

Secularization and the Birth of a Nation

The purpose of this paper is to make a contribution to the debate on secularization taking place today in our intellectual milieu. I believe that a discussion of the process of secularization independent of those processes taking place in the societal space of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is doomed to descend into prejudice. For this reason, I attempt to link two significant processes which began in world history around 1800 and which continue to this day in various corners of the world. These are the formation of national identity and the process named secularization almost from the moment of its inception. In this paper, I shall survey theories of the origin of secularization and anti-secularization, and of national identity and national consciousness. This minor research results in eight propositions, some of which represent conclusions that follow from current quantitative and historical data, and others are hypotheses still to be proven. One significant outcome of these, I believe, is finding arguments against a kind of secularizational segregation. For example, I attempt to show that living as a society in a developed country neither theoretically nor practically means unconditional secularization, and the converse. We may say the same regarding fundamentalism. As far as the concept of secularization itself is concerned, I believe that the very process christened secularization in the nineteenth century is in direct opposition to the essence of this word, and we could call it rather the 'institutionalization of the sacral'. The process of the transformation of a religion into a universal institution, in the same way as the process of the formation of national identity, began spreading at one and the same time and with the very same instruments (education and the mass media). As a result, we obtained two processes which challenged societies with their own versions of collective identity. I shall attempt to show that two types of institutional religion were formed as a consequence of this 'rivalry': transcendental (which works exclusively on a strategy to save the soul) and detranscendentalized (which is incorporated into national identity and which elaborates actions and future strategies from a perspective of national tradition). The numbers of their adherents in any society differ radically from each other. In any specific society, the percentage of religious people and, similarly, that of churchgoers, as well as the presence or absence of fundamentalism, are dependent on which of these two types is present. I shall show below how this typology of currently existing religions explains quantitative material that is at first glance so inexplicable and which has accumulated over the last century as a result of research into world religions and secularization.

In the 19th century, social thinkers thought that religion gradually lost its importance together with the growth and development of industrialized society. Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, Marx, Freud, Weber – this is an incomplete list of those thinkers who considered that religion and religiosity would in the near future lose their influence and no longer play a significant role in the formation of people's ideas and world view. As modern researchers point out¹, these thinkers were not alone in this assessment. From the Age of Enlightenment on, philosophers, anthropologists and psychologists were pointing out that sacral practices and their accompanying rituals and institutions were part of the past and, with the coming of modern times, would very much remain there². In the twentieth century – especially in the first half – the death of religion was accepted in social science as conventional wisdom.

The use of secularization³ in its modern sense of the decline of religion and religiosity began in the nineteenth century. The foundation for this was laid by the English thinker George Holyoake. He founded a secular society, a group with the aims of explaining the world without recourse to the idea of a supernatural force, and of elaborating a programme of individual moral behaviour⁴.

Max Weber was the first to thematize the departure of religion from the modern social world in his *Protestant Ethic and Science as a Vocation*. For Weber, secularization is part of the process of rationalization ongoing in the development of mankind. Rationalization for its part is a specific form of social change by means of which a 'contemporary, modern world' is realized and comes about⁵. One manifestation of rationalization is the disenchantment from the world, or in other words, ridding the world of belief in magic and of magical rituals. All the same, in the opinion of some researchers, the disenchantment does not simply mean that people lose faith in the old mysteries of religion, but rather that the idea of a 'miracle' loses unconditional value⁶. In the final analysis, Weber was not saying that that religion would vanish from the world, but rather that religion and religiosity would become one authority among many, such as science, politics and others. From a religious perspective, it becomes one among many, and ministers of religion would have less authority in deciding issues of politics, economics and medicine than they had in the past⁷.

The idea of secularization, as we noted above, was very popular, and every social scientist with few exceptions was convinced of its certainty up to the 1970s. Statistical data and various types of surveys existed to confirm this⁸, as did various church statistics. For example, in the United Kingdom the number of baptisms fell drastically between 1960 and 1983, from 55.4% of children under 12 months being baptised in 1960 to only 36.5% in 1983.

Similarly, the number of churchgoers fell from 6.2% in 1960 to 4.3% in 1983⁹.

All the same, from the 1970s the growth of religious fundamentalism on the one hand, and the accumulation of differing statistical data on the other, created a crack in the belief that the idea of secularization was correct. Peter Berger, the classic sociologist of the twentieth century and one of the founders of the sociology of religion, said in 1997: 'I think that what I and most representatives of the sociology of religion wrote in the sixties on secularization was a mistake. Our basic argument was that secularization and modernity occur together. More modernization brings more secularization. This was not a foolish theory. There were data to confirm this theory. But I think that it is mistaken in its foundations. The greater part of the world today is not secular. It is very religious.'¹⁰

Quite a large number of facts and theories opposing secularization accumulated towards the end of the twentieth century and especially at the beginning of the twenty-first. Arguments that oppose and raise doubt may be classified as follows:

(a) **Statistical and factual arguments.** Modern statistics, especially in the United States, point to an increase in religiosity and not to a decline¹¹. A Gallop poll in the UK in 1986 showed that 76% of those questioned believed in God and in life after death, while 96% wanted compulsory teaching of religion to continue in schools. Research in 1983 showed that only 16% of those questioned considered themselves adherents of some religion or other. Besides this, research undertaken in the last century in oriental countries demonstrated that after the Second World War the inclination to undertake religious rituals was increasing among the educated youth. For example, in Japan it became fashionable to have new cars, houses and offices blessed according to the Shinto religion. In the same way, various kinds of exorcism were performed. There were more churches in Taiwan towards the end of the last century than in the nineteenth or in the first half of the twentieth century. In Hong Kong, the Wong Tai Sin church (founded in 1915) had, at the end of the century, the greatest number of adherents in its history. In the 1970s and 1980s, studies of Muslims on the island of Java showed that the correlation between religiosity and education and a prestigious job was positive, or in other words, the more educated a person and the more prestigious his job the more inclined he was towards praying five times a day and, generally, towards orthodox Islamic practices than was the population in low status jobs and with less education. A study of Pakistan's 'fundamentalist' movement showed (in 1991) that the leaders of this movement were well educated (to degree level) and that supporters of the movement were basically from the upper middle class. In the same way, the growth of religious belief among Turkish

students was established by various studies at the end of the last century¹². Similarly, *Islamic Calvinists: Change and Conservatism in Central Anatolia*, a study published by ESI (European Stability Initiative) in 2005, opposes the secularization paradigm¹³. According to this study, a Calvinistic attitude is forming within Islam towards work and capital, or in other words, Islam is being interpreted as an ethos directed towards work and the accumulation of capital. The research group – through interviews with businessmen who display an instinct for high business and who at the same time remain followers of orthodox Islam, and through describing the enterprise environment organized by these – shows that what up to now, according to Weber, could only have originated within Protestantism, is possible in Islam without any practical application of the secularization of Islamic society.

(b) **Theoretical arguments.** The most significant theoretical argument, which is linked to the secularization paradigm, stems from new researches into history. A whole range of researchers into the history of religion say that ideas of people's religiosity in past centuries are exaggerated, and do not correspond with reality¹⁴. According to these studies, the population in Europe was about as religious several centuries ago as it is now. According to some studies, the main quantitative indicator of religiosity – the number of churchgoers – did not change even in the most intense period of industrialization (for example, in Britain from 1740 to 1865). Consequently, according to these theories, the secularization paradigm rests on the myth of 'Europe's former religiosity' and on nothing more.

Yet another significant prejudice, on which, in the view of the anti-secularists, the enthusiasts for the secularization paradigm rely, is an incorrect idea of the Christianization of medieval Europe. In their view, Christianity was never deep enough in northern Europe to provide a large number of churchgoers and, similarly, neither for the population to hear of a change in the religious affiliation of their political leaders in the Reformation period¹⁵.

As further proof of this conclusion, Rodney Stark, the well-known researcher into the sociology of religion, compared the time of the official Christianization of the countries of Europe and twentieth-century statistics on the numbers of churchgoers in these countries. In each case churchgoing and the time of Christianization turned out to correlate to a high degree¹⁶. This tells us that the factors of rationalization and disenchantment either do not work at all, or to such a very small extent that it is impossible to establish their impact quantitatively.

As far as subjective religiosity is concerned, we see a similar picture here too, the same as in connection with the institutionalized forms of religion: 'contrary to the widespread view, in the Middle Ages there was a great

deal of scepticism [towards religion – *author's note*], and of those some were quite radical¹⁷.

David Martin was the first to cast doubt on the theories of secularization¹⁸. As well as asking the question as to what enthusiasts of the secularization theory meant by religion and religiosity, he at the same time cast doubt on the sufficiency of such statistical data as churchgoing. Using the example of Iceland, William Swatos affirmed¹⁹ that churchgoing far from correlates with society's religiosity; rather, in modern societies, it is possible for it to correlate negatively with religiosity. Iceland, as the first secularized nation in the world, was used by the followers of the of the secularization paradigm as a clear example of secularization. Weekly churchgoing did not exceed 2%, so there was secularization. But Swatos's and Gissurarson's researches affirmed that, in present day Iceland, the proportion of baptisms and church weddings is very high. Similarly, there is frequent reference in newspaper obituaries to the immortality of the soul (as a rule, these are written by a family member or by a close friend). According to research in 1990 into world values, 81% of Icelanders believe in life after death, and 82% occasionally (20% frequently) pray outside of church. 40% believe in reincarnation, etc. Only 2.4% of Icelanders questioned were atheists.

The increase in religiosity in the countries of the post-Soviet bloc delivered a similar blow to the theories of secularization (the proportion of atheists in Hungary fell from 14% to 4% between 1981 and 1991, while churchgoing increased from 16% to 25%; in Russia, the number of those considering themselves irreligious fell from 53% to 37% in five years (1991-1995)²⁰.

In spite of these theories and data, the secularization paradigm has its supporters who, it is true, do not entirely repeat Weber's or Durkheim's arguments, but they do attempt to confirm the importance and validity of the secularization paradigm.

Neo-secularization theories. The idea behind Steve Bruce's researches relies for support on a distancing from Weber's type of secularization (rationalization), leaving it however as an indispensable mode of the modernization of secularization. The main idea of his book *God is Dead: Secularization in the West*²¹ is the following. Secularization occurs, not however owing to rationalization or the sciences, but rather owing to diversity and individual choice: 'Where diversity and egalitarianism become deep-rooted in social consciousness and embodied in a liberal democracy, where the government is sufficiently wealthy and stable, and where links to diversity and egalitarianism are not threatened with disappearance as a consequence of some unimaginable catastrophe, I cannot see anything that might turn round the process of seculariza-

tion.' Steve Bruce sees the main indicator of secularization in the diversification of religious practices and in the reduction of their stringency. A change in religious practice and its transformation into something 'softer' are perceived by Bruce as a defeat of religion. As far as a past 'golden age of belief' is concerned, Bruce, like the opponents of the secularization paradigm, considers this to be a myth. In his opinion, however, the difference is in the influence of religious beliefs and ideas 'then' and 'now'. The strength of Bruce's arguments is in that he acknowledges the majority of those facts with which supporters of the secularization paradigm are armed (the small role of science, the influx of eastern religions, the increase in the number of religious sects, the reduction in the number of atheists, etc.) and he offers us an interpretation of these according to the secularization paradigm. In Bruce's argumentation all this indicates a weakening of religiosity and the unhampered process of secularization. Bruce's academic opponents, such as Stark and Swatos, point out that the concepts of 'change' and 'weakening' are put on the same non-equivalent footing in Bruce's argumentation. However, the main defect of Bruce's book – and, it would appear, also its greatest strength – is that he writes solely of Britain, devoting only a single chapter to the US and describing the process of secularization under way there as lagging 50 years behind Britain. In Bruce's opinion, secularization is happening in the US, but is kept hidden by several factors: (a) by a tendency which 'forces' people to appear more religious than they are (there are no quantitative data to confirm their religiosity); (b) the large proportion of migrants, who are from less modernized countries and are accordingly more religious; and (c) the federal political structure: political diversity which offers inhabitants of the US the means to avoid cultural diversity.

When a dispute continues for quite a while in some scientific discipline or other, and an intellectual chasm very slowly widens between its supporters and opponents, and gradually takes shape as ideological poles, it is always to be expected that so-called conciliatory theories will be created. Conciliatory theories, it is true, do not offer us new facts and ideas, however, by a change in standpoint, they attempt to reconcile opposing poles and to present mutually opposing theories as separate instances of a general theory. I do not know whose was the idea of such an approach – Albert Einstein or some medieval theologian (it is a matter for the history of ideas) – but this approach does work, and all such attempts are interesting. We owe such an attempt regarding the secularization paradigm to Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart. The main idea of their book, *Sacred and Secular*, is an acknowledgement of the theories of the supporters of secularization and of its opponents. Secularization is occurring in developed societies, say the authors of this book but, at the same time, religiosity is increasing in the world as a whole.

The authors divide world societies into two, but not along modernization / non-modernization lines. As they justly point out, it is easy to find a country where modernization occurs, but not secularization. Norris and Inglehart introduce two additional factors which, in their view, draw a demarcation line between those countries and societies where secularization is happening and where it is not. These factors, in their view, are existential security and cultural tradition²². The authors call these the two supporting axioms of their theory. The axiom of existential security consists in the following: A lack of human security is decisive for religiosity and, conversely, the greater the feeling of existential security in a society, the lower the religiosity. In other words, faith in the transcendental is widespread when a person cannot see in his environment guarantees of his own security. As far as the second axiom is concerned, this is expressed in the following manner: World views linked to religious traditions spread in the modern world without the direct involvement of churches and religious institutions. For this reason, in spite of the fact that only 5% of the Swedish population, for example, are regular weekly churchgoers, the overwhelming majority of the population holds those ideas and values that were created within the Protestant religion. Accordingly, the authors conclude, the work ethic, sexual freedom and democracy in various countries will rely on historical religious traditions. Even those people living in a specific society who do not acknowledge a particular faith, and who do not belong to traditional confessions, become the bearers of complexes of behaviour and ideas that follow from these beliefs and values.

This is the scales on which are arranged today the theories for and against secularization. It is clear that in the modern world the relationship between the religious and the secular cannot happen by that simple construction which was thematized by Weber in his day (rationalization is equivalent to secularization). On the one hand, the accumulation of statistical material indicating an increase in religion and religiosity in developing and even developed countries and, on the other hand, the creation of a whole range of political theories stating that the role of tradition is an irreversible process²³, give us reason to assume that the processes of secularization and sacralization are more interesting and comprise more factors than even the authors of, for example, the theories of neo-secularization considered.

The purpose of this paper is not to criticize theories. I shall only point out, in connection with theories of neo-secularization, that considering tradition as permanent or constant has been in doubt in the social sciences for some time now²⁴, and even a tradition formerly sanctioned empirically and by conventional wisdom can turn out to have been invented in the recent past. On the other hand, we must point out regarding anti-secularization the-

ories that the modern world is structurally so complex and diverse in comparison with the Middle Ages²⁵ that a simple equivalence between religion and religiosity existing in the Middle Ages and in our time – inserting an equals sign – can in no way adequately describe the reality in which we live. Those theories which side with or oppose secularization theory have several ideas in common in how they describe the modern world. In other words, there are in these theories descriptions of the processes of secularization and sacralization occurring in the modern world which are shared by the ‘secularizationists’ and the ‘anti-secularizationists’. These are:

1. Religiosity and churchgoing is increasing in developing countries;
2. Indifference towards, and a lack of understanding of, traditional interpretations and ideas of religion are increasing in developing countries;
3. There is an ongoing increase in religious fundamentalism in developing countries²⁶;
4. Participation in traditional religious rituals is declining in developed countries;
5. The number of supporters of religions and religious ideas is increasing in developed countries;
6. Institutional forms of religiosity are becoming ‘softer’ in developed countries than was the case traditionally in the past²⁷.

A further significant idea on which those representing secularization and anti-secularization agree is that accounts of religiosity in the past are exaggerated. In spite of the fact that supporters of secularization point out that the ‘decline in religiosity is not a sociological myth²⁸, nonetheless the total religiosity of medieval people is more linked to myths about the Middle Ages than to reality. The myth of medieval religiosity relies more on the idea that ‘the Age of the Reason replaced the Age of Faith’ than on historical data²⁹. Historians increasingly agree with the view that the Catholic idea of the Middle Ages, in the same way as the Reformation period, are nineteenth-century creations³⁰. ‘A new age of Christianity commenced in Europe when churches gradually began to lose the support of governments after 1800 and to self-organize. And this did not happen until the new mass media and school education had changed the Christianization of everyone into a reality.’³¹

This is the environment in which the present-day discussion over secularization revolves. By adding several new facts we shall attempt below to make even clearer the processes of secularization and sacralization occurring in our environment.

In the quotation from the Dutch scholar Wim de Ruyter (‘Dark, backward and barbarous’. In: *Newsletter* 1. Leiden Institute for the Study of Reli-

gions. pp. 3-8) cited above by William Swatos, he directs attention to the link between the mass media and school education and the spread of religiosity. In other words, it follows from this conclusion that rationalization as the basis of the mass media and school education appears as something that supports religiosity, and not secularization.

If we run an eye over the map of twentieth-century thought, we see that the creation of the social institutions of the mass media and universal school education is linked by two important scholars – Ernest Gellner³² (the institution of universal education) and Benedict Anderson³³ (the institution of the mass media) – to the birth of nationalism. In other words, these two processes are linked by them to the creation of the basis of nationality and national self-identity. Below, I briefly describe both theories which, together with a further theory of Anthony Smith³⁴, laid the foundation for one of the most significant debates in the history of thought: that on the origins of nations and national consciousness.

All three theories say that nationalism – or, more precisely, the idea of the nation – is an artefact and that its origin is linked to specific socio-political and cultural developments in the history of mankind. Agreement among these theories stops with this consensus and the differences begin. Gellner defines nationalism as ‘a political principle according to which the political and the national must be congruent with each other’. This is a completely new principle typical of modernity. Before that, states were not organized according to the national³⁵.

Gellner highlights three stages of history: hunting-gathering, agro-literate and industrial.

Nationalism appears with the transition from the agro-literate culture to the industrial stage. In the agro-literate stage the elites see an advantage in cultural diversity. Under such circumstances nothing threatens their power at this time.

In industrial societies ‘a high culture pervades the whole of society, defines it and needs to be sustained by the polity’. In an industrial society the changing nature of work demands cultural homogeneity. In other words, a need is created for impersonal, context-free communication.

Besides this, an industrial society is dependent on perpetual growth in order to satisfy demands. It is possible to achieve perpetual growth only by implementing constant changes in the structure of granting employment. The high level of technical skills demanded means that many places have to be allocated on the basis of merit. This renders necessary a certain egalitarianism and, at the same time, makes general training essential before specialized training, so as to meet the need for job mobility.

Thus education occupies an important place. Education begins to define an individual's status, in the same way as kinship did in the earlier agroliterate society.

Consequently, the state brings together the state and culture. For this reason, a need was created for all areas of cultural penetration to be covered, and nationalism is the only way for this coverage to be realized successfully.

Anderson's *Imagined Communities* was published in the same year as Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism* (1983). Anderson's basic hypothesis is the following: The decline in the influence of religion gave rise to new concepts of time, which for their part gave rise to the possibility of imagining the nation.

Before nationalism there existed 'great religiously imagined communities', such as, for example, the Christian, which was based on a common language (Latin, for example). Together with diffusion and expansion Europeans discovered that their concepts of existence were not the only ones. In the same way, the factor of Latin as a common language began to weaken and the so-called vernacular languages began to revive.

While Europe existed as a great religious imagined community, it was the concept of time which united and gathered history together. The past, present and future were not linked as cause and effect, but rather by means of divine will. In such a concept of time the word 'meanwhile' made no sense. After the collapse of this kind of society it became possible to imagine such a situation without 'simultaneous time' but with 'homogeneous, empty time' instead. The marking out of such a type of time was possible using the clock and the calendar, and was responsible for theoretically incidental coincidences.

Then the age of print capitalism 'arose'. Latin lost its monopoly after some time, and new books began to be published in national languages. Here, Protestantism and its concept of internal salvation were particularly important. Books, newspapers and short stories were printed and distributed, and gave rise to the idea in readers of the simultaneous existence of a group of readers like themselves who make use of the output of cultural production in the same way as they do.

1. This production created for readers three fundamentals of national consciousness:
2. A unitary field of movement in both directions between Latin and the vernacular languages;
3. A new means of fixing the language and thus a basis for the idea of the permanence of the nation;
4. Languages of power which differed from the Latin language prevalent up to then.

Anderson argues that nationalism is a consequence of the development of a mixture of secularization, human diversity, capitalism and printing technology.

Smith's theory is based on 'ethno-symbolism'. Smith was Gellner's pupil and he attempted to overcome the difficulties of Gellner's modernist perspective.

The main weakness of the modernist perspective is its inability to account for the passions unleashed by nationalism. Why do people fight and die for their own nation if nationalism is merely a tool created by the elite to increase their economic gains and for economic unity?

Smith argues that all nationalism is based on an attempt by 'a specific group' to confer on history a sense of common identity and of common history. This does not mean that this history must be adequate academically. Smith says that much nationalism is based on historically erroneous interpretations, and strives to completely mythologize certain parts of its own history.

Nationalism, according to Smith, does not demand that the members of a 'nation' be similar, only that they must feel solidarity with the nation and with the other members of the nation. A feeling of nationalism can be created from any ideology dominant in a given place. Nationalism will grow from pre-existing kinship and from religious and belief systems.

These three theories examine nationalism and the formation of nations from three varying perspectives: constructivist (Gellner), traditionalist (Smith) and reductionist (Anderson). In this case, the consequence of these three theories for the debate between supporters of secularization and anti-secularization is of interest. As we noted above, religiosity, church membership, and the church as a modern idea – which implies the existence of believers and a shared doctrine – are, in the view of several historians, a result of the nineteenth century. In other words, religion only became universal and linked to identity after it became possible to spread the doctrine of religion by means of education and the mass media. If this corresponds to historical reality, then the narrative of medieval [European] religiosity is more the invention of a tradition than a description of historical reality. On the other hand, if we rely on the theories of Gellner, Smith and Hobsbawm, the invention of a large-scale tradition – in other words, the 'discovery' of a tradition which is calculated to define the identity of all citizens living in a specific area – is an exclusive procedure of nationalism. Thus we take on the task of simultaneously explaining a mechanism for the spread of religiosity and nationalism, their mutual dependence – since they spread by identical means – and their importance in the formation of identity.

It is possible for doubt to arise: What is right in connection with European religiosity might not be correct in the case of other religions, such as Eastern Christianity, where there was a custom of holding worship in separate languages. In this case, worship in a separate native language fulfilled a role in religious identity. All the same, I still think that, in the case of Eastern Christianity, worship in the local language had a role only in the formation of linguistic identity, so much did the forms taken by religious worship differ from one another and from the ecclesiastic centres in the absence of permanent and institutionalized informational and educational links.

We may say the same about other religions within which worship was not held in a language unknown to the population. The lack of communication between specific leaders of religious worship and differences created in the historical process explain, on the one hand, the origin of the diverse tendencies of eastern religions (Islam, for example) [up to the nineteenth century] and, on the other hand, the great efforts expended by the unifiers of countries on the abolition of religious differences and of dissenters.

Thus we may state the not unreasonable hypothesis that **no identity whatsoever existed in the world up to the start of the nineteenth century which united large groups of people and aligned their cultural or state boundaries with this identity**. Not only is nationalism an invention of modernity, but also **we must begin reckoning the history of identity of any kind, [beyond the boundaries of kinship, acquaintance or clan], from around 1800**. Language did not form the basis of social identity because, to begin with, it functioned in several different states and, if someone used it in the meaning of identity, this was perhaps only within the framework of a discourse justifying expansion³⁶.

Accordingly, the picture of world and social history is much more dramatic than it appears at first glance. Only after the nineteenth century does a universal social mechanism originate by which a person – a total stranger to you and with whom you have no physical or kinship connection – might not be alien. Naturally, such mechanisms existed in the Middle Ages and earlier, however only the middle or upper classes had permission and means to use these exclusively. Religious orders and secret societies shared the same characteristics, but they lacked universality and a principle of common consent on membership³⁷.

Thus we have a picture of religiosity and nationalism as universal institutions: social paradigms created at approximately one and the same time. Structurally, the two have one main common characteristic: both are based on the invention of tradition but, **if nationalism is based on an invented tradition of the past and by dint of these attempts to extend its own schema**

over its followers, religiosity accumulates believers by creating a tradition of the future. By tradition of the future I mean those religious practices by which it is possible, through specific individual efforts, to attribute a legitimate picture of a specific and clear future to the person making these efforts. This is an immanent part of the structure of all religions. Naturally, the latter is not the first-born child of modernity, but an emphasis on the creation of a tradition of the future, its advancement at the expense of other characteristics and qualities, and its broadening **from a path of personal salvation to an axis of collective identity** must be consequences of modernity.

I think that we may be able to describe two forms of religiosity in our world. One is a part of nationalism and occupied in the process of creating a tradition of the past. This occupation can be manifested differently in different countries: as an increase in religious extremism in the Near East, or as fundamentalist propaganda in some Eastern European countries. And the other is when institutionalized forms of religion preserve 'transcendentalism'. In other words, they are directed towards individual salvation and offer members of society strategies to elaborate a tradition of the future.

In the first case we are concerned, not with the secularization of society, but with the **detranscendancy** of religion. When religion becomes a part of a tradition of the past³⁸, and behaves as an institution for the invention and preservation of a tradition of the past, in this case religiosity is a significant – but yet individual – instance of national identity. In place of God, nationality and the nation become determining factors in religious discourse³⁹. We can observe in many countries of the world a process of the detranscendancy of religion and instances of its role in society in the creation of a tradition of the past. As an indicator of this, by establishing the difference between the percentage of the population acknowledging membership of a specific denomination and the corresponding percentage of churchgoers, it is possible that a significant but indirect indicator might be discovered. We shall speak about this below.

It appears that there is no foundation whatsoever for talk of some kind of secularization in respect of societies and nations in today's world. What is more, it may be said that our world, both intellectually and in its way of life, is gradually moving away from a secular past (in the Middle Ages) and is becoming ever more religious. This process of sacralization is happening in two ways: by inventing traditions of the past and traditions of the future, in other words, by putting in place frameworks of national and religious identities and summoning followers to fill these frameworks.

Thus sacralization in our world has two paths: the sacral as an end (a tradition of the future) and the sacral as a means (a tradition of the past):

National consciousness in Old World countries is almost entirely owing to religion. I can only hypothesize in the case of the US. There the birth of the nation was structurally a religious act. The American nation was born by construing a tradition of the future, so diverse were the religions, traditions, ways of life and cultures of the people newly arrived on the continent. As Alexis de Tocqueville noted, if east coast Americans and the pioneers of the north had something in common, this was the Bible and the documents adopted by the legislative organs, and, in the same way, those ideals articulated in these documents. It is possible in this way – by the orientation of the value construction of this specific nation, not on the past, but on the future – to explain the popularity of institutional religion in this country. ‘Being American’ is so individualistic and so directed toward working out a strategy of personal ‘salvation’, that the average American should not feel any kind of discomfort by incorporation into some religion or other. On the contrary, that act – participation in religious worship – should assist him in feeling a full member of the American nation. All the same, I cannot say that a tradition of the past plays no part in the construction of American nationality. Today, a Buddhist or Muslim as American president is inconceivable.

As far as ‘old’ European and oriental nations are concerned, their oldness, it appears, is manifested fundamentally in construing a tradition of the past. The education system, as Gellner said, ‘takes to the people’ the national idea, and the mass media, as Anderson said, creates the basis of nationality. In a whole range of countries, discourse on cultural identity is impossible without explicit mention of the history of religion (Protestant and Orthodox countries, oriental countries where worship is held in the national language, also Catholic countries whose culture was closely linked to Catholicism in the invention of tradition). In this case, the national idea accomplishes the spread of religion and, accordingly, this very easily becomes the establishment of religiosity by the national idea as one of its own modes. In this instance, the detranscendentalism of religion is realized unhindered, and two ways remain for the institutional forms of religion: either they must agree with detranscendentalism (in this case they will have guaranteed a large number of adherents and [even if only formally] the support of the political / national administration), or they must attempt to play an independent game and work to create a tradition of the future.

Besides historical conditions and the political environment, the choice of the institutional development of a specific church is dependent on specific people, who take specific decisions at a specific time. This decision is expressed verbally thus: What must the Church do? – submit itself to the idea of nationalism and become detranscendentalized, or work to elaborate a tradition of the

future, entirely directing itself toward offering specific people institutions of personal salvation, and to uniting its adherents under a strategy of salvation. In this case, it enters into competition with the national idea and with national institutions which, besides a whole range of advantages⁴⁰, already offer their own followers a detranscendentalized religion, or in other words, much more than a transcendental church could offer. Of course, a transcendental religion's offering is much more meagre (in forms of content and expression it is the richest of all, including oriental religion). It is for this reason that transcendental religion hopelessly loses the struggle with detranscendentalized religion for the number of adherents.

However, this defeat in no way means secularization. Firstly, in spite of the fact that transcendental churchgoing is low, it will still be more than it was in the Middle Ages. Secondly, in terms of structure and worship, a detranscendentalized religion does not differ at all from a transcendental one and, in many cases, as a creator and preserver of a tradition of the past it can turn out to be even stricter. This should explain that quantitative fact as to why churchgoing is 3% in Denmark and 26% in Spain, in spite of the fact that in both Denmark and Spain the number of those confirming a religious affiliation is very high. The explanation is manifest: religion is detranscendentalized in Spain, but not in Denmark⁴¹. In the same way, it is noteworthy that when analyzing the countries of northern Europe, together with the percentage of weekly churchgoers we also need to take the growth in evangelical and other 'house churches' into account⁴².

An intermediate level of churchgoing, in the range 3% to 20%, for example (among such countries are those of the former socialist bloc and of the Soviet Union) should indicate that the leadership of the institutional forms of religion in these countries either has not taken a decision on detranscendentalism versus transcendentalism, or that the decision has been taken, but the process of detranscendentalization had not yet been completed. As an example of this we may cite the development of the Orthodox Church in Georgia over the past twenty years. In spite of the fact that the Church hierarchy took a decision in the 1990s on detranscendentalization⁴³, which was expressed not only in the appearance of a religious nationalist discourse, but also in the aggressive expansion of religious worship on a countrywide scale⁴⁴, we still cannot say that this decision has been fully implemented. In the discourse of representatives of the Georgian Orthodox Church, strategies directed toward a tradition of the future are still frequent which, in a certain sense, is linked to the poverty of part of society and, we may say, to a loss of social hope.

For this reason, interpreting quantitative data on sacralization and secularization necessitates not the introduction of additional variables, but rather an analysis of the discursive and institutional practices of religions.

An increase in fundamentalism could be an indirect indicator of those societies where religion is detranscendentalized, regardless of location in the world and creed affiliation. The expression of this fundamentalism varies, from acts of terrorism to opposition to the insertion of religious tolerance in education laws and to opposition to restrictions on teaching religion in school.

Thus fundamentalist societies can be on the list of either developed or developing countries. The generalized response of these societies to challenges arising in the global world varies, but not how they view these challenges.

It would appear that the profile of every specific society and the transcendentalism or detranscendentalism of its religions are dependent on specific political circumstances and on the specific decisions of specific people. Accordingly, the more church hierarchies might revisit the decision, or might choose a transcendental ecclesiasticism, the more the number of weekly churchgoers will decline, although it is possible that the numbers of church weddings and baptisms might increase, as a process of partaking in the national idea or tradition. And the converse: The more churches and religions in the world set out on the path of detranscendentalism, the more the number of churchgoers will increase and the more the church/religion will attempt to become an essential attribute of the nationalist state.

For this reason, when we discuss secularization and sacralization, we must always take into account specific religious practices and discourses. Only after analyzing these is it possible to account for the religious reality around us.

I may thus formulate my position in the debate on secularization by making the following points:

1. In most countries of the world the spread of the nationalist idea and of religiosity, and their potential to become universal, occur simultaneously (after 1800), and are accomplished by the same instruments (education and the mass media).
2. The origin of the national idea is in most cases based on the contemporary idea of religiosity. The invention of a national tradition is in most cases based on the invention of a religious tradition; thus **the birth of a nation is linked to the universal institutionalization of religion**. In most societies, it would appear, a national ideology and tradition will arise from the invention of a tradition of the universality of religion.
3. There exist two forms of institutionalized religion / church in the modern world: the **transcendentalized**, which offers society strategies directed toward the future (personal salvation, saving the soul),

and the **detranscendentalized**, which works as a preserver of a tradition of the past in which the idea of the nation takes the place of the idea of God, and which is a separate (although possibly most important) instance of nationalist tradition and philosophy. The second offers its adherents a strategy of saving souls, only in this case saving the soul is linked to devotion to national traditions.

4. A detranscendentalized religion is closely linked in its activities and discourse to state institutions and to the majority of the population, since it is a part of national identity and can spread 'together with the state'. For this reason, **the number of adherents of a detranscendentalized church is greater than of a transcendentized one** which offers the adherent only the saving of the individual soul.
5. Such a typology of churches explains the differing percentages of religiosity (number of churchgoers) in various countries. **The preservation of national identity is the main stimulus for participation in a detranscendentalized church.** Accordingly, participation in worship at the same time means participation in the preservation of the nation and in firming up a secure collective environment.
6. **There is no law according to which we can say unambiguously why one church or another is transcendentized or detranscendentalized.** This is always a consequence of specific persons (in the church hierarchy) and political causes / environment.
7. **The detranscendentalism of religion is not characteristic of societies solely in developed or in developing countries. The development status of a country is no indicator of the type of modern church / institutionalized religion.** We may encounter a detranscendentalized religion in Europe (e.g., Spain) as well as in the East (e.g., Iran). In both cases it is possible to describe the religious attitudes of society as fundamentalist, however, in both cases, the responses of these societies to global world challenges differ.
8. **It is possible to encounter hybrid transcendentized - detranscendentalized churches / institutionalized religions, a situation when a decision on (de)transcendentalism has not yet been taken or has not yet been fully implemented.** 'Average' churchgoing (3–20%) in a range of countries (e.g., Hungary, Georgia) is explained by this hybridism. It is possible that the explanation of this hybridism might be linked to the presence of poverty in society and a lack of social hope (that is, to a rejection of the national / state idea).

Owing to all the above we may say that the process of secularization, if it exists at all, does not divide the world into developed and developing coun-

tries. All the same, if we adduce additional indicators (such as statistics on church baptisms and weddings, ‘domestic religions,’ informal practices, and the like) it is possible that secularization might turn out to be a process occurring in the heads of relatively very few people over a relatively very short period of time.

That process which begun after 1800, and which was called [erroneously, in my view] secularization, caused irreversible changes throughout the whole world, irrespective of the type of society or culture. Two very important modes of our social environment are consequence of this process: that structure of national identity which characterizes us, and that form of institutionalized religion / church as spread both within and without us.

Notes:

1. Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart. *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, Cambridge University Press, 2004. p. 1.
2. *Ibid.* p.1.
3. *Saeculum* is a Latin word meaning era, world, earth. This word was used in medieval Europe to denote ‘civil’ in marking the boundary between ecclesiastical and civil law, lands and property.
4. William H. Swatos, “Secularization Theory: The Course of a Concept”, in *Sociology of Religion* (Fall 1999), 2.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Max Weber. *Science as a Vocation*.
8. Gigi Zedania, “Systematic and comparative research into values”, in *Values of Georgian society: Reports, analysis, recommendations #7* (in Georgian), Tbilisi. OSGE, 2007, 7-16.
9. UK Church Statistics, 1983.
10. Rodney Stark, “Secularization, R.I.P – rest in peace”, in *Sociology of Religion* (Fall 1999), 13.
11. Rick Philips, “Can rising of church participation be a consequence of secularization?”, in *Sociology of Religion* (Summer 2004), 2.
12. Rodney Stark, “Secularization, R.I.P – rest in peace”, “Asian “Folk” Religions”, in *Sociology of Religion* (Fall 1999), 18-19.

13. "Islamic Calvinists – Change and Conservatism in Central Anatolia", *ESI Newsletter*. April 2005.
14. Rodney Stark, *op. cit.*, 4-6.
15. Andrew Greeley, *Religion as Poetry*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers. 1995.
16. Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A sociologist reconsiders history*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1996.
17. *Ibid.*, 9-10.
18. David Martin, "Towards eliminating the concept of secularization", in *Penguin Survey of the Social Sciences*, ed. Julius Gould. Harmondworth (UK): Penguin Books, 1965.
19. William H. Swatos, Jr., "The Relevance of Religion: Iceland and Secularization Theory", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 23. 1984.
20. Rodney Stark, *op. cit.*, 11.
21. Steve Bruce, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West*. Blackwell. 2002.
22. Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*. Cambridge University Press, 2004, 9-15.
23. Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.
24. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press. 1992.
25. In the multiplicity of social institutions, for example.
26. This increase in religious fundamentalism in developing countries is, in the assessment of intellectuals and representatives of the social sciences, alien to the immanent content of these religions (for example, Abdou Filali-Ansary, "Islam and Liberal Democracy: The Challenge of Secularization", *Journal of Democracy*, 7.2 (1996): 76-80).
27. In other words, as we noted above when dealing with Bruce's theory, forms of religious life are becoming more tolerant and more open.
28. Steve Bruce, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West*. Blackwell. 2002.
29. Swatos, "Secularization Theory", 7.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (in Georgian). Tbilisi: Neker. 2004.
33. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (in Georgian). Tbilisi: Language and Culture. 2005.
34. Anthony Smith. *Nationalism: Theory, ideology, history* (in Georgian). Tbilisi: Georgian Language International Centre. 2006.

35. Here I shall not examine Hobsbawm's theory (*Nations and Nationalism since 1780*. Cambridge University Press. 1992) which is, in principle, a development of Gellner's theory.
36. For example, the phrase of the 9th century spiritual writer Giorgi Merchule to the effect that Georgia (Kartli) is everywhere where the liturgy is conducted in the Georgian language. This, it may be said, was the slogan of the expansionist policy of Georgian kings in the following centuries (up to the conquest of Georgia by the Mongols in the thirteenth century). Georgian churches and monasteries were being constructed wherever possible around the Black Sea.
37. Of course, national identity in fundamentalist or fascist societies is characterized by barriers to membership but, in principle, adopting a national identity requires no more than the making of a declaration.
38. Sergo Ratiani, "Several remarks on Georgians' religiosity and traditionalism", in *Values of Georgian society: Reports, analysis, recommendations #7* (in Georgian). Tbilisi. OSGF, 2007. 39-46.
39. To my knowledge, such a rearrangement is perceived as heresy by Church scholars, and is called the "phyletistic heresy" (love of nation and ethnos).
40. Security systems, education, power, definite future strategies, etc., in short, everything that a modern state has or could have.
41. This in no way implies that the church in Denmark and, generally, in the Protestant countries of northern Europe is poor. We may regard government contributions to these churches as institutional gratitude for their not becoming detranscendentalized and creating further headaches for the country's security. It would appear that **detranscendentalism always contains a danger of an increase in fundamentalism**.
42. See www.hewett.norfolk.sch.uk.
43. It is possible that the stimulus for this decision was 9 April 1989, when Soviet soldiers broke up a rally attended by many thousands demanding independence. The rally was organized by nationalist activists and the slogans were nationalist. The Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, Ilia the Second, called on the rally to disperse, and warned of the expected break-up. The rally clearly gave the advantage to the nationalist leaders, and several of these publicly insulted the Patriarch.
44. The boom in church construction, the rapid increase in the number of priests, etc.

English translation by PJ Hillery