

# HEGEMONIC NARRATIVES AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY POLITICS IN CONTEMPORARY LITHUANIA

Ingo W. Schröder

## ABSTRACT

The essay introduces the Gramscian concept of hegemony to the study of identity politics, with a special focus on the distinction established by Jean and John Comaroff between hegemony and identity. The case of Catholic identity in Lithuania is used as an illustration why identity politics tend to fail when they are perceived to serve the ends of ideology rather than creating a hegemonic consensus.

KEY WORDS: identity politics, hegemony, ideology, Catholicism, cultural heritage, Lithuania.

## ANOTACIJA

Straipsnyje supažindinama su A. Gramsci suformuluota hegemonijos koncepcija, leidžiančia išsiaiškinti identiteto formavimosi principus. Atskirai dėmesio šiuo atveju skiriama Jean ir Johno Comaroffų nubrėžtai atskirties linijai tarp hegemonijos ir identiteto sampratų. Katalikiškojo identiteto fenomenas Lietuvoje yra pateikiamas pavyzdžiu, iliustruojančiu nesėkmingo identiteto formavimosi proceso atvejus tada, kai jis yra atribojamas nuo hegemonijos konsensuso paieškų ir suvokiamas vien ideologiniu pagrindu.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: tapatybės politika, hegemonija, ideologija, katalikybė, kultūros paveldas, Lietuva.

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In this short essay I will explore identity politics from the theoretical vantage point of hegemony and with an empirical focus on religion in Lithuania. The following reflections seek to provide some very preliminary conclusions from an ongoing research project on the role of the Catholic Church among urban Lithuanians and at the same time argue for the usefulness of Marxist concepts in the anthropology of religion. As I have explained in more detail elsewhere<sup>1</sup>, I consider the concept of hegemony to have the potential of making an important contribution to the analysis of religion, in particular under conditions that favour the dominance of one church, as is the case in Lithuania. Applying concepts from the Marxist toolbox also promises to blow some fresh air into the overused concept of identity politics, as well as the emerging field of the anthropology of Christianity, which has so far been dominated by Geertzian musings on culture and meaning.

Gramsci's concept of hegemony was introduced to the social sciences by Raymond Williams<sup>2</sup> and to anthropology by Marxist scholars like Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith, to mention just the most notable names<sup>3</sup>. It is relatively easy to establish a consensus about the general understanding

<sup>1</sup> See: SCHRÖDER, Ingo W. Catholicism in Lithuania: Hegemony or Common Sense? (manuscript under preparation); SCHRÖDER, Ingo W. The Making and Breaking of Collective Identities: Analytical Inspirations from the New Marxist Anthropology (forthcoming in: Ethnicity Studies / Etniškumo studijos).

<sup>2</sup> See: WILLIAMS, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

<sup>3</sup> See: SIDER, Gerald. *Between History and Tomorrow: The Making and Breaking of Everyday Life in Rural Newfoundland*. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2003; SIDER, Gerald. *Living Indian Histories: Lumbee and Tuscarora People in North Carolina*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003; SMITH, Gavin. *Livelihood and*

of hegemony: it can be described as the way how a political elite asserts its position by inculcating the subaltern masses by means of culture and civil society with their own coherent view of the world that structures the people's perception and experience of their everyday reality in such a pervasive way that they refrain from resisting the prevailing condition. A more detailed definition of hegemony has been much more difficult to achieve, mostly because of Gramsci's own ambiguous way of writing about it<sup>4</sup>. I do not intend to enter into a deeper discussion of definitional components of hegemony, but for the purpose of this essay will focus on the elaboration of Gramsci's ideas by Jean and John Comaroff. In their voluminous study of the colonial encounter between British colonialism and the Tswana people of southern Africa, they discuss hegemony – along with ideology and culture – in their introductory chapter as one of the conceptual tools they intend to work with. In their concise definition, they describe hegemony as “that order of signs and practices, relations and distinctions, images and epistemologies – drawn from a historically situated cultural field – that come to be taken-for-granted as the natural and received shape of the world and everything that inhabit it”<sup>5</sup>. It is, as they remark themselves, very close to Bourdieu's concept of the habitus. The following lengthy quote is intended to illustrate how the Comaroffs connect culture with different forms of domination:

[Hegemony and ideology] (...) are the two dominant forms in which power enters – or, more accurately, is entailed in – culture. It is through them, therefore, that the relationship between power and culture is finally to be grasped, although a further caveat is necessary: that power itself is Janus-faced. Sometimes it appears as the (relative) capacity of human beings to shape the actions and perceptions of others by exercising control over the production, circulation, and consumption of signs and objects, over the making of both subjectivities and realities. This is power in its *agentive* mode: it refers to the command wielded by human beings in specific historical contexts. But power also presents, or rather hides, itself in the form of everyday life. Sometimes ascribed to transcendental, suprahistorical forces ..., these forms are not easily questioned. Being “natural” and “ineffable”, they seem to be beyond human agency, notwithstanding the fact that the interests they serve may be all too human. This kind of *nonagentive* power proliferates outside the realm of institutional politics, saturating such things as aesthetics and ethics, built form and bodily representation, medical knowledge and mundane usage. What is more, it may not be experienced as power at all, since its effects are rarely wrought by overt compulsion. They are internalized, in their negative guise, as constraints; in their neutral guise, as conventions, and, in their positive guise, as values. Yet the silent power of the sign, the unspoken authority of habit, may be as effective as the most violent coercion in shaping, directing, even dominating social thought and action. [COMAROFF, Jean & COMAROFF, John (...) 1991, P. 21–22, emphasis in the original].

The Comaroffs identify “power in the agentive mode” with ideology and “power in the nonagentive mode” with hegemony. The basic difference between the two lies in the fact that ideology is recognized as the expression of the interests of a particular social group, whereas hegemony

*Resistance: Peasants and the Politics of Land in Peru*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989; SMITH, Gavin. *Confronting the Present: Towards a Politically Engaged Anthropology*. Oxford: Berg, 1999; SMITH, Gavin. *Hegemony: Critical Interpretations and Beyond*. *Focaal*, Vol. 43, 2004, p. 99–120.

<sup>4</sup> See the discussion in: CREHAN, Kate. *Gramsci, Culture and Anthropology*. London: Pluto Press, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> COMAROFF, Jean & COMAROFF, John. *Of Revelation and Revolution*, Vol. 1: *Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 23.

is seen as a set of conventions shared and naturalized throughout a political community. For this reason the latter is beyond direct argument, whereas the former is more likely to be perceived as guided by particularist interest and therefore open to contestation. “Hegemony homogenizes, ideology articulates”<sup>6</sup>.

Still the two are linked with one another in a dialectical relationship, both being, as it were, two sides of the same coin of political domination.

Hegemony, we suggest, exists in reciprocal interdependence with ideology: it is that part of a dominant worldview which has been naturalized and, having hidden itself in orthodoxy, no more appears as ideology at all. Inversely, the ideologies of the subordinate may give expression to discordant but hitherto voiceless experience of contradictions that a prevailing hegemony can no longer conceal. Self-evidently, the hegemonic proportion of any dominant ideology may be greater or lesser. [ibid, P. 25]

The actual relationship between hegemony and ideology is established in an ongoing struggle over domination in the cultural field that involves the elite and various subaltern groups. The relative proportions of the two modalities of cultural domination are constantly liable to shift, and the way how specific symbolic expressions and practices are perceived within the continuum whose ends they constitute is always contingent upon the specific socio-historical context. The Comaroffs conclude:

So it is with culture, hegemony, and ideology: hegemony is a product of the dialectic whereby the content of dominant ideologies is distilled into the shared forms that seem to have such historical longevity as to be above history – and hence, to have the capacity to generate new substantive practices along the surfaces of economy and society. [ibid, P. 30]

So far, the concept of hegemony has only sporadically been applied to the study of religion. To Gramsci himself, religion (which, due to his focus on the Italian situation, to him means Catholicism) plays a rather ambiguous role with regard to hegemony. At a general level, he sees the church as an ally of the ruling class and an important rival to socialism. In practice, however, he recognizes the great variability of Catholicism among different social groups:

Every religion, even the Catholic (in fact, especially the Catholic, precisely because of its efforts to remain united superficially, and not to split up into national churches and into various social strata) is in reality a multiplicity of distinct and often contradictory religions: there is a Catholicism of the *petit bourgeoisie* and city workers, a women’s Catholicism, an intellectual’s Catholicism equally varied and disconnected. [GRAMSCI, A. (...) 1971, P. 419–420]

Hence, religion is also part of the “common sense” of the people, as a “religion of the people” that encompasses the beliefs, morals, and practices expressing in a religious idiom the needs and experiences of the subaltern classes. This “religion of the people” is “spontaneous” in Gramsci’s terms; it gives a direct interpretation to the immediate experiencing of nature, social relationships, or work. By virtue of this closeness to ongoing, concrete experience, the “religion of the people”

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 24.

can acquire a revolutionary capacity, as exemplified by the Reformation or the numerous heretical movements of Medieval and early Modern times<sup>7</sup>. In sum, Gramsci sees religion, and especially Catholicism, both as part of a hegemonic order supported by the church hierarchy in collusion with the political elite, and as a potential resource of resistance to hegemony – and even, under certain circumstances, counterhegemonic ideas and practices.

Unlike the more narrowly political aspects of Gramsci's oeuvre, which have enjoyed a resilient popularity among Marxism-inspired social scientists since the 1970s, his ideas on religion have only rarely been picked up by social scientists. If we discount a number of rather general reflections of the hegemonic role of the Catholic Church in Latin America, equally inspired by Gramscian Marxism and Liberation Theology<sup>8</sup>, there are only two fairly well-known studies from a sociological viewpoint. Dwight B. Billings<sup>9</sup> has studied the – supportive or negative – contribution of Protestantism to social activism in the context of class confrontation over labour rights in the U.S. South in the 1920s and 1930s, comparing the Appalachian coalfields and the textile-manufacturing communities in Carolina Piedmont region of. Dana Sawchuk's study<sup>10</sup> focuses on the involvement of the Catholic Church in the revolutionary struggles of 1970s Nicaragua, when the church hierarchy supported ruling-class dominance while the *Iglesia Popular* at the base allied itself with the revolutionary Sandinista forces. Both case studies support Gramsci's understanding of the dual potential of religion as either a supportive discourse of the ruling elite or an ideology of resistance against the rule of that elite. They show that it may even assume both roles at the same time. However, each case needs to be examined very carefully with regard to its specific historical context.

Since the Catholic Church in Lithuania is currently not implicated in political struggles comparable to the two above case studies, I suggest adopting a more general approach to hegemony and following William Roseberry's description of cultural domination as an idiom of communicating about the social world:

What hegemony constructs, then, is not a shared ideology but a common material and meaningful framework for living through, talking about, and acting upon social orders characterized by domination. That common material and meaningful framework is, in part, discursive, a common language or way of talking about social relationships that sets out the central terms around which and in terms of which contestation and struggle can occur. [ROSEBERRY, W. (...) 1994, P. 361]

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I will now look at two such idioms in the construction of a dominant view of Lithuanian identity: Catholicism and the nation. Catholicism's claim to hegemony is based on a number of solid historical facts: close to 80% of Lithuania's population identify themselves as Catholics, whereas other religions are shown to be marginal in the census; the Catholic Church has a long history as the almost exclusive religion of ethnic Lithuanians; and finally, there are close ties between the Catholic Church and the Conservative/Christian Democrat Party that was in power for some ye-

<sup>7</sup> Cf.: FULTON, John. Religion and Politics in Gramsci: An Introduction. *Sociological Analysis*, Vol. 48, 1987, p. 197–216.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. MADURO, Otto. *Religion and Social Conflicts*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1982; TORRES, Carlos Albert. *The Church, Society and Hegemony: A Critical Sociology of Religion in Latin America*. Westport: Praeger, 1992.

<sup>9</sup> See: BILLINGS, Dwight B. Religion as Opposition: A Gramscian Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 96, 1990, p. 1–31.

<sup>10</sup> See: SAWCHUK, Dana. The Catholic Church in the Nicaraguan Revolution: A Gramscian Analysis. *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 58, 1997, p. 39–51.

ars after independence and is currently again leading the country's coalition government. Having gained a high degree of societal support for its political role in Lithuania's independence struggle, the Catholic Church has indeed sought to propagate Christian values as a hegemonic narrative in Lithuanian society. This effort was quickly doomed to failure, however. In general terms, there were four reasons for this failure: first, the history of Catholicism and the church in Lithuania is actually much more complex than the current statistics reveal. From the 19th-century independence movement through the time of the First Republic, the role of Catholicism and church-state relations were always far from unequivocal. Except for the First Republic's initial years before the seizing of power by the Smetona regime, the church was never able to establish the close relationship with the political elite that Gramsci had in mind as characteristic of a historical bloc. After Lithuania's loss of independence during World War II, the Soviet regime's atheist policy, while not completely successful in eradicating a Catholic habitus, especially in the countryside, still succeeded in preventing the dissemination of knowledge of the Catholic doctrine among the generations that grew up in the Lithuanian SSR.

Hence and second, for the majority of Lithuanians, Catholicism was something discovered – or maybe rediscovered – under very specific circumstances after independence rather than being able to simply reaffirm a hegemonic position in society. Many people's religious expectations soon clashed with reality as they found the Catholic faith difficult to practice and ethically demanding and the church hierarchical, inflexible, reactionary, and generally lacking many of the qualities required to successfully reach out to people in the new pluralist environment. Rather than facing the new challenge, many church representatives and conservative believers still lament the loss of the “pure” faith of Soviet times, when circumstances welded together a community of serious members of a small but dedicated church. As a result, the church has today more or less abandoned any claims to hegemony and concentrates its attention on a small circle of “true” believers. Earnest religious seekers, on the other hand, who are to be found mostly among the young and well educated, turn to other religions or create personalized bricolages of spiritualities. The majority of the population follows a superficial habit of passive Catholicism out of a vague sense of propriety through the celebration of Christian rituals and attending mass on holidays, without deep feelings of attachment or a strong interest in the basics of Christian doctrine.

Third, history – especially the history of the idea of a national cultural heritage – has proven, to paraphrase Marx, “a nightmare” resting on the shoulders of today's Catholic Church. The discovery of the Lithuanian nation and a romantic view of “traditional” Lithuanian culture during the first national awakening of the 19th century and again in late Soviet times widely ignored the contribution of Catholicism to historic Lithuanian culture. Although from an etic perspective, the Catholic Church is obviously an integral part of Lithuania's national heritage, the recreated visions of national culture understood the “traditional” as predominantly expressed in peasant folk customs that ultimately date back to pre-Christian times. Hence no coherent hegemonic discourse has developed that unites ideas of Catholicism and nationalism. Both have remained, while not exactly antagonistic, mostly separate idioms of collective culture that stand for divergent historicities.

Finally, Catholicism is naturally at odds with neoliberal-capitalist ideas of consumerism and individual merit that have rapidly proliferated in Lithuania since independence and are supported by the breakdown of social networks and a everyone-for-themselves attitude toward civic relations, feelings of fundamental insecurity, frustration, and confusion. This situation has generated feelings of hostility against everyone, and most of all, every institution that is perceived to profit at

one's expense, not exempting the church from such fundamental mistrust. Furthermore, prevailing ideas of a decent life are privileging economic success or security over issues of morality, spiritual wellbeing, and ideas of the common good, while all spheres of life are permeated by the enthusiastically adopted ideas of consumption and short-term benefit.

The hegemonic narrative of the nation and a national cultural heritage has fared comparatively better in contemporary Lithuanian society than that of Catholicism. Even earlier than Catholicism was revalued as a resource of anti-Soviet resistance, national traditional culture had been discovered by the "ethnoculture movement" in the late 1960s. After independence, the Lithuanian state has lavished a large amount of attention and funds upon the preservation of the nation's cultural heritage<sup>11</sup>. Museums, monuments, and prestigious building projects – like the "Grand Dukes' Palace" (Lith. – *valdovų rūmai*) in the centre of Vilnius – represent the national past as a streamlined narrative of two essential components: ancient glory, recalling the Grand Duchy as the "golden age" of Lithuanian history, and the more recent suffering of ethnic Lithuanians under Tsarist and Soviet Russian occupation. While the main content of the nationalist narrative is largely uncontested in the public sphere, the ethnocultural movement has mostly remained detached from the state-sponsored vision of a national history. The state provides only very limited support in terms of infrastructure for the various National Culture or Folk Culture Centres and folklore ensembles. Ethnocultural activism has largely remained a fairly individualized scene of individuals and groups that love to perform "traditional" songs and dances and to celebrate holidays in a "traditional" manner, love nature and their homeland, and are to a certain degree influenced by ideas of a pre-Christian Baltic culture. Their activities express a nationalist attitude in the widest sense, but generally fail to inspire remotely as intense feelings of loyalty to the state and its government as to the notion of a cultural heritage that has been passed down through the generation and requires to be preserved.

Thus, it appears that both of these hegemonic narratives are ultimately failing to produce consensus over Lithuanian identity. Even among those people who relate to these grand narratives of church and nation, there is an obvious tension in everyday understandings between the hegemonic reading of these terms as leitmotifs of Lithuanian identity and local understandings of the same as either personal belief or personal love of traditional culture that are not necessarily connected to any institution or national idea. I would be cautious to characterize such narratives of belief and tradition as truly counterhegemonic<sup>12</sup>, but rather as "countercultural". They open up cultural fields that are in opposition to the dominant field of public culture defined by the triangle of first, consumerism and political and social apathy, second, superficial Catholicism, and third, the vulgar-nationalist narrative of medieval glory and recent suffering.

There is, in fact, no discernible counterhegemonic identity politics in today's Lithuania. This situation is due to the weakness of oppositional political forces like the labour movement or leftist political groups that are capable of posing a substantial challenge to the dominant neoliberal and conservative politics. There is, however, a kind of countercultural politics that a certain segment of the population identifies with, mostly younger middle-class academics that possess the intellectual means to articulate such ideas. They can, broadly speaking, be labelled either folklore activists or unconventional Catholics (or Christians). Countercultural politics produce trajectories of identification and feelings of belonging around the participation in emotionally charged activities (either

<sup>11</sup> See: ČEPAITIENĖ, Rasa. *Laikas ir akmenys: Kultūros paveldo sampratos moderniojoje Lietuvoje*. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2005.

<sup>12</sup> See: DURRENBERGER, E. Paul & DOUKAS, Dimitra. Gospel of Wealth, Gospel of Work: Counterhegemony in the U.S. Working Class. *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 110, 2008, p. 214–225.

by celebrating folk culture or through spiritual experience) that create meaning with reference to the connectedness to either the past or the supernatural. Such countercultural politics create islands of contestation of the dominant view of the world – without, however, pursuing a clear-cut goal of true political contestation. For this reason, they cannot be understood as identity politics ‘from below’, as they lack the investment of political labour that would be required in order to translate social cohesion into political action.

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As Gerald Sider<sup>13</sup> has argued, contemporary societies are characterized by the increasing inability of hegemonic narratives to generate an identity politics that successfully creates feelings of loyalty to political institutions. At the same time, the intense hardship brought about for local communities by the neoliberal politics of global markets in collusion with states erodes local social relations and common sense to such an extent that counterhegemonic ideas are almost impossible to create. Lithuania presents a good example of such a situation where people are wary of the grand narratives of Catholicism and national identity, yet they react mostly with apathy and frustration rather than any kind of overt or covert resistance.

By way of a conclusion, I would like to refer again to the Comaroffs’ approach to hegemony outlined at the beginning of this essay. The dilemma of Catholicism in Lithuania can be explained with reference to the distinction between hegemony and ideology. Power in its agentive mode may produce quiescence by preventing the articulation of counterhegemonic ideas and practices<sup>14</sup>, but will not engender feelings of a shared identity among the elite and the subaltern. Due to the various circumstances mentioned above, Catholicism is being perceived by the majority of the Lithuanian population as serving the interests of a minority elite, that is, as ideology. As a result, the people have plenty of reasons to take a critical view of many aspects of the Catholic faith, as well as actions and proclamations of the church. Only to a minority Catholicism constitutes a culture, an element of the common sense of the everyday. Ironically, at least in the urban environment, this religious minority does not necessarily reproduce the Catholic hegemony in the way intended by the church. They are just as likely to build a Christian culture from their religious experiences that reflects a religious idiom of perceiving the world that claims autonomy of the official church doctrine.

As I have sketched in this essay, the struggle over identity in Lithuania is highly complex. Whereas economic benefits and hardships in contemporary society can quite easily be identified, the cultural politics which reflect that political economy are much more fragmented and fluid. Yet such a seemingly post-modern diagnosis should not obscure our view upon the fact that there are indeed political-economic forces behind the making and unmaking of culture and identity. It seems to me that the realist viewpoint of hegemony offers a useful approach to elucidate this connection between political economy and culture that produces identities.

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<sup>13</sup> See: SIDER, Gerald. *Remaking Marxist Anthropology. New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry*. Vol. 1, 2007, p. 12–13.

<sup>14</sup> Cf.: GAVENTA, John. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982.

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## HEGEMONIJOS APRAIŠKOS IR RELIGINIO IDENTITETO POLITIKA ŠIUOLAIKINĖJE LIETUVOJE

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## S a n t r a u k a

Straipsnyje supažindinama su A. Gramsci suformuluota hegemonijos koncepcija, leidžiančia išsiaiškinti identiteto formavimosi principus. Atskirai dėmesio šiuo atveju skiriama Jean ir Johno Comaroffų nubrėžtai atskirties linijai tarp hegemonijos ir identiteto sampratų. Katalikiškojo identiteto fenomenas Lietuvoje yra pateikiamas pavyzdžiu, iliustruojančiu nesėkmingo identiteto



formavimosi proceso atvejus tada, kai jis yra atribojamas nuo hegemonijos konsensuso paieškų ir suvokiamas vien ideologiniu pagrindu.

Gramsci pasiūlyta hegemonijos samprata gali būti apibūdinta kaip politinio elito siekis apginti savo pozicijas diegiant inertiškoms kultūrinės ir pilietinės bendruomenės masėms sau parankias pasaulėžiūros sampratas. Taip šių masių kasdienės gyvensenos suvokimui yra daroma visuotinė įtaka, apsidraudžiant nuo galimo pasipriešinimo dominuojančioms tokio elito pozicijoms. Dar viena svarbi šio fenomeno savybė yra detalai aprašyta Jean ir Johno Comaroffų. Straipsnyje toliau vystoma šių autorių pastebėtos ir nubrėžtos atskirties linijos tarp *hegemonijos* kaip tiesioginės valdžios raiškos atributo ir *ideologijos* kaip netiesioginio valdžios raiškos atributo teorija. Ji atstovauja partikuliariniams interesams ir jau vien dėl šios priežasties ne visada gali būti pateisinama.

Hegemonijos koncepcija tik pavieniais atvejais yra minima religijos tyrimuose. Kita vertus, ji šiame kontekste išskyla kaip ypač aktualus potencialios religijos įtakos bendruomeniniam gyvenimui veiksnys. Į šią situaciją dėmesį jau yra atkreipęs A. Gramsci, pabrėždamas, kad bendruomenė konkrečiose istorinėse situacijose dažnai balansuoja ties riba tarp minėtos hegemonijos apraiškų ir natūralios įvykių bei jų vertinimų eigos. Antrojoje straipsnio dalyje autorius aptaria hegemonijos fenomeno panaudojimo galimybes identiteto formavimo religiniu aspektu kontekste. Jis tai daro sąmoningai, žinodamas galias katalikybės tradicijas Lietuvoje. Autorius seka Katalikų bažnyčios pastangas įteigti bendruomenei tikėjimo tiesas tokia savo ideologine kalba, kurią yra gerai įvaldžiusi pati Bažnyčia, kurią gerai žino didžioji dalis bendruomenės narių ir kuri gali iš anksto užbėgti už akių galimiems ideologiniams disputams ar ginčams (Roseberry).

Diskutuodama su kitomis šalies kultūrinio gyvenimo realijomis, kurių viena svarbiausių yra tautos istorinės gyvensenos ir kultūrinio palikimo nuostatos, Bažnyčia dažnai praranda savo įtakos sferas kovoje dėl ideologinės hegemonijos pozicijų. Visa tai dar labiau komplikuoja nuolat stiprėjanti individualistines ir pasaulietines gyvensenos vertybes propaguojanti modernioji vakarietiškojo kapitalizmo ideologija. Nepaisant visuotinės opinijos, kad didžioji lietuvių dalis formaliai laiko save katalikais, tik nedaugeliui jų katalikybė yra tapusi esminiu jų gyvenimo būdo idealu, t. y. pasaulėžiūra, iš esmės nulemiančia jų pasaulio pažinimo ir vertinimo kriterijus. Daugeliui paprastų lietuvių katalikybė lieka svarbi ideologija ne tiek jų pačių gyvenime, kiek (jų nuomone) kitų visuomenės sluoksnių – bendruomenės elito – interesams tarnaujanti ideologija. Tik santykinai labai nedidelė pačių religingiausių žmonių dalis gali liudyti, kad katalikybė yra nuolatinė ir neatskiriama kasdienio jų gyvenimo dalis. Paradoksalu, bet (bent jau miesto bendruomenėse) tam tikra tokių religinių pasišventėlių dalis aktyviai dalyvauja kuriant alternatyvios krikščioniškosios kultūros socialinius pagrindus. O tokia jų pozicija atriboja juos tiek nuo vyraujančio abejingumo nudvasintai vartotojiškai pasaulėžiūrai, tiek ir nuo pačios Bažnyčios doktrinos.