Spirituality in New Social Movements
A Case Study of Non-Governmental Organization Embercombe

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Research Problem

- Secularization thesis: privatized and socially insignicant nature of de-institutionalized and individualized spiritualities

- *Versus* presence of spiritualities in the public sphere

- Spirituality and social change in the context of New Social Movements

Research Question

- Forms of spirituality which enable the actors to articulate problems transcending their individual lives

- Case Study of British NGO *Embercombe*

- In what ways do the actors in the organization Embercombe interconnect their own inner spiritual development with the effort to change the community and wider society?

Presentation Structure

- 1) Privatization and De-privatization theories

- 2) Conceptions of spirituality

- 3) Embercombe in the context of holistic milieu

- 4) Key characteristics of New Social Movements

- 5) De-privatized aspects of the organization Embercombe

Privatization of Religion

- Secularization *versus* transformation of religion paradigm

- Consuming of subjective religious representations and sacralization of individual identity (Luckmann, 1967)

- Spirituality is self-contained and precarious (Bruce, 2002)

De-privatization of Religion

- What are the best conditions for religion to enter the public sphere?

...... and taking into account specific features of spiritualities......

„When religion enters the public sphere to question and contest the absolute lawful autonomy of the secular spheres and their claims to be organized in accordance with principles of functional differentiation without regard to extraneous ethical or moral considerations." (Casanova, 1994: 57-58)

What is Spirituality?

- „Spirituality is any human practice that maintains contact between the everyday world and a more general meta-empirical framework of meaning by way of the individual manipulation of symbolic systems". (Hanegraaff, 2005: 42)

- „Self-understanding, change, the true life is sought by seeking out, experiencing and expressing a source of significance which lies within the process of life itself" (Heelas, Woodhead 2005: 31)

From Holistic Milieu to Holistic Movement

- To explore the Spiritual revolution thesis it was necessary to compare congregational sphere with holistic milieu

- What do I miss in the Kendal Project? - Spirituality in primary institutions and public aspects of spirituality present in secondary institutions

- How to make a step further? Concepts: SPIN of SPIN (York 1995), progressive milieu (Lynch 2007), grassroot spirituality movement (Forman 2004)
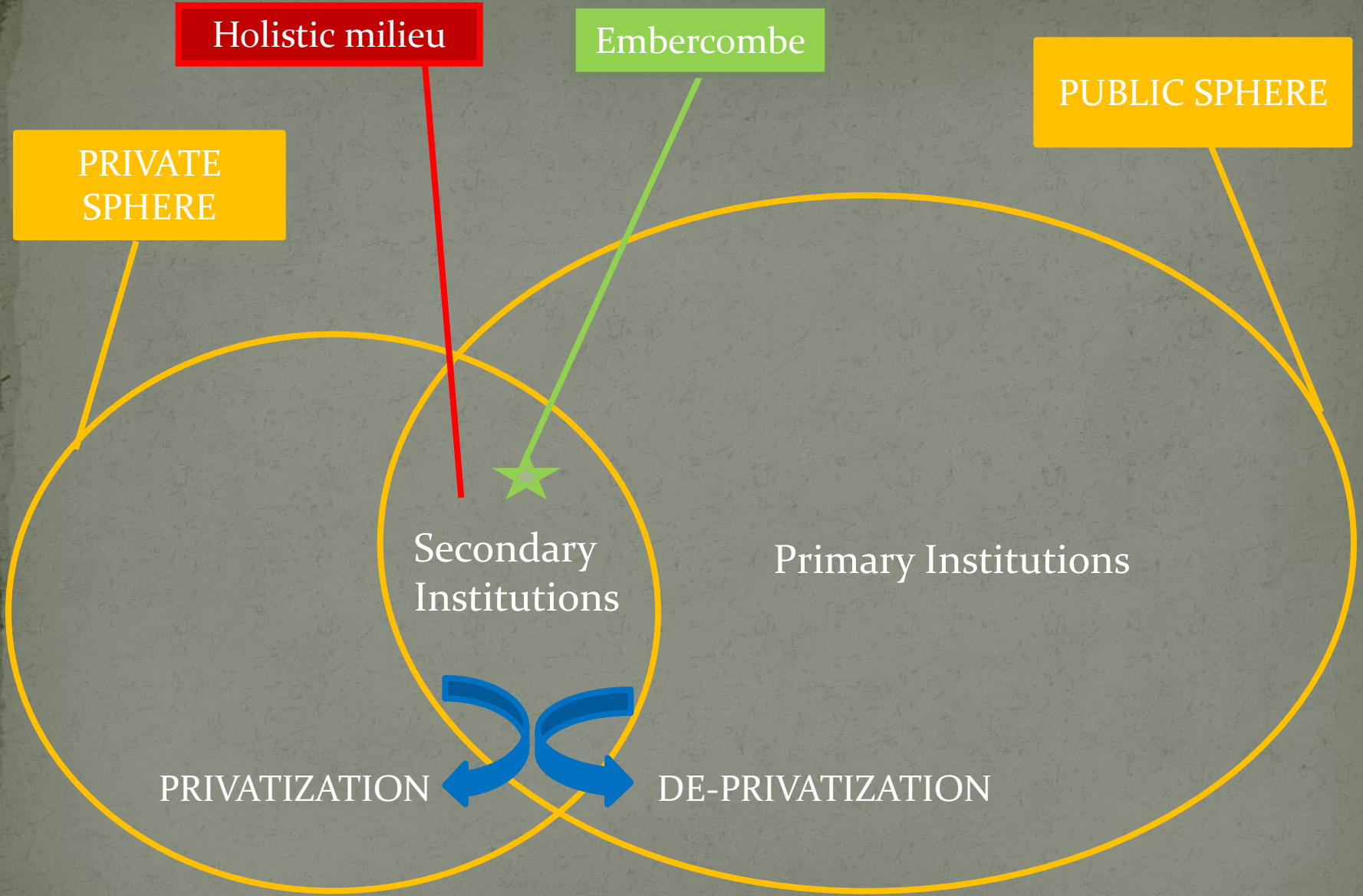
Holistic milieu

Embercombe

PUBLIC SPHERE

PRIVATE SPHERE

Secondary Institutions

Primary Institutions

PRIVATIZATION

DE-PRIVATIZATION

The New Social Movements

- Cultural and symbolic „work" of NSM - instead of focus on material gains, identity politics

- Challenging the cultural codes of dominant science-technical discourse in the domain of everyday experience and practice

- Exploring unmesurable and uncontrollable dimensions of existence such as playfulness, harmony between body and soul

Embercombe

- http://www.embercombe.co.uk/
- MISSION: „**Touching hearts, stimulating minds and inspiring committed action for truly sustainable world**"

- Strong environmental and social orientation of the organization apparent in the whole space

- Programmes for very different groups of actors – students, teachers, corporations, socially disadvantaged youth

De-privatized aspects of Embercombe

- **Twofold journey** – inner transformation leading to acts changing the outer world

- „**Being planted**" – spiritual embedded practice (possibly) leading to activism

- „**Dreamer**" – institution challenging the instrumental rationality discourse

The Journey

- Spiritual journey leading through self-exploration to self-transformation

- Going beyond one's comfort zone to stimulate processes of exploration

- „Our mission is to assist the emergence of a powerful network of young adults - authentic leaders and change agents - able to engage with the challenges of our world in their own unique way while living purposeful, sustainable and fulfilling lives."

(http://www.catalystcourse.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=4)

Going beyond one's comfort zone?

Being planted

- Spiritual embedded practice *being planted*
- Deep connection with nature nurtures one's authenticity
- „First I felt very calm and I'm really with nature and then I started to feel the pain of like the Earth and it was really horrible and I was just crying. And then this idea came time about if everybody plants one tree in their lifetime and nurtures it as well, then this country will be different place, completely different place. I think it would create a reverence for nature. So yes it was a very deep experience." (Susi, 13.11. 2010)

The Dreamer

- Dis-harmony between „doing" and „being"

- Too much of planting, organizing events, caring for visitors and site management

- In the morning circle one person chooses to be a dreamer for that day

- Spiritual insights are used to establish new advancements to make the organization more environmentally and spiritualy harmonious

Conclusion

- The everyday spiritual practicies of actors in the organization Embercombe, the spiritualized institutions (dreamer), the environmental worldviews and the connections with other organizations, holistic healers, corporations and universities in primary and secondary spheres are *the manifestations of the theoretical gap in the secularization paradigm*

Discussion

- Suggestion for further research
- - mapping the exact structure of connections to acters and organizations in public sphere

- Is it possible to „measure" the impact or influence of spiritually motivated actions?

- I would like to thank for your participation and now I would be glad to answer any questions.

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