



**Doctoral School of
Social Communication**

Summary of PhD thesis

by János József, Tóth

Universal Collective Existence and Communication

Towards a Modification of the Social Constructivist Model of Communication

Ph.D. thesis

Advisor:

Dr. habil. Csaba Vass

CSc.

Budapest, 2015

**Institute of Behavioural Sciences and
Communication Theory**

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1. Introduction to the research and topic justification

In my 2008 Master's thesis, I discussed some preliminary findings which are further explored in this PhD dissertation. It presented a structured analysis of the integrative and separative aspects of a theological concept of communication. It demonstrated that communication, if understood as making something common, cannot be realized without separating the (soon-becoming) members subjected to integration from other well-defined objects, norms and values; in addition it argued that this duality of integration and separation cannot be excluded from analyzing the concept of communication without being inconsistent with Roman Catholic dogma. The focus of analysis of my Master's research was very narrow but the project proved highly inspirational and encouraged me to pursue the topic of sacral communication further and in a wider context during my doctorate research. My PhD thesis is concerned mainly with the problems which arise when communication is understood as a community-making process; the methodology used allows for the exploration of the concept's theological dimension, while also expressing the language of social sciences.

1.1 Communication: Transmission and/or world-making

The need for elaborating and developing the aforementioned approach to communication is justified by four identified characteristics of current communication studies and media studies. These characteristics are found to be responsible for many of the field-specific, disciplinary boundaries which hinder the building of a general model of communication capable of describing each and every community-making process in which human beings are involved, independent of culture and time. The characteristics, from particular to general, are as follows:

- the dominance of the transmission models and approaches (Dance and Larson 1976, Carey 1989, Cronen 1995, Rothenbuler 1998, Rodriguez 2010, etc.), and the marginal role of world-making models of communication in communication research;
- the differentiation and solidification of the socio-collective (Tönnies 1922, Lippmann 1922, Bernays 1923, Lukács 1923, Schmitt 1923, Lasswell 1927) and the philosophical-theological framework (Jaspers 1919, Wittgeinstein 1922, Buber 1923, Ogden and Richards 1923, Heidegger 1927) of communication research;
- under-theorization of mainstream communication studies (Potter, Cooper and Dupagne 1993, Riffe and Freitag 1997, Kamhawi and Weaver 2003, Potter and Riddle 2007) and the heavy

influence of the socio-collective paradigm (Rosengren 1989, Giddens 1989, Krippendorff 1989, Craig 1989, Potter, Cooper and Dupagne 1993, Lee 2011) in recent decades

- a Western-type secular dominance – consisting of theoretical, methodological, technical and economic elements – in producing scientific knowledge on communication (f.e. Alatas 2003, 2006, Guaratne 2009, 2010, Wang 2011, Shi-Xu 2014).

Considering these boundaries as a limit for professional imagination, it made sense to inspect the four characteristics in detail before deciding whether to develop a completely new model of communication. Eventually, this investigation established that a social scientifically relevant world-making model of communication can only reflect theological dimensions of communication effectively if the concept of society – as an integrated, holistic entity – is de-constructed and re-defined as a special form of universal collective human existence (UCHE).

1.2 The need to conceptualize transcendent agents in a general world-making model of communication

The concept of society, as we currently understand it, was the result of an enlightened conceptual innovation which refers to the general field of human existence in a way that includes neither the divine nor the natural world (Gauchet 1979, Gordon 1994, Baker 1994, Mintzker 2008, Jung 2012), or at *best*, it includes them only as a symbolic human construct without an independent reality of its own. This is problematic for a world-making model of communication. Communication, community and society are interconnected. It is not only that translational connections between *κοινωνία* (*koinonia*: Greek), *communio*, *societas* and *communicatio* (Latin) are already well-known to scholars, but etymological and conceptual analyses of the Greek and Latin terms (stated above) show that by omitting the historically and referentially present transcendent dimension, many current and historical forms of collective human existence will be excluded from the scope of communication research when using a world-making model.

1.3 Integrating transcendent agents into a social constructivist framework for communication studies

By proposing various forms of UCHE, including those that incorporate transcendent entities (such as the three Divine Persons of the Trinity or angels) among its members, social construction of reality – as an explanatory model for building shared worlds – can be applied analogically to these other, non-

social forms of UCHE. Berger and Luckmann (1967: 19-20) suggest that these worlds of everyday life are „not only taken for granted as reality by the ordinary members of [*that specific form of universal collective human existence*]¹ in the subjectively meaningful conduct of their lives. It is a world that originates in their thoughts and actions, and is maintained as real by these.”

Thus, the social science paradigm in communication research should not be dismissed. Instead, it needs to be modified, accordingly, using a neo-social-constructivist approach. This approach will particularize the role and position of society among the various forms of UCHE, while also introducing other non-social forms of similar universal validity which encompass the world-making activity of both human and transcendent beings, as well as non-beings.

This thesis paper aims to develop and analyze the possibility of re-thinking society and communicative world-making. The main reason is to increase theoretical diversity within communication research. This will be achieved by theorizing communication as both human- and world-making processes within communities comprising, in part, transcendent members.

This topic was not investigated exclusively in previous studies; however, some aspects of my research have been identified in the following:

- i. The extensive literature on the relationship between theology and social sciences, which focuses on the possibilities (or the problems) of their integration. (f.e. Milbank 1990, 2008, Postman 1992, Martin 1997, Shilling and Mellor 2001, Keenan 2003)
- ii. The fact that social scientific theories or methods are already incorporated within certain sub-fields of theology, i.e. liberation and practical theology. This shows that an interdisciplinary cooperation between the two fields is already, successfully realized, and that the integration efforts of this study are not unprecedented at a more general level (although the direction of integration is unconventional, i.e. from theology into social sciences and not *vice versa*). (see f.e. Gutiérrez 1988, van der Ven 1993, Hermans *et. al.* 2002)
- iii. Some relatively rare examples of economic research which incorporated theology when investigating socio-economic phenomena. These studies built their theoretical framework on the Holy Scripture and, less frequently, on the Sacred Tradition of the Church; they frequently provided an application of Christian view for economic studies. These examples are unique within Western economic research because they afforded theology a primary role, while social

¹ in the original text: „society”

studies performed a secondary role or in some cases it did not feature at all. (f.e. North 1973, 1989, Cramp 1981, McKee 1987, Meeks 1989, Hobgood 1991, O'Boyle 1998, Long 2000, Forrester 2001, Beed and Beed 2006).

iv. Results achieved in the field of communication theology which testify that an intellectual plus can be achieved at the intersection of theology and communication research by taking theological perspectives into account when dealing with complex communication phenomena. (f.e. Eilers 2003, 2011, Arens 1995)

2. Methodologies

In this research the methodology used included philosophical hermeneutics, critical reading and critical analysis. At certain stages during the research, when using different methods was expected to achieve more consistent results, thematic and conceptual analyses were conducted.

The literature review had a dual focus. Firstly, in order to establish the claim for de-constructing the concept of society as the single form of UCHE, a search was undertaken in order to identify cases where researchers attempted to rethink the characteristics of society so that the result no longer referred to the general field of human existence; these results were then compared and contrasted with previous theories concerning dual and multiple societies. Secondly, a structured thematic analysis of recently published sociological literature was undertaken; its aim was to uncover thematic patterns and to investigate if any attempt had been made to consider the transcendent members which co-exist with humans, or alternatively to examine if the studies reflect a lack of non-reductive theory. This research examined relevant articles which were published between 2010 and 2013 in all forty-six international, „A”-category sociology journals (categorized as such by the *Hungarian Academy of Sciences* according to a new journal list introduced in September 2013). From this corpus, a sample of 173 articles was selected by using a new, self-made protocol; this number was further reduced to a final sample size of 160 after additional screening. This data was gathered between June 3 and June 16, 2014 using EBSCO and the journals' own homepages. Categorization and the definition of emerging themes were based on the general logic of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 2012 [1967]), using an intuitive strategy.

Conceptual analysis was applied when exploring forms of UCHE which are organized in a substantially different way than society. During the conceptual analysis of cosmopolis, various

sections within the chapter „*De conjunctione deorum et hominum*” from *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* were examined, as well as a sample composed from the writings of classical authors (Diogenes Laertios, Dio Chrysostomos, Eusebios of Caesarea, Clement of Alexandria, Musonius Rufus, Seneca and Cicero). The conceptual analysis of *koinonia* was built on the analysis of all „*koinonia*” / „*κοινωνία*” lexical entries found in twelve major Greek-English lexicons selected by using a combination of purposive and simple, random sampling. The works by Liddel-Scott (1883) and Lampe (1961) had a fixed place in the sample, while the other ten sources were selected randomly from a list of Greek-English lexicons which emerged in the search results of the key phrase „Greek-English lexicon” on the *archive.org* and *hathitrust.com* websites. Firstly, meaning analysis of the term was conducted, this was based on the meanings presented in the lexicons. Secondly, the references provided were traced back to the original, classical texts; a sample consisting of 153 blocks of text was selected (labelled from A to EW). In each of the texts labelled A to EW, the term „*koinonia*” was presented in a wider context. The blocks of texts were conceptually analyzed in order to identify the members of *koinonia* and the (divine, angelic, human and natural) worlds they belong to.

3. Results

In the following sections, I present the main results of this research.

The social-scientific embeddedness of communication research has led to a situation where conceptualizing the existence and role of transcendent members is irrelevant for communication when defined as shared world-making. Consequently, the existence and construction of purely transcendental and hybrid communities (consisting of both human and transcendent members) cannot be described in a non-reductive way using current communication models.

3.1 Analysis of the concept of society as universal collective human existence (UCHE)

The classical, Enlightenment-era concept of „society” referred to a general collective form of human existence which was, more or less, an achievement of civilization; this understanding had only human members and was separated both from nature and the transcendental. This approach has been refined through the years, and nowadays the transcendent world and the natural world, as social constructs, have been integrated into the shared collective reality of human members. This perception of society

dominates a significant proportion of current communication research; accordingly, my research places emphasis on elaborating other collective human existences with the same scope as society, or with a wider universal scope. Such alternative, historically and culturally based non-society forms of UCHE can conceptually replace society in the social constructivist model of shared world-making when dealing with social phenomena within hybrid communities.

Society is not a homogeneous form of UCHE.

As discussed briefly above, it has been demonstrated that within social sciences, there has been a long history of theorizing dual and multiple societies; this is evident within international literature, as well as in the Hungarian literature. Thus, previous research has ensured that the theorizing of exclusively human co-existences is satisfactory diverse. However, that is no reason to think that society is the only possible form of UCHE.

Society is not the only possible form of UCHE.

As we have seen, the literature deals with the problems of „being outside of” and „transcending” society (as a structure „of this world”); other forms of UCHE were presented above, including the concepts of cosmopolis and *koinonia*; these will be further discussed in the following section.

3.2 Conceptual alternatives for understanding UCHE: cosmopolis and *koinonia*

3.2.1 Analysis and Comparison of Texts I: Transcendent members of cosmopolis, their community with humans and each other

The cosmopolis is a possible, non-society form of UCHE. Within it, characteristically, gods and humans co-exist. The hierarchy and norms of this co-existence is derived from a higher non-human law, which is normative for human action.

In classical texts concerning the cosmopolis, the co-existence of gods and humans is not only postulated but references to their relations exist also. On the one hand, this type of co-existence is ordered and contrasted to the „earthly” Hellenistic and Roman polis to such an extent that even the „polis”-ness of an earthly city was contested. This is especially so for the stoic cosmopolis where the

universe (cosmos) was conceptualized analogically as a city (polis). On the other hand, in this type of co-existence man is subordinated either to gods or to a higher divine law („divine will”, „right reason”). As such, the stoic cosmopolis contained transcendental references not only to specific elements but also to their relations; these served as basic principles and laws for organization and government. (see f.e. in Eusebius of Caesarea: *Praeparatio Evangelica* 15.15., Musonius Rufus: *Disc.* IX. 1-10, Seneca: *De Otio* 4.1, Cicero: *De Re Publica* 3.33)

Here, „law”, „divine will” and „right reason” are essentially synonyms referring to the normative transcendent organizing principle which assured political order. In the first book of his *de Finibus*, Chrysippus explained that man’s individual nature is part of the cosmic nature which is why man’s greatest goal is to live in accordance with its own human nature, as well as that of the universe, and, consequently, to refrain from actions forbidden by the universal law which is the right reason identical with Zeus. This constitutes, said Chrysippus, „the virtue of the happy man and the smooth current of life, when all actions promote the harmony of the spirit dwelling in the individual man with the will of him who orders the universe” (Diogenes Laertios VII.88).

Regarding the governing and organizing of laws within the polis, it can be said that they are not, as such, decreed by humans. Instead, humans simply assert such „laws” as moral givens. As the manifestations of right reason, they are normative to human action. By behaving normatively through conforming to divine influences and expectations, man expresses the collective intention of living in accordance with the divine will. The individual manifestations of this intention can be identified in mental and behavioral forms: firstly, as right reasoning when deciding what is, and what is not, in accordance with nature; secondly, through living a good life when choosing, or siding with, things that are in accordance with nature; and thirdly, by refusing, or separating themselves from, things that are not in accordance with nature which, needless to say, is intimately linked with living a good life.

In addition, it must be noted that the cosmopolis is not born from some phantasmagorical play of mind. The construction and development of this classical concept was preceded by serious intellectual work based on solid arguments and resulting in strong, model-like principles aimed at creating a type of co-existence in which the life of actual human beings could be made better. The community of gods and wise people living in love, harmony and friendship, as well as helping each other in a practical way, was far removed from utopian concepts but instead shows considerable parallels with the later idea of the Christian eschatological world-state (cf. Eph. 2.19-22, Augustine’s *City of God*).

3.2.2 Analysis and Comparison of Texts II: Transcendent members of *koinonia*, their community with humans and each other

Koinonia can refer to another possible form of non-society form of UCHE when the term signifies a community in which the members are from different worlds. Moreover, translational and term usage connections between *koinonia*, *communicatio* and *societas* make apparent the necessity for a communication model which considers that the purpose of communication is to construct and maintain collective human existences.

In order to show what type of communities can be referred to as *koinonia*, the references to „*koinonia*” in the lexical entries were traced back to the original sources which identified the specific members of the *koinonia* in question according to the four worlds (divine, angelic, human and natural) to which they each belong.

The *koinonia*-s were divided into two main groups. The first group consists of *koinonia*-s each of which has members that belong to one world only. These were named „mono-dimensional *koinonia*-s”. The second group consists of *koinonia*-s each of which has members belonging to at least two worlds; this includes cases where one specific member belongs to multiple worlds simultaneously (for example, the R.C. Church or Christ incarnated).

The 153 blocks of *koinonia*-explanatory texts, labelled from A to EW, were reduced down to 146 after removing seven blocks of text which claim the impossibility of *koinonia*. The distribution of the various types of *koinonia* is as follows:

Mono-dimensional *koinonia* (n=68)

Inside the <divine world> (n=10)

Koinonia of Divine Persons

between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: CV, CX, CY, CZ

between the Father and the Son: AT, CP, CQ, CS, CT

between God and the Holy Spirit: CU

Inside the <Angelic world> (n=2)

between angels: AU, BH

Inside the <Human World> (n=47)

between humans:

in general: EC, ED

between every human: H, AD

between man and woman (non-sexual): EW

between man and woman (heterosexual): S, T, AE, AH, AI, AJ, AL, AM, AN, AO

between man and man (homosexual): AP

between man and woman (marriage): M, N, (AK: marriage between believers and heretics)

between man and woman (androgyny): R

between a person and a group: C

between groups of church members: BN

between ecclesiastics and church members: U, EE

between church members and heretic(s): BV, BX

between church members and unbelievers: EL

between members of a table community: CC, CD

between (Arian) heretics: BW

between citizens: D, J, O

between subjects: F

between church members: V, BT, BU, BY, EO, ES

between apostles: EM, (between apostolic companions EQ)

between apostles and church members: EJ

between debate opponents: DZ

between teacher and audience: EA

between murderers: EP

between just and unjust people: G

between human parts (body members: head, limbs, etc.) or qualities (n=4)

P, X, CB, CJ

between human and a human construct (n=1)

between human and weapon: L

between human constructs (n=4)

between a song's topic and the singers' voice: A
between greatness and smallness: I
between cities: E
between clans and villages: K

Inside the <Natural World> (n=0)

none

Multi-dimensional *koinonia* (n=78)

Between the divine, the angelic and the human world (n=8)

between ecclesiastics: CA
between the Church and church members: BP
within the community of the Church: BQ, BR, BS, BZ
between individual ecclesiastics: BO
within the Church as community BL

Between the divine and the human world (n=61)

between God and human(s): AZ, AX, BA, EF, CI, CL, CM, DM, (specifically between God and teacher: BF, between God and the gnostic man: CF, between God, Abraham and Abraham's seed: EG)
between gods and humans: B
between heavens and humans: BE
between the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and humans: CW
between incorruption and the human body: DG
between Christ and Jesus (incarnation): AC, DA, DB, DC, EU
between the Holy Spirit and human(s): DH, DI, DJ, DL
between Jesus Christ and humans: DD, DE, DF, EK, ET, EB, EI, (specifically the Eucharist: BC, BD, BJ, BM, DO, DP, DQ, DR, DS, DT, DU, DV, DW, DX, DY, EH)
between the Son and doxology: CR
between the Word and humans: AQ
between the Word and rational beings: CG
between immortality and humans: CE

between saints: BI²
between the divine nature and humans: DK
between the Word and baptism: AF
between the Holy Mysteries and catechumens: CK
the community of the body of Christ: CN
between faith and suffering man: Y
between God, the sacraments and man: DN
in the community of faith: EN
in the spiritual community: EV
between God, blessings that flow from philosophy, other spiritual gifts and men: Z

Between the divine and the angelic world (n=4)

between God (in gen.) and angel: AV, AY, BB
between the Holy Spirit and angel: AW

Between the angelic and the human world (n=2)

between convert and „gloomy baseness” (as Satan and/or its works): AA
between human and Satan: ER

Between the human and the natural world (n=1)

between herdsman and the sea: Q

In general between every thing (n=2)

W, BG

The list above indicates that *koinonia* relates to both mono- and multi-dimensional communities, more often the latter than the former. Regarding the members which make up each of the communities, in mono-dimensional *koinonia*-s these are mainly human, but to a lesser extent some mono-dimensional unities are made up of the Divine Persons of the Trinity or angels. Interestingly, examples of purely natural *koinonia*-s are completely absent from the texts. The results, therefore, demonstrate no

² The „community of saints” can be considered here as a special case because saints are initially humans; however, in this community its members transcend the human world. Saints can only become members of this community – with Jesus Christ in eternal life – after they fade from life; one of the requirements of becoming a saint is to be dead in flesh.

evidence that *koinonia*, either in its ancient Greek or early Christian form, was ever used to designate communities within/between nature. Multi-dimensional *koinonia*-s occur in various combinations which permeate the divine, the angelic, the human and the natural dimensions; however, emphasis is placed on the connection between the human and divine worlds. This is evident because sixty-one of the seventy-eight occurrences relate to human–divine communities (this figure can be rounded up to sixty-nine if instances which involved angels are included; or the figure can be further increased to seventy-one if the two cases where *koinonia* was used to signify an all-encompassing unity of every thing are included).

It is important to stress that with a few exceptions, *koinonia* refers to some special unity or community of members, and, as such, the map of meanings is useful for distinguishing the various dimensions that make up each of the unities or communities. The few exceptions are *koinonia* which refer to simple connections or connecting (D, R, AR, EM), gathering and distributing alms to the poor (U, V, EC, ED, EE) and disclosure (DZ, EA, EB, EG). These were the only instances that did not automatically encompass the unity or community of the agents; in addition, it is clear that few of these exceptions are compatible with the transmission model of communication.

Latin „soc-“, translations of *koinonia* like *societas*, *societate*, *societatem*, etc. signify exclusively human connections at approximately the same ratio as connections between humans and transcendent entities. Translations of *koinonia* as *communicatio* signify mainly unities and communities composed of both human and transcendent members. In some instances, *communicatio*-translations of *koinonia* refer to the conveyance of messages. However, within the transmission model of communication, such occurrences are rare.

The emphasis on unity/community and on *koinonia* as a special type of unity/community is also apparent in cases where *koinonia* and its derivations are translated as:

- *socii*, *socios*, *societate*, *societatem*, *societatis* and *societas*;
- *communicare*, *communicatio*, *communicat*, *communicatione*, *communicationis*, *communicationem*, *communicandi* and *communicantes*.

Regarding Biblical text references, these translations appear as follows (see Table 1):

Text's label code	Vulgata Clementina	Nova Vulgata
U	collationem	<u>communicationem</u>
V	communions	Communions
DL	<u>communicatio</u>	<u>Communicatio</u>
EE	<u>Communicationem</u>	<u>communicationem</u>
EI	<i>Societatem</i>	Communions
EH	<u>Communicatio</u>	<u>Communicatio</u>
EJ	<u>Communicatione</u>	<u>Communicatione</u>
EK	<i>Societatem</i>	Communions
EL	Participatio	Participatio
EM	<i>Societatis</i>	Communions
EN	<u>Communicatio</u>	Communio
EO	<u>Communicationis</u>	Communions
EP	<i>socii (non essemus ~)</i>	<i>socii (non essemus ~)</i>
EQ	<i>Socii</i>	<i>Socii</i>
ER	<i>Socios</i>	<u>Communicantes</u>
ES	<u>Communicatione</u>	Communione
ET	<i>Societas</i>	Communio
EU	Dispensatio	Dispensatio
EV	<i>Societas</i>	Communio

Table 1: Latin translations of *koinonia* in *Vulgata Clementina* (VC) and *Nova Vulgata* (NV) („*soc-*„ translations are indented, and *communicare* and its derivations are underlined for better readability)

Looking at the Latin translations of *koinonia* in texts written by the Fathers of the Church and collected in *Patrologia Graeca* and *Patrologia Latina*, the following results emerge (see Table 2):

W <i>commercio</i>	X <i>conjunctionem</i>	Y <i>societas</i>
Z <i>participes</i>	AA <i>communions</i>	AC <i>societate</i>
AD <i>societate</i>	AE <i>commiscendum</i>	AF <i>societatem</i>
AG <i>communione</i>	AH <i>consuetudo</i>	AI <i>conjunctionem</i>
AJ <i>conjunctionem</i>	AL <i>societate</i>	AM <i>communions</i>

AN communionem	AO communionem	AP conjunctiones
AQ communionem	AS commune	AT communitatem
AU communitas	AV <u>communicatione</u>	AW communionem
AX communiouque	AY participatione	AZ communionem
BA <i>societate</i>	BB <u>communicationem</u>	BC consortium
BD communionem	BE communitas	BF [omitted]
BG communionem	BH communione	BI <i>societatem</i>
BJ communione	BL ecclesiam	BM communione
BN communionem	BO communione	BP communionem
BQ communionem	BR communionem	BS communionem
BT communionem	BU communione	BV communionem
BW communionem	BX communionem	BY communionis
BZ communionem	CA communicatorum	CB <i>societas</i>
CC commune	CD (mensae) consors	CE participes
CF communionem	CG communionem	CI <u>communicatio</u>
CJ consortium	CK communiouque	CL communione
CM communionem	CN communionem	CP <u>communicatio</u>
CQ commune	CR consortio	CS communionis
CT communione	CU communionem	CV communionem
CW consortium	CX <i>societas</i>	CY <i>societas</i>
CZ communionem	DA communione	DB communionem
DC communione	DD communionem	DE communione
DF participationem	DG particeps	DH <u>communicationem</u>
DI <u>communicatione</u>	DJ <u>communicatio</u>	DK consortes
DM communione	DN communione	DO communionem
DP communionem	DQ <u>communicatio</u>	DR communionem
DS communionis	DT communionem	DU <u>communicandi</u>
DV communiou	DW communionis	DX communionem
DY communionem	DZ disputationes (koinoniai ton logon)	EA <u>communicat</u>
EB [omitted]	EC <u>communicatione</u>	ED <u>communicare</u>
EF <u>communicatio</u>	EG <u>communicatio</u>	

Table 2: Latin translations of *koinonia* in *Patrologia Graeca* („soc-“, translations are indented, and *communicare* and its derivations are underlined for better readability).

Regarding the „soc-“, translations of *koinonia*, there are two homogenous translations in the *Vulgata Clementina* and the *Nova Vulgata*, and ten cases are found in *Patrologia Graeca* (Σ 12); these tell us the following:

- a type of unity/community in each of the 12 cases is apparent;
 - in 7 of these cases, the unities/communities are mono-dimensional;
 - from these 7 cases, 5 comprise members from the human world alone;
 - from these 7 cases, 2 of the communities comprise the Divine Persons of the Trinity;
 - in the other 5 cases, these unities/communities are multi-dimensional;
 - each of the 5 cases refers to communities of both divine and human members.

Koinonia-(soc-)	Mono-dimensional	Multi-dimensional	Total
unity/community	AD, AL, CB, CX, CY, EP, EQ	Y, AC, AF, BA, BI	12

Table 3: Mono- and Multi-dimensional *koinonia*-s („soc-“, translations)

Koinonia as *communicare*, *communicatio* and other derivations shows better correlations between *Vulgata Clementina* and *Nova Vulgata* translations. Among the nineteen examined verses, six in the VC and five in the NV show words derived from *communicare* when translating *koinonia*. Within these cases, there are four examples (DL, EE, EH and EJ) of same-word usage, two of which replace the old translation with „*communicatio*” and „*communione*” (ES, EN), and a further one changes the old „*collationem*” to „*communicationem*” (U). Each of the four homogeneous translations refers to multi-dimensional connections between God and humans.

Latin texts in the *Patrologia Graeca* show that „*communicatio*” often refers to a state or a process with transcendent members. In the majority of these cases *communicatio* makes reference to the unity or community of members, with the exception of two cases where *communicatio* means disclosure or transmitting a message, and one further case of gathering and distributing alms. To sum up, in the four homogeneous translations from VC and NV, and the fourteen *communicare*-derived translations found in *Patrologia Graeca* (Σ 18), *koinonia* signifies:

- in 15 cases, a type of unity/community;
 - 11 of these 15 unities/communities are multi-dimensional;

- 9 of these 11 are shared communities comprising divine and human members;
- 2 of these 11 are communities of angels and Divine Persons of the Trinity;
- 4 of these 15 unities/communities are mono-dimensional;
 - 3 of these 4 are communities comprising members of the human world;
 - 1 of these 4 is a community within the divine world;
- in 2 cases, disclosure/transmission of messages;
 - 1 of these 2 is a mono-dimensional disclosure between humans;
 - 1 of these 2 is a multi-dimensional message (the sender is a member of the divine world and the receiver is a member of the human world);
- in 1 case, a mono-dimensional, humanistic gathering of alms.

Koinonia-communicatio	Mono-dimensional	Multi-dimensional	Total
unity or community	CP, EC, ED, EJ	AV, BB, CI, DL, DH, DI, DJ, DQ, DU, EF, EH	15
disclosure	EA	EG	2
gathering and distributing alms	EE	-	1

Table 4: Mono- and Multi-dimensional *koinonia*-s (*communicare*-derived translations)

The most important aspect of the conceptual analysis of *koinonia* and cosmopolis is presenting the multi-dimensional unities/communities that have both transcendent and human members. Some of these interpretations are universal in scope and can encompass larger groups which share the same norms, or even perhaps the whole of humanity may be included. The analysis also showed that the various meanings of „communication”, as understood within the ancient Greek and Christian traditions, prove that the current transmission model of communication is inadequate.

3.3 Topical and geographical patterns in recently produced social-scientific knowledge: Western dominance and the lack of sacral perspective

Current „elite” sociological literature represents scientific knowledge and results produced in a Western-research environment where the intention of considering transcendent members during (theoretical or empirical) social research is almost completely absent; examples of awareness of this neglect are equally rare.

During the thematic analysis of 160 articles selected from 46 A-category international sociology journals, it was discovered that theological axioms, definitions or concepts were not used to explain the phenomena or problems studied. Possible transcendent members of different forms of collective human existences (for example, societies, social groups, households and families, as well as various small groups of friends, parishes, neighborhoods, students, etc.) were not examined at the theoretical level nor at the empirical level. There was only one attempt to raise awareness of this lack of conceptualization by highlighting and discussing the presumption of what is rightly called „the secularism of social sciences”; this argues that only humans can be the sources of action, meaning and purpose – never gods or spirits (Seth 2013). During the thematic analysis one other methodologically focused study criticized the current state of affairs when it discussed the need to define and measure religious groups according to each group’s self-definition (which should obviously include transcendent members as well), and not according to selected political or sociological frameworks (Woodberry *et al.* 2012).

The majority (thirty-nine: 85%) of journals examined are published by large commercial publishers, while the number of independent journals published by learned societies or scientific institutes is small (15%) and their weight in publishing original articles on religious topics is even smaller (5%). Each of the commercial publishing houses concerned belong, geographically, to the Western world within which a further, significant dominance by countries with English as their first language (hereafter Anglophones) is observable: the headquarters of twenty-nine of the publishers can be found in such countries, while Dutch and German publishers account for only ten journals. Commercial publishers from the United States constitute the largest group (there are twenty-one journals from the US, eight from the UK, seven from the Netherlands and three from Germany).

The chief editors of the journals reviewed for this study are affiliated predominantly with US- and UK-based research or higher education institutions; this represents a further dimension of the dominance of Anglophone countries. Further investigation revealed that from a total of seventy-one

chief editors, thirty-seven (51%) are affiliated with US-based institutions, twenty-two (30%) with UK-based institutions and the remaining fourteen (19%) with institutions in other countries. Of the journals published by large commercial publishers, approximately 45% of the chief editors is affiliated with US-based institutions and 33% with UK-based institutions, at the time of this investigation. The remaining 22% is divided between Canadian, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian and Brazilian institutions. Regarding the affiliations of the chief editors of independent journals, there is a 88:12 ratio between US- and UK-based institutions, with no room for institutions from any other countries.

Finally, regarding the first-named (or sole) authors of articles published in the journals between January 2010 and December 2013, their affiliations represent the third dimension of the dominance of Anglophone countries; the breakdown follows. With regards to studies concerning religious topics, 73% of the authors of Christianity-specific articles are affiliated with either US- or UK-based institutions (US: 56%, UK: 17%). A comparatively high percentage, at 67%, of authors of general religious topics, which were not connected to a specific religion, are also associated with US- and UK-based institutions (US: 54%, UK: 13%), while 63% of the authors of Islam-specific articles are affiliated with US- and UK-based institutions (US: 24%, UK: 39%).

3.4 Obstacles to re-thinking society and introducing forms of UCHE with shared reality construction between human and transcendent members

Before re-thinking UCHE in a way that could encompass societies and communities comprising both human and transcendent members, it should be noted that there are various obstacles. The main obstacles are the secularism of social sciences which focuses on empirical research and the „publish-or-perish” research environment which rewards paradigmatic conformity and committance.

Two possible strategies for re-thinking UCHE were examined: the application of either perennial philosophy or post-secular theory for reconstructing the concept of society. It was concluded that although both are decidedly apt for diagnosing current social and political problems, they do not depart from the framework of society in any meaningful way. Post-secular thought basically revolves around (secular and non-secular) societies, while perennial philosophy deals with the individual reintegration of human and divine. This philosophy has less (ambiguous) emphasis on universal collectivity which can show itself in positive and negative forms (as a sacral/religious/traditional society or as a modern or globalized society). Nevertheless, perennial philosophy has a greater

potential for rethinking collective human existences made up of different qualities of beings. However, within its framework it is ultimately impossible to consider religious truths fully according to a particular religious tradition because they are regarded as an expression of the meta-narrative of „primordial tradition” in that particular religious language and system of symbols, laws and rites. This means that this branch of hermeneutics is incompatible with the self-definition of historical religious communities which organized themselves around religious truths.

Post-secularism deals with a possible form of cooperation between secular and religious morality; it seeks a solution to a social crisis by drawing attention to the necessity of integrating some religious values into that society. In this way, the re-organizational task outlined by Habermas and others would occur within society, thereby re-introducing the idea that even within a secular society agents must not deny, in principle, that religious interpretations of the world have the potential to express truth, and this acceptance of the „truth potential of religions” has transformative cultural, political, legal and moral implications. (see f.e. Habermas 2001, Habermas and Ratzinger 2005) However, this form of cooperation equates to merely the acknowledgement of the failure of modern rationality to do away altogether with religion. It is true that this line of thought aims at making sure that in the informal public sphere – which is the sphere of public opinion formation – any possible relevant argument should be heard and religious people should be allowed to bring their religious positions into the public debate. In this respect, and *only* in this respect, post-secular thought takes up the argument that religious views and insights, moral intuitions and sensitivities should be part of the argumentative realm of the informal public sphere. On the other hand, it is very clear that – apart from the argumentative context of the informal public sphere in which these religious truths and values must play their role – they are not to be situated on the same level as modern science, for example. Religion must accede to the authority of science which holds the social monopoly on knowledge, and it must participate within a constitutional state which is based on a non-sacred concept of morality. Moreover, although Habermas and others acknowledge the value of religious ideas and moral intuitions in the informal sphere of public opinion formation, post-secular thought is inseparable from the claim that these ideas and intuitions – if and when they come to the formal public sphere of will-formation, at the level of the institutions of constitutional democracies – should be translated in a rational way to the, more acceptable, language of reason. Unfortunately, within post-secularism there is no suggestion that religious truths should share the same status as secular rational arguments. Therefore, the conceptualization of transcendent members into a universal community in line with religious truths, and translated into the language of social sciences can be discussed publicly; however accepting it as scientific and on the same level as, and as a possible alternative to, established social science theories is beyond the scope of possibilities offered by post-secular thought.

The proposed solution here does not involve re-sacralization or transformation of society, instead it should be viewed as a purely secular form of UCHE consisting exclusively of human members. Concurrently, we need to introduce other forms of UCHE which include the communities of transcendent (divine and angelic) and human members; these forms of UCHE should have the same universal scope as the concept of society. This thesis has postulated the existence and activity of transcendent members, as well as their role in the shared construction of reality with humans; however, it does not specify positive or negative normative boundaries, the task of which is left to the sociological imagination. Of course, the result of the sociological imagination can be value-loaded in principle, and each person can decide to imagine transcendent members according to a specific religious tradition. Separating societal reality from every possible form of involvement with transcendent agents, and distancing it from other forms of UCHE leads to at least two important (unanswered) questions, namely: is such a reality even possible, or it is no more than a utopian concept? And what is the scope of the analytical power of sociology when faced with communities having both transcendent and human members?

3.5 Summary of Results

The thesis has aimed to explore the limitations inherent in the concept of society which prevail in current communication research and can seriously hinder the development of a general world-making model of communication that attempts to take into account the existence and role of transcendent members in shared reality construction. This study identified and traced the concept of society back to an enlightened conceptual innovation; it then presented the problems of its application using examples from the history of European sociological thought. An analysis of the concepts of *cosmopolis* and *koinonia* was conducted in order to make it clear that the concept of society and the presumption of social-type shared realities cannot be applied universally when researching every macro-level collective co-existence of humans, but have to be limited to those forms that are organized according to principles which do not permit existence of, or an active role by, non-human members. These results also make clear the necessity of conceptualizing other forms of UCHE which include both transcendent and human members, and the need to implement a hermeneutic framework for self-interpretation and diagnosis comparable to that of society. In the meanwhile, the social constructivist approach could be used analogically to describe shared community construction by divine, angelic and human members. However, imagining the common cosmopolite or koinonic reality originated in their thoughts and actions, and maintained as real by these, is difficult if not impossible within modern social sciences, which have an effect on developing a world-making model of communication appropriate for cosmopolis- or *koinonia*-type co-existences. Transcendent agents of communication understood as shared reality construction, to which the „communication” translations of *koinonia* are

clearly referring to, can appear only as socio-cultural constructs or symbolic abstracts originating in human activity. In this manner, transcendent members would participate in reality construction not on their own right as angelic beings or Divine Persons but by being the abstract source of guiding norms and values of human behavior. The dominance of such current approaches and their lack of conceptualization of real transcendent members in human co-existences were corroborated through a thematic analysis of recent articles published in A-category sociology journals, which are supposed to exert the most influence on, and be the latest and most significant results of, current sociological research.

The proposed solution here is to de- and re-construct the concept of society through philosophical hermeneutics thereby creating the concept of universal collective human existence (UCHE) which has a social form, i.e. society, which is composed only of human members and their various mental, material, institutional, etc. products, and non-social forms which are composed of both transcendent and human members.

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