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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUSNESS IN CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPE

Religiousness in Central and East Europe under the Conditions of Social Transformations

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1.0 Introduction

Durkheim, the precursor of contemporary sociology of religion, proceeded from the theoretical hypothesis that religion is a social factor which exercises control on individuals. The context of this control is the group which influences the internalization of beliefs and customs. Congruently with this, religion plays an important integrative role. Given current religiousness and the prevailing process of individualization and secularization, as a system of persuasions, beliefs, customs, and rituals which binds together the members of a group, religion itself is changing and increasingly becoming a private fact. Hence, a fact which above all concerns the individual.

Just a cursory glance at contemporary society reveals that changes are occurring in the values of people and social groups. Traditionally highly-valued phenomena, objects, institutions are losing their significance. The advances of the natural sciences and technology are replacing the mysterious with the rational; the fear of the unknown is being eradicated by growth in human experience and knowledge; the rise in prosperity, the orientation to the worldly and the living, the appearance of inner religiousness and de-institutionalization of religion--signal the direction and intensity of value changes. The social character of religion is clearly changing. Social contexts and factors determine the social position and role of religion as well as religiousness as its individual expression. In restricting this study to religion in the advanced Western societies and the former-socialist East and Central European societies, the focus is placed above all on contemporary Christianity, specifically on the functioning of the Catholic and Protestant Churches. This restricted (social, cultural) religious space is characterized by great structural and cultural changes which in interaction are

reflected in rapidly rising rationalism and declining dependency of the individual on his group, and thus in growing individualism and changes in customary beliefs, values, and conduct. These structural and cultural changes are not occurring evenly nor are producing the same effects in all European countries. Although some general trend (convergence) can be discerned, and one of its expressions is secularization as a general developmental direction, the differences between countries are nevertheless great. Interpersonal relations in all segments of life (family, work, leisure time, etc) are being replaced by complex relations and the functions of information and communication systems. Most forms of immediate group control are disappearing. Whereas once it was nearly impossible not to go to church, express contrary convictions and behave differently (deviantly) due to the group's prevailing values, beliefs and conduct (Wilson, 1982), now this is becoming quite normal. People are becoming increasingly independent of their surroundings, increasingly lenient towards themselves, and more permissive towards others.

In describing religiousness and the position of the church in the European context today, or over the last few decades, we cannot go past the structural changes which gradually developed in the early 1920s and by the early 1950s diagonally split the European space into West and East. West Europe, as a structural-cultural space marked intensely by all the foregoing processes and changes, is synonymous with a society with a pluralistic market, political and ideological order. There religiousness and the church have preserved their natural position by themselves changing. The term East is synonymous with a society that has experienced cataclysmic structural and cultural shocks, abolished private property as well as cultural, ideological, and political pluralism, and began to develop as a so-called socialist state. These countries are characterized by an abrupt change in the position of the church and scope for religious expression. Whereas the growing individuality in the West comes from the dissolution of the social milieu's control capabilities, in the East suppression and then loss of religiousness and atheism result from tighter (ideological) control and stricter sanctions for proscribed behavior, as well as the operation of the monopolistic system of indoctrination. Earlier, the group supervised compliance with religious rules and conduct at the interpersonal level. Under the new circumstances the group (even the family, working group, etc.) monitored and severely penalized non-compliance with the prohibition of religious and church life. In the West the church developed freely and yet lost its social role. In the East it became the "opium of the masses" and "the barrier to the united revolutionary struggle of the exploited class for heaven on earth," etc. In the former-socialist countries there was a deliberate policy of suppression of religion and the church for decades (Hallman and de Moor, 1963). The methods used differed; some were brutal, some subtle and refined. For ideological and tactical reasons religion was treated as the enemy of humanity (Zulehner, 1993).

The position of religiousness and the church in the West was influenced primarily by structural and cultural changes. Some authors see the direction and intensity of the changes as marking the secularization process while others question its very existence. For example, Greely (1993) concludes from an analysis of extensive international research of religiousness[1] that not only is religion still alive but it is still significant. In his opinion it is too early to write an obituary for religion. According to him, there is no empirical evidence of a long-term decline in religiousness. Its state today cannot be qualified as a regression from that prevailing in Christian Europe. It is difficult to describe the changes in religious practices as regression, etc. All this suggests rejection of the secularization thesis.

On the other hand, in their interpretation of the results of an extensive international value survey[2], Hallman and Ruud de Moor (1993) put the main stress on secularization as a process that is radically altering Western society and culture. They find this process became more marked after the Second World War, and they have posited three basic hypotheses with regard to its course: (1) the more economically advanced a country, the more advanced is secularization and individualization, at least in Western democracies, (2) religious values and church-related moral values will continue to change in the direction of secularization and individuality, and (3) secularization and individualism will in the end bring a convergence amongst nations.

Secularization is expressed by the lowering of the thresholds of restrictions imposed on the individual by society and the group; the individual chooses his/her own beliefs and actions more freely; individual participation in church activity declines even up to the denial of church membership; the individual becomes estranged from traditional religious culture; the church loses its influence in society. Religiousness and the church thus become a matter of personal choice and coercive restrictions on the individual diminish more and more. The authors demonstrate the process of secularization by means of data on devoutness (church

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[1]The project "International Social Sciences Program: Religion, 1991," was carried out in 17 West European countries (treating the Western and Eastern parts separately), the Philippines, New Zealand, USA, Hungary, and Slovenia. In Slovenia it was conducted as part of the Slovenian Public Opinion project of the Faculty for Social Sciences (FDV), Center for Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research (CJMMK), University of Ljubljana, SJM 91/2 International Survey on Belief and the Church, project leader Dr. Niko Tos, sample N=2080.

[2]The European Value Program, and the World Value Program (WVP), conducted in two stages over 1981-1990 and encompassing more than 30 countries from all continents. Project leader of the World Value Program is Prof. Ronald Ingelhar, Center for Political Research, Institute for Social Sciences, University of Michigan. Slovenia joined the WVP program in the second stage: World Value Program, project leader Dr. Niko Toš, SJM 1992; SJM92/1, N=1035; FDV, CJMMK, University of Ljubljana.

attendance, involvement in church organizations and belief), orthodoxy (belief in God and fundamental religious tenets), religiousness (belief in a personal God), confidence in the church and observance of the rites of passage. Their analysis rests on data collected at two time cross-sections (1981-1990). The very fact that the survey covered many countries, systematically at two time cross-sections over a ten-year interval, gives an opportunity for comparative analysis and thus opens a new chapter in contemporary sociology of religion. Let us examine their basic findings.

The analysis of devoutness (Hallman, De Moor, 1993) shows a secularization trend in all countries examined, with the exceptions of Ireland and Northern Ireland. There are notable differences between countries in the intensity of the process and the times when the process was launched intensively. The data clearly shows that the shift from higher to lower devoutness categories comes with increases in marginal church members and finally an increase in the undevout. Ranking highest in devoutness at both points in time are Ireland, Northern Ireland, USA, Italy, and Spain; the lowest are Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, France, and Great Britain.[3] With regard to the proportion of undevout, the most outstanding are Holland, United Kingdom, France, and Belgium while in Sweden, Ireland, and Denmark there are nearly no undevout. All this suggests that Europe's religious space is very colorful, segmented, and defined by various specific features and circumstances of each country or its cultural-historical context. The process of secularization is also evident and intensive in southern Europe, in the 'traditional Catholic' countries, yet in the Scandinavian countries which traditionally show low religiousness, there is no visible outflow from the marginally devout (believers who rarely attend church) to the completely undevout category. The authors conclude in relation to their first hypothesis that at least in the short term the level of economic development is not a decisive factor in explaining the drop in devoutness. After analysis of concrete cases they come to the conclusion that the level of devoutness (church attendance), at least in recent decades, can be explained only by more complicated interactions between structural and cultural factors.

They also analyzed the process of secularization from the standpoint of the orthodoxy dimension and once again found great differences among the countries observed. This points to distinctive and complex influences arising from the structural and cultural context of each country or region. In addition, a connection was discerned between orthodoxy and devoutness as well as important differences in degree of orthodoxy between particular groups in all the

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[3]On level of devoutness Slovenia ranks (ISSP, Religion 1991; SJM91/2, N=2080) together with the North and Central European states although the secularization trend, important in the 1970s stopped and reversed. Devoutness, religiousness, and identification with religious groups have risen in recent years. This is probably due to feedback effects of the transformation of the system.

European states examined, although not in the USA which is characterized by high devoutness and orthodoxy.

At the core of the analysis of the dimension of religiousness is the attitude towards God, or belief in God. Great country differences were observed in this dimension which however are congruent with the level of orthodoxy. Exceptions are Ireland and Northern Ireland where orthodoxy is much higher than religiousness. This is explained by the finding that individual belief systems in traditional countries are strictly dependant on what the group believes. Thus they are determined by group social control and its religious practices. In contrast to the Irish, in Italy and Portugal religiousness is considerably higher than orthodoxy. Thus, especially in the initial phase, the process of secularization erodes orthodoxy more easily than religiousness; religiousness is by nature more deeply-rooted. The research shows that Sweden, Denmark, and France are the least religious and the USA and Italy the most. From differences observed at the group level, they come to the conclusion that these country differences are mainly a consequence of life-styles. The hypothesis of economic determinism cannot be confirmed at this point; rather the data suggests continued development in the direction of individuality and secularization, while the actual state of religiousness at the two time cross-sections does not confirm the convergence assumption.

Analysis of the dimension of confidence in the church (its ability to address moral, family, spiritual, and social problems) shows that confidence varies among countries and is greater the higher the level of religiousness and orthodoxy. The church enjoys the highest confidence in the USA and Northern Ireland and the lowest in Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, and Norway. Further, the level of religiousness is shown to be a good indicator of confidence in the church in a particular country. There is a perceptible difference in confidence in the church between those who are active in the church, or regularly attend religious ceremonies, and those who go to church only occasionally, the undevout. Inter-temporal comparison shows that confidence in the church is decreasing in all countries except Spain where it has actually risen slightly.

Following Durkheim's thesis that religious practices are crucial for religion's cohesive function, Hallman and de Moor analyzed the attitude towards rites of passage. They find that this function of religion or the church's role in the diffusion of these practices has decreased. These practices are being adopted and performed not only by the devout, orthodox and religious believers, but also by marginal believers, that is the undevout category. That is to say non-believers, people who are not church members, follow these practices. This is not an expression of religiousness, but it is rather an expression of the general culture which has lost all religious meaning for a large part of the population. Hallman and de Moor conclude that the greater degrees of secularization and individualization in society today compared with fifty years ago are the outcome of radical changes that occurred before the 1980s.

Church attendance is continuing to decline just like adherence to traditional religious values, while at the same time permissiveness is growing visibly in many countries. This all indicates the process of individualization and secularization is continuing, although the pace of change seems to have been waning in the past decade. Often the changes are also a consequence of generational succession.

The hypothesis of economic determinism is not confirmed. The case of high religiousness in the USA in particular militates against it. Moreover, a tendency towards convergence, as conformity of predominating values, judgments, and beliefs has similarly not been confirmed.

In comparison with Greeley's study, which did not go beyond a superficial examination, Hallman and de Moor conducted a theoretical and methodologically sound analysis which revealed the true nature and extent of the process of secularization in contemporary European countries. This was the main reason why it has been presented in such detail here.

Now let us go back to the starting point with a question: if the position of the church in the so-called socialist Central and East European countries is impaired, limited, and marginalized, and further, if these societies have developed under the influence of conformity, one-party rule, a single ideological dogma, with a high degree of internal control and a developed repressive apparatus, etc., did their secularization process unfold in the same way as in the Western cultural space? Was religious culture in these countries determined merely by decrees which prescribed educational values, the intellectual content of the mass media, the form of ideological control, and the tools of ideological compulsion? Considering the nature of religiousness and its interwoveness with cultural tradition, such assumptions may be rejected. It is unlikely that a uniform system of ideological repression like that which prevailed in East and Central Europe would produce a completely uniform level of religiousness in conflict with consciousness and practices. The systemic determination of religiousness is greater the longer the systems are in operation and the more repressive they are. The level of ideological orthodoxy in a country is a significant co-determinant of the scope for functioning of the church and thus for expression and preservation of religiousness. The development and practice of religious culture was certainly influenced by the closed nature of these societies, or countries, and their prosperity. Further, the state of religious culture in a country is influenced by the church's historical position, especially during the Second World War and the equating of religious and national identity, and so on. In all these respects the Central and East European countries differ widely. Thus, Poland is distinguished by its highly-developed Polish-Catholic national identity and the special role of the Polish church throughout national history, particularly during the Second World War and later when it became synonymous with resistance to the Communist regime. In contrast, was the position of Slovenia which developed within Yugoslavia, with the least orthodox and most liberal

one-party regime, considerable openness, and relatively high prosperity. On the other hand, the former-GDR or East Germany (and the Czech Republic and Baltic states) was marked by the highest level of systemic orthodoxy, total control of all relations between the individual and the group, and a developed system of sanctions.

The formation and expression of religiousness and the position of the church were also influenced by factors other than these system specific ones, as shown by shifts in religiousness and devoutness in the West European space. There is no good and convincing proof for the assertion that secularization, as a process of leaving the church, is a 'natural process' in the open and democratic societies in West Europe, while in Central and Eastern Europe it is purely systemically determined. In the latter space too, there were processes of de-agrarianization, industrialization, urbanization, agglomeration in urban centers and metropolises, with a corresponding real decline in the power of control mechanisms and the process of individualization. Precisely these processes carried these societies across the threshold of really existent socialism. The more dynamic systems came apart under the weight of internal liberalization while the more rigid and orthodox systems disintegrated in a wave of revolutionary transition. Thus, after the mass flight of its people and the fall of the wall, East Germany collapsed. By contrast, Slovenia took shape as an independent democratic country gradually through internal liberalization within the legal framework in the period after 1985, although on the way it had to fight a ten-day war against the former-Yugoslav Army. These are two extreme examples of the course of transition in Central and East Europe which point to the initial or previous state of affairs, which also applies to religious culture as an important expression of national culture. It is unwarranted to expect religiousness to be uniform in Central and East European countries and hence confirm its crude systemic determination. These countries with their socialist system should also be expected to differ widely in all aspects of religiousness and attitudes towards the church. The range of differences between them is wide and the factors determining them diverse. Indeed the hypothesis that the predominantly socialist system in these countries promoted the secularization process in all cases cannot be confirmed.

Hereafter attention is centered on the Central and East European countries. Drawing on the two principal researches first an examination is made of the state of religious consciousness and attitude towards the church in the nine Central and East European countries along the diagonal from the Baltic to the Adriatic Sea. Next the state of religiousness is examined in the unified German space (that is the former Federal Republic and German Democratic Republic, or for convenience West and East Germany) as a case of extreme systemic determination of religiousness and religious culture. Besides this, the situation with religious culture in Slovenia is presented by way of comparison.

2.0 Religiousness in Times of Social Transformation--The Position of the Church in Central and Eastern Europe

Religious values were given strong emphasis in the European Values Program which at first in 1982 covered twenty West European countries and was expanded to more European and Non-European countries when repeated in 1990/91. A separate analysis and interpretation of nine Central and East European countries, namely, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, East Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Slovenia was done by a group of researchers, religious scholars, and pastoral theologians at the Pastoral Forum in Vienna.[4] Two features were more or less characteristic of all the selected countries: (1) in the past fifty years they had Communist party rule, a socialist social order and (with the exception of Slovenia) they had been part of the Soviet block, and (2) by cultural-historical legacy and tradition the majority of believers are Christians, or more specifically Catholics. A feature of their revolutions and transition was stress on national identity as the centerpoint of the liberalization and democratization process, especially in those cases involving dissociation and separation from a multinational state formation and attainment of statehood.

One of the aims of the Pastoral Forum was to more accurately measure by means of research methods, the extent of the damage to the religious culture in these countries. Mention has to be made at the outset of the methodological difficulties the researcher wittingly or unwittingly faces in attempting this evaluation at the empirical level because of the lack of prior measurements or criteria for these evaluations. The extent and depth of changes which are not determined systemically is hard to separate from all others occurring in a particular social and temporal context.

It is self-evident that systemic determination (the socialist system) in the course of fifty years and the influence of the prevailing ideological and systemic indoctrination do not have the same effects in different countries. Particular attention shall be given here to Slovenia's position in relation to the others. Three dimensions: religiousness, Christianity (orthodoxy) and devoutness[5] were employed to examine the state of belief and the church in these countries following the end of the socialist period and their transition to a pluralistic democratic development.

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[4]P. Zulehner, ed., Kirchen im übergang in freiheitliche Gesellschaften, (Vienna: Pastorales Forum E.V., 1994), p. 174.

[5]The operationalization of these dimensions which differs in part from the WVP analysis (Hallman, de Moor, 1993) is described in Zulehner, P., 1994.

2.1 Religiousness

Eight criteria of religiousness were used: the importance of God in life, frequency of prayer, solace from faith, desire for meditation, attitudes towards religious rites at birth, marriage and death, religious self-evaluation, religiousness of the source family, agreement with parents on religious questions. Orthodoxy was measured in terms of adherence to Christian religious teachings, attitude towards the image of God and belief in resurrection. Devoutness was defined by membership in religious groups, frequency of church attendance, confidence in the church and view of domains in which the church can provide answers and in which it should be engaged. Data from the International Value Survey used here are based on three theoretically distinct areas: examination of personal religiousness, the Christian content of personal religiousness, and attitude towards various religious or spiritual groups. We shall look at the results in sets.

Frequency of prayer and attitude towards rites. Personal religiousness may be evinced through the frequency of prayer and attendance at or performance of rites at important events in life such as birth, marriage, and death (rites of passage); in this framework we also present data obtained from questions concerning belief as a source of solace and the desire for meditation.

In all the countries examined, except for Poland, the need for religious rites was the most prevalent at times of death. On all the other criteria of religiousness country differences were evident. It is noteworthy, however, that the need for rites at important times in life is prevalent and common to believers in all countries; this also holds in the main for the desire to meditate, although there are manifest country differences and deviations in view of faith as a source of solace. The differences in frequency (or abstention from) prayer are greater.

Poland stands out in a class of its own on all the criteria of religiousness. Next in line with lower religiousness are Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia. The third group, with a considerably lower level of religiousness, includes Latvia, Estonia, East Germany, and the Czech Republic. The differences between the countries observed are more than evident.

A further criterion of personal religiousness was the evaluation of the importance of God in a person's life. A ten-degree scale was used for measurement. The country differences were not as great as in the first case, although again Poland stands out with the highest value accorded to the significance of God. The second class includes Slovakia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovenia, and the third, with the lowest average evaluation, East Germany and the Czech Republic.

Self-evaluation of religiousness.[6] Great country differences were found on this criterion. Whereas 96% of Poles consider themselves religious, only about 20 % or nearly five times fewer Estonians do. The proportions were exceptionally low in East Germany, Czech Republic, and Latvia (in the 32% to 38% range), while Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, and Lithuania formed a intermediate class. The highest level of confirmed atheists was found in East Germany (17%) followed by Slovenia (7%) although overall the level of declared atheists is strikingly low. This indicates varying courses of modernization (industrialization, urbanization), intensities of ideological pressure throughout the fifty-year postwar development and the effects of ideological indoctrination. It may be inferred that the effect of ideological indoctrination in Poland was negligible. Rather the opposite effects may be inferred--leading to total identification with the church as the core of religious-national identity and the carrier of opposition to the system.[7] On the other hand in Estonia, East Germany, and the Czech Republic the effects of ideological indoctrination are more than evident, although only in East Germany do they reach the final form of active atheism.

Transmission of religious culture. This concerns the relationship between religiousness or religious culture in two succeeding generations and the emphasis placed by the family on religious education. The question on the religiousness of parents reveals two things: first, the religious socialization environment of the population, and second, in combination with the questions on religious self-evaluation and the importance of religious education, it indicates any shifts in the prevailing type of religious culture. The data again fall into three types or classes. Poland stands by itself in the first class with no significant deviations found on the intergenerational plane (between the religiousness of parents and current religious education). Virtually all Poles live in Catholic families, describe themselves as believers, and two-thirds of them stress the importance of firm belief or religious bonds as an important educational rule in the family. The lowest group or type includes East Germany, the Czech Republic, Latvia, and Estonia. It is characterized by a low level of recognizable religiousness of the family environment (from 48% to 19%), a low level of religiousness of the respondents (from 38% to 20%), and rare mention of religion as an educational principle in rearing children (from 13% to 3%). Between these the middle category, which includes Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, and Slovenia is characterized by a high initial (parental) religiousness,

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[6]A separate question about personal belief required classification into four groups: (1) believer, (2) I am not a believer, (3) I am a confirmed atheist and (4) I am undecided.

[7]The church as a point of identification in the process of transition is losing importance as shown at the last elections (1994).

predominant religiousness of the respondents, and relatively limited emphasis on religiousness or faith as a principle in child-rearing (from 33 to 21%).

With respect to the personal religiousness dimension then the nine countries examined fall more or less regularly into three groups on all eight criteria. These groups may be described as: predominantly high religiousness, average religiousness with signs of growing non-religiousness, and low religiousness with a predominance of non-religiousness. On all the criteria examined only Poland fits into the first group. Slovakia follows the most closely, at the top of the second, with Slovenia, Hungary, and Lithuania coming next. Latvia ranks between the second and third group. The Czech Republic, East Germany, and Estonia group clearly in the third, lowest category.

2.2 Christianity (Orthodoxy)

Criteria indicating the Christian character of personal religiousness, or orthodoxy, were also employed in the Value Survey. First attitudes were examined towards fundamental tenets from the Christian and one from the Asian religious tradition. Belief in God, the soul, sin, life after death, heaven, resurrection, the devil, hell, and reincarnation were examined by means of a multi-degree scale allowing a hierarchy of beliefs in these religious tenets to be constructed.

The descriptive data clearly shows the great differences in the belief in basic religious tenets and further that these differences are obtained not only between countries but also within them. The most generally accepted religious tenet is belief in God (95% to 20%) followed by belief in sin (84% to 20%), the soul (72% to 13%), life after death (62% to 11%), heaven (67% to 7%), and resurrection (64% to 7%). Belief in reincarnation is lowest (31% to 12%), followed by belief in hell (37% to 4%) and the devil (30% to 4%). Components of religious teachings with a positive, optimistic connotation (such as belief in God, the soul, life after death, and heaven) are accepted more strongly and distinctly than those with a negative or repressive connotation (hell, the devil). The ranking of attitudes regarding all nine religious truths completely confirms the foregoing categorization. Poland comes in the first category by itself followed by Slovakia, Hungary, and Slovenia, and all the other countries come in the lower half of the distribution.

The concept of God was examined by means of a question indicating a theistic (Christian) or a deistic view of God, or an agnostic or atheistic view. The data do not yield the same distribution of countries into three categories as before. Poland once again is in a category of its own with a theistic view prevailing strongly (79%) and a negligible incidence of all other responses. In Hungary, which comes second in frequency of the theistic view, there is also a significant proportion of agnostic and atheistic views, while in Slovenia, Lithuania, and

Slovakia deistic views are more prevalent. In the rest of the countries examined the frequency of theistic views is negligible, and deistic views predominate, with the exception of East Germany where atheistic views (48%) are the strongest.

As already noted belief in God is at the core of personal faith and is the central religious tenet unparalleled by any other tenet or belief. This holds for all Central and East European countries examined with the exceptions of Lithuania where belief in sin and the soul are more prevalent, the Czech Republic where the belief in sin is more marked, and Latvia where belief in the soul is stronger in part. This and the fact that an average belief in sin takes second place, before all other religious tenets, indicates the ethical dimension of religiousness.

In Christian teachings the concept of an after-life, belief in resurrection and heaven are significant. The differences in the concept of God presented are expressed in their entirety in the belief in an after-life, resurrection, and heaven. Belief in these basic Christian teachings are most strongly rooted in Poland, followed by Slovakia, Latvia, Hungary, and Slovenia. It is however declining in the other countries examined.

Just as in the analysis of self-evaluation of religiousness, it may be concluded here that there are significant differences between the Central and East European countries examined in the Christian character of beliefs. Yet again Poland is a category of its own. It is followed by Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, and Lithuania while the Christian character of belief is decomposing in the Czech Republic, Latvia, Estonia, and East Germany.

2.3 Devoutness

The third dimension examined concerns attitudes towards specific religious groups. Measured in terms of membership and involvement in these groups, this criterion is usually characterized as devoutness. The European Values Survey offers a number of indicators: membership of religious groups, confidence in the church, attendance at church services. Added here is presentation of data on views regarding the everyday issues the church should help resolve, that is the social matters it should address.

Membership in religious groups. The proportion of respondents that do not belong to any religious group varies in the Central and East European countries examined. By far the highest proportion not identified with a religious group is found in Estonia (86%), followed by East Germany (62%), the Czech Republic, and Latvia (61%). The lowest proportions were found in Poland (4%) and Slovenia (27%). In line with this there are manifest differences in the proportion belonging to a religious group and particularly the Catholic church. Thus, membership in the Catholic church predominates in Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Lithuania. There are substantially more Catholics than Protestants among believers in

Hungary and the Czech Republic, while Protestants significantly outnumber the Catholics in East Germany. Among the countries examined, membership in other churches (Orthodox) is more pronounced in Latvia (12%), Estonia (6%), and Lithuania (5%).

Once again the countries fall into three groups. In the first comes Poland without parallel. The second, where the proportion of members of religious groups ranges between 73% to 57%, includes Slovenia, Slovakia, Lithuania, and Hungary. In the third category, with approximately 39% to 40% of respondents identifying with religious groups comes Latvia, the Czech Republic, and the East Germany. Estonia stands apart with a mere 14%.

Attendance at religious ceremonies. The differences between countries are large. In Poland 83% of the population attends church ceremonies at least once a month, 42% in Slovakia, 35% in Slovenia, 28% in Lithuania, 23% in Hungary, 13% in the Czech Republic, 17% in East Germany, and only 12% in Latvia. Regular attendance at Sunday services varies even more, from 65% to 5%.

Confidence in the church. The confidence the church enjoys among the people or believers in a country or milieu is significant in consolidating religious culture and intensifying contacts with the church. This confidence is higher or lower depending on the situation in which the church functions and the way it has functioned in the past and is functioning in the present. Comparative analysis shows that the differences in level of confidence are pronounced and great. The countries rank differently on this criterion than the usual three category classifications. Poland again stands apart with a high level of confidence in the church. But grouping in the second category are Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, and Estonia which are characterized by a predominant confidence in the church. The third category includes Slovakia, East Germany, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic where lack of confidence in the church is characteristic. While the ranking of East Germany and the Czech Republic are in a sense internally consistent, for they are both characterized by low socio-religiousness in general, the Slovakian and Slovenian cases require special explanation. Namely, lack of confidence in the church is expressed by 51% of respondents in Slovakia and 61% in Slovenia. In view of the high socio-religiousness in these countries, which places them above Lithuania and Hungary and behind Poland, it is not possible to speak of an impairment of their religious culture but rather of an impaired image of the church in their value systems. The fact that the church has not succeeded in winning greater confidence during the transition after the democratic revolution as institutions of the new era and fulcrums of liberalization and independence (both countries have recently achieved sovereignty), is not entirely due to their Tory repression in the past.[8] One possible

[8]The differences between Slovakia and Slovenia in this respect are more than evident. For decades Slovenia has been endeavouring to settle relations between the church and the state (See: Roter,Zdenko, 1993) whilst in the past decade dogmatic pressures were easing, political

explanation may be its politicization in the between-war period, the way its relations with the state were arranged, and its current political involvement in the newly independent countries. Whether this explanation suffices or not requires detailed study. In Slovenia's case the low level of confidence in the church as an institution and in the clergy, which is associated with high identification with the religious community and above-average religiousness, may derive from earlier resentments and historical actions which brought the church and politically active clergy into conflict with the Liberals and subsequently the Communists, movements in the pre- and between-war period, such as, the insularity of the church institutions, its reservations towards its followers' extra-institutional movements, and at the time of the social turnaround, its uncritical bias in the name of reconciliation, as well as its ties to the past, the attempt to revive the church's position of social power through the restitution or re-privatization of its former semi-feudal estates, and further the open ties of part of the clergy to right-wing, conservative political forces and parties. Of course, these critical qualifications and remarks do not apply to the institutional church as a whole, but to individual, publicly prominent parts of it. This nonetheless is enough for the relatively adverse attitude amongst the public and believers towards the church and the clergy in general.

View of the role of the church. This aspect of the survey was measured by two questions: can the church provide answers to questions in the domain of morals issues, family life, spiritual and social problems and personal needs? Is it called upon to take positions on the situation in the Third World, racial discrimination, disarmament, environment, euthanasia, abortion, unemployment, extra-familial relations, homosexuality, and government policies?

Answers to the first question show that the differences among countries are very pronounced. In Poland the high level of confidence in the church is reflected in the position that it is entirely capable of dealing with spiritual needs, family relations, and moral matters. Views on the church's capabilities to address social and life issues are more reserved. Hungarians and Lithuanians hold similar views, except that they also stress the role of the church in addressing social problems. Non-religious Czechs and East Germans and the religious Slovaks hold very similar views on its authority in spiritual matters and personal needs; however, they differ with respect to family matters and social issues. To a great extent Czechs and Slovaks ascribe it authority to deal with problems at the family level but less so with social problems. The exact opposite is the case with East Germans: only a third considers that the church has the authority to address family matters, while a half considers it called upon to address social issues. On an international scale Slovenia stands out, together with

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relations were liberalizing internally, etc.

Latvia lagging substantially lags behind it, with a exceptionally low estimate of the church's 'capabilities' to act. Respondents in Slovenia primarily stress its spiritual role, that is, its authority to address questions on the meaning of life (51%); its role in the ethical domain is relatively positively rated (39%), while its success regarding family and current social issues is evaluated considerably lower (34%, 32%).

The majority of respondents or believers in all the countries examined ascribe the church a primarily spiritual role, and emphasis on other domains varies from one country to another. For example, East Germans emphasize social problems, the Poles and Lithuanians family problems, and the Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, and Slovenes moral problems as the second most important domain. There are also characteristic differences among countries regarding the matters with which the church should concern itself. Above all it is clear that the East Germans ascribe the highest and broadest 'authority' to the church.[9] The country differences in expectations relating to the activities of the church are great. Despite their low level of religiousness the East Germans evaluate the church's authority the highest whereas both the highly religious Poles and the low-religious Czechs are more moderate and reserved. With their above-average religiousness both the Slovaks and the Slovenes are the most restrained in their rating of the church's 'authority'. Thus, the East Germans, Hungarians, and Poles strongly stress its role in addressing Third World problems, as well as racial discrimination; disarmament is stressed as a church concern by the Czechs and Hungarians, ecology by the East Germans, Hungarians, Czechs, and Poles, euthanasia by the East Germans, Poles and Hungarians, the right to life or abortion by the Poles, East Germans, and Hungarians, unemployment by the East Germans, Hungarians, and Poles; extra-marital relations by the Poles, homosexuality by the Poles, and government policies by the former-East Germans. Disarmament and environmental protection are singled out strikingly by the Slovaks and Slovenes, who also show the least desire for the church's involvement in the sphere of government policies.

As in judgments of the church's capability or effectiveness, there are manifest country differences in relation to judgments of the church's authority which deviate significantly from the foregoing country distribution. Respondents in low-religious East Germany are the most open regarding domains of the church's concern and rate highly its authority to address nearly all current affairs, yet they are reserved about its authority in even traditional domains, such as sexual morality. In their estimates the Poles are much more reserved and

[9]With respect to ten domains cited the East Germans responded positively 6.3 times, Hungarians 5.2, Poles 5, Czechs 4.2, Slovaks 3, and Slovenes 2.8 times.

completely deny it the authority to address government policies.[10] The Slovaks and the Slovenes, who otherwise positively evaluate the church's capacity to address questions about the meaning of life and spiritual matters, are very restrictive, and a broad domain is allowed only by individuals or groups characterized by high religiousness. On average in both countries, the church as an institution is not ascribed an important role at all, and lack of confidence is expressed in its involvement in these domains.

An internal incongruity may be seen in the data on devoutness. The question arises as to the methodological adequacy of treating this dimension as a single whole. Religious group membership, confidence in the church and clergy, judgement of their effectiveness or capability and their 'authority' are in part correlated positively and in part negatively. Thus, Poland is characterized by a high level of identification with the Catholic church, high confidence, and a high rating of its effectiveness, but an average rating of its 'authority'. Outstanding is the marked rejection of the church's involvement in the domain of social affairs and government policies. Substantially different from Poland is East Germany where there is a low level of identification with the church, low confidence, an average rating of its effectiveness, while its authority in all domains (except sexual morality) is given above-average rating. Slovenia (and Slovakia) are characterized by a high level of identification with the Catholic church, a below average low confidence in the church and the clergy, low estimate of its effectiveness or capability to deal with non-spiritual questions, and an especially low estimation of its authority to address various moral and social issues.

The following, more detailed presentation of the effects of systemic determination of religious culture draws on a study of the position of religion in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), namely in the earlier (former-FRG, hereafter 'West Germany') and the new (former-GDR, hereafter 'East Germany') federal lands.

3.0 Religiousness in Germany: The Effects of the Two Systems

The Values Survey provided a special opportunity to study the effects of systemic determination of religious culture. It included questions on religion and was carried out after the unification of the two Germanies using sub-samples for the two previously separate states.[11] Since this survey was done immediately after unification, it is assumed that it allows

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[10]This is shown by voting behavior at the last elections in Poland, in 1994.

[11]Mohler, Peter, Ph. et. al., Die Basisumfrage, (ALLBUS) Zentralarchiv fur empirische Sozialforschung, Mannheim 1991. The research sample included 1477 respondents from the territory of former-West Germany (FRG) and 1537 from former-East Germany (GDR).

examination and measurement of the effects of fifty years of different systems of socialization and indoctrination, with diametrically opposite values and ideological foundations, in their relatively pure and unaltered forms. Of course, this applies without reservation for the lands from West Germany, but this is not the case with lands from East Germany. In the late 1980s, the time of turmoil before the revolution and unification, a new type of political socialization was launched there by the social movements, the mass escapes and demonstrations. This was presumably a time of powerful value transformations. But these transformations could not reach down to primary socialization, and accordingly one part of the value system, primarily religious culture, which had formed in the course of decades remained more or less unchanged. The deeper levels of religious culture and the very essence of belief could not be changed merely by the revolution. Thus, the only changes that could have occurred would be on the surface, such as attitudes towards institutions and the church within a plural society and their social roles in it.

On the analytical plane religiousness, to the extent that it is at all accessible to study, has the function of an experimental variable. With the developed and especially the West European societies we may assume a convergence of social development processes and hence of values. The situation in West Germany's social space, in terms of its economic and urban development, high prosperity, predominant values, secularization processes and religious culture is typical of developmental trends in West Europe. By contrast East Germany, although it carried the seeds of its destruction from its very creation, was a trenchant caricature of the situation and trends in the East European space up to the mid-1980s. Crude industrialism, abolition of the market, one-party rule with a complete ideological monopoly in schools and the media, denial of all individuality, and physical segregation from the German and European surroundings typified its development. These crude divisions affected the one and the same nation. Pacification led the West Germans to democratization and a free market system, but it took the East Germans from one totalitarian system to another. At the time of division both were marked by a high level of war damage. East Germany was predominantly agrarian, the West industrial. While the East was predominantly Protestant the West was half Protestant and half Catholic. Directly after the war the West received substantial financial aid as a bulwark in the contest between the two blocs, whereas the East was industrially exploited intensively and occupied militarily by the Soviet Union for many years. These and other circumstances cannot be controlled in the present experiment, yet they nonetheless significantly co-determined the direction and course of social and cultural development in East and West Germany.

Let us return to the beginning. Using the extensive data (Allbus, 1991), Terwey (1992) extracted and analyzed some basic socio-religious findings, such as identification with religious groups, attendance at religious ceremonies, belief in God, belief in Christian

religious teachings and supernatural phenomena (superstition). Terwey sought to show the differences (and similarities) in religious orientation in the two parts of united Germany. Here we go further and add Slovenian data to the presentation in an attempt to take Slovenia's bearings in relation to the two (extreme) German systems.

Identification with religious denominations. West Germany is marked by a high level of identification with the church (89.4%) and East Germany by an exceptionally low level (35.3%) while Slovenia comes close to West Germany (73.2%)(12). The great majority of respondents in West Germany (89.4%) identified with Christian groups, mostly the Protestant (45%) and Catholic church (41.9%). Members of the Protestant church (28.8% of the total) predominate among East German respondents who identify with the church, and significantly fewer belong to the Catholic (5.5%) and other Christian churches (2.6%). The situation in Slovenia is simpler: 68% belong to the Catholic church and 2.8% to other Christian churches. Thus, East Germany deviates significantly. Here the initial situation in both parts of Germany has to be taken into account.[12] Revealing is the fact that in the 1950s Catholics made up 11%, Protestants 80.6%, and only 7.6% did not subscribe to any religion (Vicher, 1990, 308). There was then an extremely drastic fall in church membership in East Germany; both of the dominant churches were strongly affected although the Protestant more than the Catholic church. It may be said for both West Germany and Slovenia that despite the secularization process, religious group or church membership (Catholic and Protestant) is still high and an expression of cultural, civilizational, national, and religious identification.

Attendance at religious ceremonies. This is closely associated with identification with religious groups. Frequency of attendance differs in the three countries with the demarcation line running between East Germany and Slovenia on one side and West Germany on the other. The percentage of respondents regularly attending ceremonies (more than once a week) reaches a good fifth of Slovenia's population (22.7%), a seventh (14.7%) in West Germany, and only a thirtieth (3.5%) in East Germany. The differences are just as sharp in regard to the proportion of non-churchgoers.[13] This ranges from more than four-fifths (81.9%) in East Germany, a good half (53.7%) in West Germany to over two-fifths in Slovenia (42.6%). In these three states then the practice of attending church or religious services is the most-developed in Slovenia, with West Germany lagging slightly, while it is virtually

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[12]Data from the International Survey on Belief and the Church, ISSP, SJM 1991/2, N=2080; this was conducted at the same time as the German survey with the same methodology.

[13]The question of how much Nazism and the period of the Third Reich affected religiousness and in particular moral values was neglected here.

non-existent in East Germany as an expression of church membership and intimate personal religiousness. On this criteria then the three states seem to fall into two distinct systems: West Germany in one, and Slovenia and East Germany in the other.

Belief in God. If the church as an institution and point of reference and activity has disappeared in East Germany, yet is strongly present in West Germany and Slovenia, the question arises whether personal, inner religiousness has also been erased. Further, does identification with the church and attendance suffice as a measure of inner personal religiousness? Is the flight from the church in East Germany primarily a 'concession' to the system (just as leaving the church may be a form of tax avoidance in West Germany). Data for the two parts of Germany reveal essential differences in inner religiousness (belief in God) as well as changes in personal faith. The West Germany data show confirmed atheists make up less than a tenth (9.6%) while less than a quarter (23.4%) have stopped believing in God. By contrast in East Germany confirmed atheists constitute a half (50.7%), while another quarter (24.9%) report they have stopped believing in God so that together with the atheists they make up a three-quarters of the population. Whereas West Germany is characterized by predominant belief in God, East Germany is characterized even more so by unreligiousness. Comparable data from Slovenian surveys indicates that Slovenia again groups together with West Germany, for only 19% of respondents were undecided on a comparable question. The proportion answering affirmatively that they believe in God reached about three-fifths; a little less than two-fifths are not believers so that confirmed atheism ('I do not believe in god and never have') is stronger in Slovenia than in West Germany. The Value Survey indicates that in Slovenia a third (32.7%) do not believe in God, and about the same in West Germany, whereas three-quarters are not believers in East Germany. Once again the line of division places West Germany and Slovenia on one side and East Germany on the other, although the survey also reveals that the proportion of confirmed atheists is higher in Slovenia than in West Germany.

Belief in God is at the center of the teachings of both main Christian churches (Catholic and Protestant) in this space. Thus in conjunction with attitude towards other Christian teachings, it is a measure of inner religiousness. Since belief in God in the populations under consideration is less widespread than identification with a religious group, evidently a substantial part of those that belong to a religious group and attend services do not believe in God or other religious tenets. The data also show some individuals believe in God and other tenets even though they do not identify with a religious group nor attend religious ceremonies. No substantive differences were found among the three sub-samples in this respect.

Other religious teachings. Comparative analysis of the data for other religious teachings shows that belief in life after death ranges from more than forty percent (44.4%) in West

Germany to less than thirty percent (28.8%) in Slovenia and over ten percent (12.2%) in East Germany. Slovenes believe in hell more (23.6%) than West Germans (20.3%) while few East Germans (5.7%) believe in it at all. West Germans (35.0%) believe in heaven more than Slovenes (27.5%), and even the East Germans have not allowed it to be taken away from them (17.4%). Belief in the devil is lowest in all three samples; there are no real differences between Slovenia and West Germany. In all three belief in miracles is the most widespread. West Germans believe in them the most (51.2%), followed by Slovenes (42.8%), and East Germans (34.9%).

Belief in Christian religious teachings is in a sense uniformly prevalent in both Slovenia and West Germany whereas in East Germany it is barely evident, with the exception of belief in heaven and miracles. Clearly there is a gap in East Germany between religiousness and its Christian content which has almost completely disappeared. Since it may be assumed that the fundamental religious tenets were more strongly instilled and expressed in religious consciousness and beliefs in West Europe, it may be concluded that a quite intensive secularization process is taking place in West Germany and Slovenia. But the state of religiousness found in East Germany cannot be ascribed to the normal course of secularization triggered by processes of modernization and individualization. It is above all a case of forced atheism and accelerated secularization that rested on ideological monopoly in the schools, in promotion and sanctions as well as mass indoctrination through the media.

While religious content and belief have been almost completely driven from consciousness in East Germany, belief in paranormal phenomena, such as lucky charms, soothsayers and astrologers, miracle healers and the like are more 'usual'. Slovenians believe in all kinds of paranormal phenomena more than respondents from either part of Germany. This is especially so with regard to belief in miracle healers and soothsayers which is twice as frequent as in West and East Germany. Otherwise, the East Germans are slightly less superstitious than West Germans. Whether the higher superstitiousness in Slovenia is a reservoir for religiousness, or the exact opposite, is hard to decide.

In concluding this review it may be noted that the extent of identification with the church and the degree of church integration is a point of significant difference between West and East Germany. Identification with the church and religiousness have practically disappeared from East Germany. If this is also characteristic of West Germany, then it may be ascribed to the secularization processes similarly under way, more or less intensively in Western (European) democratic societies. These processes are gradually emptying belief of substantive religious teachings. Comparative analysis and particularly the attempt to determine Slovenia's place in relation to West and East Germany shows a sharp division, with Slovenia standing closer to West than East Germany. It may be assumed that in Slovenia the religious substrata was not substantially damaged and that it has been renewed over the past

few decades, especially in the 1980s and brought closer to the West European average. Besides the systemic damage to the religious culture, evidenced by the changed and marginalized position of the church in society, the expropriation of its property and its separation from the educational system, the secularization process has also been important in Slovenia especially over the last decades just as in the case of Western Europe, concurrently with the loosening of ideological bonds within the system and the processes of renewal of religious culture.

4.0 An Attempt at East-West Comparison

The previous section dealt with the way religiousness developed in one nation under two different systems and showed how Slovenia fits into this picture. Further light on the problems in the East-West space is shed by Zulehner's analysis of Value Survey data for 26 countries from West Europe and Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Lithuania, and Latvia. Using fifteen criteria from the religion section of the Survey (see 2.0 above) and the factor values he calculated the degree of socio-religiousness for each respondent and country sample.[14] This complex indicator was used to rank the countries, viz: Poland ranked highest on socio-religiousness followed by Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. The bottom half of the ranking included the Czech Republic with the lowest socio-religiousness, followed by East Germany, Sweden, and Denmark. Other countries with high socio-religiousness were Italy, Portugal, Canada, Iceland, and Spain. However, France, Lithuania, and the Netherlands ranked low, while Austria, Slovakia, West Germany (former-FRG), Lithuania, Finland, Belgium, United Kingdom, Norway, Hungary, and Slovenia came in the middle.

Zulehner arrives at the following conclusions: (1) considering that the majority of former-socialist countries lie below the average, with the exception of Poland and Slovakia, the hypothesis that religious culture was impaired in these countries seems to be confirmed; (2) nevertheless, both of the two extreme poles in the classification are occupied by former-socialist countries: Poland at the top and East Germany and the Czech Republic at the bottom of the rank order. The distribution of all the Central and East European countries on this dimension does not permit any conclusions regarding the division between East and West.

Zulehner proceeded to classify the countries into four categories according to level of socio-religiousness: first, an extremely high level (Poland, both Irelands and USA), second, an above- average level (Italy, Portugal, Spain, Iceland, Austria, and Slovakia), third, average

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[14]Zulehner,, pp. 39-43.

religiousness with slight deviations downwards (Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, Lithuania, Belgium, United Kingdom, Norway, Hungary, Slovenia, Netherlands), and fourth, a low level (Latvia, France, Denmark, Sweden, East Germany, and the Czech Republic).

The very construct of the socio-religiousness dimension and the method of analysis call for a critical methodological examination. The indicators included do not describe one but several dimensions of religiousness on which important differences may be observed in any given sub-sample. Thus, some countries rank highly primarily because of the confidence shown in the church and the positive estimate of its effectiveness and authority, while others, e.g. Slovenia and Slovakia, rank relatively low because of their responses to these same indicators. This is precisely why the Czech Republic comes at the bottom of the ranking and East Germany next above it, etc.

The following classification of all the countries into four groups appears more suitable: group 1) above-average socio-religiousness (Poland, both Irelands, USA, Italy, Portugal, Canada, Iceland, and Spain), group 2) average socio-religiousness (+/- 0.20 deviation from the average) (Austria, Slovakia, West Germany, Lithuania, Finland, Belgium, United Kingdom, Norway, Hungary, and Slovenia), group 3) below-average socio-religiousness (Netherlands, Latvia, France, Denmark, Sweden, East Germany, and the Czech Republic). Most East and Central European countries thus come in the middle; Poland stands at the top, and East Germany and the Czech Republic at the bottom. It would be difficult to conclude from this ordering that these countries constitute a religious-cultural space quite separate from West Europe. On this classification Slovenia groups with West European countries, such as West Germany, Finland, Belgium, United Kingdom, Norway, Hungary, Netherlands, France, etc.

Of course, this distribution similarly does not deny the hypothesis that the systemic dimension is an important co-determinant of religious culture in the former-socialist countries.

5.0 Conclusions

The Central and East European countries are differentiated significantly by systemic determination of the position of the church and religiousness, along with cultural-historical and modernization factors. Although indisputably state ideological regulations and indoctrination systems worked against the church and religiousness in all cases, it is clear from the results that the intensity of these factors varied from one country to another and to a greater or lesser extent inside a particular country and period. In some the constraints eased, and the repressive political regulation of the church let up, while in others it failed

to act in the intended direction or triggered opposite effects. In some countries the indoctrination systems functioned rigidly, strictly, and fully.

The question of the ideological determination of religious culture in the nine observed Central and East European countries may be answered most easily by citing the examples of Poland, East Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Slovenia which are all marked by a strong predominance of Christian, and specifically Catholic, cultural-historical features--with the exception of East Germany (and partial deviations by Hungary and the Czech Republic). Nevertheless, precisely Slovenia, Poland, and East Germany are the most illustrative examples of the three models of the effects of social, cultural, and ideological factors on the development of religious culture. With the exception of Slovenia, a salient feature of all the countries studied is their exclusiveness towards Europe. East Germany was shut to the West for the entire post-war period, Hungary from the 1950s onwards, Czechoslovakia in the 1960s and 1970s, etc. Slovenia by contrast reached the relatively highest level of economic and socio-spatial development not just as a region (republic) of Yugoslavia but primarily as a consequence of its openness and the intensive impacts from West Europe and its neighboring countries. Movement of people was free to and from the European space from the 1950s. This all allows the assumption that socio-religiousness there was shaped not only by the more liberal Yugoslav and specifically Slovenian political system and practices but above all by general European modernization trends.

The most outstanding cases among the countries examined are Poland and East Germany which illustrate the effects of the systemic determinants of religious culture. In the case of Poland the effects were striking and opposite to that intended. In view of current events in Poland following the turnaround it may be surmised that given fifty years of democratic social development Polish religious culture and the position of the church would have been closer to that in West Europe in many ways. East Germany, today's new federal states, illustrates the exceptional effectiveness of ideological regulation and repression as well as the extreme impairment of religious culture. Over the past few decades in Slovenia the state and the church have endeavoured to reach an accord, and ideological and cultural pluralism has been established gradually. The deviations revealed by the Values Survey and the changes in religious culture since the end of the 1960s to the present (Tos, 1993) may be attributed to a large extent to the modernization process--urbanization, industrialization, de-agrarianization and the growth in social welfare--that is to say, a process that has been significant throughout West European space in this period and its related secularization effects.

In conclusion it may be reiterated:

(1)In the part of the world that has been examined (West, Central and East Europe and North America) the process of secularization is universal and omnipresent.

(2)The secularization process has varying intensity in different countries; it has begun at different points in time.

(3)The secularization process is also evident in countries with a traditionally high level of religiousness (Poland, USA, both Irelands, South America, etc).

(4)The level of secularization reached varies from country to country and is evinced by differences in religious culture.

(5)Differences between 'West' and 'East' are perceptible but are insufficient to confirm the assumption that secularization in the 'Eastern' countries is merely a consequence of state pressure and ideological influence.

(6)Therefore, it holds for East Europe as well that secularization is launched by the same general factors found in the West.

(7)In some Eastern countries the systemic determination of religious culture (East Germany, the Czech Republic) is striking. It is expressed in the decomposition of the religious culture in these countries.

(8)In exceptional cases systemic influences are opposite to those intended: religiousness is strengthened, the secularization process is held up (Poland).

(9)It may be assumed that the transition of the Eastern societies is holding up secularization. In some of them not only has identification with the church been growing in the last few years but so has religiousness, devoutness, and religious orthodoxy.

(10)Secularization had already come to a halt in Slovenia in the mid-1980s; religiousness has burgeoned especially in recent years. Reversal of the secularization trend, that is growth of religiousness, is a reaction to systemic influences on religious expression and the shaping of religious culture.

(11)In comparison with other Central and East European countries Slovenia is above-average in level of religious culture and religious expression, while in comparison with West European countries it is close to average, coming below southern Europe and above northern Europe.

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