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THE END OF GEOGRAPHY OF RELIGION?
TOWARDS THE ISSUE OF THE RELEVANCE
OF RELIGIONS RESEARCH IN THE CONTEMPORARY
HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

Introduction

Is there a threat of end in geography of religions? The existential fear concerning the next development and some speculations about possible end of geography of religions issue from two sources. Firstly, there is a concern about the future of geography itself resulting from the ongoing globalization. As P. Haggett points (2001, p. 587) *"an extreme view claims that the global is now the natural order of affairs in today's technologically driven world. Time-space is being compressed, the end of geography is arriving, everywhere is becoming the same"*. But Haggett (2001, p. 588) at the same time draws attention to the two counter-argument sources, and basically, he removed the worries about the future of geography. The first argument is that globalization is nothing new. The first globalization debate was at the end of the nineteenth century and this debate was concerned with the transformation of economic life by the expansionary forces of capitalism. This was expressed in the economic theory of imperialism. In this view, we still inhabit an international, rather than a globalized, world economy. A second counter-argument is that global change does not occur everywhere in the same way and at the same rate. The processes of globalization are not geographically uniform. Under this view, geography is alive and well, and adapting general global forces into distinct patterns. As globalization becomes more intense, so regionalization and localization tend to grow as countervailing forces to offset the effects (Haggett 2001, p. 588).

The other source of existential fears represent the beliefs of the intellectual elites from the first three quarters of the 20th century about the gradual recession of the importance of the religion as a result of the economic and social modernization. While in the pre-modern period the religion was one of the key social factors and in fact it was influencing the whole life of the traditional societies, in the modern period it should have been profiled as the secondary social factor and its functions should had been taken over by other social subsystems.

The religion should have become exclusively a private matter of how to spend the free time or the matter of the individual psychology (Lužný 1999, p. 137). These tendencies are represented for example by B.R. Wilson, T.F. O´Dea, T. Luckmann (see Lužný 1999). The above opinions, in concentrated version, could be found in Fukuyama's theory about the end of history and about the victory of liberal democracy over the religion in Europe (Fukuyama 2001, p. 260).

Fukuyama proves that the modernization accompanied with the market economy extension and the liberal democracy forms such a historical power which cannot be overcome by traditional cultures created mostly on the basis of religions. But the author himself accepts the existence of issues which persist on the European political scene owing to religion (e.g. the issue of abortion and euthanasia), but mostly by the influence of strong Christian-democratic parties.

The aim of our article is to discuss the function of religion as a factor in politics. In case of verification of Fukuyama's theory the aspect of political influence of religions would slowly disappear and the relevance of the geography of religions would weaken accordingly. In our discussion we will seek for the arguments rejecting the above views and supporting the need of the development of geography of religions.

We will seek these arguments in religious revitalization and its function in presence, what has already been discussed in religious, political, and sociological literature.

Choosing some phenomena we will demonstrate the relevance of religions as political factor, and the relevance of the geography of religions as a human-geographic discipline.

Religious revitalization in the world and its reflection in literature

The development in the recent decades of the 20th c. has caused more problems to the original beliefs of the intellectual elites from the first half of that century about the gradual recession of the importance of the religion as a result of the economic and social modernization. While in the pre-modern period the religion was one of the key social factors and in fact if was influencing the whole life of the traditional societies, in the modern period it should have been profiled as the secondary social factor and its functions should had been taken over by other social subsystems. The religion should have become exclusively a private

matter of how to spend the leisure time or the matter of the individual psychology (Lužný 1999, p. 137).

Despite the fact of proceeding modernization that reached the global dimensions, since the second half of the 1970s the tendencies of the religious revitalization have been appearing. The literature interprets this phenomenon differently. G. Kepel (1994) calls it a God's revenge (la revanche de Dieu) and characterizes it as an approach that was reoriented from the adjustment of the secular values to discovering and revealing the spiritual basis of the society organization, even if it would cause its change. Kepel connects this phenomenon mostly with the revitalization of Christianism, Islam, and Judaism. Other conception was introduced by J. Casanova (1994), who describes this phenomenon as the deprivatization of the religion. He characterizes it as the efforts of different religions to gain an active role in the public life and to introduce the morality into the policy to push away the religions to the private sphere and their complete marginalization that was caused by the modernization and secularization of the society. (Casanova 1994, p. 6). According to D. Lužný (1999, p. 114) the religions do not deny the modernity, but in reverse they adjust to the conditions of the modern society. Respecting its basic principles (right to privacy and freedom of religion) they enter the public sphere. The deprivatization of the religions is realized in various ways (e.g., religion stands for the traditional values, disputes the absolute legal and moral autonomy of the secular sphere, stresses the principles of the common wealth compared to individual needs pressed by the liberalism (Lužný 1999, p. 112-113). The part of the religions recovery was also the discovery of the fundamentalist movements that are striving to exculpate the religion doctrines and institutions and subordinate the public and private life to religious orders and bans (e.g., Islamism, protestant Christian fundamentalism in the USA and its diffusion in the Latin America and post-soviet area).

Though the manifestations of these efforts can be observed also before that time, this process has become more considerable in the eighties of the 20th c. when it was manifested in the all more relevant religious systems of the world (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism). Thus deprivatization of the religion took on the global character (Casanova 1994). S. Huntington (2001) explains the global phenomenon of the religions revival by affect of the specific factors but he also tries to identify the general factors. He considers the human need to acquire new basis on their own identity and the new moral regulations that would provide the certain meaning, purpose and objective of their lives to be the relevant general factor. Thus the process of the modernization and secularization itself when the traditional sources of the identity and authority were disapproved is paradoxically the cause of the religion revival. People who are migrating in big numbers form the country to the towns were uprooted; they came across with many representatives of other cultural traditions and were exposed to the new types of the interpersonal relations. As R. Stark a W.S. Bainbridge (1987) claim the secularization is self-limiting process that evokes two opposite tendencies. On one hand there is a revival of the existing religious tra-

ditions and on the other hand there is a stimulation of the experimentation and formation of the new religious traditions. That is the good news for geography of religions which has to participate in their scholastic prehension.

The phenomenon of religious nationalism

Out of the researches and conceptions that were discussed in the introduction follows that the connection of the traditional religions and the modern policy (synthesis of the religion and the national state) with its historical basis in the secular culture is acceptable for many religion activists in different parts of world. M. Juergensmeyer (1993) also stresses it by analyzing the metamorphosis of the position of the religions in the globalization period. Juergensmeyer does not agree with F. Fukuyama (1992) as to the end of history and the victory/ prevalence of the secular liberal democracy. He points up the political development in many non-European countries that does not fulfil these expectations. After the end of the Cold War and of the bipolar world arrangement one could register not only the development of the new strong economies and the collapse of the old power structures but also strengthening of the activity of many local societies that are often based on the ethnic or religion allegiance. Those social movements do not accept the secular liberal democracy and its concept of isolation policy and religion. On the contrary, they strive to connect the religious and political aspects of the struggle for freedom. Their efforts go into getting out of the secular culture of the West (Juergensmayer 1993). A classic example is the Islamic revolution in Iran, where Islamists came to power in the 1978-1979 years and they subordinated the whole economic, political and cultural life of the country to the Koran. We can mention the activity of the Islamists in other countries (e.g., Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Turkey), where they gained the important positions in the opposition against the secular governments (Huntington 2002). Refusal of the secular liberal democracy is not limited only to the Muslim world but it also occurs in the other geocultural regions. (India, Sri Lanka, central Asia, etc.). A large extension of those processes led Juergensmayer (1993) to the consideration that it might be a new Cold War based on different perspectives on the world and occasionally can have a violence character, that is to gain the global character (Lužný 1999).

According to the ethno-religious character of that religious activity – Juergensmayer (1993, p. 40) defines it as the religious nationalism. Its basic features are the religious and political aims and refusal of the separation of the policy and religion that is according to its representatives the typical feature of the western way of thinking. Juergensmayer also does not consider it appropriate to use the concept fundamentalism in this context because it is not telling, truthful enough and what more it has pejorative connotations and it express the attitude to other people rather than description of the given phenomenon (Lužný 1999).

The religious nationalists are famous for refusing the secular western culture but they do not refuse the secular principles of the policy including the political

apparatus of the modern national state (Lužný 1999, p. 116). Their concentration is concerned with the political ideology that is legitimized political structure of the national state. In case the democratic political procedures are derived from the traditional religious principles they also accept the national state as the form of the modern political organization. The religious nationalists support and claim the democracy, but they refuse some principles of the western democratic culture, especially the image that the policy is the expression of the individual interests that are pushed forward via certain form of the participation in the collective decision-making. The governmental power should not be subordinated to the citizens' will but to the God's will according to the religious nationalists. Those should govern who has learned the truth and would like to subordinate the life of the society to this truth (Lužný 1999, p. 119).

The term religious nationalism might seem to be contradictory because the word nationalism is being connected with the concept of the nation. However, in accordance with the conclusions mentioned above, it is necessary to state that the religion acts here as a unifying indicator that is connecting the society to the one whole. Allegiance to the religion substitutes allegiance to the nation especially in cases where the national identity does not have a dominant role and is substituted by the religious identity that is dominant for forming allegiance to the certain society.

As A. Gellner (1993) states, the nationalism comes out of the need of the modern society to create the cultural homogeneity. In this conception the religion has an important role; many times it has determining role. It is namely the religious faith that expresses the common moral values and spiritual persuasion that are connecting people to the one whole that can be a nation in an ethnic sense of word where not only religion affects but also other indicators (e.g. language, traditions, territory, history, etc.). In case of religious nationalism the religion is the dominant indicator of the identity of people while the other factors have only a secondary role, respectively, they are not determining.

The religion and the secular nationalism are functionally similar because both systems saturate the same needs and human demand for the collective identity, moral authority, loyalty to something that is more than a man. Both systems provide the frame to the moral order and legitimize the given social-cultural arrangement (Lužný 1999, p. 116). Juergensmayer understands those systems as the ideologies of the order and considers them for the potential opponent.

Representatives of the religious nationalism come out of the fact that the traditional religion is under the oppression of the secular nationalism and their traditional culture is in decay under the influence of the West. This is why they seek the basis for their struggle to free their nation from under the influence of the secular West in their religion. The religious nationalists do not consider just the secular West for their enemy but also the secular governments of their own countries and they accuse them for the alliance with the global enemy. Some groups of the religious nationalists speak about the global movement against the religion and they often attach its control to the USA. The criticism

of the secular state is the manifestation of the disillusion with not fulfilling the inadequate hopes that were expected. In many cases the secular state in the third world did not fulfil these expectation and did not bring the economic prosperity and social justice

The consequence of creating a religious state can be a threat to the rights of religious minorities. Religious nationalist solve this problem by two methods. The first one is a separation that assumes the territorial isolation of the minority and majority. However, this method can be applied only in case if the religious minority is located, concentrated in the certain territory. The second method is to adjust that would enable to incorporate the minority to the broader frame; however this does not mean the liquidation of its specifics. The basic assumption is the equality of the members of the minority and majority. The religious nationalists do understand the religious minorities just because for their religious character. The worse situation arises in case if there is a secular minority within the frame of the religious state. The religious nationalists perceive it unfriendly and this is why they can hardly reconcile with its existence. (Lužný 1999, p. 120).

Political influence on religion can be well illustrated by the two-way process of the globalization where on one side we can see the particularization of the universal and on the other side universalization of the particular. The globalization nowadays causes the raise of various movements that are dealing with the question of the "real sense" of the world as a whole, the world as one place. The process of the globalization initiates searching for the particular identities (collective and individual) because while the world is becoming one place the individuals and groups of people are forced to declare their difference and to determine their positions in the frame of the global order. In the process of the globalization is thus strengthen the importance of community, the firm values and other fundaments that enable the individual or society to find to find the fixed local place in the frame of the global whole. With regard to the fact the religion belongs to the fundamental sources of the social order and thus also of the political legitimization, it plays an important role in the contemporary global conditions (Robertson 1992, p. 27). Globalization covers then the ambivalent trends. On one side, it leads towards the unification, on the other side it produces the variety and supports heterogeneity inside homogeneity and the differentiation inside of already existing identity.

Religion thus remains the source of the collective as well as of the individual identity and in the context of globalization it becomes the very important political factor. Robertson (1992) points out that the revival of the religion, discovery of the religious nationalism and fundamentalism in very different countries (USA, Japan, India, Iran, Sri Lanka) is the religious reaction to the strengthening globalization. Geography of religions and political geography have an irreplaceable role in the study of that phenomenon.

The phenomenon of religious and inter-civilization tensions and conflicts

The evaluation of religions relevance in territorial conflicts in the world has been the concern of several authors.

A. Jackowski (2003, p. 47-53) in his textbook gives great attention to the conflicts with religious background. As Rinschede (1999) points, following works might me also inspiring: T.R. Gurr (1993), T.R. Gurr and B. Harff (1994), and O´Brien and Palmer Atlas (1994). These authors have distinguished 3 types of religious tensions and conflicts:

– conflicts with very active participation of religions
– conflicts where religions play an important role besides territorial, political, and ethnical factors
– conflicts where religions are in the background and with their importance they come after other factors

The end of Cold War brought radical changes in the politic-geographical structures of the world. After the fall of bipolar world organization the problem of new definition of relations between the West and the Third World countries seem to be very actual. In that context there arise questions concerning religion motivated terrorism and the attempt to apply democratic principles, which are the product of Greek ancient, Judaism-Christian and the Enlightenment traditions of the Western civilization, into areas formed by the different religious systems (Halík 2002). The contemporary development shows that this attempt strikes considerable, even a militant resistance.

Tab. 1. Major religious conflicts at the beginning of the 21st c.

Country	Concerned religions
Sudan	Christianism/Islam/primary religions
Nigeria	Christianism/Islam
Egypt	Coptic Christians/Islam extremists
Israel/Palestinian State	Judaism/Islam
Iran	Islam/Bahaism
India	Sikhism/Hinduism
China/Tibet	Buddhism/atheism
Northern Ireland	Catholicism/Protestantism
Kashmir	Islam/Hinduism
India	Hinduism/Islam
Sri Lanka	Buddhism/Hinduism/Islam
Myanmar	Buddhism/Christianism/Islam
Čečensko	Orthodoxy/Islam
Iraq	Shiite Muslim, Sunni Muslim
The Philippines	Christianism/Islam

Source: Adapted by Rinschede (1999) in Matlovič (2001)

Radical Islamism has mobilized itself very markedly. It attempts to become one of the important unifying powers in the Third World countries, what causes the escalation of the tension between the western countries and the Islamist groups. The accompaniment of growing tension are numerous terroristic attacks of Islamists which might lead to situational and even permanent ill will between the members of Western and Islam civilization.

The Huntington concept of the clash of civilizations evoked a suggestive discussion about the role of religious factor in the origination of tensions and conflicts (Huntington 2001). He claims that the contemporary world is multipolar and multicultural. After the Cold War the struggle of superpowers was replaced by the struggle of civilizations. Following-up the theory of cultural spheres by A. Toynbee Huntington has assigned 8 civilizations in the world: Western (Euro-Atlantic), Slavonic-Orthodox, Islamic, Hindustani, Confucian, Japanese, Latin-American, and African.

These civilizations structure themselves into sub-civilizations (e.g. Western into European and North American). By the civilization Huntington understands a culture unit which is not a part of any larger cultural unit and represents the highest culture society with the most general level of cultural identity of people. Civilizations are to a great extent specified on the basis of religion and other cultural specifications. They might be formed by several states or just by one (the Japanese civilization). Civilizations are the dynamic phenomena; they arise, develop themselves, decline, and die away. According to Huntington the world is entering the period when the advanced communication system enables civilizations to intensify the contacts among them what results in a multicultural and multi-civilization system. The power relationships among individual civilizations are according to Huntington shifting slowly from the distinct dominance of the Western civilization towards the reinforcement of the Islam and Chinese civilization. Conflicts that determine the world development will, according to Huntington, proceed among states and their groups belonging to different civilizations, i. e. the world will get under the clash of civilizations.

Most likely centres of tension will be the places and areas where the two different civilizations interfere. It results from the differences between civilizations which are not only real but also primary and often archaic and all embracing. They range from the child upbringing through the conception of the state to the understanding of nature and God. Many people, after the cultural disaffection and disappointment from the West, caused by the social-economic processes of modernization and globalization, always more markedly remind themselves of their own religious rootage (Huntington 1993, 2001; Ištok 1997). According to Huntington there is a possibility to miss the global conflict only if the politicians accept such a politics that would respect the different cultural and civilization value conceptions and views. According to this author, the main role of the western politicians is – instead of the attempt to transform other civilizations imitating the western pattern – the effort to preserve the unique qualities of the Western civilization, their protection, and development.

Besides the positive reactions there were many critical voices that Huntington work evoked. Critics reproached him the non-systematic and heterogeneous interpretation in the spirit of the postmodernist methodology. His definition of civilizations was considered vague, too simplifying and underestimating the structural complication of certain cultural areas. His assumptions that people of certain civilization will gather into one levelled and identically acting mass, is by some critics fabricated, historic unserious, and empirically unverifiable (Mendel 2002). Other criticized effect was that the lines of confrontation do not run along the civilization borders but rather divide the people inside them (Krejčí 2002, p. 36). After all, this fact is conceded Huntington in the concept of civilization split countries (e.g. Turkey, Russia, Mexico). Despite the critique, it is impossible to deny that Huntington's concept of the clash of civilization, as one of the ways for the further population development, has outlined the role of religion as a relevant factor in the world plurality formation. Religion actually enables us to identify the individuality of a culture or civilization. As far as we examine the religion it is possible to understand better the tensions and conflicts that in open or latent form are related to religious factors.

The phenomenon of intra-civilization tension

The western civilization, like others, suffers many intra-civilization problems. In that context there arises a question concerning the common value base of the present West. After the end of the "Second" world in consequence of its defeat in Cold War stands the "First" world before the inevitability to define its relation towards the "Third" world. The efforts of radical Islam are very apparent in terms of offering a common value and ideological platform for many third and Fourth world countries with socially deprived classes of immigrants living in the rich West. Thus, it intrudes here the old bipolar scheme from the time of Cold War; the West on one side, and the radical Islamism on the other (Halík 2002, p. 175); however, the West has been trying to avoid that scheme so far. Looking for a common value base of the West is closely associated with the ideological struggle between liberalism and conservativism, or let us say, between secular and religious oriented strata of the society. A part of conservatives warns against the consequences of nowadays development and against the extinction of the western civilization. A representative example is the study of a Catholic conservative politician P. Buchanan "The Death of the West". Buchanan (2004), issued from the demographic analyses, warns against the extinction of population in the western countries. A reason of extinction he sees in Cultural Revolution which led to the destruction of actual moral order and change of human values. The ideologists of this view should have been Marxist theorists – G. Lukács, A. Gramsci, T. Adorno, and H. Marcuse. Considering the success of the Cultural Revolution in the end of 1960s the idea of individualism and hedonism became dominant. The death of own civilization became insignificant for the western elites. Buchanan criticizes the revolution idea of equity and he

considers it ideological, Utopian, and completely devastating. Bachanan put under the hard critique the patronymic equity enforced mostly by liberalism. That equity caused the crisis of family institution, and consequently the decrease of birth-rate and acceleration of the ageing process. He warns against the disregard towards living and the culture of death which tolerates birth-control, abortion, euthanasia, and homosexual partnerships. He criticizes deconsecrating, affirmative action, and multi-culture. He also warns against the destructive results of massive migrations from Africa and Asia to Europe and from Africa, Asia, and Latin America to USA. He puts the emphasis mainly on the Islamic countries with the highest fertility of the world; thus they have preserved the desire for persistence of heir civilization.

A certain threat for the West Buchanan also sees in the rise of anti-western feelings of the western population as a result of taking control over education, culture, and justice by liberals who are influenced by Marxism. Globalization, as he argues, is also a big threat leading towards the weakening of states and disintegration of nations.

Although Buchanan considers the liberal Cultural Revolution victorious, still it is possible to observe certain implementation of conservative views in present politics. In the European Union it was for example the attempt of some countries to state the reference to God in the preamble of the constitutional law. It is also the effort of churches and Christian-democratic parties to enforce the legislation restraining induced abortion and supporting family. On the other hand, there is the effort to preclude the legal acceptation of registered homosexual partnerships. This concept also includes the Catholic revaluation of modernizing trends; the revaluation was initiated by the II. Vatican Council in the 1960s (Hekrdla 2002). In the USA there occurs the assertion of protestant fundamentalism – e.g. in the southern Baptist churches. These fundamentalistic Baptists unlike their more liberal European co-religionists, concentrate on the suppression of the sexual minorities laws, they refuse religion neutral education at schools, involve themselves in PRO LIFE Campaign, and after the fall of Sad dam Hussein regime they develop missions in Iraq (Havran 2004). One of the views on the intra-civilization (also inter-civilization) tensions is the dichotomy particularists – universalists. While the particularists (mostly conservatives) emphasize the separateness and value autonomy of the local cultures, universalists (mostly liberals) highlight the panhuman values with their common intercultural attraction and importance (Budil 2002, p. 118). An interesting project on the field of universalism is the search for the ethical principles common for the religious systems of the world and creation of so called world ethos (Küng 2000).

Conclusion

There is no threat of end in geography of religions; it results from the dispel of the oncoming globalization, secularization and modernization fears. Using the example of the phenomenon of religious nationalism, religious and inter-

civilization tension, and intra-civilization tension we mentioned the relevance of religious factor in present-day world. We understand it as a challenge for geography of religions to participate in research assumption of these phenomena. Religion returns back into public and political life in rather a massive way all over the world. This return shows a significant spatial differentiation and conditionality by the factors of widely understood geographic environment. Besides the real space a cyberspace has to play a very important role. In the cyberspace there form very active religious groups which do not create any memberships or institution structures. They act through internet and they role grows in manipulation of people thinking, values, and behaviour (Halík 2002). Geography of religion might contribute to the search of values, morality, and motives of political decisions, as Pacione (1999) noticed; because as D. Harvey (1996, p.10) observed "meaningful political action cannot proceed without some embedded notions of value, if only a determination as to what is or not important to analyse intellectually let alone struggle for politically". M. Pacione (1999, s. 128) claims, that the incorporation into human geography of the moral perspectives of a socially-relevant religion may be a catalyst to enable "relevant research" in human geography to emerge from backwater to which it was consigned in the 1970s into the mainstream of social policy debate.

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Koniec geografii religii?

problem znaczenia badań religii we współczesnej geografii człowieka

Streszczenie

Czy istnieje groźba końca geografii religii? Odpowiedź brzmi nie. Przykłady zjawisk nacjonalizmu religijnego, napięć religijnych i międzycywilizacyjnych oraz wewnątrz-cywilizacyjnych pokazują znaczenie czynnika religijnego we współczesnym świecie. Wyzwaniem dla geografii religii jest włączenie się w badania owych zjawisk. Religia wraca do życia publicznego i politycznego na skalę masową na całym świecie.

Powrót ten wykazuje wyraźne zróżnicowanie przestrzenne i uzależnienie od różnych czynników środowiskowych. Oprócz przestrzeni realnej ważną rolę odgrywać może tu cyberprzestrzeń. W cyberprzestrzeni aktywne są grupy, które nie tworzą struktur instytucjonalnych i członkostwa. Działają poprzez Internet, a ich rola w manipulowaniu sposobami myślenia, wartościami i zachowaniami ludzi rośnie (Halik 2002). Geografia religii może pełnić niezastąpioną rolę w badaniu wartości, moralności oraz motywów decyzji politycznych.

Tłumaczenie Bolesław Domański