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DOSSIER

**Un nouveau contexte pour les relations euro-méditerranéennes : Opportunités saisies ou passées ?
A New Context for Euro-Mediterranean Relations: Seized or Leaved Opportunities?**

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A New Context for Euro-Mediterranean Relations: Seized or Leaved Opportunities

A Theory of the Role of Religion in Regional Supranational Integration Processes

Filippo M. Giordano

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Introduction

This essay examines the influence of religions on the establishment of regional supranational organisations at the international level,¹ which, following the example of European integration, have gradually structured vast continental areas around common institutions, aiming to achieve an economic and social wealth, as well as military and political safety.² It aims at defining the problem and at outlining a research strategy to get a better understanding of regional organisations and their relationships with all the subjects involved in the supranational integration process.

Whereas the role of religions in the democratization process has been widely studied,³ the analysis of the religious factor within the framework of regional integrations seems to be much more limited, as far as peace defence and human rights protection are concerned, and despite their weight at the international

1. The term "religion" refers to prophetic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), Indian-mystical religions (Hinduism and Buddhism) and Far Eastern religions (Confucianism, Taoism).

2. See Mario Telò, *European Union and New Regionalism. Regional Actors and Global Governance in Post-Hegemonic Era* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007).

3. See Jeffrey Haynes (ed. by), *Religion and Democratizations*, (New York: Routledge, 2011). On UN, see Giovanni Finizio and Ernesto Gallo (eds.), *Democracy at the United Nations. UN Reform in the Age of Globalisation* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2013).

level.⁴ However, there are many examples and evidence of the strong influence of confessional actors on the integration processes, including the European Union (EU).⁵

This aspect encourages the search for an interpretational system showing the level of interaction between the two areas, which is the target of this essay. To this end, it is necessary to analyse theoretically the relationship between religious subjects and regional integration processes, and to select the categories through which this integration takes place. These theoretical aspects will then be applied to the case of the European continent, so as to provide a comprehensive empirical model of the phenomenon.

Before proceeding further, however, an explanation of the reasons that have led us to choose Europe as the starting point of our analysis is needed. In Europe, the interaction between a continental political subject (the EU) and a highly pervasive confessional one (Christianism) is more evident than anywhere else. It is also important to take into due account the nature of this phenomenon, which goes well beyond the mechanisms underlying the functional structure of an integration process, but which is deeply rooted in the history of the civilization that has fostered it. In fact, regional integrations are not only the expression of the economic interests of States belonging to vast geographical areas, but also the outcome of a wider democratization process,⁶ often linked with values such as peace, safety, stability, prosperity, environmental protection and respect of human rights. These presuppositions are widely shared by all faiths, as all religious traditions are based on key ethical elements that can be easily linked to those principles.⁷

The above-mentioned factors lead us to the assumption that religions, to different extents, can promote the development of democratic principles⁸ as well

4. See Fabio Petito, "Il ritorno della religione nelle relazioni internazionali e qualche riflessione sul caso singolare dell'espansione globale del protestantesimo," *Quaderni di relazioni internazionali* 12 (2010): 35-47; Jeffrey Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, Harlow: Pearson, (2007); Fabio Petito and Pavlos Hatzopoulos (eds.), *Ritorno dall'esilio. La religione nelle relazioni internazionali*, (Bologna: il Mulino, 2006); John L. Esposito and Michael Watson (eds.), *Religion and Global Order*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000).

5. See Alfredo Canavero and Jean-Dominique Durand (eds.), *Il fattore religioso nell'integrazione europea*, (Milano: Unicopli, 1999).

6. See Antonio Papisca, "Democrazia internazionale, via di pace. Il rilancio della politica passa attraverso la globalizzazione della democrazia", *Futuribili* 1-2 (2003): pp. 92-106. On the democratization process, See Lucio Levi, Giovanni Finizio and Nicola Vallinoto (eds.), *The Democratization of International Institutions: First International Democracy Report*, (London: Routledge, 2013).

7. See Clive Lawton and Peggy Morgan (eds.), *Ethical issues in six religious traditions*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, (2007). See also Andrea Bellavite and Ettore Malnati, "I cristiani e la pace", *Futuribili* 1-2 (2003): pp. 107-131.

8. See Jeffrey Haynes (ed. by), *Religion and Democratizations*, op. cit.

as the vision of a peaceful society, without fundamentalist tensions.⁹ From a less generic perspective, it is possible to say that religions also promote the establishment of supranational inclusive political organisations, such as those stemming from the most advanced integration processes. In this regard, the term “*advanced integration*” defines the most similar community-making process of institutions and policies to the model of federal State,¹⁰ where the highest level of political and institutional balance can be found at the continental level, and beyond the assumptions of the democratization process.¹¹

In light of the above-mentioned considerations, the most complex and interesting model is undoubtedly the European one, with the crucial influence of Christianity. Therefore, the analysis of this experience has been used to delineate the indicator (or “*confessional coefficient*”) of the interaction between a given religious subject and a regional integration process. Before proceeding with the analysis of such indicator, however, it is necessary to explain briefly what the so-called regional integrations are, what their scope is and what their underlying interests or principles are. This procedure will lead to a more comprehensive explanation of the confessional coefficient, and to an effective delineation of some general categories to measure the impact of religion on a given supranational integration process. Finally, the outcome of our analysis will be applied to some concrete cases.

1. Comparison and similarities between regional integration processes and religions

Over the last decades, notably from the mid-1980s onwards, this phenomenon has increasingly conditioned international relationships and their stability, with relevant geopolitical consequences at the global level. Such trend has then become more marked with the end of the bipolar order and with the pressing need of a higher level of safety and stability at the international level.¹² The precursor of this evolution can be traced back to the European Community; however, EU-inspired

9. See Perry Schmidt-Leukel (ed.), *War and Peace in World Religions: The Gerald Weisfeld Lectures 2003*, (London: SCM Press, 2010); Hans Küng, *Scontro di civiltà ed etica globale. Globalizzazione, religioni, valori universali, pace*, (Roma: Datanews, 2005); Id., *Etica mondiale per la politica e l'economia*, (Brescia: Queriniana, 2002). As Telò wrote, “it is a clear result of current research that no religion or culture, including Islam, is inescapably fundamentalist by its very nature. Nowhere can fundamentalism rightfully claim to be the unchallenged expression of the cultural identity of a community” [Mario Telò, *European Union and New Regionalism*, op. cit.: 58]. It is therefore possible to state that fundamentalism is a deviated expression of any religious trend, and therefore useless for the purposes of this essay; instead, we will analyse the universalistic assumptions that have had a historical influence on all religious faiths and showing clear common characteristics.

10. See Jürgen Habermas, *La costellazione postnazionale*, (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1999).

11. See Ann Ward and Lee Ward (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Federalism*, (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009).

12. See Ademola Abass, *Regional Organisations and the Development of Collective Security. Beyond Chapter VIII of the UN Charter*, (Portland: Hart Publishing, 2004).

regional integration models have also been set up in other continents since the 1960s, following the gradual decolonisation movement. Among them, it is worth remembering the former Organisation of African Unity (OAU) established in 1963—later replaced by the African Union (AU) in 2002—and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), formed in 1967. All the above-mentioned examples of regional integration were initially based on economic cooperation. After the Cold War, however, a new form of regionalism (*New Regionalism*) was developed, aimed at safety, justice, environment and cultural identity.¹³ In the last 20 years, several types of interregional cooperation (namely, complex multilevel governance systems for extra-regional relationships¹⁴) have been created alongside many regionalisation processes to deal with the opposing trends of globalisation.¹⁵

Regionalism is therefore linked to the transformation of the national State system: globalisation drives these States to transfer part of their sovereignty to supranational organisations able to solve all the large-scale issues (safety, economy and markets, energy, environment, emigration, etc.) that cannot be handled by small-scale political entities.

Finally, there exist two types of regionalism, differing in the depth of their integration. The first type is characterised by a high level of integration at the institutional level and by a large sharing of rules, regulations, principles and decision-making procedures limiting the independence of each member State (*tight integration*). This is the case of the European Union, which is characterised by a highly developed integration level and shows a clear federalist trend (EMU),¹⁶ notwithstanding some strong limitations (CFSP and SCDP). The second type

13. Stephen C. Calleya, *Regionalism in the Post-Cold War World*, Burlington: Ashgate, (2000).

14. As in the case of the ASEAN, which, in the 1990s, set up a series of structured interregional relationships (ASEAN Plus Three, East ASEAN Summit, ASEAN Regional Forum, Asia – Europe Meeting), and of the European Union with the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Barcelona Process 1995, later Union for the Mediterranean 2008). See Mathew Doidge, *The European Union and Interregionalism. Patterns of Engagement*, (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011).

15. See Andrew F. Cooper, Christopher W. Hughes and Philippe De Lombaerde (eds.), *Regionalisation and Global Governance: the taming of globalisation?* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008); Mario Telò, *European Union and New Regionalism*, op. cit.; Simon Sweeney, *Europe, the state, and globalisation*, (Harlow: Pearson, 2005); Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell (eds.), *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organisation and International Order*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

16. Other *tight integrations* include the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the League of Arab States (Arab League), the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Andean Community (CAN) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). See Lucio Levi, Giovanni Finizio and Nicola Vallinoto (eds.), *The Democratization of International Institutions*, op. cit.; Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell (eds.), *Regionalism in World Politics*, op. cit. Obviously, some of these transnational organisations differ from the European Union and its highly developed model because they pursue different objectives and cannot be considered regional integrations in the strict sense of the term. In fact, in many of these organisations most sectors are ruled by an intergovernmental system, even if, as in the case of the ECOWAS and its monetary union (West African Monetary Zone), a series of integration processes is currently being set up.

of regionalism is characterised by a looser level of integration, in which common institutions cannot build up and impose consensus, and informal consultation and intergovernmental method prevail (*loose integration*). Such entities, often of a transcontinental nature, tend to integrate various areas characterised by ongoing regionalisation processes, as in the case of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).¹⁷

In order to fully understand the connection between religions—some more than others—and the integration process of vast national communities, it is necessary to determine and analyse their common interests. The case of the European Union is an emblematic one.¹⁸

From the post-war period onwards, Europe has witnessed the flourishing of many initiatives aimed at preventing internal conflicts, and which have stimulated and shaped European solidarity through the establishment of intergovernmental and supranational common bodies, geared towards a community of values and aims. Besides the EU, which represents the most advanced integration structure in Europe, the list includes OECD, OSCE, NATO, EFTA and the intergovernmental organisations of the Council of Europe.

The common adhesion to a set of shared principles (human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy promotion, protection of civil liberties) represents, by now, an ideal consolidated heritage within the EU and its member States. In the case of other countries showing a propensity to follow the same trend, such adhesion is also the inspiration for the establishment of an international democratic society where a universal system of secure values can be created.¹⁹ The development of international ethics is explicitly pursued by many religious subjects aimed at its strengthening and gradual institutionalization (*global governance*).²⁰ In addition, the functionalist nature of the European Union has inspired other regional systems to develop their own political and institutional structures relying on a common ground (economic development, social equity and welfare,

17. Among loose integrations, it is worth remembering the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the better-known Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and, finally, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Council of Europe, which encompasses the former Soviet Union republics. See Lucio Levi, Giovanni Finizio and Nicola Vallinoto (eds.), *The Democratization of International Institutions*, op. cit.; Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell (eds.), *Regionalism in World Politics*, op. cit. These systems are based on intergovernmental methodologies, as most institutions and policies lack community-making procedures.

18. See Mathew Doidge, *The European Union and Interregionalism*, op. cit.

19. See Ulrich Beck, *Lo sguardo cosmopolita*, (Roma: Carocci, 2005); Mario Telò, *Europa potenza civile*, (Bari-Roma: Laterza, 2004); Jürgen Habermas, *L'inclusione dell'altro. Studi di teoria politica*, (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1998).

20. See Jürgen Habermas, *La costellazione postnazionale*, op. cit.; Hans Küng, *Etica mondiale per la politica e l'economia*, op. cit.; Id., *Cristianesimo*, (Milano: Rizzoli, 1999).

political stability, security, military defence), and largely based on the European example.²¹

Regional integrations have fostered the gradual establishment of an integrated normative network of transnational relationships, with a view to promoting both a universal *ethos* and a wider economic wealth and military safety. Whereas the convergence of religion and politics in the ethical field can be easily seen,²² it is still possible to perceive, behind all functional aims, the moral root (social justice, equality, peace, solidarity) which leads religions to the endorsement of all the particular interests underlying a regional integration process, as in the case of the European Union and its high confessional coefficient; instead, the above-mentioned root is more difficult to contextualise within other areas undergoing a regionalization process.

In fact, the determination of the actual influence of religions on the ongoing regional integration processes in South America, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Africa remains controversial. First of all, in all these extremely recent processes the role of contributory factors, including those of a religious nature, is still to be fully assessed; second, most of these processes are clearly driven by functional interests rather than by ethical and idealistic reasons, and often represent a surrogate of the European model. Finally, the peculiar fragmentation of their social and cultural elements hampers the detection of religious factors and the drawing up of a balance highlighting the level of mutual interaction between confessional subjects and political systems (confessional coefficient).

In many parts of the world, in fact, the political tensions towards regional integration are rarely accompanied by univocal religious tensions coherently aiming at the same goal. The effects of religious influence on a common political process, and the consequential limits to the potentialities of the confessional coefficient, are undermined—with the partial exception of South America, where a certain confessional homogeneity exists—by both geographical discontinuity and conflicts among the various religious trends.²³ Such problem can be clearly seen in the SAARC and ASEAN regions, as well as in Africa (ECOWAS, SADC and the African Union itself²⁴). The same situation occurs in Middle Eastern countries

21. See Mario Telò, *European Union and New Regionalism*, op. cit.

22. See Ellen Messer, "Pluralist Approaches to Human Rights," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 53, 3 (1997): pp. 293–317.

23. See Elizabeth Jelin, "Cultural Movements and Social Actors in the New Regional Scenarios: The Case of Mercosur," *International Political Science Review* 22, 1 (2001): pp. 85–98.

24. See Wulf Herbert and Deibel Tobias, *Conflict early warning and response mechanisms: tools for enhancing the effectiveness of regional organisations? A comparative study of the AU, ECOWAS, IGAD, ASEAN/ARF and PIF*, London: Crisis States Research Centre – DESTIN, LSE, (2009), (accessed 26 January 2014), <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28495/1/WP49.2.pdf> and Laurie Nathan, *The Peacemaking Effectiveness of Regional Organisations*, (London: Crisis States Research Centre – DESTIN, LSE, 2010), (accessed 26 January 2014), <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/download/wp/wpSeries2/WP812.pdf>.

with the Arab League and the CCG: all these regions are characterized by the preponderance of various religious systems—sometimes even of various, if not contrasting, trends, as in the case of Islam—over a single confessional trend.²⁵

The religious homogeneity of a geopolitical area is certainly not essential in the setting up of a regional integration process; however, an irenic conciliatory attitude based on shared values among different denominations is instrumental in creating a positive and ecumenical approach to the development of transnational political and economic systems with a high integration level,²⁶ as in the case of Europe, where the religious factor, notably of Christian origin, has had a significant influence on the historical process behind the creation of the European Community, not only by actively backing up the integration process, but also by offering the ethical and idealistic support to overcome the mere functionalist dimension.²⁷ In fact, the Christian Churches, aside from all internal differentiations,²⁸ have acknowledged the value of the European Union and have been instrumental in its creation, as inferred by the analysis of the confessional coefficient.

2. Confessional coefficient and religious factors

Having defined the converging interests (values and aims) and detected the regional organisations, it is now time to define what the confessional coefficient is. Our indicator points out the scope and level of influence of the religious subject on the regionalization process, which can be measured by means of the so-called “*religious factors*” of integration. Despite their differences in both nature and effectiveness, these factors can be seen, according to their religious tradition and the regional integration they pertain to, as estimative constants²⁹ to evaluate the impact of a given religious system on the political forces and the economic, social and institutional subjects taking part in a supranational integration process. It is therefore possible to detect a:

1. social-cultural factor, which entails

25. See Hans Küng, *Islam. Passato, presente e futuro*, (Milano: Rizzoli, 2007).

26. See Hans Küng, *Cristianesimo*, op. cit.

27. See Alfredo Canavero and Jean-Dominique Durand (eds.), *Il fattore religioso nell'integrazione europea*, op. cit.

28. See Franco Bolgiani, Francesco Broglio Margiotta and Roberto Mazzola (eds.), *Chiese cristiane, pluralismo religioso e democrazia liberale in Europa*, (Bologna: il Mulino, 2006); Oscar Cullmann, *Le vie dell'unità cristiana* (Brescia: Queriniana, 1994); Id., *L'unità attraverso la diversità, Il suo fondamento e il problema della sua realizzazione* (Brescia: Queriniana, 1987).

29. We have used the term “constant” because the estimation parameter (religious factor) is common to all religions (e.g. leading personalities, social and cultural aspects, ecclesiastical institutions, ideological elements); whereas the content varies according to the concrete engagement of each denomination in the regionalisation process.

2. a second individual factor, (concerning eminent personalities and figures),
3. a third factor related to: A) religious institutions (political-ecclesiastical structures) and B) confessional/denominational nongovernmental organizations, and
4. finally, a fourth factor related to the capacity to transfer religion-related concepts to the ideological, juridical and institutional domains of a supranational political community.

Before examining each aspect, however, it is necessary to explain some of the questions underlying the choice of religious factors. First and foremost, they aim at grouping in analytical categories all the elements—common to all religious trends without exception—which have affected the various integration processes independently of the traditions and the protocol of each religious faith. It has to be pointed out, however, that the evaluation of the actual interaction capacity of the religious factors cannot disregard the evaluation of the ethical and prescriptive progress of their inherent doctrinal structures. This qualitative aspect stems from the degree of affinity of the religious factor with the principles presupposing the development of an advanced integration process, that is, of a federal nature. The same confessional ratio is actually influenced by the democratization level of the religious bodies (ecclesiastical institutions, internal disciplines, etc.) and by the convergence of their system of values with that of a secularized and democratically developed civil society. Clear examples are provided by the various level of democratization of Islam, Judaism and Christianity, or by the internal differences between the Catholic Church and the different denominations of reformed Protestantism.³⁰

30. See Hans Küng, *Islam. Passato, presente e futuro*, op. cit.; Id., *Cristianesimo*, op. cit.; Id., *Ebraismo*, (Milano: Rizzoli, 1995). Obviously, each religious system supports the democratic principles differently, thus reflecting its own internal democratisation level. As Samuel P. Huntington stated, "Christianism has a strong propensity to be supportive of democracy while other religions, such as Islam, Buddhism and Confucianism, do not" Jeffrey Haynes (ed. by), *Religion and Democratizations*, op. cit.: 2. See also Samuel P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996); John W. Gruchy, *De Christianity and democracy: a theology for a just world order*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Although his opinion is only partially shareable, even within Christianity it is possible to find different levels of democracy and propensity to encourage the development of democratic systems. Another crucial factor is the believers' attitude towards intramundane reality, seen as a testing ground for their faith. This presupposition, even more evident in Protestant Churches, seems to have stimulated a higher level of engagement and responsibility of the believers in the government of the *res publica*. It is important to remember that the interest of Protestant culture in the mundane reality is more marked than in other denominations, because of the confessional connotation of the political, social and economic actions of its believers. See Max Weber, *Letica protestante e lo spirito del capitalismo*, (Milano: Rizzoli, 1991). Finally, Protestants seem to have developed a stronger familiarity with the democratic system and with more advanced forms of associative democracy like federalism [Everett 1997], in accordance with their Calvinist heritage. See Robert McCune Kingdon and Robert Linder, *Calvin and Calvinism: sources of democracy?* (Lexington: Heath, 1970); William J. Everett, *Religion, Federalism, and the Struggle for Public Life. Cases from Germany, India, and America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Let us turn now to the examination of the each of the four factors:

1. Among the main factors that have, explicitly or implicitly, influenced the development of regional integration processes, a major role has been played by those related to *ethos* and religious culture, where a direct and indirect action can be detected.

In the first case, the focus is on the circulation, within the society, of a set of values aligned with the principles underlying supranational integration, namely: pacifism; equal rights; respect for diversity; protection of freedoms; and which are propaedeutical to supranational integration: irenism; tolerance; ecumenism; universal brotherhood.

In the second case, instead, such action aims at steering the society towards the regionalisation process, thus predisposing the believers to the acknowledgement of the advantages and the necessity of this objective, mainly through official messages or declarations of the religious authority in particular moments of the integration process (encyclicals, synodal declarations, proclamations, etc.). This factor shows the conformity between religious values and integration objectives and also makes it possible to evaluate the pervasive power of the religious subjects.³¹

2. Directly connected to the first factor are the actions of each individual involved in a regional integration process, that is, political and religious leaders who promote initiatives in favour of the development of supranational institutions under the influence of confessional *ethos*. In this case, a distinction has to be made between personalities influenced by their own religious ascendancy and dealing with political relationships (heads of State and government, ministers, regional organisation officers, etc.) and high-profile religious personalities who advocate political initiatives consistent with the aims pursued by their religious faith (pontiffs, patriarchs, ayatollahs, religious representatives, etc.).
3. The third factor is an enhancement of the second, as it deals with the actions of religious institutions and organisations, as well as the internal bodies in charge of devising resolutions on international political issues. It is necessary to point out, however, that religious systems vary greatly: A) some ecclesiastical organizations act as actual States with their own diplomatic corps (Catholic Church), whereas others are of a theocratic nature (Islamic Republic) or influence the civil laws of

31. See Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacro e secolare. Religione e politica nel mondo globalizzato*, (Bologna: il Mulino, 2007); José Casanova, *Oltre la secolarizzazione. La religione alla riconquista della sfera pubblica*, (Bologna: il Mulino, 2000).

the State hosting them (Israel) with their own rules. In this case, religion can act as a political subject through the State and its external representative bodies (government, ministries, diplomatic corps, specific offices, etc.). B) There are also nongovernmental confessions with open, or partially open, structures, like the communion of Orthodox Churches and the various federations of Protestant Churches. In that case, instead, the various Churches act as a national/transnational/international subject leveraging on the charismatic power of its secular institutions or through agencies specifically aimed at defining and communicating their general political trends. However, some forms of overlapping are still possible: (A→B), as many Catholic, Jewish and Islamic associations and organizations all over the world have their own independent structures and nongovernmental trends—be them affiliated or partially disagreeing with their own “religion-oriented Churches/Churches-States/States”—as in the case of the Latin-American Episcopal Council, the World Jewish Congress, the Jamaat Tabligh in India, etc.

(B → A) Inversely, a clear example is shown by the formal role of some Protestant or Orthodox Churches, which have kept their constitutional bond with the State or its institutions, despite their lack of direct political influence (e.g. the Scandinavian Lutheranism, the Church of England and Scotland, the Greek Orthodox Church,³² etc.).

4. Finally, the last factor is provided by the existence of a supranational community of secularized religious values within the juridical, cultural and symbolic heritage, as epitomized in the famous UN motto “unity in diversity,” which was elaborated in a religious environment.³³ As we have already seen, many religious concepts have passed on to the European culture and to the community language and symbolism. Another effective example is provided by Johannes Althusius (1557-1638),³⁴ and his principle of subsidiarity,³⁵ which was included in the social doctrine of the Catholic Church (*Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo*

32. The Greek Orthodox Church still acts as a strong national power, thus fostering the promiscuity between religious aspects and civil and political rights. Suffice it to say that the Greek Constitution clearly refers to the “Holy and Consubstantial and Indivisible Trinity” (art. 3) and forbids any alterations to the Holy Books. Besides, the Greek government not only assigns the Orthodox Church a particular status, but also obliges all citizens to declare their religious belief on their identity papers.

33. See Oscar Cullmann, *L'unità attraverso la diversità. op. cit.*

34. Corrado Malandrino (ed.), *Althusius Johannes. La politica elaborata organicamente con metodo, e illustrata con esempi sacri e profani*, (Torino: Claudiana, 2009).

35. *Idem.*

Anno)³⁶ and later in the European common right with the Treaty Of Maastricht.³⁷

All of the above-mentioned factors are clearly detectable in the case of EU, which is not only the most advanced political and economic integration process, but it also shows more clearly than in any other process the virtuous interaction between political and religious subjects. The European Union is, therefore, the concrete model of our work and the measurement reference of our confessional coefficient.

3. Considerations on the (Christian) confessional coefficient of the European integration

The observation and analysis of the European Union clearly shows the high level of interaction between religious subjects, mainly Christians, and European integration. This is due to the action of the Christian Churches, which have not only objectively acknowledged the advantages of the integration in terms of social and economic welfare,³⁸ but have also identified the political unity of Europe as the main objective of the whole process,³⁹ in which the confessional coefficient is backed up by the existence of all of the above-mentioned factors. In the case of the EU, the Christian elements and the political aspects of integration converge and even overlap. As Jacques Delors remarked on about the development of the European Community “*les origines mêmes, les racines de notre réflexion politique sur le fédéralisme, la subsidiarité et la démocratie ont [...] de forts ancrages dans la pensée chrétienne et oecuménique.*”⁴⁰ These words highlight the deep link between Christian culture and the ideal, political and normative concepts underlying the birth of the European Community, to which “*chaque groupe chrétien*” gave “*un apport décisif indispensable et spécifique dans l’élaboration de ces concepts fondamentaux à travers la rationalisation du droit naturel, qui a permis de dégager des principes communs métapositifs à la théorie de l’organisation politique contemporaine.*”⁴¹

36. See Mario Toso, *Welfare society. La riforma del welfare: l’apporto dei pontefici*, Milano: LAS, (2003).

37. See Paola Bilancia, “Principio di sussidiarietà e ruolo delle autonomie nell’Unione europea,” *Nomos* 1-2 (2005): pp. 281–291; Francesco Ingravalle, *La sussidiarietà nei trattati e nelle istituzioni politiche dell’UE*, Alessandria: Department of Public Policy and Public Choice – POLIS, (2005), (accessed 26 January 2014), <http://polis.unipmn.it/pubbl/altri/ingravalle55.pdf>.

38. See Marco Parisi, *Le organizzazioni religiose nel processo costituente europeo*, (Napoli: ESI, 2005).

39. See Alfredo Canavero and Jean-Dominique Durand (eds.), *Il fattore religioso nell’integrazione europea*, op. cit.

40. See Ferdinando Citterio and Luciano Vaccaro (eds.), *Quale federalismo per qual Europa? Il contributo della tradizione cristiana*, (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1996): 34.

41. Ibid.

These words lead to the acknowledgement of the aspects characterising the social and cultural religious factor, as epitomised by the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union,⁴² whose binding nature has been officially ratified by the Treaty of Lisbon.⁴³ The Charter encompasses all the ethical trends at the basis of the very essence of the Christian religion, thus showing the convergence between religious *ethos* and a secularised system of values shared at the supranational level. In fact, the Treaty of Nice was favourably welcomed by Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic institutions, from the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI)⁴⁴ to the Conference of European Churches (KEK) and the World Council of Churches (WCC).⁴⁵

A more active part, at both the social and cultural levels, has been played by the religious authorities, who have issued documents to support the progress of the community integration process, notably papal encyclicals, aimed at consolidating and defining the concept of peace by progressively adapting it to the idea that the protection of peace should depend on the unity of Europe and a more united world. From the encyclical *Pacem in terris* on the pillars of peace (truth, justice, love and freedom) to *Populorum progressio*, in which the development of peoples is seen as the key element for peace, to *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, the Catholic Church has repeatedly stated that peace must lay its foundations on a structured solidarity and on the global reformation of financial and economic institutions.

Notably, as far as European integration and peace are concerned, the Catholic Church has supported the project of a European Defence Community (EDC),

42. See http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf (accessed 26 January 2014).

43. It has to be remembered that various Christian institutions have turned their attention to the *European Convention on Human Rights* (ECHR) from the 1950s onwards, as the Council of Europe has always represented an ideal institution for the Christian Churches because of its will to establish a common juridical and democratic space. For example, in 1970 the Holy See appointed a special envoy to attend the meetings of the Council and later became a *permanent observer*. In addition, *the Protestant and Orthodox Churches have always seen the Council of Europe as a vital institution* for the circulation of Christian values; in fact, in 2001 they decided to introduce the contents of the *Charta Cœcumenica* to the Council, because they were aware of having reached a crucial goal in the rapprochement among Christian Churches in Europe.

44. See considerations and proposals from the Group "Società Civile - Terzo Settore," Ufficio nazionale per problemi sociali e il lavoro della Conferenza Episcopale Italiana (CEI), 30 giugno 2000, Roma, http://www.chiesacattolica.it/pls/ccf_new_v3/cciv4_doc.edit_documento?p_id=5125 (accessed 26 January 2014).

45. See Gianni Long, "I protestanti, la Carta dei diritti e la convenzione per l'Europa", in *I protestanti e l'Europa*, eds. FCEI e UICCA, (Roma: Cooperativa Com Nuovi Tempi, 2003): 71-80. Doctrinal differences among different groups may lead to misunderstandings and difficulties hampering a common action aimed at a political integration process. Religious pluralism, Byrnes and Katzenstein remarked, may turn into a limit for the European Union, as in the case of its opening to include other countries. See Timothy A. Byrnes and Peter J. Katzenstein (eds.), *Religion in an Expanding Europe*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). It may also happen that the ecclesiastical institutions use their power to drive the political and juridical choices of the European Union, as in the case of the European Convention of the reference to the common Christian roots in the preamble of the new European Constitution. An in-depth analysis of this issue would need a separate study, which would go well beyond the scope of this essay. The above-mentioned 'limits', however, do not invalidate the constructive nature of religions towards the European integration process. See Joseph H. Weiler, *Un'Europa cristiana*, (Milano: Rizzoli, 2003) and Giovanni Reale, *Radici culturali e spirituali dell'Europa. Per una rinascita dell'uomo europeo*, (Milano: Raffaello Cortina, 2003).

as proposed by Alcide De Gasperi following Altiero Spinelli's suggestions. The above-mentioned proposal aimed at creating a European Political Community (EPC) within the treaty (art. 38) to promote a federal-like reformation of the former European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).⁴⁶ The Catholic Church took a clear stance: even after the signing of the Treaties of Rome, Pius XII reasserted his Europeanist beliefs and stated that "*les résultats obtenus Nous font bien augurer de l'avenir*" and that "*les pays d'Europe, qui ont admis le principe de déléguer une partie de leur souveraineté à un organisme supranational, entrent, [...], dans une voie salutaire, d'où peut sortir pour eux-mêmes et pour l'Europe une vie nouvelle dans tous les domaines, un enrichissement non seulement économique et culturel, mais aussi spirituel et religieux.*"⁴⁷

Even the Protestant Churches came out in favour of the idea of Europe as a community based on solidarity. Some of them, however, pushed the limits even further by promoting the idea of a federal-like Europe in two documents issued in the 1990s by the Dutch reformed Church (*Hart en ziel voor Europa?*) and the German Evangelical Church (*Europa fördert die Christen*), in which the pursuit of the original objectives of the European integration is encouraged and the aspects preventing its development from being fully achieved are criticised (democratic deficit, market distortions, social exclusions, lack of a common foreign policy, etc.). Finally, both documents state that the best model to establish an authentic European solidarity is the federal one.⁴⁸

The historical analysis of the personalities which have made a decisive contribution to the European integration show that its political progress was not driven by a cultural process, but by men strongly influenced by that process. Among them were the former European Commission President Jacques Delors and political personalities like Alcide De Gasperi, Konrad Adenauer and Robert Schuman, whose political thought was driven by their Christian vision of a united Europe. All the above-mentioned 'fathers' of the European community came from the ex-

46. See Daniela Preda, *Storia di una speranza. La battaglia per la CED e la Federazione europea*, (Milano: Jaca Book, 1990). On the Catholic stance, see Alfredo Canavero and Jean-Dominique Durand (eds.), *Il fattore religioso nell'integrazione europea*, op. cit.: 295-309 and Marco Mugnaini (ed.), *Stato, Chiesa e relazioni internazionali*, (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2003): 188-191.

47. See "Ad Legatos populares legibus ferendis, Romae coadunatos, ob Conventum Coetus, qui 'Communauté Européenne du Charbon et de l'Acier' appellatur, (C.E.C.A.)," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis (AAS)*, a. 49, s. II, v. XXIV (Jan. 25, 1957): 969.

48. See *Hart En Ziel Voor Europa? Rapport Van De Generale Synode Der Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1996) and Jean-Marie Lustiger, *Europa fördert die Christen - Zur Problematik von Nation und Konfession*, (Regensburg: Günther, 1993). See also Ermanno Genre and Flavio Pajer, *L'Unione europea e la sfida delle religioni. Verso una nuova presenza della religione nelle scuole*, (Torino: Claudiana, 2005). On the relationship between Protestants and the European integration process, see Alfredo Canavero and Jean-Dominique Durand (eds.), *Il fattore religioso nell'integrazione europea*, op. cit.: 141-157; 159-174. On the Orthodox Churches, see *ibid.*: 81-98; 207-229.

perience of Christian democracy and were linked not only by their cosmopolitan background but also by a strong Catholic faith.⁴⁹

Furthermore, among the Protestants, some personalities played a crucial role in the European integration process by trying to foster the federal evolution of its institutions, such as Walter Halstein, Adenauer's Demochristian collaborator and later first president of the European Commission, who came from the anti-Nazi opposition and the *Bekennende Kirche* (the German Confessing Church joined by the famous theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer.⁵⁰) His successor, the Belgian Jean Rey, also had a deeply rooted Christian faith; Ray was the son of a protestant pastor, a member of the WCC and a firm believer in the federal unity of Europe.⁵¹ Finally, it is not possible to leave out a key personality like Richard von Weizsäcker, member of the *Christlich-demokratische Union* (CDU) and president of the German Federal Republic (1984-1994) during the difficult reunification process of Germany. Weizsäcker, a man of deep faith, was president of the Congress of the German Evangelical Church (*Deutscher evangelischer Kirchentag*) and member of the WCC Central Committee from 1968 to 1984. Weizsäcker was also an assessor of the European federation, and his vision of a unified Germany was always of a Europeanist, rather than of a nationalistic nature, because he believed this to be the first step towards the integration of Eastern European countries in the European Community.⁵²

Many more examples and key religious personalities could be added to the list, and some of them have already been indirectly mentioned when speaking of the documents issued by the Churches. In fact, many pontiffs have given their personal contribution to the unity of Europe through encyclicals and have expressed their 'hopes' for Europe (John XXIII, Paul VI).⁵³ The first pontiff to openly express his adhesion to the project of a federal and united Europe was Pius XIII, who immediately supported the European integration process as a way to achieve peace at the global level.⁵⁴ However, the most recent and relevant Catholic con-

49. See Claudio G. Anta, *Padri dell'Europa. Sette brevi ritratti*, (Milano: Mondadori, 2005). On the figure of De Gasperi, see Daniela Preda, *Alcide De Gasperi federalista europeo*, (Bologna: il Mulino, 2004).

50. Malandrino Corrado, *'Tut etwas Tapferes': compi un atto di coraggio. L'Europa federale di Walter Hallstein 1948-1982*, (Bologna: il Mulino, 2005).

51. See Francis Balace, Willy De Clercq and Robert Planchar (eds.), *Jean Rey: liegeois, européen, homme politique. Actes de la commémoration Jean Rey 1902-2002*, Liège: Les Éditions de l'Université de Liège – Ulg, (2004).

52. See Richard von Weizsäcker, *Von Deutschland nach Europa. Die bewegende Kraft der Geschichte*, München: Siedler, (1991). On the role of the Churches in the German reunification process and the relationships between Eastern and Western Europe in the framework of religious relationship, see Alfredo Canavero and Jean-Dominique Durand (eds.), *Il fattore religioso nell'integrazione europea*, op. cit.

53. See Pio XII, Giovanni Paolo XXIII and Paolo VI, *La Chiesa e l'Europa: dai discorsi e messaggi di Pio XII, Giovanni XXIII e Paolo VI nel X anniversario della firma dei trattati della Comunità economica europea e della Comunità europea dell'energia atomica, 25 marzo 1957*, Roma: Ufficio per l'Italia del Servizio stampa e informazione delle Comunità europee, (1967).

54. See "Nuntius Radiophonicus", *Acta Apostolicae Sedis (AAS)*, a. 46, s. II, v. XXI (Jan. 16, 1954): 12-16.

tribution comes from John Paul II who, in his apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia In Europa*, asserted his faith in the European model and hoped for its completion through the drawing up of a fundamental charter and the accomplishment of a full political unity.⁵⁵

The federal character of the European unity had already been claimed during the Second World War by the then WCC Secretary General Adolph W. Visser't Hooft,⁵⁶ and his co-operators. Visser't Hooft had created an informal study committee, the "*Ecumenical commission on European cooperation*" with the clear intention of keeping the WCC informed on the development of the European unification process and to promote common initiatives.⁵⁷ The commixture between personalities directly involved in the European integration process and confessional bodies leads us to the third factor, in which the systematic effort of religions to influence a regionalisation process through their own organisational structure⁵⁸ is clearly visible.

With the exception of the Catholic Church, which has the power to establish diplomatic relationships and agreements with transnational and international bodies,⁵⁹ suffice it to mention the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) of the WCC, possibly the most propositional body linked to a Church.⁶⁰ The CCIA has been the political consultative body for the WCC since 1946 and acts as a pressure group. Notably, it encourages the resolution of conflicts through inter-religious dialogue and the cooperation with regional organisations and international institutions promoting the defence of peace and human rights.⁶¹ The CCIA being also the political office of the WCC, it draws up its

55. See John Paul II's post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, Rome, 28 June 2003, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20030628_cclesia-in-europa_en.html, (accessed 26 January 2014).

56. See Willem A. Visser't Hooft, *Le temps du rassemblement. Mémoires*, (Paris: Édition du Seuil, 1973).

57. See Martin Greschat and Wilfried Loth (eds.), *Die Christen und die Entstehung der Europäischen*, (Stuttgart-Berlin-Köln: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1994). The Commission included liberal, socialist and Christian-democratic politicians, university professors, and members of Europeanist and federalist movements and ecclesiastical institutions, such as John Edwards, André Philip, Constantijn. L. Patijn, Max Kohnstamm, Jean Rey, Mario Alberto Rollier, Gustav Heinemann and Poul Albrecht.

58. However, religious personalities can also be found within research institutes, think tanks and other political bodies outside the ecclesiastical sphere, as in the case of the *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, a British think tank founded in 1958 by, among the others, Sir Kenneth Grubb and Rev. Alan Booth, respectively president and secretary of the *Commission of the Churches in International Affairs* of the WCC.

59. See Marco Mugnaini (ed.), *Stato, Chiesa e relazioni internazionali*, op. cit.

60. See John Nurser, "The 'Ecumenical Movement' Churches, 'Global Order,' and Human Rights: 1938–1948," *Human Rights Quarterly* 25, 4 (2003). On the various religious organisations, see Antonio G. Chizzoniti, *Chiese, associazioni, comunità religiose e organizzazioni non confessionali nell'Unione Europea*, (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2002).

61. See *To Be One Voice of Advocacy for Peace and Justice*, Meeting of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), 2–8 October 2010, Saint Vlash Theological Academy - Durrës, Albania, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/speeches/to-be-one-voice-of-advocacy-for-peace-and-justice.html> (accessed 26 January 2014).

international political program and makes contacts with various organisations (the UN, specialized agencies, governments, etc.).

Since its very beginnings, the Commission has carefully observed the development of the European integration process and hoped for the overcoming of national interests and the transformation of the European Community into a federal-like *entité régionale*. CCIA's perspective on developing countries is very interesting⁶² because, according to the Commission—from the 1960s onwards—the best way to overcome the tensions triggered by the decolonisation process would have been through the establishment of large continental-based federations of States, in Africa and South-East Asia.⁶³ Regionalism was therefore the intermediate and preliminary step toward a *Community of Nations* built on a *federal structure*.⁶⁴ In a 1967 report, the CCIA wrote that “*les associations régionales qui répondent à ces exigences peuvent rendre plus forte l'organisation mondiale en réduisant les menaces contre la paix et en diminuant le nombre des questions à régler sur le plan International.*” Finally, the documents stated that the role of the Christians “*est de considérer l'utilité des groupements régionaux en fonction de la manière dont ceux-ci servent les intérêts de la communauté mondiale.*”⁶⁵ This fact clearly shows not only the strong commitment of the Christian organisations to the unity of Europe and other forms of regionalism, but also the type of integration they favoured.

The scope of this essay prevents us from including further probative examples of the strong interaction between religious confessions and regional and supranational integration systems. However, a strong religious coefficient is clearly detectable not only in the history of European integration, but can be also observed in the process which has led some other countries, in recent times, to foster similar—and even more ambitious—types of regional and supranational integrations at the international level.⁶⁶

Among them, it is worth mentioning the initiative launched in 2000 by the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in which an international and interreligious group of 20 outstanding personalities in the world of politics, diplomacy,

62. See Dwain C. Epps (ed. by), *The Churches in International Affairs: Reports 1999-2002*, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2005).

63. See *Post-Colonial Independence – The Christian Concern* (annex I), Meeting of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), 11-14 November 1961, Bangalore - India.

64. See *The Church and the Disorder of International Society*, Meeting of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), December 1947, Geneva, Switzerland.

65. See *Les Institutions, l'éthique et la loi internationale*, Colloque sur la Commission des Églises pour les Affaires Internationales, 12-17 Avril 1967, La Haye - Pays-Bas.

66. See H. Küng, *Global Responsibility. In Search of a New World Ethic*, London/Continuum, (New York: SCM Press 1991); H. Küng, *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics*, (London: SCM Press 1997) / (New York: Oxford University Press 1998); H. Küng and H. Schmidt (eds.), *A Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities. Two Declarations*, (London: SCM Press 1998).

culture, science and religion worked together to formulate an ethical global project for the UN Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.⁶⁷ This “Group of Eminent Persons” also included Protestant and Catholic political and religious exponents, such as Weizsäcker, Delors, and Küng.⁶⁸ The latter then recalled how the group had developed “*a new paradigm of international relations which takes into consideration new actors on the global scene*” and that “*the world religions have reappeared as actors in world politics,*” thus inspiring and legitimating “*understanding, reconciliation, cooperation and peace.*” According to Küng, in a globalized world “*such a global ethic is absolutely necessary.*”⁶⁹ Finally, the words used by the Catholic theologian in his speech at the United Nations clearly show the pivotal role of law, as well as the close relationship between politics and religion in terms of ethics and universal values:

*“For a globalization of economy, technology and communication also results in a globalization of problems which threaten to overwhelm us all over the world: problems of ecology, nuclear technology, and genetic engineering but also of globalized crime, and globalized terrorism. At such a time it is a matter of urgency that the globalization of economy, technology and communication be supported by a globalization of ethics. In other words: Globalization requires a global ethic, not as an additional burden but as a base and support for human beings, for civil society.”*⁷⁰

Abstract

The article aims at highlighting a relatively unknown phenomenon which involves the role of religion in supranational and regional integrations. Starting from an analysis of the European Union, and moving on to the individuation of the level of interaction between religious subjects and political actors within the framework of supranational regionalism, this essay highlights a “confessional coefficient” for the measurement of the above-mentioned interaction level and its relationship with various “religious factors.”

Résumé

L'article met en lumière un phénomène relativement peu connu qui concerne le rôle de la religion dans les intégrations supranationales et régionales. À partir d'une analyse de l'Union européenne, puis de l'individuation du niveau d'interaction entre les sujets religieux et les acteurs politiques dans le cadre du régionalisme supranational, cet article met en évidence un « coefficient confessionnel » pour mesurer le niveau de l'interaction mentionnée et sa relation avec divers « facteurs religieux ».

67. G. Picco, H. Küng, R. von Weizsäcker et al., *Crossing the Divide. Dialogue among Civilizations*, School of Diplomacy and International Relations, (South Orange (NJ): Seton Hall University 2001).

68. The other members of this work and study group were: Prince Hassan bin Talal, A. Kamal Aboulmagd, Haanan Ashrawi, Lourdes Arispe, Ruth Cardoso, Leslic Gelb, Nadine Gordimer, Sergey Kapitzza, Hayao Kaway, Tommy Koh, Amartya Sen, Tu Wei-Ming, Javad Zarif and Giandomenico Picco. On this initiative, see: <http://www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/en/pressrels/2000/pi216.html>.

69. From speech of Hans Küng at General Assembly of the UN on “Dialogue among Civilizations”, New York, 7-9 November 2001, see <http://www.weltethos.org/data-en/c-40-literatur/44-008-un-statement.php>.

70. Ibid.