Orthodoxy Versus Post-Communism?

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Belarus, Serbia, Ukraine and the Russkiy Mir

By

Michał Wawrzonek,
Nelly Bekus
and Mirella Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska

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CHAPTER ONE

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY VIS-À-VIS POSTCOMMUNIST TRANSFORMATION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

NELLY BEKUS AND MICHAŁ WAWRZONEK

Introduction

Various arguments have been brought into the discussion on factors that play pivotal roles in making successful democratization in post-communist countries happen. The list of the factors generally viewed as conducive to a democratic system gives special attention to economy, political culture and the institutional legacies of a society.[1] The role played by "cultural prerequisites" in building sustainable democratic systems has been discussed by political scientists since 1960.[2] Among various cultural components, studies of Western societies have tended to consider the dominant religious tradition of a given society exclusively as an indicator of its preindustrial heritage, as a measure of the value systems prevailing at given times and places in the past; only to some extent have they

[1] Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); Adam Przeworski et al., *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Material Well-being in the World, 1950–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Bruce Parrott, *Perspectives on Postcommunist Democratization,* in: *Democratic Changes and Authoritarian Reactions in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova*, ed. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, pp. 1–40 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[2] Almond, Gabriel A. and Sidney Verba. *The Civic Culture. Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (London: Sage Publications, 1989); Ronald Inglehart, *The Renaissance of Political Culture*, in: "American Political Science Review" 82 (4), 1988, pp. 1203–1230.

reserved for religion the role of cultural integrating factor in the aftermath of modernization and secularization.[3] In the context of modern Western societies, religion seemed to be a far less adequate indicator of culture as a whole, which became more differentiated and subject to rapid change.[4] In the post-communist societies of Eastern Europe, the political dynamic of liberation from totalitarian ideology was accompanied by the return of religion to public life after decades of suppression.

This context of post-totalitarian society enabled religious traditions to re-establish their close association with cultural legacies and the symbolic capital of liberated nations. Religion, repressed by previous regimes, was now revived and manifested the essence of a new political order. The diversity in the success of political transformation and different effects of implementation of democratic systems and institutions among former communist countries provided rich material for the reassessment of major theories of democratic development and better understanding of the role of religion and the wider cultural components of society in the post-communist transition. This book aims to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between religion and political development while trying to detect the extent to which the tradition of Orthodox Christianity can be held "accountable" for the unsuccessful scenarios of post-communist transformation.[5] The conventional Western perception of Eastern Christianity as backward and failing the Western European standards of civilization goes back as far as the Byzantine era.[6] This image of Orthodoxy contributed significantly to the Western perception of Eastern Europe.[7] Furthermore, a specific tradition of thinking about Eastern Christianity as a peculiar cultural and religious background specifically conducive to the imposition of communist ideology has been developed, thus making the Orthodox tradition responsible for the social experiment launched by the Bolsheviks in the USSR and exported to other Eastern European countries after the Second World War. A thesis of communist

[3] Inglehart, *The Renaissance of Political Culture*, p. 1221.
[4] Inglehart, *The Renaissance of Political Culture*, p. 1223.
[5] Victoria Clark, *Why Angels Fall: A Journey through Orthodox Europe from Byzantium to Kosovo* (London: Macmillan, 2000).
[6] Vasilios N. Makrides, Dirk Uffelmann, *Studying Eastern Orthodox Anti-Westernism: The Need for a Comparative Research Agenda*, in: *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*, ed. Jonathan Sutton and William Peter van den Bercken (Wilsele, Belgium: Peeters Publishers, 2003), p. 107.
[7] Elisabeth Prodromou, *Paradigms, Power, and Identity: Rediscovering Orthodoxy and Regionalizing Europe*,in: "European Journal of Political Research" 30, 1996, pp. 125–154.

ideology as a version of secular religion close in its nature to Orthodoxy was formulated by Nikolas Berdyaev in the 1920s and advocated by Western scholars during the Cold War (R. Kaplan, S. Huntington, G. Kennan) in order to rationalize the political estrangement of Eastern Europe. The dominant national churches in the most "resistant" Central European countries as well as in the post-communist Baltic states and Slovenia are either Catholic or Protestant; in the communist "adoptive" and transitionally unsuccessful post-Soviet states and the Balkans, that role was undertaken by Christian Orthodox churches or Islam. This made it possible to assume that there are certain implications in the historical tradition of Orthodoxy that pre-determine political development.[8] It appears to encourage "a 'hesitation' about democracy" in societies that derives from the tradition that still tends to believe that a very close relationship with the state is the most appropriate form of political engagement.[9] As Kitromilides observed, persistent discrepancies in the logic of the political development of Eastern European states after 1989 and the inability of the West to understand the Eastern half of the shared continent "created ground for re-imagining iron curtains to be replaced by a velvet curtain associated with the aesthetics of Orthodoxy".[10]

This book examines the role played by the Orthodox tradition of Russia, Ukraine, Serbia and Belarus in the formation of the political culture in these societies. Orthodox Christianity constitutes the dominant religion in these countries and they all experience a "troubled" trajectory of post-communist transformation that makes them suitable case studies for the purposes of this research.

The Orthodox tradition is understood in this context not only as a religious denomination, but also as a paradigm of culture that forms a basis for identity, being, at the same time, connected with and influenced by a church structure and policy. Exploring the potential impact of religious tradition on the formation of political culture, the book seeks to explore how Orthodox Churches have been adapted to local political and cultural conditions in the four countries after the fall of communism; how nation-building projects in these countries employed their Orthodox tradition to legitimize their political scenarios; how Orthodox Christian

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[8] Milenko Petrovic, *The Democratic Transition of Post-Communist Europe. In the Shadow of Communist Differences and Uneven Europeanisation* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 95.

[9] John Anderson, *Christianity and Democratisation: From Pious Subject to Critical Participants* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 154.

[10] Paschalis Kitromilides, *An Orthodox Commonwealth* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2007), p. xiii.

Churches engaged with political actors and states and what are the mechanisms of influence of Orthodox religious tradition on the postcommunist societies in the conditions of post-socialist de-secularization. The book also attempts to elaborate on the idea of co-existing cultural programmes of modernity as implied by the paradigm of multiple modernities. Formulated as a way to reflect and deconstruct the universalistic status of the connection between the concepts of modernity, democracy and secularism, this paradigm proposes seeing the world map as a collection of axial civilizations each of which gravitates around a system of values not necessarily shared by others and enriching the global community with its own symbolic legacy and cultural heritage.[11] The paradoxical context of two opposite trends is discussed in the book – de-secularization as a part of post-communist liberalization with churches rising to a role of public actors after the decades of suppression and the spread of the post-secular order as one of the globalizing trends combined with the Orthodox legacy that make discerning the particular effect of the religious tradition an extremely challenging task. The combined study of four different countries with Eastern Christianity as a dominant religion allows us to hope that patterns of change experienced by these societies under the impact of their Orthodox Christian tradition may denote the specific framework of Orthodox civilizations.

Political Culture, Secularization and Desecularization

"Political culture" as a concept employed in the analysis of political development became a popular and nearly universal tool for filling the gap between the micro and macro dimensions in the theory of politics.[12] With reference to post-Soviet social reality, Kenneth Jowitt's concept of "political culture" as deriving from and depending on the existing governing political regime appears to provide the most appropriate tool for studying political development in the aftermath of communist failure.

A key position in Jowitt's theory relates to the mutual relations and tensions between "a set of informal, adaptive, behavioural and attitudinal postures" and the formalized way of defining the institutional order as well as ideological and political questions – in other words, between the

[11] See on this *Reflections on Multiple Modernities. European, Chinese and Other Interpretations* ed. Dominic Sachenmaier, Jens Riedel and Shmuel Eisenstadt (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

[12] Gabriel Almond, G. Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics: a Developmental Approach* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1966), pp. 51–2; see also Stephen Chilton, *Grounding Political Development* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1991), pp. 59–71.

political structure and culture.[13] According to this approach, the "political regime" is understood as "a complex of formal and informal principles and rules which lay down how power operates and interacts within the social and economic sphere and around which the expectations and motivations of individual political actors are developed."[14] According to these assumptions, the ruling regime defines the manner of "how a privileged governing actor understands the meaning of executing state power and the ways to legitimize it in the eyes of the political community".[15]

Jowitt's model of political culture was criticized as going too far in its determinist assumptions and giving too much importance to the current regime in determining how political culture develops and functions. In Steven Chilton's view, such an approach does not give an answer to the crucial question of the origin of political culture. According to him, the problem of the extent to which it was a consequence of the operating regime and the extent to which the political culture was its cause still demands empirical verification.[16]

While acknowledging certain limitations of applicability of such a concept, we need to take into consideration that Jowitt's concept of political culture was employed as an analytical tool for the analysis of the distinct social and political reality of communism. As a rule, under totalitarian conditions this reality was constructed and subordinated to a political structure that imposed legitimate ways of adapting attitudes to the ruling order. Behaviours and judgments incompatible with (or even simply deviating from) the imposed template were treated as a danger to the totalitarian political structure and as such were combated. This happened regardless of the real intentions of individuals and groups whose behaviours were considered to be incorrect. This concept proved to be particularly useful in the analysis of the Ukrainian case.

According to K. Jowitt, political culture should be analysed on three different levels: the elite, the regime and the community.[17] In the first case, we should investigate the "informal adaptive (behavioural and attitudinal) postures that emerge as a response to and consequence of a given elite's

[13] Kenneth Jowitt, *New World Disorder. The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 55.
[14] Jan Holzer, Stanislav Balík, *Postkomunistyczne reżimy niedemokratyczne. Badania nad przemianami teorii politycznej w okresie po transformacji ustrojowej* (Kraków-Nowy Sącz, 2009), p. 31.
[15] J. Holzer, S. Balík, *Postkomunistyczne reżimy*, p. 32.
[16] S. Chilton, *Grounding*, pp. 63–64.
[17] K. Jowitt, *New World*, p. 55.

identity-forming experiences."[18] Thus, the regime's political culture would be based on behaviours which are a reaction to the institutionalized forms of defining social, economic and political life.[19] The level of the community's political culture would develop the relationships between the regime and the community experienced in the past and the attitudes which have arisen due to these relationships.[20]

Religion as a category in the analysis is represented by one of the branches of Christianity. This religion, according to the Czech theologian Tomaŝ Halík, is characterized by the combination of the internal dimension (faith (*fides*) in Jesus) and external dimension (pertaining to its role in shaping the mundane, temporal reality of societies).

John Paul II emphasized: "it was evangelization which formed Europe, giving birth to the civilization of its peoples and their cultures".[21] In other words, Christianity formed European people's notions about the "sacral foundation of society".[22] It started to accomplish the same task as the *religio* of ancient Rome, and became "the power integrating society." Being a complex of common opinions, beliefs and values, it was perceived as the "criterion of the loyalty of the citizen towards the state, the criterion of fulfilling his duties." Throughout the history of Europe, Christianity in its "external dimension," as its *religio,* seems to function like a unifying social system of "beliefs" which the social community is based on according to Eric Voegelin.[23]

The modern era brought the attempts to develop a new "religio" without reference to transcendency. Christianity in its previous form has progressively lost its integrating values with reference to temporal reality.[24] Simultaneously, with the deepening of the divisions between the different Christian churches, the significance of the institutional Church increased. In other words Christianity became a set of beliefs closely linked with particular ecclesial institutions.[25] As such, it was absorbed or excluded by the new factors determining modern "religio" – science,

[18] K. Jowitt, *New World*, p. 56.
[19] K. Jowitt, *New World*, p. 56.
[20] K. Jowitt, *New World*, p. 56.
[21] Pope John Paul II, *Memory and Identity. Personal Reflections* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005), p. 104.
[22] Tomáŝ Halík, *Czy dzisiejsza Europa jest niechrześcijańska i niereligijna?* in: *Wzywany czy niewzywany Bóg się tutaj zjawi* (Kraków: WAM, 2006), p. 24.
[23] Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics. An Introduction* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 31.
[24] T. Halík, *Czy dzisiejsza Europa*, p. 36.
[25] T. Halík, *Czy dzisiejsza Europa*, p. 37.

cultural values and ideologies. According to Halík modernity modified the status of religion. Instead of being a system of values integrating society, religion (Christianity) became "a relatively separated sector of social and private life."[26] These processes could be related to the consequences of secularization.

From our point of view, very important in Berger's initial concept of secularization was ensuring "secularization of consciousness," which means that people started to "look upon the world and their own lives without the benefit of religious interpretation."[27]

For a better understanding of the consequences of such a transformation of "consciousness" on the supra-individual level, Shmuel Eisenstadt's theory of axial civilization is worth considering. According to Eisenstadt, civilizations are based on a combination of "the ontological and cosmological visions (visions of transmundane and mundane reality) with the definition, construction and regulation of the major arenas of social life and interaction."[28] Western civilization was founded on some "new basic metaphysical conceptions of the chasm between the transcendental and mundane orders"[29] and attempted to reconstruct the mundane world from the human personality to a socio-political and economic order according to the appropriate 'higher' transcendental vision."[30] This "transcendental vision" was determined by religion. From this perspective, it seems clear why religion under the conditions of Christianity present in Europe had a dominating position in social life. Thus, secularization would mean a conceptual separation of the projections of the desired social order from the conviction that it is not dependent on any supernatural reality.

The Soviet Union almost from the beginning of its existence launched an anti-religious campaign aimed at marginalizing religion in the life of Soviet people and the atheization of the Soviet people's mindset. It was a part of a wider transformation of Soviet society, often characterized as communist modernization, which resulted in a serious change in people's attitudes towards religion.

In the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, religion was interpreted as an ideology that masked the interests of the ruling class. Religion was viewed as an illusion which helped to preserve the unjust social basis, a

[26] T. Halík, *Czy dzisiejsza Europa*, p. 36
[27] Peter Ludwig Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), p. 108.
[28] Shmuel Eisenstadt, *The civilizational dimension in sociological analysis*, in: "Thesis Eleven", 62, August 2000, p. 1.
[29] Eisenstadt, *The civilizational dimension*, p. 4.
[30] Eisenstadt, *The civilizational dimension*, p. 4.

consciousness which prevented any changes in social reality. The issue of Marx's teaching on religion was debated in some communist countries and parts of the Western world throughout the twentieth century. The Latin American theology of liberation had formulated a vision of Marxism which was not viewed as the opposite to religion, but considered it a tool for social analysis and social change. In all communist countries, however, atheism remained the official position of rulers, with very few examples of more or less "soft" state policy towards religion.[31]

Growth in the number of people who claimed to be atheists in socialist societies cannot be viewed as entirely being the result of socialist atheistic propaganda. Equally important was also the complex social change occurring in these societies during industrialization and urbanization. According to the secularization theory, it was modernization, via education, the rise of scientific rationality, urbanization and differentiation between the roles of Church and state that has led to the decline of religiosity in Western societies.[32] Studies on patterns of religious changes in post-communist countries in Eastern Europe reveal certain parallels among these changes and the process of secularization in Western European countries.[33] R. G. Suny characterized the history of socialist transformation as a part of the general process of modernization and as a variation from Western modernity. Such an approach implies a broader understanding of the very category of modernity, which allows for different types of combinations of the dominant Western type of modernity with local or traditional elements (like in revolutionary Iran or the Soviet Union). From this perspective, the "great achievement of the

[31] For illustration of less restricted and more complicated relations between the Church and communist power see Lucian N. Leustean's study of Orthodoxy during the Cold War in Romania. He describes various forms of cooperation and partnership between the Orthodox Church and the Communist Party which developed in Romania. Study reveals the paradoxical cultural role played by the Orthodox Church in Romania to enhance the legitimization of the communist regime among ethnic Romanians. Lucian N. Leustean, *Orthodoxy and the Cold War. Religion and political power in Romania, 1947–1965* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, UK, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

[32] Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Peter Berger, *Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (New York, Vintage Books, 1974).

[33] Mary L. Gautier, *Church attendance and religious belief in post-communist societies* in: "Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion" 36 (2), 1997, pp. 289–96; Ariana Need and Geoffrey Evans*, Analysing patterns of religious participation in post-communist Eastern Europe,* in: "British Journal of Sociology" 52 (2), 2001, pp. 229–48.

Soviet experiment was the rough modernization of a backward, agrarian society."[34]

Setting the Soviet experience against the background of the Western modernization theory of the 1960s, R. G. Suny acknowledged that Soviet modernization excluded such aspects as democratic institutions and "a consumer-driven economy."[35] George Schöpflin characterized the transformation of societies in the socialist epoch as a "one-sided modernization revolution." Although it was a reduced form of modernization, it was related to those spheres of public life that directly affected the social structure of society. The communist transformation "effectively liquidated the traditional peasantry of the area, the type bound by the village, illiterate and suspicious of the city and urban life."[36] The process of urbanization, the expansion of mass education and the mass employment of women that accompanied industrialization in socialist societies constituted a "halfway" or partial modernization. During these transformations, radical changes accured in the communicative facilities in social space: the communist revolution "very effectively extended the power of the state over society and constructed a modern communications network that allowed the state to reach virtually the entire population."[37] This, in turn, created fertile ground for the rapid spread of the new communist outlook, which implied the replacement of religious faith by hope for the construction of the ideal social order. Socialist modernization and rationalization, like its Western counterpart, "engendered a new type of cognition, which, under the influence of media, became a social phenomenon eliminating pre-logical, and thus, religious phenomenon".[38] The increased number of irreligious people occurring in socialist societies during the social changes made it possible to speak about "allegedly similar patterns of social change resulting in rising secularism."[39]

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[34] Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 505.
[35] Suny, *Soviet Experiment*, p. 505.
[36] George Schöpflin, *Nationalism and Ethnicity in Europe, East and West* in: *Nationalism and Nationalities in the New Europe,* ed. Ch. Kupchan (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 54.
[37] Schöpflin, *Nationalism and Ethnicity*, p. 55.
[38] Karel Dobbelaere, *Towards an Integrated Perspective of the Processes Related to the Descriptive Concept of Secularisation* in: "Sociology of Religion" 60 (3), 1999, p. 245.
[39] Siniša Zrinščak, *Generations and Atheism: Patterns of Response to Communist Rule among Different Generations and Countries* in: "Social Compass" 51 (2), 2004, p. 224.

Obviously, there were different processes behind the decrease in the social importance of religion in Western societies and for the Soviet people. Trying to elaborate a more systematic understanding of secularization and its manifestation, K. Dobbelaere differentiated between levels of analysis of the secularization process: the macro or societal level, the meso or subsystem level, and the micro or individual level.[40] Olivier Tschannen proposed considering secularization as a general paradigm which can be studied via different "exemplars." According to him, three exemplars are central to the secularization paradigm: differentiation, rationalization and this-worldliness. Each of these "exemplars" can be applied to the analysis of the atheization of socialist societies initiated by the Bolshevik government in Soviet society. The process of the formation of a largely atheistic society, which came into being by the end of communist rule, can be similarly analysed in different dimensions. In order to understand the similarities and differences between Western secularization and Soviet atheization, it can be helpful to analyse the change in the functional relations and compare both processes and their consequences.

The change of the role and of the status of the Church in the West's societal system occurred as a result of the autonomization of societal subsystems, which at a certain stage of their modernization and democratic evolution arrived at the point where they found it logical to claim autonomy and reject religiously prescribed rules of functioning. This resulted in the emancipation of education from ecclesiastical authority, the separation of Church and state, the rejection of Church prescriptions about birth control and abortion, the decline of religious content in literature and arts, and the development of science as an autonomous secular perspective.[41] In Soviet society, the process of counter-religious emancipation was launched as a result of a revolutionary change in the whole societal paradigm, which appeared to be not only free of religiously prescribed rules, but aggressively hostile towards religion. The origins of this antagonism could be found in the Marxist theory which saw religion as an "opiate of the people" and in the specifics of its application in the practice of social change in Russian society. The latter was the idea of an alternative religion based on building an ideal society in the real world (Nikolas Berdyaev). These ideological and political transformations resulted in the complete reformation of society, which led to the emancipation of the human mind from the power of transcendence but,

[40] K. Dobbelaere, *Towards an Integrated Perspective*, p. 230.
[41] K. Dobbelaere, *Towards an Integrated Perspective*, p. 231.

instead, replaced the former religious authority by faith in an ideal society. From this perspective, the idea of a specifically religious concept of society as the environment of the religious system formulated by Luhmann paradoxically preserved certain essential patterns.

At the same time, the logic of social transformation under communist (especially Soviet) rule led to totally different consequences from those popularly associated with the Western model of modernization. Instead of internal social differentiation, they resulted in the homogenization of social subsystems. In this totalitarian regime, there was no place for the model of free speech that is pivotal for the West. It was replaced by the state's total control of all spheres of social life. Post-communist societies, due to communism, inherited a lack of separation (or incomplete separation) of the economic and political spheres. Under these conditions, a new ruling class emerged. Its position was founded on an archaic (from the Western point of view) system of relationships between society and state power and its agents which can be described as a tension between client and patron. As a result, instead of effective pluralism, free market economy and civil society, the patterns of modern neopatrimonialism were developed.[42]

While in the Western social system secularization resulted from processes of functional differentiation and the autonomization of societal subsystems, the socialist society subsystems were "freed" of the religious authority only to become subordinate to a new type of highest authority (the Communist Party) ruled by an alternative system of values (declared to be social equality, brotherhood and freedom from class exploitation) and inspired by the idea of the construction of the "ideal" social order. Instead of autonomization, which characterized the functioning of social subsystems in secularized Western societies, the atheization of the Soviet people was accompanied by the introduction of the alternative system of belief in the ideals declared to be unconditionally true for Soviet citizens. Paradoxically, it led to similar consequences concerning religion in secular and atheistic societies.

The overarching and transcendent religious system, both in a modern functionally differentiated society and in the communist ideologically controlled society, has been reduced to a subsystem alongside other subsystems, losing in this process its overarching claims over the other

[42] Олександр Фисун, „*К переосмыслению постсоветской политики: неопатримональная интерпретация* in: "Политическая концептология" 4, 2010, pp. 158–187.

subsystems. In both cases, one can observe the essential decline of religious authority on the societal level.[43]

A certain correlation between secularization and atheization can also be found on the organizational (meso) level and the individual (micro) level of transformation of religiosity in Western and Soviet societies. In the process of rationalization, social goals (be they political, scientific, medical, economic or other) are isolated, and the means of achieving these goals are continuously being improved.[44] Emancipation of the educational system, complete separation of the Church from the state, and new cultural and scientific trends placed religion as one among other spheres of social life, related to just one among many other aspects (i.e. the spiritual) in relation to (individual) human existence. As a result, the societal significance of religion greatly diminished. In the West, these processes were accompanied by the development of functional rationality. Rationalization was manifested in various subsystems. There was no place for traditional authority in the political system; the new economic organization developed large-scale industrial production and distribution (which left behind the religious ethos of the old economy[45]); state administration of modern states required correspondingly trained people. All these processes created the demand for education and training based on scientific techniques and rational thinking, which came to replace the previous religious-literary formation.

Soviet power took on a new external form (a new type of hero, a personalized despot, was replaced by the communist party, which was a depersonalized, collective hero). On the inside, it covered old, traditional patterns of authority (the need for charisma).[46]

Many aspects of the development of functional rationality which accompanied the decline of religious authority in the West were also characteristic of Soviet society, with some variations. The rationalization of the Soviet people's life originated according to a different logic of social processes, with Bolshevik ideas about new social and political order being the major driving force behind the changes. The ultimate goal of the

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[43] Mark Chaves, *Secularization as declining religious authority* "Social Forces" 72, 1994, p. 754.

[44] B. Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, p. 42.

[45] On this see: Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1920), pp. 163–206. Rationalization can be defined as the act of improving the means and making procedures more efficient, simple, logical and functional in order to reach given goals. Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 42.

[46] K. Jowitt, *New World Disorder*, p. 125.

revolution was to establish an ideal, rationally constructed from the perspective of their social order. This required transforming czarist Russia with a backward agrarian economy and traditional societal order into the modern industrial state that educated the population. The socialist system has often been characterized as an extreme example of the realization of social rationality. The ultimate goal of socialism was the "end of history, in which perfect social harmony would permanently be established. Social harmony was to be achieved by the abolition of exploitation, the transcendence of alienation, and above all, the transformation of society from the 'kingdom of necessity' to the kingdom of freedom." According to socialists, this would be achieved by rationalizing production[47] and thus advancing material production beyond the limits obtainable under capitalism, and socialism would in this way usher mankind into a post-scarcity world.[48]

In a socialist system a new human spirit was imagined as fully isolated from any transcendent substance and was constructed without any reference to divine authority, and was thus constrained to the mundane order. Having formulated this utterly rational programme of constructing a new social order, the Soviet government became interested in cleansing the ideological climate on the "construction site" into which the entire Soviet state was transformed: atheization on the institutional (meso) level. In a capitalist society, the secularization process on the meso level has led to the creation of a religious market, where previously dominating powerful religious denominations, which often possessed exclusive legitimacy on a given territory in the past, faced the need to compete for the souls of the people or make arrangements not to proselytize different views. Religious pluralism and competition, as Berger writes, relativizes the religious message, it is "de-objectivated," and, more generally, "pluralistic situation . . . *ipso facto* it plunges religion into a crisis of credibility."[49]

Relativization of the religious message was reinforced further by liberalizing the religious landscape and developing a religious market in Western societies. Soviet society, instead of a religious pluralism, saw the construction of a new institutional environment for Church activity, which was unprecedentedly hostile towards the Church, viewing religion as an

[47] Socialist writings include strong critiques of capitalism on the grounds that its production is "irrational."
[48] Andrzej Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom: The Rise and Fall of the Communist Utopia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995).
[49] P. L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, pp. 150–151.

ideological enemy of a new order and its humanistic goals. While in the West institutional secularization caused religions to compete with each other, resulting in the relativization of their doctrines, religion in the Soviet Union faced rivalization between communist ideology and the atheistic outlook which was a part of it.

A pivotal question was not so much the situation of rivalry, but the conditions under which this rivalry occurred. In this context, the problem of the lack of freedom (and the equal chances of "competitors") appears once again. We can indeed speak of two models of the secularized state: the Western and the Soviet. In the first model, the state remained indifferent towards the question of the existence of the transcendent. In the case of the Soviet model, it was based on the indisputable presupposition that no supernatural order existed.

Secularization in the Western meaning devalued the "external dimension" of religion (as a "religio"), but did not directly touch the sphere of what T. Halík called "fides." Thus, secularization under the rules of the totalitarian regime founded on the Marxist-Leninist ideology was focused directly on "fides."

Paradoxically, in the history of Russian Orthodoxy, the Bolshevik government came to power at the very moment when the Church was about to change. Indeed, during the period between 1905 and 1917, when the state autocracy's grip on the Russian Empire weakened, the Russian Orthodox Church tried to reassert a symphonic model of relations with the state. In 1917, at the Pomestnyi sobor, the Russian Orthodox Church made an attempt to restore the Church's sovereignty that it lost after the reforms of Peter the Great. However, as N. Petro writes, "when the Church was poised to reassert its moral leadership in society, the country's political leaders took Peter's idea to extremes no one would have dreamed possible."[50] The beginning of the twentieth century was characterized by a general revival of "what the Russians call spiritual culture. . . . This was a popular, if not a mass, phenomenon, reclaiming the independent authority of the Church, releasing it from its bondage to the state, supported by extraordinary new artistic and intellectual creativity."[51]

This development was stopped by Soviet authorities, so the history of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union can be studied as a story of survival in an extremely hostile environment. "The USSR was the first

[50] Nicolai N. Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy: An Interpretation of Political Culture* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 70.

[51] James H. Billington, *Orthodoxy and Democracy* in: "Journal of Church and State" 49 (1), 2007, p. 22.

political system in human history whose very legitimacy was based on the destruction of all religion, which meant primarily the Russian Orthodox Church itself."[52] For the new ruling regime, the Church was not only part of an old order, but one of the most powerful symbols of the Russian Empire's ideology, formulated in 1832 by S. Uvarov as "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality" (Самодержавие Православие Народность). A struggle with this symbol and its appearances in the form of Churches, parishes and religious communities was viewed as logical and natural. A tremendous reduction of places of worship in the Soviet state accompanied by aggressive atheization in the education system and press constituted an essential element of atheization on an institutional level. From this perspective, religion was considered to be an element of the old order which was destroyed along with its other attributes, structures and institutions. Tomka argues that secularist manifestations in socialist societies could be characterized as a social anomie which resulted from the quick and violent destruction of the old social system.[53]

Desecularization constituted a common characteristic feature of post-communist countries.[54] Berger described desecularization as counter-secularization and offered an innovative view on the vitality of religion vis-à-vis global modernity.[55] The variety of modes in which de-secularization has been occurring around the world has created a demand for distinguishing concepts which would be able to reflect different models of changing religiosity. Western Europe provides an example of a wide array of manifestations of religions' vitality, resilience and mutations in secularized settings. Among the forms of such a survival and adaptation of religious faith to secular conditions is the phenomenon of "believing without belonging" and "vicarious religion" described by Grace Davie.[56]

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[52] J. Billington, *Orthodoxy and Democracy*, p. 23.

[53] Miklos Tomka, *Secularisation or Anomy? Interpreting Religious Change in Communist Societies* in: "Social Compass" 38 (1), 1991, p. 67–79.

[54] Peter L. Berger, *Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview* in *Desecularization of the World. Resurgent Religion and World Politics* ed. Peter Berger (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1999); S. White, I. McAllister, O. Kryshtanovskaya, *Religion and politics in Postcommunist Russia* in: "Religion, State and Society" 22 (1), 1994, pp. 73–88; Vyacheslav Karpov, *The Social Dynamics of Russia's Desecularisation: a Comparative and Theoretical Perspective* in: "Religion, State and Society" 41 (3), 2013, pp. 254–283; Irena Borowik, (ed.) *Religion, Churches and Religiosity in Post-Communist Europe* (Kraków: Nomos, 2006).

[55] Berger, *Desecularization of the World*, p. 7.

[56] Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe. A Memory Mutates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

The idea of religion as being transformed into a public agency and acquiring new resilient functions is reflected in the notion of "public religion."[57] The concept of post-secular society was called upon to reflect the phenomenon of the paradoxical public activity of religious communities and the public significance of religious affairs in the life of societies that are largely secularized.

There is, however, an essential difference between the genesis and rules under which a religious resurgence has developed in Western society and the conditions and consequences of the so-called desecularization process in the post-communist states. In the Western context, the re-emergence of religion in the public arena has been viewed as a new tendency in continuing the evolutionary process of globalization and modernization. Finke and Stark even suggested the existence of a secularization-revival cycle as an engine of growth within specific churches and sects.[58]

The beginning of religious resurgence in post-communist states was motivated by a different logic: it was enabled by the weakening of ideological pressure in the late Soviet period and aggravated by the ultimate failure of communist ideology and the fall of the totalitarian system. The revival of religiosity became a response to the anti-religious policy conducted by communist powers. The return of religion into public life after decades of Christian churches being pushed to the margins of social life was driven by the same force of revival as previously suppressed forms of collective identification that brought about the wave of revival of nations. This reactive (responsive) character of religious resurgence in Eastern Europe has prompted some authors to speak about the specific post-communist process of anti-secularization, underlining the political reasoning behind the change in the status of religion.[59] In addition to the return to a set of values and beliefs banned under communist rule, there were additional functions which religion was able to fulfil under the conditions of the total destruction of the old socio-political system. In most Eastern European countries, as Borowik writes, the importance of religion derived from its ability to offer a tool for reconstructing political or geopolitical identity in a post-communist era when the older twentieth-century political identities rooted in the October Revolution became no

[57] José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
[58] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776–2005* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).
[59] Zrinščak, *Generations and Atheism*, p. 225.

longer viable.[60] Religious faith in this context can be analysed through its "cultural defence" function: as a resource to re-create a group identity when other sources of collective identity are threatened.[61]

The studies of Orthodox revival in Russia, Ukraine, Serbia and Belarus presented in this book aspire to explore how this additional function of religion has been reflected in the process of desecularization. What appears particularly challenging in this research is to scrutinize the overlapping logic of post-communist desecularization with the manifestations and of the specific context of Orthodox "axial civilization."

The proposed conceptual framework of desecularization implies an antecedence of secularization in communist societies. Indeed, religion was generally deprived of its previous influence on the social (and political) life in communist lands, especially those that are the subject of our research. But it was a result of the different processes rather than those described in Berger's concept of secularization. There, secularization was understood as a process of liberation of the subjective perception of the reality of religious axioms and was considered to be a natural consequence of social modernization and industrialization that resulted in a pluralism of worldviews.[62] However, in the countries of state socialism, there was no place for any kind of pluralism.

In this context, a theoretical framework of the analysis of post-communist societies based on the concept of "desecularization" understood as "counter-secularization" suggests that we would witness the process of reconstructing the connection between "transcendental visions" defined by religion and social reality. In many cases, recent institutional growth of Christian churches and their impact on "religious phraseology" in official public discourse, as the cases of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Serbia discussed in this book confirm, is nothing but the result of post-communist leaders seeking "spiritual means to achieve the persistently materialistic goals of a sensate culture."[63] This means that these are the symptoms of processes opposite to those we should expect as a consequence of "counter-secularization." Lack of terminological precision would lead to serious *misunderstandings* and would effectively impede a correct

[60] Irena Borowik, *Orthodoxy Confronting the Collapse of Communism in Post-Soviet Countries* in: "Social Compass" 53 (2), 2006, p. 272.
[61] Roy Wallis and Steve Bruce, *Secularization: The Orthodox Model* in: *The Sociology of Religion* ed. S. Bruce (Aldershot: Elgar, 1995), p. 702.
[62] P. L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy. Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), p. 108.
[63] V. Karpov, *The Social Dynamics of Russia's Desecularisation*, p. 256.

interpretation of the genesis, nature and social consequences of religious resurgence in post-communist societies.

According to Bogomilova, such a close connection and subordination of traditional religions and Churches with or to some contemporary social-political project is in itself a consequence of secularization (being at the same time one of the dimensions of globalization).[64] Such Church involvement in the process of reforming the ideological foundation of societal cohesion could be observed in all post-communist states. After the fall of the totalitarian system in Eastern Europe, there was an urgent demand for a new moral basis which would shape collective self-consciousness and manage social disorientation. Religious faith was one of the ideological systems which had not been tainted by association with socialism and, at the same time, represented historical continuity and cultural tradition. In some countries, like Poland, the Catholic Church was involved in both the anti-communist underground and the country's national revival after the change in the regime. This resulted in the formation of a specific type of "moral majority" (in Poland, Slovenia and Croatia) which perceives Christian values as the ideological "cement" holding the nation together.[65] In this way, in different countries with different religious traditions, religion came to be perceived as closely correlated with projects for nation or/and state-building.

Political Religion

Soviet authorities created a legislative basis for religious activity that only formally allowed for the existence of religious communities, but this made it highly problematic for the Church to fulfil its ecclesiastical mission. The Church was forced to adapt to the rules of the game formulated by the superpower. The Decree of 1918 stated, that "No churches or religious communities have a right to own property. They have no rights of a *legal entity*."[66]

Restrictions on religious practices were accompanied by the establishment of an intensive project of re-education of socialist citizenry.

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[64] Nonka Bogomilova, *Reflections on the contemporary religious 'revival'* in: "Theme – Journal for Social Research", 4, 2003, p. 514.

[65] Renata Salecl, *National Identity and Socialist Moral Majority* in *Becoming National*, ed. G. Eley and R. Suny (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 418.

[66] *Декрет о свободе совести, церковных и религиозних обществах*, in: *Декреты Советской власти.* Vol 1, (Москва: Гос. изд-во полит.литературы, 1957), pp. 373–374, http://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/DEKRET/religion.htm.

"Scientific atheism" was vigorously taught in schools, promoted in all public areas of life, and preached by state-supported atheist proselytes.[67] Scientific atheism promoted by the Soviet ideological machine "combined a belief in social utopianism with an ethical mandate to proselytize the message of atheism. In sum, scientific atheism was not a science or even a social science but a Marxist-inspired faith in the moral superiority of belief in historical materialism."[68] Studies of the communist educational system showed that all subjects in the school curriculum – physics, biology, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, history, geography and literature – served as starting points for instructing pupils on the evils or falsity of religion.[69] Over the decades of Soviet history, atheist ideology had been a strong competitor of religion backed by the powerful support provided by the Communist Party.

At the same time, this hostility towards churches and religion was accompanied by the introduction of an alternative "belief" system. Nikolas Berdyaev saw socialism and theocracy as essentially synonymous:

> Socialist society and the state due to its type is confessional, sacred and not secular, laic. There is a dominant religion in a socialist state, and those belonging to this dominant religion should have preferential rights. This state is not uninterested in the faith, not indifferent, as in a liberal-democratic state, but it declares its truth and induces it. Those who do not recognize the socialist faith should be placed in a position similar to the one in which Jews found themselves in the old theocratic Christian societies. . . . Socialism denies freedom of conscience, just as medieval Catholic theocracy did.[70]

This ideological resemblance of socialist ideology to a closed religious system of beliefs was enforced by an elaborate system of public ritual, which flourished in the former Soviet Union from its foundation in 1917 and collapsed in 1991, making "socialism a political religion in an atheist

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[67] Kimmo Kaariainen, *Discussion on Scientific Atheism as a Soviet Science*. (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1989); David E. Powell, *Antireligious Propaganda in the Soviet Union: A Study of Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1975).

[68] Paul Froese, *After Atheism: An Analysis of Religious Monopolies in the Post-Communist World* in: "Sociology of Religion" 65 (1), 2004, 57–75, p. 66.

[69] Bohdan Bociurkiw and John Strong, *Religion in the Soviet Union* (London: Sage Publications, 1975), p.153.

[70] Nicolas Berdyaev, *Democracy, Socialism and Theocracy* in: *The End of Our Time* (1924) translated by D. Attwater (London: Sheed and Ward, 1933), pp. 187–188.

society."[71] Indeed, the Soviet state invested profoundly in its ritual system as a conscious political policy.[72] It was invented in order to provide replacements for religious rituals; hence the ceremonial list of the Soviet state included calendar festivals, rites of passage, mass parades, a leadership cult, places of pilgrimage etc. At the same time, Christel Lane argues that the ritual system of the former Soviet Union should be seen not as a civil religion, but as a political religion.[73] While civil religion represents the transcendent categorical truths on which people and interest groups can draw to support existing political institutions, they can also protest against them, evoking religious legitimation for their protest. Political religion, as in case of the USSR, "was consciously planned and nationally administered by the regime as a system of symbols and rituals sacralising Soviet society and the Soviet state. It fused political ideology and religion into an indissoluble entity."[74]

The idea of employing the concept of a "political religion" for the analysis of totalitarian regimes, indeed, enables us to understand the patterns of the relationship between ideological doctrine and the society it is designed for. The declared values and corresponding "perception" of these values are "sacred" in terms of the unquestioned status of unconditional truth.

This idea was already widely discussed by scholars in the 1930s, who clearly saw religious aspects in the way totalitarian ideologies were developed and societies indoctrinated. According to Voegelin, religiosity had been an important aspect of modern political systems, especially in modern nation-states. As Opitz put it, "according to Voegelin's thesis, crucial needs of large sections of the population were essentially *religious*. The thesis that these needs - needs that were satisfied by the ideologies -

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[71] Alan Aldridge, *Religion in the Contemporary World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), p. 153.

[72] Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society – the Soviet Case* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Christopher A. P. Binns, *The changing face of power: revolution and accommodation in the development of the Soviet ceremonial system* in: "Man: Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute" 14, 1979, pp. 585–606 and 15, 1980, pp. 170–87.

[73] See on parallels and difference between political religion in the former Soviet Union and Nazi Germany: C. Lane, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society – the Soviet Case* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 273–9.

[74] Aldridge, *Religion in the Contemporary World*, p. 157.

lay at the basis of the rise of the ideological mass movement, remain valid today."[75]

According to French thinker Aron, in comparing Communist rule to the tsarism that preceded it, the revolutionary ideology, as a secular religion, played the same role that Russian Orthodox religion played during tsarism. Sacralisation of power in the communist system serves the establishment of a system of rule: "the revolutionary ideology, the secular religion, begins to perform the same role to the advantage of the General Secretary of the Party that Orthodox religion played to the advantage of the tsars. Caesaropapism arises anew, just as the interpreter of history becomes the Emperor-Pope".[76] Secular religion, according to Aron, fulfils several essential functions in people's lives: it replaces faith with the individual human being; the salvation of humanity occurs in this world in the distant future and takes the form of a social transformation and new social order.

Doctrinal Specifics and Historical Legacy of Orthodoxy: *Sobornost'* and *Symphony*

Several specific concepts developed in Orthodoxy are traditionally viewed as particularly important in effecting the political culture of Orthodox societies: *sobornost'* and *symphony*.

The idea of *sobornost'* was developed by Slavophile thinkers Alexei Khomyakov and Ivan Kireevsky. It was inspired partly by the Russian word for "Catholic" in the Nicene Creed and partly by the Orthodox Church's conciliar basis of authority. According to this idea, all human beings are interconnected and every person deserves autonomy while, at the same time, having a duty to serve all others. *Sobornost,* in fact, at its best would be an Orthodox parallel to subsidiarity, in which each level of society, all the way down to the individual, has a role to play for the common good and each has a duty to assist others in achieving this goal.[77]

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[75] Peter Joachim Opitz, *Afterword* in: E. Voegelin, *Die Politischen Religionen* (1938) (Munich, 1993), p. 71.

[76] Joachim Stark and Raymond Aron, *Uber Deutschland und den Nationalsozialismum* (Köln: Opladen, 1993), 275–93, p. 291. Quoted by Hans Otto Seitschek, *The Interpretation of totalitarianism as religion* in: *Totalitarianism and Political Religions*, Vol. III *Concepts for the comparison of dictatorship: theory and history of interpretation* ed. Hans Maier (London and New York: Routledge, 2003).

[77] *Fr. Michael Butler: Orthodoxy, Church and State*.

Sobornost as "unity in multiplicity," according to Khomyakov, is ensured by the deeply internalized Orthodox tradition, in which over-individual and over-rational awareness of the community finds its expression.[78] This primacy of the collective over the individual principle also explains why religious freedom has been understood within the Russian Orthodox Church in terms of collective rather than individual rights; that is, the right of "traditional" communities to exist side by side rather than for individuals to have the ability to change faiths.[79] This communitarian strain in Orthodox doctrine caused the evolution of a noticeable gap between Orthodox cultures and the West when it comes to democratic values, respect for human rights and the smooth functioning of liberal economic institutions.[80] At the same time, *sobornost',* as Billington noted, can also be interpreted as a bottom-up development of communities, the "democracy of ordinary life" which was what de Tocqueville found essential when building democracy on a continental scale in America.[81]

The idea of *sobornost'* is closely connected with the Orthodox concern for sacramental and collective salvation. This connection derives from the "mystical vision of history" characteristic of Orthodoxy. Unlike Catholicism and Protestantism, which are based on the idea of transcendence, Orthodoxy presumes the divine presence in the human world in accord with the theory of "immanence." Transcendent in this context means the extra-social, the extra-natural, the supernatural and implies a radical distinction between "the world" down below and the heavenly world above. The strict division between the divine and the profane (with the political viewed as an element of the latter) makes Western Christianity to some extent immune to politicization. "Immanent" means that *which resides* within reality, that which does not rely upon something external to itself for its existence.

In Western tradition, there is a long road leading to God as a transcendent reality, and it is in this way that Western rationalism and its orientation on future goals has been formed. At the same time, the mystical Deity of Eastern Christians is present "here and now" – in the rite, in feelings, in the community, which makes the mundane affairs of

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http://blog.acton.org/archives/56363–fr-michael-butler-orthodoxy-church-and-state.html.

[78] Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

[79] Nikolas Gvosdev, *Emperors and Elections: Reconciling the Orthodox Tradition With Modern Politics* (Huntington, NY: Nova Press, 2000), p. 202.

[80] Ibid., p. 201.

[81] James H. Billington, *Orthodoxy and Democracy* in: "Journal of Church and State" 49 (1), 2007, p. 24.