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THE SECULARIZATION ISSUE: DISCREPANCIES OF THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL INTERPRETATION AMONG CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGISTS OF RELIGION

by

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I. INTRODUCTION

One of the leading hypotheses advanced to interpret the significance of religion in modern society is undoubtedly the hypothesis of secularization. Unlike most of the journalists and theologians who have largely taken secularization as an established fact, contemporary sociologists of religion are by no means in agreement not only about the nature, causes, and the future course of secularization but also about the very occurrence of secularization itself. Contemporary sociologists who are interested in this topic can be roughly divided into two opposing camps. Whereas one camp maintains that secularization is definitely taking place as religion is progressively becoming marginal and irrelevant--if not disappearing--both in social life and in individual consciousness, the other camp insists that the concept of secularization is more a myth than a fact for religion has not shown any sign of decline or demise. What is more remarkable is that the same sociologists may belong to one camp in one context and switch to the opposing camp in another--that is, he may argue against the secularization hypothesis in one discussion and talk in favor of it in another. Although all sociologists of religion are fully aware of the scarcity of empirical data and the inadequacy of the data that are available, both opponents and exponents of the secularization hypothesis have marshalled empirical materials to endorse their respective positions. The purpose of this thesis is to trace out the source of these discrepancies in the current discussion of secularization.

Due to its popularity, articles, books, and conventions have been dedicated to the thesis of secularization. One can hardly find a con-

temporary textbook on religion without giving some attention to this topic. Yet, a contrasting analysis of contemporary perspectives on the issue of secularization is still wanting. Shiner's (1967) landmark article, "The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research," in which he constructed six ideal types of the meaning of secularization, is an interdisciplinary rather than a purely sociological study. In his master's thesis, "The Codification of the Sociological Theory on Secularization," Tellis-Nayak (1970) attempted to arrange some of the contemporary theories on secularization into an individualization-rationalization framework, treating the objective, structural secularization and the subjective, individual secularization as the subthemes of the general process of individualization and rationalization. In the article, "Les Théories Sociologiques Concernant la Sécularisation--Typologie at Critique," which later, with some changes, was developed into a book, Lauwers (1973) classified some major sociological theories on secularization into three types: pluralization (Herberg and Yinger), privatization (Berger and Luckmann), and rationalization (Weber and Wilson). In his book, The Sociology of Secularization: A Critique of a Concept, Glasner (1976) took a sharp issue with the concepts of secularization in sociological literature criticizing them as social myths rather than scientific constructs. All these studies tend to treat the theorists as though they all took secularization as an empirically already verified fact and overlooked some important distinctions they have made, implicitly and explicitly, in their discussion of secularization. What distinguishes the present study from all the previous ones is the effort to bring to light these distinctions that qualify the arguments of the sociologists about the issue of

secularization. It is argued that the current conflicting and ambiguous views on secularization stem, to a very large extent, from the different definitions of religion that contemporary sociologists of religion employed in their discussion of secularization. Sociologists differ greatly in defining religion. By the term "religion," they may refer to a particular religious tradition, or they may mean religion in general. Even when they speak of religion in general, some may define religion so broadly that they include in their definition even those belief systems that are normally considered non-religious or even anti-religious such as Communism; others may exclude such systems in their definition of religion. In general, if religion is defined in generic terms, sociologists adopting an exclusive definition of religion tend to defend the secularization thesis understood as the decline of religion, whereas those preferring an inclusive definition tend to reject it; but none of the contemporary sociologists is willing to accept a concept of secularization that suggests en eventual total disappearance of religion. However, if religion is defined in terms of a particular religious tradition, all sociologists tend to argue for the secularization thesis, at least, when it indicates the decline of religion; some are even in favor of a concept of secularization that refers to a complete demise of religion.

This study is divided into two major sections. In the first section, attempt is made to analyze how the different definitions of religion which contemporary sociologists adopt, have affected their views on the nature, alleged causes, and future direction of secularization. The objective of the second section is to point out how the different definitions of religion have influenced the sociologists in their interpretation of historical, statistical, and survey data, as well as their evaluation of the signifi-

cance of the upsurge of the so-called new religions.

This analysis is confined, chiefly, to the views of Yinger, Bellah, Parsons, Greeley, Glock, Berger, O'Dea, Luckmann, Martin, Wilson, and Acquaviva. These sociologists of religion are selected not just because they have shown a sustained interest in the issue of secularization, but especially because their positions are representative of those of the contemporary sociologists who have discussed the topic of secularization.

In the absence of a universally accepted definition of religion, any critique of the different approaches to the issue of secularization must be based on a particular definition of religion with its own bias. Hence, this analysis is intended to be descriptive rather than critical.

II. THEORETICAL DISCREPANCIES

With rare exceptions (Becker, 1932, 1967; Goodridge, 1968), the notion of secularization, variously conceptualized as it is, is conceptualized in terms of religion. The definition of religion determines, to a very considerable degree, a sociologist's assessment of religion's past, present, and future significance in society and, consequently, his position on the issue of secularization. Despite its importance, not all sociologists concerned with the problem of secularization have put forward a clear-cut definition of religion: some have proposed more than one, others none. In order to classify a sociologist's stand in the discussion of secularization, a typical definition of religion will be selected if he has offered several; in case he has given none, effort will be made to gather information from the scattered texts of his works to ascertain what he means by religion. This section is intended to point out the implications of the definition of religion for a diagnosis of secularization's occurrence, the evaluation of its alleged causes, and the predictions of its future course.

Definitions of Religion and Conceptualization of Secularization

Definitions of religion proposed by sociologists have been variously classified. Some sociologists such as Berger (1967a:175-178, 1971, 1974), Luckmann (1967:41-43, 1971, 1977), Dobbelaere and Lauwers (1973) divide them into substantive and functional definitions in terms of whether emphasis is placed on the content of religion, or on what religion does for society or the individual. Other writers like Towler (1974:15-18) and Machaleck (1977) distinguish between real and nominal definitions

depending on whether they correspond to all concrete manifestations of religion known, or are just arbitrary constructions of the investigators for their specific researches. For our purpose, it seems convenient to follow yet another group of sociologists such as Robertson (1970:35-41) and Jackson (1974:7-13) and classify them into exclusive and inclusive definitions. Exclusive definitions tend to follow the tradition of Otto and exclude what are conventionally considered not as religions, whereas inclusive definitions are more in line with Durkheim's school and include also what are normally regarded not as religions. Practically, exclusive definitions can be equated with substantive and real definitions, and inclusive definitions with functional and nominal ones. While sociologists committed to an exclusive definition are more likely to argue in favor of the secularization hypothesis, those opting for an inclusive definition tend to refuse it.

Inclusive Definitions

One group of sociologists choose to define religion so broadly that any notion of secularization, seen as "dereligionization" (Robertson, 1947:48) is virtually impossible. According to these sociologists, religion does change in content and form but it never declines or demises.

The most inclusive definition of religion ever advanced by a sociologist is probably the one proposed by Luckmann. Religion is, according to him, "that that makes a human organism a human" (das, was den Menschen zum Menschen lässt) (1972:5). Since, empirically, it is the world view which performs such a function, Luckmann (1967:53) calls the world view "the elementary social form of religion," and as such, it is considered as constitutive of both individual and society.

> The statement that religion is present in non-specific form in all societies and all "normal"

> individuals is, therefore, axiomatic. It specifies a religious dimension in the 'definition' of individual and society but is empty of specific empirical content (Luckmann, 1967:78).

Berger (1971:52) comments on Luckmann's definition of religion: "Since no man or society can exist without religion (in Luckmann's definition), there can be no secularization proper—there is only shift and change of religion."

Indeed, Luckmann (1969, 1971, 1977) considers the notion of secularization that suggests the decline of religion or the disappearance of religion as a contemporary myth, created by those theologians, sociologists, and historians who, seeking for a systematic historical understanding of the emergence, nature, and uniqueness of modern world, employed a substantive, narrow definition of religion, often identifying religion tout court with its organizational and institutional forms, presumed the existence of a golden era of religion from which religion began to deteriorate, and adopted the positivistic view of historical evolution that as human reason develops religion automatically declines. Because the notion of secularization originates in the desire for a comprehensive account of the felt uniqueness of modern world, Luckmann notes that "in a manner of speaking, the roots of the notion of secularization are religious" (1977: 17), and such an account, "subverted by ideological oversimplifications," is called "mythological" because it is "a historical narrative which contains a number of fictitious elements" (Luckmann, 1977:17).

Parsons, in his early writings (1951:326-383; 1952:283-296) emphasizes religion on personality level; but, in his later works (1964; 1966b: 28-29; 1971:207-245), he conceives religion primarily as the ultimate value that informs the whole social order and interprets it in terms of the cybernetic hierarchy of control.

> . . . for many years, the general view which I have been espousing is that, in the socio-cultural sphere, and indeed also the psychological, what has come generally to be called 'religion' stands at the highest level in the cybernetic hierarchy of the forces which, in the sense of defining the general directionality of human action among the possible alternatives permitted in the human condition, controls the process of human action (Parsons, 1971:215-216).

Society is seen, in keeping with the Durkheimian tradition, as a religiously based moral order characterized by congruence within and between the cultural, structural, and personality levels of the social system (Fenn, 1970:117-136). Thus, every society manifests religious values, and every human action is guided, directly or indirectly, by religion. When every social order and human action is necessarily congruent with religious values, a secularized society or individual is no longer conceivable. Parsons calls the concept of secularization defined as the loss of religious commitment or the diminution of religious influence a misinterpretation (1971:217-218) and a false identification of religion with other worldliness (1963:36-37).

While Luckmann and Parsons focus on religion as an objectivated meaning or value system that regulates, controls, and transforms individuals, another group of sociologists, inspired by Tillich, regard religion primarily as a cultural tool invented by man to cope with ultimate problems of existence. Thus, Yinger defines religion as

> . . . a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggle with these ultimate problems of human life. It expresses their refusal to capitulate to death, to give up in the face of frustration, to allow hostility to tear apart their human associations (1970:7).

Bellah employs a similar definition: "religion is a set of symbolic forms and acts which relate men to the ultimate conditions of his existence" (1970:21). Likewise, Martin sees religion as "man's attempt to

come to a working settlement with the condition in which he finds himself" (1965:12-13). Though what are considered as the ultimate problems and the ways of coping with them may change over time, there will, according to these sociologists, always be problems which cannot be adjusted or solved with empirical resources and rational means, and men will always resort to supra-empirical means to deal with them (Yinger, 1967:20; 1970:9-12; Bellah, 1970:203; Martin, 1969:5-6). In other words, the content and form of religion may change as perceptions of the ultimate problems change, but without religion, man would not be human (Bellah, 1970:203). Hence, one should not ask whether or how much people are religious, but how and how differently people are religious (Yinger, 1970:34-35; 488-489). It is obvious that for these sociologists, the idea of religious decline or demise is logically unimaginable.

Yinger (1963:67-74) maintains that the notion of the decline of religion is rooted in the faulty definition of religion in terms of a set of unmodifiable beliefs and practices, which resembles Bellah's remark that the idea of secularization originates from the identification of religion with "belief," understood as an absolutized set of propositions (Bellah, 1970:221-222). Furthermore, to Bellah, as to Luckmann, the idea that as science advances, religion declines or disappears, is not a scientific notion but a religious one, since it functions basically to create an emotionally coherent picture (1970:237). The unitary, irreversible understanding of secularization stems, according to Martin (1969:1-36), from a purist definition of religion, a unilinear view of history, the idea of a universal convergence of culture, and an attempt to simplify the complexity of religious change in the interest of a counter-religious ideology.

In addition to viewing religion as "tentative answers to the ultimate mysteries" (Greeley, 1973:175), Greeley conceives religion as designed to satisfy certain permanent human needs: the needs for belonging to a group which shares his ultimate value commitment, integrating the disturbing forces of sexuality with the rest of life, coming into contact with the mysterious and the awesome, and finally, the need for having certain leaders who can furnish both comfort and challenge in the wrestling with ultimate problems (1972a). As these human needs are postulated to persist, so is also the effort to find means to meet them: religion. Partly reflecting the criticisms of Luckmann and Martin, Greeley (1972a: 17-54; 1972b:127-155) calls the conventional thesis of secularization understood whether as religious crisis or decline a myth supported neither by empirical data nor by sociological theories; it is rooted in doctrinaire assumptions about the nature of history and social change, in the interpretation of the religion of the general population in terms of the intellectuals' attitude toward religion, and in the idea that the present generation is the hinge of history.

Most of the current criticisms of the concept of secularization (Matthes, 1962a; 1962b:74-104; Rendtorf, 1966; Savramis, 1967; Watzke, 1969; Towler, 1974:228-251; Brothers, 1973; Dobbeleare and Lauwers, 1973; Glasner, 1976) are either repetitions, reflections, or variants of the positions cited above. They are all derived, directly or indirectly, from a broad definition of religion and a nature of man that is postulated, implicitly or explicitly, to be religious. Little attention has been given to the questions: Is a broad definition itself an ideology (Berger, 1974)? Is religion universal (Cohen, 1966)? Do all men actually always seek symbolic means to solve the "ultimate problems," or

to meet the alleged religious needs? Is society necessarily held by common values (Fenn, 1970)? Unless these questions are adequately answered, all the criticisms of the concept of secularization themselves might be just as based on doctrinaire assumptions as the concepts of secularization they criticize.

Secularization Modified

As indicated above, all these sociologists have launched their attacks on the notion of secularization from the standpoint of religion so inclusively defined that any conceptualization of decline of religion as such is by definition ruled out. Yet, some modified versions of secularization do appear, here and there, in their works. Such modified concepts of secularization are no longer constructed in terms of religion per se, but in terms of a particular form of religion. Thus, Yinger (1963:67-74) maintains that the concept of secularization makes sense only from the point of view of a specific religious tradition at a given time. Indeed, in his early work (1951:119) he defines secularization as "the process in which traditional religious symbols and forms have lost force and appeal." Bellah, who argues for a distinction between "religion" and "belief," states that "what is generally called secularization and the decline of religion would in this context appear as the decline of the external control system of religion and the decline of traditional religious belief" (1970:227). Elsewhere (Bellah, 1968:222), as an advocate of a religious evolutionary theory, he holds that "the process of secularization involves a change in the structure rather the end of religion itself." Speaking of the Catholic Church after Vatican II, Greeley (1966:119-120) characterizes the transition from a feudal organizational style to a modern large corporate one as secularization:

> In becoming secular it is putting aside the static, tribal, highly symbolic, ritualistic relationship that with some minor changes have been typical of it for half a millenium, and it is taking on the dynamic, rationalized, flexible, and technological relationships of the contemporary world. Just as the organization of the Church in the middle ages reflected the styles of organization to be found in the secular society (or perhaps vice versa) so the Catholic Church in the modern world can be presumed to take on the organizational style which is characteristic of any large corporate body in the modern world (1966:120).

Martin who so energetically called for the elimination of the concept of secularization (1967:9-12) has himself developed a general theory of secularization (1978), a theory, basically limited to Christianity, but, with modification, can also be applied to other religions (1978:1-2). Martin's concept of secularization is no longer understood as a universal, unilinear, and irreversible process but contains several more or less discrete and limited trends, varying both in direction and in degree under specific historical and cultural conditions (1978:2). It could be thus called a "middle range" theory of secularization.

Luckmann (1963:150; 1967:28-40) employed the term secularization when he described the restricted Church participation in Europe and the "radical inner change in American church religion" (1967:36). His early work (1963) was based on the hypothesis that with the growth of urbanization men become less religious. Furthermore, he also developed his own theory of secularization that institutional segmentation has replaced religious values with functional rationality in the various institutional spheres such as economy and politics as he explains:

> . . . Secularization is not a process in which traditional religious values just fade away; it is a process in which internal institutional ideologies replace, within their own domain, an over-arching and transcendent universe of norms (1963:160).

Luckmann points out repeatedly that this theory refers only to the major institutions, not to the individuals or society at large (1969:179; 1973: 78). In other words, social structure is secularized; individual and society are not.

Probably the most peculiar and ambiguous concept of secularization current in the literature is the one formulated by Parsons. Positing society as a moral community and interpreting it in terms of cybernetic hierarchy of control, Parsons suggests that the question of secularization should also be approached within the same framework of reference (1971:215-216). Since, for Parsons, as noted above, it is impossible to conceive any sector or individual in society as being uncontrolled by religious values, he has constructed a concept of secularization, not in terms of the decline of religion, but in terms of the institutionalization of religious values. It is a process in which religion, standing at the top of the cybernetic hierarchy of control and as the ultimate value and ground of meaning, progressively reintegrates those components in society which have, through differentiation, been separated from its influence. This integration is made possible by according religious significance to the secular components, which is, in turn, made possible by modifying previous religious values. Parsons calls the former process "adaptive upgrading," the later "value-generalization." It is, therefore, inaccurate to regard Parsons' concept of secularization just as differentiation. It is, as he himself interprets it, basically a dual process of differentiation and inclusion (1971:218-219). Indeed, by viewing secularization as the institutionalization of religious values, Parsons has emphasized inclusion at the expense of differentiation. In discussing inclusion, he seems to have overemphasized the moral upgrading

of the secular and overlooked the value-generalization, which is precisely what many authors call secularization. Elsewhere (1965a:46), Parsons grants that a society in which no religious institution is permitted to set normative standards for the general population, such as in the United States, may be defined as secularized

Thus, although these sociologists criticize the concept of secularization in one context, they use it in another. Because of the recent discussion of the concept of secularization, it seems that some authors have become more cautious in using it; others even drop the term completely (Winter, 1977; Yinger: 1970 as compared with 1951).

The concept of secularization cannot be conceived unless a fixed point of departure is established. Religion, inclusively defined, can have virtually all possible contents and forms and cannot be limited to a particular form or content. As such, it is unable to provide a starting point from which the process of secularization can begin. The modified notions of secularization, cited above, are only possible because a vantage point has been established, be it the traditional religion, a particular denomination, or the differentiated sectors, which is exactly what the sociologists who choose an exclusive definition of religion intend to do.

Exclusive Definitions

Another group of sociologists prefer a relatively narrow definition of religion, one that is not so narrow as can be identified with any particular form of religion, but narrow enough to make explicit the specific difference of religion so that the religious can be discerned from the non-religious, and thus make the conceptualization of secularization, even in terms of religion as such, possible. These sociologists, though varying

greatly in their elaboration of the definition of religion, all take the sacred, the supernatural, or their equivalents as the essential characteristic of religion.

Berger (1967a:175-177; 1971; 1974a) has repeatedly discussed the implications of the definition of religion for the issue of secularization. He argues for a narrow definition of religion because the elimination of the problem of secularization by a broad definition, as Luckmann did, is a solution too easy to be meaningful. Religion is, for Berger, a symbolic cosmos constructed by man in relation to the sacred in order to provide an ultimate shield against chaos, which continuously threatens human existence (1967a:26-28; 1971:52-53). It is "a symbolic canopy stretched out over the network of social institutions, giving them an appearance of stability and rightness that they would otherwise lack (1967b:310). Secularization is, logically, conceived as the progressive shrinkage of the sacred canopy or the gradual removal of the sacred cosmos from both social structure and individual consciousness (1967a:105-108; 1967b:323-324; 1974a:132). He also defines secularization variously as the demise of the supernatural (1969:2-34), desacralization (1971), and the decline of the experience of transcendence (1976).

Drawing on both functional and historical perspectives, O'Dea, though occasionally speaking of religion also in a broad sense as world view of value orientation (1971), sees religion, basically, as man's response to a beyond experienced as sacred when he faces the limit-situation of contingency, powerlessness, and scarcity (1966:1-35).

> Religion is man's response to breaking points at which he experiences ultimate and sacred powers. Out of this experience religious organizations, ritual practices, and beliefs and values evolve. Such institutionalized religious forms express the human answer

> engendered at the breaking points while putting men into ritual relationships with the sacred and ultimate power" (O'Dea, 1966:27).

Despite his frequent remarks on the loss of direction or orientation in contemporary American society (1969, 1971), O'Dea conceives secularization mainly as a transformation of attitude and thought:

> Secularization can be said to consist fundamentally two related transformations in human thinking. There is the 'desacralization' of the attitude toward persons and things --the withdrawal of the kind of emotional involvement of the sacred. Secondly, there is the rationalization of thought-- the withholding of emotional participation in thinking about the world. Rationalization implies both a cognitive attitude relatively free of emotion, and the use of logic rather than an emotional symbolism to organize thought (O'Dea, 1966:81).

In search for a general, elastic, and culture-free definition of religion, Acquaviva (1971:25-67) ended up simply with "the experience of the sacred." While the concepts of secularization formulated by Berger and O'Dea can, in its simplest form, labeled as desacralization, Acquaviva makes a clear distinction between secularization and descralization. Secularization is conceived as the refusal of magical use of the sacred, or the unwillingness to attribute magical significance to things, events, or persons, whereas desacralization refers to the loss of capacity of the experience of the sacred, or the decline of intensity and diffusion of the experience of the sacred (Acquaviva, 1971:66-67; Acquaviva and Guizzardi, 1971:35-36). This distinction makes possible the notion of a secularized religion, i.e., the experience of the sacred without magical manipulation of the sacred. In other words, a secularized man can still have a religion. But, a desacralized religion, i.e., a religion without the experience of the sacred, is, for Acquaviva, a contradition in term (1971:66).

Some sociologists, though formally defining religion as such in

terms of the more general category of the supernatural or the sacred, are primarily concerned with the organized religions in their discussion of secularization. Thus, Wilson considers religious all "those activities and orientations that make explicit reference to the supernatural source of value" (1976b:4) or are "determined by faith in well-defined supernatural order" (1971:256). Yet, he insists that the discussion of secularization should focus only on the gradual disregard of those beliefs and practices that received sustained social support and institutional expressions (1971:252-253). Hence, the concept of secularization advanced by Wilson refers primarily to the shift of conventional religion from "being central to the whole way of life" to being "no more than a leisure-time pursuit" (1971:265), a concept almost identical with the one proposed by Luckmann. His often cited definition of seculartization reads: "The process whereby religious thinking, practice, and institutions lose social (emphasis mine) significance (1969:14).

Similarly, Glock defines religion per se as any "value orientation that has a supernatural referent (Glock and Stark, 1964:17), but in all his works, he is preoccupied, as he himself attests (1967:29-30), with the significance of Christian religions in the beliefs and practices of individual Americans. As a result, Glock defines secularization basically in terms of Christian beliefs variously as the process in which "a demythologized modernism is overwhelming the traditional, Christ-centered, mythical faith (Stark and Glock, 1968:205), or in which "the mythical, the supernatural elements of traditional Christianity have been replaced by a demythologized, ethical rather than theological religion (Glock and Stark, 1965:116), or as the demise of the old time supernaturalism (Stark and Glock, 1968:213) and the demise of organized faith (Stark and Glock,

1968:216). What Wilson and Glock consider as secularization appears to concur with some of the modified versions of secularization mentioned above such as those of Yinger, Bellah, Martin, and Luckmann.

Secularization Modified

So far it has been shown that, by identifying the central category of religion as the supernatural, the sacred, or the like, these sociologists have been able, each in his own way, to develop their particular concepts of secularization, which, in theory, can lead to the complete disappearance of religion. However, in their elaboration of the definition of religion, they all, implicitly or explicitly, postulate a metatheoretical constant which makes it impossible for them to conceptualize a notion of secularization that entails an inevitable demise of religion.

Already in his early work (1967a, 1969) where he argues for the thesis of secularization of both socio-cultural sphere and individual consciousness, Berger states that "men are congenitally compelled to impose a meaningful order upon reality" (1967a:22) and talks about signals of transcendence metaphorically as rumors of angels (1969). Later, he suggests that "perhaps the multidimensionality of religious experience is an anthropological constant (1974a:133), and that the sacred, as an ontological reality, breaches into human daily life from time to time (1974a:129-131; 1976:9-12). This probably explains why Berger, in his later writings, no longer speaks of the secularization of consciousness.

Unlike Berger who seems to perceive in the experience of the sacred the intrusion of a pre-existing reality, Acquaviva considers the experience of the sacred rather as a pure psychological phenomenon (1971:273-283).

As such, it represents a structural component of human psychology, and it is, in its essential features, a patrimony of all human beings--at least, understood as an expression of human biopsychic structure (1971: 66; 1973a:10). The experience of the sacred may eclipse but can never vanish totally. "For Acquaviva," remarks Guizzardi (1977:388), "the experience of the sacred, in the sense of the radically other of R. Otto, constitutes an anthropological constant of his thesis of the eclipse of the sacred."

As stated above, Wilson and Glock discuss secularization primarily in the context of Christian religion. For both, when Christian religion is discredited, the basic religious needs such as "psychic reassurances, fantasy outlet, affection, supernatural benefit, and special dispensations" (Wilson, 1971:268), and "the need for a system of ultimate meaning" (Glock and Stark, 1965:306) are still to be satisfied. This is the reason why Glock speaks of "the gap of meaning" created by science that is yet to be filled (1976:366), and Wilson talks about the "anomaly of secularization" (1976a:76). He observes that secularization, by destroying community, affection, and irrationality, makes religion appear obsolete; yet, man remains partially irrational and cannot live without community and affection, implying that man still needs religion.

The preceding analysis of the definitions of religion proposed by the leading contemporary sociologists of religion has shown that none of them can be called an exponent of the thesis of secularization without qualification. Sociologists who work with an inclusive definition of religion, though they attack the concept of secularization, do use the term secularization in a particular context; some of them have even developed their own theories of secularization. On the other hand, those

sociologists who adopt an exclusive definition of religion, while arguing in favor of the hypothesis of secularization, do not speak of the complete demise of religion. Thus, none of the concepts of secularization put forward by the leading sociologists of religion can be identified with the conventional idea of secularization which connotes the eventual end of religion.

Causes of Secularization

Whether a sociologist considers a factor as a cause of secularization depends, first of all, on whether he is convinced that there is such a process called secularization. As indicated above, despite the modifications they made in the discussion of the conceptualization of secularization, sociologists committed to an inclusive definition of religion tend to reject the hypothesis of secularization, while those working with an exclusive definition are prone to defend it. The aim of this section is to clarify their respective positions on the alleged causes of secularization. In sociological literature, a variety of factors have been suggested as the causes of secularization, such as the Judeo-Christian concept of God and nature, Greek reationality, humanism, science, education, industrialization, urbanization, mobility, differentiation, and many others. Two--by far the most extensively discussed factors--are undoubtedly science and differentiation; the others, though often referred to, have seldom been subject of dispute. In the following analysis, attention will be given exclusively to science and differentiation. Needless to say, not all the sociologists selected in this study have equally participated in the discussion of both subjects.

Science

The popularity of the question whether the advance of science neces-

sarily leads to the decline or the eventual death of religion has stimulated, among contemporary sociologists of religion, not so much a debate as a variety of comments. Unlike their early counterparts, contemporary sociologists of religion are fully aware both of the intrinsic limitation of the scientific outlook--and hence of its restricted impact on religion--as well as the significance of religion for human existence. Again, how they assess the relationships between science and religion hinges very much on their definitions of religion.

For the sociologists who are in favor of an inclusive definition of religion, the growth of science does not weaken or demolish religion as such, although it may destroy a certain kind of religion. Thus, Yinger points out that "science disapproves specific religious beliefs, but it does not disprove religion" (1970:61). A particular religion may be destroyed because its beliefs and practices are incompatible with science; or its leaders, for various reasons, prevent the necessary adjustment. If, however, the existing religions of a society are rendered obsolete, new ones are bound to appear because, to Yinger, no society can survive without providing means for its members to cope with the ultimate problems (Yinger, 1970:61-62). He states:

> Religion in a scientific era will speak in a different idiom, it will develop new systems of 'overbeliefs' by means of which men struggle with the basic problems of life. But it is no more true to say that science destroys religion than it is to say that science destroys art. When new media of communication, new materials, new instruments are invented, science sets new conditions within which artistic life is carried on; it modifies the forms of expression; but it does not destroy the expressive and creative process.
> . . . Of this we can be certain: by the growth of knowledge, religion will be changed, yet it will not be destroyed (1963:182-183).

While Yinger focuses on the necessary adjustment of religion to the

new environment created by science, Parsons emphasizes the absence of theoretical clash between science and religion as such. Religion is concerned basically with the problem of meaning, the moral aspect of action, and the emotional adjustment to irrational discrepancies of existence, whereas science is interested only in empirically verifiable knowledge (1951:326-383). Bellah (1970:242-248) carries Parsons' argument further that not only science and religion do not have to conflict with each other, but they can also be integrated:

> When I speak of integration I do not mean some kind of fantastic syncreticism of science and religion. They have different purposes, different limitations, different modes of action. But they are both part, and I would argue a necssary part, of every culture and every person. They need to exist in some vital and healthy whole in which each is integral. This means not simply a tacit agreement to ignore each other but open interchange between them with all the possibilities of mutual growth and transformation that entails (1970:244)

Greeley (1972a:15) argues along the same line that science cannot be regarded as a substitute of man's mythological need but as its supplement. He also points out that it is true that science has removed many mysteries of the world but it has, at the same time, also discovered many new ones, which need no less ultimate, thus religious, interpretation than in the previous eras of human history (1972a:55-83). Indeed, "as long as rational science cannot cope with the basic questions religion is designed to cope with, this [the scientific achievement] is of itself essentially a trivial, at least, as far as religion is concerned" (1972a:14).

Martin (1969:116) observes that even though science has increased the general sense of human power, each particular person still feels the threat of contingency and thus the need for religion. He thinks that "maybe the lack of individual power contributes to the massive survival of

beliefs in fate, in luck, in a moral homeostasis and in superstitions of every kind" (1969:117). He remarks further that scientifically sophisticated societies such as America "are capable of living by belief systems emotionally and intellectually crass to the point of nausea" (1967:114). Reflecting Bellah's idea, Martin notes that "there remains in man a perennial urge to fit the scientific achievement (and the scientific threat) into a framework of over-all religious meaning such as vulgarized Marxism provides in communist countries" (1967:115).

Luckmann seems to criticize the idea that science will necessarily demolish religion from the standpoint of sociology of religion. He regards science and religion as but two among many socially constructed symbolic universes (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:40). As such, there is no empirical basis to decide that one is better than the other. This is probably why Luckmann, speaking of science and church-oriented religion, remarks that it is "sociologically downright naive" to believe that the various types of faith in science is inherently superior than the church religion and one will necessarily retreat as the other advances (1967:38).

These sociologists, critical of the concept of secularization, tend to discuss the impact of science on religion in terms of religion tout court, taking for granted, or paying little attention to its effect on particular religious systems. Science, according to these sociologists of religion, does not cause religious decline, let alone religious demise, be it because science cannot eliminate man's ultimate concerns, or because science and religion are not incompatible, or because science's deadly impact on religion is not generally felt, or, finally, because science is not superior than religion. Thus, as long as man lives, there will, according to these sociologists, always be religion in one form or another.

For the sociologists who take the sacred or the supernatural as the central variable of religion, science, as the epitome of the process of rational disenchanted endeavor, does constitute a contributing factor to religion's decline, if not its demise.

O'Dea (1956; 1966:85-86; 1969:103-109; 1971) sees science's threat to religion essentially in its problem-solving mentality which tends to claim to be able to solve any problem, though it is intrinsically incapable of answering the most fundamental problems of meaning. "It tends to dissolve the basic notions of religious thought as myth in the pejorative sense of the word." (1969:108-109) Elsewhere, he states that science introduces a reductionist frame of mind that tends "to make religion itself appear a strange phenomenon and one demanding rational explanation: (1971: 328). Thus, according to O'Dea, science, being anti-religious in its basic orientation, has created a severe religious crisis; but, being unable to eliminate the fundamental religious needs, it cannot destroy religion.

Wilson holds that science per se cannot represent a rival to religion because science is concerned with means, and religion with end (1969:78), but the real danger of science to religion is its growing prestige as an institution that has created a mentality that what cannot be scientifically accepted cannot be religiously reassuring (1969:18), and "science is more reliable and more valuable than religion" (1969:67).

According to Acquaviva (1960:221; 1971:217-219), science does cause secularization. Science, he maintains, has transformed our logic as evidenced in the transformation of our language. A-religious terms have gradualy replaced religious ones, an indication that a-religious thinking has also replaced religious thinking. Indeed, science has changed our

standard of judgment. Attempt at adjustment made by religion practically led always to secularization.

> Our logic is thus marked by concepts derived from the recent technological and scientific revolution. At this point, when the parameters of judgment of nearly all men have been substantially changed, a negative interpretation of religious phenomena becomes easier. It is not the case that the majority finds itself deprived of parameters of judgment which are sensitive to religious phenomena, once these parameters have been eliminated from modern logic? Naturally, all this leads to a religious lag in relation to science. Efforts at assimilation--rarely successful--in practice lead to secularization of the sacred rather than to assimilation by science and technology of religious elements (1960:221).

Like Luckmann, Berger (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:40) believes that the scientific world view is no better than any other world view; hence, the real cause of secularization should not be sought in scientific thought, but in everyday experience:

> The causes of secularization must be sought, primarily, not in movements of ideas (such as the influence of modern scientific thought) but in concrete social experiences. Thus a prime secularizing force is not the abstract rationality of science or philosophy, but the 'functional rationality' (a Weberian term) of modern capitalism bureaucracy, and industrial production. The social formations of modernity bring about habits and mind-sets which are unfavorable to the religious attitude. They encourage activism, problem-solving, this worldliness, and by the same token they discourage contemplation, surrender, and a concern for what may lie beyond this world. But simply, modernity produces an awful lot of noise, which makes it difficult to listen to the gods (1976:11).

Preoccupied with Christian religion in America, Glock, in his discussion of secularization, shows little interest in the relationship of science and religion as such. Glock (1972, 1976; Glock and Stark, 1965: 289-306) does acknowledge that science cannot prove or disprove the existence of the supernatural, but he perceives an irresolvable conflict between scientific and Judeo-Christian assumptions about nature and man.

While the basic assumption of science is that every event or human action is determined by antecedent factors, the fundamental belief of Judeo-Christian religion is that God intervenes in natural events, and that man is essentially free in his actions. Although science does not eliminate religion, because the existence of nature, universe, and mankind remain unexplained, hence there will always be a warrant for the supernatural, it does affect the "saliency of religion" by having proved that human behavior, including religious practice and commitment, are, in a large measure, a result of his social context. With the progress of science, God may then appear less and less relevant to everyday life.

> If what can be attributed to God's will is made narrower and narrower, and if man's accountability for his actions is found to be more and more circumscribed, religion seems destined to lose much of its power to inform and guide the human condition (Glock and Stark, 1965:306).

As expected, the foregoing analysis has shown that the leading sociologists of religion do not hold that science will ever be able to demolish religion. While the sociologists taking an inclusive approach to the definition of religion believe that the advance of science cannot cause either decline nor end of religion, the sociologists taking an exclusive approach argue that, as science progresses, religion looses in relevancy.

Differentiation

The discussion of differentiation as an alleged contributing factor of secularization centers on the question whether functional differentiation causes reduction or even loss of religious influence as an overarching legitimzation system. All sociologists of religion agree that differentiation does not eliminate religion on personality level, but they disagree on the role of religion on institutional and societal levels.

Parsons maintains that functional differentiation does not undermine religion as an over-arching legitimzation system, but only causes its values to be generalized to higher levels. As indicated above, Parsons sees religion primarily as the ultimate value that stands on the highest level in the cybernetic hierarchy of control, defining, in universal terms, the patterns of desirable orientation for the entire society. Analytically, he believes that religion as value, is "independent of the internal differentiation of the system" and is "relevant on the level of generality which 'transcends' functional differentiation" (1965a:43-78). When functional differentiation takes place, what is concomitantly differentiated is, according to Parsons, norm which specifies concrete functional performances, not value. Value can be modified and generalized but it cannot be differentiated. Norm is "function-specific" (1965a:43) and legitimated by value; it operates on "lower level of generality with respect to expected concrete collective and role performance" (1965a"43), while value is "independent of the specification of situation or of differentiated function within the system" (1965a:44). For example, in the modern United States, the process in which religion, government, education, economy and other major institutions have become differentiated and specialized, has coincided with the development of a more generalized religious orientation, which is distinct from any particular denominational tradition. Although religious institutions are no longer allowed to claim universal religious jurisdiction over the whole society, the common, societal values are still values that are derived from Christian religion. Parsons urges that distinction should be made "between a generally legitimate religious orientation and the particularities of a specific denominational position" (1965b:25). The process of differen-

tiation is accompanied by the process of value-generalization, which, as a modification of value, has been called secularization (Glasner, 1976:35). But, for Parsons, value-generalization is concomitant with the inclusion and the upgrading of the secular. It is the religious upgrading of the secular which, as stated above, should be emphasized in the discussion of secularization according to Parsons, not the value-generalization. If Parsons calls the whole differentiation-value generalization upgrading-inclusion process secularization (1971:218-219), differentiation can still be said to be the antecedent condition of the upgrading process, the institutionalization of religious values.

Luckmann, for whom both individual and society are axiomatically religious, does maintain that differentiation replaces religion with functional rationality in all major dominant institutions such as politics, economy, education, etc., as discussed earlier. He states:

> They [dominant institutions] lose their intimate relation to the transcendent symbolic universe. The traditional legitimation from 'above' (the ethic of vocation, divine right of kinds) is replaced by legitimation from 'within', i.e., by reference to the sheer rational efficiency of the institution. In this sense the norms of the autonomous institutional spheres are becoming increasingly 'secular' (1963:160).

As an energetic critic of Parsons' view, Fenn (1970, 1972, 1973) carries Luckmann's argument further by saying that "differentiated society undermines the possibility of a single normative order, let alone a moral consensus which is explicitly religious in content (1973:345).

In evaluating the theoretical positions of Parsons and Luckmann, Greeley remarks:

> The question is, to a very considerable extent, one of fact, and the data are not available for us to judge the fact. My hunch is that the truth probably lies somewhere in between the two positions, leaning more heavily toward Parsons than toward Luckmann (1969:85).

Thus, sociologists advocating for an inclusive definition of religion do not agree whether functional differentiation drives away religious influence from non-religious institutions. While Luckmann believes that functional rationality completely undermines religious legitimation in major non-religious spheres, for Parsons, functional norms are still legitimated by religious values.

Sociologists who are in favor of an exclusive definition of religion tend to agree with Luckmann's position. Thus, Wilson (1976a, 1976b) insists that modern differentiated societies have shifted from being moral orders to being technical ones:

> Modern societies have ceased to depend upon an integrated consensus of values as the basis of their cohesion. Society, as distinct from the agglomeration of communities that in the past made up the larger entity loosely referred to as 'society', is a coherent, large-scale integrated system, held together by techniques and procedures not by values. Culture, in advanced societies, ceases to be integrative: it becomes a supernumerary item, as society shifts from being a moral to being a technical system (1976b:113).

Indeed, "modern social organization implies secularity" (1976a:259), and the cannons of rationality that organize modern institutions are offensive to the spirit of religion which emphasizes love, affection, and other non-rational concerns (1976a:273).

Berger points out that "the concentration of religious activities and symbols in <u>one</u> institutional sphere . . ., <u>ipso facto</u> defines the rest of society as 'the world', as a profane realm at least relatively removed from the jurisdiction of the sacred" (1967:123). Elsewhere he remarks:

> Religion fulfills the function of symbolic integration by supplying values and cognitive interpretations that form a sort of overarching canopy for <u>all</u> of the institutions . . .
>
> This function is radically transformed as modern society emerges. Religion becomes less and less capable of furnishing overarching symbols for the full range of social institutions

> . . . this change of functionality is a logical consequence of the immense institutional differentiation of modern society. The old religious symbols can no longer be made to stretch, so to speak, to encompass the new range of institutions. Different institutional areas develop their own autonomous symbolisms, most of them having little or no relationship to the traditional religious ones (1967b:324).

Hence, in one place, he defines secularization as "the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols" (1967a:107).

Although O'Dea did not deal with the process of differentiation theoretically, he did maintain that the emergence of government, law, education, economy, and other major social institutions has contributed to the process of secularization of culture in which a non-religious world view has crowded the religious one into the sphere of private experience and has become the mode of thought in the public sphere, which is nothing but another way of stating Luckmann's theory of secularization (1966:80-90; 1969:42-120).

In his discussion of religion's integrative power in modern differentiated society, Glock (1960) directly addresses himself to the question of the definition of religion: ". . . if we define religion as a 'sacred' or ultimate commitment to some set of norms, values, and beliefs, then religion is indeed essential to social integration" (1960:57); but, he goes on to say that "institutionalized religion is not essential to social integration; theoretically, a high degree of social integration may exist without it" (1960:57). He believes that institutionalized religion can integrate society only if the supra-social authority is granted precedence over other forms of authority; if supra-social, social, and legal authority support the same values; if the society in question is ruled by tradition; and if consensus exists in the religious community (1960:58). In modern

societies, he says, "this capacity of religion to inform the secular normative structure seems to be largely a thing of the past" (1960:59), and organized religion does no longer inform the secular but is informed by it (1960:59-60).

Thus, sociologists who choose to define as religion any consensus or common value tend to reject the contention that differentiation is a cause of secularization, while those who adopt a narrow definition of religion agree that differentiation does remove religious influence from the major institutional sectors. However, whether differentiation is a cause of secularization or not, sociological researches have found and continue to find "the religious factor" in various major institutional spheres as evidenced in many textbooks of sociology of religion.

The Future Course of Secularization

Predicting the future fate of religion is a difficult task and can often cause embarrassment. Speaking of the past predictions of the religious demise, Greeley remarks that "the prediction has generally been wrong every time it has been made" (1969:6). Similar statements can be made about the predictions of a brighter future of religion. Lenski's anticipation of "the rising rates of church attendance in American society" and "the strengthening of socio-religious group communalism" (1961:325) is but a recent example. Yet, in interpreting religion's past and present situations, sociologists of religion are often tempted to make some projections about its future development.

How a sociologist foresees the future trend of secularization depends obviously upon how he evaluates the alleged causes of secularization, which is, in turn, related to the definition of religion. The purpose of this section is to attempt to point out the discrepancies among the leading sociologists of religion in projecting the future direction of secularization.

The sociologists working with an inclusive definition tend to predict that there will be religion as it has always been, though a particular form of religion may disappear.

According to Yinger (1970:532-534; 1971:29), since the modern world is "desupernaturalized," existing traditional religions will unlikely play a vital part in man's religious life in the future; instead, partly from the sectarian protest against the established religion partly from religious innovations, and partly from the synthesis of some of quasi-religions such as Communism, Freudianism, Positivism, and many others there will develop new religions. "Or they will fail to come, the world will be shattered" (1970:533).

While acknowledging that even in the most advanced society, primitive, archaic, and all kinds of imaginable religions will coexist, Bellah (1968) believes that the dominant type of religion in the post-dualistic society will be the "personalist and individualist but not asocial and apolitical" (1968:227). With increasing education, he explains, man no longer accepts blindly any religion handed down from the past, but seeks to work out his own ultimate problems by himself. But, this does not mean that such a religion will, as Luckmann (1967:117) fears, be selfish; instead, it will be politically involved and socially conscious.

Conceiving the past socio-religious development as a differentiation-value-generalization-upgrading-inclusion process, Parsons (1963, 1966a, 1971, 1974) does not see why the same process should stop in the future. Rather, he perceives that a world society informed by Christian value is in the making. In the West, he notes, what, from the religious point of view, has for nearly two centuries been defined as the most subversive movement, namely materalistic rationalism, now seems to be in the course to

be included within Christian value sustem (1971:231); and worldwide, for the first time in history, Christianity is now involved in a deep confrontation with the major religions in the Orient as well as the modern political religion of communism, and, through the upgrading-inclusion process, Christianity will, he envisions, eventually bring the whole world into its fold.

Martin (1976a) observes that modern societies, capitalistic as well as Marxist, cannot manage without religion. Both technical rationalism and political materialism have been unable to solve personal existential problems, and thus, he predicts that, in the future, religion will survive, not only in the West, but also in the East. Speaking of the world's "high religions," Martin (1969:5-6) believes that the basic religious orientations in the world, limited in number, will always remain as fundamental alternatives; they will not be "eroded as rationality disenchants the world but remain as the permanent structure of options" (1969:6).

For Greeley (1969, 1972a, 1972b, 1973, 1974), there will be no drastic religious change in the future. Man is by nature "unsecular" (1972a). Contrary to Bellah and Luckmann, he does not foresee that institutional religion will lose members or importance, nor will the doctrinal orthodoxy collapse, although they will probably change in emphasis such as more concern with the democratic religious organization, the non-rational, religious responsibility of the individual, intimate fellowship congregation, and more explicit articulation of religious myths (1969:16-75; 1972a:263). "To talk about 'institutionaless' religion is," he says, "at best naive romanticism" (1972a:241).

Having developed the thesis that functional differentiation has displaced religion from its role as a major public institution into a

voluntary association in the private sphere, Luckmann, in his speculation about the future of religion, is understandably interested in the possibility of the re-emergence of religion as an overarching symbolic universe such as it was in the middle ages or archaic societies (1971, 1972). He believe that the supernatural religion will not disappear, the traditional religion will persist, and "the death of God" talk is nonsense; but he does not think that an overarching religious system will ever be possible again, because the functional autonomy of the major social institutions will preclude the re-emergence of such a religion; besides, in modern societies religion is no longer part of the general socialization. Thus, in highly differentiated societies religion has to take a private form and remain invisible, so to speak.

Sociologists who prefer an exclusive definition of religion are more cautious and less optimistic about the future development of religion, although none of them foresees the end of religion. In his early works (1967a, 1969), Berger insisted that the process of secularization is unlikely to reverse itself in the future, but, in his later writings (1971, 1974, 1974b, 1976), he has modified his position, even though he still maintains that the hypothesis of secularization as an interpretative scheme is valid for explaining the past and present religious situations (1971:66-67). In a recent work he talks about his position on the future of religion as follows:

> In the last few years I have come to believe that many observers of the religious scene (I among them) have overestimated both the degree and the irreversibility of secularization. There are a number of indications, to paraphrase Mark Twain, that the news about the demise of religion has been exaggerated. Also, there are signs of a vigorous resurgence of religion in quarters where one would have least expected it (as, for instance, among the college-age children of the most orthodox secularists).

> All this needs not mean that we are on a brink of a new Reformation (though I doubt if anyone thought they were on the brink of a Reformation at the beginning of the sixteenth century either), but it seems increasingly likely to me that there are limits to secularization. I am not saying this because of any philosophical or theological beliefs about the truth of the religious view of reality, although I myself believe in this truth. Rather, I am impressed by the intrinsic inability of secularized world views to answer the deeper questions of the human condition, questions of whence, whether, and why. These seem to be ineradicable and they are answered only in the most banal ways by the ersatz religions of secularicism. Perhaps, finally, the reversibility of the process of secularization is probable because of the pervasive boredom of a world without gods.
>
> This does not necessarily mean, however, that a return to religion would also mean a return to the churches. It is perfectly possible that future religious resurgences will create new institutional forms and that the existing institutions will be left behind as museum pieces of a bygone era (1974b:14-15).

In evaluating the present religious stiutation in the West, O'Dea (1968, 1969, 1971) consistently speaks of religious crisis, urges religious leaders to adjust religion to the changing socio-cultural environments, and is rather pessimistic about the future of religion. However, in a book on religion in general (Comstock, et al., 1971) of which O'Dea is a co-author, we find a less gloomy prognosis about the future fate of religion:

> The evidence at the moment is mixed. Some forms of religion are declining; others flourishing to a remarkable degree. In this connection we must be careful to distinguish between the continued vitality of personal religion --an individual's religious orientation--and the decline of importance of the institutional forms of religion. It is true that at the present time some institutional forms of religion have experienced a period of decline, but even this fact must be qualified: Some Eastern religions have acquired new vitality with the emergence of modern nationalistic attitudes. Furthermore, all institutions have their periods of growth and decline, which often take a cycle pattern. A decline at the moment may well be countered by a resurgence in the future.
>
> Even if it is true, however, that religion is declining in its institutional form, we must recognize that the future of religious activity in the life of man and the future of religious institutions are two distinct things. It is possible

> that in a future world in which religious institutions have little influence on the political, economic and scientific activities of man, large numbers of men might still pursue forms of religious practic and symbolism that are less structured and socially coerced than has been the case in the past (Comstock, et al., 1971: 626).

Like other sociologists of religion, Acquaviva (1968; 1971:251-306; 1973b) does not foresee the complete disappearance of religion as such in the post-industrial society, but he is more pessimistic in assessing the future trend of the present secularization process. As indicated above, for Acquaviva, the secularized man ceases to use religion magically but does not cease to have the experience of the sacred. Thus, in the secularized, post-industrial society man will still have religion even though he will have a different experience of the sacred and a different "image of God" from what he has today (1968; 1971:283-300; 1973b; Acquaviva and Guizzardi, 1971:40-44). In other words, there will be a new, secularized religion. But, when he comments on the future trend of the present secularization process in the West, he insists that secularization, as a concomitant of the essential development of industrial society, is hardly going to stop in the future.

> Anyhow, it appears evident that there is a process of secularization and a vast impoverishment of the sacred and religiosity; according to the present state of research and the facts we have, it is difficult to say when it is going to terminate. The data in our possession make one think that there will hardly be, in the near, even relatively remote, future, a substantial reversal of the present trend (1971:306).

Speculating about the future destiny of religion in America, Glock (Stark and Glock, 1968) does not predict the end of religion as such but he believes that traditional Christian religion is on its way out and we may well be entering a post-Christian era. In a book he wrote together with Stark we read the following:

> The evidence leads us to two conclusions: the religious beliefs which have been the bedrocks of Christian faith for nearly two millennia are on their way out; this may very well be the dawn of a post-Christian era (Stark and Glock, 1968:205)

But later, we find a more cautious comment:

> This is hardly to suggest that religion itself will die. Clearly, so long as questions of ultimate meaning persist, and so long as the human spirit strives to transcend itself, the religious quest will remain alive. But whether or not the religion of the future is in any sense Christian remains to be seen. Clearly, it will not be if one means by Christian the orthodoxy of the past and the institutional structures built upon that theology. But if one can conceive of christianity as a continuity in a search for ethics, and a retention of certain traditions of language and ritual, perhaps Christianity will remain alive.
>
> The institutional shape of the religion of the future is as difficult to predict as its theological content. Conceivably it may take on a public character, as suggested recently by Robert Bellah, or the invisible form anticipated by Thomas Luckmann. Or it may live on in a public witness conducted by priests without parishes similar to religions in Asia. Quite possibly, religion in the future will be very different from anything we can now anticipate (Stark and Glock, 1968:223-224).

In his assessment of the future fate of Christianity, Wilson indicates that secular society no longer has direct respect for Christian religion, but it is too early to say that it could function without it as its values and orientations have been derived from the Christian past (1969:261). Nevertheless, he says, traditional Christian religion is incapable of expressing and accommodating man's ultimate concerns today, and new religions may be expected to emerge to take its place. Since modern social structure, being rationally and technically organized, cannot tolerate religion in its public sphere of operation, new religions virtually have to develop in the private sphere where "private individuals may experience their religious dispositions, gratifying their interests in the supernatural and work out dependency relations that are unsustained in the rest

of their social experience (Wilson, 1971:268).

Thus, contemporary sociologists of religion, whether committed to an exclusive or an inclusive definition of religion, are all in agreement that religion as such will not disappear in the future. While some are less favorably disposed toward the fate of institutional religion, others are more cautious in their predictions. In different degree, all leading contemporary sociologists of religion do not envision a very bright future for all the existing traditional religions.

Summary

This section has been an attempt to point out the impact of the definitions of religion as proposed by the leading contemporary sociologists of religion on their interpretation of the nature, causes, and future course of secularization. It has been shown that sociologists working with an inclusive definition of religion hold that there cannot be such a concept of secularization seen as the decline or demise of religion *per se*, although they do use the term secularization to describe changes of a particular form of religion, notably Christianity, or the removal of religious influence from certain institutional sectors of society. This is the reason why the conventional notion of secularization that suggests the eventual end of religion has been variously labelled as myth, dogma, ideology, or the like. Sociologists adopting an exclusive definition of religion do maintain that secularization is taking place even if it is understood as the decline of religion *tout court*, although none of them entertains a concept of secularization that suggests the total disappearance of religion.

Because of these divergencies of view on the conceptualization of secularization, the leading contemporary sociologists of religion differ

also in their assessment of the many factors that have been cited as the causes of secularization. Sociologists opting for an inclusive definition of religion tend to deny that there is any factor which can justly be called a cause of secularization per se simply because, according to these sociologists, secularization per se does not exist, although they do acknolwedge that many factors have contributed to the decline or fall of many particular religious traditions. Sociologists using an exclusive definition of religion do maintain that factors such as science and differentiation have caused the decline of even religion as such, if not its demise.

As to the future direction of secularization, sociologists adopting an inclusive definition tend to insist that religion will change and persist as it did always in the past, while sociologists choosing an exclusive definition are not in agreement. Some have already perceived a beginning of the reversal of secularization, others believe that the religious crisis and secularization will continue indefinitely. But they all concur that religion as such will never vanish.

Just as the leading contemporary sociologists of religion do not agree on the meaning of secularization they differ in interpreting the significance and meaning of empirical materials pertinent to the issue of secularization, to which we turn in the next chapter.

III. EMPIRICAL DIVERGENCES

The previous section has been an attempt to clarify exclusively conceptual differences among the leading contemporary sociologists of religion in the discussion of the issue of secularization. It has been shown that the conflicting views on the occurrence, nature, extent, and future course of secularization are, to a large extent, the logical consequences of their respective definitional preferences. The objective of this section is to point out how the leading contemporary sociologists of religion employ empirical data--understood in a broad sense of the term--to support, or to illustrate their claims and counter-claims with regard to the hypothesis of secularization. It focuses chiefly on the following three questions: How do they interpret historical data to back up their position? Do statistical materials and research data support the secularization hypothesis? And, does the emergence of the so-called new religions represent a counter-secularization trend? It is argued that the sociologists advocating an inclusive definition of religion tend to deny that the empirical data available support the secularization hypothesis, while the sociologists adopting an exclusive definition are more likely to argue that the empirical data do support it.

Historical Data

The very concept of secularization implies the assumption that society and individuals in previous ages were more "religious" than they are today. Are there historical data to substantiate this assumption? The aim of this section is to analyze how the leading contemporary sociologists of religion approach this question.

For sociologists working with an inclusive definition of religion, the question whether people or society in the past were more "religious" than they are today would be meaningless, and to ask for historical evidence would be superfluous. As indicated above, for these sociologists religion is part of human condition, and society has a religious dimension; religion changes but does not decline.

Yinger suggests that questions asking who is religious and who is not, how far secularization has proceeded, whether there is a return to religion, be set aside (1970:33); he even states that they are wrongly put (1970:488-489). For him, the history of Christianity in the western world is not a consistent decline, but a continuous adaptation, both in form and in content, to the changing experiences, values, and problems of its adherents (1970:482-507). In the course of history people have become differently Christian not less Christian. Parsons characterizes the history of the West as a history of the progressive institutionalization of religious values, not the decline of religion (1963, 1971, 1974). The medieval synthesis, the Reformation, the emergence of denominationalism, and the new "expressive revolution" are seen as different phases in the process of institutionalization of Christian values in society, not as various indications of a falling away from Christian commitment.

For Bellah, religion evolves but does not decline (1970:20-50). As he interprets it, Western religion has evolved through primitive, archaic, historical, early modern, and modern stages. Each stage has created a new, but not a diluted form of religion. Religious symbolism has evolved from concern with the maintenance of personal, social, and cosmic harmony in the primitive and archaic religions, through the preoccupation with escape into the transcendental world in the historical religions, to an

active structuring of the world according to religious values in pre-modern and modern times. This process of evolution is viewed as religious change, not secularization. Even the collapse of traditional doctrinal orthodoxy in modern world in not considered as a sign of secularization or religious indifference but as a result of the emergence of a new way of conceiving and practicing religion. Similarly, to Luckmann, the history of mankind has been marked by a series of social forms of religion, not by a steady decline of religion (1971, 1972). In archaic societies religion took a diffuse form, in traditional civilizations, an institutional form, and in modern societies, an invisible form.

Martin argues that there is no unitary process of secularization. Religious institutions expand and decline for a variety of reasons, and even the same religious institution falls and rises for different reasons in different cultural and historical context (1969:14-17). The conventional historical account of secularization is derived from organizing materials in terms of ideas of historical evolution rooted in retionalistic and Marxist philosophy and from simplifying the complexity of history through contrasting pairs of concepts such as the magico-religious and the scientific, the sacred and the secular, and the like (1973:82-83). In his analysis of the history of Christianity in Western societies, Martin (1978) maintains that the outcomes of the English war, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Russian Revolution have created different patterns of secularization in England, America, France, and Russia. Secularization in England is characterized by erosion of religious ethos and institutional participation; in America by erosion of religious ethos; in France by massive religious beliefs, ethos, and institutions confronting massive secularist beliefs, ethos, and institutions; and in

Russia by massive erosion of religious beliefs, ethos, and institutions (1978:7-8).

Against the so-called "good old days" fallacy (Greeley, 1969:12), Greeley cited several historical evidences to prove that there is no ground for assuming that faith and morals in the middle ages were better than they are today:

> In 1276, for example, the Cardinal Legate Simon de Brion threatened excommunications to all clerics and students who mocked at Jesus and Mary during the Mass itself and played dice on the altar--this presumably in the midst of an "age of faith." And those who speak of 'sexual revolution' or of a "permissive society" should be asked a revolution from what and permissive in regard to what. One very much doubts morals are any more lax today than they were in the Versailles of Louis XIV, the London of the Restoration, or the Regency of the Salzburg of Archbishop Wulf von Dietrich (1970b:279).

Elsewhere (Greeley, 1969:12-19), he cited anthropologist Geertz and sociologist LeBras to support the contention that the primitive people or early Christians were no more religious than modern men or modern Christians--a practice followed by many critics of secularization thesis (Brothers, 1973; Jackson, 1974; Towler, 1974, Glasner).

As expected, sociologists employing an exclusive definition of religion tend to see the history of religion as a history of secularization.

In his discussion of secularization, Wilson, as noted above, is concerned mainly with the significance of religion in social order. What he contends is that religion was once socially more significant than it is today. Hence, to point out the persistence of private religions in modern society or the existence of individual irreligions in the past does not really invalidate his thesis (Wilson, 1969, 1971, 1975, 1976a, 1976b). Addressing himself to the question whether society and individual used to be more religious than they are today, Wilson states that

> Religious thinking, religious practices and religious institutions were once at the centre of the life of western society, as indeed of all societies. . . .
>
> In the twentieth century that situation has manifestly changed, and the process of change continues (1969:9-10).

Describing the age of Innocent III, Wilson remarks that

> . . . life was effectively regulated, at least in its public concerns, by the demands of the Church. The Church controlled not only the moral fabric of society (perhaps that least of all), but the formal process of political, juridical, commercial, and social intercourse--the institutional operation of society (1976b:9-10).

Today, he goes on to say that

> Not only fewer people believe, but everyone knows that fewer people believe, and this very knowledge diminishes the credit of the Church. Despite impressive buildings, and established place in public life, and the dignity accorded to Church leaders, it becomes clear to all that the Church is losing its social significance (1976b:15).

Berger (1971) takes issue with the critics of secularization who contend that in the absence of scientific data from the past, we cannot say with any pretense of science that religiosity in the previous ages was more intense than it is today (Greeley, 1969:12, 22-23). He admits that there are no data on the past religious situation that can be compared with the data collected by social scientists today; but, he says, if one does not dismiss scientific rank from the materials gathered by historians, one is hardly overwhelmed by the argument, because there is a wealth of materials on the place of religion in Western societies in the past, materials not only from interpretation of the intellectuals but rather from sources like memoirs, letters, reports on actual events, legal documents, and the like that allow a good insight into beliefs and practices of common people of the time. He continues:

> Once such materials are accepted as evidence, one is hard-pressed to come to another conclusion than the one that the place of religion in consciousness and social life has become much smaller today. One needs only to consider the reports on the

> daily life in the middle ages or, what lies much closer to us, the reports of Louis de Saint Simon on the life at the court of Louis XIV--let alone the reports on the daily life and beliefs of the peasants (1971:57).

Acquaviva (1971:162) divides the history of social transformation into three phases: the first phase of social history is mainly a religious history; the second phase is a history of cooperation between society and religion; and the third phase is a history of desacralization of society. Speaking of dechristianization, he (1960) maintains that the decline of religion is mainly due to the coming of the city. Since the dawn of humanity, there have been rebels against all forms of religion, or at least organized religion, although on a lower scale than during the eighteenth and following centuries. "It was during the two hundred year 1970-1950 that both the acceleration of urban development and the growth of irreligion took place (1960:210).

While Parsons insists that the history of the relationship between Christianity and society has been "the development of the process of the 'Christianizing' of the secular society: (1963:44), O'Dea maintains that the history of the Western civilization has been the history of "a de-Christianization" (1956:67) or, as he often calls it, the secularization of culture (1956, 1966, 1969). The history of the secularization of culture consists, according to O'Dea, of four basic processes: Judaism and Christianity, the Renaissance, the Reformation, and rise of science. Judaism and Christianity "de-divinized the world," the Renaissance "strove for a religion of affirmation of the world and of the intellect," the Reformation was "an attempt to find a Christian center gravity in a world of social and moral integration and national and intellectual innovation," and science attempts to make men "become the masters and possessors of nature (1956: 57). Each process involves a further phase of desacralization and ration-

Even without any data to show that the religious condition in the past was any better, Glock and his co-author Stark believe that the current religious situation in America, especially the widespread doubt about orthodoxy, represents a "religious revolution" (Stark and Glock, 1968: 205-224).

> . . . we have no certain evidence that fewer theologians a generation ago doubted traditional Christian doctrines. Nor can we prove that the forebearers of today's Christians were less inclined to doubt these doctrines. There is simply no reliable evidence on the state of faith in past times. Nevertheless, we are convinced that the widespread doubt of traditional Christian tenets is a recent development, that previous generations have been more prone to traditional convictions (Stark and Glock, 1968:206).

Such kind of argumentation Greeley characterizes as "naive" (1969:65).

Since we lack systematic, thoroughly documented historical data on the state of religion in the past, there is simply no way of establishing with certainty whether there has been a decline of religiosity or not. Historical material is notoriously difficult to analyze and subject to many biases. Out of a wealth of historical data evidences are often gathered to support conflicting views and certain prenotions without reporting the existence of data which may serve as counter-evidence. Too often, historical data which are just illustrative are selected to prove sweeping historical generalizations. The debate on the religiosity of the past ages is another example of the weakness and vulnerability of most of the analysis of historical material developed by sociologists.

The New Religions

The outburst of a bewildering array of the so-called "new religions" in the 1960 has stimulated, as expected, special interest among sociologists of religion concerned with the issue of secularization. What is the significance of these new religious patterns with respect to secularization?

Is it a counter-secularization movement or a further sign of secularization? The purpose of this section is to show how the sociologists with different approaches to the definition of religion evaluate the meaning of this new phenomenon.

The sociologists adopting an inclusive definition of religion tend to see in the emergence of the new religions as a search for a new form of religion. Speaking of the necessity of formation of new religions to cope with modern situation, Yinger remarks about the contemporary youth movements that "many elements of contemporary youth movements also seem to me, despite their nihilistic and anomic qualities, to express a profound search for sacred ideas and qualities. They are sensitive to the fact that new ultimate questions press in on man . . ." (1970:534).

According to Parsons, the new religious movement represents a beginning of an "expressive revolution," (1974:222), a harbinger of the emergence of a new type of religion that is in favor of the affective-expressive emphasis relative to the previous cognitive-rationalistic one. The themes of love and community in the new religions are seen to be legitimate socio-cultural descendents of Christianity (1971:232-234). Speaking of the increasing acceptance of the legitimacy of non-western religions, Parsons makes the following comment:

> From one point of view . . ., the new movement may be a kind of culmination of the trend of secularization we have traced which has sanctified, by inclusion, and moral upgrading component after component of what originally was conceived to be the world by contrast with the spiritual order (1971:233).

Bellah (1974, 1975, 1976) discerns in the new movement an emergence of a new religious consciousness, an open, iconoclastic, non-rational, experimental, and new way of grasping religious meaning. It is not a

counterc ulture, though not totally unrelated to it; "above all, it is a new way of being religious within modern culture and is not simple rejection of that. As a form of consciousness, it is not clearly institutionalized, although there is more than in the churches than perhaps is realized (1974:114-115). Moreover, Bellah interprets the new religious movement as an indication of "the inability of utilitarian individualism to provide a meaningful pattern of personal and social existence" (1976:339), and as a source of visions and ideals that hold promise for a broader cultural transformation which can begin to repair the broken covenant.

Greeley (1969:55-72; 1970a) does not consider the resurgence of the new religions as a counter-secularization, since there has never been secularization, but as a protest against the hyper-rationalist society, and as a multiplication of new forms of religion.

> It is then, in my judgment, inaccurate to assume that some of the more recent and bizzare manifestations of religion and the sacred represent a 're-sacralization'. Society was never really 'de-sacralized' in the first place. What we are witnessing, I think, is rather the expansion of Thomas Luckmann's 'marketplace of interpretative schemes'. New forms of the sacred are becoming available in that marketplace, though at least some of them are in fact very old (1970a:204).

Unlike Bellah, Martin (1974, 1976b) regards contemporary youth movement as a counter-culture that struggles against "science, puritanism, industrial society, and utilitarian ugliness" (1966b:87) and describes it as "anarchic, morally deviant and experimental, aesthetically exploratory, mystical" (1976b:88). Elsewhere (Martin: 1974), he calls the student movement from Stockholm to New York "religious without institutionalization and dogmatic coherence" (1974:569).

Sociologists working with an exclusive definition of religion tend to stress that the new religious movement is a further demonstration of the

decline or irrelevance of traditional religions, although they do not deny it as a search for meaning, community, and the like.

In the Californian youth culture, Berger believes, "the basic religious sensibility" is "a kind of quasi-mystical, very anti-intellectual approach to reality" (1977a:71). Speaking of the recent upsurge of preoccupation with occulticism, Berger states that "The current occult wave (including its devil component) is to be understood as resulting from the repression of transcendence in modern consciousnes: (1977b:209) and characterizes it as "a pronographic provocation . . . against the world view of modern secularity" (1977b:209) because like eating forbidden fruit, it provides libidinal pleasure, or more to the point: "modern man doing magic resembles a Puritan in a whorehouse" (1977b:208).

Like Bellah, Acquaviva (1973a:18-21) sees in the youth movement the emergence of new ways of being religious but he believes that this is because both secular theology and the established Church have failed to satisfy the religious need of the youth.

Similarly, O'Dea (1969) regards the youth movement as a testimony of a profound religious crisis, a loss of "a sense of ontologically justified orientation," and the meaninglessness of the traditional religions.

> But malaise, reluctance to assume adult roles, loss of orientation, search for meaning and direction, rebellion against the adult society, a cult of experience and of the present--all these testify to the loss of meaning. All these testify that we witness a spiritual crisis. The incapacity of our spiritual and intellectual leaders to offer meaning to these youth is a further testimony. The trumpet gives an uncertain sound, when indeed one can hear it at all (1969:162).

The widespread exploitation and experimentation of alternative life styles among the youth is, according to Glock (1976) a visible symptom of a world view clash that has been going on for decades. Science has

undermined the traditional religious world view but is unable to provide a substitute itself; the hectic quest for the alternatives is a desperate effort to fill the void science has created.

The most outspoken sociologist who insists that the new religions represent not the dawn of a new religious revolution but a widespread secularization is Wilson. New sects, he points out, "are themselves a feature of societies experiencing secularization, and they may be seen as a response to a situation in which religious values have lost pre-eminence (1969:207). Modern society is organized by rational, impersonal, and bureaucratic modes of control; as a result, "charismatic leadership persists only in the interstices between institutional orders, in the narrow social space that remains for collective behavior, spontaneous faith, and unconstrained obedience and adultaion" (1975a: 125). Commenting on the hippies in the United States, Wilson says that "the central quest is the pleasurable search for the expanded mind, not the anguished search for objective religious truths" (1970:200). More recently, Wilson argued that the present upsurge of the novel religions should be viewed "as a confirmation of the process of secularization. They indicate the extent to which religion has become inconsequential for modern society" (1976b:96). Against those who see in the youth movement the persistence of religion he writes:

> The emergence of the new cult movements are not counter-forces to secularization nor the likely seed-beds of an alternative culture. These cults, oversung as evidence of the persistence of religion by some who should know better but who today have perhaps no other religious song to sing, I regard as having a rather different significance. Their growth, transient appeal, decay, and eventual replacement by other enthusiasms, appear to me to be evidence of the trials of the human spirit in a world in which new techniques and increasingly rational procedures dominate man's social experience. They tell us that living in secular society is

> painful, and they intimate modern man's permanent condition of bereavement at the loss of community. But they do not provide the basis for a new religious culture (1976b:viii).

Elsewhere (1975b) he addresses himself even more directly to the issue of secularization:

> If we concede the abundance of sects and cults, does this create embarrassment for those who support the secularization thesis? I hardly think so. These movements thrive precisely because the culture is secularized: in a religious society they could scarcely arise, or, if arising, survive. They are themselves a religious response to the secularization of society, but they are essentially a marginal phenomenon (1975b:81-82).

Besides, "secularization," he says, "is the major contemporary transformation of religion against which the cults are likely to be no more than transient and volatile gestures of defiance? (1976b:112).

How one assesses the new religious movements depends very much on his own ideological predisposition and experiences. The different evaluations are, to a large extent, personal speculations and biases. Bell (1968:476-488) calls them a cultural vogue of the decade, cultural experience expressed in religious language, and escape from reality in search for fantasy. These interpretations are equally defendable as any one advanced above. In order to find out the significance of the new religious movements, Wuthnow (1976) examined thirteen new religious groups in San Francisco Bay and came to the following conclusion:

> The future of these movements, judging from the present data, in uncertain. On the one hand, they have garnered most of their support from the better educated and more intellectually aware. If there is something about these movements that is more compatible with the modern intellectual climate than traditional religion has been, they may prosper well into the future, especially as more and more people become educated. On the other hand, they seem to appeal most to young people who are still at an unsettled stage in their lives. As these young people mature and become more settled, they may abandon these groups. Thus, the appeal of these groups would be limited to new cohorts as similar stages in their life-cycles (1976:292-293).

Religious Statistics and Survey Researches

The very concept of secularization implies a long-term phenomenon; but data on long term religious change are almost non-existent. Religious statistics and some survey studies are the only trend data that are available today. Religious statistics are notoriously subject to many errors and inadequacies, and the survey data are restricted to too short a period of time and, in some cases, to too small a population to justify any meaningful generalizations. These short comings and many more notwithstanding, even some of the leading sociologists of religion who are interested in the issue of secularization have marshalled hard data, often not even trend data, to endorse their respective positions. This section is an attempt to indicate the ways in which these sociologists use church statistics or survey data to substantiate their views. Of course, not all sociologists we have selected are interested in quantitative empirical documentations.

Some sociologists employing a broad definition of religion consider church statistics and survey data, being confined to church religion, to be incapable of measuring religiosity as such. Luckmann, (1960, 1967) although not the first to distinguish between religion and churches, is probably the first sociologist who has brought to attention the severe limitations of church statistics and most of recent researches in sociology of religion. He points out that underlying most, if not all, recent studies of sociology of religion is the assumption of identification of church with religion as such. It is this assumption, coupled with vestiges of the nineteenth century positivistic view of religion, that accounts for the current misconception of secularization that characterizes much of recent sociology of religion: diminution of church religiosity is auto-

matically identified with the decline of religion as such--an entirely illegitimate inference. Luckmann's position has engendered a cohort of critics of the methodology prevalent among sociologists of religion on the same ground (Matthes, 1962a, 1962b; Vrijhof, 1969; Swanhorn, 1969; Gannon, 1972; Brothers, 1973; Glasner, 1976). Yet, he continues to say that in the absence of adequate researches on the place of religion as such in modern society, no one interested in theorizing can afford the luxury to disregard the abundant materials collected on church religion. Examining recent researches from America, France, and Germany, almost none of them trend data, Luckmann came to the conclusion that church religion has become a marginal phenomenon in modern society:

> Comparing the European and American findings on the social location of church religion and allowing for the differences in the character of church religion in European and American society we are led to the conclusion that traditional church religion was pushed to the periphery of 'modern' life in Europe while it became more "modern" in America by undergoing a process of internal secularization (1967:36-37).

Yinger (1970:32-40) adopted a similar view when he speaks of cross-cultural measurements of religious behavior. The problem of definition, he says, merges with the problem of measurements. A serious difficult associated with virtually all efforts to measure religion is the limitation of the dimensions or scales to a few clearly related religious traditions. This puts a limit on any effort to develop generalizations about the relationships between religion and society that have cross-cultural validity. Furthermore, they measure what religion one has dropped off, but not what one has picked up.

> Most importantly, if one's measurements use a criterion the degree of acceptance of traditional form of belief and practice, one is confronted with a serious problem of distinguishing between religious change and religious decline. And one is likely to miss completely the more ephemeral,

> the emergent, or the poorly institutionalized expression of ultimate concern (1970:32).

Speaking of British religious practice, Martin (1967:34-51) shares Wilson's conclusion that there has been a general tendency of decline in baptisms, confirmations, and attendance as shown in religious statistics; but he warns that the interpretation of church statistics should take into account the widespread religious interest in the audience of radio and television (on any given Sunday about 24 per cent of the adult population see BBC religious programs and about 18 per cent ITV religious programs), and the participation in a multitude of ancillary organizations. (At least four persons out of five seem to feel that religion should be passed on in these various ways to children.) Furthermore, he suggests that the constant use of the word "decline" should be set against massive demographic fluctuations, which often show that the real source of the decline is other than religious and against the striking resilience of the church under the accelerating changes that erode traditional institutions of any kind. He also indicates that the large-scale institutional abstention of the working class does not necessarily mean that they are irreligious. He points out further disaffection from organized religion in the post-Restoration era, religious indifference as well as heresy in London, and church absence of the lowest social strata in the seventeenth century. Then he concludes:

> At any rate the important and massive fact remains that with every incentive to spend time in an alternative manner one quarter of the population is in church at least once a month. And even if one allows for some tendency to exaggerate attendance on the part of those interrogated, that exaggeration is in itself significant. . . .
> . . . if we expect some mild erosion of the more conventional rites of passage and the special difficulties of non-conformists, the position seems to have been almost stationary since the war (1967:50-51).

With regard to beliefs and attitudes, Martin (1967:52-76) indicates that the figures which suggest the smallness of the orthodox minority deserve cautious interpretation. There are many different possible combinations of beliefs apart from the orthodox which equally have their own internal logic: diversity is not necessarily irreligion nor confusion. One should remember, he points out, that only one person in twenty is an explicit atheist and some one of ten atheists believes in immortality; faith in prayer is wide and deep even among the agnostics. (One person in three says daily prayers and only one person in four fails to teach prayers to children; besides, one person in six believes in hell, and as many believe in ghosts; a broad assent exists to what is perversely believed to be Christian morality such as do as you would be done by; attitudes toward religious observance show considerable variation according to the type of observance; compared with the politicians, the clergy have a surprisingly good image, and on social matters, the Church is believed to be losing influence but this is widely deplored, which is in itself significant.) To all these must be added the so-called subterranean theologies and a variety of superstitions such as belief in ghosts (one in six of the population believes in ghosts and one in fifteen says he has actually one), and faith in luck and devices (nearly half of the population has consulted a fortune teller, and four out of five read weekly horoscopes, though half of these describe it as a diversion). About the whole situation Martin remarks as follows:

> All such examples bear strongly on assumption about secularization, the impact of the age of science, the advent of human maturity and so on. They suggest that far from being secular our culture wobbles between a partially absorbed Christianity, biased towards comfort and the need for confidence, and beliefs in fate, luck and moral governance incongruously joined together. If we add to these layers of folk religiosity the attraction

> of Freudianism and of Marxist mechanics for segments of the intelligentsia, it is clear that whatever the difficulties of institutional religion they have little connection with any atrophy of the capacity for belief (1967:76).

If Freudianism and Marxism are considered as religions, the concept of religion is broad indeed.

To endorse his contention that there has been a persistence of religion rather than secularization, Greeley (1969, 1972a, 1972b) repeatedly cited a 1965 replication of the 1952 national study, a 1965 research by NORC on religious behavior of graduate students of the top twelve American universities, some other statistics and authors. The 1965 replication study shows that from 1952 to 1965 there had been almost no change either in basic doctrinal commitments or in membership and church attendance for American gentiles. Proportional orthodoxy among the Jews--never as important for the Jews as for the gentiles, he emphasizes--seemed to be declining, while at the same time synagogue attendance was going up, as was affiliation with congregation. As for the youth, Catholic young people were more orthodox than their predecessors, and there were some minor signs of a downward trend among young Protestants, but, he noted, that "certainly not of such a magnitude as to allow us to believe the newspaper accounts of the vast apostasy among the young" (1969:39). To discount the importance of the very notable decline in American Catholics' willingness to accept the traditional teaching on birth control and respect for the clergy, Greeley remarks:

> . . . thus far in the history of Catholicism in the United States, the changing attitudes toward the clergy and changing sexual morality have not affected either the basic doctrinal loyalty of Catholics or their organizational involvement. (One can presume that, certain Catholic leaders to the contrary notwithstanding, birth control and divorce are not at the center of the Catholic doctrinal system (1972b:141).

Incidently, this remark seems to have been substantiated by a recent replication study of Greeley and associates (Greeley, et al, 1976:28-39). About these above mentioned findings, Greeley comments that "the data . . . are admittedly thin. They do not prove that the secularization hypothesis is wrong but they certainly call it into considerable question" (1972b:141).

The 1965 ongoing NORC study of the religious behavior of the June 1961 college graduates indicated that there was some erosion of church affiliation among the arts and science graduate students: 95 per cent of the students had been raised in affiliation with organized religion, but only 75 per cent still maintained a religious affiliation. It should be remembered, Greeley warned, that this loss, though a considerable one for the organized church, occurred among those young people where presumably the loss would be most massive and that, even here, the loss constitutes only a fifth of the population (1969:40-41). The same study showed that there was some erosion in weekly church attendance among the Protestant graduates, but "there was no evidence of a notable secularization of either the Catholic or Jewish respondents" (1969:42), and there was no major conflict between scholarship and religion. About these young Americans Greeley states:

> Our data may indicate that, while the crises of faith are more serious and more frequent than they were in the past, they are not yet necessarily the beginning of a loss of faith or departure from organized religion . . .
>
> The secularization hypothesis, therefore, is simply not substantiated by any of the empirical data available to us; neither is the hypothesis of grave crisis (1972b:150).

Speaking of the annual Gallup poll data on church attendance, Greeley makes the following observation:

> For reasons we do not understand, there are cyclical patterns in religious behavior, with upswings and downswings

> apparently following each other at intervals of five to ten years. In any event, church attendance in the middle 1960's is higher than it was in the middle 1930's, and one would be as ill-advised to argue for a religious revival on the basis of those statistics as one would be to argue for a religious decline on the basis of shorter-range statistics (1969:49).

The effect of an inclusive definition of religion in the argument of secularization is most apparent in the comments Greeley made on the low institutional participation in European countries. Although church membership and affiliation in European countries are less striking than in the United States, he says, the "basic convictions still seem to persist in great masses of the population" (1969:51), and "religious of some sort, however vague, seems to persist despite these problems" (1969:52). He then continues:

> One may write this off as a residue of the past or as a persistent superstition, but the important fact to remember is that the residue persists and so the superstitution, and persists in large segments of the population (1969:53).

Elsewhere, he makes similar remark:

> I am merely arguing from the data that religion has managed to persist in the modern world, in some fashion or the other (emphasis mine), despite forces of secularization and change which are alleged to be working with great vigor (1972a:13).

In citing other authors, Greeley seems to be highly selective and biased. For instance, he cited Lipset (1962) who, after examining all available denominational statistics, came to the conclusion that there has been no dramatic change in the pattern of religious life of Americans, to support his contention that there is no secularization; but, he failed to mention another, perhaps, the most detailed and extensive, analysis of American church statistics made by Demerath (1968) who has reached an opposite conclusion that "traditional religion is increasingly autonomous but decreasingly relevant" (Demerath, 1968:43).

Sociologists using an exclusive definition of religion are inclined to argue that religious statistics and research data do provide evidence for the secularization hypothesis. Thus, Wilson (1969:21-22) maintains that although church statistics cannot measure the meaning, motivation, and strength of religion, nor the invisible, unorganized religion, they do supply some evidence of change in organized religious participation and churches' influence over ideas and activities of men. They can, therefore, offer some sort of index of secularization. Hence, what Wilson, through religious statistics, intends to prove in his discussion of secularization is not whether there is still religion in one form or another, rather the loss of influence of organized churches. After examining British church statistics on membership, attendance, baptisms, confirmations, Eastern communions, Sunday school enrollments, weddings, and burials, Wilson came to the following conclusion:

> There are two trends which can be discerned. The first is the diminution in religious practice over the period of sixty or seventy years in most forms of religious involvement which amount to more than one isolated ceremonials. The other is the diminution in religious participation over the life-cycle of the individual (1969:30).

In an attempt to devaluate the relatively high figures on baptisms, confirmation, wedding, and burial, Wilson states that if set over against the low figures of other religious participations, the figures cannot be said to represent religious sentiment but should be seen as just to provide "appropriate ceremonial for prestige and status enhancement at crucial stages of life cycle" (1969:39), and in many cases, as routine or superstition, which, for Martin and Greeley, as noted above, would be still considered as evidence for the persistence of religion.

In addition, Wilson indicated that religious forces exercise now less influence over people's lives than they did, as manifested in the smaller

numbers who are involved in church work of one kind or another; in less time and attention given to religious thought and action; in proportionally less religious publications as compared with secular publications; in smaller religious control over the means of communication, and so on. As for the large audience of TV and radio religious programs, pointed out by Martin, Wilson remarks that "we cannot be all sure that their level of attention is the same as that which prevails in church" (1966:25).

To evaluate the whole British religious situation, Wilson say that although institutionally the organized religion still remains favorably placed, "there can be no doubt about the decline in church-going, church-membership, sustained religious commitment, and the general standing of the Church in society" (1969:39).

The statistically impressive religious participation in the United States was discredited by Wilson in a similar fashion in which he commented on the high figures on the rites of passage in Britain mentioned above. Adopting the now famous thesis of Herberg (1960), Wilson maitains that being religious in America is simply being American, having little to do with religiosity itself.

> . . . the American Churches have, in effect, if less explicitly, subordinated their distinctive religious values to the values of American society. Thus, though religious practice has increased, the vacuousness of popular religious ideas has also increased: the content and meaning of religious commitment has been acculturated (1969:122).

To justify this interpretation, Wilson states that it is a gross fallacy to interpret statistical figures of different countries in the same way without taking into account the historical and cultural context in which the statistics exist (1969:118).

Acquaviva is also aware that the experience of the sacred cannot be directly measured, but he maintains that the statistical figures can be

treated as indicative, approximate, and suggestive indirect index of the degree of religiosity (1970:76-81). As evidence of the vast impoverishment of the sacred, Acquaviva (1971:92-147, 178-199) has collected a wealth of statistical data from all over the world including communist countries such as Russia, Romania, Yugoslavia, and even China. The data are restricted primarily to Catholicism, ranging from church membership and attendance through spiritual exercies to divorce and illegitimate birth rates; from trend data to simple reports. Some data are the very data which other sociologists use as evidence for high religiosity such as the high percentage of citizens in Western societies who still believe in God.

Having presented these data, Acquaviva, without giving any attention to the lack of comparative data in the previous ages, simply states:

> To conclude, the cifers and reports presented so far appear to be enough to convince the reader of the fact that, without doubt, it is difficult not to sustain that adherence to the ecclesiastical religiosity, and, within certain limits, to any type of religious belief, even belief in God is increasingly weakening (1970:114).

Such illegitimate conclusion appears even more puzzling when set against the great bulk of materials he cited from the French religio-geographic data and LeBras' (1963:449) insistence that all his work of sociology and history has been a protest against the idyllic image of Christians in the middle ages.

Glock discussed the issue of secularization primarily in the context of the comment he and his associate Stark made on the dispute of the so-called post-war religious revival in America (Glock and Stark, 1965:67-85) and their analyses of the 1963 Northern Californian regional survey on religion and anti-semiticism (Stark and Glock, 1968) and the 1958 NORC study on the graduate students of twenty-five American universities (Glock and Stark, 1965:261-288).

In the discussion of the religious revival they questioned the reliability of the religious statistics: "none of it actually is completely reliable although it is impossible to judge just exactly how reliable it is" (Glock and Stark, 1965:76). They also indicated that the indicators used are too crude and do not represent all dimensions of religion. Further, the data on high contributions and investments in church buildings, they said, may simply reflect the general prosperity and do not necessarily indicate religious fervor. Similarly, the increase in religious literature and commodities may just be a result of commercial fad that "religion was again in style" (Glock and Stark, 1965:78). Then they made the following comment:

> Actually, there is nothing in the literature that would constitute a serious and systematic defense of the secularization hypothesis. Its advocates are likely to be clergymen, church administrators, theologians, or journalists, and where they have been social scientists they have tended to be oriented to qualitative rather than quantitative observation. The evidence which they cite tends to be neither systematic nor thoroughly documented. Their view of religion . . . is likely to be a circumscribed one, though in a different way from the views of the 'revivalists' (Glock and Stark, 1965: 83).

Nevertheless, after examining the Northern Californian data set against the data from the national sample provided by NORC in 1964, Glock and his associate did find some evidence of secularization going on in the United States.

> . . . perhaps the most important finding . . . is that the overwhelming proportion of Americans today do not adhere to a pristine orthodoxy. Less than a third overall were firmly committed to these three beliefs [belief in God, in the Devil, and in life after death], and only in the small Protestant sects were as many as half classifiable as highly orthodox. Indeed, 45 per cent of America's Protestants and 46 per cent of the Roman Catholics fall in the bottom two categories of the Orthodox Index. Thus, it is clear that "Old Time" Christian Orthodoxy in all its certainty is not the predominant religious perspective of modern America.

> Whether Protestant or Catholic, the average American does not firmly retify this group of traditional doctrines.
>
> These findings raise the issue of secularization. A number of recent commentators have claimed that American religion during the twentieth century has become increasingly secularized; that the mystical and supernatural elements of traditional Christianity have been replaced by an increasingly skeptical and demythologized religious outlook. These data suggest that this has indeed occurred. While it is true that we have no comparable information on the religious beliefs of nineteenth century Americans, there seem compelling historical grounds for suggesting that the average mid-nineteenth century American Christian would have scored high on our Orthodoxy Index. If this assumption is warranted then it is clear that substantial changes have in fact taken place (Stark and Glock, 1968:63).

As noted above, it is exactly this assumption that has been challenged by many sociologists, notably Greeley (1969, 1972a, 1972b).

While Greeley (1969, 1972b) did not find any major conflict between science and scholarship in the 1965 study on graduate students of the top twelve American universities, Glock and his colleague (Glock and Stark, 1965:262-288) did find the deteriorating impact of science on religion in the 1958 study on the graduate students of twenty-five American universities. Among others, they found that religious affiliation and attendance at worship increases sharply as exposure to scientific scholarship decreases, and that scholarly ethos was negatively related to religious affiliation and attendance (1965:279, 284). To the question whether lack of religious affiliation means also lack of religious faith, Glock and his colleague replied that public opinion polls suggest that

> . . . when an American says he has no religion he means he not only has no formal church affiliation, but that he also rejects religious faith. Hence, while we have no data on the religious beliefs of these graduate students, there seem some basis for interpreting their reports of no religious preference as implying a rejection of religious belief (Glock and Stark, 1965:270).

Such interpretation would be unimaginable for Yinger who insists that people should be asked not only what religion they have left but also what

religion they have gone to, as indicated above.

Whether the secularization hypothesis is born out by empirical data depends very much on the choice of data or the mode of interpreting data which in turn hinges on the definition of religion. While most of the sociologists prefering an inclusive definition of religion tend to question no longer primarily the reliability of the data but the very validity of the data as indices of religiosity. Sociologists choosing an exclusive definition tend to argue that the existing data do provide at least some evidence for the hypothesis of secularization. Both groups are inclined to exaggerate and stretch the meaning and significance of the data in favor of their respective views, despite the appearance of scientific objectivity.

Summary

The objective of this chapter has been to indicate how sociologists adopting different kinds of definitions of religion use and intepret empirical data to endorse their different positions. It has been pointed out that sociologists committed to an inclusive definition tend to regard the history of religion as a history of religious change, variously seen as adaptation, evolution, transformation, or institutionalization of religious values in society. Even when the history of Christianity in the West is viewed as a history of religious decline, it is not considered as a unitary and irreversible process of decline. Its nihilistic elements notwithstanding, the recent youth movement is seen mostly as a sign of religious vitality, variously interpreted as the search for new answers to existential problems, the dawn of a new religious revolution, the emergence of a new religious consciousness, or as the protext against an over-rationalized society and the like. Refusing to accept church

statistics and most recent research data as adequate indices of religiosity in general, these sociologists have the tendency to minimize the significance of church statistics and research materials by emphasizing the ubiquity of private and personal religions or by adducing only those data that favor their positions. On the other hand, those sociologists devoted to an exclusive definition tend to interpret the history of religion as a history of religious decline understood as desacralization, secularization of culture, diminution of influence both in social life and individual consciousness, or deviation from orthodoxy. They are inclined to see the outburst of the new religions more as an evidence for the insignificance of traditional religions than as an indication of a renewed religious vitality. Though fully aware of the inadequacies of religious statistics and research materials as indices of religiosity as such, they do use them as some proof for the hypothesis of secularization. Unlike their inclusivist counterparts, these sociologists tend to minimize the importance of private religions, but like them, they, too, tend to overlook data that disfavor their views.

It appears that precisely in the collecting and interpreting empirical materials, which are supposed to be strictly scientific activities, one can see more clearly how easily scientists, despite their avowed objectivity and neutrality, become victims of personal value, bias, and even temperament and select only those data that can serve to support their preconceived interpretative schemes.

IV. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to point out the discrepancies of the leading contemporary sociological views on the issue of secularization by showing how the different definitions of religion proposed by a group of representative contemporary sociologists of religion have affected their understanding of the concept, cause, and future direction of secularization. I have shown that when religion is defined in generic terms, none of these sociologists is willing to accept the concept of secularization, if it implies a notion of an inevitable demise of religion. But, when religion is understood as a specific form of religion, all of these sociologists, each in his fashion, have developed some concept of secularization.

Further, I have indicated that sociologists who adopt an inclusive definition of religion are inclined to maintain that religion changes but never declines (let alone dies) and hence the concept of secularization is inconceivable. Consequently, for these sociologists, no factor can be considered as a cause of secularization, and to talk about the future course of secularization is meaningless. On the other hand, those sociologists who prefer an exclusive definition are likely to hold that religion does decline, if not dies, and to regard many factors, especially science and social differentiation to be causes of secularization. While some of them tend to predict the continuation of the process of secularization in the future, others are more willing to grant the possibility of a reversal of the process.

As to the empirical evidence, although all these sociologists are fully aware of the lack of adequate and reliable data about present and

past religious situations, they all seek to substantiate their respective positions through some historical, statistical, or survey materials. Sociologists who employ an inclusive definition of religion are prone to see the history of religion as a history of religious change, to consider church statistics as well as the existing survey instruments to be invalid to measure religiosity as such, and to interpret the current new religious movement as a sign of the persistence of religion. They tend to emphasize the existence of the invisible religions such as magic, superstitions, and so on, and are skeptical of the assumed high religiosity of the past. But, those sociologists who work with an exclusive definition are more likely to regard the history of religion as a history of religious decline, to consider religious statistics and survey data as, at least, some indices of secularization, and to view the upsurge of the new religions as a symptom of religious crisis and irrelevance of existing religions in modern society. They tend to ignore the so-called subterranean religions and assume, often uncritically, that people in the past were more religious than they are today. Both groups tend to adduce survey findings and religious statistics that support their views, ignoring those opposing their positions.

All in all, if the concept of secularization is taken as a notion that suggests an irreversible process of religious demise, none of these leading contemporary sociologists of religion can be said to be an advocate of secularization; if, however, it is understood as the decline or demise of a particular religious institution, all of these sociologists may be called the exponents of secularization. Further, if secularization is defined as the decline of religion tout court, those who use an exclusive definition of religion would be considered the advocates of secularization but not those who opt for an inclusive one. Hence, none of these leading

sociologists of religion can be treated as an advocate of secularization without qualification.

Whether definitions of religion should be a matter of individual preference or not, it has surely been shown that they have been such and that they have a fundamental impact on the outcome of the discussion of secularization. Since each definition of religion--by implication, each view on the issue of secularization--represents an ideological stance, to call any other perspective on secularization an ideology, a dogma, a myth or the like only shows its own ideological position. Thus, as long as the problem of definition is not solved, the divergences of opinion on the issue of secularization are bound to remain.

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APPROVAL SHEET

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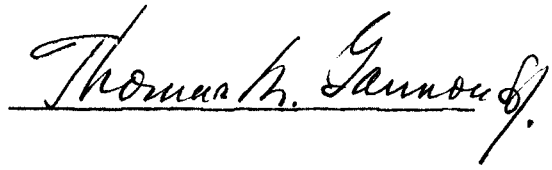
The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the committee with reference and content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.



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