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## PREFACE

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## Introduction: Secularization and its discontents

Secularization at least since the 1990s has remained one of the most hotly debated issues in the humanities and social sciences. When in 1994 José Casanova asked at the beginning of his influential *Public Religions in the Modern World* whether “anyone today still believes in secularization,” this was a symptom of a massive disenchantment of what up till then had seemed as unshakable and almost sacred ground for reflection on the vicissitudes of belief in the modern world (Casanova 1994). The straight-line paradigm of secularization based on the insights of the classics of sociology such as Durkheim and Weber, and proclaiming if not the demise, then at least the inevitable decline of religion due to the processes of modernization (structural differentiation, individualization etc.) came under serious critical scrutiny. What was taken for granted gradually turned out to be only a bunch of dubious generalizations whose empirical foundation was flimsy, to say the least. Influential proponents of the paradigm – such as Peter Berger – went as far as to switch sides and became its most severe critics. The paradigm itself with its far-reaching implications remained, no doubt, an important element of our intellectual landscape, as the still repeated attempts at its revival convincingly prove. Moreover, many of the critiques of the secularization paradigm proved too hasty, ideological and simplistic – and so were convincingly refuted. On the other hand, certain elements of the paradigm proved worth retaining: nobody doubts, as José Casanova observes, either that in our Western societies religion became a more private matter, or that these societies undergo changes in the direction of “rationalization,” to which religious belief by no means could remain immune. But does this give us any ground to predict the “end of religion” or the inevitable and global future domination of what Charles Taylor calls “exclusive humanism,” the viewpoint that takes a human flourishing to be possible only if spiritual transcendence is totally banned (cf. Taylor 2007)?

That all this, in fact, does not give us any such ground, is a sign that secularization-as-a-paradigm, or a set of ontological assumptions that support theories, predictions and empirical generalizations has been seriously undermined and

has irrevocably lost most of its appeal. What dwells among its ruins is a group of theories neither of which, however, has as yet gained the status once ascribed to the fallen paradigm (what makes matters worse in the debate over secularization is that it all too easily turns into a clash of ideologies: secularism that constantly warns of the rising tide of “fundamentalism” and social conservatism which considers secularization a symptom of an impending moral disaster). First of all, there is the so-called market theory of religion, well-known especially thanks to Rodney Stark’s and William Bainbridge’s influential works (see e.g. 1987). Being in fact an outgrowth of the secularization paradigm, it soon turned into its fierce competitor. It offers an elaborated theoretical framework and empirical findings that point to the persistence and growth of religion and religiosity fostered by the persisting demand for spiritual values. Secondly, there is a multi-faceted and colorful throng of theories and conceptions that draw a picture of the world being either in train of “desecularization” (to use Peter Berger’s phrase – see 1999) or immersed by the high tide of the “new spirituality” that flourishes thanks to the typically modern needs of originality, individuality and authenticity. And thirdly, there is “postsecularism” that seems now to be undergoing a transformation from a philosophical plea for religion in the secularized world (in Jürgen Habermas or Charles Taylor – cf. 2001 and 2007 resp.) to a full-blown theoretical framework that attempts to give the account of how religious belief, sometimes in highly idiosyncratic forms, is re-introduced into the secularized spheres of modern Western societies, and how it may enrich the public discourse of liberal democracy (cf. Nynas et al. 2012). It would be extremely risky to ascribe any common denominator to all these theoretical undertakings, but if there is any, it was, perhaps, best resumed by Richard K. Fenn, who claims that “institutionalized religion lost its monopoly on the sacred” which becomes “more democratic, egalitarian, playful, inventive, and potentially subversive than in the recent past.” In other words, the sacred is at large, and to chase it sociology must constantly refine its tools, including the basic terms such as “religion”, “religiosity” or “spirituality” (Fenn 2003, p. 3).

The following issue of *Studia Sociologica* is an attempt on the part of a group of authors from various disciplines and research traditions to take stock of this situation of theoretical (as well as real) pluralism. It is, first of all, an attempt to give as clear a picture of it as possible, to outline its historical, cultural, philosophical, and, last but not least, theological contexts. What meaning can we give to the terms “secularization” and “desecularization,” and which of those meanings will “work” in the present situation? What can we conceive as an empirical test for those concepts? What are the philosophical and theological roots of now commonly used concepts such as religious and spiritual “pluralism”? The papers gathered in the first section of the issue under the heading *Contexts* deal with these and other, closely related questions. In the first paper Łukasz Kuttyło, after giving a clear outline of the state of the sociological debate on secularization, devises a model to test competing paradigms appearing therein. This leads to reflection on how the changing and

notoriously ambivalent meanings of such basic terms as religion, “religious practice” or “religiosity” may influence our perception of those paradigms. In the second paper, way different as it is, Andrii Baumeister deals with a similar problem: the ambivalence of the very term “secularization.” Comparing two different theories of the secularizing processes, conceived respectively by Charles Taylor and Hans Blumenberg, the author shows the limitations of the concept which are made especially well visible, if this latter is applied as a theoretical ground for such modern constructs as human rights or the liberal public sphere. Baumeister’s reflection on Taylor finds its follow-up in the paper by Jennifer Guyver who gives a thorough and detailed analysis of the use made by Taylor of such categories as “religion” and “secularization” to counter the anti-religious bias of much of modern social science. The fourth paper, by Maria Roginska, focuses on another highly ambivalent term, that of the “sacred,” which is perhaps the most influential notion introduced by the 20<sup>th</sup> century anthropology and sociology of religion. The author prefers to talk about “spirituality” rather than “religion” in this context and shows some paradoxical forms of the postmodern quest for the sacred which sometimes may even disregard the seemingly unbridgeable gap separating religion and “hard” science. The next two papers, by Stanisław Obirek and Robert Borkowski respectively, deal, each in its own way, with the issue of religious pluralism. Obirek focuses on the plea for a more pluralistic Catholicism made by the well-known Polish theologian Tomasz Węclawski, whom he contrasts in this context with, on the one hand, Joseph Ratzinger’s more conservative approach and, on the other, with Jürgen Habermas’s postsecular position. Borkowski, in turn, gives us a broad picture of the war on Western pluralistic, multicultural society waged by Islamist or jihadist terrorists. This is what Gilles Kepel has once called “God’s revenge,” the high tide of anti-secularist backlash that, incidentally, forced many theorists of secularization to revise their schemas (Kepel 2003 [1991]).

The next section, entitled *Research*, contains papers dealing with more empirical aspects of the main subject. First comes the paper by Panagiotis Pentaris, who analyzes the relationship between religion and professional practice in the public sector in postwar Great Britain. In what ways were confessions of faith or broad assumptions about patients’ (clients’) religiosity important in shaping the welfare system? It turns out that current changes within society’s religious profile have far-reaching consequences for its functions affected as they are by the present economic slump. With our next author, Erdem Damar, we change both the region and the context for a more political one, as the issue under discussion is how the secular-religious divide in Turkey is produced within the political field itself and by the factors that have apparently less to do with either faith or religiosity. This situation, as the author asserts, creates multiple and complicated politico-religious identities that clashed in what later became known in the Western media as the “Gezi Park protests.” The next paper, by Victor Yelenski, takes us to Ukraine and discusses the uses made of religion and religiosity in the post-Soviet “nation-building” process.

Taking Peter Berger's desecularization thesis as his point of departure the author wonders how the ongoing desecularization in Ukraine will affect its multiple ethno-national identities and relations between Churches and the Ukrainian state, now in the throes of perhaps the deepest crisis since its birth in the 1990s. The author gives as well an account of the various political engagements of Ukrainian Churches during the recent Maidan upheaval. The last two papers in the section again shift the reader's attention, this time from the socio-political to the socio-psychological context, or the problem of individual religious identity, experience and "God's image." Andrzej Pankalla and Anna Wieradzka discuss the changes in individual religious identity brought about by the postmodern transformation of society. Using the psychological conception of personality by J. Marcia, later reworked by K. Luyckx, as well as some empirical data, they sketch the picture of individual religious development, and come up with a proposition for new coaching and pastoral practice that would take into account ambiguities and intricacies of postmodern religious context. At the end of the section Andrzej Gołąb gives the account of his research project on the so-called cultural image of God in Polish scientists and on their perception of Polish religiosity. The author discusses at length the relationship between these two elements or variables.

In the last section of the issue Piotr Stawiński commemorates the late Robert O. Bellah, one of the most outstanding contemporary scholars in religious studies, who died in 2013. Besides giving an overview of Bellah's life and work, the author sketches his conception of the study of religion and social sciences in general as a "public philosophy" related to the civic concern for integrity of the democratic public sphere. The last piece in the issue is Dorota Czakon's report on the conference "New faces of spirituality" that took place at the Pedagogical University of Cracow on 28<sup>th</sup>–29<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

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