POST-SECULARITY: TRENDS OF ANALYSIS OF THE PHENOMENON IN MODERN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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Annotation: This article is devoted to the systematization and classification of modern approaches to the interpretation of the post-secularity phenomenon. Post-secular as a religious, socio-historical and cultural phenomenon is a diverse and multilayered space for research, and the problem of post-secular contains a sufficient reserve for analyzing the religious foundations of the modern information society. The very process of secularization remains also unclear. Based on this, we formed three interpretation classes: the first one includes ideas about post-secularity as a critique of the secularization theory; the second one is based on a dialectical synthesis of religious and secular views of the world; the third one is devoted to the analysis of the quality of religious consciousness and faith practice in the post-secular space. As a result of the analysis, the authors came to the conclusion that the formation of post-secular thinking and the development of post-secular society were inextricably linked with the evaluation and reassessment of the secularization principles of modern reality.

Key words: post-secularity, secularization, secularism, "multiple modernities", "commodification of religiosity".

1 Introduction

A surge of interest in the problem of post-secular understanding of the world occurred in the late 90s of the XX century. Gradually, the concept of post-secular acquired various shades, and the problem of an adequate analysis of this phenomenon became even more complex and versatile in the XXI century. The phenomenon of post-secularity covers the problem fields of a wide spectrum of disciplines from philosophy and theology to culturology or international relations. Therefore, it is difficult enough to assume possibility of creating a uniform post-secularity theory. However, the following question remains topical: how much of the meaning attributed to the post-secular in the various academic fields, are consistent and compatible?

At present, there is an urgent need, at least, to systematize and "restore order" in the growing diversity of the meanings of this term. In this paper, without pretending to be exhaustive, we will try to structure many approaches to understanding of the post-secular approach existing in the modern discourse, and also to point out the main arguments in favor of the post-secular understanding of the world.

2 Materials And Methods

In this paper, we relied on particular post-secularity concepts of the modern researchers of religion (E. Greeley, C. Taylor, P. Berger, B. Turner, et al.) in order to demonstrate the widest possible range of opinions, taking into account the socio-political and cultural characteristics of the various regions. It should also be noted that both theoretical and philosophical studies (J. Caputo, C. Taylor, et al.) and the works based on empirical studies of religion sociologists (R. Stark, P. Berger, E. Greeley) were subjected to the analysis and systematization.

In view of our task of systematization of the basic approaches to post-secularity understanding, the basic methods of research were the general scientific methods traditional for the social and humanitarian works: phenomenological, method of unity of the historical and the logical in cognition, systemic approach.

3 Results

Based on the content of the sources analyzed, we tend to adhere to the view that the whole wide range of ideas and concepts of post-secularity can be divided into three broad groups. Of course, this classification will not be as complete and detailed as possible, but, nevertheless, it will help lay the foundation for further systematic understanding of the post-secularity phenomenon. Since the term "post-secularity" is already semantically related to the secularization process, our division of a set of presented theories is based on the relationship specific between these two phenomena.

The first group, in our opinion, should include the critics of secularization and skeptics denying it as such. The supporters of these positions hold the view that secularization has never reflected the true state of religious changes, thus it is necessary to completely abandon the vicious and erroneous concept, and in return we should talk about the modern religious situation in terms of post-secular.

In this direction, the researchers, accusing secularization of being nothing more than a self-serving ploy and an ideological myth created by the "rational intellectuals", express quite extreme views. In particular, A. Morozov argues that "secularization as a comprehensive process no longer exists. And not in the sense that the "process" was over and the "post-secular era" began, but most likely in the sense that there was no "process" at all. And there was only a self-description of the rationalistic consciousness, which singled out this process as existing" (Morozov,2007). David Martin shared this position (at an early stage of his researches), proposing "to strike out secularization from the sociological dictionary" as it is nothing more than an ideological construct (Martin,1969,p. 30). Peter Glazner also considered secularization as a myth spread by the ideologies hostile to religion (Glasner,1977).and according to J. Hadden, secularization was originally rather not an ideology of some circle of scientists demanding any evidence, rather than a systematically valid theory, and empirical studies only refuted the theoretical provisions in the societies considered secularized (Hadden,1987).

In our view, in the light of these and similar arguments, the understanding of post-secular is reduced not so much to the sociocultural situation "after secularization" as to the discourse "after the theory of secularization".

In a less sharp form, it is suggested that "secularization, as a theory about the future development of society, is increasingly out of touch with real events, the religion does not disappear" (Douglas et al, 2008). This thesis is consistent with the fact that secularization could be a determining process for several decades in certain parts of the world before finally extinguished, or even until the process has gone in the opposite direction. As an illustration, one can cite the point of view of the Catholic sociologist E. Greeley, who believes that if the secular processes take place, then only among intellectuals. On the whole, there is a discrepancy between the theory declaring the decline of religiosity and empirical data (Greeley,1969).

The American religion sociologist Rodney Stark repeats Greeley: "After... the completely failed prophecies and misunderstandings of the past and present, it is time to bury the secularization doctrine in the cemetery of false theories and whisper: "Rest in peace" (Stark and Finke, 2000). According to his empirical researches (Finke and Stark, 1992). the individual religiosity was still great and the level of churchization before modernization was low in Europe at the moment; on the contrary, the statistical indicators of religion not only remained consistently high, but even increased over the past one hundred and fifty years in the USA. As for the rest of the world, the main

discussions still remain of Christian-centric nature despite the fact that the theorists define secularization as a global process.

P. Berger could be also referred to the critics of secularization, when he points to the inconsistency of both the term "post-secularity" and "desecularization" in a number of his last works. The reason for this position is that both of these terms imply some chronological sequence: it is assumed that "the world was secular at one time, and it became post-secular now... but... the world has never ceased to be religious" (Berger,2011, p. 103).

As it is known, the modern pluralistic world no longer lends itself to an interpretation that reduces it to unity for the sake of ultimate truth at all costs. In connection with this understanding of the "plural modernity", the disputes over the secularization theory continue among sociologists of religion in the last decade. In earlier discussions, it seemed obvious that the growth of wealth and personal safety would go hand in hand with a decrease in participation in the religious life. However, C. Taylor (Wohlrab-Sahra, Burchardtb ,2012). takes a critical position, arguing that the secularization theories were mostly "subtraction stories" based on the idea that the secularization was unfolded as a release from earlier forms of knowledge. He makes a distinction between the process of secularization as the expulsion of religion from public space and the concept of secular as weakening of religious conviction. Ultimately, he focuses on secularization as a change in the "conditions of faith" in the conditions of the exceptional humanism emergence. Taylor understands and supports the idea of multiple modernities, emphasizing that "secularism, like other features of "modernity"... finds quite different expressions, and is developed under the pressure of various demands and aspirations in different civilizations" (Charles,2007, p. 22).

The concept of "multiple secularities" is based on the recognition that the notion of secular is generally blamed for very divergent meanings that are associated with different political and cultural contexts and social conflicts in the history of societies. Despite the fact that these social conflicts inevitably lead to different social dynamics, they are always focused on the specific cultural and historical ways of drawing boundaries and differences between religion and other spheres of social practice. On the one hand, this conceptualization recognizes divergent structures of meaning, which then are accumulated in the concept of secular in different societies. On the other hand, these differences prove that the transformation of the public place of religion unfolds as comparable processes in principle. Thus, the same secularization motives exist in the representations of different societies in the modern world of numerous and intricate "multiple modernities".

As a result, we see that the researchers (Wohlrab-Sahra and Burch,2012) reduce the criticism of the classical secularization theory to three fundamental objections. Namely, they have doubts in: 1) its alleged universalism, (2) its importance as the basic theory of process, and 3) its modernist normative bias.

Another common argument in favor of understanding the modern world as a post-secular one was that the secularism - as a general term for various ideological antireligious movements of our time - created such problems in a society to which only new, post-secular, religious answers could be considered expedient. Secularization affected the decline of religious authority, which led to a reorientation to the real world "here and now", but at the same time, the modernity created new risks and fears that once again engendered religiosity. Therefore, the post-secularity can become the major stage of historical development, creating favorable conditions for origin and development of new forms of religiosity. In the post-secular era, religion "must necessarily fill the vacuum created in the XX century by the failure of secular materialism... Indeed, it can be argued that the immediate consequence of the complete and apparent failure of secularism is the new religious Renaissance, which is observed throughout the world" (Morales,2007).

Thus, one of the reasons for speaking in terms of post-secular was the conviction that the ideas of secularity and secularism were either "intent" or mistake. Therefore, we included those ideas of post-secularity to the first class, which tend to point to imperfections and weaknesses in the theories of secularization.

The second group – let us call it "based on the secular" - should include the researchers who, instead of considering post-secularity only as a correction of secularism errors, chose to see in it some progressive development based on the achievements of both religious and secular epochs. In modern reality, the post-secular destroys the boundaries of public and private, secular and religious, which leads to the participation of religion in politics, public debate, as well as allows the resacralization of certain areas of life.

In the context of post-secular analysis by the second group of researchers, it is important to note that the proponents of respect attitude for the achievements of secular tradition draw attention to the need to distinguish pre- and post-secular in order to protect the latter from any interventions of pre-secular values that are justly rejected by modernity for the rejection of freedom and democracy.

Perhaps one of the most frank statements about understanding the post-secularity as a progressive achievement based on the secularity results is to consider John Caputo's words that "post-" in the post-secular should be understood not in the sense of "the game is over", but in the sense of "after passing through" modernity" (Turner,2012, p. 201), i.e. on the one hand, there is no danger of the emergence of irrational relativism, and on the other hand, the danger of a return to the conservative pre-modernity. The post-secular worldview, in his opinion, should appear before us as a symbol of the New Enlightenment, which continues the old Enlightenment, but by other means and enlightened relative the old one. Speaking against a return to pre-secular values, Caputo evaluates the theological trends of radical orthodoxy (primarily associated with such names as D. Millbank, K. Pikstock, U.T. Kavano, etc.) rather than the conservative pre-modern movements that only masquerade as postmodern and post-secularity. Radical orthodoxy is inclined to believe that the secular world should reconsider its foundations, return to its roots and to the church, i.e. not the Christ should adapt to the non-religious people, but the non-religious people should turn to uncomfortable Christ. However, according to Caputo, the New Enlightenment should no longer build illusions that it is possible to establish the impenetrable boundaries and to separate certain areas of knowledge from each other, including the fields of science, art and religion, thus preserving them in a patriarchal traditional form. The undogmatized modernity proclaims that the right of everyone to freedom is its core value: freedom of thought, faith, doubt, and each personal freedom is limited only by the same freedom of the other. The consequence of this is the emergence of a multitude competing beliefs and practices, "and we should make every conceivable effort to give them a place, let all the flowers bloom... Including the flowers of religion" (Caputo ,2011, p. 202). The only possible criterion for the credibility and legitimacy of these pluralistic views should be the ability to withstand the open public debates. Only in this way can we give the modernity a subtle postmodern sounding - this is, from Caputo's point of view, the defining idea of a new post-secular Enlightenment.

Thus, the second group of understanding the post-secularity is formed under the slogan of a dialectical synthesis of the advantages of religious and secular, with an aim of building a new post-secular future on this basis.

However, along with a rather optimistic interpretation of the post-secular future of religion, there is a much more skeptical view on the problem of religiosity functioning and development in the modern society in science. In this regard, we single out **the third group** of post-secularity researchers.

It should include the critics of theoretical concept of post-secularism in terms of the quality of religious consciousness manifestation in the post-secular space. According to B. Turner (Turner,2012). the commercialization of religion takes place simultaneously with the democratization in the modern societies. This is expressed in such phenomena of mass culture as: "televangelism", religious tourism, order of prayer at a distance, etc. And then religion itself becomes compatible with the secular consumerism in the post-secular society, since "the ineffable hierarchy of the existing is democratized through the popular manifestations of religion", and the sacred becomes principally *expressible*. According to Turner, the process of universal transformation of modern religions into a commodity, the situation of "religious piety globalization" enables us to look at secularization in a completely different way. The democratization of religion turns it into an expressible system of beliefs and practices that can be sold as a commodity and as a service in the religious markets. This leads to the spread of a new spirituality that exists outside of traditional churches and is no longer a condition for resolving meaningful problems in everyday life. What is important is that the consequence of all these processes is the ever increasing division between "religion" and "spirituality". The paradox of the religion existence in the post-secular society is that the modern religions are at risk, as the metaphysical tension between the world and religion is lost. This is due to the inclusion of religion in the context of consumer goods. Turner calls this process a "commodification of religiosity," which in turn leads to a change in the "tight solidarity" of the secular society to the new individualized "weak solidarity" of the post-secular religion. "Weak solidarity" is a consequence of the commercialization and weakening of the social function of religion. Therefore, from Turner's point of view, "it is at stake that the viable forms of social life can be found in the global world of commercial and commodified religiosity" in the revival of interest in religion (Wohlrab-Sahra,2012, p. 48).

4 Summary

In this article, we examined three groups of researches of the post-secularity phenomenon. The first group includes the ideas of post-secularity, which tend to point to imperfections and weaknesses in the theories of secularization, the second group of researchers adheres to the idea of a dialectical synthesis of the advantages of religious and secular, with the aim of building a new post-secular future on this basis, and the third group consists of ideas of critics of the post-secularism concept in terms of the quality of religious consciousness manifestation and the faith practice in the post-secular space. Thus, the problem of post-secular contains a sufficient reserve for analyzing the religious foundations of the modern information society.

5 Conclusions

The analysis of a whole spectrum of various religious studies of the post-secular problem leads us to the conclusion that the formation of post-secular thinking and the development of post-secular society were inextricably linked with the evaluation and reassessment of the secularization principles of modern reality. The theory of "multiple secularities," along with the notion of "commodified religiosity", is an indisputable proof that the very secularization phenomenon and its impact on contemporary processes of the religiosity revival in society is not fully understood. This means that it becomes possible to view the post-secular as a way of secular self-reflection.

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