

# Media and Religion:

## From sacralization to profanation / Special issue

### Editorial

The recent events taking place in France attracted once again the attention on the complex relationship between religion, politics, and mass media. The tragedy of these events and the political and media mobilization that followed run the risk to project them into a singularity cone. However, periodically, the old tension between religion and politics, now inter-mediate by the cultural industries and mass media, reappears in forms more or less obvious. Mostly, this tension is manifested through the dialectic between sacralization and profanation: elements that from the perspective of politics, mass media or popular culture appear as profane, are integrated and claimed by religion as sacred values; and vice versa elements that are not considered sacred by the religious canon, are amplified, signified and lived by the participants in the political life as if they were sacred. For the first instance, we can look at the conflicts started by the cartoons with anti-religious tinge from Denmark and no France, by the vehement disproof of some novels or movies (from DaVinci Code to The Passion of Christ) considered blasphemous to religion, or by the profaning of the Church through journalistic investigations, etc. Eloquent for the second case are: the phenomena of institutional or popular sacralization of certain political leaders (from Lenin to Isabela Peron), of certain celebrities (Elvis Presley or Jim Morrison); the processes

of consecration through interpreting death as a martyrization (i.e. Benazir Bhuto, Della Chiessa, Corneliu Coposu); or the numerous uses of the religious pantheon in advertising, leading to a sacralization of the commodification.

That is why the second edition of Bucharest workshop (Media and Religion: from sacralization to profanation – see [www.mediaandreligion.ro](http://www.mediaandreligion.ro)) aims to become an open platform for debating the relations between sacralization and profanation, as they are (inter)mediated by media and popular culture. An old tradition of research from the social-humanistic sciences, initiated by E. Durkheim places the analysis of religious phenomena from the perspective of the sacred and profane opposition. The contemporary approaches transformed the structure opposition into a dialectic becoming, following the two categories' transformations. They led to a de-substantiation of the notions and to moving the emphasis on the social, political symbolical mechanisms through which different realities are invested with the sacred or profane status. The analysis of sacralization and profanation processes is echoed in the media scholars' interest for the mediation processes through which the different representations of the world are created, negotiated, re-signified and assumed. In this scientific context we aim to debate the interplay of media, religion and politics, from the perspective of the dialectics between sacralization and profanation. Through its nature this debate is inter-disciplinary, mobilizing approaches from media studies to theology, from psychology to linguistics, from cultural anthropology to political sciences.