BABES-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK

SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES IN

POST-SOCIALIST ROMANIA

PhD THESIS SUMMARY

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ABSTRACT. The thesis of my research project is that in spite of the disappearance of the communism regime and its secular policy of implementing an atheistic worldview, the Romanian post-socialism brought forth not a religious revival, as rational choice theory of religion has claimed , but a new logic of secularization. This logic of secularization manifests itself especially among the young generations that were socialized within the new post-socialist life-world and takes the shape of three very distinct processes: de-Christianization of the religious world-view, de-institutionalization of religious experience and most of all de-moralization of the practical sphere of life. During the post-socialist period the Church although it strengthened its political power it lost control over the minds and souls of the young Romanian generations. The main hypothesis of my research is that these three features of secularization are the by-product of a modernization and Europeanization process that affect mostly the people that were socialized in the new post-socialist world. This is due to the fact that the new post-socialist period and the integration in the European Union lead to a pluralization of life-worlds and so to the erosion of the traditional religious mentalities. In the context of the emergence of a new secular culture that informs mostly the subjectivities and practices of the self of the young generations, religious actors try to cope with this by articulating different strategies of counter-secularization

KEY WORDS: social epistemologies of religion and secularization, rational choice theory, social phenomenology, post-socialism, religious change, atheism, logics of secularization, counter-secularization, secular culture, religious education, religious conversions.

CONTENT

SUMMARY OF PHD THESIS

The thesis of my research project is that in spite of the disappearance of the communism regime and its secular policy of implementing an atheistic worldview, the Romanian post-socialism brought forth not a religious revival, as rational choice theory of religion has claimed, but a new logic of secularization. This logic of secularization manifests itself especially among the young generations that were socialized within the new post-socialist life-world and takes the shape of three very distinct processes: de-Christianization of the religious world-view, de-institutionalization of religious experience and most of all de-moralization of the practical sphere of life. During the post-socialist period the Church although it strengthened its political power it lost control over the lives of the young Romanian generations.

The main hypothesis of my research is that these three features of secularization are the by-product of a modernization and Europeanization process that affect mostly the people that were socialized in the new post-socialist world. This is due to the fact that the new post-socialist period and the integration in the European Union lead to a pluralization of life-worlds and so to the erosion of the traditional religious mentalities.

In many ways this process of pluralization of life-worlds, which both in Western and Easter Europe became synonymous with the process of modernization, was re-experienced and re-enacted with the fall of communism in the socialist states. The communist ideologies acted as an agent of conserving the social world, penetrating and controlling completely the public space. The transition which Eastern Europe is undergoing is only secondary an economic transition from a state-planed economy to an free market economy; primary this transition is one that goes from an unique social-world with an ever increasing level of plausibility structure and a total monopolization of what social reality is to a pluralization of social worlds and the emergence of multiple competing narratives of reality.

Romania, an Orthodox country that has recently joint the E.U. (2007), has experienced a strong restructuring of their religious mentalities in the past twenty years. After the fall of communism, religion was once again an important factor of shaping the

public sphere of life (Müller, 2004; Tomka, 2004;). Some researchers, defending the supply-side theory of religion (Stark, Iannacone, Finke), argued that after the fall of the communist regimes the post-socialist countries have shown an increasing interest toward religion, which reveals a so called religious revival pattern that proves the secularization theory wrong (Froese 2001, 2003).

This argument is further employed to show that Western Europe is an exceptional case and that the secularization of the Western countries is not linked to a modernization process but to a specific way of organizing the religious market (Finke 1992; Iannacone 1992, 1998; Stark 1999): namely the monopolization of the market by a dominant religion (Catholicism or Protestantism).

They argue that in those societies where there are more religions competing on the local religious market (religious pluralization) it leads to the positive stimulation of the consumption of religiosity (as is the case of U.S.A). In this theoretical framework, Eastern Europe counts as a religious plural market only because atheism is re-interpreted as a religious-ideology (Froese 2004: 40-48). Post-socialist Romanian Orthodoxy by challenging this (secular) world-view is able to generate a competing religious market and so to bring fourth a "religious revival".

The "supply-side" theories tend to look at the Eastern-Europe as a conglomerate of social spaces where religious world-views are growingly marketed and where religion dominates the public life; this shows in their opinion that secularization has nothing to do with a modernization process, but with the way the "religious market" is organized. In my PhD Thesis I strongly criticize the "supply-side" perspective and the rational choice theory of religion by pointing out that pluralization has the opposite effect.

In the past two decades the secularization theory has been strongly criticized and denounced by sociological and anthropological research alike. Under the heading of multiple-modernities these studies try to show that secularization is not the byproduct of a modernization process {understood as social *differentiation*, *rationalization* and *pluralization of world-views}*, but is rather of specific cultural factors that are peculiar to Western European countries. This means that Euro-secularism cannot be extrapolated to other social and cultural settings. Peter Berger for example, a sociologist that in the 70 and 80 has put forward one of the most comprehensive *phenomenological theories of*

secularization has retracted in recent years most of his thesis and regards now secularism as weak concept that can be traced back to specific features of Western Europe (such as the consolidation of a secular intelligentsia since the Enlightenment period).

Most of the present-day criticism of secularization theory draws on empirical data that comes from two different socio-cultural areas. The first one is North America where these studies point out that one of the most post-modernized countries of the world is at the same time a very religious society. This is so not because of the neo-conservative religious right that has controlled the political life in the past decade, but because of the high church attendance rates, diversification of new religious movements and most of all the explosion of the Evangelical communities. This shows in their opinion that modernity does not have to bring forth secularism as has happened in Western Europe.

The second socio-cultural area on which these criticisms rely is *Eastern Europe*. Here these studies point out that after several decades of state organized secularism, ideological atheism and marginalization of religious life, Eastern Europe is undergoing now a strong religious revival. There is an increasing alliance between religion and politics and massive religious attendance across Eastern Europe. This shows in their opinion that there is an alternative modernization route that does not have to follow the secular path dependency of Western Europe. In these studies there are always two countries that are mentioned as being strongly religious: Catholic Poland and Orthodox Romania.

I try to test this theories looking at the different post-socialist countries that have been undergoing in the past two decades a strong social and cultural pluralization process. As in all other Eastern European countries Romania has a "religious market" that is dominated by a single religion; in the case of Romania - Eastern Christianity. The RCTR tries to explain the religious revival by pointing out that in Eastern Europe the competition has been not among different religious suppliers, but between world-views. Atheism is seen as a sort of secular religion that is challenged during the post-socialist period by different religious word-views. This leads to a diversification of religious market and later to religious revival.

In my research I try to show why this approach is wrong and why I think we can see the development of clear patterns of secularization in Romania. I argue that the so called religious revival thesis is not a viable explanation.

I try to show that this line of reasoning is not sociological accurate and that this rooted a) in the way atheism is conceptualized as a religious world-view; this leads to the failure to see that this secular ideologies were top-to-bottom state organized attempts to secularized the society that had only a limited impact on the religious mentalities; and b) in the way religiosity is conceptualized; this leads to the failure to see the big structural changes that are taking place at the level of the new Europeanized young generations and the increasingly secularization trend that Romania is experiencing.

The sociological and anthropological quest to explore the new capitalistic culture of Romania has to approach the issue of the impact of the emergent new cultural identities on Orthodox religion and religious representations. My research proposal takes a sociological and anthropological look at the cosmologies of capitalism in Romania and its impact on the traditional religious mentalities.

My argument is that atheism in spite of its political secularism failed in achieving a wide secularization of the society, but post-socialist pluralism managed to do just that**.** All the statistical data gathered by the sociologists and different researches pointed out that the atheization was mostly unsuccessful in those social strata and in those regions that were less educated, less urbanized, had less party-members, were not drawn in the industrialization process and those that were socialized outside the communist education system.

This shows that atheization was a result of an instrumental ideologization and managed to dislocate religious beliefs only where the bureaucratic system developed (Martin 1978: 221). This shows the nature of the secularization process that took place during the communist period: forced instrumental control of the worldview that was dictated from top to bottom through the existing official networks. This repression managed to control religiosity in the public sphere and push it in the private sphere of life. Religion never actually disappeared in Romania from an individual level in spite of a societal secularization (Dobbelaere, 2002) that took place in the communist period.

It was only natural that after the fall of communism, the religiosity that was alive at the private level should have been made manifest at the public level. Adding to these the decades of long repression, the new discovered religious freedom led to a very normal religious euphoria and to the strengthening of the institutional force of the different religiosities. But underneath this religious euphoria strong structural forces were already at work and would eventually enhance the weakening of traditional religious mentalities: most of all the culture of pluralism and the economical growth.

In the context of the emergence of a new secular culture that informs mostly the subjectivities and practices of the self of the young generations, religious actors try to cope with this by articulating different strategies of counter-secularization. Church allegiances with political structures in order to attract subsidies; the implementation of religious education financed by the state, or the different social programs of neo-protestant movements are only a few of them.

I argue though that these counter-secularization strategies have only a limited impact on the practices of the self of young generations. The new emerging *cosmologies of capitalism* and the *institutionalization of social pluralism* are leading to the formation of what Charles Taylor calls an "*immanent framework*" (Taylor, 2007) and to new patterns of secularization. This is also the case of Romania, one of the most religious countries in Europe, but similar patterns can be found in Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, etc not to mention countries as Czech Republic, Estonia and former Eastern Germany that are undergoing a high degree of secularization.

CHAPTER 1. The emergence of religious markets in post-communist Eastern Europe: the rational theory of religion and the issue of secularization.

The Rational Choice Theory of Religion (RCTR) has been developed in the past two decades by Rodney Stark, William Bainbridge, Roger Finke, Laurence Iannaccone, etc. and is acclaimed by many sociologists as the new emerging paradigm in religious studies. Labeled as well as the economics of religion, this approach is increasingly

informing empirical research and is advocated by many sociologists as the main theoretical critique of the secularization theory.

The main aim of this chapter is to analyze the rational choice theory approach to religion in post-communist Eastern Europe and to review the way this research program has analyzed the religious transformations of this region. The central theoretical device of RCTR is that of the religious market with an emphasis on the impact that religious pluralization has on religious consumption.

In this chapter I focus on the theoretical foundations of rational choice theory of religion and the main epistemological axioms regarding social action on which these studies rely (1.1); than I outline how religion is analyzed in terms of rational actors that seek to maximize their utility and the impact this has on the production of various religious goods an services (1.2). The rational choice theory of religion has advocated a shift from a demand-side approach to religion to a supply side, emphasizing the impact the structure of the market has on religious consumption. According to RCTR, secularization is the outcome of the monopolization of the religious market, a process that is reversible when religious de-regulation occurs and when religious pluralization is institutionalized (1.3). The final section of this chapter is dedicated to how the rational choice model has been applied to the religious transformation in Eastern Europe after the disappearance of atheist world-view imposed by the communist regimes (1.4).

A novel approach that is brought in by this RCTR is the shift from a demand-side perspective of religion to a supply-side perspective. Religion is not anymore analyzed in terms of how subjective religious needs are structured by an increasing social rationalization of individual consciousness; now it is analyzed in terms of how religious agents are producing different religious goods and they way they are offered to religious consumers. It is not the demand that counts but the supply.

An important concept for RCTR is the concept of religious market and religious goods. A diversified religious market where there is a strong religious competition between the different religious suppliers will result in better quality of religious goods and so in a positive stimulation of religious consumption which increases religiosity.

This is how RCTR explains the difference between US and Western Europe. In the US we have an institutionalized religious pluralism that stimulates the production of

religious goods, in Europe we have monopolized religious markets, where one religion it is supported by the State. Monopolization leads to no competition whatsoever, to low quality of religious goods and services and eventuality to decrease of religiosity. Secularization is a temporary situation that has to do with the way religious markets are regulated and not to an erosion of religious needs.

CHAPTER 2. Religion, rationality and the pluralization of value spheres: a Weberian critique of the rational choice theory of secularization

In this chapter I criticize the RCT model of researching religion by exploring an alternative social epistemology of religion. I do this by analyzing Weber's notion of purposive rationality and the manner he links it with that of religious action. In spite of the fact that he proceeds from what rational choice theorists label as methodological individualism, Weber's approach to this issue is far more complex. His view of the institutionalization of purposive rationality (societal rationalization) and how this relates to the religious field constitute a perspective on the rationality of action radically different from that provided by RCTR.

According to Weber, societal rationalization that created the purposive-rational driven modern institutions is the outcome of specific historical and cultural factors that emerged in the Western world. Far from being a universal process, purposive rational action has a limited predictive value and is culturally bound to a specific area. Its indiscriminate application to all types of social action represents a blunt ethnocentrism.

Paradoxically, the institutionalization of purposive rationality has religious origins and is the end-product of a century-long disenchantment process. Weber links this issue with the pluralization of the value spheres and the implicit decline of religion. According to Weber, pluralization (both social and religious) leads to secularization and not to religious revitalization, as RCTR claims.

Weber's approach to the issues of religion and secularization allows us to differentiate between various values spheres of action and understand the various meanings ascribed to rationalization. The religious sphere functions according to its

specific logic and rationality that has to be distinguished from the instrumental rational action of the economical and political sphere. The religious experience cannot be reduced to purposive rationality as RCTR claims. This theme was later on developed by social phenomenology which emphasized the uniqueness of the religious finite province of meaning. Weber's own approach to the issue of religious rationalization provides useful resources for criticizing the reductionist and ethnocentric approach to religion advocated by rational choice theorists.

Most sociological analyses of the issue of secularization mention Weber's contribution to the sociology of religion as pivotal for the development of the theory of secularization. In spite of this, most of the studies quoting Weber limit their investigation to brief references to "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" while ignoring other important Weberian texts in which he developed his ideas on the issue of religious disenchantment of the world. By limiting the analysis to the "Ethic" they end up with a fragmented and vague exegesis of Weber's theory of secularization. Hence the frequent confusions and misunderstandings for which Weber has been unjustly criticized.

Partially, this confusion derives from the fact that, in spite of the extensive attention he devoted to the sociology of religion and to the social and cultural implications of religion, nowhere in his writing did Weber explicitly deal with the problem and the genesis of *non-religiosity*. The theme of disenchantment of the world and the social mechanisms that led to the development of secularization represents most of the times a secondary concern that is always linked with a major Weberian theme, that of *rationalization*. The problem of rationalization represents the red thread that is intertwined in the very texture of Weber's sociology. This is the reason why the analysis of the ways in which modernity leads to a crisis of the religious symbolic systems and to a radical marginalization of religious worldviews has to take into consideration the difficult route of analyzing the complex issue of rationalization. Weber approached this issue in most of his studies in order to establish the "sociology of rationality".

In this chapter I undertake a reconstruction of the main Weberian theses on the process of secularization starting with a systematic analysis of those texts that deal with the genesis of this process and its implication for modern societies. The genealogy of the "*disenchantment of the world*" has to be related with that of societal rationalization and,

from a methodological point of view, an analysis of Weber's perspective on secularization has to proceed from here. Max Weber's thesis is that the process of rationalization and intellectualization (which paradoxically is originally a religious process) makes way for a dislocation of mythical thinking and for the subsequent emergence of various competing value spheres. This competition will fully develop itself within the Western culture and will ultimately lead to secularization.

The concept of "disenchantment" designates an extensive process that enfolds over thousand of years and overlaps with a series of social and structural processes: demythologization and development of distinct value spheres; the institutionalization of these spheres of values and the conflict between religion and all the other cultural systems of action; and the spread and generalization of practical rationalism at a global scale (paradoxically through a religious ethic) that enthralled the human spirit and annihilated any kind of ultimate meaning within the Western capitalist culture.

Weber ambiguously applies the term "disenchantment" to all the moments of this vast process by approaching them as a single entity that has evolved throughout history and has eventually led to the decrease of religious social power to meaningfully integrate human existence.

In order to reconstruct Weber's concept of secularization considered as disenchantment of the world, I analytically approach the various meanings that this concept has in his work. In this chapter I analyze **a)** the problem of demythologization and the emergence of salvation religions that appeared as a result of formal rationalization unleashed by prophetic activity and which, through a process of sublimation (ethical mastering of everyday life and the elaboration of integrative theodicy), has lead to **b)** the differentiation of distinct spheres of values and their institutionalization in cultural systems of action subsequently setting in motion a deep conflict between the religious system and all other systems; and **c)** to an unbalanced societal rationalization that has transformed the capitalist culture through the institutionalization of purposive rationality of the Protestant ethic into an immense "steel cage".

CHAPTER 3. The social phenomenological approach to secularization: inter-subjective religious life-worlds and the erosion of traditional social forms of religion.

The attempt of reducing the phenomenological social epistemology in an overarching paradigm along rational choice lines has several limits. In spite the fact that both of them precede from the idea of a unified methodology of social science under the auspices of methodological individualism and of the need to understand the subjective grounding of action and its rationality (Srubar, 1993:35, Collins 1993) they represent two radical different approaches to social action. The phenomenological analysis of the of meaningful action that is genealogy in the inter-subjective constituted life-world (Srubar, 1993: 39) and the idea of various provinces of meaning that supply actors with socially determined projects of actions is very hard to be transposed in a rational choice epistemology without losing its main theoretical assumptions. This translation is always done in terms of reducing all aspects of social action to instrumental rational action (*Zweckrationalitat*) and transforming it into universal criteria of interpreting the social world (Srubar, 1993:39)

The strong divide between these two social epistemologies will become much clear when we focus on the issue of religion and secularization. In this chapter I explore the emergence of a specific social paradigm of analyzing the religious transformations triggered by the process of modernization and post-modernization: namely that of social phenomenology.

I approach this issue by first (3.1) distinguishing between sociological approaches to religion that are informed by a phenomenological theory of social action from classical phenomenological approaches to religion that have become popular in theological and religious studies. I will argue in this chapter that what is usual labeled as "phenomenology of religion" draws on a pre-Husserlian concept of phenomenology and are not sensitive to the social and cultural embeddedness of religion and most of all to the inter-subjective structure of the social life-worlds in which religious subjectivities and practices are articulated. Alfred's Schutz phenomenological studies (3.2) have provided a new paradigm for analyzing social action that had important consequences for the sociological study of religion (3.3) and secularization (3.4 and 3.5).

Within the phenomenological social epistemology the religious finite province of meaning has consistency, or in Schutz's language has "reality-bestowing" properties only in so far is able to generate a binding dependency of the every-day life world. The religious epoche generates a suspension of the natural attitude and positions the subject within a specific fundamental intentionality structure that organizes his life-world in a specific way. Working can in specific religious cultures cease being a pragmatic way of dealing with the natural world and becomes a religious act. The belonging of an act to a specific finite province of meaning has to do not with the ontological status of that object but with the categories of intentionality of the subject, as Schutz makes it clear.

Within the phenomenological social epistemology, secularization has to be related to the general disconnection of the religious finite province of meaning from ever-day life-world. It ceases to provide religious motives for action and religious interpretation of every-day life. Secularization does not mean the disappearance of the religious finite province of meaning but its incapacity to be an "independent variable" for all other spheres of life.

Berger's and Luckmann theories of religion and secularization draw on Schutz's social phenomenological theories. Both of them have emphasized how religion is a social constructed category and how the transformations induced by modernity generate deep socio-structural changes of the religious sphere.

CHAPTER 4. The construction of the religious space in post-socialist Romania

In the new post-socialist world, under the pressure of pluralization of life-worlds several tendencies towards secularization can be noticed: de-Christianization of religious beliefs, deinstitutionalization of religious experience, structural changes of the role of the Church and de-moralization of the practical sphere of life.

In my studies I have show that although most of the Romanian citizens think of themselves as being Christians they increasingly reject the Christian religious ideas in favor of more general and diffuse religious ideas. There is a growing segment of the

population that rejects traditional Christian doctrines such as the belief in hell, heaven, life-after-death but still state their belief in God, sin and the power of religion.

We have now in Romania a strange situation that is very peculiar and unusual to the dominant and institutionalized Christian religious self-understanding[1]: a great segment of Romanians consider themselves as being religious but do not accept the very Christian definition of what religion is; people belief in God and moral culpability understood in religious terms (sin), but do not believe in the Christian eschatology and in the main articles of faith, believe in religion as a source for spiritual comfort and strength but do not necessary think about Christianity of being this very religion. Post-socialist Romania is experiencing at the level of religious mentality a great disparity between general religious ideas and specific Christian ones: the first set of beliefs have an acceptance among more than 85 % of the population whereas the second set of religious beliefs only 56 % giving us almost a third of the population that finds itself in the situation described above.

We are drawn to the same conclusion also by looking at how people that state their believe in God, perceive the object of their faith: the traditional view of God, promoted by the popular theology and its refined expression through the dogma of each Christian confession is held by 37% of the population, the dominant view being that of a Spirit or Life Force which is held by 44 % of the population, while 14 % do not knowing what to think. This abstract and impersonal view is incompatible with the main institutionalized definitions of God and does not have a correlative in either of the religious traditions existing in present-day Romania. It can be traced back to the impact of the popularization of a scientific world-view and associated with those strata that are most exposed to this, namely the one having an urban residence and a high degree of education.

Both the growing number of those who tend to perceive their object of faith as an impersonal and abstract one and the wide degree of uncertainty that exists regarding an important Christian doctrine acts as a synthetic indicator of the Christian de-

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[1] The latest national censuses revealed that 99% of the Romanian population declared that belong to a Christian denomination (most of them belong to the Orthodox Church).

monopolization of the realm of religious idea and gives us an idea of the extent of the de-Christianization process through which Romania is undergoing.

We can measure the degree of secularization by analyzing the degree of legitimation of the involvement of the church in the spiritual, moral, familial and social sphere. The way the roles of the church are perceived in a society constitutes a genuine sign of societal secularization: the more the population legitimizes the involvement of the church in the different spheres of life, the lesser the differentiation between the religious and secular sphere there is and so the lesser societal secularized a society is.

Looking at the statistical data available, we are able to notice that the church looses its privileged position of housing the religious experience and that the process of de-institutionalization of religious experience leads to structural changes of the locus of the church within the society. This can be easily highlighted by looking at how the different age groups relate to different roles of the church. This way, we are able to see that the growing tendency from a generation to another is to limit the involvement of the church to strictly spiritual issues and to decline its competence regarding moral, familial and social matters. The legitimate roles that a church can play are shrinking within younger generations. There are significant differences at the inter-generational level in regards to the way the church is perceived that leads to a gradual erosion of the legitimating of church's involvement in the different spheres of life.

Table 1. The Legitimation the involvement of the church in various spheres of life

ROMANIA	18 - 29	30 - 49	50 - 70+
Church and spirituality	84.7 %	89.5 %	90.5 %
Church and morality	73.2 %	79. 3 %	85.8 %
Church and family	71.3 %	74.5 %	85.6 %
Church and society	38.6 %	45.9 %	65.4 %

Another specific aspect of the process of secularization that can be observed within post-socialism is the tendency to uncouple religion from its practical consequences (morality) that leads alongside of a de-institutionalization of religious experience to a big scale process of de-moralization.

The new soteoriologies of modernity will insist not only on the structural possibility of a private religiosity (as opposed to the traditional one that legislated the religious community as the only "true" medium of pursuing salvation) but on the abolishing of all norms of the religious community as a consubstantial part of the religious experience, operating this way one of the most important scission of post-modern religiosity: the one between the spiritual and the moral.

Although the monolithically vehemence in attitude expressed by all the Churches towards this social and moral values, a strong discrepancy between the Christian position and the public opinion can be noticed. A great segment of the population does not internalize these social norms. This high level of uncertainty can be interpreted as a synthetic indicator of a general social anomy, due mostly to the pluralism of social worlds and the emergence of different structures of plausibility, which makes hard the affirmation of an encompassing order, capable of structuring in a meaningful way the moral life-world. This process of de-moralization does not affect only un-religious people, but religious people as well. This is why we are able to talk not only about a "believing without belonging" mentality but about a "believing without practicing" mentality as well.

This shift in religiosity that we are able to identify among the young people leads generally to a generational/cultural gap and so to a religious socialization crises within the family. It is in this context that we have to understand the increasing pressure of the Church on State to finance a religious education in the national curricula: the lack of religious socialization within the family and the increasingly absence of the young generations from local churches makes way for a new religious policy that the traditional Churches have to enforce in order to deal with this new logic of secularization.

CHAPTER 5. Secularization of the practical sphere of life: the issue of de-moralization in Eastern and Western Europe

In the present chapter I integrate into the current debates on the secularization theory a dimension that was relatively ignored by recent approaches of this phenomenon,

namely the religious dimension of morality. I explore the existing relationship between religion and the different social patterns of morality in order to highlight the process of erosion of all forms of morality (*demoralization*), especially those legitimized by a religious narrative. I try to show this way that the transition from communist to post-communism brought important structural changes not only in the realm of religious mentalities but in the realm of practical sphere of life as well.

The need of new types of data, other than the ones employed by the debates of the 60`s (nominal belonging to a religion, churchgoing, belief in god) (Dobbelaere, 1999), was made necessary by the growing complexity of the theories regarding religion in contemporary societies (Tschannen, 1991) and by the strong dispute over the existence of a theoretical body of secularization theory (Hadden, 1987) and the existence of a so called process of de-sacralization of contemporary societies (Finke 1992; Iannacone 1992, 1998; Stark 1999).

In one of the few studies regarding the relationship between religion and morality, Rodney Stark, one of the fierce RCTR contester of the secularization theory, argues that the Durkheimian connection between religion and the moral order is incorrect (Stark, 1996:53-55, 1996b:55), and he does this by underlying the contingent effect of religiosity on individual morality (Reeves 1998:301), this being strongly determined by the specific perspective on divinity (personal or impersonal, moral, immoral, amoral, etc) (Stark, 1996b:81-86) and not by the ritual and communitarian dimension of religion (Stark, 2001: 619-623).

Stark argues that the relationship between religion and morality does not exist within Orthodox countries because *"Eastern Orthodoxy stresses rite and ritual, icons and incense, and has remarkably little to say about sin [...]* (Stark, 2001:625)." In spite the fact that Eastern Christianity stipulates the belief of a supernatural being that imposes moral requests on the believer, this does not counts in Stark's (Stark, 2001:626) opinion because of the lack of moral scrupulosity that allegedly characterizes Orthodoxy. This broad reductionism is operated by Stark because the variables he uses to codify moral behavior are not correlated with religiosity in Eastern Orthodox countries, countries that are largely ex-communist countries.

But this is so not because Orthodoxy does not produces the same moral requirements as Protestant and Catholic Christianity but because Stark operationalization of morality is very superficial and refers to values that are not usually structured by the religious discourse. The reason why these correlations fail has to do with the communist background and the gradual dissolution of civic moralities as we will se in the analysis bellow. The indicators of morality used by Stark are very weakly correlated with the religious prescription; as the factorial analysis will show there are much better indicators for this purpose.

Although Stark's analysis succeeds in bringing in the contemporary debate the old Weberian question of religious ethic and the diverse ways of rejection and acceptance of the world, it operates a dangerous reduction assuming an isomorphic equivalence between the different indicators of morality (Thiele 1996: 4-19), loosing this way sight of the different types of moralities that have a specific institutional correlative (Edel, 2000:12-16). This means that not all types of morality can be put in a significant relationship with the religious dimension (a fact that is totally neglected by Stark), and this gives us a reliable procedure to test Stark's thesis regarding the relationship between moral order and the communitarian dimension of religion.

The result of my analysis leads to opposite conclusions then the one that have been highlighted by Stark: the morality dimension is not only strongly dependent of the communitarian expression of religion, but continues to be, as Wilson has showed, strongly articulated in those social strata where the feeling of an integrated community has been less altered by the process of modernization (Wilson, 2000: 43-51).

CHAPTER 6. Religious education as a counter-secularization strategy in contemporary Romania

In the context of the emergence of a new secular culture that informs mostly the life of teenagers, religious actors try to cope with this by articulating different strategies of counter-secularization. In this chapter I am analyzing the issue of various forms of religious education that have been implemented in the public educational system in

Romania. In the early 90's religion has been introduced as a mandatory subject of study from the 1st to the 8th grade in accordance to the confessional belonging of each student. The post-socialist governments financed this policy from public money and created as well the legal framework for the establishment of denominational educational institutions

The concept of de-secularization has to be linked to the different cultural attempts to define such comprehensive meanings that are able to counteract the disintegrating effects of modernity and the de-centering of self that accompanies the post-modern transformation (Dawson 2005, Karner, 2004:11-16). An important consideration has to be given to the question of agency in religion and to the different strategies that the religious actors articulate in order to provide relevant religious meanings to a secularized life-world.

In this chapter I am particularly interested as well in analyzing the way the Neo-Protestant communities (Pentecostals, Baptists and Adventists) deal with the issue of secularization by institutionalizing an alternative education system and their attempt of restructuring the world-view and values of Romanian teenagers. I have outlined the strategies which the neo-protestant educational system tries to articulate in order to establish a religious counter-culture to the national educational system. Our findings showed that within the neo-protestant High-Schools the restructuring of the world-view goes as far as stimulating a specific perspective on marriage, work or politics.

It encourages the establishment of a specific social network outside the church and to the formation of young teenager communities along religious lines. In this sense the Neo-protestant education system represent a systematic strategy to counter the process of secularization that affect mostly the young generation that grew up in the new post-socialist world. But at the same time this point out to the general tendency of secularization among the other teen-agers. The reason why parents and pastors made great efforts to establish these high-schools is precisely because they were afraid that their children were too much exposed to emerging post-socialist secular culture.

In this chapter I analyzed the issue of religious education and the effect the policies implemented by the state have on religious socialization. To what extend are these policies effective in generating specific beliefs (atheistic or religious) among teenagers? Are the state structures capable of implanting a specific word-view in the lives

of students and generate specific religious / secular outcomes? My analysis suggests that this has only a limited impact and that ultimate values cannot be regulated by the educational system.

During the communist period the communist ideologists had to find different ways to modernize the rural religious mentalities. Because their efforts were not very successful and families were still religiously socializing their children, the Communist Party set up an elaborate plane to governmentalize the time resources of children and disciplinize them into adopting a dialectical materialist world-view.

The idea of the communist authorities was that within the educational establishment children and teenagers would get in touch with the enlightening power of science that would drive away the obscure mystical forces of religion. Teachers were instructed to teach their students the value of scientific explanation and of the atheistic worldview. Students' psychological and social sanity was dependent on replacing their magical religious attitude with a scientific-atheist one that could ensure the construction of the humanist Communist society.

As a result of this all educational institutions were transformed into controlled environments where a nude form of political secularism was exercised in order to construct the New Human Being. This New Human Being was supposed to able to realize its essence through labor and was committed to a materialist philosophy. Religion was considered a reified bourgeoisie ideology that was holding the Proletarian forces back.

But these secular polices had a very limited effect on the religious representations of students and the Romanian society continued to perpetuate a religious world-view. The religious socialization of children within the families was much more important than the secular policies implemented by the state and so the atheization process was a practical failure.

I am arguing that during the post-socialist period the implementation of religious education within lay schools that indented the opposite effect had a limited result as well. As we have seen in the previous chapters the emergence of pluralist culture led to a general trend o secularization that affects mostly the teenagers socialized in this new post-socialist world. The secularization process takes the shape of three distinct sub-

processes (de-Christianization of religious beliefs, de-institutionalization of religious experience and de-moralization of the practical sphere of life) that builds up to a general trend of domination of the secular culture.

The religion classes that were introduced in the lay schools during the post-socialist period are not able to counteract this general trend. The secularization process is much stronger among teenagers than the rest of the population because they are much more connected to the various media that exposes them to a new secular and pluralist culture. The religious classes are not able to generate the envisioned religiosity and constitute limited resources in halting the spread of the secular culture among students.

CHAPTER 7. New religious movements: Gypsiness and the new religious politics of identity

The main argument of this chapter is that the religious conversion of Gypsies to Pentecostalism leads to a restructuring of their every-day life and their social networks and most of all to the production of specific narratives of identity and a religious understanding of what it really "means" to be a Gypsy. The Gypsy Pentecostal movement is generating institutional and symbolic resources that allows for a new type of ethnic management of identity and this has to be related to three distinct issues: social de-marginalization, the moralization of conduct and the creation of a socially integrated communities.

I am relating this to the fact that in rural areas the social discrimination and exclusion of Gypsies is higher than usual. The Romanian villages are confined spaces of interaction that have a reduced structure of opportunities and this affects Gypsies much stronger. In rural areas there is a clear spatial segregation, the Roma are confined at the end of the village and are not allowed to buy properties and houses within the village. A very convincing expression of this spatial segregation is the way cemeteries are organized in rural Romania. Although they share the same religion with the majority, the Gypsies are always buried in a distinct segregated section of the cemetery. The borderline that exists within cemeteries and separates the Gypsies from Orthodox Romanians or

Reformat Hungarians is a reflection of the social segregation that functions among the living.

In my paper I have tried to outline that this social segregation is reproduced within the Orthodox and Reformat religious communities as well and this does not allow the Gypsies to institutionally express their religiosity in spite the fact that they are know as being very magical and religious oriented people. Pentecostalism by organizing churches within their community offers the possibility to diminish this social and religious exclusion. It does this through the establishment of strongly integrated communities and through the ethical rationalization of everyday life.

During the post-socialist period we can notice a strong ethnicization of Pentecostalism among the Roma. The conversion of Gypsies to Pentecostalism has two different genealogies in the Romanian society: the communist period that led to a multi-ethnic unified religious community, which was together keeping the Faith and the post-socialist period that led to the emergence of separate ethnic Gypsy Pentecostal churches. The overwhelming majority of the Gypsy churches (about 95 % of them) appeared in the last two decades and so they are a specific feature of the post-socialist period. The Churches are always located within their marginalized community and the religious leaders are recruited from here.

The social integration of Roma groups and their ethnic mobilization becomes problematic during the post-socialist period as we can see from the intensification of political activism of the Roma intelligentsia. During the communist period the state authorities have tried to ethnically assimilate the Gypsies through forced industrialization and urbanization. During the post-socialist period as a reaction to the social and economical marginalization of Roma this issue has been dealt with through the attempt of a general ethnic mobilization. This ethnic mobilization can be achieved only through specific policies of ethno-genesis or in the words of Benedict Anderson through the imagination of an inclusive community.

The biggest obstacle in generating such an imagined community is due not so much to the absence of political elites or empowering institutional means but due to the traditional fragmentation of Roma according to kin groups and different professions, that resists the top to bottom ethnic homogenization policies.

The post-socialist intensification of political activism aims at the transformation of these multiple and conflicting traditional identities in a unified ethno-cultural one. The ethno-genesis process means the popularization of a common history, common language, common origin (ethnic narrative) which require ethnic activists (national intelligentsia) that are able to articulate at grassroots levels integrated "imagined communities". This is done locally through political parties and NGO's that have as an objective the advancement of cultural and linguistic rights of this ethnic minority. Their aim is always political mobilization and the implementations of social projects that try do diminish the social marginalization of Roma.

After two decades of inventing and imagining a Roma ideology, as the Roma intelligentsia calls it, the consolidation of a Roma ethnic identity has to a great extent failed. A proof for this is the incapacity of Gypsy political mobilization for the Parliament and local governing structures and the fact that most Gypsies refuse such and ethnic model of imagining their identity.

My thesis is that Pentecostalism manages to do just that because it is not an elitist attempt of creating ethnic identity but a popular one that spreads from bottom to top. The religious conversions generate proud awareness of their Gypsiness while their entire social identity is religiously re-mastered. Practically, this is achieved through the emergence of well integrated micro-communities, the emergence of local religious leaders and most of all through a re-conceptualization of what it means to be Gypsy. Pentecostalism promotes the idea that Gypsies are an important ethnic group that has an important religious calling. The local churches are able to institutionalize a new ethnic model that is very differently from the socially fragmented traditional model and from the international political one that is supported by the local NGO's and the national and European political structures.

I argue that Pentecostalism manages through the religious conversions and through the reconfiguration of social networks to articulate a distinct strategy in order to deal with social and ethnical marginalization. In enables the necessary means for a marginalized community to produce its own structures and narratives of identity. The "new heavenly citizenship" provides through the local church not only salvation for the

lost soul, but also the understanding of a proud ethnic identity and social de-marginalization.

CHAPTER 8. The Politics of After-Life: Cemeteries and Death in a multi-ethnic town from Romania

In the final chapter of my PhD Thesis I explore how post-socialism is restructuring the present-day Romanian religious landscape and the symbolic management of death. I am analyzing this by looking at the different discourses that surround the dead body and at the way these discourses are embodied in death related practices and in the organizing of cemeteries as earthly images of afterlife.

I call these discourses "after-life politics" and I mean by this the conceptual schemes that are employed in order to deal with the insecurity triggered by the post-socialist pluralization of life-worlds and with the erosion of old certainties. The politics of after-life are not simple cosmologies that stipulate what happens with people after they die, but they are powerful strategies that can integrate into a meaningful structure the dead bodies, the mortuary rituals and the cemeteries. By doing this they regulate not so much the after-life of dead bodies but the life of the living. Cemeteries by organizing these regulations become micro-worlds that reflect the religious, ethnic and cultural struggles of the new post-socialist world.

My research takes place in the multi-ethnic and multi-religious village of Sch., situated in the south-eastern part of Romania. Old-Orthodox Lipovenians (divided into two antagonist religious communities, *popovtsi* and *bezopopovtsi*) and their eternal rivals, Orthodox Romanians, have to co-habit the village with the post-socialist emerged community of Lipovenian-Romanian Adventists. What seems even harder to do is to share the after-life and cemetery space, where the borderlines between these four communities become even stronger.

The production of multiple cemetery spaces signal not so much the existence of distinct perspectives on dying but the necessity of a distinct social control over the people of the four churches. Each church should be the only sovereign power that regulates the

ultimate meanings of life of their believers. In Sch. each of the dead bodies has a certain conceivable place within the graveyard. Each dead body falls under a specific practice of burial (according to a religious categorizing of death) and has attached to it a specific mythology of after-life and distinct social practices among the living. Only the Adventists do not have any place in this symbolic universe. For them there is no chance left in the after-life, they are buried somewhere outside the cemetery, in a place that can be hardly conceptualized. According to the villagers dying as a "religious heretic" represents one of the worst ways of dying that leads to the burial in one of the lowest and impure grounds

The symbolic representations of dying and the specific types of mortuary space and practices attached to it (burial grounds that lie symbolically in the sun or shadow etc.) became one of the dominant instruments of controlling and safeguarding ethnic and cultural identities. The instrumentalization of the symbolic architecture of after-life that penetrates the dead body and the fragmentation of the cemetery space that accompanied this process mirror the important transformations of the Romanian social system and the struggle to enact the different post-socialist politics of ethnic and cultural identities.

Although what is happening in Sch. is to a great extend exceptional, I argue that this case represents a specific instance of how a religious mastering of death looks like and of how a religious perspective is embodied and spatialized in terms of organizing the cemetery. This model is reproduced in various degrees in Romania and represents the conceptual couple of secular death. Methodological this is the beginning point form which the distance of secularization should be measured.

We can notice in Romania, especially in the urban strata a rationalization and individualization of the body and correspondently a secularization of the cemetery. The cemetery space it is changing its functions: it is not a space regulated by religious authorities, but by the civil ones. The cemetery space is not a projection of after-life but rather a representation of social status (wealth, social prestige, civic honors as in the case of political leaders etc). Cemeteries are not anymore instruments through which the local religious powers exert their sovereignty over everyday-life, they are secular spaces that fulfill public functions.

People are increasingly skeptical of the classical Christian narrative of afterlife and we can notice a gradual erosion of the religious cosmologies. Death starts to be

handled by private for-profits companies and sometimes the priests have only a formal role. Both in terms of the death related practices and the meanings people attach to dying we can notice in post-socialist Romania a gradual secularization. We have statistical data to illustrate this, but what we lack is an anthropology of secular death and of the secular cemetery spaces.

The secularization theory has become too complex and the attempt to settle this debate with statistical tools (church attendance, religious belonging, and various religious beliefs) will have a limited impact. Instead what we need is an anthropology of secularization that should analyze more concrete forms and embodiments of religious and secular practices. Death, cemeteries and after-life politics could become a way of approaching the issue of secularization in contemporary societies.