Before defining secularization, one needs a definition of "religion" (roughly, unseen/supernatural powers and agencies which can intervene in human affairs and possess moral purpose).

Bruce Is Critical of Previous Definitions of Secularization

Previous definitions of secularization focused on "modernization" as a dominant (inevitable) trend in developed Western societies.

Secularization involves, as a consequence of industrial production, the development of new ways of organizing social and economic relationships that are "rationalized" or functional in character and therefore

(1) do not require religious convictions
(2) do not require participants to invoke religious meanings
(3) are not under the dominance, regulation or control of religious institutions, but rather support or maximize the autonomy of the individual

There are several problems with this way of looking at secularization.

First of all, it assumes an abstract, inevitable historical process that runs the more or less the same way in developed Western countries that adopted (and continue to pursue) industrialization.

- This fails to explain the different forms secularization has taken in, e.g. the United States, as opposed to Denmark.
- It also fails to identify the way that emerging social elites acted to promote secularization (as Smith noted last week) or how the use of different strategies by educational and literary elites changed the path or affected the progress of secularization in a particular country.

Second, it assumes that religion is nothing more than a pre-modern search for power and effective control over one's environment (charms, dancing to make it rain), which loses its place when a more efficient and effective system comes along (control over the environment through technologies of industrial production).

"Rationalization" is supposed to mean that mythical or poetic forms of language which are evocative are replaced by empirical, instrumental categories which "get things done" (production and consumption of goods and services).

This also involves the rise of specialized technical professions, which maintain their own internal logic and self-governance (including control of training and certification.)

Religious institutions would therefore lose any role in the public space of production and consumption.

Bruce's Critique:

We don't need to make all of these assumptions or to assume that there is one uniform model or that change is linear.

Still, it is useful to define secularization as

(1) "the declining importance of religion for the operation of non-religious roles and institutions such as those of the state and the economy" (limited role for religion in technologies of prediction, control and uniform production/reproducibility), which may lead to

(2) "a decline in the social standing of religious roles and institutions" which in turn may tend to support

(3) "a decline in the extent to which people engage in religious practices, display beliefs of a religious kind and conduct other aspects of their lives in a manner informed by such beliefs.

    a. This would involve a decline in plausibility as religions are no longer agreed to make claims across different public areas of life.

        i. Religions could still survive in the private sphere of individual expression and voluntary association.

        ii. Communal religions, centered around a historic tradition, will have trouble continuing their traditional way of life when the individual is now the source of authority and generates new interpretations appropriate to the individual's personal convictions and felt needs.

            1. Separating work role from the received class system (i.e. feudalism was dead) allowed for

                a. mobility,

                b. creating new religious identities apart from the received social structures (like the Cornwall tin miner on p. 12)

                c. new religious identities could be used to assert egalitarianism and social influence/standing in spite of disparities in income/employment.

                    i. This erodes the ability of one religious tradition to make claims in the broader culture. (Immigration can accelerate this trend by increasing diversity and competing alternatives.)

                    ii. The dominant religious tradition can no longer be an inherited religious "high culture" that claims to provide the agreed moral/religious basis across the society.

                        1. This is instead replaced by an increasingly minimal, lowest common denominator ideal based on maximizing material prosperity and individual freedoms.

                        2. By contrast, an individual religious community will now have authority only over its own

followers, but can still provide low-level social services within the local community.

    a. Sect type organizations can continue to exist and attempt to assert greater control, but this will only work when they can continuously provide something approaching a total world for the individual.

Exceptions:

- When a traditionally homogeneous country experiences some kind of reaction to a perceived external threat, religion can reinforce national/ethnic social identity. (E.g. Greece under Turkish rule, Northern Ireland, etc.)

Mouzelis:

Pre-modern=

- Local segments were where economic production occurred and were somewhat self-sufficient; segments defined character of life for individuals, groups
- relatively undifferentiated social institutions,
- fixed social structures with limited social mobility

Secularization =

(1) Inclusion of a whole population in the national center (reduced power of segmental localism; from small scale cooperative agriculture→mobility required to find work opportunities in distant urban centers)
(2) Top down differentiation (overall differentiation of institutional spheres)
    a. New elites who gain economic power through technologies of production have power to reshape where goods are produced, transported and sold (hence, where work opportunities will exist) and may attain proportionally greater power/influence over local situations (further disrupting local patterns of work and social relationships, e.g. Walmart moves into a rural community and displaces family-owned local small businesses, so that locals lose control of the means of production). This results in a shift of people's identifications and attachments from their local communities to other modes of attachment and identification.
    b. State will subsequently respond to increasingly individualized, mobile society by providing support services and training no longer primarily provided by local networks

        i. Each discrete sphere will develop its own logic, values, professional rationale and internal standards.

        ii. Advance of bureaucratic organization and surveillance technologies (think, e.g. of the recent movie, Closed Circuit).

(3) Widespread individualization (spread of individualization to elite to non-elite level)

    a. Determine location of residence, type of family structure (if any), type of work sought, education/training pursued, life goals, political affiliation, consumer choices

    b. Detraditionalization→autonomy

Schieman:

- As secularization proceeds, how will the decision making of individuals be affected?
- Will education (potentially linked to secularization?) affect how people use or don't use religious ideas in decision-making?

Roughly, the answer seems to be this:

Education provides one with other options beside conventional religious knowledge and processes, i.e. it gives one new forms of knowledge and processes that can be used or appealed to.

- What is important here are resources that foster self-directedness and independent problem-solving.)
- People with professional skills of critical evaluation may also be more selective in choosing what aspects of religion they use for problem solving.

The effects of this are buffered to a limited extent by aspects of high commitment to religion.

- Education alone (or scientific training, in other surveys) do not by themselves produce a uniform decline in use of religion for problem-solving.
- Still an underlying trend is observable that can be buffered or moderated by high levels of religious involvement.
  - Perhaps this has to do with more exposure to religious problem-solving being modeled and validated within the religious community, which plays a larger role in one's social world and identity.
  - People with more education (and therefore a more cognitive, analytical approach)and who use religious problem-solving may have a disproportionate effect on other members of the religious community.