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### **The meaning of 'Religion' in the Italian Constitutional Court Jurisprudence**

**SOMMARIO:** 1. Introduction - 2. The meaning of religion in the first jurisprudence of the Constitutional court - 3. What are the boundaries of religion? - 4. Conclusions.

#### **1 - Introduction**

Scholars in many different fields have often asked what features a social phenomenon should have so it can be considered to be a religion, but in the juridical field it has been stated that looking to define a religious confession is not a worthwhile venture, and even less so trying to define a religion. It is as if the attempt to outline a concept of religion is an unwanted meddling in a sphere of life that cannot be reduced to legal categorization, almost as if the State claims the right to "prefigure a stereotype of religion"<sup>263</sup>.

Virtually all legal systems deal with religions in various ways, but only with difficulty can we find any criteria according to which a social phenomenon can be qualified as religious.

Even those who deal with international law point out the lack of a definition of religion and they emphasize that, even though there are a large number of acts that protect freedom of religion, none of them explain what is actually meant by the word "religion"<sup>264</sup>.

This issue has been under examination for many years and in many countries. For example, American jurisprudence and its scholars - with a law system characterized by the separation of Church and State - in its early period considered as religions exclusively those which were monotheistic,

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<sup>263</sup> S. DOMIANELLO, *Giurisprudenza costituzionale e fattore religioso. Le pronunzie della Corte Costituzionale in materia ecclesiastica (1987-1998)*, Giuffrè, Milano, 1999, p. 65. M. TEDESCHI, *Le minoranze religiose tra autonomia e immobilismo del legislatore*, in R. Coppola, C. Ventrella (eds.), *Laicità e dimensione pubblica del fattore religioso. Stato attuale e prospettive*, Cacucci, Bari, 2012, p. 75, wrote that "the State must not classify a group as a religious one, because the group autoqualifies itself [...] Religions are social groups with religious purposes".

<sup>264</sup> See T.J. GUNN, *The Complexity of Religion and the Definition of "Religion" in International Law*, in 16 *Harvard Human Rights Journal* (2003), pp. 189-215.



and only later were atheistic, moral and philosophical beliefs included in the definition of religion. This interpretation was confirmed by the Supreme Court in the 1960s<sup>265</sup>.

There is no real definition of what religion is from the point of view of the law, and this is the case also in Italy. This lack of definition could be justified by the non-religious essence of the contemporary legal system which must take a step back when it comes to giving a definition to words that are linked to the religious sphere.

A direct look at the Italian experience would seem to show that the State's presumption to identify a concept of religion is incompatible with secularism. In fact, the secular state by definition should not be able to define religion and the religious. However, the very definition that the Constitutional Court has given to Italian secularism makes it a necessity for the State itself to know whether a social reality can be defined as a religion, and whether a certain fact or behaviour can be qualified as religious. The well-known judgment n° 203 of 12 April 1989<sup>266</sup>, which for the first time stated the "supreme principle of secularism of the State", defined it not as "the State's indifference to religions, but the guarantee of the State for the safeguarding of freedom of religion, under confessional and cultural pluralism"<sup>267</sup>. To be not indifferent to something you must know what that something is and, "under the confessional and cultural pluralism" in Italy, recognizing religion is not easy.

Even the guarantee of equal freedom for all religious confessions which Article 8 of the Italian Constitution specifies, requires a compass to guide jurisprudence in the difficult task of understanding if a group is a

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<sup>265</sup> See **L.J. STRANG**, *The Meaning of "Religion" in the First Amendment*, in 40 *Duquesne Law Review* (2001-2002), pp. 181-240. See, also, **G.C. FREEMAN, III**, *The Misguided Search for the Constitutional Definition of "Religion"*, in 71 *Georgia Law Review* (1983), p. 1553, nt. 157; in Freeman vision, there is a list of eight characteristic that all religions possess, though each religion may not have all characteristics: "1. A belief in a Supreme Being; 2. A belief in a transcendental reality; 3. A moral code; 4. A worldview that provides an account of man's role in the universe and around which an individual organizes his life; 5. Sacred rituals and holy days; 6. Worship and prayer; 7. A sacred text or scriptures; 8. Membership in a social organization that promotes a religious belief system".

<sup>266</sup> This sentence, like the others cited in this paper, is published in the Italian Constitutional Court official website ([www.cortecostituzionale.it](http://www.cortecostituzionale.it)).

<sup>267</sup> We have a very wide bibliography on the principle of "laicità". For an approach that moves from jurisprudence, see **S. SICARDI**, *Il principio di laicità nella giurisprudenza della Corte Costituzionale (e rispetto alle posizioni dei giudici comuni)*, in *Atti della tavola rotonda su "Rigore costituzionale ed etica repubblicana"*, Università degli Studi di Roma "La Sapienza" (26 maggio 2006), (<http://archivio.rivistaaic.it/materiali/convegni/200611foggia/relazione%20Sicardi.pdf>). For a theoretical approach, see **P. STEFANI**, *Il problema giuridico della laicità nella società multiculturale*, Aracne, Roma, 2013.



religion or not<sup>268</sup>, though unfortunately this compass is not to be found within the Constitution.

## 2 - The meaning of religion in the jurisprudence of the first Constitutional court

The Constitution, indeed, uses many words related to religion without giving them any actual definition. We find several references to religion, for instance in the article of law that affirms the equality of all citizens without regard to their "religion" (Article 3); elsewhere the Constitution uses words like "religious faith", "cult", "rites" (Article 19), or it protects the "purpose of religion or of worship" of bodies and organizations (Article 20). However, when the Constitution of the Republic wants to legislate on organised religion it identifies this as the Catholic Church (Article 7) and "religious confessions" (Article 8). This short list of the references to religion that we can find in the Constitution shows that the writers of the Constitution preferred to get the definition of religion, religious, cult and rites etc. from the social context of their time, rather than trying to identify the features of religion. At that time the Italian social context was rather clear and reassuring in that in Italy, in the mid-1950s, religion was essentially the Catholic Church while other religions which were historically present in the country, especially Judaism and Evangelicalism, were considered in a subordinate position to that of the Catholic Church. They were defined, by Law n° 1159 of 24 June 1929, as "admitted cults", terminology that was the fruit of the ideology, which permeated Italy at that time.

This was still the "definition" of religion in 1956, the year that the Italian Constitutional Court issued its first ruling. In that same year, Cesare Magni devoted a large part of his book *Avviamento allo studio analitico del diritto ecclesiastico* to the legal definition of "Religion" and "Religious". Magni asserted that religion, in its broader sense, can be defined as a "belief in the existence of transcendent powers, personal or impersonal, acting in the world"<sup>269</sup>.

Without doubt, the Author - and it couldn't have been in any other way - obtained his definition of religion from the cultural and social context of the age in which he lived. His reference to "impersonal powers" was necessary in order to encompass the Far Eastern traditions which Magni identified in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Chinese universalism,

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<sup>268</sup> See P. CONSORTI, *Diritto e religione*, 2<sup>a</sup> ed., Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2014, p. 90.

<sup>269</sup> C. MAGNI, *Avviamento allo studio analitico del diritto ecclesiastico*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1956, p. 77.



while those religions which believe in a personal God, “who created the world from nothing thanks to his only and free will, and who is over all things”<sup>270</sup> are the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism. Evidently, he had in his mind the great religions of the world. Two years later, Pietro Gismondi, in his paper on the religious interests within the Constitution, identified in religion the “essential and primordial expression of human spirituality”<sup>271</sup>. He believed that religions are hallmarks of the nation and that they “reflect the history of the people among which they were born and the peculiarities of their civilizations”. He also insists on the legal character of religions, that they can be religions only if they have rules and an organization<sup>272</sup>. Magni looked for a definition of religion within their theology while Gismondi focused on their institutional aspects.

If this is the idea of religion that we can find in legal scholarship, what is the earliest definition of religion that we can find within the jurisprudence of the Italian Constitutional Court? In its first years of activity, the Constitutional Court did not see any need to identify a definition of religion. In fact, until the end of the Nineteen-Seventies, the Court was principally involved in justifying the privileges of the Catholic Church over other religions. Such privileges were necessary to protect the “religious feelings” of the majority of the Italian people<sup>273</sup>.

In Judgment n° 125 of 28 November 1957, the Court dealt with the question of the constitutionality of the crime of contempt against symbols or persons of the Catholic Church, which was more severely punished than contempt against symbols or persons of other religions. In the opinion of the Court, the special consideration reserved to the Catholic Church was justified by “the importance of the ancient uninterrupted tradition the Catholic Church has always had in the Italian population, almost all Italians being Catholic”. Also in the Judgment n° 79 of 17 December 1958, the Constitutional Court deemed the crime of contempt lawful because it is a crime against the “religion of the State”, even if the State was formally non confessional. In the judges’ opinion, with this formulation, the legislator didn’t want to give “importance to a formal qualification of the Catholic religion, but to the circumstance that almost the entire Italian population

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<sup>270</sup> C. MAGNI, *Avviamento allo studio*, cit., p. 87.

<sup>271</sup> P. GISMONDI, *L’interesse religioso nella Costituzione*, in *Giurisprudenza Costituzionale*, 1958, p. 1222.

<sup>272</sup> P. GISMONDI, *L’interesse religioso*, cit., pp. 1222 e 1230.

<sup>273</sup> See A. ALBISETTI, *Il diritto ecclesiastico nella giurisprudenza della Corte Costituzionale*, III ed., Giuffrè, Milano, 2000, pp. 24-26.



professes Catholicism". In the Court's opinion, "there can be no distance between social reality and legal principles"<sup>274</sup>.

Judgment N°58 of 6 July 1960, ruled that the wording of the oath established by Article 404 of the code of criminal proceedings, then in effect, was constitutional. That wording contained an explicit reference to a commitment to truth before God, but the judges wrote that "it corresponds to the conscience of the Italian people, who are believers; so, allowing that the swearer believes in God, it is consistent with any religion, also for the non-Catholics". Actually, the Court didn't examine the question as related to Article 19 (protection of religious freedom), but with respect to Article 21 (freedom of thought), since it expressly asserted that, according to the Constitution, religious freedom is only a positive freedom, a freedom to believe: "atheism begins where religious life ends". The Court, even if it doesn't say so, in this judgment shows itself to have a precise idea of what religion is: it is a religious idea that believes in the existence of God. It is clear that the model of religion in the mind of the Court is the Catholic one to which almost the entire Italian population belongs, (as we can read in the grounds for the judgment). In fact, the Court states that, so conceived, the wording of oath would satisfy all religions, including the non-Catholics, but this statement is not correct in that some religions prohibit their adherents from taking any type of oath. In fact it was rescinded after only three years.

Judgment n° 85 of 25 May 1963 originates from the refusal of a Pentecostal Christian to take an oath, for religious reasons. A citizen, Christian but not Catholic, refutes the theory that the oath would be consistent with his religious faith. At this point, the Court has to change the level of argumentation and it argues that in reality the oath is not an act of worship, but it expresses "an appeal to general religious values"; so precluding the hypothesis that the State, imposing the oath, interferes in religious affairs.

The Court, with these judgments, gave a definition of religion and worship, supporting a Catholic interpretation of them, perhaps unwittingly, perhaps not, but anyway echoing the definition given by Gismondi, which is that religion identifies itself with nation.

In judgment n° 39 of 13 May 1965, that once again concerns the constitutionality of the criminal laws protecting religions, the Court justifies the fact that contempt against the Catholic Church receives a heavier sentence than that against other religions. It considers that the law "can treat in a different way the various religions on the basis of their different

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<sup>274</sup> M. VENTURA, *La libertà di religione o di credo: il percorso costituzionale*, in AA.VV., *Per i sessanta anni della Corte costituzionale*, Giuffrè, Milano, 2017, p. 26.



importance in the public sphere". From this perspective, the Catholic confession is "practised by the majority of the Italian people, and for that a different criminal protection is constitutional, because it looks more carefully at the "religious feelings of the Italian people".

We may say that, according to Constitutional Court jurisprudence of that time, religion was synonymous with Catholicism, which permeated the culture and was socially perceived as the religion of Italian people. Similarly, we can say without exaggeration that the Constitutional Court, in its first fifteen years of activity, supported the markedly Catholic sentiments of the society of time<sup>275</sup>, favouring the protection of collective religious freedom (especially that of the Catholic church) rather than individual freedom. In Constitutional Court jurisprudence, religion appears as an institutional reality rather than a response to people's spiritual needs.

In the mid-Seventies a small change in jurisprudence came about with some judgments in criminal matters expressing the need for the legislator not to be limited to protecting the religious feelings of Catholics, but also to be concerned with the protection of the religiosity of others.

In judgment n° 117 of 2 October 1979, the Court changed its opinion regarding the oath and it noted that, while in 1960 it had denied "the prevailing religious essence" of the oath, in hindsight "it has a clear religious meaning". The wording of the oath, that appeals to our responsibility towards God,

"in everyday language evokes a commitment to tell the truth in front of a supernatural and supreme Being, who is transcendent, omnipotent and omniscient [...] in front of a God who can read inside people's hearts and who judges their behaviour".

It is interesting to note that Italian Constitutional jurisprudence doesn't give a definition of religion, but it ventures onto the more treacherous ground of defining God. It defines God, in accordance with the Catholic vision, as a Supreme Being, omnipotent, omniscient and the judge of humankind. Notwithstanding this, the sentence declares that the part of oath's wording that refers to divinity is unconstitutional and it expressly admits that atheism is an expression of religious freedom, protected by Article 19 of the Italian Constitution.

In the late 1980s, even the crime of blasphemy is interpreted in a new way. The court is conscious of the difficulty of continuing to justify the

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<sup>275</sup> See G. DALLA TORRE, *Giurisprudenza costituzionale e dottrina ecclesiasticistica. Saggio di analisi*, in R. Botta (ed.), *Diritto ecclesiastico e Corte costituzionale*, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli, 2006, p. 97.





punishability of this behaviour given the fact that it would offend "the religion of almost all Italians", or because it would protect "the religious feelings of the majority of Italian population". After judgment n° 925 of 28 July 1988, blasphemy remains punishable but it becomes "immoral behaviour", a "bad habit for many people"; the Court underlines the need for the legislature to intervene "to tackle inequalities in the treatment of different religions".

The Court continues to use concepts such as "religion", "religious act", "conscience", "religious feelings" taking their meanings for granted or rather, adapting their definitions to those given by the prevailing culture.

### 3 - What are the boundaries of religion?

Of note was a change of perspective in Constitutional jurisprudence towards the end of the last century. A few years before this, in 1984, with the reform of the Concordat between the Catholic Church and the State, the principle of the Catholic religion as the sole religion of the Italian State, was considered no longer in force, but the meaning of religion was still an open question.

In 1986, Francesco Finocchiaro published the first edition of his textbook, studied in the following decades by generations of professors and students, in which he felt the need to give a definition of religion, and he formulated it as follows: religion

"has its own original complete conception of the world, which empowers not only the relationship between man and God, but those existing between man and man, giving rules governing not only the social life of an entire group, not only the relationships between the group and the other communities, but also the behaviour of the individual belonging to the group, when he acts within other social communities such as, for example, the civil community"<sup>276</sup>.

The most authoritative Italian scholarship of the mid-1980s regarded religion as a theistic system, which has an original interpretation of human events, and that has a system of moral and legal regulation of relationships between people, between people and God, and between the religion and other communities, especially the State.

Some years later, the Court had to decide on the constitutionality of some tax laws that facilitated the religious activities of organizations and

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<sup>276</sup> F. FINOCCHIARO, *Diritto ecclesiastico*, 10<sup>a</sup> ed., Zanichelli, Bologna, 2009 (but we can find the same definition in the first edition of the book).



associations, and it questioned the meaning of the phrase “religious association”. In judgment n° 467 of 19 November 1992, the Court underlined that in general the law does not give a definition of the various aims of organizations, whether political, cultural, sports or even trade unions, however, this “does not mean that we cannot, and we must not deduce the meaning of the phrase ‘religious association’ from all of the laws”. Continuing its argument, the Court asserted that in order to define an association as “religious” it is not sufficient that it qualifies itself as such, but it is necessary that its real nature is evaluated in the light of “criteria that can be deduced from the whole legal system”. Associations “shall demonstrate their religious essence and their religious character [...] according to criteria that in the law of the state qualify the aims of religion and cult worship”.

The Court, with this judgment, distanced itself from its previous attitude of accepting the definitions of religion and religious as what was commonly believed. It asserted the necessity of identifying a definition of religious within national law, and this definition is to be deduced from laws regarding religious entities, that is a religious association is that which has a purpose of religion or worship.

However, we find no explanation of what this religious purpose may be; we find only the reference to the discipline of ecclesiastical organizations, which, from our point of view, is disappointing. Indeed, the legislature defines the content of religious activities for practical reasons, essentially related to the fact that certain activities carried out by religious entities receive a favourable tax treatment. Thus in Law n° 222 of 20 May 1985 which governs Catholic organizations, charitable activities, assistance and education are not defined as religious activities, while the agreement with the Valdese Board of Methodists etc. considers them as religious. If we applied to the Islamic religion the definition of “religious activities” of Law n° 222 of 1985, we would have to exclude from them the *Zakat* (ritual charity) and the *Hajj* (pilgrimage), which are not only religious acts but also are mandatory for Muslim believers. It is therefore impossible to derive a definition of what is “religious”, valid for all, from an examination of legislation in the field of religious bodies and entities.

A broader attempt to define what religion is, was made by the Constitutional Court in judgment n° 195 of 27 April 1993, which considered the constitutionality of a regional law concerning the construction of places of worship, and focused on the definition of “religious confession”. The Court, after having excluded the possibility of resorting to the criterion of





self-qualification, tried to draw up "a sort of identikit"<sup>277</sup> of the religious confession. It stated that the existence of a confession must be established in the light of criteria such as previous public recognition, a statute that clearly expresses its characteristics and, finally, general respect. However, this is like a dog biting its tail, because the problem is that, in a multicultural society, we often do not have a general respect for what a religion is. This is anyway only a partial attempt, because, as we have already mentioned, the definition concerns religious confessions rather than religion. In fact, religious confession is only a *species* of the *genus* religion.

In the same period, the Court perceived the necessity of rethinking the law that punishes blasphemy and it explained that in Paragraph I of Article 724 of the Italian penal code that religion is the object of protection. As we have said, in judgment n° 925 of 1988, the Court declared the legitimacy of the crime of blasphemy "secularizing" it into rude behaviour, but in judgment n° 440 of 18 October 1995, the Court underlined the differences existing between religion and "good manners", and blasphemy was brought back to its real nature, it could not be considered only as immoral behaviour or as a rude act. The Court wrote that "religion and its believers are always different from good manners and from polite people"; then, examining the text of Article 724, para. I, it affirms "blasphemy against a deity [...] can be punished independently of the fact that the deity is from one religion or from another".

The issue of defining what religion is and what deity means still remained unresolved. The same Court underlined this problem in the judgment n° 346 of 16 July 2002, where it wrote that there is "there is a lack, in the law, of clear legal criteria that are useful to define religious confessions".

A favourable occasion for the Court to express itself on this topic came with judgment n° 52 of 16 March 2016. The case was about the Italian government's refusal to begin negotiations for the drawing up of an agreement with an atheist organization, the UAAR (Union of atheists, agnostics and rationalists). The government had refused to start negotiations, by asserting that atheism is certainly protected by Article 19 of the Constitution, but atheism does not allow organizations that we can define as a "religious confession", which, according to the Italian government, is "an act of faith devoted to the divine and lived in common among many people who make it manifest to society through a particular institutional structure" (note 5 December 2003 of the Presidency of the

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<sup>277</sup> P. MONETA, *Effetti della giurisprudenza della Corte costituzionale sul piano legislativo e interpretativo*, in R. Botta (ed), *Diritto ecclesiastico e Corte costituzionale*, cit., p. 264.



Council of Ministers, quoted in Council of State, Sect. IV, 4 December 2011, n° 6083<sup>278</sup>; which does not enter into the merit of the definition of religious confession, but merely asserts that such an assessment cannot be regarded as unquestionable even if it involves "undoubted practical difficulties", and affirms cannot even be "characterized by wide discretion").

The Court, in judgment n° 52 of 2016, does not deeply go into considering if an organization of atheists can be defined as a religious confession. It merely underlines that, in the absence of a definition of confession, the same Court had pointed out criteria that "in legal experience are used to distinguish religious confessions from other social organizations". It observes that the fact that the Government denying the character of confession to the UAAR association has had no other effect than to deny the opening of negotiations for an agreement with the state. Since in the Court's opinion such negotiations are remitted to the broad political discretion of the Government, the Court does not go into the merits of the matter. The ruling of the Court states that the government has broad freedom in deciding whether and with what religious confession to begin negotiations for the drawing up of an agreement, but it does not tell us if, and for what reasons, an association of atheists can be considered as a religious confession. It really was a missed opportunity. The United Sections of the Court of Cassation, in judgment n° 16305 of 28 June 2013<sup>279</sup>, - that is at the origin of the appeal decided by the Constitutional Court with the judgment n° 52 of 2016 - affirmed that

"if legal consequences derive from the conventional notion of religion, it is inevitable and necessary for those who are delegated with the responsibility of defining it, must do so, otherwise the recognition of rights and possibilities related to this definition remains entrusted to their arbitrariness".

The Court of Cassation emphasizes that there should be no further procrastination in finding a definition of religion, because legal consequences are linked to that definition, above all the opportunity of asking the government to open negotiations to draw up an agreement as according to Article 8 of the Constitution<sup>280</sup>. The Constitutional Court decided, however, not to take note of the urgency, in a judgment that marks

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<sup>278</sup> The Sentence in OLIR- Osservatorio delle libertà ed istituzioni religiose ([https://www.olir.it/ricerca/getdocumentopdf.php?lang=ita&Form\\_object\\_id=5713](https://www.olir.it/ricerca/getdocumentopdf.php?lang=ita&Form_object_id=5713)).

<sup>279</sup> In OLIR (<https://www.olir.it/documenti/?documento=6134>).

<sup>280</sup> See A. LICASTRO, *La Corte costituzionale torna protagonista dei processi di transizione della politica ecclesiastica italiana?*, in *Stato, Chiese e pluralismo confessionale*, Rivista telematica ([www.statoe chiese.it](http://www.statoe chiese.it)), n. 26 del 2016, p. 27.



“one of the most timid moments - if not of true regression - of Constitutional jurisprudence in ecclesiastical matters”<sup>281</sup>.

#### 4 - Conclusions

To find an answer to the question on what religion is, we have to turn back to scholarship. Silvio Ferrari tried to elaborate a definition, making a distinction between "religion" and "belief"; the first offers to believers a transcendent reality, answering the fundamental questions of human existence, it has a moral code and engages the faithful, especially through acts of worship. Belief, which can be atheist, agnostic, philosophical, pacifist, animalist, vegan, and so much more, offers an interpretation of natural reality, but it does not invite you to believe in an "Ultimate Reality, an Absolute, or a Vital Force"<sup>282</sup>. If it is true that it is almost impossible to identify a paradigm of religion, because there are realities that escape definition, we do however have the tools to elaborate a definition, starting from the religions already existing in our society<sup>283</sup>.

The first observation to be made is that, looking at reality, religion does not always correspond to the model of religious confession, and the difference between them is played out on the level of organization of its rules and regulations. A religious confession must be organized and it must have a juridical organization, while religion pervades the culture and therefore it forges the identity of the person.

Italian Constitutional jurisprudence is therefore called to make a cultural effort - as it has done in the past, for example, when it stated the supreme principle of "laicità" (secularism) - to try to give a meaning to the word "religion". It is an effort necessary in a society characterized more and more by the presence of different cultures. It is a necessity if we want to create a pacific coexistence. Religion and culture are in fact two closely related phenomena; we can say that there is a "interpenetration between religion and culture"<sup>284</sup>. In culturally homogenous societies, such as was

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<sup>281</sup> V. PACILLO, *La politica ecclesiastica tra discrezionalità dell'Esecutivo, principio di bilateralità e laicità/neutralità dello Stato: brevi note a margine della sentenza della Corte Costituzionale n. 52 del 10 marzo 2016*, in *Lo Stato. Rivista semestrale di Scienza costituzionale e Teoria del diritto*, IV (2016), n. 6, p. 249.

<sup>282</sup> S. FERRARI, *La nozione giuridica di confessione religiosa (come sopravvivere senza conoscerla)*, in V. Parlato, G.B. Varnier (eds.), *Principio pattizio e realtà religiose minoritarie*, Giappichelli, Torino, 1995, p. 35.

<sup>283</sup> S. FERRARI, *La nozione giuridica di confessione religiosa*, cit., pp. 31-32.

<sup>284</sup> M. RICCA, *Laicità interculturale. Cos'è?*, in G. Macrì, M. Parisi, V. Tozzi (eds.), *Diritto e religione. L'evoluzione di un settore della scienza giuridica attraverso il confronto fra quattro libri*,



found in the Italy of the last century, there was no question of understanding what a religion was. Nowadays the categories mix and “cultural difference frequently assumes the same features as religious identity. In so doing, it claims nothing but its own space within the public space, that is, along the same paths that all subjects of law tread every day”<sup>285</sup>. Multicultural society requires jurists to better understand what the boundaries of religion are, because without understanding this, it is impossible to govern and prevent conflict.

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Plectica, Salerno, 2012, p. 61.

<sup>285</sup> **M. RICCA**, *A modest proposal: An Overgrown Constitutional Path to Cultural/Religious Pluralism in Italy*, in *CALUMET - intercultural law and humanities review*, 3 (2/2016), p. 10 (<http://www.windogem.it/calumet/index.asp?lang=eng>).