

**A religious resurgence? The restructuring of the religious field in Eastern Europe after the collapse of communism** – *Detlef Pollack (Sociology), University of Frankfurt/Oder (Germany)*

My presentation focuses on the question of whether or not we can observe a religious revival after the collapse of communism in the East European countries and how we can account for the religious changes after the social, political and economic upheaval of 1989. In order to be able to answer this question it is necessary to analyze the religious situation in communist Eastern Europe before 1989. In general communist rule caused a weakening of church ties in the population and a decline in the social significance of church and religion. The degree of alienation from the church, however, differed between the individual countries and between the denominations within these countries. The higher the degree of political repression the higher the degree of alienation from the church. Roman Catholic Church has succeeded the most in preserving its numbers, whereas Lutheran churches have been the least successful.

After the collapse of communism in almost every post-communist country a religious upswing took place. After 15 years of political, economic and social transformation we can state that only in less highly developed countries such as Russia, the Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania the religious resurgence has proven to be permanent. In the more developed countries like Slovenia, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Eastern Germany we observe certain signs of religious decline. It seems that there is a statistically significant correlation between the degree of modernization and religious decline.