

Geography of Religion – Rediscovering a Subdiscipline

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In many parts of the world, the significance of religion has increased during the last years and decades. In the sociology of religion, the secularization thesis was the dominant framework for the interpretation of developments in the realm of religion for a long time. Meanwhile, other explanation patterns have become more prominent, such as the individualization thesis and economic theories. The so-called “spatial turn” does not seem to have reached sociology of religion yet. In history of religion (religious studies), however, questions of spatiality and locality are being studied intensively.

Geography of religion has been regarded a diverse and incoherent field until recently. In the past years this has changed. Two directions of research have become apparent. One of them mainly considers social geographical problems and methods while the other has been influenced by the new cultural geography approach. Both should more frequently work with the above mentioned theoretical approaches of sociology of religion. Geography of religion must not, however, lose track of its main goal: it always has to point to the fact that all religious processes take place in space and have a spatial dimension.

Key words: Geography of religion, spatial turn, sociology of religion, religious science

Geografija religije – ponovno otkrivanje znanstvene subdiscipline

Posljednjih desetljeća u mnogim dijelovima svijeta poraslo je značenje religije. U sociologiji religije sekularizacija je dugo vremena bila dominantno okvirno načelo za tumačenje razvoja religije. U međuvremenu dolaze do izražaja i drugi obrasci tumačenja, kao što su teza o individualizaciji i ekonomske teorije. Takozvani “prostorni obrat” (“spatial turn”) izgleda da još nije zahvatio sociologiju religije. Međutim, pitanja prostornosti i mjesta vrlo se intenzivno proučavaju kroz povijest religije (religijski studiji).

Geografija religije donedavno se smatrala raznolikim i nepovezanim područjem. Posljednjih godina to se izmijenilo. Uočavaju se dva smjera istraživanja. Jedan se, uglavnom, bavi socijalno-geografskim problemima i metodama, dok je drugi pod utjecajem novog pristupa kulturne geografije. Oba bi češće trebala koristiti gore spomenute teorijske pristupe sociologije religije. Međutim, geografija religije ne smije izgubiti iz vidokruga svoj glavni cilj: uvijek treba ukazivati na činjenicu da se svi religijski procesi odvijaju u prostoru i imaju prostornu dimenziju.

Ključne riječi: geografija religije, “prostorni obrat”, sociologija religije, religijska znanost

In (Western) Europe, the view is very widespread that religion is on the downward path: secularisation, empty churches, fading church membership, and dwindling church influence in society spontaneously come to one's mind. The global view, however, reveals a very different picture. Increasingly, religion is considered to experience a revival or renaissance. The phenomenon of religion has changed its appearance considerably over the last decades. When geographers look at religion, they can only do so in close interdisciplinary interchange – as with most other geographic subdisciplines as well. For the geography of religion, the most important neighbouring disciplines are the sociology of religion and religious science. One could also add theology. Many scholars in the fields of sociology of religion and religious science are theologians, however, and work in Faculties of Theology. There are points of contact between theology and geography of religion in the fields of Practical Theology and Pastoral Theology (Henkel 2000, Scherz 2004).

Consequently, after a brief discussion about the changing view on the position of religion in society, this article will give an assessment of the most significant recent developments in these neighbouring disciplines and point out actual and potential links to the geography of religion. A survey of the most recent publications in the geography of religion and their evaluation follows in the second part. Emphasis will be on English and German literature without disregarding publications from other languages. At the end, a brief review of research on the geography of religion in Southeastern Europe will be included as well.

1 THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN SOCIETY

In pre-modern societies, religion had a central and undisputed place in life with an obvious impact on most sectors of public life. The European Enlightenment triggered off a process of expelling religion from this central position. In the mid-1960s, the American theologian Harvey Cox (1965) in his book "The secular city" postulated that the emergence of the urban civilization and the collapse of traditional religion were the dominating characteristics of his time and that they were closely linked. He had taken up the thesis of the German sociologist Max Weber who saw the development of Western European society as an irreversible process of secularization. The predominance of a purpose-driven decision-making, the "occidental rationalism", would eventually lead to an "Entzauberung" (disenchantment) of the world and finally to a complete disappearance of religion. And this movement, according to Cox, had its roots in urban centres. Shortly after Cox, Peter L. Berger (1967) published his influential study "The Sacred Canopy". More demanding in style than Cox's popularly written book, this study tries to give theoretical explanations for secularization. Berger considers it to be a process by which parts of society and sections of culture are released from the domination of religious institutions and symbols. This process can be observed historically primarily in the industrialized Western societies and most clearly in Protestantism. Its deeper roots lie, however, in Judaism, where in ancient times, according to Berger, God was radically transcended and where ethics were rationalized.

Most of the ensuing empirical studies agreed on the decreasing significance of religion. For Germany, for instance, it was observed that the ties of people to the two established churches, the Protestant and the Roman Catholic Church have weakened significantly

during the last decades (Henkel 1988, 2001a). Corresponding data for other European countries have been collected and interpreted, among others by Martin (1978). For him, this development correlates with the historical and political changes in these countries. Simultaneously, the intensity of religious convictions has decreased in Western European countries (Dogon 1995). A statistical correlation between strong religious convictions and individual or common religious practice has been confirmed by many sociological studies.

During the last years, new doubts about the secularization thesis have been loudly voiced. Apart from new theoretical approaches towards the phenomenon of religion (see below), worldwide political changes have contributed to this. Even though it has never been explicitly stated that the secularization thesis claims worldwide validity, this has always been implied. With the Iranian Revolution in 1979 doubting voices were raised against the undisputed assumption of a natural relationship of modernization and secularization. The territorial spreading of Islam that followed and international terrorism which claims to be linked to religious values give support to these criticizing voices. The other major religions have also experienced growing fundamentalism. The geographical implications of fundamentalism in Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism have been investigated by Stump (2000). On the global scale, there are not only these often violent and therefore negative religious manifestations that hint at a worldwide renaissance of religion, however. Remarkable religious changes have also happened in Latin America over the last decades. Here, through many centuries the Roman Catholic Church has held some kind of monopoly on religion. Recently it has lost a considerable number of its members. This may have been caused by its monolithic make-up due to its predominance over centuries as well as its strong linkage to the governments which undermined the credibility of the church especially in dictatorial states. On the other hand, there has been a strong growth among Pentecostal, Charismatic and Evangelical churches. This continent is not at all experiencing secularization but rather a transformation towards Protestantism (Stoll 1990). Similarly detailed studies for Sub-Saharan Africa would be very desirable. Equal dynamics can, however, be observed in Africa as well. Again, the new rise does not take place in the traditional “mission churches” (Henkel 1989) but in the more Charismatic, Pentecostal and Evangelical churches. In comparison to most European countries, regular church attendance is on average considerably higher, so it is well justified to call Black Africa a Christian continent (Henkel 1986) – contrary to the still prevailing dominating view.

Similar changes like those in Latin America and Black Africa can be seen in some parts of Southeast Asia. In all these parts of the world, one could argue, modernization hasn't yet fully taken grip and correspondingly secularization has not set in yet. This argument is contradicted by the fact that these new religious movements are mainly carried by the better educated groups of society that are leaning towards Western thinking. The religious innovations have generally originated from the big cities which, at the same time, are considered to be the starting point of secularization.

The religious landscape of the USA, finally, is extremely difficult to explain when applying the secularization thesis. In contrast to all European countries with the exception of France, the US have a strict, constitutionally ruled separation of church and state. Personal membership in a church is on a totally voluntary basis and not determined by

“geographical destiny of birth” (Geipel 1996, 120). Therefore all churches in the USA are financially independent from the State and self-reliable. Berger has observed that American churches are characterised by an “inner secularization” which only marginally differs from secularization in Europe. All recent relevant comparative studies, however, show that religion is much more present in the US-American society than in European countries (e.g. Studies of the International Social Service Programme and the World Value Survey, compiled e.g. in Höllinger 1996). This is equally true for religious belief and practice. Following the secularization thesis, the secularization process should be most advanced in the US because it has a leading position in modernization. But the number of people who belong to a religious organization has increased in the US from 17% (1776) to 62% (1980). Finke and Stark (1992) consequently coined the term the “churching of America”.

Among the parts of the world under Christian or Islamic influence only Europe remains as a continent with considerable secularization¹. From all the parts of the world that were, over many centuries, influenced and formed by the Christian or Islamic faiths, only Europe seems to be left with secularization having gained considerable ground. This observation coincides with the findings of Beyer (2001) who from his different studies draws the conclusion that the globalization process has had a positive impact on the spreading of religion rather than a negative one as one would to expect. From the global viewpoint, therefore, the state of religion in Europe appears to be a deviation from the general tendency which also implies that Europe’s influence as a centre of intellectual innovation exporting ideas throughout the world is in decline at least in this area.

But even in the different countries of Europe the situation is not the same. There are considerable discrepancies between strongly secularized countries such as the Netherlands or East Germany and e.g. Ireland and Poland which continue to have a strong religious framework (cf. Knippenberg 1998, Denz 2000). Especially when looking at Eastern Europe, one frequently talks about a “return of religion” since 1989/90. In many South-eastern and Eastern European countries, church buildings that had been closed for a long time or used otherwise have been reopened; religious groups are gaining more influence on politics while religious beliefs and practices are on the increase (Tomka & Zulehner 2000, Pollack 1998). For Western Europe, the French sociologist Hervieu-Léger (1993) observes a certain “loss of religion” but she refuses to apply the term secularization. And she also sees a “new flourishing of faith” in many different manifestations, set off by a search for deeper meaning in life which apparently cannot be offered by the modernist ideology of progress.

2 SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION, DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The secularization thesis is meanwhile no longer applied by some of its former representatives such as Cox (1995) and Berger (1999). Cox felt to revise his former view when faced with the rapid growth of the Pentecostal–Charismatic Christian movement, while Berger now speaks of a process of “desecularization”. Thomas Luckmann (1967) who has carried out his studies mainly in the USA only applies the term secularization to society as a whole and strongly denies its validity for the individual. Against the secularization

thesis he puts forward the individualization thesis: in his book “The Invisible Religion” he points out that religion does not just disappear; rather, it changes its form of expression. Churches and other religious organizations lose ground whenever a transformation of the predominant appearance of religion in society can be observed. Religion becomes more private. Dogmatic systems following church guidelines become increasingly less accepted and are being replaced by “patchwork-religions”, often syncretistic and individually made up. Like other organizations in society (e.g. political parties and trade unions), the churches experience how people lose confidence in them without abandoning their religious beliefs. This new development made Davie (1994) coin the catch phrase “believing without belonging” with regard to Great Britain.

Luckmann’s criticism of the secularization thesis is based on a functional definition of the term religion. Religion for him covers a very wide field and he can still see it where others only talk of its disappearance. For him, religion is an anthropological feature of human life. His functional definition² does not look at “religion per se”. It is rather traced and measured by its impact in and on society. A substantial definition, in contrast, will always try to define the exact nature and characteristics of religion and often presumes a duality between profane everyday life and “the sacred” (M. Eliade) or “the numinose” (R. Otto). One of the problems with the substantial definition is its Eurocentrism. In most non-Western cultures, profane and religious matters are inextricably interwoven and very hard or impossible to separate.

The individualization thesis often implies that the process of modernization leads to a withdrawal of religion from public life into a private niche. It has been convincingly shown by Casanova (1994) that the opposite is happening in Spain, Poland, Brazil and the USA. In these countries, he rather notices a deprivatization of religion. Also as a “public matter”, religion hasn’t reached the end of the road, it is finding a new role, though. Undoubtedly, plurality in religion is constantly increasing worldwide. The spreading globalization with its new means of communication and its migration streams brings religious movements that in the past had been confined to certain parts of the earth into other regions of the world as well. Due to this development, explanatory models influenced by an economic thinking which pay more attention to the increasing plurality in religion(s) than does the secularization thesis are gaining ground. These approaches imply that religion is controlled by similar mechanisms as the economy: religious needs create a demand that asks for adequate supply. A market of religions emerges which is ruled by the laws of competition. Religious supplies are able to focus on the needs of certain target groups or “market segments”. The economic approach applied to religion was first developed in the USA. Because of the historic church-state separation in the USA, no “religious monopolies” could develop as they did in most European countries (or, like in Germany, “duopolies”) with hardly any room for competition left. For the advocates of the economic approach (e.g. Iannacone et al. 1997), the explanation of the fact that in the USA individual as well as social religious life is much stronger than in most European countries is to be found here. To say it more directly, the more established churches in Europe were never compelled to serve the religious needs and desires of their members because there was hardly any competition. Furthermore, the strong ties between church and state guaranteed that competitors could not gain a foothold. “De-churching” will only be stopped or reverted

when and if a free religious market without any state-strings can emerge. Opponents of this economic approach insist, however, that religious competition cannot strengthen religion's position in society but will, on the contrary, weaken it because competition as such is rooted in human profane thinking and so discredits religion's claim to be of godly, transcendental nature (Bruce 2002).

The sociology of religion has seen very stimulating debates on a high theoretical level during the last decades. It seems, however, that the so-called "spatial turn" that has found widespread acceptance throughout the social sciences has not yet reached this sector of sociology. It is self-evident that all changes in human society do not take place in an abstract vacuum but are inevitably linked to a definite geographical place or space. A certain place or space is not just the setting for the event by chance. Neither is it only a scenery. First, there is always a reason why an event (in the sense of a historical or political process) takes place (!) here and not somewhere else. Second, the properties of this place or space has an effect on the course of the event, and third, the event will change or at least influence the place/space. The events and processes referred to here are not confined to visible, physiognomically measurable phenomena. They include social and political structures which characterise this particular place/space. Although it is true that space as such is not an explanans for political, social or economical processes. But it is also true that it must never be neglected when we try to understand or to explain developments. Neglect might lead to wrong conclusions. " 'The spatial' is not just an outcome; it is also part of the explanation ... It is not just that the spatial is socially constructed; the social is spatially constructed too" (Massey & Allen 1984, 4).

Such conclusions are not only drawn by geographers. Also a self-critical sociologist says, "Von wenigen Ausnahmen abgesehen begriff und begreift sich ‚Soziologie‘ als eine raumlose Wissenschaft ... Makrotheorien ‚schweben‘ ohnehin meist frei im Raum; Mikrotheorien berücksichtigen nur in Ausnahmefällenden Raum über darin gelagerte Sachen oder Menschen in ihrer Leiblichkeit (‚physikalischer Raum‘, *Platz*) oder gar über soziale Strukturen der Nutzung, Gestaltung oder Kommunikation (‚sozialer Raum‘, *Ort*)"³ (Dangschat 1994, 336, emphases original). This also applies to the phenomenon religion: new religions, religious movements, churches and other religious organizations, but also "non-religiosity" start and grow big in definite places or regions. They spread into certain areas, whereas into others they don't. Their diffusion is linked to certain preconditions, an intellectual, political, economic and social network favourable for the acceptance of these new movements. Distance strongly matters, too: like any other information, religious messages and movements have to be transmitted from one place to the other before they can be accepted there⁴.

3 RELIGIOUS SCIENCE: MOVING FROM THE STUDY OF MUTUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGION AND PLACES/SPACES TO STUDIES OF LOCAL RELIGIONS

In contrast to the sociology of religion, religious science, initially a historical science ("history of religion"), almost from its very beginning included the spa-

tial dimension. In many textbooks of religious science, one can find a chapter on “geography of religion” (next to “psychology of religion”, “ethnology of religion” etc.). The task attributed to the geography of religion very often is to investigate the interrelation of religion and landscape/space/”geographical environment”. We must distinguish between two opposite approaches (so e.g. according to Hock 2002, 146ff. and Kippenberg/von Stuckrad 2003, 114ff.): the shaping and making of the environment under the influence of religion (shaping of the environment), and the shaping of religion under the influence of the environment (environment dependence). Religious scientists could not avoid looking more closely at the question of location and other spatial factors, in particular when investigating “holy places”. The comprehensive study by Turner (1979) on this topic could be very helpful for geographers but has, unfortunately, only been paid little notice to. He distinguishes holy places by their historic or phenomenological appearance: the “church/temple” and the “assembly place for the believers”.

Studies concerning the shaping of the environment are mainly done by geographers while those concerning environmental dependence are looked into by scientists of religion. Each science has its own adequate instruments for either question. Some of the investigations done by religious scientists about environment dependence occasionally are not free of deterministic, particularly geo-deterministic ideas. Such an approach does not comply with the complexity of modern religious systems.

In the last years, religious scientists have been exploring a topic which is discussed under different headings: “studying local religions”, “localization of religion”⁵ “religion and locality”⁶. Research here focuses on religious communities and congregations in one particular city, a certain urban or rural district. Each congregation is registered and described with special emphasis on its history and its significance for that particular city. The term “mapping” which usually is used in this context comprises far more than just a cartographic mapping and description. It implies “placing in a particular spatial as well as historical/social context”. Germany and Switzerland have seen quite a large number of studies like these during the past years (e.g. Ch. Baumann 2000a, Bernasko/Rech 2003, Cyranka/Obst 2001, Grünberg et al. 1995, Rademacher/Grübel 2003, re.form Leipzig 2003, Ruttman 1995). These studies are following different concepts but all of them place religious organizations in a local/regional context and thus focus on the spatial dimension. The spatial aspect is a crucial point in detailed studies on immigrant religions. The question how they change and are practised in a new environment is of particular interest. Buddhist and Hindu communities in Germany and Hindu communities in the Caribbean were studied by M. Baumann (2000 and 2003) especially focusing on the question how religious groups are getting organized in a diaspora situation, how they adjust to a new surrounding and at the same time change it for instance by constructing new religious buildings. When immigrant religious groups claim public space, often problems will arise subsequently. This usually happens when mosques are built (Schmitt 2003), but also the opening of the first Hindu temple in Germany in Hamm, Westphalia, in July 2002, raised public concern (Baumann et al. 2003).

4 THE PLACE OF RELIGIONS IN GEOGRAPHY

Human geography emphasises that there is a spatial aspect in every structure or process investigated by human or social sciences. As a constituent part of human geography, geography of religion wants to record religious phenomena and processes, describe, explain and understand them and finally identify the determining factors. This is not primarily a historic approach. Geography looks at the present and tries to explain phenomena in their spatial dimension. It has to draw on their histories, however, because everything we observe has come into being.

What then is the significance, the place of religion in geography? This is not the right place to depict the early stages of geography of religion. They have been described extensively e.g. by Schwind (1975), Sopher (1981), Büttner (1985), Kong (1990), Claval (1992), Park (1994), Rinschede (1999) and Henkel (2001b). Geographers who have looked at the phenomenon of religion have done so far more frequently from the viewpoint of religious science than from a religious-sociological approach which is more theory based⁷. Those researchers e.g. who investigate sacred places as physiognomically conceivable phenomena in a geographic surrounding tend to feel closer to religious science – if they are identifying with religion at all. The “Bochum Modell” by Büttner (1985, 41 ff.) presents one of the few independent theoretical approaches in the geography of religion. However, this model, too, sticks to the fact that in the dialectical religion-environment relationship, there is besides (or below) the religious and the social levels (“level of religious entities”) an “indicator-level” which is defined as a “level of physiognomic, tangible indicators created by the religious groups and the natural environment”(p.45). It was Büttner’s aim to analyse the mutual interdependence between those three levels. Unfortunately he only partially succeeded in applying his concept to his empirical study of the religious group of the Waldensians (Northern Italy) and to two Moravian settlements.

In her survey on the literature of the geography of religion (however only in English), Kong (2001a) concludes that the frequently heard judgement of the subdiscipline being “a field in disarray” (Tuan 1976, 271), “a diverse and fragmented endeavour within geography” (Stump 1986, 1) characterised by “lack of coherence” (Sopher 1981, 510) is no longer valid today. According to her judgement it is on the contrary “... in fact distinguished by rich diversity, yet simultaneously significant coherence, albeit a theoretical coherence that I read into the range of empirical work from a posteriori position” (Kong 2001a, 212). This great diversity is also clearly reflected in the two most recent textbooks of the geography of religion written by Park (1994) and Rinschede (1999). Their contents basically read “religion and ...” (politics, population, economy, environment, settlement etc). This shows that religious ideas and phenomena are closely connected with genuine geographical problems. The great variety of topics dealt with in the first ten volumes of the interdisciplinary book series GEOGRAPHIA RELIGIONUM also proves this. Kong (p. 212) goes on: “... religion deserves to be acknowledged fully and in like manner alongside race, class and gender in geographical analysis. Most significantly, I underline the geographic significance of examining religion, not least in the intersection of sacred and secular forces in the making of place ... the separation between sacred and secular is more fluid than rigid”. In his review of the latest research in the field of social geography,

Peach (2002, 255) strongly supports this judgement: "...religion seems destined to become the new area for social geographical research in the first decade of the twenty-first century." In his main point he makes globalization responsible for the fact that many people, particularly migrants, identify more intensely with their religion and its rituals than with their ethnicity.

There are, roughly speaking, two directions into which the geography of religion has been developing in the last years⁸. They correspond with the two developments Peach (1999) observes in social geographical research in general: "rigid", concrete studies which are closer to empirical socio-religious research ("old social geography", the "Caliban School" according to Peach) on the one hand and post-modern studies which follow the New Cultural Geography (the "Hamlet School").

The first track is reflected in two atlases of religion by Knippenberg (1992) and Henkel (2001a). Both are not merely atlases, they rather give a historical-spatial interpretation of the religious landscape of the Netherlands and Germany. The book on Catholics in France by Bertrand/Muller (2002) must also be counted among this group. The studies of these authors follow the school of French "géographie religieuse" which were stimulated by the religious sociological investigations by Le Bras (1955) and Boulard/Remy (1968). "Substantial" is also the mapping of the more than 1000 officially registered mosques, Hindu mandirs and Sikh gurdwaras in England (Peach 2000) which have changed the cultural landscape. Mainly and especially the cities which, as pointed out before, are considered to be most secularized (= nonreligious) have become the focal points for important changes in the religious structures. Ley/Martin (1993) found a close interdependence between gentrification and secularization for Vancouver. Religious habits change with a change in lifestyle. In a study on Belfast, Livingstone et al. (1998) establish a connection between religious and political behaviour. Confronted, however, with great religious diversity, they also point out the danger of a bipolar view of the problems. Social problems in urban centres may well be related to the prevalent ethical values in society which again are frequently linked to religious attitudes (Pacione 1990 and 1999⁹). Some of these works have been carried out in a similar way as the above mentioned recent local studies. They are primarily based on the evaluation of quantitative data.

The second stream in recent literature on geography of religion might be called postmodern and New Cultural Geography-based. First and foremost, the various studies by Kong (1993a and b, 1996, 2001b and 2002) deserve to be named here. Her research is focusing on the meaning of religious buildings such as churches, temples etc. for people's identity, and the spatial behaviour of believers including occasional conflicts with the political administration. Religious "(cultural) landscapes" on different scales and their symbols are also being looked into by the following studies: Graham (1994, 1998), Macdonald (2002), Nagar (1997), Naylor/Ryan (2002), Palmer (2002), Raivo (1997, 2002), Sahr (2001), Valins (2000, 2003) and Vincent/Warf (2002). They all in a way follow the thoughts of Tuan (1978) which belong into the tradition of humanistic geography.

Most astonishingly, little attention is paid to religious phenomena in present mainstream research of cultural geography as can be observed in standard books on the topic such as Daniels et al. (2001), Gebhardt et al. (2003), Mitchell (2000). This was different in

the “old cultural geography”. The textbooks by Bergman (1995), de Blij/Murphy (1999), Jordan et al. (1997) and Rubenstein (1999) e.g. all include among their 10 to 14 chapters one chapter on religion¹⁰. The reader compiled by Mikesell/Wagner, which is considered a basic writing of the Berkeley School of (old) cultural geography, contains an essay by Fickeler (1962) translated into English. This essay was first published in the first volume of Carl Troll’s newly founded “Erdkunde” in 1947. Only very few essays by German geographers – apart from Christaller’s “central places” – were published in the US and had an impact on American geography after World War II. One gets the impression that many “new” cultural geographers (as well as some “old” and other geographers) strictly avoid the topic of religion. Is this still a reflex on the presumption that enlightenment, modernism, secularization and scientific thinking are incompatible? The philosophical and historical scientific works of Livingstone (e.g. 1994, 1998, 2003) throw a fresh light on some crusty viewpoints. On the other hand, the thematic issue “Space and Religion” of the “International Journal of Urban and Regional Research” (Hervieu-Léger 2002) does not have a single geographer among its authors. Religion certainly has its place in what is usually understood by “culture” - unless you want to take up again the old distinction between ‘Kultur’ (culture) and ‘Kultus’ (worship, cult) formerly stressed by German history of religion - and has to be dealt with appropriately in human geography. It still needs further investigation to answer the question if there is a definite connection between religion as a well accepted topic of geographical research in US American geography and the above mentioned greater importance of religion in the US American society. After all, two “specialty groups” working in this field (“Geography of Religions and Belief Systems – GORABS and “Geography of the Bible”) of the Association of American Geographers have been in existence for a long time.

Conferences on geography of religion have been organized on an international level by the two committees “History of Geographical Thought” (Wardenga/Wilczynski 1998) and “The cultural approach in geography” (Actas...1999) of the International Geographical Union (IGU). In Germany, efforts are being made to give this topic a wider publicity by the working group “geography of religion” within the German Society of Geography. This group has been in existence for more than 20 years (Henkel 1998) and recently held conference on the topics “Religion - Culture - Territory” (Regensburg 2001), “The City and Religion” (Conference of German-speaking geographers in Leipzig 2001), “Religion – Culture - Migration” (Mainz 2002) and “The New Temples of the Postmodern” (Conference of German-speaking geographers in Berne 2003). A project on “The changing religious landscape of Europe” with conferences held in Heidelberg (2003), Amsterdam (2004) and Prague (2005) has been started comparing the religious situation in ten European countries (Knippenberg 2005).

Some further research fields that have been studied in recent years from various perspectives and in various methods should also be mentioned here. One of the most frequently studied topic is the religious behaviour of immigrants. It mainly focuses on the presence of Islam in the Western world (Vertovec/Peach 1997, Dwyer 1999, Dunn 2001, Büchner 2000, Schaffer/Thieme 2001, Schmitt 2003). Religious aspects of other migration movements are looked at by Numrich (1997), Kruse/Lerner (2000), Chivallon (2001), Beatty/Ley (2003) and Henkel (2002). They are primarily studying the religious

structures of the immigrant communities and discuss the question whether these are of help or hindrance for their integration into the host societies.

Religious tourism still remains a field of research for geographers, although it has lost momentum compared to the 1980s and early 1990s (e.g. Bhardwaj/Rinschede 1988, Nolan/Nolan 1989, Rinschede/Bhardwaj 1990, Bhardwaj et al. 1994). Prorok (2003) recently focused on pilgrimage sites of non-Christians in America. The book series PEREGRINUS CRACOVENSIS which meanwhile comprises 13 volumes (in Polish and English) strongly concentrates on Roman Catholic pilgrimages, mainly in Poland. It is edited by the only University Chair worldwide for the geography of religion at the University of Krakow in Poland. This in turn is an expression of the regained strength of religion in Eastern Europe after 1990. Increasing attention is also given to pseudo- or substitute religious pilgrimages and to those where religious and profane aims are overlapping¹¹ (Davidson et al. 1990, Zelinsky 1990, Graham/Murray 1997, Szkółka 2000, Kruse 2003). A (so far) very unusual contribution was written by Slater (2004) which almost has the character of a confession.

In the meantime, numerous studies have been made also by geographers on the changes of the religious landscape in Central and Eastern Europe after 1990. Russia (Krindatch 1996, Sidorov 2000a and b, 2003, Kotin/Krindatch 2005), the Czech Republic (Havliček 2005), Slovakia (Očovský 1996, Matlovič 2002), Poland (Bilska-Wodecka 2005) and Belarus (Richard 1996) have been looked into. Special attention has been paid to the Ukraine (Krindatch 2003, 2005) which is a country where Roman Catholic Christianity meets Orthodox Christianity. Questions related to the philosophy and theory of science when assessing geographical research on religion are discussed from a Christian perspective in several papers (among others, Ley 1998, Livingstone 1998 and Wallace 1998) presented at a conference on “Geography and Worldview” and in a thematic issue on “Geography in Christian perspective” (Curry 2002).

There is one area of study which is hardly represented in religious geographical, especially Continental European, research at all. This is the complex of environmental ethics and ecological theology. This is surprising especially in the light of the fact that the relation between humans and their environment has always been a central subject in geography which is itself a “interdisciplinary discipline” located somewhere between the natural and the social/human sciences. In the English speaking world, however, there are a few geographers who have dealt with the issue a Christian perspective (Park 1992, Bjelland 2002, Livingstone 2002).

5 GEOGRAPHY OF RELIGION IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

In contrast to other social scientists, few geographers seem to have dealt with questions of religions in Southeastern Europe¹². Some exceptions are the studies of the spatial distribution of religious groups by Pechoux (1989), Kocsis (1997), Stojmilov (2000) and Ipatiov (2004) and investigation of the demographic development in the Diocese of Gospić-Senj (Croatia) by Pejnović (2004). Pilgrimages to Marian shrines in Croatia were studied by Mirković (1996). The by far most important place of pilgrimage in the region,

Međugorje in Western Herzegovina, was studied by several authors (Vukonić 1996, 145ff., Gormsen/Hassel 1996 and Jurkovich/Gesler 1997). It could be observed here that since the war in Bosnia in the early 1990s, the number of visitors has grown considerably. In Southeastern Europe, religious adherence often is closely linked to nationality and ethnicity. Although frequently the wars of the 1990s in ex-Yugoslavia have been depicted as religious wars, this is not what they were (Iveković 2002, 534). There is, however, scope for studies on religious change in this region in which geographers could be involved. The very link between nationality, religion and territoriality could be investigated theoretical as well as empirically. In Croatia, many new Roman Catholic churches have been built after 1995 which goes along with the regained strong position of the Catholic Church in society. This process including the church sites chosen could be a topic of investigation. On the other hand, religious pluralisation can be observed as a consequence of globalization and Europeanization in a country which was strongly isolated for several years in political terms.

CONCLUSION

What is a geography of religion for Europe going to look like in the future? There are strong indications that there will be two major changes in the religious landscape with great impact and challenge to geographical research: first, an “Americanization” is going to take place and will lead to a great diversification (Henkel 2004). Geography will primarily be involved by looking at the various aspects of immigrant religion and its interdependence with religious life traditionally practiced in this region. New religious teachings and practices may, on the one hand, have a proselytising effect, but at the same time they are also subject to the process of inculturation.

Secondly, with the continuing unification of Europe, a Europeanization of the religious landscape can be expected. The relationship between churches and other religious organizations on the one hand and the national state on the other has found its own individual pattern in each country. Although it is intended to let the religious sector remain a matter of the individual member state, in an even more coherent European Union a certain harmonization in the religion-state relations is very likely to take place. More detailed knowledge about one another and more frequent communication are only some of the reasons for this conclusion. In these studies, methods from the “Caliban” as well as the “Hamlet” school (see above) can be likewise applied. It is of great importance, however, – maybe even more so than for other geographical subdisciplines – that geography of religion be in close contact with neighbouring disciplines and incorporate their findings, especially from religious science and sociology of religion. Refusing interdisciplinary cooperation is less appropriate today than ever.

NOTES

1. For those parts of the world where other religions dominate, new approaches must be found. The terms “religion” and “secularization” may not be applicable here. Cf. the observations on India by Bergunder (2001,227f).
2. See the survey of the different definitions of religion by Kehrer (1998).
3. „With a few exceptions, ‘*sociology*’ has seen itself in the past and in the present as *a spaceless science* ... macrotheories tend to float freely through space, microtheories only very rarely take into account space by identifying the location of objects, the physical existence of people (‘physical space’, *site*), or even social structures deriving from using, shaping or communicating in a certain locality (‘social space’, *place*)” (translation R.H.).
4. There is a remarkable exception of the „space-blindness“ in the sociology of religion: The special issue on the geography of religion of the religious-sociological journal “Social Compass” (Dory 1993).
5. “The globalization and the localization of religion” was the topic of the 3rd conference of the European Association for the Study of Religion in May 2003 in Bergen/Norway. The Working Group on the Sociology of Religion within the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie had its annual meeting in December 2004 on the topic “Religions in public space”.
6. This is the title of a research programme at the Dept. of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds (GB) led by Kim Knott (cf. Knott 1998 and 2000). This institute offers regular courses on this topic as a part of its master’s programme.
7. An early exception from this tendency are the social geographic studies by Hahn (e.g. 1958) which are closely in line with Max Weber.
8. cf. also latest publications on the website of the working group „Religionsgeographie“ (part of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Geographie) www.religionsgeographie.de.
9. This article was the starting point for an interesting discussion on the justification and the goals of the geography of religion in the same Journal (Scottish Geographical Journal 116, 2000, 59-68).
10. Following the tradition of the old cultural geography, Zelinsky (2001) presents a survey on the uniqueness of the religious landscape of the US.
11. An early study of this genre was the article on Sacre-Coeur in Paris by Harvey (1979).
12. This is just a brief and certainly incomplete survey on the topic. It could also serve as an encouragement to further research.

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SAŽETAK

Geografija religije – ponovno otkrivanje znanstvene subdiscipline

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Osim Bütnera (1985), geografi do sada nisu osmislili gotovo nijedan teorijski pristup fenomenu religije. Zato su upućeni na sociologiju religije i religijsku znanost. Prije rasprave o geografiji religije, članak daje pregled novijeg razvoja u oba spomenuta područja.

U sociologiji religije, sekularizacija je dugo vremena bila dominantno okvirmo načelo za tumačenje razvoja religije. U međuvremenu dolaze do izražaja i drugi obrasci tumačenja, kao što su teza o individualizaciji i ekonomske teorije. To možemo zahvaliti činjenici što se posljednjih desetljeća u mnogim dijelovima svijeta značenje religije povećava, a ne smanjuje kako predviđa sekularizacija. Izgleda da se ovo posljednje odnosi na Europu, no čak i tu se primjećuje ponovno oživljavanje religije, osobito u istočnom dijelu kontinenta nakon pada Komunizma.

Religijska znanost je bila povijesna znanost, koja se nekad nazivala poviješću religije. Između ostalog, ona proučava međuzavisnost religije s jedne strane i krajolika/prostora/"geografskog okoliša" s druge strane, posebno u kontekstu svetih mjesta i prostora. Zato ona od početka uključuje prostornu dimenziju. Međutim, u posljednje vrijeme, pitanja prostornosti i mjesta proučavaju se uključujući nove pristupe ponekad obuhvaćene nazivom "kulturni obrat" ("cultural turn").

Geografija religije donedavno se smatrala raznolikim i nepovezanim područjem. Posljednjih godina to se izmijenilo. Uočavaju se dva smjera istraživanja. Jedan se, uglavnom, bavi socijalno-

geografskim problemima i metodama, dok je drugi pod utjecajem novog pristupa kulturne geografije. Oba bi češće trebala koristiti gore spomenute teorijske pristupe sociologije religije. Međutim, geografija religije ne smije izgubiti iz vidokruga svoj glavni cilj: uvijek treba ukazivati na činjenicu da se svi religijski procesi odvijaju u prostoru i imaju prostornu dimenziju.

Kako će u budućnosti izgledati geografija religije za Europu? Postoje snažne indikacije da će doći do dvije glavne promjene u religijskom krajoliku s jakim utjecajem na geografska istraživanja: prvo, odigrat će se “amerikanizacija” i ona će dovesti do velike raznolikosti (Henkel 2004). Geografija će biti uključena prvenstveno u promatranju različitih aspekata religije doseljenika i njezine međuzavisnosti s vjerskim životom koji se tradicionalno prakticira u regiji. Nova vjerska učenja i prakse mogu s jedne strane imati efekt obraćenja, ali u isto vrijeme ona sama su izložena procesu inkulturacije.

Nadalje, kroz proces ujedinjavanja Europe može se očekivati i europeizacija religijskog krajolika. Odnos crkava i ostalih religijskih organizacija s jedne strane i nacionalne države s druge u svakoj zemlji ima svoj vlastiti obrazac. Iako je namjera da pitanje religije ostane stvar svake pojedine države, vrlo je vjerovatno da će se u povezanoj Europskoj Uniji odnosi religija-država na izvjestan način ipak uskladiti.

Za geografiju religije je od velike važnosti, možda od veće nego za druge geografske subdiscipline, da bude u bliskom dodiru sa srodnim disciplinama te da uključuje njihove nalaze, posebno one religijske znanosti i sociologije religije. Odbijanje interdisciplinarnе suradnje danas je neprikladnije nego ikada prije.

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