

TRADITIONAL AND  
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# TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL RELIGIOSITY

(A Thematic Collection of Papers of International Significance)

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## Introduction: Religious Change - Traditional and Non-traditional Religiosity

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■ Religious life and the connection between people and social groups with religion and church are subject to constant change and different social influences. The history of the Balkans undoubtedly testifies to how out-religious and out-ecclesiastical circumstances (concentrated around the believers' salvation) contribute to the *changes* in the religious and ecclesiastical life of individuals and social groups. These changes are so remarkably strong and obvious that, after a certain period, it is difficult not to highlight social and even political and international factors as inevitable in their explanation, although we are, therefore, exposed to the danger of falling into a kind of sociologism. However, between the assertion that the entire religious and ecclesiastical life depends on the constellation of ambient and social circumstances, and the claim that these circumstances affect the spiritual and ecclesiastical sphere, there is an evident difference. Social sciences are the most competent to analyze and explain how and to what extent the social events of the 1970s in Europe and the world have influenced changes in the connection between people and social groups, both with established religions that have existed for centuries, as well as new religious ideas, expressions and practices. These differences also influenced the changed social position of religions and churches in the world. Therefore, the ambient influence on religions and churches is not one-way, since the changed religious situation afterwards influences social roles, culture, politics, morality and general social values.

This approach to religious changes has certain features of methodological reductionism. In this approach, religion does not have, as in the theological, a major but an auxiliary role, because what is primarily sought through religious events is not a religious explanation, but the explanation of the behavior of people and the interaction of social groups as carriers of a certain confessional self-awareness. For instance, the historical circumstances in the

Balkans show clearly that the relations of people and nations cannot be understood without a religious factor. Because this factor is intertwined with the social and public sphere, societies and their mutual relations cannot be understood without their religious and confessional course. Hence, although social factors are important for the explanation of religious phenomena, this phenomenon is not only a social product - there are also gnoseological, anthropological and psychological factors of religion and religiousness.

The deterministic framework of religious changes is made more complex by a number of significant social changes around which there is an agreement as events that paradigmatically confirmed the influence on the change of the position of the religion itself and religious institutions in society, but also the spiritual atmosphere in culture. At work is, on the one hand, gaining the political significance of religious traditions, and on the other, the traditions, while announcing their return, deprivatize the adopted, syncretic beliefs and behaviors, which are essential elements of the process of desecularization of religious life. These events showed that religion did not lose, that is, that it again resurfaced the potentials to inspire great, collective efforts of people for change that relate to the very essence of their political and religious life. In particular, these are the following events: 1. The strengthening of fundamentalism in Islamic countries in the late 1970s, first in the face of Iranian Islamic revolutions, and then in series of Islamic political movements in other countries, Al-Qaeda's so-called "Islamic states"; then 2. The change in the religious situation in a number of Western countries, such as the rise of Christian conservatism in the USA, or the strengthening of radical Christianity in Latin America, as well as the change in the strategy of Catholicism in Europe from the adaptation to the modern world to re-evangelization of that same world, especially with incentives that were supposed to come from Catholicism in the East, mostly from Polish Catholicism as the most effective model. 3. Therefore, as the next important deterministic framework of the religious twist, there is certainly an active or at least a supporting role of religion and church in the destruction of the communist order in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s. On this basis, a religious situation emerged that can be described by terms like radical de-atheization of these societies in the process of

returning or bringing the broad population closer to the suppressed and stigmatized religion and church; 4. On the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic Yugoslavia and the present Republic of Serbia, in the 1980s, and especially during the wars in 1990s, regardless of the confessions, the growth of public, or more precisely, political abuse of religion, and calming in religious stabilization during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, after wanderings of identity throughout the entire crisis period, for which even today we can not say that it is only a distant memory. 5. The acquisition of the public importance of Orthodoxy in the past year in the Eastern Ukraine and Russia as an identifier, homogenizer and a way to defend the culture in a crisis situation (Blagojević, 2015).

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The forecasts of some theoreticians, philosophers and social scientists who advocated the theory of secularization, namely the inevitable disappearance or marginalization of religion and religiosity in the process of modernization of society - were simply not realized. Actually, the exact opposite became visible at the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s even on the European, the most secularized soil, along with events related to the demolition of the Berlin Wall. Religion and religiosity survived not only as individual-psychological but also as social facts. In other words, religion and religiosity exhibit influence not only on individual consciousness and behavior, but also on collective views and actions. The complex deterministic framework of the reversibility of these phenomena is made up of a number of important changes in social life in the last forty years, both in Europe and in the rest of the world (e.g. the decline of communism, the process of globalization and rise of migration, the decline of postcolonial secular nationalism in the Middle East and North Africa and the rise of the spiritual revolution /Iran/ and various forms of radical Islam). On the one hand, religious traditions in many societies acquire extrareligious, political significance and thereby, on the other hand, deprivatize the accepted, often syncretic, religious ideas and behaviors. Thus, the deprivatization of religious apprehension represents the crucial moment in the desecularization of social life, primarily in some

transitioning, post-socialist societies. Although there is significant (mis)use of religion for non-religious purposes in such circumstances, it is precisely this influence of religious consciousness and the social significance of religions and their hierarchies that points to the moments of desecularization of social life. However, the revitalization of tradition is not the only source of the potential significance of the religious sphere for social life. Pluralization and diffusion of religious expression, especially in developed democracies, are certainly one of the important sources of vitality of religion in the modern world.

In addition to the visible action of different religions in the world (rivalry among them, missionary and the emergence of fundamentalism – (Habermas, 2008) several moments further reinforce their contemporary position (Turner, 2011): the globalization of devotion, the transformation of religion into goods in the market of religious ideas and practices and the occurrence of spirituality, especially in the West. The globalization of religion, therefore, has three forms: global revivalism that concerns traditional forms of religion with orthodox beliefs and practices - either in churches, mosques, temples or monasteries - which include traditional fundamentalism, Pentecostalism and charismatic churches. The second form concerns national and traditional religions that gather those who seek solace, healing, and various kinds of compensation; and, finally, we are witnessing the emergence and spreading of a *new kind of spirituality (of religiousness)*, as heterodox, urban and commercialized form of religiosity, namely, the other side of *traditional, institutionalized* churches (Karpov, 2010). Thus, world religions grow and express their social significance, mostly in relation to identity politics in different parts of the world, while *new religious expressions* and independent churches, originated from the United States, on the other hand, are multiplying and globalizing (Синелина, 2014). By becoming, in part, goods in the market of spiritual products, in some parts of the world the conflict between religion and the secular society is getting milder, as religion enters the framework of the consumerist culture of modern capitalism.



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