Orthodox Church had a special relationship with the emperor since it was an integral part of the imperial polity. It was actively present in daily life, and it took responsibility for matters that did not concern the emperor, even though the latter also played a role in religious affairs. Even though the Byzantine emperor was not worshipped as a deity, he was regarded as the representative of Christ on Earth, and thus, it was his responsibility to grant a good government for his people (Hussey, 2010).

The Orthodox Christian approach to the relationship between the state and the Church is largely influenced by the Byzantine concept of *symphonia*. This concept finds its roots in the interactions between the Orthodox Church and the state (Empire) during the Byzantine Empire. *Symphonia* represents a cooperative system between these two entities, where the State has the responsibility of ensuring its own security and projecting its power on the global stage. Meanwhile, the Church is responsible for ensuring the spiritual progress and salvation of the people. The two institutions employ different approaches to ensure the well-being of the population, and thus, there is no conflict between them. Theoretically, each institution should abide by their own regulations, and neither should be subservient to the other (Leustean, 2011).

It is noteworthy that the delimitation between the domains of the State and the Church in historical contexts was not always clearly defined. Consequently, religious leaders often exerted substantial political influence, while political leaders intervened in matters concerning the Church's position in society. Unlike the Western European context, Orthodox Christianity's ecclesiological structure extends to encompass "the whole body of the faithful, the 'holy Catholic church' of the Creed, or at least the faithful of their own persuasion" (Leustean, 2011, p. 191). As a result, the emperor assumed responsibility not only for the salvation of the faithful but also for his own redemption, leading political leaders to interfere in religious affairs (Leustean, 2011). Hussey and Louth (2010) comment on the Byzantine emperor's duties:

The Christian polity was made up of the priesthood (sacerdotium) and the Empire (basileia) and they should work together, the one promoting orthodoxy, the other regulating human affairs.<sup>2</sup> But the Emperor had an overall responsibility for both

civil and canon law. 'If we make every effort to enforce civil laws, how much more should we not try to enforce the canons and the divine laws designed for the salvation of our souls?'<sup>3</sup> The position accorded to the Byzantine Emperor thus reflected the integration of non-Christian and Christian elements. He was an autocrat whose absolute authority was tempered by his ultimate responsibility for good government in all spheres of the Christian life (Hussey, 2010, p.300).

Given that Orthodox Christianity has preserved Byzantine political and religious traditions, the Byzantine model regarding the role of political leaders in religious life is observable in contemporary societies with an Orthodox Christian majority (Leustean, 2011). However, there was more than one single model of *symphonia* in the History of the Byzantine Empire. In fact, a diverse array of ideals concerning the ideal relationship between Church and State were developed. Thus, *symphonia* was situational, varying according to different historical contexts over the course of more than a millennium. There were instances in which the empire assertively attempted to interfere with the institutional structure of the Church, appointing or removing patriarchs, with the aim of altering the institution's stance. On the other hand, there were also occasions in which members of the Church tried to influence the empire by suggesting a superiority of religious ideals over the state's power (Džalto, 2021).

As a result, the concept of *symphonia* may refer to multiple ideals in Orthodox Christian theology. For instance, it is possible to make a distinction between the ideas of *symphonia* and *synallelia*, even though both refer to the ideal concerning Church-state relations. As demonstrated by Džalto (2021), the symphonic ideal may be understood as an organic, symbiotic relationship between these two institutions, without clear boundaries defining political ideologies and theological concepts.

On the other hand, *synallelia* regards the autonomy of the religious and political spheres, while both cooperate to achieve the common well-being. Following the author's argument, I shall use the term *symphonia* as an umbrella term that includes many possibilities regarding the proximity between Church and state, since "[...] most of the time, the church-state relationship in the East, in reality, fell somewhere in the middle of this spectrum" (Džalto, 2021, p.59)

It is important to note that when examining the relationship between the Church and State in the Byzantine Empire and its legacy in modern Orthodox countries, there are certain limitations to the application of the *symphonia* concept. Kalkandjieva (2011) highlights that although the idea of *symphonia* was an ideal to strive for, it cannot be used to analyse contemporary Orthodox-majority countries in a literal sense. Unlike in the Byzantine Empire, modern states are not considered as Christ's kingdom, and their leaders do not possess the

same powers and authority as the Byzantine emperor in appointing patriarchs or having priestly powers. Therefore, *symphonia* cannot be fully applied to analyse modern Orthodox countries, but only to a certain extent. (Kalkandjieva, 2011).

Despite its limitations, the symphonic ideal still holds relevance when it comes to addressing social issues related to Church-State relations in modern Orthodox-majority countries. Kalkandjieva (2011) asserts that:

At the same time, it seems that it is quite difficult for all tradition ally Orthodox states to overcome the nineteenth-century model of the confessional state where the domination of Orthodoxy over the other confessions was constitutionally guaranteed. This system was abandoned only in those states that adopted the principle of separation of church and state while under communist rule. Even in this case, however, Orthodox societies remain ignorant about the true aims of the separation of church and state as it has happened in the West. Their peoples continue to perceive this principle as a means of destroying religion and imposing the monopoly of atheism on society. As a result, the collapse of communism and the process of eurointegration raised many questions concerning the proper Orthodox model of church-state relations (Kalkandjieva, 2011, p.594).

There are divergences between the Western and Orthodox perspectives regarding the ideal model of Church-State relations. Western legal systems generally presuppose a separation between these institutions, which has been subject to criticism amongst Orthodox theologians. Thus, to comprehend the contemporary Orthodox view of the Western model of Church-State relations, it is crucial to delve into how this concept has evolved in Orthodox countries over the centuries. This requires an examination of the role of religion in shaping national identities, the persistence of the Orthodox/Byzantine heritage in the present day, and the implications of these divergences for the relations between Orthodox-majority countries and the secular West.

### **4.3 Religion and nationalism in nineteenth-century Southeastern Europe**

In the nineteenth century, Southeastern Europe witnessed the emergence of new nation states and the spread of nationalism. Inspired by the French Revolution, political movements strived for independence – mainly from the Ottoman Empire – and promoted the construction of a national identity. These national ideals also took on a religious aspect. The local Orthodox Churches also played a significant role in this process by adapting nationalism to local realities and promoting national cohesion through innovations, as in the case of education, one of the most important changes introduced (Leuştean, 2014). Figure 11 illustrates the national landscape of 19th century Southeastern Europe.

**Figure 11 - Nineteenth-Century Southeastern Europe**



Source: Leuştean (2014, n.p.)

After the conquest of the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire incorporated local populations into its political system. This had implications for the construction of Greek national identity, Church-State relations, and the State-building of the modern Greek State. The Ottoman Empire administered the conquered communities according to their respective religious affiliations. This system would become known as the *millet* system (Mylonas, 2019). Mylonas (2019, p.3-4) comments on the structure of the *millets*:

Broadly speaking, the Ottoman system was composed of non-territorial confessional communities (*millets*) that had varying degrees of autonomy in terms of justice and local affairs. All legal cases relating to family law or inheritance involving members of a particular community were under the jurisdiction of each millet. [...] Each religious leader of the various communities was the head of the community, the *millet-başı*, reporting directly to the Sultan (Mylonas, 2019, p.3-4).

According to Islamic law, the people of the book – Christians and Jews – should be protected by the state. Non-Muslim populations had autonomy inside their communities. They were allowed to maintain their own identities, their Churches, and even to run schools. (Ozturk, 2014). After the Ottomans consolidated their rule in Southeastern Europe, the Ecumenical Patriarchate assumed the role of leader of the Orthodox in *rum* (Orthodox) *millet*. Sultan Mehmed II appointed the Ecumenical Patriarchate as the authority over all the Orthodox Churches, to prevent the possibility of alliances between the latter and the Western Churches. This religious autonomy was well received by the Greek Orthodox Church, who was under the rule of the Vatican and now regarded the Sultan as a liberator of the faith (Ozturk, 2014). Figure 12 shows the extension of the Ottoman Empire in 1815, including Greece and the Danubian Principalities.

**Figure 12 - The Ottoman Empire, 1815**



Source: Jelavich; Jelavich (1977, p.21)



In the Ottoman Empire, many Christians referred to themselves as “*Romioi*” - that is, Romans. These Christian populations who lived under Ottoman rule were granted relative autonomy from the Sultan, and were allowed to practise their religion, to speak their own languages, and were administered by local elites, who were pointed by the Sultan himself (Cartledge; Varnava, 2022).

It is noteworthy that the leaders of each millet were religious figures, a fact that holds great significance in the formation of collective identities (Ozturk, 2014). However, the relationship between the *rum* millet and the Sublime Porte underwent a period of decline following the Greek Declaration of Independence in 1821, which culminated in the execution of the Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory V. The Porte accused him of supporting the rebellion, and his execution served as a source of inspiration for the Orthodox population residing within the Ottoman Empire. For many years, the Ecumenical Patriarchate was perceived as an institution subservient to the Sultan. However, the establishment of national Churches and autonomy from the Ecumenical Patriarchate were considered essential prerequisites for achieving self-governance (Leuştean, 2014)

Following the emergence of independence movements and the subsequent dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, which led to the formation of national states in the Balkans, the influence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate experienced a decline, as nationalism had become the primary criterion for determining belonging within the region (Yannas, 2009). Consequently, regional nationalists sought to nationalise religious ties, and the manipulation of religious institutions became a crucial strategy for catalysing local nation-building processes (Roudometof, 1999).

In 1833, Greece became the first nation to declare autocephaly of its national Church, but it was only formally recognized by Constantinople in 1850. In Serbia, both political and religious spheres worked concurrently to achieve independence, and after obtaining formal recognition of independence from the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Orthodoxy was adopted as the State religion. In Romania, the emergence of the national Church and independence from the Ecumenical Patriarchate was also linked to the unification of the Principalities of the Danube, Wallachia, and Moldavia (Leuştean, 2014)

In contrast to the cases mentioned, Bulgaria's demand for independence from the Ecumenical Patriarchate preceded the creation of the state. The demand for a national Church was initially rejected by the Ecumenical Patriarch, but Bulgaria became an autonomous principality in 1878, and the constitution of 1879 referred to the Church and the maintenance of its ties with the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Leuştean, 2014).

The modern Greek state was the outcome of the Greek War of Independence, which lasted for nine years and marked the end of Ottoman rule over the Greek-speaking Christians. Greek intellectuals who were part of the movement that would come to be known as the Greek Enlightenment proposed the construction of a modern Greece that united Christian culture with the classical (Greek) heritage, thus producing a "Hellenic" national identity. This idea – known as neo-Hellenism – was spread amongst Ottoman Christians, who would now identify themselves as Hellenes rather than *Romioi* (Cartledge; Varnava, 2022).

Now that we are acquainted with the historical developments concerning national identities and Church-state relations in Southeastern Europe from a broader perspective, I will now introduce the case studies. The main objective of the second part of this chapter is “to open the black box” of the Greek and Romanian states concerning their respective Church-state relations and processes of integration into the EU. Therefore, I shall approach the domestic changes required by the EU regarding issues of religious freedom and human rights, the perceptions, and reactions of their respective national Churches with regard to institution and the very idea of "Europe" and, finally, the cultural divergences related to the relations between church and state until the present day.

The first part of the chapter will be dedicated to the Greek case, including the origins of the Greek modern state, the role of religion in the process of nation-building and the integration of Greece into the EU. The second part covers the Romanian case its historical background: the unification of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, the adoption of Orthodox Christianity as the official religion of the Romanian modern state, the birth of the autocephalous Romanian Orthodox Church and its relations with the Romanian state and, finally, Romania's accession into the EU.

#### **4.4 Church-State relations in Modern Greece**

The link between nation and religion has been closely intertwined in Greek society since the establishment of the modern Greek state. The ecclesiastical and nationalist discourses have not been clearly delimited throughout the history of modern Greece, and the Orthodox symphonic ideal has been present in the interactions between the state and the Church (Makris; Bekridakis, 2013). In this regard, I contend that state-building is a critical variable when analysing the (religious) liminal identity of modern Greece, as it laid the groundwork for the Greek model of Church-state relations that, with certain caveats, has persisted to the present day. As such, the ensuing sections will explore the significance of

religion for Greek society and its influence on the Greek state. Figure 13 depicts the formation and expansion of the Greek modern state.

**Figure 13 - The expansion of Greece, 1821-1919**



Source: Jelavich (2000, p.79)

Although the number of (young) Greek citizens who declare themselves as being atheist, agnostic or non-religious has increased in the last decade, the Orthodox Church is still an influential institution in Greek society (Sakellariou; 2022), since Orthodox Christianity is the dominant religion in contemporary Greece. Orthodoxy is the religion of approximately 87% of the Greek population, corresponding to 9,880,000 Orthodox Christians (Pew Research Center, 2017). Table 9 depicts the religious landscape of contemporary Greece:

**Table 9 - The religious landscape of contemporary Greece**

| Orthodox | Catholic | Other Christian | Muslim | Other religion | Unaffiliated |
|----------|----------|-----------------|--------|----------------|--------------|
| 90%      | <1%      | 3%              | 2%     | 1%             | 4%           |

**Source:** Elaborated by the author based on Pew Research Center (2017, p.52)

After declaring independence from the Ecumenical Patriarchy, the GOC was “incorporated in the state apparatus, becoming this way an ideological proponent of the national ideology” (Sakellariou, 2022, p.59). Subsequently, a symbiotic alliance materialised between the GOC and the Greek state, wherein the former garnered shelter under the patronage of the latter, reciprocating with an exchange of ideological tenets and political backing. For instance, the GOC engaged in the reproduction of a discourse that promoted a negative view of Western ideologies, such as modernity, Enlightenment, globalisation and individualism, while glorifying a supposed Eastern, Byzantine identity (Sakellariou, 2022). Guidelines concerning Church-state relations in Greece can be found in its constitutions. For instance, the two first articles of the 1911 constitution declare that:

Art. 1. The established religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ. Every other known religion is tolerated, and the forms of its worship are carried out without hindrance under the protection of the laws, proselytism and all other interference with the established religion being prohibited. Art. 2. The Orthodox Church of Greece, acknowledging for its head our Lord Jesus Christ, is indissolubly united in doctrine with the Great Church in Constantinople and with every other Church of Christ holding the same doctrines, steadfastly observing, as they do, the holy apostolic and synodal canons and holy traditions: it is autocephalous, exercising its sovereign rights independently of every other Church, and it is administered by a Holy Synod of bishops. The ministers of all recognized religions are subjected to the same superintendence on the part of the State as the ministers of the established religions. The text of the Holy Scriptures is maintained unchanged: the rendering thereof in another form of language without the previous sanction of the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople also, is absolutely prohibited (The Constitution Of Greece, 1911, p.1).

The close relationship between statehood and religious identity is evident in the first article, which emphasises that any interference with the Orthodox religion is strictly prohibited. However, it remains unclear what type of act would be deemed a violation of this prohibition. Notably, this article was revised in the 1975 constitution, which is still in effect. In the current constitution, Article 3, titled "Relations of Church and State," includes the same prohibition against interfering with the Orthodox religion, but it is no longer positioned at the beginning of the document. Article three reads as follows:

1. The prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ. The Orthodox Church of Greece, acknowledging our Lord Jesus Christ as its

head, is inseparably united in doctrine with the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople and with every other Church of Christ of the same doctrine, observing unwaveringly, as they do, the holy apostolic and synodal canons and sacred traditions. It is autocephalous and is administered by the Holy Synod of serving Bishops and the Permanent Holy Synod originating thereof and assembled as specified by the Statutory Charter of the Church in compliance with the provisions of the Patriarchal Tome of June 29, 1850 and the Synodal Act of September 4, 1928.” (The Constitution Of Greece, 1975, p.26).

Besides stating that the Greek State has a “prevailing” religion – a statement that has been present in the introductions of all previous Greek constitutions (Ministry Of Education And Religious Affairs, 2021) - the constitution also addresses the rules concerning religious life in the country. Article 13 in the section “Part Two: Individual And Social Rights” is dedicated to the guidelines regarding freedom of religion. According to the document:

1. Freedom of religious conscience is inviolable. The enjoyment of civil rights and liberties does not depend on the individual’s religious beliefs. 2. All known religions shall be free and their rites of worship shall be performed unhindered and under the protection of the law. The practice of rites of worship is not allowed to offend public order or the good usages. Proselytism is prohibited. 3. The ministers of all known religions shall be subject to the same supervision by the State and to the same obligations towards it as those of the prevailing religion. 4. No person shall be exempt from discharging his obligations to the State or may refuse to comply with the laws by reason of his religious convictions. 5. No oath shall be imposed or administered except as specified by law and in the form determined by law.” (The Constitution Of Greece, 2019, p.34).

This excerpt has a different approach to the supposed interferences with the Greek Orthodox Church; instead, it refers to the “public good”. Moreover, attention should be paid to the fact that, while the constitution grants freedom of religious conscience in the country, proselytism is expressly prohibited, as in the case of the 1911 constitution. The prohibition on proselytism may be interpreted as a criterion for the homogenization of identities, as suggested by Rae (2003), insofar as it determines religion as a category of inclusion/exclusion. Based on these articles, one could also argue that Greek Orthodox citizens may be privileged when compared to individuals who belong to other religious denominations, considering that an interference with the Orthodox faith through public worship may be seen as arbitrary.

These issues were discussed in the court case that became known as *Kokkinakis versus Greece*, the first case on religious freedom referred to the European Court of Human Rights (henceforward ECHR) in 1992. Mr. Minos Kokkinakis, a retired businessman of Greek (Cretan) citizenship, was born into an Orthodox family, but became a Jehovah’s Witness in 1936. Mr. Kokkinakis had been arrested multiple times of proselytising, having been arrested

more than sixty times, being occasionally interned (on the grounds of his religious activities) and imprisoned (on the grounds of proselytism, conscientious objection and holding religious meetings in a private house). He had been arrested four times between 1960 and 1970 (ECHR, 1993).

On 2 March 1986, Mr. Kokkinakis and his wife were accused of calling at the home of Mrs Kyriakaki and engaging in a discussion with her. Mr and Mrs. Kokkinakis were arrested after Mrs Kyriakaki's husband, who happened to be a member of the local Orthodox Church, informed the police. They were prosecuted and found guilty at the Lasithi Criminal Court, based on the accusation of proselytism, according to the article 4 of the constitution. Afterwards, the couple appealed to the Crete Court of Appeal, resulting in the revoking of Mrs. Kokkinakis' sentence, while Mr. Kokkinakis' sentence was upheld, although reduced in three months (ECHR, 1993).

On 22 August 1988 Mr. Kokkinakis applied to the Commission, whose opinion was that: "(a) there had been no violation of Article 7 (art. 7) (by eleven votes to two); (b) there had been a violation of Article 9 (art. 9) (unanimously); and (c) no separate issue arose under Article 10 (art. 10) (by twelve votes to one)." (ECHR, 1993, p.10). On 25 May 1993, Mr. Kokkinakis was found innocent by decision of the ECHR, affirming that Mr. Kokkinakis' actions did not violate the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Thus, the ECHR delivered its decision:

1. Holds by six votes to three that there has been a breach of Article 9 (art. 9); 2. Holds by eight votes to one that there has been no breach of Article 7 (art. 7); 3. Holds unanimously that it is unnecessary to examine the case under Article 10 (art. 10) or under Article 14 taken together with Article 9 (art. 14+9); 4. Holds unanimously that the respondent State is to pay the applicant, within three months, 400,000 (four hundred thousand) drachmas in respect of non-pecuniary damage and 2,789,500 (two million seven hundred and eighty-nine thousand five hundred) drachmas in respect of costs and expenses (ECHR, 1993, p.18).

The prohibition of proselytism can be considered as a heritage of the Metaxas regime (1936-1941) with the intent of promoting a nationalistic reform (Puppink; Bauer, 2021). During Metaxas' government, Orthodox Christians had privileges when compared to other religious groups. For instance, besides criminalising proselytism, being Orthodox was a requirement for joining the youth movement organised by the regime. In addition, Metaxas saw the Protestant Reading of the Bible as a threat since this autonomous interpretation of the gospels could compromise his disciplinary ideals (Puppink; Bauer, 2021).

“Kokkinakis vs. Greece” was not the only judicial case concerning Church-state relations and human rights in the country. Other cases involving freedom of religion in Greece are: *Manoussakis and Others v. Greece* (1996), *Thlimmenos v. Greece* (2000) and *Alexandridis v. Greece* (2008). In all these cases the ECHR found the violation of article 9 of the Convention (“Freedom of thought, conscience and religion”). In the case “*Manoussakis and Others v. Greece*”, the applicants (a group of Jehovah’s Witnesses) were convicted because they used a private space for religious worship without the recognition of the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs and a “recognized ecclesiastical authority” (ECHR, 1996, n.p.).

In *Thlimmenos v. Greece*, the judgement was based on the violations of the Articles 6, 9 and 14 of the Convention (right to a fair hearing, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and prohibition of discrimination, respectively). Mr. Thlimmenos – a Jehovah’s Witness – had his appointment to the post of accountant refused by the authorities. The allegation was that Mr. Thlimmenos had been previously convicted for his refusal of wearing the military uniform, based on religious motivations. The Court decided that the refusal of enlisting in the armed forces on religious grounds did not imply any moral deviation that could interfere with his capacity of exercising that profession (ECHR, 2022).

On 21 February 2008, Theodoros Alexandridis (a lawyer) was forced to reveal that he was not a member of the Orthodox Church, since, according to the domestic legislation, he had to take a religious oath. The Court decided by unanimity that the Article 9 of the Convention had been violated, arguing that “the fact that the applicant had had to reveal to the court that he was not an Orthodox Christian and that he wanted to make a solemn declaration rather than take the religious oath, had interfered with his freedom not to have to manifest his religious beliefs” (Council Of Europe, 2008, n.p.). As for the general measures taken by the ECHR in this case, the Court suggested an amendment of the Lawyers’ code so citizens were no longer obliged to reveal their religious beliefs (ECHR, 2023).

It is important to state that “In almost 90% of the judgments delivered concerning Greece, the Court has given judgment (sic) against the State, finding at least one violation of the Convention” (ECHR, 2023, p.4). The Human Rights Watch (henceforward HRW) - a non-governmental organisation – also has several reports on the violation of human rights in Greece. In 2012, Terrence McNally’ play entitled “*Corpus Christi*”, which portrayed Jesus and his apostles as homosexuals, was investigated by the Athens public prosecutor’s office on the grounds of blasphemy (Human Rights Watch, 2012). The HRW asked the Greek government to drop the investigation and demanded the abolishment of the blasphemy law

(Human Rights Watch, 2012). In the same year, the New Democracy government considered reintroducing the law into the Greek penal code (Voria, 2019).

Furthermore, I argue that the educational system - specifically, religious education - can also be seen as an indicator of the current status of secularism in Greek society. It is worth mentioning that, in Greece, both educational and religious sectors were centralised into a single ministry, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (MofERA), which is responsible for the administration and implementation of educational policies (Talantopoulou, 2021). According to the institution, its goal is:

[...] the protection of freedom of religious conscience and religious worship, is the protection of freedom of religious conscience and religious worship, the supervision of the religious education system and the ministers of known religions, as well as the connection of religion, education and culture with the simultaneous promotion of actions against fanaticism and intolerance and in favor of interfaith relations and dialogue for the benefit of religious peace and social cohesion (ΥΠΟΥΡΓΙΟΣ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ, n.d.)<sup>10</sup>.

As pointed out by Pollis (1992), the very existence of the MofERA demonstrates the relevance of religion as a primordial element in education in Greek society. Moreover, religious education in Greece may also be seen as the state fulfilling its duty to preserve and promote Greek Orthodox identity through the socialisation of young people. Pollis (1992) argues that this political strategy may be related to a supposed fear on the part of the Greek state that promoting diversity and equality among all religions could represent a threat to the maintenance of the Greek Orthodox Christian identity, even though religious minorities in the country are few in numbers when compared to Orthodox Christianity (Pollis, 1992). In this sense, religious education transcends the educational sphere in Greek society, being also related to political and social issues, such as religious identities, Church-State relations and religious diversity (Talantopoulou, 2021).

The MofERA is responsible for the educational system in all levels of education (from pre-primary to adult): it shapes and implements policies and strategic goals established by the government. However, it should also be mentioned that, although the state is formally responsible for the educational system, religious education in schools is organised in cooperation with the GOC, a collaboration that may result in the marginalisation of non-Orthodox convictions in Greek society. Moreover, the privileged status of Orthodox

---

<sup>10</sup> είναι η προστασία της ελευθερίας της θρησκευτικής συνείδησης και της θρησκευτικής λατρείας, η εποπτεία του θρησκευτικού εκπαιδευτικού συστήματος και των λειτουργιών των γνωστών θρησκειών, καθώς και η σύνδεση θρησκείας, παιδείας και πολιτισμού με την ταυτόχρονη προαγωγή δράσεων κατά του φανατισμού και της μισαλλοδοξίας και υπέρ των διαθρησκευτικών σχέσεων και διαλόγου προς όφελος της θρησκευτικής ειρήνης και της κοινωνικής συνοχής.



Christianity in the Greek educational system is not aligned with the guidelines established by the Council of Europe. The institution recommends diversity and impartiality in the study of religion in the educational systems of its member states (Talantopoulou, 2021).

I contend that, in a broader sense, the mentioned themes are also part of the discussion regarding the Europeanization of Greece and the difficulties that the Greek State faces when trying to adapt to certain international norms, mainly regarding the protection of human rights and respect to the rights of religious minorities. The intersection between these topics were explored by Pollis (1992). According to the author, Greece has been confronted with difficulties when it comes to the implementation of human rights norms since its integration into the European Community. The creation of a single market by the EC required a harmonisation of social policies to establish a common foreign policy amongst its member states (Pollis, 1992).

Thus, changes in domestic policies, institutions and rules were required of the Greek state by the EC, who pressured the country to adopt its norms (Pollis, 1992). Regarding this process of adaptation to “European” norms, Pollis (1992) had already pointed out that:

It is true that if the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights are used as the yardstick, Greece's overall legal commitment to individual rights and their implementation tends to conform to European standards. However, a fundamental divergence between Greece and "Europe" is highlighted by exceptions such as the violation of the rights of religious minorities and, as a consequence, other rights such as freedom of expression and communication. The context within which rights operate in Greece differs from that in western European countries. Redressing and eliminating the specific rights violations that do exist will be difficult since they are based on Greece's official world-view and ideology. All states demand loyalty to the state, but Greece's organicity and hence the absence of individual autonomy and the subordination of the individual to the state create the potential for rights violations, even in a democratic régime (Pollis, 1992, p.190).

Given the considerations, Pollis (1992) suggested a conflict in the process of Greece's integration in the EC, considering the country's idiosyncrasies about the Greek perception of its national identity. By attempting to preserve its peculiar notion of national identity - which, in turn, was based on the relationship between religion, nation and statehood - the country would be going against a trend present in Western European countries that, unlike Greece, experienced an erosion of national identities in favour of the reconstruction of Europe based on a supranational identity. In this sense, European integration would eventually imply a reconstruction of the Greek national identity. Considering that there would supposedly be a reduction in decision-making capacity on the part of the Greek state as a product of regional

integration, Pollis (1992) believed that integration into the EC would facilitate this transformation of Greek identity.

While the question whether regional integration has indeed achieved a certain degree of transformation of Greek national identity is a topic worthy of future studies, it is not the focus of this thesis. Instead, I am interested in examining the normative conflicts arising from Greece's integration into the EC/EU to understand what the implications for the (liminal) identity of the Greek state are. For this reason, I have mentioned cases in which Greece's domestic policies and legislation somehow conflicted with expectations from Western Europe. Now, it is necessary to demonstrate how these problems manifest themselves in the context of European integration.

The negotiations for the accession of Greece to the European Community (EC) initiated in the 1970's. Since then, the Greek state has been facing challenges in the attempt to adopt reforms required by the EU. The Church, assuming the role of protector of the national identity, has offered resistance in the face of the "Westernization' of Greece" (Günel; Balci, 2019, p.133) and, thus, posing a difficulty for the State when it comes to the adoption of laws and the protection of human rights in the country (Günel; Balci, 2019). Greece's accession to the EC had important consequences for domestic issues, including Church-State relations. In a world marked by globalisation, the state had to deal with new actors who, in turn, could influence domestic policies. Since the state – the protector of the national Church - no longer had absolute control of its domestic affairs in a context of globalisation, this would also lead to a weakening of the Church. Moreover, it should be mentioned that the EC has had a contentious relationship with the Church due to the former's accusations of the latter's violation of human rights (Günel; Balci, 2019).

In 1981, the Socialist Government (PASOK) implemented the reforms required by the EU for Greece's accession, advocating the separation of Church and state. At the same time, the Greek State was also pressured by the EU for the secularisation of the country. However, in the same decade, Greek society witnessed an increase in the popularity of the GOC, especially because of the efforts of Archbishop Christodoulos, a charismatic leader of the Church who saw EU membership as a danger, arguing that it could lead to alienation. The reforms concerning Church-State relations initiated by Foreign Minister George Papandreou led to a contentious relationship between the government and the Church. Papandreou pointed to issues such as the role of religion in education, the construction of places of worship, justifying these changes based on the requirements from the EU and the ECHR (Günel; Balci, 2019).

Church-State relations in Greece and the EU have also been influenced by the debate surrounding state identity cards. Prior to 1986, religion was included on several public documents, such as birth, marriage, and death certificates. Following Greece's integration into the Schengen Convention<sup>11</sup> in 1995, the European Union stipulated that the Greek government should issue new bilingual identity cards for its citizens. Subsequently, in adherence to the Privacy Protection Act, enacted two years later, the inclusion of personal information, such as religion, in state documents was prohibited (Molokotos-Liederman, 2007). Law number 2472 (10 April 1997) established new criteria regarding the processing of personal data. Article two determined that:

b) "Sensitive data", the data concerning racial or national origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, membership in an association, union and trade union, health, social welfare and love life, as well as regarding criminal prosecutions or convictions (Hellenic Parliament, 1997, Art. 2472, p.685, my translation).<sup>12</sup>

This move garnered criticism from Eurosceptics in the year 2000, who expressed disapproval regarding the removal of religion from official identification records (Molokotos-Liederman, 2007). In 1991, the New Democracy party introduced a law that reversed the previous law, requiring the declaration of religion on new identity cards. While the party initially considered making the declaration of religious affiliation optional, the GOC opposed this and demanded that religion remain mandatory on the identity cards. The European Parliament condemned the decision to maintain religious affiliation on the document and urged the Greek state to reverse the law (Molokotos-Liederman, 2007).

The case of identity cards also involved human rights issues and raised questions regarding Greece's position in the EU and the process of secularisation of Greek society. The reaction of the Greek Orthodox Church to this case can be interpreted as a fear on the part of the institution that the change in identity cards could compromise its influence in society, thus accelerating the process of secularisation (Molokotos-Liederman, 2007). In 2000, Archbishop Christodoulos took part in a public demonstration against that measure, urging Christians to resist the forces of globalisation. Members of the clergy argued that the measure constituted an endeavour by the socialist government to adapt the country to European expectations. The then Metropolitan Prokopios asserted that the removal of religion from identity cards was a

<sup>11</sup> The Schengen Convention establishes the free movement of people within the European Union, without the need for passports (MOLOKOTOS-LIEDERMAN, 2007).

<sup>12</sup> "Ευαίσθητα δεδομένα", τα δεδομένα που αφορούν τη φυλετική ή εθνική πρόλευση, τα πολιτικά φρονήματα, της θρησκευτικές ή φιλοσοφικές πεποιθήσεις τη συμμετοχή σε ένωση, σωματείο και συνδικαλιστική οργάνωση, την υγεία, την κοινωνική πρόνοια και την ερωτική ζωή, καθώς και σχετικά με ποινικές διώξεις ή καταδίκες.

part of the socialist party's plan to establish a separation between the GOC and the Greek state (The New York Times, 2000).

Christodoulos had a reactionary political stance, openly criticising modern values. Nevertheless, he attempted to keep close contact with the EU to profit from this relationship through the EU's institutional setting, leading to the opening of a representative body of the GOC in Brussels in 1998 (Markides, 2012). Furthermore, the enthronement of Christodoulos as Archbishop of Athens and all Greece was marked by polemical and controversial engagements between the CoG and the Greek state. In addition to the aforementioned identity cards issue, two other emblematic cases arose during Christodoulos leadership of the GOC: the dispute with the Ecumenical Patriarchate over the in the New Lands, that is, lands that are under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate which are located within the boundaries of the Greek state, and the reaction of some members of the Church hierarchy against the visit of the Pope John Paul II - which was to be received by the Prime Minister Constantine Simitis (PASOK) government as a head of state (Prodromou, 2004).

Although the former case may be seen at first as an exclusively Greek domestic affair, European integration was an important variable when it came to the government's decision to intervene in the dispute between Christodoulos and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Initially, the government of the New Democracy party had opted to follow the PASOK's government decision to remain neutral in the issue, sustaining the argument that the authority of the state did not extend to religious matters. However, the government would later consider intervening in the dispute to defuse it. Prodromou (2004) – which analysed this issue as a conjunctural political affair in 2004 – argued that the state's decision whether or not to intervene in the issue may have been related to both the approaching of the elections of the European Parliament and to avoid controversies during the Olympic Games which were being held in Athens: thus, these moves may be seen as an attempt of the Greek state to consolidate its domestic political position, while taking into account its international image (Prodromou, 2004).

Christodoulos' perspective concerning the Greek national identity and its critics on the “Westernisation” of Greece would be not simply a political disagreement, but as a much deeper philosophical difference between different civilizations. Through some of the Archbishop's discourses<sup>13</sup>, one could identify the differences between the Western and the Greek Orthodox understanding of national identity, since Christodoulos argued that religion is

---

<sup>13</sup> Some of these discourses will be analysed in Chapter four.

the central identity marker of the Greek national identity and it would be impossible for an individual to be Greek without being an Orthodox Christian (Payne, 2003).

Furthermore, according to the Archbishop, the Church has the role of preserving the Christian identity of Europe and the duty to promote the unity between European nations. Arguing that both Greek and the European identities were being undermined by Western democratic norms, Christodoulos also contended that the Church should cooperate with the state to preserve the “Greek race” (Payne, 2003, p.266). Understanding Christodoulos’ definition of national identity can be useful in comprehending how the GOC perceived the identity cards issue. Furthermore, the removal of religion affiliation from the identity cards could be seen by the Church as a violation of the symphonic ideal, since that policy had an impact on the harmonious relationship between the Church and the state (Payne, 2003).

Moreover, I also argue that this conflictual relationship between the GOC and the Greek state regarding the implementation of human rights policies in the country may be seen as being connected to a broader complex social phenomenon defined by Makrides (2009) as Orthodox anti-Westernism. According to the author, this phenomenon can be understood as:

A widespread phenomenon in the Orthodox world today, particularly in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, expressed by numerous actors, manifested at various levels and operating in different contexts, religious and otherwise. Historically it can be traced back to the long-term differentiation between the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) and the Western Roman Empire, as well as between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchates. Because many Orthodox earlier used to identify Europe with the West, anti-Westernism is sometimes closely connected with anti-Europeanism (Makrides, 2009, p.209).

Orthodox Anti-Westernism is deeply rooted in the Great Schism of 1054 and the opposition between the Latin West and the Orthodox East. However, it has also been influenced by multiple historical processes; modernity and the scientific advances that took place in Western countries also contributed to the estrangement between East and West. After the fall of Byzantium in 1453, many Orthodox Christians came to regard the West as being heretic and anti-Christian due to the process of secularisation. At the same time, Western perceptions of the Orthodox East has also contributed to the spread of Orthodox Anti-Westernism through depictions of Eastern nations as being backward, barbarian and uncivilised, thus reinforcing a series of stereotypes and prejudices of Eastern European countries (Makrides, 2009).

Moreover, Orthodox Anti-Westernism is not restricted to its religious aspect, and it is also manifested in the cultural, political and social spheres. For this reason, it is imperative to

situate this phenomenon within the context of European integration since, as argued by Makrides (2009), Orthodox Anti-Westernism is often connected not only to nationalism, but also to anti-Europeanism. The latter refers to a critical view of a specific definition of Europe based on a Western perspective that differs from an Eastern/Byzantine understanding of Europe that regards the continent not only in geographical terms but also in political, social and religious aspects. From this perspective, Europe could be understood as being synonymous with the West. This elucidates why, until recently, Greeks used to regard Greece as an external entity to Europe, perceiving Europeans as "others" (Makrides, 2009, p.216).

I argue that the controversy surrounding identity cards is a clear example of Greece's liminal status in the European Union. This case illustrates Greece's marginal status in the EU structure since its integration, in addition to demonstrating how the relationship between European integration and Greek Orthodox identity occurs. Molokotos-Liederman (2007) comments on an identity crisis:

Since the 1980s and Greece's entry in the European Union, there has been an increasing discrepancy between rapid economic expansion on the one hand and a much slower social development (including education) on the other hand. This has resulted in a national 'identity crisis'. Hence the value of using the ID card controversy (placed in the context of ongoing developments in the Greek political, social, and religious landscape) as a starting point for a wider reflection on religion and national identity in Greece against the challenges of globalisation, pluralism, and European integration (Molokotos-Liederman, 2007, p.198).

However, as argued by Molokotos-Liederman (2007), Greek national identity is complex, mixing aspects of modernity and traditionalism. Regarding this complexity of the Greek case, the author argues:

The opinion groups that we have identified in the ID card controversy reflect a broader tension in Greek society between traditionalism (inspired primarily by Byzantine Orthodoxy) and a more secular Western-inspired modernism (influenced by rationalism and the Enlightenment). The opposition between two visions of Greek identity appears to correspond to attitudes towards Church-State relations, pluralism and minority rights, and European integration. However, as the writer Amin Maalouf has argued, identity cannot be "compartmentalised" or "divided in halves" (3). If this is so, being Greek today amounts to a specific blend of being both modern and traditional. In other words, in addition to the dualism between modernity and tradition, attempts must be made to bring together Greece's Eastern and Western heritage. In the ID card controversy, it seems that the neutral and pro-dialogue opinion groups are articulating just such an attempt. These perspectives offer more complex and nuanced notions of Greek identity, revealing a 'grey' area that permits a multiplicity of allegiances to both modernity and tradition, all equally legitimate and combined (Molokotos-Liederman, 2007, p.199-200).

Based on Molokotos-Liederman's argument, I argue that this complexity arising from the difficulty of identifying or classifying Greek national identity is also related to the liminal

character of Greek identity in the EU structure. We can notice a relationship between national identity, religion and the adaptation of the Greek state to the standardisation proposed by the EU. In this sense, human rights, secularism and nationalism are articulated in Greek society, producing complex phenomena such as Orthodox anti-Westernism and Greece's difficulty in adapting to European standards.

Furthermore, Greece still faces challenges regarding the adoption of policies regarding human rights. The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)<sup>14</sup> paid a visit to Athens in 2023 to check Greece's situation regarding the protection of Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union. The document (DRAFT MISSION REPORT) contains the following observations about the rights of LGBTIQ people in the country:

In this exchange with several representatives of the civil society the following main points were raised: - marriage equality and the lack of legislation; - the lack of clear pathways for services in charge of affirmative action in view of equal treatment in Greece; - discrimination and access to health care system; it was noted that legislation was adopted by the current Government in some less controversial areas, but still lacking a lot in their content: psychiatric analyses are still required for gender legal recognition; partial prohibition of conversion therapies as it only applies to children and exclusion if performed by religious groups; - specific problems linked to LGBTIQ asylum seekers; - hate speech and hate crime, the dramatic under-reporting of cases on hate crimes (approx. only 1 in 25 cases is reported), not only as regards LGBTIQ people but also other vulnerable groups such as Roma; there is anti-hate speech legislation from 2014 in place but prosecution is inadequate; it is somehow tolerated to go publicly and speak against vulnerable groups such as LGBTIQ, migrants, Roma people etc.; severe concerns were expressed on the way the trial for the murder of the activist Zacharias Kostopoulos in 2018 was conducted and the clearing of all police officers involved in the presumed police violence; - In ICD-11 Greece is not aligned regarding de-pathologising trans people; - the fact that the anti-bullying law does not cover LGBTIQ people; discrimination in education system and the worrying phenomenon of bullying; the lack of adequate sexual education in schools; sexual orientation and gender identity are protected in every field with the exception of schools and in the work field; - the impact of a conservative society on the rights of LGBTIQ people and the need for support from authorities and EU bodies; funding is needed for social change campaigns; (European Parliament, 2023, p.4-5).

Thus, there is a series of domestic issues that still must be aligned with EU standards. Still regarding the rights of LGBTIQ people, it is important to mention the CoG's stance on this topic. In December 2023, Archbishop Ieronymos pronounced about the adoption of children by same-sex couples:

The church always believes in human freedom, but we will not allow the composition of society to change. How will a child who will take my communion tomorrow be? Therein lies the disagreement. What human rights will a child (of a

---

<sup>14</sup> LIBE, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, is a committee of the European Parliament (European Parliament, n.d.).

same-sex couple) have? Who's his mom, who's his dad? He will have two moms or two dads. We respect freedom for every person, but I do not allow it to change my way of life. On the issue of childbearing I disagree personally (Ieronymos *apud* EFSYN, 2023, n.p., my translation)<sup>15</sup>.

While the cases of human rights violations judged by the European Court demonstrate the perception of secularism and the status of the secularisation process in Greek society at the domestic level, the identity card case points out how Church-state relations in Greece acquire an international dimension.

In this sense, the Greek perception of the separation between politics and religion becomes an international issue as Greek norms and values conflict with a Western understanding of secularism shared and promoted by Western institutions such as the European Court and the EU. European. Therefore, we can observe processes of articulation in the Greek social imaginary which, in turn, is highly influenced by an Orthodox Byzantine cultural heritage, leading to the formation of social statements by religious sectors of contemporary Greek society.

The differences between these two understandings of the idea of secular, as well as the idiosyncrasies of the Greek social imaginary about Church-State relations, will be addressed again in chapter four, where discourse analysis will demonstrate these elements through a comprehensive perspective.

#### 4.5. Church-State relations in Romania

The establishment of the Romanian national state differed considerably from the Greek case due to political, economic, geographical and cultural elements. In the eighteenth century, the Danubian Principalities were under a (Christian) Greek Phanariot regime and were not directly administered by the Ottoman Empire (Jelavich; Jelavich, 1977). After the Ottoman conquest, Moldavia and Wallachia – as well as Transylvania – became autonomous provinces, rather than being incorporated into the Ottoman imperial system. These lands were not incorporated into the empire, as the Ottomans had other plans for these provinces: the empire's aim was to make them "buffer provinces" (Jelavich, 1983, p.99) so that they could provide defence against neighbouring powers, in addition to contributing to taxes and

---

<sup>15</sup> Η εκκλησία πάντοτε πιστεύει στην ελευθερία του ανθρώπου, δεν θα επιτρέψουμε όμως να αλλάξει η σύνθεση της κοινωνίας. Πώς θα γίνει ένα παιδί που θα κάνει την κοινωνία μου αύριο; Εκεί είναι η διαφωνία. Ποια ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα θα έχει ένα παιδί (ενός ομόφυλου ζευγαριού); Ποια είναι η μαμά του, ποιος ο μπαμπάς του; Θα έχει δύο μαμάδες ή δύο μπαμπάδες. Την ελευθερία τη σεβόμαστε για τον κάθε άνθρωπο, το να μου αλλάξει όμως τον τρόπο ζωής δεν το επιτρέπω. Στο θέμα της τεκνοθεσίας διαφωνώ προσωπικά.



agricultural supplies. To this end, the Ottoman government sought to "ensure that the Principalities did not become centers of intrigue" (Jelavich, 1983, p.100).

Consequently, the aforementioned principalities maintained their own institutions, and the native aristocracy remained in power maintaining political, social and economic privileges. A series of treaties maintained the autonomous status of the provinces vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire, a situation that would only change in the 18th century. Both principalities had autonomy in terms of foreign policy and internal administration, although the Porte regularly intervened in local elections by nominating candidates. Moreover, the principalities were also involved in their suzerain's wars (Jelavich, 1983). Therefore, the national movement in the Principalities had to handle two concerns: the fight against Ottoman rule, as well as the removal of the Greek Phanariot elite from that region (Jelavich; Jelavich, 1977). Figure 14 depicts the territories of Moldavia and Wallachia:

**Figure 14 - Moldavia and Wallachia**



Source: Jelavich (1983, p.99)

With the Phanariot regime, there was also a significant increase in Greek influence in the principalities: many Greeks became successful merchants and Greek families intermarried with the local aristocracy. It should also be mentioned that many Greeks went on to occupy high positions in the hierarchy of the local Orthodox Church; a fact that would eventually result in Greek dominance of the Romanian Church. The Phanariot rulers had the dream of restoring an Orthodox – although not Romanian – Byzantium in the principalities and went so far as to establish “a Byzantine island within the Ottoman Empire” (Jelavich, 1983, p.104). It should also be mentioned that under Ottoman suzerainty, the church in each Principality was under leadership of metropolitans that were under jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Leustean, 2014). By 1822, the Danube Principalities had already managed to get rid of the Phanariotes (Jelavich, 1983).

Tsarist Russia played an important political role in the process of forming the Romanian state. Russian influence in the Principalities was established mainly through the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji (1774), although Russia had already been participating in their respective internal policies since the beginning of the eighteenth century. The treaty allowed the Russians to speak on behalf of the Orthodox Christian population of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, it recognized Russia's right of intervention, which gave the Russians influence over many domestic political changes in the Principalities. The status of Orthodox institutions, as well as revolutionary movements, would be sources of friction in the relationship between Russia and the Principalities (Jelavich, 2004).

There was, however, resistance to the Russian protectorate and, during the 1840s, the Russian government had already made enemies in the Principalities. A change of habits had occurred: young Romanians coming from the aristocracy imported radical ideas from Western and Central Europe into the Principalities; many Romanian intellectuals and students "made Paris their spiritual center" (Jelavich, 2004, p.40), and eventually they would find themselves under the influence of concepts such as romantic nationalism and the notion of national liberation, as well as an interest in the origins of the Romanian people. In this context, Jelavich (2004) mentions a crucial point to note:

With their emphasis on the Roman and Dacian heritage of the Romanian people, they naturally tended to have an attitude toward Russia divergent from that of many in the older generation, some of whom saw Russia as an Orthodox brother and a useful balance to Ottoman control. In contrast, the Latin background of the Romanian nationality appeared to link the Romanian people, not with the Slavs, but with the French and the Italians. Moreover, like other revolutionaries of the period, the Romanians looked at tsarist Russia as the embodiment of political and social backwardness; France, in contrast, symbolized progress, reason, and beauty.

Educated in Western countries and deeply convinced of the validity of the revolutionary ideals, the emerging Romanian leaders were to reject the Orthodox, Ottoman legacy with its Russian ties and to stress their Roman and Dacian origins and the Latin basis of their language. The national program was exceedingly broad. The emphasis was on the ending of both Russian and Ottoman political control in Moldavia and Wallachia and the unification of these Principalities. Some, however, looked forward to the full union of what they regarded as the rightful Romanian lands, including not only these two provinces, but also Bukovina, Transylvania, and Bessarabia; Habsburg possessions, as well as Russian and Ottoman interests, were thus involved (Jelavich, 2004, p.41).

Although this phenomenon precedes the emergence of the modern Romanian state, I argue that this historical moment can be interpreted as a sign of liminality of Romanian society in terms of national identity and foreign policy. It is observed that Romanian identity was divided between two spheres of influence and two civilizational paradigms. On the one hand, Orthodox conservatism had originated from Russian influence; on the other, the idea of a Latin identity based on Dacian and Roman heritage, also highlighted by the Romanian language. As we will see in the next chapters, these elements of Romanian culture can be considered as aspects of a liminal identity.

The unification of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia into a single state occurred in 1859, although the term Romania would only be used in official documents of this new state in 1862. Colonel Alexandru Ioan Cuza was elected prince of Moldavia on 5 January 1859, and ruler of Wallachia on 24 January 1859. Cuza sought to promote internal unity in the Principalities through the founding of common institutions, the creation of a unified army, the establishment of Bucharest as the capital, as well as using Orthodoxy as an instrument to consolidate his rule in both Principalities (Leustean, 2014). According to Leustean (2014):

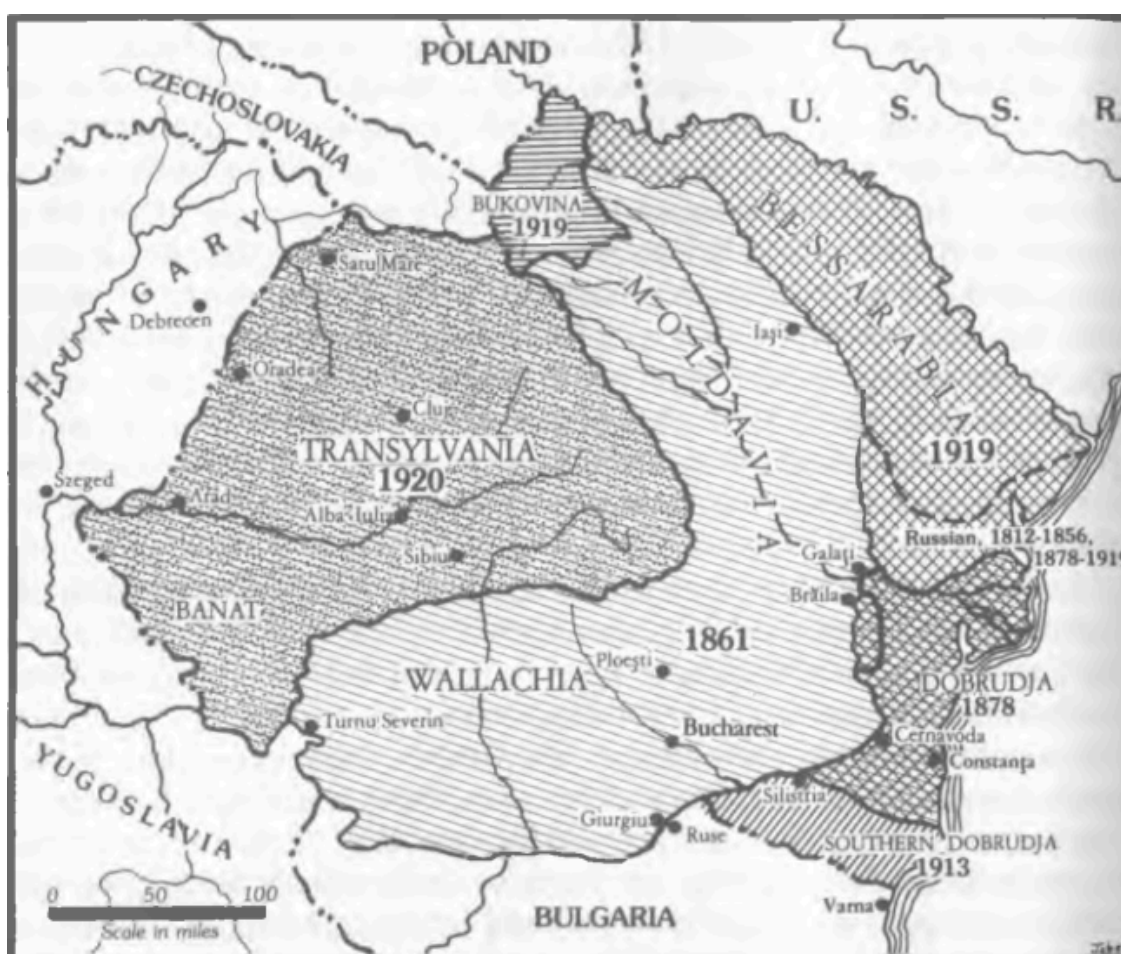
Cuza's political and religious reforms had an impact on the future development of church- state relations. He used the financial resources of the church to consolidate his state both politically and economically and to further popular measures such as state education and land reform. By confiscating church land and controlling the Orthodox hierarchy, Cuza acquired a major role in Romanian national consciousness especially after the First World War when the country expanded its territory. He was perceived as an authoritarian ruler who had managed to remove church land from Greek control and to acquire international recognition of the Romanian state. Moreover, his reforms showed that the church could become an important ally in building the Romanian nation- state; power over the church hierarchy gave Cuza overall control of the church and, indirectly, of the Romanian faithful (Leustean, 2014, p. 121-122).

A quarter of the territory of Wallachia and almost a third of the territory of Moldavia belonged to the Orthodox Church. In 1863, Cuza reduced the number of monks in the monasteries. The objective was to make the formation of new monks more difficult, since

approval from the Ministry of Religious Confessions would now be required, resulting in an expansion of Cuza's control over members of the church hierarchy. Cuza's political decisions were also aimed at reducing Greek influence in Romania (Leustean, 2014). Moreover, under Cuza's rule, another important reform consisted of a shift in liturgical language and the substitution of the Cyrillic alphabet with the Latin alphabet (Stan; Turcescu, 2007).

After facing opposition from conservatives and liberal radicals, Cuza was forced to abdicate in 1866. His political legacy in promoting the unity of Romania was continued by Prince Carol I. Under Carol I's rule, political control of Orthodoxy acquired an even more nationalist character: Romanian politicians began to use religious symbols to promote national unity, to transform historical figures into myths and also to make references to mythological figures highlighting their religious character. Figure 15 illustrates the creation and expansion of the Romanian modern state:

**Figure 15 - The expansion of Romania 1861-1920**



Source: Jelavich (1983, p.288)

Carol I's reign was marked by the use of Romanian religious and mythological elements in political speeches. Although he, a Catholic, did not convert to Orthodoxy, his children, as well as the future rulers of Romania were expected to adopt the official religion of the Romanian state, as established by the Constitution of Romania of 1866 (Leustean, 2014). However, it should be mentioned that the option to make Orthodoxy the dominant religion in the Romanian State was not trivial. Regarding the reasons for this political choice, Leustean (2014) mentions that:

The political regime continued to favor Orthodoxy as the dominant religion, and Romanian politicians felt the need to explain to other Europe countries why Romania supported the church and did not convert its population to a different Christian confession. In a letter to the French newspaper *L'Opinion Nationale*, Brătianu suggested that the attachment of the Romanian state to Orthodoxy and not Roman Catholicism was connected to two main points. Firstly, all Orthodox states that had achieved political unity had proclaimed their own national Orthodox Church independent from Constantinople. Brătianu emphasized the role of Orthodoxy in preserving the national identity of Romanians in the past and claimed that the new state had benefited from this religious dimension. Secondly, by preserving Orthodoxy as the state religion, Romania could have a strong political influence in the Balkans among the other Orthodox countries (Leustean, 2014, p.123-124).

Therefore, I argue that religion was present in the state-building and nation-building processes of the modern Romanian State. In both processes, the proximity between the State and Orthodox Christianity was expressed in different ways. Cuza's policies promoted a rapprochement between State and Church as the former gained control over the hierarchy of the latter. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the close relationship between politics and religion was also manifested through the use of religious discourses by Romanian politicians. I contend that, since the emergence of the modern Romanian State, religion already had a relevant role in Romanian foreign policy: an example of this is the political decision mentioned by Leustean (2014) who considered the international political context when defining Orthodox Christianity as the dominant religion in the country.

When approaching the State-Church relationship in Romania in that historical context, it is essential to analyse the role of the dominant religion in the Romanian Constitution of 1866. Article 21 defined that:

Freedom of conscience is absolute. The freedom of all religions is guaranteed as long as their celebration does not affect public order or good morals. The Orthodox religion of the Resurrection is the dominant religion of the Romanian State. The Romanian Orthodox Church is and remains unaffiliated by any foreign hierarchy, but maintaining the unity with the ecumenical church of the resurgence in terms of dogmas. The spiritual, canonical and disciplinary affairs of the Romanian Orthodox Church will be regulated by a single central synodal authority, according to a special

law. Metropolitans and diocesan bishops of the Romanian Orthodox Church are elected according to the method determined by a special law (Constitutiunea din 1866, n.p.)<sup>16</sup>.

Following a pattern of emergence of national churches in Southeastern Europe, a Romanian autocephalous church declared its independence. The first synod of the (united) Romanian Orthodox Church happened in 1865, and the ROC was officially recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1885 (Leustean, 2014). The influence of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the nation-building process occurred from the 19th century onwards, as the institution sought to integrate religion into the Romanian identity. Through a nationalist discourse, the Church endeavoured to establish a common identity among the populations of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, as well as Transylvania. Concurrently, the notion that the Church constituted a fundamental component of the Romanian identity was disseminated. It was upon this discourse that the Romanian Orthodox Church secured privileges over other religions in Romania (Stan; Turcescu, 2000). According to Stan and Turcescu (2000):

When national consciousness emerged in Eastern Europe the Church joined the bandwagon by positioning itself as pivotal for the very definition of 'Romanianism', a shared identity supposedly superseding Moldovan, Wallachian and Transylvanian regional allegiances. In doing so, the Church borrowed, and eventually monopolised, the Transylvanian Greek Catholics' nationalist discourse centred on the Latin character of the Romanian language and descent. This discourse appropriation gave the Orthodox Church growing moral and political legitimacy in the eyes of the Romanians, and more recognition from the state. Before communism took over the country the constitutional arrangements of the modern Romanian state recognised the Church as the national church, a privileged position which still fell short of full autonomy from the secular power (Stan; Turcescu, 2000, p.1468).

In the 1923 constitution, the Romanian Orthodox Church was granted the status of state religion, with the Greek Catholic Church being granted precedence over all other religious denominations (Stan; Turcescu, 2007). After Romania joined the communist bloc in the aftermath of World War II, the Romanian Communist Party considered the Church to be useful despite seeing it as a capitalist remnant. Considering that the Church was respected by the population, the communist regime decided to use the Church to further its political goals (Stan; Turcescu, 2000). Since the communists believed that it could serve their political

---

<sup>16</sup> Libertatea conștiinței este absolută. Libertatea tuturor cultelor este garantată întrucât în ziua sărbătoririi lor nu aduce o atingere ordinii publice sau bunelor moravuri. Religia ortodoxă a țării este religia dominantă a Statului român. Biserica ortodoxă română este și rămâne nealterată de orice schimbări de stare, păstrându-și în același timp unitatea cu biserica ecumenică a țării în privința dogmelor. Afacerile spirituale, canonice și disciplinare ale bisericii ortodoxe române, se vor reglementa de o singură autoritate sinodală centrală, conform unei legi speciale. Mitropolitii și episcopii eparhiale ai bisericii ortodoxe române sunt aleși după modul ce se determină prin o lege specială.

interests, the Church was not dismantled. However, the state controlled the Church, which led to a weakening of its role in society: it lost its rights when it came to conducting educational and charitable activities. Eventually, the state would transform the Church into an unconditional supporter of the regime and, in return, would tolerate ecclesiastical activities (Stan; Turcescu, 2014).

Despite the religious persecution under the communist regime, the ROC would not publicly denounce it. Instead, it condoned many of the government's actions against the Church. Moreover, the collaboration with the communist regime even included attempts of conciliating Orthodox theology with the Communist ideology. During the Ceaușescu government, anti-religious policies were carried out until December 1989, although some voices stood up to the government policies concerning the religious freedom in the country, such as Father Gheorghe Calciu Dumitreasa, who was arrested and exiled for criticising atheism (Stan; Turcescu, 2000). Although the Church never admitted to voluntarily collaborating with communist authorities, after the fall of Ceaușescu, the ROC was criticized for its support for the communist regime (Stan; Turcescu, 2000).

The end of the Communist period marked a new era for the ROC. Regarding the status of the Church in post-communist Romania, Stan and Turcescu (2000) comment that:

No analysis can ignore the Church's skillful use of nationalism to restore its prestige and strike a chord with Romanians. Its post-1989 discourse has underscored the link between Orthodoxy and Romanianism, and the importance of preserving the Romanian nation and identity in the face of growing modernisation, globalisation, secularisation and religious proselytism. Part of the nationalist drive was the June 1992 Synod decision to canonise 19 Romanian saints and to declare the second Sunday after Pentecost the 'Sunday of the Romanian Saints'. The inclusion of historical political figures fostered confusion between saints and national heroes, the more so since some canonised rulers were known more for their intrigues and cruelty than their saintly and Christian life (Stan; Turcescu, 2000, p.1472).

In post-communist Romania, one of the most important changes regarding Church-State relations was the November 1991 Constitution, which, as pointed out by Stan and Turcescu (2000, p.1474), was a product of "a largely secular society and self-declared atheistic politicians". The new Constitution did not mention the Orthodox Church, although it contains references to religion and provisions regarding its activities. Moreover, there were other significant changes: in order to be allowed to function, all churches must obtain state approval, and, just as before 1989, the Church was denied control in schools. In fact, the privileged status of the ROC before the Communist period was not restored, and, disappointed with the new Constitution and the fact that it was no longer the prevailing

religion of the Romanian nation, in 1994 the ROC declared itself as the “National Church”, which prompted criticism from the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches (Stan; Turcescu, 2000).

Post-communist Romania went through a religious revival, a phenomenon for this research since it may be considered a relevant social mechanism. Stan and Turcescu (2000) comment on the involvement of the ROC in public affairs:

Encouraged by the post-communist religious revival, the Church proved to be a constant public voice and a strong advocate for religious solutions to various civil issues. Some of the issues addressed by the Orthodox Church during the past decade include parliamentary representation for the Orthodox hierarchy, introduction of compulsory religion courses at all pre-university educational levels, upholding the ban on homosexual behaviour, an anti-abortion campaign, and the restitution of the property seized by the communist state from Greek Catholics and transferred to the Orthodox Church. (Stan; Turcescu, 2000, 1476).

The ROC sought political representation. Archbishop Anania – one of the most conservative Orthodox leaders – proposed that priests should be involved in politics by acting as electoral advisors to the public, and asked priests to convince believers to vote for candidates selected by the Church. Furthermore, Anania also requested the State to recognize the members of the Synod as senators, a demand that had already been made by the Church. A draft law was prepared by a group of Orthodox members who agreed with Anania’s proposal, but many Romanian politicians did not support it and it was not discussed by the parliament (Stan; Turcescu, 2000).

Another demand from the ROC was the establishment of religious education in the educational system at the pre-university level. However, with the education law of July 1995, religious education became compulsory only in elementary schools, being optional for high school level. Moreover, the Church also called of a revision of textbooks to ensure they were in line with Christian values.

The 1999 education law recognized religion as part of the "common curriculum", resulting in an ambiguity regarding the obligation of religious education in schools, since only mandatory subjects were common to all curricula and, at the same time, time, were optional for students. However, the Church stated in its internet documents that religious education was mandatory, thereby contradicting human rights conventions signed by Romania, as well as the Constitutional Court Decision no. 72 of 1995, which stated that the state should be responsible for organizing religious education in state schools, that no one could be forced to adopt religious beliefs that were contrary to their own beliefs, and that parents or legal



guardians had the responsibility to educate their minor children in accordance with their own beliefs. Regarding the human rights conventions signed by Romania, Stan and Turcescu (2007) mention that:

The court cited Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, stating that “everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance”; Article 18.2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which provides that “no one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice”; and Article 13.3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, according to which “the States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the state and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.” Article 9 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights supported a similar view. The court insisted that Article 9.1 of the Law on Education should be interpreted in strict conformity with Article 29 of the constitution, in the sense that “nobody can be constrained to adopt an opinion or to adhere to a religious belief that is contrary to the person’s beliefs” and that “parents and [legal] guardians have the right and responsibility to ensure, according to their own convictions, the education of their minor children.” For the court, any other interpretation was unconstitutional (Stan; Turcescu, 2007, p.157-158).

The Constitutional Court interpreted that religious education was “mandatory” in the sense that religion should be a subject of study in primary schools, but, with consent of their parents, students could choose not to study it. Emergency Ordinance no. 36 of 10 July 1997 amended article 9.1 of the law on education. It was therefore determined that students could choose not to study religion, however, they would be responsible for notifying the school if they wanted to request exemption from classes. Thus, studying religion was the default option (Stan; Turcescu, 2007). Stan and Turcescu (2007) argue that, as a consequence of this amendment, some parents could choose not to exempt their children from studying religion in schools, as this could create embarrassment for their children as they could suffer pressure from part of colleagues, in addition to being intimidated by priests, teachers and other members of the community.

The ROC also engaged in public debates concerning sexuality, including topics such as homosexual relationships, abortion and prostitution, issues that became divisive in Romanian society after 1989. In these debates, Romania's integration into the EU appeared as a relevant topic, and there were discussions involving religious leaders, politicians, academics and the media regarding the alignment of Romanian legislation with EU standards, including

changes in moral issues and the formulation of new laws regarding sexuality. Since this topic directly relates to Romania's entry into the EU, we must also address the country's adaptation to EU integration, and the problems faced by Romanian society about the issue of sexuality and human rights in a broader sense.

Romania became a full member of the EU on January first, 2007 (European Union, n.d.). When Romania formally applied for membership in the European community during the 1990s, Article 200 of the Romanian Criminal Code was not aligned with European standards of tolerance. The article – which was introduced during the Ceaușescu government – established the punishment of homosexual relationships, with a penalty of up to five years in prison, contradicting European legislation regarding non-discrimination and the recognition of minorities. The Constitutional Court asked legislators, the academic community, religious groups recognized by the State, administrative bodies and civil society to comment on the article. The Court's decision (Decision no. 81 of 15 July 1995) was to maintain the ban on homosexual relations, stating that all religious denominations, without exception, condemned homosexuality (Stan; Turcescu, 2007). However, the Court sought to reconcile Romanian legislation with European legislation:

The Senate rejected charges that Article 200 ran counter to the 1991 Romanian constitution and the European Human Rights Convention, while the academic community asked for more time to study the issue. Only the civil society groups asked for the ban to be scrapped. In its ruling, the Constitutional Court noted that Article 200, which banned any kind of homosexual behavior, ran counter to important pieces of international legislation the country adopted after 1989. To reconcile the Romanian Criminal Code with European legislation, the court ruled that Article 200 was unconstitutional 'to the extent that it refers to consensual sexual relations between adults of the same sex, not taking place in public and not producing public scandal.' The court's bold move paved the way for decriminalizing homosexuality (Stan; Turcescu, 2007, p.173)

Prime Minister Nicolae Vacaroiu's government initiated the modifications of the code, seeking to follow European standards, due to international pressure. After years of discussions, more liberal measures regarding homosexuality were established with Law no. 140 of 5 November 1996. The new version of article 200 provided for a penalty for homosexual activities if they were carried out in public or if they caused a public scandal; Moreover, "The article punished those 'inciting or encouraging a person to the practice of sexual relations between persons of the same sex,' as well as 'propaganda or association or any other act of proselytism committed with the same purpose.' (Stan; Turcescu, 2007, p.173-174), while not specifying what constituted a public scandal, as well as the exact boundaries between the private and the public behaviours (Stan; Turcescu, 2007).

In 1998, Prime Minister Radu Vasile's government adopted amendments to decriminalise homosexual behaviour, although, according to Justice Minister Valeriu Stoica, the main objective was to change the *de jure* status of homosexuality in the country, aiming to eliminate the Council of Europe's suspicions towards Romania. To avoid criticism from society, the government stated that "Article 200 had been scrapped as part of a larger drive to harmonize Romanian and European Union legislation that included lifting jail sanctions for calumny and decriminalizing the insult of public authorities" (Stan; Turcescu, 2007, p.174).

The changes proposed by Prime Minister Vasile came to the fore again in 2000, when Romania formally started accession talks with the EU. It should be mentioned that addressing the problem regarding discrimination against minority groups "became a formal commitment for Romania to enter Europe" (Stan; Turcescu, 2007, p.174). The ROC also took a position in this debate:

On 28 June of that year, deputies voted to decriminalize homosexuality, in accordance with Council of Europe Resolution no. 1123,10 which deemed the Romanian Article 200 discriminatory. Once the lower legislative chamber approved them, the changes were sent to the upper chamber for examination. To quash the amendments, the Orthodox Holy Synod met ahead of the debate in the Senate, with spokesman Archbishop Nifon of Targoviste announcing that the synod had decided to ask President Emil Constantinescu not to sign the changes into law, should the Senate also vote for decriminalizing homosexuality. Local gay rights activists set up a lobby in parliament and petitioned Patriarch Teoctist in a bid to temper the Orthodox clerics' wrath. Ultimately, the international factor decided the fate of Article 200. When it became clear that the Romanian political elite was ready to postpone eliminating Article 200 in the electoral year 2000, the Council of Europe threatened on 9 September 2000 to renew the monitoring of Romania's human rights record. Hours before the deadline, the Romanian bicameral legislative assembly passed the amendments (Stan; Turcescu, 2007, p.174-175).

Although all religious denominations were against the decriminalization of homosexuality, the Orthodox Church was the most vocal denomination regarding this issue. In 1998, a report published co-authored by Human Rights Watch and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission classified the Orthodox Church as "one of the most formidable opponents to decriminalizing homosexuality" (Stan; Turcescu, 2007, p.175). Prior to Romania's integration into the EU, the Church maintained a mostly positive stance regarding the country's accession. Although most of the Romanian population was in favour of the country's integration into the EU, there was never a serious debate about the consequences of integration for Romania. Thus, religious denominations took the lead in the debate regarding the pros and cons of integration. It is important to consider that:

The Romanian Orthodox Church was identified as the most formidable opponent to the country's bid to join the European Union, but one should remember that

denomination has led only a small flock of Euro-skeptics in the country. Western Europe as a home to secularization, privatization of religion, liberalization, and the loosening of family values and national traditions was perceived by clergy and their hierarchs as a threat to Orthodox values and accepted traditions in Romania. These apprehensions were coupled with a genuine concern that the predominantly Orthodox Romanians could remain second-class citizens in the predominantly Protestant and Catholic enlarged European Union. (Stan; Turcescu, 2007, p.207)

Archbishop Bartolomeu Anania – who had emerged as the leader of the conservative wing of the ROC – spoke about Romania's accession to the EU and criticized European values. For instance, in December 2003, Anania once argued that: “We find that the New Europe has only two dimensions, political and economic. [They are] very important, but insufficient. Both politics and economics can divide the people. The new Europe lacks two vital dimensions: religious and cultural.” (Anania *apud* Stan; Turcescu, 2007, p.207). In an article, he also stated that Europe should rediscover Romania, and not the other way around, and criticised the way in which Western European powers treated Romania as an inferior nation (Stan; Turcescu, 2010)<sup>17</sup>. Many Orthodox leaders – including Patriarch Teoctist – spoke out against homosexuality, with Bartolomeu Anania being the most outspoken on the subject. The ROC used state television to criticise the changes in article 200, defending traditional positions regarding sexuality and rejecting “any “Westernization” of Romanian mores (Stan; Turcescu, 2007, p.177).

In December 2006, one month before Romania's official accession to the EU, the Romanian parliament, in line with agreements signed with the EU, approved Law 489/2006 on Religious Freedom and the Status of Religious Denominations, under pressure from European institutions. and some Romanian parties (Guglielmi, 2021). Before this law, there was confusion about the legal status of religious associations and religious denominations. After the 1990s, specifications on religious life were guided by provincial Decree 177, which maintained the distinction between religious groups favoured by the state and groups that did not enjoy special status. According to Andreescu (2008), the decree, by placing religious associations and denominations under State control, enabled violations of religious freedom. For example: one of the decree's articles established that religious denominations must obtain State approval to promote congresses or conferences.

Decree 177 became unconstitutional after Romania implemented provisions regarding religious freedom established by institutions such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), since, according to

---

<sup>17</sup> This article will be thoroughly analysed in chapter four.

the Romanian constitution, International treaties signed by Romania take precedence over domestic legislation (Andreescu, 2008).

Furthermore, Law 489/2006 establishes the absence of a state religion. According to the text:

Art. 9 – (1) There is no State Religion in Romania; the State is neutral towards any religious persuasion or atheistic ideology. (2) The denominations are equal before the law and public authorities. The State, through its authorities, shall neither promote nor support the granting of privileges or the instatement of discrimination towards any denomination. (3) Public authorities shall cooperate with the denominations in matters of common interest and shall support their activity. (4) The Romanian State, through its jurisdictional public authorities, shall support spiritual-cultural and social activities carried out in other countries by denominations recognized in Romania. (5) The central public authorities can sign partnerships with recognized denominations, in domains of common interests, as well as agreements for regulating certain aspects specific to the tradition of denominations, which agreements shall be submitted to approval by law (Law on the Freedom of Religion and the General Status of Denominations, 2007, p.3).

It is also important to note that although the law recognizes that there is no state religion in Romania, the ROC is the only religious denomination explicitly mentioned in the text: “(2) The Romanian State recognizes the important role of the Romanian Orthodox Church and that of other churches and denominations as recognized by the national history of Romania and in the life of the Romanian society” (Law on the Freedom of Religion and the General Status of Denominations, 2007, p.2). As pointed out by Andreescu (2008, p. 157), “Although all denominations receive an ‘honourable mention’ for their contributions to Romanian society and the country’s history, the ROC is the only cult to be explicitly mentioned by name”. Still regarding the law, the author argues that:

Nevertheless, in sufficiently many respects the 2006 law is a satisfactory piece of legislation, devoid of provisions which could serve in the future to legitimate egregious violations of religious freedom. As its drafters and supporters have never tired of repeating, its content is similar to laws in established European democracies such as Austria or Belgium, and in more recent ones, such as the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Several dubious provisions (for example, disfavours schismatic groups, setting even higher standards for receiving the status of cult, the recognition of culte by the national legislature) and even a few outrageous ones (such as the notion that entry into the ranks of the clergy implies a partial waiver of the right of access to the civil justice system)<sup>21</sup> were eventually eliminated from the law. There is no mention in the new law of past practices such as the recognition by presidential decree of the heads of acknowledged denominations. Law 489/2006 is also the best piece of legislation on religious freedom that has been proposed so far in Romania, at least among those that stood any chance of being adopted. This suggests that civil society in Romania, and minority religious groups in particular, are now strong enough to resist at least some onerous impositions from the Romanian Orthodox Church (Andreescu, 2008, p.157).

So far, we have been able to notice how changes in Romanian legislation have affected the status of the ROC in the country. However, we cannot disregard the social legitimacy of the Orthodox Church in Romania. According to a research conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2017, Orthodox Christianity is the religion of approximately 86% of the Romanian population. Table 10 depicts the religious landscape of contemporary Romania

**Table 10 - The religious landscape of contemporary Romania**

| Orthodox | Catholic | Other Christian | Muslim | Other religion | Unaffiliated |
|----------|----------|-----------------|--------|----------------|--------------|
| 86%      | 5%       | 7%              | <1%    | 1%             | 2%           |

**Source:** Elaborated by the author based on Pew Research Center (2017, p.52)

Romania still faces problems related to human rights. For instance, there was an attempt to ban same-sex marriage in the country. A referendum was proposed by a civil society group called the Coalition for the Family, whose members define themselves as “upholding Christian and traditional values”. The group declared that the change was necessary to defend the family and preserve marriage. The referendum failed because the minimum number of votes was not reached: only 21.8% of voters turned out, whereas the referendum required at least 30%. Milena Veselinovic and Laura Smith-Spark (2018) quote the statement of a member of an LGBT rights group about the referendum: “‘Romanians rejected being divided and hating each other, it is a victory for Romanian democracy and moreover, Romanians rejected the involvement of the Orthodox Church in the state's secular affairs’,” said Vlad Viski of LGBT rights group MozaiQ. (Veselinovic; Smith-Spark, 2018, n.p.).

Furthermore, members of the European Parliament spoke about the referendum. According to Veselinovic and Smith-Spark (2018):

More than 40 members of the European Parliament wrote to Romanian Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă in the run-up to the referendum to express their dismay that the vote was being held at all. ‘Allowing this referendum to take place adds validity to anti-LGBTI rhetoric and encourages hate speech and violence against LGBTI individuals,’ they wrote. ‘We cannot allow that this legal limbo will place LGBTI individuals, including LGBTI children and children in rainbow families, in a vulnerable position and in flagrant violation of the fundamental right to non-discrimination as enshrined in the EU Human Rights Law. (Veselinovic; Smith-Spark, 2018, n.p.).

A survey conducted by Freedom House analysed the level of civil liberties in Romania. Faced with the question: "Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or non-belief in public and private?", the score given to Romania was 3 out of 4. The report states that:

Religious freedom is generally respected. While the Romanian Orthodox Church (BOR) remains dominant and politically powerful, the government formally recognizes 18 religions, each of which is eligible for proportional state support. Others can register as religious associations. There have been reports of discrimination and harassment against religious minorities, including vandalism in Jewish cemeteries and media articles referring to Islam and Muslim migrants as threats to Romania. The promotion of antisemitism was banned by legislation adopted in 2018. Some religious ceremonies were impacted by COVID-19-related measures. In the first half of 2021, the BOR criticized the government's decision to restrict or cancel major pilgrimages. Larger religious ceremonies were allowed to proceed after the government eased some pandemic restrictions in June (Freedom House, 2022, n.p.).

Forlenza and Turner (2019) comment on the conflicts between the ROC and the adoption of policies regarding human rights in Romania. According to the authors:

The Orthodox Romanian Church waged a battle against the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, prior to Romania's EU accession and ratification of the charter. Until then, homosexuality had been criminalized in the Romanian penal code. The cancellation of this provision was a prerequisite for Romania's accession to the EU—much to the anger and disappointment of the Romanian Orthodox Church (Ramet, 2006: 167–69). Homosexuality and gay rights have become one of the contested topics between Orthodoxy and liberal human rights supported EU institutions and charters. The rejection of LGBT rights has come to epitomize for many Orthodox churches their opposition to the liberal human rights regime as a whole (Stoeckl, 2014: 12–13). (Forlenza; Turner, 2019, p.15).

Based on the observations and data cited, we can observe that despite being a full member of the EU since 2007, Romania still faces problems involving the Church-state relations and the adoption of laws and treaties involving "Western" perspectives on rights. humans. Therefore, a relationship can be seen between the Orthodox perspective on the relationship between politics and religion and Western expectations regarding the legislation expected from an EU member country.

#### **4.6 Final remarks**

In this chapter, my objective was twofold. Firstly, I sought to provide a contextualization of the formations of religious and national identities in Southeastern Europe, to demonstrate how these processes directly influenced the political trajectories of Greece and Romania. In the second part, we were able to observe the domestic contexts of these countries from the nation-building and state-building processes. We saw how religion has been present in the political life of these nations since the emergence of their respective national states, and how Church-state relations have been built up to contemporary times.

The aim of this chapter was to highlight the main relevant historical contexts that may be pertinent to understand how Greece and Romania constituted themselves as liminal entities in the context of European integration, and how this liminal condition remains to this day. Now that we are more familiar with both cases, we can move on to chapter four, where we will see how this liminality is also constructed through speeches by Orthodox leaders regarding the integration of their respective countries into the EU.



## 5. CHAPTER 4 – CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND LIMINALITY IN ORTHODOX DISCOURSES

Thus far I have sought to demonstrate the liminal condition of Greece and Romania through a comprehensive analysis. This historical perspective of the processes of state-building, nation-building, and the construction of Church-state relations in these two countries allowed me to make inferences based on sociopolitical contexts, events that can be considered as relevant social mechanisms for understanding their respective liminal positions in the contemporaneity.

This chapter is dedicated to discourse analysis, in accordance with the terms presented in the introduction. For this reason, it is divided into two parts: in the first part, I will analyse the official documents of the negotiations between Greece and Romania and the European Union in regards to the integration of both countries into the institution, by applying content analysis as suggested by Pashakhanlou (2017); In the second part, I will look for representations in intertextual models through discourse analysis in terms of Hansen (2006).

I ought to demonstrate the processes of construction of the *Self* and the *Other* in Orthodox speeches made by religious leaders. However, throughout the chapter other issues relating to the Orthodox social imaginary will also be explored. As a starting point, I propose the following questions: 1- What is the perception of the Greek and Romanian Orthodox Churches regarding a supposed common European identity? 2- Considering the Orthodox perspective on the ideas of the secular, secularism and secularisation, what is the relation between *Self* and the *Other* in the speeches of religious leaders representing the GOC and ROC? And 3- What evidence of liminality can we find in Orthodox discourses on European integration?

Therefore, I propose an analysis guided by these three questions, analysing the selected speeches to find representations of political (and religious) discourses that may occasionally be juxtaposed and interrelated. Furthermore, attention should be paid to different constructions of identities, space and time, as suggested by Hansen (2006). The analytical focus, the object of analysis and the objective of the analysis were based on Models 1 and 2, as proposed by Hansen (2006).

## 5.1 Official documents – EU integration: what was demanded?

In this section, official documents related to the integration process of Greece and Romania into the EU are going to be analysed, including documents referring to the candidacy and adaptation of both countries to the demands of the EU. I will initiate this chapter with the “*COMMISSION OPINION of 23 May 1979 on the application for accession to the European Communities by the Hellenic Republic*”. In this document, in which the commission of the European Communities delivers a favourable opinion on the accession of the Hellenic Republic, there is only one brief mention to the topic of “human rights”. It reads as follows:

Whereas the principles of pluralist democracy and respect for human rights form part of the common heritage of the peoples of the States brought together in the European Communities and are therefore essential elements of membership of the said Communities (Official Journal of the European Communities, 1979, p.3).

At first glance, we could interpret this brief mention as being less important than the other sections referring to economic issues. However, in the Treaty on European Union, the issue of human rights is explicitly mentioned several times. Although Greece's accession to the EC precedes the document in terms of time, the Treaty of the European Union is still in force and applies to all member countries (as we saw, in the previous chapter, in LIBE's recent report on Greece). Therefore, in this sense, I shall quote the first two articles of the treaty, considering that article 1 (Common provisions) mentions the validity of the treaty, and article 2, which concerns the protection of human rights and, therefore, is particularly relevant for this analysis:

TITLE I COMMON PROVISIONS Article 1 (ex Article 1 TEU) (1) By this Treaty, the HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES establish among themselves a EUROPEAN UNION, hereinafter called ‘the Union’, on which the Member States confer competences to attain objectives they have in common. This Treaty marks a new stage in the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as openly as possible and as closely as possible to the citizen. The Union shall be founded on the present Treaty and on the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Treaties’). Those two Treaties shall have the same legal value. The Union shall replace and succeed the European Community (European Union, 2016, p.16).

The document states that the EU replaces the EC. Although this information may be considered obvious, it is important to take into account that, even though Greece's accession documents to the EC precede the founding of the EU, it is understood, based on this excerpt,

that all EU guidelines relating to human rights, democracy, diversity and rule of law also apply to Greece, even though Greece's accession documents to the EC do not mention these topics in the same way as they do here. These topics are mentioned in article 2:

Article 2 The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail (European Union, 2016, p.17).

Admitting that the treaty recognizes the diversity that exists among EU member states, article 2 establishes common values that must be shared by all states that have joined the EU. These values are also mentioned in the preamble of the document, where we can read: “DRAWING INSPIRATION from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law” (European Union, 2016, p.15). It is relevant enough to mention that, despite religion being vaguely present in the text, it isn't explicitly specified what the supposed European religious heritage actually is.

On the other hand, mentions of “human rights” are found more often in the text. Article 6 is specifically dedicated to this topic:

1. The Union recognises the rights, freedoms and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of 7 December 2000, as adapted at Strasbourg, on 12 December 2007, which shall have the same legal value as the Treaties. The provisions of the Charter shall not extend in any way the competences of the Union as defined in the Treaties. The rights, freedoms and principles in the Charter shall be interpreted in accordance with the general provisions in Title VII of the Charter governing its interpretation and application and with due regard to the explanations referred to in the Charter, that set out the sources of those provisions. 2. The Union shall accede to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Such accession shall not affect the Union's competences as defined in the Treaties. 3. Fundamental rights, as guaranteed by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and as they result from the constitutional traditions common to the Member States, shall constitute general principles of the Union's law (European Union, 2016, p.19).

The treaty establishes that the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union has the same legal value as the EU Treaties. Furthermore, it establishes a relationship between the EU and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. It is clear, therefore, that all countries automatically adopt such conventions and values once they become EU member states. Moreover, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union is also mentioned in the section “A. DECLARATIONS CONCERNING PROVISIONS OF THE TREATIES”:

1. Declaration concerning the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union  
The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which has legally binding force, confirms the fundamental rights guaranteed by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and as they result from the constitutional traditions common to the Member States. The Charter does not extend the field of application of Union law beyond the powers of the Union or establish any new power or task for the Union, or modify powers and tasks as defined by the Treaties (European Union, 2016, p.337).

In the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the aforementioned values will be introduced once again. Due to the relevance of the document, the preamble will be quoted in full:

The peoples of Europe, in creating an ever closer union among them, are resolved to share a peaceful future based on common values. Conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security and justice. The Union contributes to the preservation and to the development of these common values while respecting the diversity of the cultures and traditions of the peoples of Europe as well as the national identities of the Member States and the organisation of their public authorities at national, regional and local levels; it seeks to promote balanced and sustainable development and ensures free movement of persons, services, goods and capital, and the freedom of establishment. To this end, it is necessary to strengthen the protection of fundamental rights in the light of changes in society, social progress and scientific and technological developments by making those rights more visible in a Charter. This Charter reaffirms, with due regard for the powers and tasks of the Union and for the principle of subsidiarity, the rights as they result, in particular, from the constitutional traditions and international obligations common to the Member States, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Social Charters adopted by the Union and by the Council of Europe and the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union and of the European Court of Human Rights. In this context the Charter will be interpreted by the courts of the Union and the Member States with due regard to the explanations prepared under the authority of the Praesidium of the Convention which drafted the Charter and updated under the responsibility of the Praesidium of the European Convention. Enjoyment of these rights entails responsibilities and duties with regard to other persons, to the human community and to future generations. The Union therefore recognises the rights, freedoms and principles set out hereafter (Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2016, p.393).

Thus, the preamble states that human rights as well as the EU's "common values" must be preserved, while recognizing the cultural diversity and national identities of EU member states. Of all 54 articles that make up the Charter, two are of special importance for this research:

Article 8, "Protection of personal data" ("1. Everyone has the right to the protection of personal data concerning him or her"); 2. Such data must be processed fairly for specified purposes and on the basis of the consent of the person concerned or some other legitimate basis laid down by law. Everyone has the right of access to data which has been collected concerning him or her, and the right to have it rectified;

[...] Article 10, "Freedom of thought, conscience and religion" (1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observation)" (Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2016, p.395).

These two articles are important to understand two particularities of the Greek case: 1 – The controversy regarding the removal of religion from identity cards and 2 – The situation of non-dominant religious denominations in Greece, as well as the ban on proselytism in the country.

The analysed documents also help us to better understand the challenges faced by Romania in implementing policies regarding human rights. In the document "*COMMISSION OPINION of 22 February 2005 on the applications for accession to the European Union by the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania*" (2005), there are also mentions of human rights and the protection of minorities, issues that the country has faced since its accession to the EU, as pointed out in the last chapter:

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Article 49 thereof, Whereas: (1) The Republic of Bulgaria and Romania have applied to become members of the European Union. (2) In its opinions of 15 July 1997 on the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania, the Commission has already had an opportunity to express its views on certain essential aspects of the problems arising in connection with these applications. (3) The European Council meeting in Copenhagen in June 1993 laid down for the first time the political, economic and *acquis* criteria for membership, that have guided the accession process and the Commission's regular assessments of the readiness of the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania. The political criteria require the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania to ensure the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the respect for and protection of minorities; these requirements are enshrined as constitutional principles in the Treaty on European Union and have been emphasised in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The economic criteria require the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. The *acquis* criterion refers to the ability to take on the obligations of membership arising from the Union's legislation, the *acquis communautaire*, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union (Official Journal of the European Union, 2005, p.3).

The preamble of the document makes particular mention of article 49 of the Treaty on European Union. Article 49 reinforces the relevance of Article 2 and the importance of the commitment of candidate countries to the adoption of common EU values:

Any European State which respects the values referred to in Article 2 and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union. The European Parliament and national Parliaments shall be notified of this application. The applicant State shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after receiving the consent of the

European Parliament, which shall act by a majority of its component members. The conditions of eligibility agreed upon by the European Council shall be taken into account. The conditions of admission and the adjustments to the Treaties on which the Union is founded, which such admission entails, shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the applicant State. This agreement shall be submitted for ratification by all the contracting States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements (European Union, 2016, p.43).

Once again, we see the significance that the EU attributes to the adoption and protection of human rights. Although the documents address numerous issues, given the scope of this research, I shall focus on the sections mentioned above. Based on what has been presented, I would like to return to the allegory of rites of passage that I proposed in Chapter 1. Observing the mentions of human rights present in the Treaty on European Union and in the accession treaties of Greece and Romania, we can consider these conditionalities as being part of a rite of reintegration. Based on Turner's (2008) observations, there are similarities in these documents that allow us to draw a parallel with the conditionalities imposed on a person during the liminal phase of a rite of passage.

In this sense, we can observe a series of demands made to preliminary entities which, in turn, must accept all the conditionalities imposed in a passive or acquiescent manner. However, as we saw in the previous chapter, this "resistance" to accept all these conditionalities is precisely what maintains and reinforces the identities of these States compared to those whose "re-aggregation" has already been completed and are in compliance with the imposed terms.

It is important to highlight that I do not want to imply that non-Orthodox EU countries are fully in agreement with EU policies regarding the common values proposed in the treaties, nor that Western European countries are exempt from human rights violations. I argue that what distinguishes countries with an Orthodox majority such as Greece and Romania is precisely the relationship between national identity and religion, elements that directly imply the difficulty of these states in adapting to common EU values, such as, for example, the protection of human rights of minorities. I do not mean that the liminality of Greece and Romania is limited to these two aspects. Instead, I contend that these are some of the themes that highlight the liminality of these countries in the context of European integration because they are often found to be related to the Orthodox identity of these countries. In this sense, the Church-State relationship and Orthodox identities are elements that characterise the liminality of Greece and Romania because the Orthodox social imaginary articulates issues such as secularism and human rights also through religion, that is, these social issues are not perceived as secular matters that must be seen as being external to the cooperation between

Church and State.

Therefore, although Greece and Romania are already EU member states, by not adapting to the institution's expectations, both states end up perpetuating their liminal condition. Thus, now that we have seen the terms established by the EU for the integration of candidate countries, in the next part of the chapter we will observe how the EU and the regional integration process is perceived and constructed discursively by Orthodox religious leaders.

## **5.2 Discourse analysis – Orthodox constructions of the EU**

The analysed speeches present commonalities despite being situated in different historical contexts. A shared aspect was the construction of the Self and the Other, often characterised by a sense of ambiguity. In the speeches, references to the national identities of Greece and Romania were recurrent. Therefore, attention should be given to the construction of these identities and how they are articulated through the association of meanings. Firstly, I shall initiate the analysis by demonstrating how Greece is constructed in the speeches of Archbishop Christodoulos:

It is necessary, however, for us to reflect on the question, what is Europe and who is a European. From the answers given up to today none have been as concise and simple, but also exact, as that given by Paul Valery, when he spoke to students at the University of Zurich. He explained that "the European person is not determined by his race, language, or nationality, since Europe is the motherland of many languages, nationalities, and traditions. The European, he added, is whoever belongs to a people that has embraced the Roman rule of justice, comprehends well Greek education and has accepted and assimilated Christian teaching". In other words, Rome, Athens, and Jerusalem consist of the three-part foundation of Europe's spiritual life, with emphasis on Christianity, which was the greatest in size than the others. But also the well-known English philosopher of History, Christopher Dawson expresses the same affirmation with other words. He writes: "If Europe owes its political existence to the Roman Empire, if it owes its strength and direction of its culture to Greek education, then it owes to Christianity its spiritual entity". He adds, "It is difficult for one to imagine that an unvarying European consciousness can exist, with all those nations and races, with all those languages and customs, if a continuous presence of the Christian Church did not exist" (Christodoulos, 1999a, n.p.).

In this passage, Greece is associated with the category "Christianity" (in a broader sense), which is constructed as a significant criterion for belonging to a supposed European civilisation. Historical arguments are presented to reinforce this belonging to Europe and to categorise Greek culture as indispensable for the formation of Europe as a cultural space. This construction of the Greek Self based on historical discourses about Greek identity can be found in various speeches. For instance:

As a matter of fact, before Christianity, the term “Europe” denoted merely a geographical concept, it signified merely one specific region. At first, it was the name of an area of Greece, also known as Epirus. The first geographer, Hecataeus from Miletus used the term Europe to denote the region which extends from the embouchure of the river Danube to the Iberian peninsula. The term Europe is found for the first time in a text by Sulpicius Severus of the 4th century AD, no longer as a geographical concept but as a unitary formation: after expressing his admiration for the ascetics of the East, the Roman chronicler adds that “our Europe too has found its place in the economy of salvation by means of its saints”. However, more centuries had to go by before Christianity could triumph, more work needed to be done before Europe could be formed as a distinct entity. Around 950 AD, the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus speaks of Europe with the pride that one has when one speaks of one’s own homeland: “It is reasonable that Byzantium should be at the head of the land called Europe, given that it is a city both reigning over and surpassing the entire world”. And he adds confidently: “indeed, I regard it as the head of Europe because Byzantium itself is the most beautiful and most honourable part of Thrace” (Christodoulos, 2003a, n.p.).

This excerpt illustrates two processes present in Archbishop Christodoulos’ speech: the construction of two Greek “selves” – the European and the Byzantine – and the process of associating this identity with attributes linked to the “European Union” and the idea of “West”. However, while Greek positive identity is constructed by being associated with a supposed common European identity, we can also identify a process of differentiation with the categories “Europe/European Union”. This negative identity is based on Greece’s Orthodox/Byzantine identity and its religious heritage, which has not been entirely shared with Europe throughout history. Moreover, we can also observe a differentiation of Greek Orthodox identity based on two dichotomies: the “Orthodox”/“non-Orthodox”, and the “religious”/“non-religious”.

Processes of identity construction can also be found in speeches from Metropolitan Bartolomeu Anania, where Romania is constructed as a bastion of religious values in the face of a non-religious and non-Orthodox Europe/EU. The representation of Romania as a European country can be found in both of Anania’s analysed speeches. For instance, in a speech titled “Ce Ne Oferă Europa?”<sup>18</sup>, we can find a justification for the country’s belonging to Europe:

I reflected more deeply, contemplating our times, wondering if the process (of Romania’s admission into Europe) is not prolonging, if Dostoevsky’s vision has not transcended communism. God has helped us, and we have escaped the burden of communism through the sacrifices of December ’89, entering into another era. However, here we have another perspective: if we faced the Bolshevik East, this time we are turning our face towards Western Europe (which self-defines as “Europe” itself and invites us to join it, as if we have never been Europeans). On this matter, if I must make a parenthesis, and I want to make it, I wish to affirm that we

---

<sup>18</sup> What does Europe offer us?



have always been Europeans and that it cannot be a question of our "entry" into Europe but rather of finding ourselves in Europe, or more precisely, of Europe finding itself in us (Anania *apud* Porunca Iubirii, 2006, p.81-82, my translation)<sup>19</sup>

However, here we can identify a re-signification or a specific notion of "Europe". The category "Europe" is expanded to include the Romanian Self. In this sense, this Romanian Self is constructed based on two differentiations: the "Bolshevik East" and Western Europe, thus establishing Romania as a nation located between East and West and, at the same time, possessing its own identity.

Morality, although not explicitly stated, is also one of the primary attributes identified in the process of differentiation between Romanian society and the West/Western Europe. In speeches made by members of the CoG and the ROC, a process of articulation of meanings is evident, particularly regarding the ideas of "religion/Christianity", morality, traditionalism, and national identity, especially about the constructions of the (Orthodox) Self and the (European) Other. Moreover, tradition is portrayed in the discourse as the foundation of Orthodox Christian morality, in contrast to a secular Europe whose identity is portrayed as non-religious.

This non-religious identity of Europe is also found in another speech by Anania, entitled "Despre Europa"<sup>20</sup>:

I want everyone to know. We will undertake economic and political reforms, but all of these will not bear fruit if we do not undertake the moral reform of the Romanian people! Let us eradicate deceit, theft, robbery, and the winding path from our country. As soon as moral order is established throughout the state apparatus and in all social strata, despite our poverty, we can truly aspire towards Europe. But I would like to say a word that should be heard well: we are Europeans by geography, by history, and by vocation. We are in Europe; it's about entering European structures, and we are ready to do it, and the Romanian Orthodox Church and its children have declared it loudly and clearly. WE are in Europe! We face a new Europe that is being proposed to us, but I would like to say it clearly: EUROPE, not Sodom! (Anania *apud* Barbu et al, 2021, p.3)<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Am meditat mai adânc gândindu-mă la vremurile noastre, dacă nu cumva procesul (de admitere a României în Europa) se prelungește, dacă nu cumva viziunea dostoevskiana a mers dincolo de comunism. Dumnezeu ne-a ajutat și am scăpat de povara comunismului, prin jertfele din Decembrie '89, intrând într-o altă eră. Iată însă că avem o altă perspectivă: dacă ne-am confruntat cu Răsăritul bolșevic, de data aceasta ne îndreptăm cu fața către Occidentul European - care se autodefiniște drept "Europa" însăși și care ne invită să intrăm în ea, ca și cum noi n-am fi fost niciodată europeni. În privința aceasta - dacă trebuie să fac o paranteză și vreau să o fac - doresc să afirm că noi am fost întotdeauna europeni și că nu poate fi vorba de o "intrare" a noastră în Europa, ci de regăsirea noastră în Europa, sau mai precis de regăsirea Europei în noi.

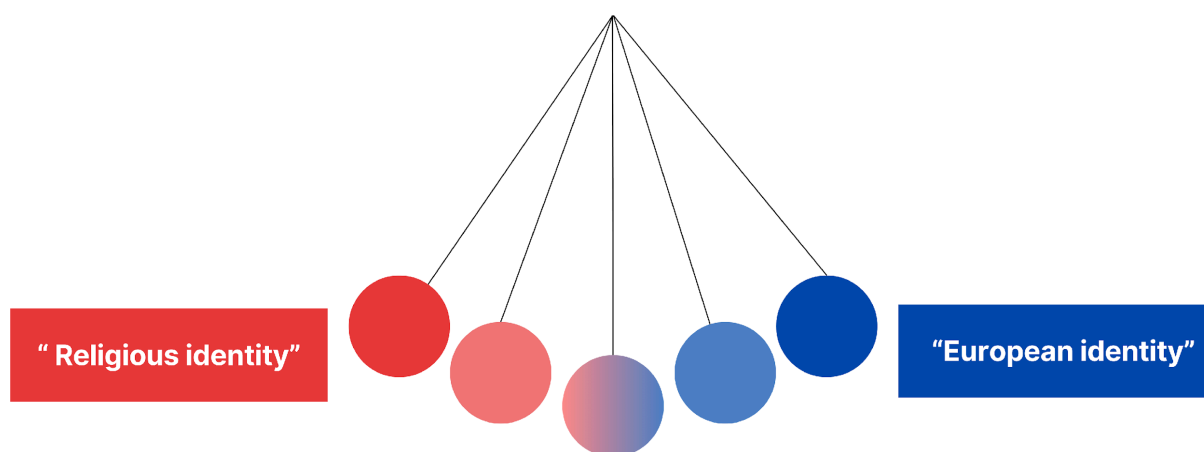
<sup>20</sup> About Europe.

<sup>21</sup> Aș vrea să știe toată lumea. Vom face reforme economice și politice, dar toate acestea nu vor avea roade dacă nu vom face reforma morală a poporului român! Să stărpim din țară minciuna, hoția, tâlhăria, drumul ocolit. De îndată ce se va instaura ordinea morală în tot aparatul de stat și în toate straturile sociale, cu toată sărăcia noastră putem într-adevăr să aspirăm către Europa. Dar aș spune o vorbă care sș fie auzită bine: noi suntem europeni prin geografie, prin istorie și prin vocație. Noi suntem în Europa, este vorba să intrăm în structurile europene și suntem gata să o facem, iar Biserica Ortodoxă Română și fiii ei au declarat-o sus și tare.

In this brief speech, we can find once again an articulation of meanings, specifically about the definition of Europe. This articulation establishes a construction of Romania's Orthodox identity. In this process, another representation is also constructed: Europe and the EU as distinct categories. Thus, the construction of Romanian identity happens through the process of differentiation – the (Romanian) Self in face of the (“New Europe”) Other. At the same time, the Romanian identity is related to a justification for the country's belonging to Europe and the EU. Thus, multiple Romanian identities are constructed in this speech.

Furthermore, regarding Romanian identity: “history”, “geography” and “vocation” are the main attributes represented as being the foundation for the construction of the Romanian (European) positive identity. However, “religion” in a broader sense, and “Orthodoxy” are not associated to the category “Europe” nor to the notion of “Romanian identity”. In this sense, the construction of a “European Romanian identity” is not associated to Orthodoxy. This trend was observed in most of the analysed texts: when the scope or focus of the discourse is Church-State relations, Orthodoxy/Byzantium are the main categories of identity construction. Figure 16 indicates the “pendulum movement” identified in the constructions of Orthodox identities found in the speeches:

**Figure 16 - Different identities found in the analysed speeches**



Source: Elaborated by the author

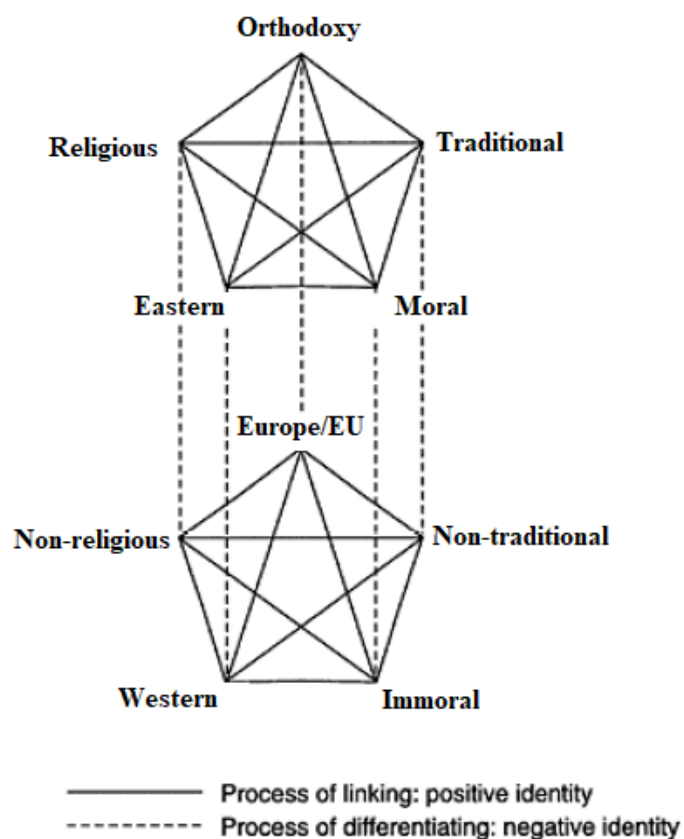
In both Greek and Romanian discursive contexts, the construction of identities occasionally takes on a contradictory character. On one hand, Greece and Romania are

---

SUNTEM în Europa! Avem în față o nouă Europă care ni se propune, dar aş vrea să spun răspicat: EUROPA, nu Sodoma!

portrayed as "European" countries, primarily based on cultural criteria. However, it is important to note that at certain moments, the differentiation between the Self and the Other is established when the Orthodox Christian identity becomes the main identity marker. In these cases, the differentiation between the Orthodox Self and the European Other establishes a new – or even multiple – positive and negative identities. Therefore, multiple representations are formed in different speeches, and also within the same speech. Figure 17 shows the main pillars of identity formation in the analysed speeches.

**Figure 17 - The linking and differentiation of “Orthodoxy” and “Europe”**

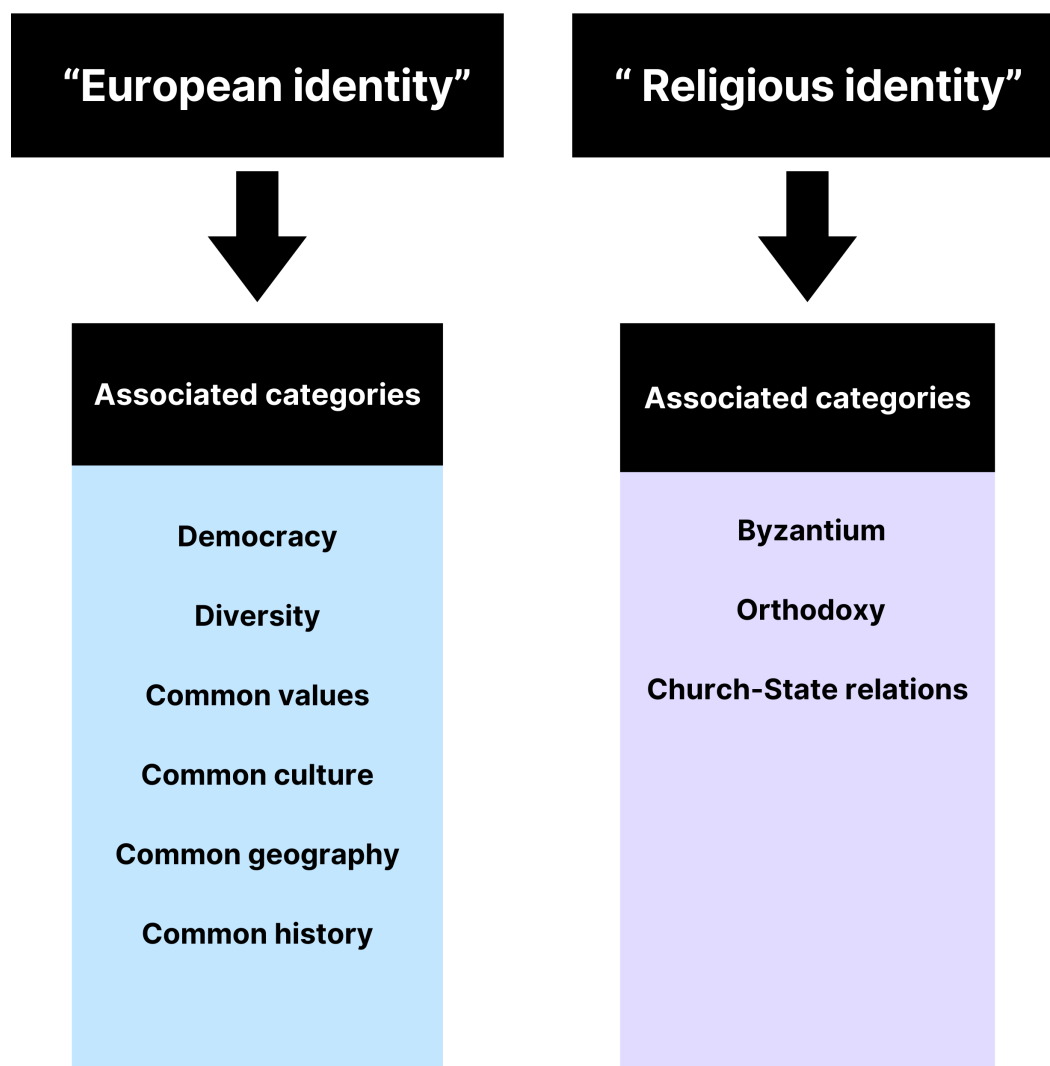


**Source:** Adapted from myr from Hansen (2006, p.38) and based on Christodoulos (1999a; 2003; 2006),  
Anania *apud* Barbu et al (2021), Anania *apud* Porunca Iubirii (2006)

Therefore, based on the analysed speeches, I argue that the European and the Orthodox identities of Greece and Romania are often fluid and highlighted according to the context and the scope of each speech. In the context of European integration, the identities of both countries follow a “pendulum movement” within an ambiguous spectrum: at certain moments,

belonging to a “European” civilization is the primary criterion of identification, whereas in other contexts, Orthodoxy is the main marker of identity. Figure 18 shows the main categories associated with each one of these identities.

**Figure 18 - Categories associated to each type of identity**



**Source:** Elaborated by the author

Hence, multiple selves and identities can be found in the analysed discourses, especially regarding the processes of linking and differentiation with the ideas of “Europe” and “European Union”. For example: in one of Anania's speeches (1998), an example of this process of differentiation between the Orthodox self and the Western/non-religious/Orthodox other can be found: “We do not expect spirituality from the West because it does not have it”

(Anania *apud* Porunca Iubirii, 2006, p.82, my translation)<sup>22</sup>, in which, once again, the Romanian self is constructed based on the idea of religiosity, a process that results in a separation between the ideas of “Romania/spirituality and the West”.

### 5.3 Orthodoxy and (or in) the EU?

In the analysed material, the national Orthodox Churches are portrayed as being supportive regarding the integration of their respective countries into the EU. Furthermore, a common point in the analysed speeches was the argument of a supposed contribution offered by Orthodoxy to the European integration project. This argument seems to be related to the (previously mentioned) process of construction of the Orthodox Self, and the differentiation between a religious and spiritual Greece/Romania in the face of a non-religious EU. Regarding the role of Orthodox Churches in the European integration, three trends can be identified in the analysed texts: the moral/spiritual contribution of Orthodox Churches to the EU, the role of Orthodoxy in the construction of a common European identity, and the adaptation of the Orthodox Churches to the integration process.

As previously mentioned, the supposed spiritual/religious contribution of Orthodoxy seems to be related to the contrast between the religious self and the non-religious other. Some excerpts can illustrate this characterization. In the speeches analysed, we can find mentions of historical speeches referring to the belonging of Greece and Romania to Europe associated with the belonging and role of Orthodoxy in European integration. On the one hand, there is a discourse that defines both Greece and Romania as “European” countries, both in discourses favourable to and critical of European integration. For example, in speeches by Archbishop Christodoulos, Greece's European identity was associated with a supposed justification for the country's membership in the European Union:

It is indeed a great honour for the Church of Greece, the Church of a member State of the European Union since 1980, to welcome the President of the European Parliament, an institution that functions and is based upon the fundamental principles of Democracy, religious freedom, dialogue and mutual respect, that is to say, upon common values of the European Union and European society. Indeed, our Church attributes great importance to the concept of a united Europe and plans to honour, with special celebrations, the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, which laid the foundation for the establishment of the European Union.[...] Your statement that "the European Union, it is true, has some difficulties with integration; we all have to be aware that our diversities are a source of wealth. It is our responsibility to interlink them to give the EU greater cohesion and a

---

<sup>22</sup> Nu așteptăm spiritualitate din Occident, pentru că nu o are.

meaning, so that each citizen can be proud of belonging both to his or her country and to Europe," is indeed characteristic. It is precisely on these very same lines and on this very same path that our Church charts its course. Putting forth and projecting the all-embracing values that spring from the Christian message, we declare that the Christian Churches of Europe participate in, contribute positively to, and are deeply and essentially concerned with the future of the European Union. The recent failure of the proposed Constitutional Convention demonstrated the void that exists between the peoples of Europe and the greater need for transparency on the part of Europe's institutional organs (Christodoulos, 2006, n.p.).

Additionally, we can also identify a Greek identity being associated with common "values" of the EU and of a "European society", along with a supposed Western cultural heritage which is shared by Greece and the EU. Moreover, in some speeches, we can find mentions to Biblical texts and arguments regarding the history of Greece:

The Apostle of Jesus came to Greece, stopping first at Samothrace, a place of mysterious worship, at that time, of paganism of the Greek spirit. This was not by chance, since when he had just passed over to Philippi his first action was to remove from a young girl the "spirit of the python" (Acts, 16:16) which she had; that is, to eliminate from her the spirit of clairvoyance. With this miraculous intrusion, Jesus Christ revealed then for the first time the new role of Hellenism, its new mission. Thereafter during the messages of the Delphi oracle in Greece "Foivos no longer has a place to live, nor a laurel crown, and furthermore the crowing water has been quenched". The shrine of Apollo is abolished, the oracle is silent, and the Hellenes will serve the word of God. Today at the start of the third millennium, those Greeks and that Word in the form of Orthodoxy are called to confirm their presence within a United Europe attesting that Orthodoxy has both a role and a word in our common European being (Christodoulos, 1999a, n.p.).

We can observe that the historical facts cited by the speaker work as a foundation for arguments regarding a justification for Greece's belonging to Europe/the EU, while also emphasizing the relevance of Orthodoxy to the spiritual formation of Europe. This can be seen as a strategy by the speaker who intends to justify Greece's presence in a community of European nations. In the following paragraph of the same speech, we find once again the contrast between the ideas of a secular or non-religious EU and the importance of Christianity/Orthodoxy for the formation of the EU:

Certain neo-Greek intellectuals think that a United Europe is a judicial region, where Christianity is forbidden or is a miasma. In reality the European Union is a creation of Christian spirituality and cannot be understood except as an expression of the holy Christian teaching. Others again, patrons of anti orthodox myths, believe that the European Union was exclusively the offspring of Roman Catholicism. They either ignore or they do not want to realize that for many centuries the Church was one, united, and even after the Schism, the Orthodox East continued for many centuries to spiritually irrigate the West. It contributed with its scholars to the European Renaissance, and so the decision of the Roman Catholic Church was right to proclaim as the Patron saints of Europe on one hand, Saint Benedict, the Hellenistic reformer of western monasticism, who has been acknowledged as "the

corner-stone of the European Union's structure", and on the other, the two missionaries from Thessalonica, Saints Cyril and Methodius, who struggled "as Greek representatives of Latin to the Slavs against the Franks", to prevent the penetration and estrangement by the Franks, and with their missionary work they planted the seed of Christian and Orthodox teaching in all of Europe and in that way, became the deacons and apostles of European consciousness. Just as in the Byzantine Empire, in the West also the Christian world always had as its cause a unified European country, a Christian state. That cause was an inseparable part of the social teachings of the Church (Christodoulos, 1999a, n.p.).

In other passages, we can also notice a discursive construction of Orthodoxy as a bastion of spirituality in the EU. This argument also justifies the importance of the Churches' actions in the formation of a common European identity and their relevance for the EU itself. This discursive construction can also be observed in the following excerpt:

Educated Europeans today feel imperative the necessity to receive from Orthodox Greeks, messages of an ecclesiastical, social, and community ethos, that will teach and be problematic. The European community has arrived at the impasse of death. As an ark of our race, the Church must struggle to develop and protect the spirituality of the Greeks in Europe. It is not necessary for us to become teachers to foreigners. It is enough for us to show with our way of life and our behavior how we are influenced by the principles of our faith. They appear by themselves, without our pursuit. Its role (Church) is not and must not be in competition with the State. Preserving our national identity, the Church helps our State in self-understanding that is a factor of strength and spontaneity. The European Union, if it wants to survive, must broaden its previous efforts to find a spiritual pedestal for the unity of its peoples. Only Christian faith by priority can secure that kind of base, and moreover by its most genuine and pure expression, that is Orthodoxy. Its longing today in Europe is sensed and the obligation of the Orthodox is to place our treasure, our common property, without conceit and vanity, and without fanaticisms and intolerance. The Greek Oikoumene (world) did not exist only as a vision of life; it existed as the "immortal water" of the continuous essential presence and our contribution to civilization and humanity. And now is the time to prove it again (Christodoulos, 1999a, n.p.).

Here we can acknowledge the construction of identities, with religion (Orthodoxy) being the main identity marker. Furthermore, we also see the Orthodox discourse that establishes cooperation between State and Church as being fundamental to social life. In this excerpt, the Greek Orthodox identity, and not the European one, is highlighted, and Greece is associated with its Byzantine heritage, and not with "European values", as we have seen in other excerpts. The differences between the Greek Orthodox self and the European other become much more visible when these elements appear in the texts and are associated with the ideas of morality/religious values, modernity/modernization, secularisation and globalisation. In the speech "The Society of People in the Time of Post-Neoterism, of Holisticity and of Globalization", there is apparently a juxtaposition between different discursive formations regarding these themes:

Besides with Globalization the necessity of the individualism of peoples is withdrawn permanently from the stage of history, and not only the walls of ideas are abandoned, that at other times separated and distinguished cultures and the peoples, but also their individual characteristics. This new tendency is strengthened more and more, and cultivates the leveling of everything, and creating conditions of insignificance of all the characteristic signs of cultures and ideologies. Globalization means a common vision and outlook based on the choices of the powerful. Withdrawal and perhaps the disappearance of localization, that exists within our daily lives and traditions that nurture the trees of our lives with their juices. Holisticity, in that way, and Globalization are removed from local traditions, religions, languages, forms of expression of all people, and foresee in the construction of a New Age where none of these will be distinguishable by the people anymore. It has to do with syncretism, the merging of religions, cultures, traditions that existed in history as the forerunner of the abolition of the entire world. [...] The entire world thus becomes not only a neighborhood in many other ways of communication, economy, politics, but also a family in a cultural aspect. This is already a desirable pursuit for Europe with the establishment of the 4th Portal, as a spiritual basis for the unity of its peoples. And this is because man as we know him up to now does not have many hopes of survival. And here arises the question, what must be done? How can man hope today that he will not become pulp within the melting pot of his remodeling? How can people keep their individuality, the substantive elements of their entity? Can we hope that the self-determination of every person as his self understood individual right could become respected? Is there a report in the Christian Churches of Europe for the salvation of modern man? Can we hold on somewhere in order not to stoop down, and become swept away into the loss? Are there any chances of hope? Can the Christian Churches of Europe offer positive assistance to drowning man? Does the Orthodox Church of Greece have any possibilities of offering? (Christodoulos, 1999b, n.p.)

Even though implicitly, the discourse establishes a relationship between the categories Europe, globalisation and non-religiosity, in contrast to a Greece whose identity is associated with characteristics such as “Orthodox” and “traditional”. In the following paragraph of the same text, Greece is constructed as a country that resists a supposed religious decline experienced by Western Europe. Furthermore, there is also an ambiguity regarding Greek identity: at the same time, discourses referring to Greece as a European country and its Eastern Byzantine identity are mentioned:

It is not easy to always give a convincing answer to those questions. Europe is going through a deep spiritual crisis, that is determined by religious syncretism or relativity and the philosophical fatigue, the absence of new things that are occurring now in the West give rise to depressing ideologies for the future of our western civilization. When “Christian” countries forbid public prayer in the schools in order not to distress those who disagree, when “Christian” universities teach theology together with satanism, when one sees the extent of child prostitution in our “Christian” societies, when discrimination finds the territory to develop there, then the need for direct confronting of the situation is understandable. The Christian Churches of Western Europe struggle to restrain the flow of alienation that’s sweeping the European Christian civilization and the European people; to keep the situation within the controlled framework; to remind about the need for the people to return to traditional values of a forgotten and pillaged civilization. I follow closely those admirable attempts, and I am saddened about the relatively small response that they



have in the formation of a new image. When I spoke with western European responsible members of the church, I witnessed their anxiety for responsibility that they realize in themselves for the future of that world. Also for the expectations they rely on Orthodoxy of the East for the transfusion of new blood of Christian genuineness in the body of the wounded by the alienation of Western Christianity (Christodoulos, 1999b, n.p.).

Once again, we can observe a “pendulum” movement in Greek identity, highlighting its Orthodox identity. Although in most of the speeches – especially in Christodoulos' speeches – Greece's European identity was reinforced, it can also be argued that there are, in the Archbishop's speeches, variations with regard to the perception of the idea of Europe. Moreover, we can see in this excerpt an implicit mention of supposed social effects that may be associated with the secularisation process experienced by Western Europe.

Albeit in this discourse the self includes the category (our) “Western civilization”, these supposed effects of secularisation are seen as a threat to the Orthodox self: the ban on obligatory prayer in public schools, as well as other supposed problems, are challenges that must be addressed, faced directly. In this sense, we can recognize, one more time, the construction of the Western Europe as secular compared to an Orthodox Greece that defends traditional Christian values. The spiritual contribution of Orthodoxy appears through an allegory, that is, a “blood transfusion” coming from the Eastern Orthodox to Western Europe. Furthermore, while the self is classified as being part of Western civilization, the enunciator establishes a division between a religious East and a problematic and spiritually alienated West.

In a more recent text, entitled “Orthodoxy in Europe, and not Orthodoxy and Europe”<sup>23</sup>, published on March 1, 2023, on the official website of the Representation Office of the Church of Greece in Brussels, there is also mention of historical discourses referring to history of Greece and Christianity:

In this perspective, the role that the Orthodox Church and theology are called to play in the European context becomes prominent, serving as a decisive part of the European becoming and culture rather than being opposed to European civilization. Orthodox Theology perceives the world and history as a space open to the surprises of God and humanity, open to new things. That's why Europe can have a future. Europe has a future, but that future always passes through the other. And for Christian Europe, the other is every human being on Earth, regardless of race, color, gender, and other distinctions. The divisive and polarizing past of Europe cannot eliminate the possibility of a prosperous future. Respect for diversity is a prerequisite for society and the only way for diversity not to become a sterile self-reference (Κατσιάρα, 2023, n.p., my translation).

---

<sup>23</sup> Ορθοδοξία στην Ευρώπη (και όχι Ορθοδοξία και Ευρώπη).

In this text, we find similarities with Christodoulos' speeches, among which we can mention: the historical-cultural contribution of Greece to the cultural formation of Europe, and the role of Orthodoxy in the context of European integration. We can detect, once again, a contradiction regarding the belonging of Orthodoxy to "Europe". This contradiction is expressed through the separation between the categories "Orthodox Church" and "European civilization", constructing Orthodoxy as being external to Europe in civilizational terms. Additionally, it can be observed an attempt to reconcile the Orthodox Byzantine cultural and religious heritage with the EU integration project through the construction of a broader identity, based on the category "Christian Europe".

Similar strategies and discourses can also be found in texts referring to Romania. In the speeches of the current Patriarch Daniel Ciobotea analysed here, we can find discursive strategies similar to those present in the speeches referring to State-Church relations and the purpose of Orthodoxy in the EU. In a speech given prior to Romania's entry into the EU, entitled "The Orthodox Church And The New Europe: Ecumenical Experience And Perspectives", intertextualities can be found in regard to different discourses, such as, mentions of categories like "integration", "East-West axis", "secularisation", among others:

The reserved attitude of some of the orthodox people towards the EU has several causes: 1. the memory of the religious and cultural antagonism between the Orthodox East and the Catholic and Protestant West, caused by the ancient division of the churches, by the Greek Catholicism, and by contemporary religious proselytism;<sup>1</sup> 2. the consequences of the ideological habitude opposing the two sides of Europe, the Western side, a rather capitalist side, and the Eastern ex-communist side as a consequence of education and propaganda during the Cold War and during the political blocs; 3. the present economic gap between Western countries and those in Central and Eastern Europe; 4. the lack of necessary and accurate information regarding the nature, structures, principles and aims of the European Union; 5. the fear of a totalizing and secularising integration, which would flatten and homogenise different cultures and identities for the global economic and strategic advantage (Ciobotea, 2008, p.167-168).

In this excerpt, we can see elements of linking and differentiation between two distinct identities, or selves: the "Orthodox people" and the "European Union", in addition to a territorial and identity dichotomy between East-West. Social phenomena are mentioned – such as the process of secularisation process and Orthodox anti-Westernism<sup>24</sup> – as well as

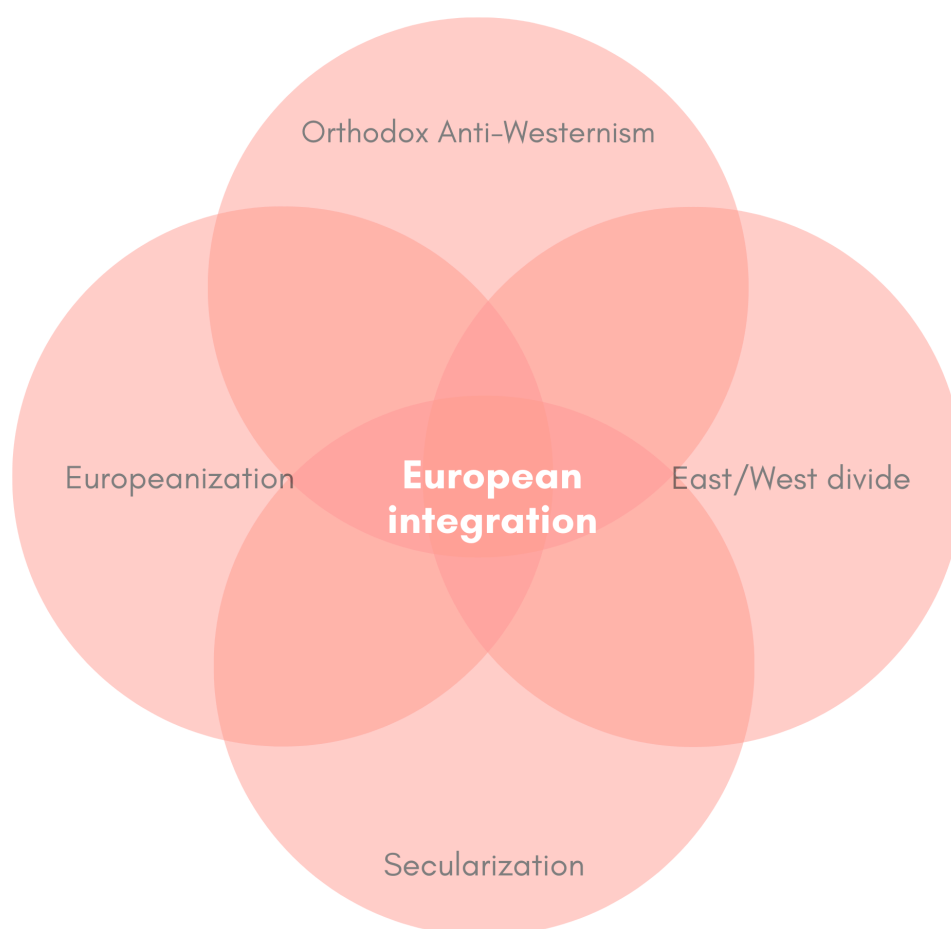
---

<sup>24</sup> This mention by Cibotea of "Orthodox anti-Westernism" was made through a footnote to the text, which reads as follows: "See Vasillios Makrides and Dirk Uffelmann, *Studying Eastern Orthodox Anti-Westernism: the Need for Comparative Research Agenda*, in the collective work *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*, ed. Johnatan Sutton, Wil van der Berchen, Peeters, Leuven-Paris-Dudley, MA 2003, 87-120." (Ciobotea, 2008, p.167).

historical discourses about socioeconomic differences associated with the division between Eastern and Western Europe.

Moreover, we can observe an association between the ideas of “fear” (on the part of the Orthodox population) and “secularising integration”, which results in the discursive construction of an Orthodox population vulnerable to European integration which, in turn, tends to homogenise cultures. In this sense, we can also identify an intertextuality between the discourses on secularisation and Europeanization, and, in the text, these categories are associated, thus establishing a “secularising European Union”. The process of secularisation is also constructed as a threat not only to religions, but also to cultures and identities. Based on this association, we can identify a connection between the meanings of religion, culture and identity. Figure 19 illustrates the intersection between different discourses in the analysed speeches:

**Figure 19 - Intersection between discourses regarding European integration**



**Source:** Elaborated by the author based on Ciobotea (2008)

In the speech entitled “Importance of Church-State cooperation in the European context”, different historical moments regarding the trajectory of Church-State relations in Romania are mentioned, as well as references of historical discourses on Orthodox and Romanian identities, in a broader perspective:

According to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), as amended by the Treaty of Lisbon of 2007, ‘The Union respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States’ (article 7, paragraph 1 TFEU). Thus, ‘recognising their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organisations’ (article 17, paragraph 3 TFEU). Therefore, in the European Union there is no ‘European model’ for the relationship between religious communities and the political authority, but the legislative systems in force in the EU Member States oscillate from a radical separation to an almost complete identification between a particular religious community and a State. At the same time, the European Union aims to engage in dialogue with religious denominations so that they may express their specific contribution to the European construction. Today there are four Member States with a majority Orthodox population in the European Union (Greece, Cyprus, Romania, and Bulgaria), where Autocephalous Churches are organised and operate, while in other Member States there are important Orthodox communities organised ethnically as autocephalous (Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia) or autonomous (Finland and Estonia). Also, in some Member States there are consistent Orthodox communities organised ethnically as diaspora (Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Belgium, and Austria). Romania, with a population of 16,307,000 Orthodox believers, is the largest country of the European Union with a majority Orthodox population (Ciobotea *apud* Ionițe, 2019, n.p.).

In this excerpt, we can note an argument regarding the contribution of Orthodoxy to European integration once more, specifically regarding the idiosyncrasies of Church-state relations in Orthodox civilizations. Here, Romania's European identity is not highlighted; instead, the construction of the Romanian self is based on Orthodoxy – being the largest EU member state with an Orthodox majority – attributing centrality to the country's religious context and the Romanian model of Church-state relations, in addition to the self-constructed based on differentiation between Romania and the Other which, in this case, are the EU member countries in which there is a “radical separation to an almost complete identification between a particular religious community and a State” (Ciobotea, 2019, n.p.).

Regarding the strategies employed by the speakers, these differ from those used by Metropolitan Bartolomeu Anania. Historical events are also used as a basis for argument, however, the differentiation between the self and the other is made differently. While the discourses present in Anania's texts established a more explicit difference between Romania and Western Europe (and the idea of “West”), in Ciobotea's texts, this relationship between

the self and the other appears in a less explicit way. However, the pendulum movement of Romania's identity is also present in the Patriarch's speeches:

In the Orthodox majority states, the Church-State relation originally followed the Byzantine principle of *symphonia*, that is, harmony, understanding and cooperation between two distinct institutions, which are united by the common social life of the people in their double status as citizens of the State and believers of the Church. In the Byzantine perspective on society there were two hierarchical systems, one of the Church and the other of the Empire, coexisting in the same space, confessing a single faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, and pursuing the same purpose: the union of the visible world with the invisible God. However, the two hierarchical systems of the State and the Church were conceived and understood as different and distinct, and any attempt to combine them proved to be unfortunate. In this regard, a good example of the relationship between the two hierarchical systems was given by the *Epanagoge* or the *Eisagoge* (a codification of the Byzantine law promulgated in 886), in which legislators distinctly juxtaposed the two systems, without combining them. Hence, in the Byzantine Empire, although the Church cooperated closely with the imperial authority, it kept its autonomy as regards ecclesiastic activities. However, the Church-State *symphonia* has never been symmetrical in the sense of equality of the two institutions, but almost always asymmetrical, because the Church has always been organized and operated in the State and was constantly praying for state authorities (Ciobotea *apud* Ionițe, 2019, n.p.).

Historical and theological discourses related to Byzantine cultural and spiritual heritage are mentioned, establishing a contrast with non-Orthodox EU countries. We can see that, once again, Byzantium is seen as the main reference of Romania's religious identity and the main attribute in the category of differentiation between the Orthodox self and the non-Orthodox Other. This can also be seen in the following paragraphs:

This historical fact illustrates the Orthodox teaching that the Church manifests itself in human society, which is organized in a political community, that is, the place of the Church is always within the State. This relationship between the Church and the State is based on the Orthodox teaching that the Church is both a spiritual, sacramental or mystical reality, and an institutional, social reality, and man – as a subject of history – belongs to both the Kingdom of Heaven and to Caesar's Kingdom (Matthew 22:21). From a practical point of view, this relationship takes place between certain limits and is based on mutually invoked prerequisites. Therefore, the Orthodox model of the Church-State relationship includes both Church autonomy in its relation to the State and their distinct and limited cooperation in a spirit of mutual respect. According to Orthodox ecclesiology, the Universal Church is defined as the communion of Autocephalous Churches that are in dogmatic, sacramental and canonical unity with each other. In practice, autocephaly represents the canonical status of a local Church that enjoys full church autonomy and has the right to choose its Primate (πρῶτος – *primus*) by its own Synod of Bishops without any external interference. Consequently, the autocephaly of a local Church is also an expression of the concept of freedom in communion, that is, the freedom of local Churches towards one another, while preserving at the same time the unity of faith, sacramental life and canonical discipline (Ciobotea *apud* Ionițe, 2019, n.p.).

Considering that, in this text, there is an intersection between different discourses referring to the history of Orthodox Christianity and the history of Romania, mainly respecting the State-Church relations, it is possible to argue that the discourses construct not only a self associated to the Romanian identity, but also an Orthodox self, established through the process of differentiation with the EU. We can also observe, in the speeches of Patriarch Daniel, as well as in the speeches of Archbishop Christodoulos, the argument of a supposed spiritual contribution of Romania to European integration.

The argument in relation to the spiritual contribution of Orthodoxy to the EU highlights and reinforces Romania's Orthodox identity, through the differentiation between the “religious” and the “non-religious” (as demonstrated in Figure 17). Once again, the argument regarding Romania's spiritual contribution to the EU can also be found in the text “The Orthodox Church And The New Europe: Ecumenical Experience And Perspectives”. Considering the recurrence of this argument, it can be understood that the ideas of spirituality and religiosity, often attributed to Romania, are essential attributes of Romanian national identity, and the same can be observed in the Greek case. For instance, we can also observe the relationship between Church-state relations and national identity in one of Daniel Ciobotea’s speeches:

The current Romanian legislation on Church-State relationship therefore reflects to a certain extent the fact that Romania is the only country with a majority neo-Latin population of Orthodox tradition, belonging to the Christian East through its ecclesial life, but also to the West through its Latin linguistics. This unique specificity represents the personal responsibility of Romania to contribute both spiritually and culturally to the promotion of cooperation in the European Union, especially in terms of good cooperation between the State and religious denominations (Ciobotea *apud* Ionițe, 2019).

In this excerpt, the arguments regarding the Orthodox contribution to the EU is linked to the categories “Church-State relationship”, while also being related to Romanian national identity. As in one of Anania’s speeches, Romania is constructed as a nation located between East and West. Moreover, attention should be paid to the fact that this ambiguous or hybrid character of the Romanian identity is also linked to the Romanian “uniqueness” regarding the Church-state relations. Thus, an identity is constructed based on Romania’s unique identity, which, in turn, justifies the Romanian model of Church-state relations in the European context.

#### 5.4 Orthodoxy on the threshold of the EU

Having observed the constructions of selves in the analysed discourses, we can now pay attention to the discursive construction of liminal identities in Orthodox discourses, especially touching the liminal condition of Orthodoxy in the context of European integration. I argue that the liminal condition of Greece and Romania regarding their religious identities, associated with their respective models of Church-State relationship, appears in the discourses in two primarily ways: 1 – Through arguments referring to the belonging of these States to the EU and the idea of Europe in a broader sense; and 2 – An ambiguity and the absence of a precise definition in regards to the categorization and classification of their respective national identities as being part of the West or the Orthodox East.

In the texts analysed, arguments about the belonging of Greece and Romania to Europe/EU were related to the European identity of these States. At times, the European identity of Greece and Romania appears as a justification for EU membership. Likewise, speeches that contest this European identity were also found in the texts. Below we will see some excerpts that mention those contradictions.

In Archbishop Christodoulos' speeches, we can find some passages in which Orthodoxy and Greece are constructed as being on the margins of the European integration project. Firstly, attention must be paid to the way in which European identity is constructed and is associated with the membership of Orthodoxy and/or Greece in the EU. At certain times, when highlighting Greece's European identity – a discursive construction that we have already seen in previous topics – the speaker presents historical and cultural arguments in order to categorise Greece as a legitimately European country. This implies the discursive construction of who can be considered European through the process of differentiation and, consequently, which nations are eligible to be members of the EU.

Thus, one of the signs of liminality is related to Greece's national identity. For example, in the text entitled “Europa Nostra”, a message addressed to the University of Craiova in 2003, we can find the following excerpt:

Before I begin my talk, let me wish you from the bottom of my heart: welcome to the European Union! Welcome to the organisation of modes of government of Europe, of which you have been a member and a co-author for centuries. I do not attempt to flatter you with these qualifications. I truly believe that Europe is the home of all her peoples, that there are no first-rank and second-rank Europeans, and that unless we all understand (sic) this, then constituting the European Union will have no future nor any particular point. The Church of Greece will continue to raise her voice in all European fora, so as to support the full integration of your country into the European Union. And this she will do because the Romanian people, with

its deep-rooted Christian consciousness, its evident Roman roots, and its manifest European orientation, is a people we need in the European Union. (Christodoulos, 2003b, n.p.).

Firstly, we must note the mention of a discourse that establishes first and second rank Europeans. Although the enunciator claims that such an idea does not exist, the fact that he mentions this argument indicates that this speech has already been given or heard in some circumstance. By denying the validity or existence of this classification, the enunciator recognizes that it exists or existed at some point, and the denial of this discourse is related to the belonging of Greece and Romania to the EU.

In this sense, we can see that this argument establishes a dialogue with discourses that set up a spectrum of “Europeanness”, in which some countries may be more European than others. Thus, a broader European identity is constructed, establishing Greece and Romania as being equal to other European nations. Furthermore, we must consider that this speech is situated in the context of European integration and, for this reason, the denial of the speech of first and second rank Europeans refers to the entry of countries like Romania into the EU. Considering this context, some categories are used as a basis to reinforce Romania's European identity, such as “rooted Christian consciousness”, “Roman roots” and “manifest European orientation”, with Orthodoxy not being explicitly mentioned as one of these identity categories.

Here I would like to establish a dialogue with Rumelili's (2003) argument in her article entitled “Liminality and Perpetuation of Conflicts: Turkish-Greek Relations in the Context of Community-Building by the EU”. In her text, Rumelili (2003) demonstrates, through discourse analysis, how Greece and Turkey find themselves in liminal positions in relation to Europe and, consequently, both States begin to represent a threat to each other. The author argues:

In short, the community-building practices of the EU helped perpetuate the conflicts between Turkey and Greece by situating them in different and also precarious positions with respect to ‘Europe’. Not only the construction of Turkey as different from and threatening to ‘Europe’ compounded the sense of difference between Turkey and Greece, but also the need to validate their identities as European encouraged representations of their identities as different from and also threatening to each other. In other words, instead of rendering the differences between Turkey and Greece less salient, the community formation process in Europe made them more pronounced and relevant (Rumelili, 2003, p.224).

Although this argument itself does not apply to the case analysed in this thesis, I intend to adapt it to my analysis to demonstrate how Greece and Romania assume a liminal



position in the analysed discourses. I intend to adapt Rumelili's (2003) argument regarding the liminal position of Greece and Romania within the EU, specifically through their national and religious identities. Considering that, in the analysed speech, the enunciator seeks to reject the idea of an “inferior” identity of Greece and Romania, I argue that the justifications present in the analysed excerpt are a response, albeit implicit, to speeches that classify both countries as being “less European”.

In this sense, it is possible to infer that these justifications referring to the European identities of Greece and Romania are based on a liminal condition of these States about their respective national identities. Taking the Greek case as an example, analysed by Rumelili (2003), we can note that throughout history, Greece has been on the margins of the EU in some aspects:

In addition, the precarious position of Greece within Europe has further reinforced the constitutive and constraining effects of the EU's community-building discourse. Even though a member, as a state situated on the periphery of the European community, economically and politically as well as geographically, Greece has not enjoyed a secure European identity. As the poorest EU member, and as the recipient of the highest per capita EU aid, Greece has been represented by other states in the EU as a drag on the European economy (Featherstone, 1996), unable to fully ‘Europeanize’ and act in a ‘communitaire fashion’ (Pettifer, 1996). (Rumelili, 2003, p. 223)

Furthermore, considering the religious focus of the speech, in addition to the excerpts previously analysed in this chapter, we can observe that this liminal condition encompasses the national identities and also the religious identities of these States. Thus, through the denial of a discourse that somehow diminishes certain countries within the scope of the EU, the analysed excerpt also presents a denial of the liminal condition of these States by reinforcing the European character of their respective identities, justifying the belonging of Greece and Romania to the EU. In the cases analysed in this thesis, we can perceive the construction of identities through discourse that aims to reinforce the belonging of both States, as well as Orthodoxy itself to Europe, to deny or change their respective liminal conditions in the EU structure.

In the speech "The Word and Role of Orthodoxy in the European Union", we also find the speech of an Orthodoxy on the margins of the EU, where the enunciator establishes this liminal identity. For example:

Unfortunately, it is true that at that time, Orthodoxy could not have the completely vital role that it wanted and should have in the building of the European consciousness as a community of nations, languages and traditions. We well know

that after the Schism, but also before it, its dogmatic difference from the Roman Catholic Church was the main barrier in the development of that contribution. And of course, it is incorrect that following the Schism, the Orthodox Church was totally cutoff from Western Europe. Up to the 12th century, schoolbooks translated from the corresponding Byzantine were taught in the schools. Knowledge of Greek on the other hand, remained a firm value in the educational horizon of the West, while at the same time, many Eastern Orthodox, anonymous teachers of literature and art collected in the West long before the Fall of Constantinople. Despite this, an obstacle existed that sufficiently restrained the attempt as well as the intention of Hellenism and Orthodoxy for a clear and strong participation in the building of spiritual foundations in the European Union (Christodoulos, 1999, n.p.)

In this excerpt, we can observe a discursive construction of Orthodoxy as not having been a protagonist in the construction of Europe but having indirectly contributed to the formation of a “European consciousness”. Historical discourses are presented once again as arguments for the inclusion of Orthodoxy in the “European self”, while the differences between Western Europe and Eastern Orthodoxy are reinforced. In this sense, there is a contradiction between this discourse and the discourse referring to the non-existence of first and second rank Europeans in the context of European integration, since here we recognize a distance, a low participation, and a lesser contribution of Orthodoxy to the “foundations spiritual” of the EU.

Another important point to be mentioned is the fact that, in this discourse, the main category used to differentiate between the self and the other is religion. The opposition in question is not just Greece versus the EU, but rather the relationship between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Europe (or the “West”). It is understood, therefore, that, here, Orthodoxy is represented as its own civilization that was alienated from the historical trajectory that led to the construction of the EU.

In this sense, in Christodoulos' speeches, the boundaries between self and other are not always clear and well established, causing Greek and Orthodox identities to fluctuate and be represented in an ambiguous way. At the same time as we seek to build a European identity, at certain times the Orthodox self appears as being external to European/Western civilization. Considering that this Orthodox self includes countries such as Greece and Romania, it is possible to infer that not only the national identities, but also the religious identities of these States are a relevant attribute when taking into account the criteria of belonging and exclusion from the EU as a common cultural space. The differentiation between Orthodoxy and Western Europe based on religious attributes also appears in the following paragraph of the same speech:

Unfortunately, Orthodoxy could not proceed completely on the shaping of Western Europe because of negative propaganda and prejudice of the European person, who

looked at Orthodoxy as an odd irresolution. On the one hand, he admired the ancient Greek civilization and on the other, with contempt, he ignored Byzantium. Moreover, western Christianity was identified with the Enlightenment, which today drains its limitations leading to an impasse on its path. The northeastern Europeans also felt incredulity and suspicion for the Greeks. The adventures of the saint, Maximus the Greek are characteristic. And even though he was acknowledged as “the man who for the Russian national consciousness has the same role that Luther has for the German”, and the Russians considered him equal to the great Fathers of the Church, he died in suffering martyrdom (Christodoulos, 1999, n.p).

In this excerpt, there is yet another differentiation between the categories “Europe” and “Orthodoxy”, by establishing “European people” as being those Western Europeans who have a negative and prejudiced view of Orthodoxy. Furthermore, this speech recognizes once again the secondary role of Orthodoxy in the formation of Western Europe, with the last excerpts cited presenting speeches that concern an approximation of Orthodoxy in relation to (Western) Europe after a historical separation. At the same time, there is a construction of the Orthodox self as being compatible with Western European identity insofar as the enunciator presents historical arguments in order to establish common attributes and characteristics shared by both Europe and Orthodoxy. This construction of a common identity can be analysed as a form of justification for the belonging of Orthodoxy in the European integration project.

Representations of liminal identities can also be found in speeches by Metropolitan Bartolomeu Anania. In the speech “What does Europe offer us?”, we can find, in addition to the already mentioned speech of Romania's European identity, a speech that represents a vision of Romanian identity as being ambiguous. For example, in one excerpt of the text, there are mentions of speeches that implicitly mention a supposed Western view of Romania:

It's difficult for us to be treated like primitives, with all our poverty, forgetting that if we are poor and backward today because of communism, it's also because the West almost freely handed us over to it. These things are known. I believe the West has no right to humiliate us, as it has tried and continues to do; without getting into politics, I must underline our country's increasingly dignified attitude in this European context. We don't expect spirituality from the West because it doesn't have it. Sometimes we are treated as "Balkanians," forgetting that we are north of the Danube and geographically not part of the Balkans. So what if we were? Alexandru Paleologu says that, after all, even if we were Balkanians, what's shameful about that? Plato, Aristotle, and Sophocles were Balkanians. And I would add: the entire theological doctrine of Thomas Aquinas relied on Aristotle, a Balkanian. And when it comes to civilization, we should remember that around the year 1000, the Byzantine emperors and princesses had marble baths, while the courtiers of Charlemagne were scratching themselves from lice and scabies.emphasise (Anania *apud* Porunca Iubirii, 2006, p.82, my translation)<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Ne e greu sa fim tratați ca niște primitivi, cu toată sărăcia noastră, uitându-se că dacă suntem astăzi săraci și înapoiți datorita comunismului, este și prin faptul că Occidentul ne-a livrat, aproape gratuit, acestuia. Lucrurile acestea sunt știute. Cred că Apusul nu are dreptul să ne umilească, așa cum a încercat și încearcă;

Anania's text references multiple discourses on Romanian national identity. There is a response to a discourse of superiority of the “West” over Romania that classifies the country as primitive and backward, in addition to, again, a differentiation between a spiritual Romania versus a West that does not have spirituality. Furthermore, two points must be considered. Firstly, the enunciator's response to the speech that establishes Romania as a Balkan nation. At the same time that this identity is denied, there is a hypothetical acceptance of it which, in turn, is associated with Byzantium, and not with the West.

As in some of Archbishop Christodoulos' speeches, here Byzantium appears as the foundation of Romanian identity. It is also important to note the use of the term “civilization” to refer to Byzantium, built with attributes of superiority in comparison to the West, here represented by “Charlemagne”. In this sense, the speech recognizes that, like Byzantium, Romania would be part of a distinct civilization from the West. In the excerpt below, there is a meeting between different discourses involving relations between Romania and the West; however, it can be noted that Romanian's identity is not precisely defined and categorised, associated with several categories and assuming an ambiguous character. In the following paragraph, there is again a process of differentiation. However, here the relation between self and other is based on two different definitions of “Europe”:

So, if it's about Europe, namely the true Europe, we have always had its vision and experience. Europe is the synthesis of Hellenic thought, Christian spirituality, and Roman civilization. It's the only Europe we recognize, but also the only Europe that is denied to us. Instead, we are offered a Europe built predominantly on economy and politics; not even the slightest hint of culture, let alone religion. If this is the Europe that entices us, we don't need it! (Anania *apud* Porunca Iubirii, 2006, p.83, my translation).<sup>26</sup>

Thus, the construction of the Self is based on identity categories such as “Hellenic thought”, “Christian spirituality” and “Roman civilization”, in face of a Europe without spirituality and culture, characterised simply by the focus on economics and politics,

---

fără să fac politică, trebuie să subliniez atitudinea tot mai demnă a țării noastre în acest context european. Nu așteptăm spiritualitate din Occident, pentru că nu o are. Uneori suntem tratați ca niște “balcanici”, uitându-se că suntem la nordul Dunării și, că, geografic, nu facem parte din Balcani. Ei, și dacă am face? Alexandru Paleologul spune că, la urma urmei, chiar dacă am fi balcanici ce este rușinos în asta? Platon, Aristotel și Sofocle au fost balcanici. Iar eu aș adăuga: toată doctrina teologică a lui Toma d'Aquino s-a sprijinit pe Aristotel, pe un balcanic. Iar dacă este vorba de civilizație, ar trebui să ne amintim că, în jurul anului 1000, bazele și principesele Bizanțului aveau băi de marmură, în timp ce curtenii lui Carol cel Mare se scărpinau de păduchi și răie.

<sup>26</sup> Așadar dacă este vorba de o Europă, și anume de adevărata Europă, noi am avut întotdeauna viziunea și trăirea ei. Europa este sinteza gândirii elene, a spiritualității creștine și a civilizației romane. Este singura Europă pe care o recunoaștem, dar și singura Europă care ni se refuză. Ni se propune în schimb o Europă construită eminamente pe economie și politică; nici cea mai mică adiere de cultură, că de religie nu mai vorbim. Dacă aceasta este Europa care ni se îmbie, nu avem nevoie de ea!

reinforcing, once again, the opposition of self and other based on spirituality/religiosity. This process of differentiation in comparison to the Western Europe becomes more explicit as Europe's negative identity is constructed based on specific attributes, being described as being “the other” of the Orthodox notion of “ideal” society. For example:

What is offered to us instead? The economic (bread). Through bread, our freedom is demanded. Hence, the absurd demands that are placed before us, to be accepted into this Europe: homosexuality, vice, abortion, debauchery, sexuality, pornography, in short, everything that can be worse in the life of a society, evils that we, as a people, led by the Church and fortunately led by our Orthodox Christian youth, firmly reject because we do not want, at the cost of our "entry" into Europe, to lose our own national identity. (Anania *apud* Porunca Iubirii, 2006, p.83-84, my translation)<sup>27</sup>.

In this excerpt, we can find references to speeches about European integration, mainly regarding the Orthodox perception on Romania's entry into the EU. Here the self is constructed based on the Romanian nationality and religious values, while the other (“this Europe”) is characterised as an entity that threatens Orthodox values, in addition to the Romanian national identity itself. Among the supposed conditionalities established by European integration in this speech, we can notice mentions of “homosexuality” and “abortion”. Based on the data presented in chapter 3, it can be identified one reference to the Orthodox perception regarding the Western notion of human rights, which is defined here as an “evil”. In this sense, we can also perceive a reference to the EU's discourse as a secularising entity, an Orthodox perception about European integration.

In a more recent text, available on the website of the Permanent Office Of The Romanian Orthodox Church To The European Institutions, entitled “Religious Education is a must in European Schools”<sup>28</sup>, we can also note the Orthodox perception of the EU with regard to religious education:

On 12 September 2023, the European Parliament adopted a resolution, that was prepared in the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT), on the System of European Schools - state of play, challenges and perspectives. European Schools are educational institutions established in EU Member States, providing children with a multilingual and multicultural education at nursery, primary and secondary levels. Today there are 13 European Schools in 6 Member States, including five schools in Belgium. These schools aim to educate the children of staff of the European

<sup>27</sup> Ce ni se propune (în schimb)? Economicul (pâinea). Prin pâine ni se cere libertatea. De aici, pretențiile aberante care ni se pun în față, a fi acceptați în această Europă: homosexualitatea, viciu, avortul, desfrâul, sexualitatea, pornografia, adică tot ceea ce poate fi mai rău în viața unei societăți, niște rele pe care noi, ca popor, în frunte cu Biserica și din fericire în frunte cu tineretul nostru creștin ortodox, le respingem cu toată fermitatea, pentru că nu vrem ca, cu prețul “intrării” noastre în Europa să ne pierdem propria identitate națională.

<sup>28</sup> Available at: <https://www.romorth.eu/single-post/religious-education-is-a-must-in-european-schools..>

institutions and those working in various diplomatic offices. The adopted text states that the European Parliament "insists on maintaining the current provision of religious education and "ethics" (para. 31). Denominationally organised Religious Education is currently being taught in European schools at the primary (5-10 years) and secondary (11-18 years) levels. It is important to emphasise the retention of Religious Education in the current curriculum, because current attempts to reform the organisation of education in European schools aim, among other things, to eliminate Religion and Ethics from the last two years of secondary education. The Representation of the Romanian Patriarchate in Brussels pays great attention to the field of education, with a special regard for Religious Education. That is why it vigorously promotes the presence of Religious Education in all European public schools as an integral part of a wholistic, efficient and formative educational process. To this end, it has published a study on the variety of manners in which Religious Education is currently being taught in the 27 Member States of the EU (Permanent Office Of The Romanian Orthodox Church To The European Institutions, 2023, n.p.).

This text takes up some points covered in chapter 3 regarding religious education in Romania. Firstly, we can identify a differentiation between the Self (Romanian Orthodox) and the Other (European), with the former being constructed as one that attributes importance to religious education, unlike "European schools" which are characterised as non-religious. It is also important to indicate that secularism appears implicitly in the discourse: there is an (Orthodox) argument that religious education should be maintained in all "European" schools. Here we see, once again, the intersection between Orthodox constructions regarding human rights and secularism in the context of the EU.

In one of the analysed texts, entitled "Statement of CROCEU"<sup>29</sup> on the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights", we can also find discursive constructions of human rights from an Orthodox perspective. Although the speakers mention that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has a "Christian spirit" (Orthodox Times, 2018, n.p.), there is a differentiation between two different discourses in the text. For instance, it is possible to identify two concepts of "human rights" in the statement:

However, because of the dominant individualistic narrative of the 20th century and also because of political "neutrality/correctness" that has been often the alibi for political inertia, fundamental rights progressively lost their appeal to the wider public. What is worse, they were progressively understood as having a defensive character, not to the avail of the community at large, but rather serving the interests of individuals, or minorities in confrontation with majorities. This did not help the advancement of peace, because the community turned somehow to an arena of rival interests (Orthodox Times, 2018, n.p.).

In this excerpt, we see the category "fundamental rights" being associated with "individualistic", "neutrality/correctness", "political inertia" and "minorities". The speakers

---

<sup>29</sup> The Committee of the Representatives of the Orthodox Churches to the European Union.

therefore establish a differentiation between the Western discourse on human rights and the Orthodox perception about them. In the text, there are also implicit mentions to other discourses regarding human rights:

In this way, fundamental Human Rights, cut off from the religious environment where they were born and the societal goal for a harmonic common life, are only a “dead letter”. This is why nowadays we need to underpin their social dimension and to enhance our efforts to clarify for all the organic interdependence between the fundamental Human Rights, social rights and the religious-cultural environment in which all of them were born. This is why States are meant to protect the fundamental human need to practice religion. They are also obliged to both support people who feel the need to practice religion for the benefit of the spiritual health of themselves and of society as a whole, and ensure that people practice religion in a respectful way, which means that their religious practice leaves them open to their neighbor in a peaceful and not at all a menacing way. As Representatives of our Orthodox Churches to the European Union, we congratulate the United Nations Organization for this remarkable anniversary. Furthermore, we express our conviction that the rights of all human beings could be guaranteed as far as they do not contradict the eternal Law of God and the perfection for which all human beings were created: “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mathew 5:48) (Orthodox Times, 2018, n.p.).

Despite implicitly, this excerpt alludes to discourses related to human rights and secularisation. For instance, in the passage “we express our conviction that the rights of all human beings could be guaranteed as far as they do not contradict the eternal Law of God and the perfection for which all human beings were created”, we can observe a reference to another discourse, that is, the contradiction between human rights and religion. Moreover, in this excerpt we can also identify an encounter of different discourses, such as an Orthodox rejection of secularisation, which does not separate the political and religious spheres of social life: in this sense, human rights should not be considered outside from the religious perspective on human life.

Similarities are found in another speech made by Patriarch Daniel, in which he argues about the relationship between religion and the European identity:

Religion is a major matrix of European identity. That is why the deep crisis Europe is undergoing is a spiritual identity crisis, first and foremost. Secondly, we must remind that the Council of Europe values, namely democracy, the state of law and human rights originate in the religious Christian and Judaic tradition. We must give these values deep theological motivation. [...] Dramatic events, such as the violent acts against the Christians in Iraq, Iran, Egypt and other [countries], the burnt wreaths and the assaults following this act call for the politicians" and the international bodies" reflection and reaction in order to avoid these dramas repeating in the future and reaching the European countries. These events make more urgent the task of finding solutions to the problems created by the massive migration of populations of different cultures and religions to Europe, a phenomenon which weakens the social cohesion in many countries (Ciobotea, n.d., n.p.).

Similarly to the argument present in the statement made by the CROCEU, in this short speech we can identify not only a representation of the Orthodox perspective on human rights, but also mentions to different discourses. Firstly, the differentiation between the Self and the Other is unclear: “Europe” is depicted as being going through a spiritual crisis; however, it is not clear whether Romania is part of this “Europe”, since the country is not mentioned in the speech. Moreover, the “Other” here is the “non-European” who threatens the “social cohesion” of many European countries. Since the constructions of the Self and the Other are hazy, the Romanian Orthodox identity is ambiguous: there are different characterizations of “Europe”.

I contend that these constructions of liminal identities found in Orthodox discourses on European integration not only point to the current liminal condition of Greece and Romania, but also to how the discourse regarding the status of the Orthodox Churches in the EU is received within Orthodoxy. In Orthodox speeches regarding the EU or the European integration project, the Orthodox identity is often ambiguous.

## **5.5 Final remarks**

In this chapter, I sought to analyse speeches by Orthodox religious leaders with the aim of understanding how European integration is constructed in Orthodox speeches. The research design was based on Hansen's terms (2006), thus enabling an analysis that includes the construction of “selves” and multiple identities in the analysed discourses. Based on the analysis carried out, we were able to observe common trends in the speeches of different religious leaders, Greek and Romanian, such as, for example, a specific understanding of what it means to be “European” and what “Europe” would be.

Considering that the analysed corpus includes materials from different eras and political contexts, it was possible to observe how some speeches referring to these themes had some changes over time: e.g., the way in which European integration is constructed in Bartolomeu Anania's speeches differs from the construction of the EU in the speeches by Daniel Ciobotea. However, similarities can be found in both, such as, processes of differentiation between a spiritual and religious Romania, whose model of Church-State relations is a Byzantine/Orthodox heritage. In the case of speeches referring to Greece, similarities were also observed that remained over decades, such as the justification of Orthodoxy's belonging to Europe.



Implicit signs of liminality were found, mainly regarding the constructions of identities of Greece and Romania and, specifically, in the absence of a categorization of these nations that would classify them as being part of the European “self”. Moreover, we were able to observe that this imprecision in the construction of self and other was often associated with historical and cultural elements of these nations, with the religious identities of these states/nations being one of the manifestations of this liminal state.

Furthermore, it should be noted that liminality is not expressed only in terms of human rights: in Orthodox discourses, religion permeates basically all spheres of social life, including politics, economy, geopolitics and foreign policy. Orthodox *selves* are generally intertwined to historic discourses which, in turn, constitute Greek and Romanian identities in the analysed speeches. For instance, Anania’s (2006) argument regarding the Western perception of Romania is an example of this discursive construction: in this text, Romanian identity is based on both material and immaterial elements. Categories such as geography and religious identities are articulated (e.g., the Byzantine past/identity), issues related to “poverty” and (under)development are also associated with Romania’s foreign policy in different historical contexts (e.g., the communist period).

Orthodox speeches related to Greece followed a similar pattern. In several excerpts from Christodoulos’ speeches, we could notice this interrelationship between religion, politics and geography as important identity markers. This may be related to the fact that the category of “secularism” as understood in Western terms is alien to the ideal of Church-state relations in Greece and Romania (and in Orthodoxy, in a broader sense). As we have already seen in the previous chapters, although *symphonia* established a cooperation between the religious and the political spheres, the understanding of the role of the Church in society was (and still is) considerably different from the Western European experience regarding the separation between the “secular” and the “religious” in society.

In this sense, critical constructivism can be a useful tool to understand the particularities of Orthodoxy. The analysis of this material reveals more than just the Orthodox perception of European integration: it also provides us with insights into the Orthodox social imaginary, its symbols, articulations, interpellations and the production of meanings. Through discourse analysis, we have seen the social claims of Orthodox actors and how they express their interests in society. Moreover, it also allows us to understand how the preferences and interests of Orthodox-majority countries are constructed. Therefore, when analysing Orthodox discourses, it is fundamental to understand how religion can be seen as not only being capable

of articulating meanings, but also as a mechanism that produces power relations and political identities in a given social context.

I would like to propose one last observation about the proposed analysis. The idea of the "East" as the "Other" in the process of formation of European identity is not new in IR studies: Neumann (1999) addressed the role of Russia in the construction of Europe's identity throughout history, while Rumelili (2004) has already demonstrated how Turkey, which can be seen as liminal in some contexts, occasionally presents itself as Europe's "Other". Based on these two arguments, I argue that Orthodox-majority nations have been liminal entities in the structure of the EU, historically and currently, perhaps even more so than Turkey. To make this statement, I rely on all the evidence presented throughout this thesis. It can be argued that, although Turkey may assume a European identity in contexts, it is a state whose identity has been associated with Islam. The latter, in turn, has been historically considered as the "Other" of Europe (Nibat, 2018).

Although the differentiation between Christendom and Islam – or Europe and Turkey – in civilisational terms is based on the idea of opposition, the same does not apply to Orthodoxy. Whereas Islam can be identified more clearly as the "opposite" of Christendom, Orthodoxy has been, and still seems to be, at once, the self and the other of Europe: it is Christian, but "schematic"; European, but Byzantine. It may be considered as a distinct, unique civilization in its own right. Within the religious landscape of the EU, Orthodoxy is a unique case to be studied in the context of European integration when it comes to the construction of religious identities.

The influence of political and religious discourses and the Byzantine heritage that is still alive in many Orthodox-majority countries contributes to the perpetuation of their liminal state within the EU. Considering that Orthodoxy gives meaning not only to religious but also historical and political discourses, it can be argued that religion is fundamental to understanding the liminality of Orthodox-majority countries, such as Greece and Romania. In this chapter, I aimed to address the interrelationship between all these elements in order to demonstrate the complexity of the studied phenomenon. In this regard, I believe that the analysis has fulfilled its purpose.

## 6 CONCLUSION

Given all the considerations discussed in the previous chapters, in this section I shall present my final remarks about this research, as well as several gaps that could not be addressed in this thesis. Once again, I want to resume my argument: in agreement with Turner (2008) and Thomassen (2009), I consider liminality to be multidimensional. In stating this, I recognize two premises. Firstly, this phenomenon could have been approached in this research from multiple epistemological perspectives. As proposed by Thomassen (2009), liminality can be observed from the individual, temporal and spatial dimensions.

This statement leads us to the second premise: since liminality can involve individuals, societies, regions, periods and epochs, the phenomenon analysed in this thesis could also have been analysed from the perspective of various knowledge disciplines, such as History, Geography, Anthropology, Sociology, among others. Probably, each of these perspectives would focus on an aspect of liminality, contributing in a unique way to the understanding of this phenomenon.

However, I chose to carry out a multidisciplinary analysis of this phenomenon, having the field of International Relations as its main epistemological foundation. Without a doubt, this choice enabled a particular contribution to the field (considering the research justification itself, discussed in the introduction). However, at the same time, this choice also established limitations to the research, just as it would have happened if I had opted for any other epistemological perspective. What, then, would be the pros and cons of this choice? And in what ways was research enhanced and, at the same time, limited by it? To answer this question, I want to first briefly summarise the main insights provided throughout the chapters.

In Chapter 1, we saw that the allegory of rites of passage could be applied to modern states given the necessary limitations. Analysing European integration as a rite of passage in itself already has a multidisciplinary aspect: it was necessary to establish a dialogue between anthropology and the field of IR to consider the State as a "liminal person" in international politics. For this, theoretical discussions about the concept of identity in the field of IR were fundamental. I chose to approach it (mainly) based on Wendt's arguments regarding the "State as a person" and Muppidi's (2004) critical constructivism. While the first was essential for carrying out the analysis with the allegory of rites of passage, the second was of great importance for the analysis of social mechanisms carried out in both chapters 2 and 3, where we were able to explore the different discourses and articulations/interpellations of meanings

in global level, such as, for example, the social imaginaries in countries with an Orthodox majority and the different perspectives on the ideal model of Church-state relations.

In this sense, the entire proposed analysis revolved around the allegory of rites of passage. This had theoretical and methodological implications since the methods and materials analysed were also selected based on this allegory. Thus, based on this assumption, I sought to establish parallels between the rites of separation and aggregation, on the one hand, and, on the other, the processes of accession of Greece and Romania to the EU, without compromising the scientific rigour of the research.

However, analysing the European integration process from a comprehensive perspective can be an arduous task, given the complexity of this phenomenon. Once again, the allegory guided the theoretical and methodological choices of the research and, taking these points into account, I chose to analyse the Europeanization process in the terms of Büttner, Eigtmüller and Worschech (2021), considering that an approach was needed that took into account not only the formal and bureaucratic aspects of regional integration, but also through a comparative transnational perspective, which included in the analysis factors such as habits, identities, interpretations, interactions between different types of actors and institutional settings.

The aforementioned theoretical and methodological contributions of Rumelili (2012) and Hansen (2006) regarding liminal entities and discourse analysis, respectively, were also essential for the accomplishment of the research in this thesis, I considered them as two complementary sources of inspiration, both being fundamental for the study of injunction in IR, for the structure of Chapter 2 and for the discourse analysis conducted in Chapter 4. As already mentioned, in Chapter 2, I was inspired by Hansen's (2006) analysis in the book "Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War" about historical discourses about the Balkans. However, my starting point was the concept of liminality, and my proposal was to provide a broader understanding of this phenomenon by classifying the Balkans and Southeastern Europe as liminal places, addressing the regional and temporal aspects that also influenced the religious dimension of liminality and, thus, reinforcing my point about the multidisciplinary possibilities in studies on liminality.

However, this multidimensional aspect of liminality also imposed serious limitations on the research process. After all, it was necessary to maintain the analytical focus: the liminality of Greece and Romania that is expressed through their respective Church-state relations. It was necessary, therefore, to work with a broader notion of liminality, involving the importance of considering its spatial and temporal aspects for the formation of national

identities in Southeastern Europe, while maintaining the focus on the relevance of the relationship between politics and religion for the preliminary conditions of Greece and Romania. For this reason, my effort throughout the chapters has been to show that, although the focus of the research has been on Church-State relations and how they are an expression of the liminal states of Greece and Romania in the EU, I have also sought to demonstrate that the liminality, arising from Church-state relations, is also associated with other factors, such as territory, local and foreign discourses and other elements that contribute to identity formation processes in international politics.

The results obtained were aligned with the proposed analytical framework. As we observed throughout this research, the content and analyses of all chapters were fundamental for understanding the constructions represented in Orthodox discourses regarding European integration: the Byzantine legacy, the symphonic ideal, Orthodox Anti-Westernism and liminal identities from Greece and Romania were identified in the analysed speeches. Thus, it was possible to conclude that the identities and constructions of "Self" and "Other" in Orthodox discourses on European integration are fluid, confusing and imprecise. This "ambiguous" differentiation between the "European"/"secular" Other and the "Orthodox"/"religious" Self accurately represents the liminal state of Greek and Romanian identities in the EU. Although this liminal state can be analysed from different perspectives, I contend that, by the end of this research, it became evident that religion is an aspect of great relevance for the perpetuation of this liminal state in both states. In this sense, the research achieved its objectives.

Due to these choices and their consequent limitations, the research left some gaps open. For example, official speeches by members of the Greek and Romanian states, which were not analysed in this research, could have contributed positively to the analysis carried out in Chapter 4. Analysing speeches by government representatives or official documents from the Greek and Romanian states could reveal important insights into how these states perceive the current situation of their respective countries in relation to policies related to human rights and secularism in the context of European integration.

Due to the focus given to the relationship between politics and religion in the two cases studied, the economic aspect ended up being neglected. For example, the influence of the Greek economic crisis on Greece's liminal state in the EU was not explored. I also did not address Romania's economic situation and how economic phenomena can offer insights into Romania's liminality in the EU. Perhaps future studies can propose new insights into this

phenomenon by analysing the relationship between these social spheres through a multi-layered analysis.

Furthermore, if the number of speeches analysed in Chapter 4 had been greater, it is possible that other important themes for the Orthodox perspective on European integration would have been addressed. Another gap that could not be filled was my inability to carry out interviews and opinion polls in person in both countries. Considering Europeanization in the terms of Büttner, Eigmüller and Worschech (2022), it is possible that trends related to public opinion could reveal other insights into the current secularisation processes in Greece and Romania.

Finally, I would also like to suggest some possibilities for future studies on this topic. Considering what has already been exposed in the introduction regarding studies on religion in the field of IR, I believe that future studies could highlight the relationship between religion and foreign policy in the context of the EU. As previously mentioned, Thomas (2005) and Chaplin and Wilton (2015) point out the Christian inspirations of the EU. In this sense, future studies could explore the implications of these (Western) Christian roots for integration of Orthodox-majority countries to the EU, as well as the possible impacts of Orthodoxy on the formulation of foreign policy in majority-Orthodox countries, whether inside or outside the EU context.

My main contribution to this research was to articulate the concepts of rites of passage/liminality, national and state identities and models of Church-state relations. Perhaps this framework can be useful to future studies that may use this analytical framework as a model to understand other cases. Future studies may examine this same object from a broader perspective within the European context. For instance, it would be interesting to analyse all the Orthodox-majority countries as a “*communitas*”, that is, an anti-structure in the context of the EU. This would enable an analysis with comparative elements among different cases, in order to observe the effects of this structure on the integration of countries.

## REFERENCES

- ABOUT. **European Parliament**. Available at: <<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/about>>. Access on January 22 2024.
- AGH, A. **The politics of Central Europe**. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE Publications, 1998.
- ANDREESCU, Liviu. Romania's new law on religious freedom and religious denominations. **Religion, State and Society**, n. 36, 2008, pp.139-161.
- BARBU, I; ANDREITA, I; PADURETU, E.; SMARANDACHE, F. **Rotonda Valaha**, Anul VI, Nr. 2, 2021.
- BERENSKOETTER, F. Identity in International Relations. **Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies**. 22. Oxford University Press, p.1-21, 2017.
- BERGER, Peter L. The Process of Secularization. In: BERGER, Peter L. **The sacred canopy: elements of a sociological theory of religion**. New York: Doubleday, p.126-146, 1967.
- BERGER, Peter. The desecularization of the world: a global overview. In: BERGER, Peter. **The desecularization of the world: resurgent religion and world politics**. Washington: Grand Rapids, Ethics and Public Policy Center/Eerdmans, p. 1-18, 1999.
- BERGER, S. Chapter 1: Western Europe. In: MISHKOVA, D.; TRENCSENYI, B. **European regions and boundaries: A conceptual history**. Oxford, England: Berghahn Books, 2017, pp.15-35.
- BLOOM, W. Identification theory - its structure, dynamics and application. In: BLOOM, W. **Personal Identity, National Identity And International Relations**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp.25-53.
- BÜTTNER, Sebastian M.; EIGMÜLLER, Monika; WORSCHKECH, Susann. **Sociology of Europeanization**, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022.
- CARLTON, D. **Churchill and the Soviet Union**. Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2000.
- CARTLEDGE, Y.; VARNAVA, A. (EDS.). **New perspectives on the Greek war of independence: Myths, realities, legacies and reflections**. 1. ed. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2022.
- CASANOVA, José. 'Rethinking secularization: a global comparative perspective' In: BEAMAN, L; BEYER, P. **Religion, Globalization and Culture**. Leiden: Brill, 2007, p.101-120.
- CASANOVA, José. "The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms" en Calhoun, C, Juergensmeyer, M and Vanantwerpen, J. (eds). **Rethinking Secularism**. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp.54-74.
- CAVAFY, C. P. et al. In Church. In: **C. P. Cavafy: Collected Poems - Bilingual Edition**. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022, p.81.

CHADHA, A. Review of Religion in International Relations Theory. **International Journal of Religion**, 3(1), p. 3–18, 2022.

CHAPLIN, J.; WILTON, G. (eds.). **God and the EU: Faith in the European project**. Londres, England: Routledge, 2015.

CHRISTODOULOS. "**Europa Nostra**". 2003b. Available at:  
<[https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos\\_speeches.asp?cat\\_id=&id=493&what\\_main=3&what\\_sub=12&lang=en&archbishop\\_heading=Addresses/Speeches](https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&id=493&what_main=3&what_sub=12&lang=en&archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches)>. Access on January 22 2024.

CHRISTODOULOS. "**Futurum**". 2003a. Available at:  
<[https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos\\_speeches.asp?cat\\_id=&id=494&what\\_main=3&what\\_sub=12&lang=en&archbishop\\_heading=Addresses/Speeches](https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&id=494&what_main=3&what_sub=12&lang=en&archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches)>. Access on January 22 2024.

CHRISTODOULOS. "**The Society of People in the Time of Post-Neoterism, of Holisticity and of Globalizaton**". 1999b. Available at:  
<[https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos\\_speeches.asp?cat\\_id=&id=486&what\\_main=3&what\\_sub=12&lang=en&archbishop\\_heading=Addresses/Speeches](https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&id=486&what_main=3&what_sub=12&lang=en&archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches)>. Access on January 22 2024.

CHRISTODOULOS. "**The Word and Role of Orthodoxy in the European Union**". 1999a. Available at:  
<[https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos\\_speeches.asp?cat\\_id=&id=485&what\\_main=3&what\\_sub=12&lang=en&archbishop\\_heading=Addresses/Speeches](https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&id=485&what_main=3&what_sub=12&lang=en&archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches)>. Access on January 22 2024.

CHRISTODOULOS. "**Welcome address to the President of the European Parliament, Josep Borrell**". 2006. Available at:  
<[https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos\\_speeches.asp?cat\\_id=&id=554&what\\_main=3&what\\_sub=12&lang=en&archbishop\\_heading=Addresses/Speeches](https://www.ecclesia.gr/english/archbishop/christodoulos_speeches.asp?cat_id=&id=554&what_main=3&what_sub=12&lang=en&archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches)>. Access on January 22 2024.

CHURCHILL, Winston. **The sinews of peace ('iron curtain speech')**. 1946. Available at:  
<<https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1946-1963-elder-statesman/the-sinews-of-peace/>>. Access on January 21 2024.

CIOBOTEA, Daniel. "The Orthodox Church and the New Europe: Ecumenical Experience and Perspectives". In: DANCA, Wilhelm (ed). **Truth and Morality: The Role of Truth in Public Life**. Romanian Philosophical Studies VII. Washington, 2008, pp.167-173.

DAMATTA, Roberto. Individualidade e liminaridade: considerações sobre os ritos de passagem e a modernidade. **Mana**, v.6, n.1., 2000, p.7-29.

DEMACOPOULOS, G. E.; PAPANIKOLAOU, A. (eds.). **Orthodox constructions of the West**. Cary, NC, USA: Oxford University Press, 2013.

DŽALTO, D. **Anarchy and the Kingdom of God: From eschatology to orthodox political theology and back**. [s.l.] Fordham University Press, 2021.

ECHR. **EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS (18748/91) - COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS - RES-54 - CASE OF MANOUSSAKIS AND OTHERS AGAINST GREECE**. 1996. Available at:



<[https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{%22itemid%22:\[%22001-58071%22\]}7](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{%22itemid%22:[%22001-58071%22]}7)>. Access on January 22 2024.

ECHR. **The ECHR and Greece: facts and figures**. 2023. European Court of Human Rights. Available at: <[https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/Facts\\_Figures\\_Greece\\_ENG](https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/Facts_Figures_Greece_ENG)>. Access on 26 February 2024.

EUR-Lex. **Browse by EuroVoc**. Available at: <[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/browse/eurovoc.html?params=72,7206,914#arrow\\_914](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/browse/eurovoc.html?params=72,7206,914#arrow_914)>. Access on: 27 February 2024.

EUROPEAN COUNCIL. **EU enlargement policy**. [n.d] Available at: <<http://consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/>>. Access on 24 April 2023.

EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS (ECHR). **CASE OF KOKKINAKIS v. GREECE** (Application no. 14307/88). 1993. Available at: <<https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-57827>>. Access on January 21 2024.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. **DRAFT MISSION REPORT following the LIBE mission to Athens, Greece, 6 to 8 March 2023**. Available at: <[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014\\_2019/plmrep/COMMITTEES/LIBE/DV/2023/04-13/DraftmissionreportGreece\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/plmrep/COMMITTEES/LIBE/DV/2023/04-13/DraftmissionreportGreece_EN.pdf)>. Access on 26 February 2024.

EUROPEAN UNION. **Protocol concerning the accession of the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union**. Brussels, 2005. Available at: [http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/aap/data/2005/l\\_157/20050625](http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/aap/data/2005/l_157/20050625). Access on 10 May 2023.

EVERYCRSREPORT.COM. **The European Union: Ongoing Challenges and Future Prospects**. 2015. Available at: <<https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R44249.html>>. Access on 27 February 2024.

EXADAKTYLOS, Theofanis; RADAELLI, Claudio M. Research Design In European Studies: The Case Of Europeanization. **JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies**, v.47, n.3, pp.507-530, 2009.

FORLENZA, R., & TURNER, B. S. Das Abendland: The politics of Europe's religious borders. **Critical Research on Religion**, v.7, n.1, 2019, pp.6-23.

FOX, J. "Religion in international relations". In: Fox, J. **An Introduction to Religion and Politics: Theory and Practice**. Abingdon: Routledge, p.195-205, 2018.

FOX, Jonathan. The Secular-Religious Competition Perspective. In: HERRINGTON, Luke M.; MCKAY, Alasdair; HAYNES, Jeffrey. **Nations under God: The Geopolitics of Faith in the Twenty-First Century**. Bristol: E-International Relations, 2015, pp. 80-87.

FREEMAN, E. A. **The historical geography of Europe**: Maps. [s.l.] Franklin Classics Trade Press, 2018.

GARWOOD, Paul., Rites of Passage. In: Timothy Insoll (ed.). **The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion**, Oxford, p.261-283, 2011.

GREEKS RALLY TO KEEP RELIGIONS ON ID CARDS. **The New York Times**, 2000. Available at:

<<https://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/22/world/greeks-rally-to-keep-religions-on-id-cards.html>>. Access on January 22 2024.

GREGORY, J. Greece legalises same-sex marriage. **BBC**, February 15, 2024. Available at: <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-68310126>>. Access on Feb 20 2024.

GUGLIELMI, M. The Romanian Orthodox Church, the European Union and the Contention on Human Rights. **Religions**, 2021, v.12, n.39, pp.1-15.

GÜNAL, A.; BALCI, Z. S. The Orthodox Church of Greece. *In: Orthodox Churches and Politics in Southeastern Europe*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019. p. 131–165.

HABERMAS, Jürgen. Notes on Post-Secular Society. **New Perspectives Quarterly**, v.25.p.17-29, 2008.

HALL, Todd H. We Will Not Swallow This Bitter Fruit: Theorizing a Diplomacy of Anger. **Security Studies**, vol. 20, n.4, 2011, p. 521–555.

HANSEN, L., **Security as practice**: Discourse analysis and the Bosnia War, Nueva York, Routledge, 2006.

HASTINGS, Adrian. **The Construction of Nationhood**: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.

HAYNES, J. Religion in international relations: Theory and practice. *In: HAYNES, J. Handbook on Religion and International Relations*. Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021, pp.5-23.

HAYNES, Jeffrey. Religion and international relations: what do we know and how do we know it? **Religions**, v. 12, n. 5, p. 1-14, 2021.

HELLENIC PARLIAMENT. ΠΡΟΣΤΑΣΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΤΟΜΟΥ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΕΠΙΞΕΡΤΑΣΙΑ ΔΕΔΟΜΕΝΩΝ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΙΚΟΥ ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΑ. 1997. Available at: <[https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/bcc26661-143b-4f2d-8916-0e0e66ba4c50/NO\\_M\\_NOM\\_AP\\_2472\\_UA23.DOC](https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/bcc26661-143b-4f2d-8916-0e0e66ba4c50/NO_M_NOM_AP_2472_UA23.DOC)>. Access on January 22 2024.

HUANG, Kexin. Rethinking the Role of Secularism in the Discipline of IR and the Chinese Experience. **Proceedings of the 2022 8th International Conference on Humanities and Social Science Research (ICHSSR 2022)**. Atlantis Press SARL., pp.247-253.

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH. **Greece**: Drop blasphemy investigation over play. 2012. Available at: <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/11/19/greece-drop-blasphemy-investigation-over-play>>. Access on January 21 2024.

HURD, E. S. **Beyond religious freedom**: The new global politics of religion. Princeton, NJ, USA: Princeton University Press, 2017.

HURD, E. S. International politics after secularism. **Review of International Studies**, v. 38, n. 5, p. 943–961, 2012.

HURD, E. S. The political authority of secularism in International Relations. **European Journal of International Relations**, v. 10, n. 2, p. 235–262, 2004.

HUSSEY, J. M. **The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire**. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 2010.

IONIȚE, Sorin. **Importance of Church-State cooperation in the European context**. Basilica.ro, 2019. Available at: <https://basilica.ro/en/importance-of-church-state-cooperation-in-the-european-context/>. Access on January 22 2024.

IORDACHI, C. The Quest for Central Europe: Symbolic Geographies and Historical Regions. In: SABIC, Z.; DRULÁK, P. (EDS.). **Regional and International Relations of Central Europe**. 2012. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012, pp.40-61.

JANSE, R. The evolution of the political criteria for accession to the European Community, 1957–1973. **European Law Journal**, 2018, pp.24: 57– 76. <https://doi.org/10.1111/eulj.12253>.

JELAVICH, B. **History of the Balkans**: Volume 1. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

JELAVICH, B. **Russia and the formation of the Romanian national state, 1821-1878**. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

JELAVICH, C.; JELAVICH, B. **The establishment of the Balkan national states, 1804-1920**. University of Washington Press, 1977.

JOHNSON, L. **Central Europe**: Enemies, neighbors, friends. Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 1996.

KALKANDJIEVA, D. A comparative analysis on church-state relations in eastern orthodoxy: Concepts, models, and principles. **A Journal of Church and State**, v. 53, n. 4, p. 587–614, 2011.

KARPOV, V.; SVENSSON, M. “Secularization, Desecularization, and Toleration: Toward an Agency-Focused Reassessment. In: Karpov, V. and Svensson, M. (eds). **Secularization, Desecularization, and Toleration: Cross-Disciplinary Challenges to a Modern Myth**. Palgrave MacMillan, pp.1-40, 2020.

KATZENSTEIN, P. J. (ed.). **The culture of national security**: Norms and identity in world politics. Nova Iorque, NY, USA: Columbia University Press, 1996.

KATZENSTEIN, P. J. Germany and Mitteleuropa: An Introduction. In: KATZENSTEIN, P. J.(ed.). **Mitteleuropa**: Between Europe and Germany. Herndon, VA, USA: Berghahn Books, 1997, pp.1-38.

KAYAOGLU, T. (2010). Westphalian Eurocentrism in International Relations Theory. **International Studies Review**, v.12, n.2, pp.193–217.

KIRSCHBAUM, S. J. **Central European history and the European Union**: The meaning of Europe. Nova Iorque, NY, USA: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.

KUNDERA, M. **A Kidnapped West**: The Tragedy of Central Europe. Faber & Faber, 2023.

LABASTIE, Cécilia.; WRIGHT, Georgina. **An Institut Montaigne Explainer: EU Enlargement**. Institut Montaigne, 2022. Available at:

<<https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/expressions/institut-montaigne-explainer-eu-enlargement>>. Acesso em 24 abr 2023.

LADRECH, R. Rethinking the Relationship between Europeanization and European Integration. In: Coman, R., Kostera, T., Tomini, L. (eds) **Europeanization and European Integration**. Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2014, p.15-28.

LAPID, Y.; KRATOCHWIL, F. (eds.). **The return of culture and identity in IR theory**. Boulder, CO, USA: Lynne Rienner, 1996.

LAW 489/2006 ON THE FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND THE GENERAL STATUS OF DENOMINATIONS PUBLISHED IN THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL, PART I, ISSUE #11/08 JAN. 2007. Available at:

<[https://adsdatabase.ohchr.org/IssueLibrary/ROMANIA\\_Law%20489.2006%20on%20the%20Freedom%20of%20Religion.pdf](https://adsdatabase.ohchr.org/IssueLibrary/ROMANIA_Law%20489.2006%20on%20the%20Freedom%20of%20Religion.pdf)>. Access on 26 February 2024.

LEUSTEAN, L. The concept of symphonia in contemporary European Orthodoxy. **International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church**, v.11, n.2-3, pp. 188-202, 2011.

LEUȘTEAN, Lucian. **Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-century Southeastern Europe**. New York: Fordham University Press, 2014.

LEUȘTEAN, Lucian. The Politics of Orthodox Churches in the European Union. **International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church**, v.18, n.2-3, p.146-15, 2018.

LÖWENHEIM, Oded; HEIMANN, Gadi. Revenge in International Politics. **Security Studies**, v. 17, n. 4, 2008, pp. 685-724.

MAGOULIAS, Harry (ed). **Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks, by Doukas. An Annotated Translation of "Historia Turco-Byzantina" by Harry J. Magoulias**, Wayne State University. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975.

MAKRIDES, V. N. Orthodox Anti-Westernism today: A hindrance to European integration? **International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church**, v. 9, n. 3, p. 209–224, 2009.

MAKRIDES, Vasilios N. Political theology in Orthodox Christian contexts: specificities and particularities in comparison with Western Latin Christianity. In: Stoeckl, Kristina; Ingeborg, Gabriel; Papanikolaou, Aristotle. **Political Theologies in Orthodox Christianity: Common Challenges - Divergent Positions**. Londres; New York, Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2017.

MAKRIS, Gerasimos; BEKRIDAKIS, Dimitris. The Greek Orthodox Church and the economic crisis since 2009. **International journal for the Study of the Christian Church**, vol. 13:2, 2013, pp. 111-132, DOI: 10.1080/1474225X.2013.793055

MÄLKSOO, Maria. The challenge of liminality for International Relations theory. **Review of International Studies**, v. 38, 2012, p. 481-494. DOI:10.1017/S0260210511000829.

MATHEWES-GREEN, F. **Welcome to the Orthodox Church**: An introduction to Eastern Christianity. Orleans, IN, USA: Paraclete Press, 2015.

MAVELLI L., PETITO F. Towards a Postsecular International Politics. *In*: Mavelli L., Petito F. (eds) **Towards a Postsecular International Politics**. Culture and Religion in International Relations. Palgrave Macmillan, Nova Iorque, 2014, pp.1-26.

MAVELLI, Luca; PETITO, Fabio. The postsecular in International Relations: an overview. **Review of International Studies**; v.38(5), 2012, p.931-942.

MAZOWER, M. **Inside Hitler's Greece**: The experience of occupation, 1941-44. New Haven, CT, USA: Yale University Press, 1993.

MCGUKIN, John Anthony. **The Orthodox Church**: An Introduction to its History Doctrine and Spiritual Culture. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

MEYENDORFF, J. **Orthodox Church**: Its past and its role in the world today. Crestwood, MO, USA: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1981.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS. **Acts Against Religious Sites In Greece**. 2021. Available at: <[https://www.minedu.gov.gr/publications/docs2022/Acts\\_against\\_religious\\_sites\\_in\\_Greece\\_-\\_Report\\_2020.pdf](https://www.minedu.gov.gr/publications/docs2022/Acts_against_religious_sites_in_Greece_-_Report_2020.pdf)>. Access on February 26 2024.

MISHKOVA, D. **Beyond Balkanism**: The scholarly politics of region making. Londres, England: Routledge, 2020.

MISHKOVA, D. **Rival Byzantiums**: Empire and identity in Southeastern Europe. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

MOLOKOTOS-LIEDERMAN, L. The Greek ID card controversy: A case study of religion and national identity in a changing European union. **Journal of Contemporary Religion**, v. 22, n. 2, p. 187–203, 2007.

MUPPIDI, Himadeep. **Politics Of The Global**. University of Minnesota Press, 2004.

MYLONAS, H. Nation-building policies in the Balkans: an Ottoman or a manufactured legacy?: Nation-building policies in the Balkans. **Nations and nationalism**, v. 25, n. 3, p. 866–887, 2019.

N, S. J. Central European history and the European Union: The meaning of Europe. Nova Iorque, NY, USA: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.

NAUDE, B. Revisiting state personhood and world politics. *In*: **Revisiting State Personhood and World Politics**. New York: Routledge, 2021. p. 1–23.

NAUMANN, F. **Mitteleuropa**. De Gruyter, 1915.

NELSEN, Brent F.; GUTH, James L. **Religion and The Struggle for European Union**. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2015.

NEMO, P. **What is the West?** Pittsburg, CA, USA: Duquesne University Press, 2005.

NEUMAYER, L. Euroscepticism in Central Europe. *In*: KIRSCHBAUM, S. J. **Central European history and the European Union**: The meaning of Europe. Nova Iorque, NY, USA: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.

NIBAT, Seçil. **European Identity**: The Turkish quest for EU membership within the context of Europe's competing narratives. 2018.

O'LOUGHLIN, J. (ED.). **Dictionary of geopolitics**. Greenwood Publishing Group, 1994.

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES. **COMMISSION OPINION OF 22 FEBRUARY 2005 ON THE APPLICATIONS FOR ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION BY THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA AND ROMANIA**. 2005. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2005:157:TOC>. Access on 26 February 2024.

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES. **COMMISSION OPINION OF 23 MAY 1979 ON THE APPLICATION FOR ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES BY THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC**. 1979. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/collection/eu-law/treaties/treaties-accession.html#new-2-13>. Access on January 22 2024.

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION. **ACCESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA AND ROMANIA TO THE EUROPEAN UNION – TREATY OF ACCESSION, PROTOCOL AND ITS ANNEXES**. 2005. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/collection/eu-law/treaties/treaties-accession.html#new-2-13>.

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION. **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2016)**. 2016b Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12016P/TXT>. Access on February 25 2024.

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION.. **Treaty on European Union (Consolidated version 2016)**. 2016a Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12016M/TXT>. Access on February 25 2024.

OLTEANU, Tina; NÈVE, Dorothée de. Eastern Orthodoxy and the Process of European Integration. In: KRAWCHUCK; BREMER, **Eastern Orthodox Encounters of Identity and Otherness: Values, Self-Reflection, Dialogue**. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2014, pp. 179-206.

ORTHODOX TIMES. **STATEMENT OF CROCEU ON THE OCCASION OF THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**. 2018. Available at: <https://orthodoxtimes.com/statement-of-croceu-on-the-occasion-of-the-70th-anniversary-of-the-universal-declaration-of-human-rights/>.

ÖZTÜRK, F. The Ottoman Millet System, In: ÖZTÜRK, F (org). **Ottoman and Turkish Law**. Bloomington: IUniverse LLC, 2014. p.1-22.

PALMER, A. **The Lands Between**: a History of East–Central Europe since the Congress of Vienna. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970, 405 p.

PASHAKHANLOU, A. H. Fully integrated content analysis in International Relations. **International Relations**, v. 31, n. 4, p. 447–465, 20 August. 2017.



**PATRIARCH DANIEL: Religious dimension of cultural dialogue "crucial" to Europe.** Embassy Of Romania In The Czech Republic, 2011. Available at: <http://praga.mae.ro/en/romania-news/501>>. Access on January 22 2024.

PAYNE, D. P. The clash of civilisations: The church of Greece, the European union and the question of human rights. **Religion, state & society: the Keston journal**, v. 31, n. 3, p. 261–271, 2003.

PERMANENT OFFICE OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH TO THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS. 2023. **Religious Education is a must in European Schools.** Available at: <https://www.romorth.eu/single-post/religious-education-is-a-must-in-european-schools>>. Access on January 22 2024.

PETKOFF, Peter. New worlds and new churches: The Orthodox Church(es) and the European Union, em: **God and the EU: Retrieving the Christian Inspirations of the European Project**. Editors Jonathan Chaplin, Gary Wilton, Routledge, UK, 2016, Cap. 4, p. 73-88.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER. **About**. No date. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/about>>. Access on 10 May 2023.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER. **Greek attitudes toward religion, minorities align more with Central and Eastern Europe than West**. October 2018. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2018/10/31/greek-attitudes-toward-religion-minorities-align-more-with-central-and-eastern-europe-than-west/>>. Access on January 21 2024.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER. **Orthodox Christianity in the 21th century**. November 2017a. Available at: <https://www.pewforum.org/2017/11/08/orthodox-take-socially-conservative-views-on-gender-issues-homosexuality/>>. Access on January 21 2024.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER. **Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe**. Mai 2017b. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2017/05/CEUP-FULL-REPORT.pdf>>. Access on 21 January 2024.

POLLIS, A. Greek national identity: Religious minorities, rights, and European norms. **Journal of Modern Greek studies**, v. 10, n. 2, p. 171–196, 1992.

PORUNCA IUBIRIL. **“Ce ne oferă Europa?”**. 2006. Available at: <https://www.agaton.ro/reviste/Pi%202006%20-%202.pdf>>. Access on January 22 2024.

PRASAD, Shubha Kamala. The Marginalisation of Religion in International Relations. **South Asian Survey**, v. 21, n.1-2, p. 35-50, 2014.

PRODROMOU, E. H. Negotiating Pluralism and Specifying Modernity in Greece: Reading Church-State Relations in the Christodoulos Period. **Social Compass**, v.51, n.4, pp.471–485, 2004.

PUPPINCK, G. BAUER, N. **WRITTEN OBSERVATIONS Submitted to the European Court of Human Rights in the case Emmanouil DAMAVOLITIS v. Greece (Application No. 44913/14)**. Available at: <http://media.aclj.org/pdf/Damavolitis-v.-Greece-no.44913.14-ECLJ-Written-observations-February-2021.pdf>>. Access on January 21 2024.

RAE, Heather. **State Identities and the Homogenisation of Peoples**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

RAMET, Sabrina P. The Orthodox Churches of Southeastern Europe: An Introduction. *In*: RAMET, Sabrina P. **Orthodox Churches and Politics in Southeastern Europe: Nationalism, Conservatism, and Intolerance**. Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

RISSE, Thomas, Daniela Engelmann-Martin, Hans-Joachim Knope, and Klaus Roscher. To Euro Or Not To Euro? **European Journal Of International Relations**, v. 5, n. 2, pp. 147-187, 1999.

RISSE, Thomas, Social Constructivism and European Integration. *In*: WIENER, Antje; DIEZ, Thomas (eds). **European Integration Theory**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 159-176.

ROMANIA: FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2022 COUNTRY REPORT. **Freedom House**, 2022. Available at: <<https://freedomhouse.org/country/romania/freedom-world/2022>>. Access on 26 February 2024.

ROUDOMETOF, V. Forms of religious glocalization: Orthodox Christianity in the longue durée. **Religions**, v. 5, n. 4, pp. 1017–1036, 2014.

ROUDOMETOF, Victor. **Nationalism, Globalization, Eastern Orthodoxy**: ‘Unthinking’ the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ in Southeastern Europe. *European Journal of Social Theory*, v. 2, n. 2, p. 233-247, 1999.

RUMELILI, B. Liminality and perpetuation of conflicts: Turkish-Greek relations in the context of community-building by the EU. **European Journal of International Relations**, v. 9, n. 2, p. 213–248, 2003.

RUMELILI, Bahar. Constructing Identity and Relating to Difference: Understanding the EU’s Mode of Differentiation. **Review of International Studies**, v. 30, n. 1, 2004, pp. 27–47.

RUMELILI, Bahar. Liminal identities and processes of domestication and subversion in International Relations. **Review of International Studies**. 38, 2012, pp.495–508.

SAKELLARIOU, A. Investigating fundamentalist trends in the Orthodox Church of Greece: Balancing between traditionalism and fundamentalism. **Zeitschrift für Religion, Gesellschaft und Politik**, pp.59–79, April 11, 2022.

SAURETTE, Paul. You dissin me? Humiliation and post 9/11 global politics. **Review of International Studies**. 2006; v.32, n.3, p.495-522.

SCHENK, F.B. Eastern Europe. *In*: MISHKOVA, D.; TRENCSENYI, B. **European regions and boundaries: A conceptual history**. Oxford, England: Berghahn Books, 2017, pp.188-209.

SHORE, Cris. **Building Europe**. New York: Routledge, 2000.

STAN, L.; TURCESCU, L. **Religion and politics in post-communist Romania**. New York, NY, USA: Oxford University Press, 2007.

STAN, L.; TURCESCU, L. The Orthodox Churches and Democratization in Romania and Bulgaria. *In*: RAMET, S. **Religion and Politics in Post-Socialist Central and Southeastern Europe**. London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp.263-285.



STAN, L.; TURCESCU, L. The Romanian Orthodox Church and Post-communist Democratisation. **Europe-Asia Studies**, v. 52, n. 8, p. 1467–1488, December. 2000.

STAN, L; TURCESCU, L. Orthodoxy and EU Integration: Opportunity or Stumbling Block? **Sfera Politicii**, n.146, 2010, pp.9-17.

TALANTOPOULOU, O. Between state and religious institutions: Religious diversity in the Greek educational system. **Audens: revista studiantil d'anàlisi interdisciplinària**, n. 5, p. 85–105, 2021.

THE CONSTITUTION OF GREECE Revised by Resolution of November 25, 2019 of the IXth Revisionary Parliament. Available at: <<https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/f3c70a23-7696-49db-9148-f24dce6a27c8/THE%20CONSTITUTION%20OF%20GREECE.pdf>>. Access on 26 February 2024.

**THE CONSTITUTION OF GREECE**. Available at: <<https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/f3c70a23-7696-49db-9148-f24dce6a27c8/THE%20CONSTITUTION%20OF%20GREECE.pdf>>. Access on January 21 2024.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES. **DECISION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES of 24 May 1979 on the accession of the Hellenic Republic to the European Coal and Steel Community**. Brussels, 1979. Available at: <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:11979H/DEC/KSG>>. Access on 10 May 2023.

**THE EDITORS OF ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA**. East-West Schism, 22 dez. 2023. Available at: <<https://www.britannica.com/event/East-West-Schism-1054>>. Access on 25 February 2024.

**THE GREEK CONSTITUTION OF 1(14) JUNE OF 1911**. Available at: <<https://www.hoelseth.com/royalty/greece/grconst19110614.html>>. Access on January 21 2024.

THOMAS, S. **The Global Resurgence Of Religion And The Transformation Of International Relations: The Struggle For The Soul Of The Twenty-First Century**. New York, NY, USA: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005.

THOMAS, Scott; O'MAHONY, A. Postsecularity and the Contending Visions of the European Political Imagination in International Relations. *In*: Mavelli L., Petito F. (eds) **Towards a Postsecular International Politics**. Culture and Religion in International Relations. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, p.105-128, 2014.

THOMASSEN B. The Uses and Meaning of Liminality. **International Political Anthropology**. v.2, n.1 p.5-28, 2009.

TODOROVA, M. **Imagining the Balkans**. New York, NY, USA: Oxford University Press, 2009.

TURNER, V. Liminality and Communitas. *In*: **The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti Structure**, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2008, pp. 41-49.

TWISS, Sumner B., SIMION, Marian Gh.; PETERSEN, Rodney L. (Eds). **Religion and Public Policy: Human Rights, Conflict, and Ethics**. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015.

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY. **1320: Section 8: The fall of Rome: Facts and fictions**. 2019. Available at: <<https://www.usu.edu/markdamen/1320Hist&Civ/chapters/08ROMFAL.htm>>. Access on: 21 January. 2024.

VAN GENNEP, Arnold. **The Rites of Passage**. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960.

VESELINOVIC, M.; SMITH-SPARK, L. Romania vote to ban same-sex marriage fails on low turnout. CNN, 8 out. 2018. Available at: <<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/10/08/europe/romania-marriage-referendum-fails-intl/index.html>>. Access on 26 February 2024.

VORIA. Φυλάκιση έως δύο έτη για όποιον καθυβρίζει τον Θεό και τη θρησκεία. 2019. Available at: <<https://www.voria.gr/article/pio-afstires-i-pines-gia-pederastia-ke-diakinisi-metanaston>>. Acesso em: January 21 2024.

WARE, T. **The Orthodox Church**: An introduction to Eastern Christianity. Harlow, England: Penguin Books, 2015.

WEBER, Max. **The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism**. New York: Routledge, 2001.

WENDT, A. Collective identity formation and the international state. **The American Political Science Review**, v. 88, n. 2, pp. 384–396, 1994.

WENDT, Alexander. **Social Theory of International Politics**. Cambridge University Press 1999.

WENDT, Alexander. The state as Person in International Theory. **Review of International Studies**. Vol. 30, No. 2, 2004, p. 289-316.

WILTON, Gary. Christianity at the founding: the legacy of Robert Schuman. *In: God and the EU: Faith in the European project*. Londres, England: Routledge, 2015, p. 13-32.

WOLFF, L. **Inventing Eastern Europe**: The map of civilization on the mind of the enlightenment. Palo Alto, CA, USA: Stanford University Press, 1994.

WORSCHKECH, Susann. The 'making' of Europe in the peripheries: Europeanization through conflicts and ambivalences. **Culture, Practice & Europeanization**. 3. 2018, p.56-76. 10.5771/2566-7742-20

YANNAS, P. The Soft Power of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. **Mediterranean Quarterly**, v.20 n° 1. 2009, pp.77-93.

KATΣΙΑΡΑ, Αλέξανδρου. **Ορθοδοξία στην Ευρώπη (και όχι Ορθοδοξία και Ευρώπη)**. 2023. Available at: <<https://www.churchofgreece.eu/%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%B8%CE%BF%CE%B4%CE%BF%CE%BE%CE%AF%CE%B1-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%81%CF%8E%CF%80%CE%B7-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CF%8C%CF%87%CE%B9-%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%B8%CE%BF%CE%B4%CE%BF%CE%BE//>>>. Access on January 22 2024.

«ΟΧΙ» ΙΕΡΩΝΥΜΟΥ ΓΙΑ ΤΕΚΝΟΘΕΣΙΑ ΑΠΟ ΟΜΟΦΥΛΑ ΖΕΥΓΆΡΙΑ. **ΕFSYN**, December 15, 2023. Available at:  
<[https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/koinonia/415425\\_ohi-ieronymoy-gia-teknothesia-apo-omofyla-zeygaria](https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/koinonia/415425_ohi-ieronymoy-gia-teknothesia-apo-omofyla-zeygaria)>. Access on 26 February 2024.

ΥΠΟΥΡΓΟΣ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ. **Σκοπός**. [n.d.] Available at:  
<<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/gepo-menu-m/skopos-m>>. Access on 21 January 2024.