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RELIGION AND POLITICAL SYSTEM.

**REPRESENTATION OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE
MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE “COLECTIV” INCIDENT**

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Abstract: The concepts of media and religion intermingle and collide in the cultural experience of the public, as religion itself has become an object of journalistic scrutiny through the recent street protests, terrorist attacks or scandals inside Orthodox and Catholic churches, with religious institutions and individuals highlighted in current political and social life.

In this article, the enmeshing of politics and religion is represented by the media's projection of the Romanian Orthodox Church as part of the state establishment and of the individuals related with the church, from the patriarch to regular priests or teachers of religion, as political actors. This qualitative analysis is built on the opposition axis good versus evil, innocent people versus corrupted system, as resulted from the news coverage of the Romanian television channels TVR1, ProTV and Digi24 of the protests following the tragic incident in Colectiv club in Bucharest. The theoretical model of analysis was inspired by the conceptual perspective of the dialectic sacred-profane, as two modes of being in the world, two existential situations assumed by man in the course of history, through the extraordinary and ordinary phenomena and events.

Key words: media, religion, politics, Romanian Orthodox Church, protests, sacred, profane, Colectiv

1. Introduction

The main research objective of this scientific inquiry is to explore how the Romanian Orthodox Church is associated, through the media lenses, with the political establishment, as shown in the television coverage during the November 2015 massive streets protests in Bucharest and other major cities. The demonstrations were triggered by the tragic incident in October 30th, 2015, during a rock concert in Colectiv club in Bucharest, when a total of 65 people lost their lives as a result of a deadly fire and 146 were severely injured. The organizers of the concert set off fireworks inside the building, causing a catastrophic blaze; pyrotechnics ignited the club's flammable polyurethane acoustic foam, and the fire spread instantly. Most of the victims that died on the site were poisoned by toxins released from the burning foam. The majority of those who were severely burned and hospitalized in Bucharest contracted life-threatening bacterial infections that led to several deaths (TVR1, 8.11.2015).

After the tragic incident massive street protests in Bucharest and major cities ignited, with solidarity meetings in several European and United States cities such as London, Paris, Rome and New York (Digi24, 4.11.2015). In the beginning, people demanded the resignation of the government, the mayor of Bucharest, and the district mayor where the nightclub was located, in order to force them to admit accountability for the tragic event. In the following days, the theme of corruption took central stage, as the dissatisfaction of the protesters with the political elites grew bigger with every death of the injured in Bucharest hospitals. The anger was fueled by the results of journalistic investigations showing the lack of law enforcement of fire hazard regulations and of minimal medical supplies and hygiene standards in Romanian hospitals. The protesters' revolt was also directed against the Romanian Orthodox Church and its leader, Patriarch Daniel, for what they considered inappropriate reactions in the aftermath of the fire. Thousands of demonstrators marched on Dealul Mitropoliei in Bucharest, where the headquarters of the Orthodox Church are located (ProTV, 4.11.2015).

This case study is analyzed from the research perspective of media and religion, as the Orthodox Church and priests became an object of journalistic scrutiny through their actions and messages regarding directly the incident at Colectiv club, and indirectly, through the interaction between the protesters and the Orthodox Church representatives, especially Patriarch Daniel. The conceptual framework of this article relates to Stewart Hoover's approach of the study of the media and religion from the following perspectives: similarity, distinction, articulation and mediatization. This inquiry is shaped by the opposition axis good versus evil, innocent people versus corrupted system. In order

to follow the research objectives in detail, we built a theoretical model of analysis inspired by the work of Mircea Eliade, “The sacred and the profane. The nature of the religion” (1987), and by Emile Durkheim’s perspective on religion as the division of objects and events into two distinctive and oppositional groups: the sacred and profane (1995). This article applied the attributes *space, people and institutions* on the various data resulting from the mediatization of the interplay of the dialectic sacred-profane.

2. Media and Religion

The new media explosion of the 21st century, the return of the religious on a global scale and the development of the online religions as well as the intensification of the role of religion in the political life are seen by researchers as interconnected trends (de Vries and Weber 2001, Morgan 2013). The emergence of the new technologies extended mass communication to the online environment and put pressure on the television to perform instant broadcasting, offering a new dimension to the dialectic sacralization-profanation (Campbell 2011). Both the public and the media have grown accustomed to television becoming a sort of civil religious space where mourning, burials and other related ceremonies are experienced by both national and worldwide audiences simultaneously. In this context, media has started to play a central role in contemporary religion, and conversely, religion has started to play an essential role in making the audiences understand the media’s place in society (Stout 2013). Therefore, a deeper interpretation of the ways in which religion intermingles with other dimensions of social and cultural life and a broader understanding of how religion and media influence each other are more necessary than ever (Hoover 2011).

2.1 Stewart Hoover’s Approach

In the study of the relationship between media and religion, Stewart Hoover (2006) focused on four major directions: similarity, distinction, articulation and mediatization, underlying that these research approaches are sometimes overlapping. In the first case, “similarity”, media is understood in broaden historical and philosophical terms as a communication system that generates reality, following Marshall McLuhan’s paradigm of technological determinism (McLuhan 1965). In that respect, religion is regarded as a medium that creates a channel with God, through a set of institutions, authorities and practices, such as churches, holy texts and preachers. Very much like the media, religion provides symbols, icons and stories to make sense of the world (Hoover 2011).

In the second case, “distinction”, Hoover (2006) approaches media and religion as separate research areas. Scholars claimed that religious entities, either institutions or individuals, express their dissatisfaction with the rise of the new media, which they quite often consider as instruments of evil. The opposition of religious individuals and religious institutions to the media resides in their belief that the press is too powerful and undermining for religious institutions and authority (Starker 2017). Other authors suggested that television lead to the de-secularization of the society and disappearance of religion in modern societies (Bruce 2002). On the other hand, religious institutions have been skilful in using media to spread their message, and researchers highlighted the increased presence of media in everyday life as one of the factors in modernity that has changed religious experience (Stewart 2011).

The category “articulation” refers to the processes of connection and disconnection of media and religion through which people appropriate cultural forms for their own purpose. Stewart Hoover locates the analysis of religion and media “in the experience of lived religious or spiritual lives as they encounter their social and cultural lives, of which the media play an ever more important part” (Hoover 2006, 55). The public discourse focuses on the role of the reception and meaning-making by media audiences, while religion is more and more an object of journalistic scrutiny as religious interests, movements, and individuals have gained a higher profile in contemporary political and social life (Hoover 2006).

By “mediatization”, Hoover (2006) offers a more integrated approach, as it doesn’t regard media and religion as the intersection of separate subjects of research, but as a unique perspective of studying religion. Knut Lundby (2013) also states that the study of the religion from a “mediatization” perspective is especially important considering the media saturated environment in the contemporary society, with the digital media pervading everyday life. Drawing on Hoover’s “mediatization” approach, Stig Hjarvard developed the theory of the media as agent of religious change. Hjarvard’s main argument supporting his theory that religion should be studied together with the media is that in western societies the press is the main source of religious ideas, and of religious imagination, through television programs, online articles or social media posts. The media took over several social functions of religion, such as rituals and community building and operations, while religious institutions have adopted media practices and rituals, such as framing their actions and activities so that they attract and appeal to the audience (Hjarvard 2013).

2.2 Sacred and Profane in the Media

Andreas Hepp and Veronika Krönert (2016) went a step further and argued that the branding of religion is one dominant pattern of

“mediatization”, as expressed in Stewart Hoover’s approach. Hepp and Krönert explain the branding of religion by presenting it in the profane space of the media, especially the commercials, without missing the sacred aspects of the message. Mihaela Frunză (2015) attributed the stereotypical representations and the basic patterns for valorizing the world represented in the commercials to a heritage originated in the global religions that first enter into the sphere of ideology before being taken over by the media.

As ideology often implies a positive or negative engagement, the mythical or religious symbols are valued in a positive or negative way in advertising. “This duality is perpetual whether it is linked to the ambivalent character of the sacred, or the existential duality implied by the sacred/profane dialectic” (Frunză 2015, 84). According to Sandu Frunză, the symbols displayed by the written and visual language in advertising are means of constructing reality for post modern man, faced with a multitude of options “regarding how to appropriate the sacred and the experience of religiosity” (2011, 190).

The symbols, myths and archetypes that have entered the main communication system through the tools of advertising always existed in diminished, hidden or degraded formats in everyday life, as found in Mircea Eliade’s work (Frunză 2015). In Mircea Eliade’s view (1996), sacred and profane are two modes of being in the world, two existential situations assumed by man in the course of history. This opposition is often expressed through the dialectic real versus unreal, religious versus non-religious, as the religious man seeks to participate in reality, to be saturated with power. Eliade (1987) investigates the way in which the religious man attempts to stay in a sacred universe, in comparison with the experience of the non-religious man that lives or wants to live in a de-sacralized world. The socio-humanistic perspective of Emile Durkheim states that all religions divide objects and events into two distinctive and oppositional groups: the sacred and profane. The sacred refers to the extraordinary, apart from the routine of the mundane life, while the profane integrates the ordinary phenomena and elements from the reality of everyday life (Durkheim 1995). The secularization and the rationalization of Western societies have blurred the meanings of sacred and profane, which are no longer considered universal: the profane could be read as “not sacred”, as irreligious, or the opposite of sacred, which may be called “anti-sacred” (Durkheim 1995).

The founder of public sphere theories, Jurgen Habermas, notes a resurgence of religion in contemporary Western societies, manifested through the strengthening of religious communities and fellowships. The public sphere is acknowledged as a realm of the social life where public opinion is formed; in post-secular societies religion takes an important role and the media makes a major contribution. “This requirement of translation must be conceived as a cooperative task in which non-religious

citizens must likewise participate” (Habermas 2006, 11). While exploring the new configuration of the public sphere, Sandu Frunză highlights the importance of minimal ethics, where interpersonal and institutional relations as well as professional media in general should exist, in the context of generalized communication and global culture. In that respect, “an openness toward recognizing the importance of the presence of religion and the religious as a significant resource in debates that take place in the public space” is necessary (Frunză 2012, 5)

2.3 Mediatization of the Romanian Orthodox Church

The researchers examined the relationship of the media, religion and politics, as well as the mediatization of the messages of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the religious and secular press through various theoretical and methodological lenses. Romina Surugiu (2012) sought to explain the increasing use of religious themes in the Romanian public sphere using the publicization hypothesis, which entails the development of media technologies, the liberalization of media economies and the de-regularization of the media market. On the one hand, the author noted a growing tendency to include religious content, such as symbols and discourses in the secular media, through the coverage of the religion related topics, such as rituals, festivities and holidays. On the other hand, the Romanian Orthodox Church became fervent in using mediated communication through their own religious media, encompassing television and radio stations, newspapers and magazines. Their messages reflect the history of the Romanian Orthodoxy, the life of the Romanian Orthodox community, with emphasis on values, traditions and rituals, and the attitude of the church towards current social, political and cultural issues (Surugiu 2012).

The Colectiv incident was previously investigated from different research perspectives, in relation with the media and the Romanian Orthodox Church. By exploring the linguistic displays on the national drama on October 30th 2015 in the social media networks, Cotrău and Cotoc (2018) noted that the contributors reached partial consensus over criticizing Romanian Orthodox clergy. One particular aspect dealt with the condemnation of a luxury life style paraded by the top clergy, especially the head of the Romanian Orthodox Church: “Step out of your Mercedes, Daniel, beatitude”. Other more general aspects referred to the anger the initial comments of the Orthodox Church representatives generated when criticizing the lifestyle and cultural activities of the victims of the fire (Cotrău and Cotoc 2018, 19). While admitting the role of the social media as an essential component of the media process, some researchers stated that the social networks hosted a fierce anti-church campaign, fueled by clamors in the street. Additional to the demonstration against the system and the corrupt politicians, there was “a revolt against the Orthodox

Church, an institution that is a symbol of Romanian spiritual identity”, taking a poorly inspired declaration of the Patriarch Daniel as a pretext (Sălcudean and Mureşan 2017, 110). Grădinaru, Pătraş and Postolea used the metaphor “mirror of anger” to describe the consequences of a tragic event that acted as a “trigger for all the hidden monsters in the collective psyche” and to bring to surface the message that were “communicated in a tendentious manner or even swept under the carpet” (2016, 170). Referring to the conflict people-state, the authors mentioned the anger of the protesters at some of the Orthodox Church representatives that did not act or react according to people’s expectations (Grădinaru, Pătraş and Postolea 2016).

3. Methodology

The author chose qualitative methodology for this scientific investigation, for its capacity to highlight the essential differences and distinctive features of the phenomenon under study, the subjective meanings, by collecting non-standard data, and analyzing texts and images, rather than numbers and statistics (Flick 2009; Baran and Davis 2000). This article carries out a qualitative content analysis, for it suits the case study, favoring the subjective interpretation of the content data collected through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns, core consistencies and meanings, within their context of communication (Patton 2002, Miles and Huberman 1994).

The sample of this analysis consisted of visual elements (graphics, slogans, photos, video), audio elements (interviews, natural sound, music, sound effects) sampled from the monitoring of three television channels, TVR1 (public), PROTV (commercial) and Digi24 (news). The analysis consisted of two weeks of television coverage, starting from the night of the tragic fire at Colectiv club, 30.10.2015, comprising of newscasts, breaking news and special reports, live and recorded interviews and talk shows. The choice of this corpus of analysis is justified by the habits of media consumption in Romania, where most of the population uses television as the main source of information, according to the data shown in the last edition of the International Encyclopedia of Media Effects (Rossler 2017).

The research design of this paper is explorative, by developing categories of analysis inductively and formulating new categories out of the material. Sociologists Barney Glasser and Anselm Strauss created an integrated concept of doing qualitative scientific investigation, the grounded theory, using coding in the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways, through three specific steps: open coding, axial coding and selective coding, entailing constant comparison of phenomena, cases and concepts, while

formulating questions that are addressed to the text (Glasser and Strauss 2017, Charmaz 2014). The author of this article employed several elements of the grounded theory: (1) the research design as a circle of data collection, open coding, axial coding and selective coding, (2) the constant comparative analysis of the collected data and the categories resulted from the previously generated concepts and theoretical constructs, (3) the research questions inductively built as a result of the data gathered through empirical investigation and (4) the results from the questions tested and verified deductively, as new data occur from the circular model of research.

The research questions used in this article are: RQ1: Which are the religion-related messages and reactions issued in the public sphere and distributed by the media during the Colectiv incident and the consecutive street manifestations? RQ2: Which are the religious institutions and people reflected in the media coverage of the Colectiv street protests? RQ3: How is the Orthodox Church's image associated with the political establishment in the media coverage of the Colectiv manifestations? RQ4: What is the relationship between the media and the Orthodox Church during the Colectiv incident and the consecutive street protests?

4. Findings

The data of this article are the direct result of the analysis carried out on the opposition axis built on the dialectic sacralization-profanation: good versus evil, innocent people versus corrupted political system. The findings collected through the content analysis of the visual and verbal messages broadcast by the television channels ProTV, TVR1 and Digi24 were coded and analyzed using the methodological tools provided by the paradigm of grounded theory. There are two distinctive categories of data resulted from the application of open coding and axial coding: *space and people and institutions*.

4.1. Sacred versus Profane Spaces

Piata Universitatii is the place where the popular revolution started in 1989, leading to the fall of Ceausescu regime; it was also the site where the peaceful anti-communist demonstrators in the summer of 1990 were severely injured and some even killed during the violent intervention of the miners from Valea Jiului, that came to Bucharest to restore the order (Tismăneanu 1990). It became a focal gathering point for the demonstrations against the austerity measures in winter 2012 that eventually led to the fall of Emil Boc government. In that spirit, the mediatized messages of the protesters of Colectiv in 2015 portray Piata

Universitatii as a sacred place, the symbol of the Romanian revolution that mirrors the rebirth of the nation. The placards filmed by the television cameras show signs such as “Start a revolution”, “Moral revolution” (TVR1, 5.11.2015), “The only solution, our own evolution”, “5 people wanted to launch an album and started a revolution!” (ProTV, 4.11.2015).

The visual and audio messages recorded or transmitted live by the television channels TVR1, ProTV and Digi 24 showed that the meaning of the sacred and profane environment was reversed in the case of the “hospitals versus cathedrals”. In the context of a crisis, hospitals are given more value and the attributes of a sacred space, for their potential of saving lives, while the churches became meaningless or redundant. The signs carried by the protesters said “We want hospitals, not cathedrals!” and “18000 churches versus 425 hospitals” (Digi24, 5.01.2015). The demonstrators interviewed by ProTV reporters explained that people’s faith is a matter of personal and intimate relationship with God “Jesus is in our souls, not in the church!”, while the those interviewed by TVR1 requested that the public funds should be directed to hospitals, instead of being given to the construction of Catedrala Mantuirii Neamului (The People’s Salvation Cathedral) “Stop financing the church with public funds” (TVR1, ProTV, 4.01.2015).

The protesters’ angry reactions were fueled by the comments made in the public space by both politicians and Orthodox priests that had labeled rock clubs as places where youngsters worship Satan, and victims of the fire as Satanists and drug addicts. Christian Democrat politician Aurelian Pavelescu accused the victims of the fire in Colectiv club of being illiterate anarchists and junkies, the Metropolitan of Banat stated that the Orthodox moral values would have prevented the youngsters to fall victims of the tragedy, while priests and teachers of Orthodox religion in schools explained the accident as a divine punishment for those celebrating Halloween “If you are listening to rock music, you are possessed by the devil “ (ProTV, 1.11.2015). Some of the topics of discussion during the religion classes in the aftermath of the fire were “What would Virgin Mary do if invited to a rock concert?”, “What would Virgin Mary do if asked to attend a meeting against the Government?” (ProTV, 2.11.2015).

Attending the funerals of one of the victims, Patriarch Daniel gave a hasty reply to the accusations that Orthodox priests refused to be present at the place of the tragedy after the incident, despite people’s appeal for spiritual guidance “We pray in the church, this is the way. Don’t teach the church about its role, you better learn about the Orthodox faith. People should come to church, instead of going to night clubs” (ProTV, 3.11.2015). Daniel also replied to the journalists that demanded an explanation for the fact that the only television that was allowed to film at the memorial services in the church was Trinitas, owned by the Orthodox Church “Only God’s television is allowed in God’s house” (TVR1, 3.11.2015). The Patriarch

later apologized in a press release, claiming that his words were misunderstood due to a hostile attitude of the media against the church (Digi24, 5.11.2015).

Nine days after the incident an Orthodox memorial service was performed at the place of the tragedy. Meanwhile, the site had become a place of pilgrimage, with thousands of flowers and candles lit in the memory of the victims. The television cameras broadcast tight shots of faces in tears, details of candles, photos of the victims and signs with emotional messages. Commemoration meetings were also held in front of the Romanian embassies and consulates all around the world, but not in any Orthodox church from the respective countries. The messages of the people attending the memorial service were mostly of sympathy and solidarity, such as “We are here for you” and “You are not alone”. However, people reacted against the allegations the politicians and Orthodox priests disseminated in the first days after the tragedy “I am a 33 year old mom, I listen to rock music and I have tattoos. I am not a Satanist!” (ProTV, 4.11.2015).

4.2 Sacred versus Profane Individuals and Institutions

The victims that had belonged to the profane world while being alive were given sacred attributes through their death under tragic circumstances. They became “Angels with burned wings”, “They had to die so that we can wake up” (ProTV, 2.11.2015). The people that lost their lives trying to save others from the flames in Colective club became martyrs in the media, such as musician Adrian Rugina (TVR1, 31.10.2015) and photographer Claudiu Petre (Digi24, 1.11.2015) and their heroic death was celebrated by special reports about their lives during prime time newscasts. Both those that died in the incident and those that are affected by the corrupted political establishment are identified as “children”, entities belonging to the innocent world. The protesters place themselves in a double role, as the defenders of the innocent and the voice of reason for those who don’t realize the gravity of the situation “We won’t give in, we are defending the rights of our children!”, “Mothers, don’t stay inside, fight for your children (ProTV, 5.11.2015). The young generation is portrayed as the savior of an entire nation throughout history, as the placards of the demonstrators in the streets of Bucharest read “Our dear children, forgive us, we’ve been wrong for 26 years. Only you can fight corruption. We’re proud of you. Mother and Father”, or “Our grandparents fought in the war (WW2), our parents in the Revolution (December 1989), now it’s our turn” (TVR1, 4.11.2015).

In terms of institutions, the corrupted establishment is placed at the other end of the axis good-evil: parliament, government and local administration. The participants at the demonstrations demanded that the number of members of Parliament be halved and their political immunity

against judiciary investigation removed. They wanted the politicians considered responsible for the disaster (Prime Minister, Minister of Internal Affairs and the mayor of 4th district) to pay for their mistakes and incompetence: “We won’t go until you go!”, “You burned us!” (Digi24, 3.11.2015). The head of the Orthodox Church was also included in the gallery of the political figures associated with corruption. One group of protesters exhibited a caricature of Mayor Cristian Popescu Piedone, Internal Affairs Minister Gabriel Oprea, Patriarch Daniel and Prime Minister Victor Viorel Ponta in flames with the caption “It is you that should have burned, jerks!” (ProTV, 4.11.2015). After the resignation of the government and the mayor of the 4th district, the participants at the demonstrations demanded that Patriarch Daniel stepped down as well “Piedone and Viorel, take also Daniel!”. There were also other placards showing that the protesters assimilated the head of the Romanian Orthodox Church to the political system as they called him “Patriarch Daniel, the holy thief”, and asked “Daniel, would you let go of your sutana?”, playing on the anagram satana (Satan) – sutana (ceremonial robe).

The essential messages emphasized the dialectic sacred-profane, good-evil, through the television coverage that pictured a popular movement against the system: “We are not here to change the Government. We are here to change the system” “The fall of the Government is not enough! We are staying here until all the politicians are gone!”, “You are not buying us with two resignations”, “You can’t manipulate us any longer”. The entire establishment is evil, as resulted from prime time coverage of TVR1, Digi24 and ProTV: “Corruption kills!”, “Corruption=death hazard”, “We don’t negotiate with thieves, off with all of you!”, “You take millions in bribe, while we are starving”, “We won’t let you steal our future!”. The media coverage indicated that empowering the citizens, as a force of good, is the solution the protesters advance in order to correct the faults of the system: “We are the change!”, “United, we save Romania!”, “Your story is over. Ours starts right now”. The song of the rock band Goodbye to Gravity, performed in Colectiv club when the incident occurred, became the anthem of the protests and the flagship of the movement of the good citizens against evil political establishment: “We are not numbers/ We are alive/ The day we give in/ Is the day we die”.

5. Conclusions and Discussion

The findings of this research support the theories according to which media is translated in broaden historical and philosophical context as a communication system that generates reality (de Vries and Weber 2001). When they employ a mutual repertoire with their audience, through

narrative constructions, symbolic values and characters, journalists become storytellers and makers of myths. The messages disseminated by the journalists in written texts as well as visual and audio communication offer meanings through which the public is able to understand and control certain aspects of the reality (Lule 2001; Coman 2003; Hjavard 2013).

All three media monitored for this paper, TVR1, ProTV and Digi24, emphasized the escalation of the conflict between the citizens and the political representatives. “It was a week that changed Romania, a tragedy that brought down the Government, changed legislation and united people” (TVR1, 7.11.2015). The media offered a reflection of a corrupted political system, with members of the parliament that are under criminal investigation and local authorities that neglect their public duties. The journalistic investigations prompted by the appeal to justice from the citizens that took the streets in Bucharest and other cities, following the tragic fire in Colectiv club, brought to light several cases of officials that take bribe and of legislation that is not properly enforced, such as fire hazard control or medical supplies and hygiene standards in hospitals. The “#Colectiv Revolution” where the Romanian citizens expressed their dissatisfaction with the political system, planted the seeds for the massive civic movements “#Rezist” and “#Corruptia Ucide”, that fueled, in February 2017, the largest demonstrations since the fall of communism in December 1989 (Sutu 2017).

The analysis of the data collected from this case study shows that the Romanian Orthodox Church as an institution along with individuals such as high ranked clergy or mere sympathizers are associated with the existing political establishment. In the media discourse, the men and women that died are assigned to the sacred category “Angels with burned wings”, while the representatives of the church are assimilated to the profane world “Patriarch Daniel, the holy thief”. At the same time, the citizens that expressed their anger in the streets criticized the political decisions to assign public money to the Romanian Orthodox Church for building cathedrals, instead of financing the hospitals that are in critical need of supplies and qualified personnel “We want hospitals, not cathedrals”.

Elements that are considered profane according to religions canons are amplified and given mythical and symbolic signification by the media, while events and values that are claimed to be sacred according to religions standards are presented as profane in the media. In a communication saturated environment of the contemporary society, the media have become the primary source of religious imagination and took over rituals, practices and meanings (de Vries and Weber 2001; Hoover 2011).

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